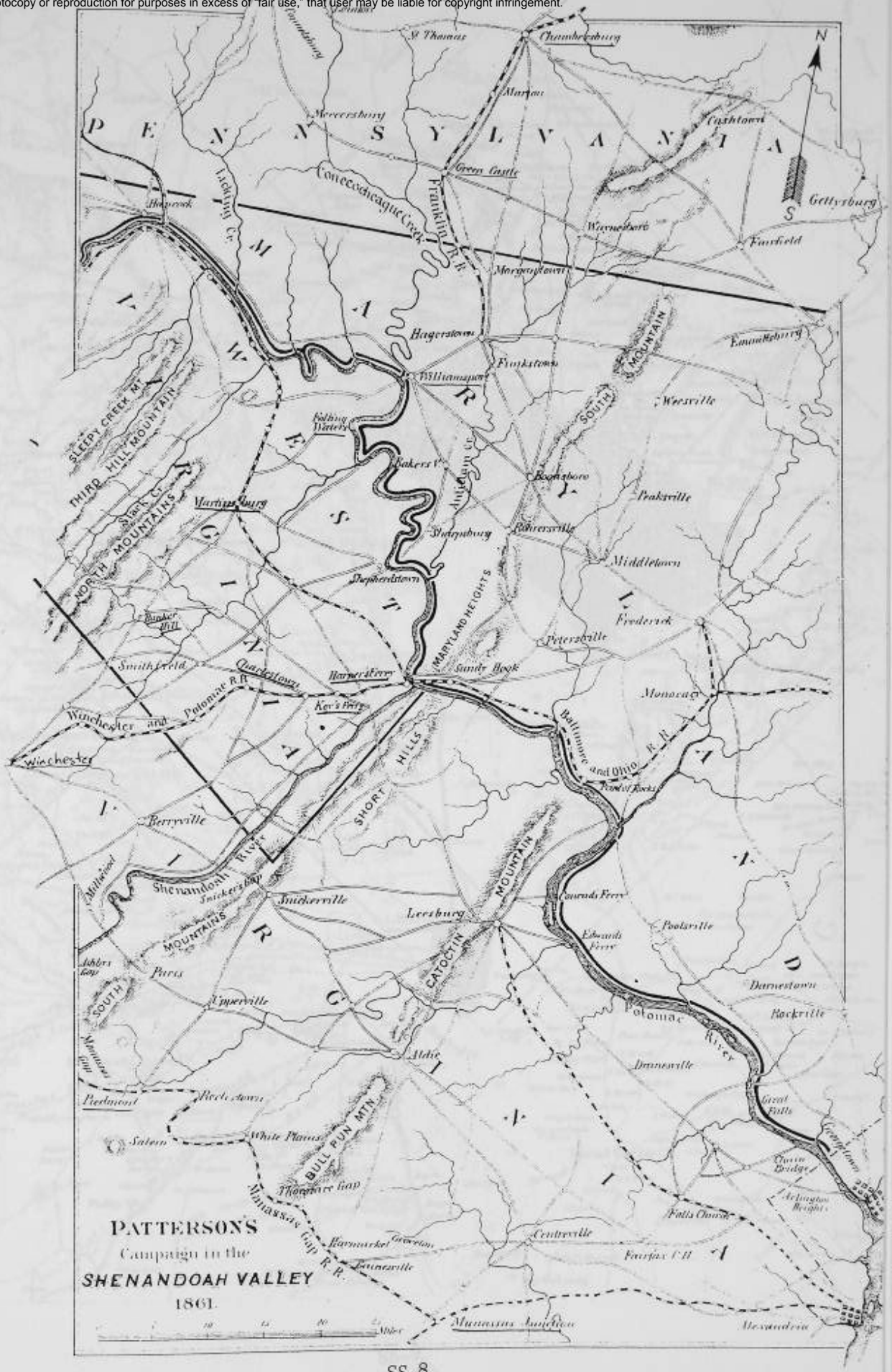
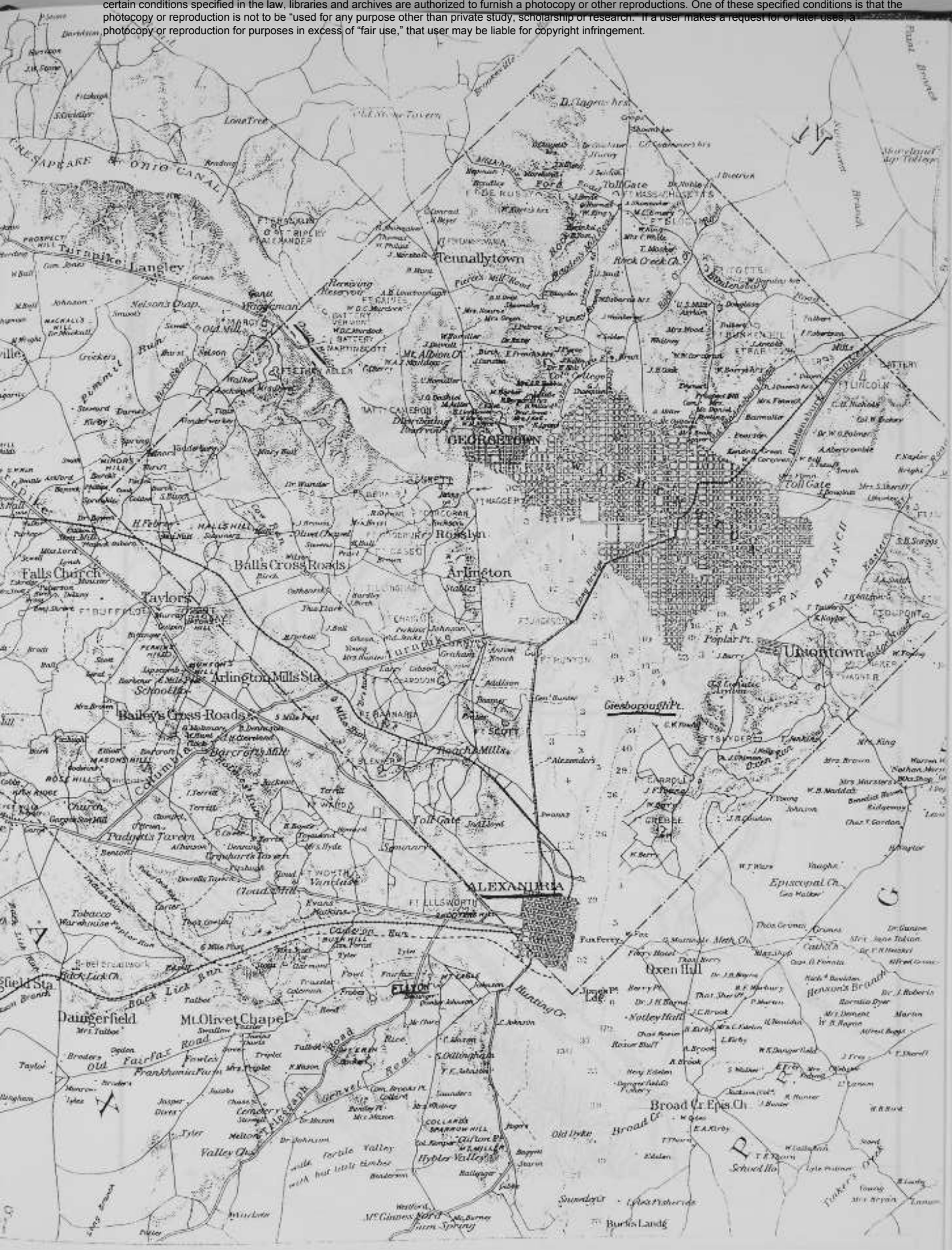
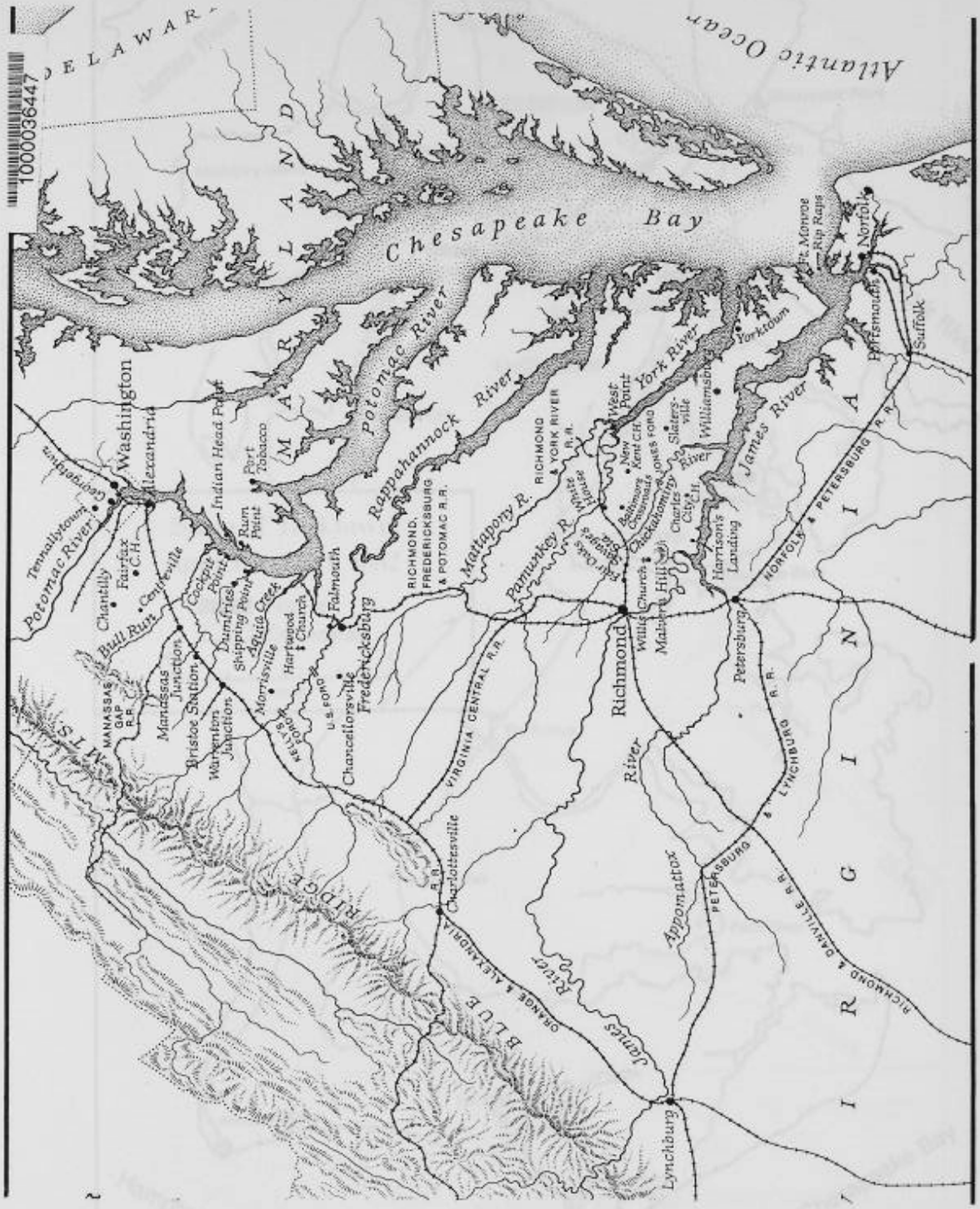
Camp on Lower Potomac
Feb 22d 64

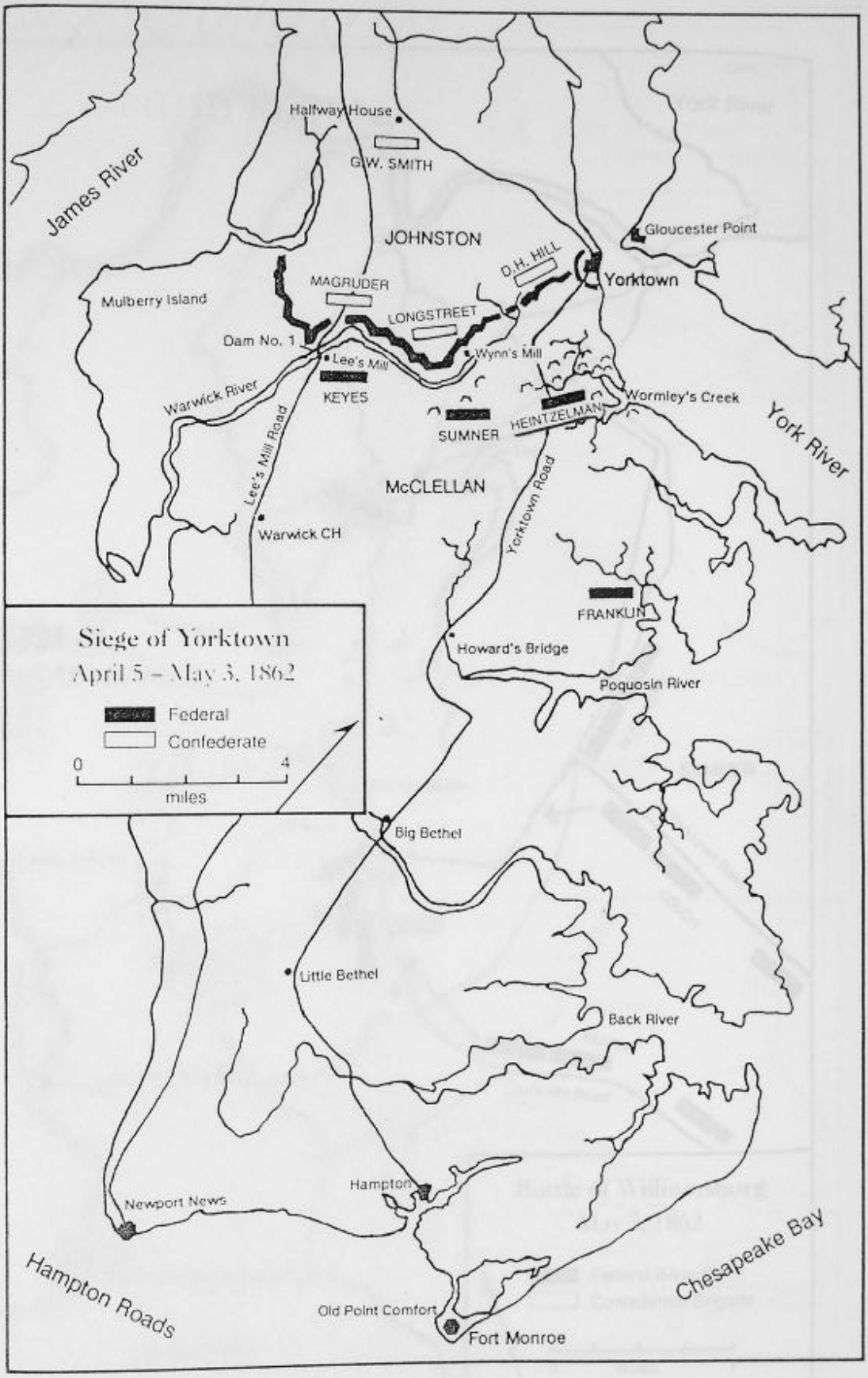
Dear [illegible]

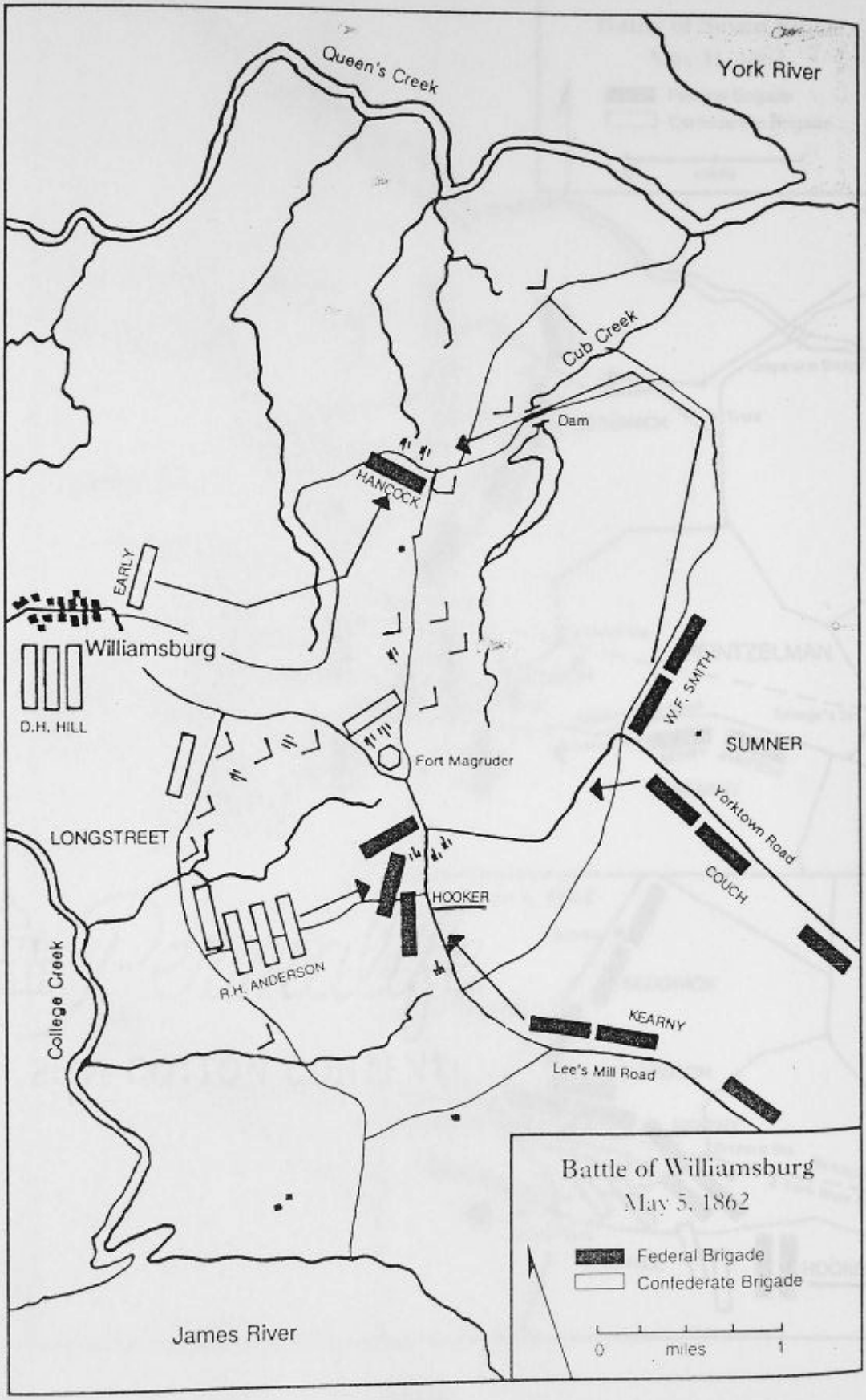
As it is my birth day I take the leisure time of writing you a few lines. I received your letter of the 16th inst and was much pleased in learning from home you give me a description of the late Rebels but I suppose we need not yet as soon as you did we get the news every day and [illegible] may judge we [illegible] get [illegible] news as soon as we do the Philadelphia Inquirer, New York Tribune. Baltimore Clipper. Washington Star. Trenton Gazette & Republican and several other news papers we have the news just as soon you get them at home if not a little sooner. We had a great Cannonading Monday night on the river I believe there was a battle from [illegible] I [illegible] the Rebels

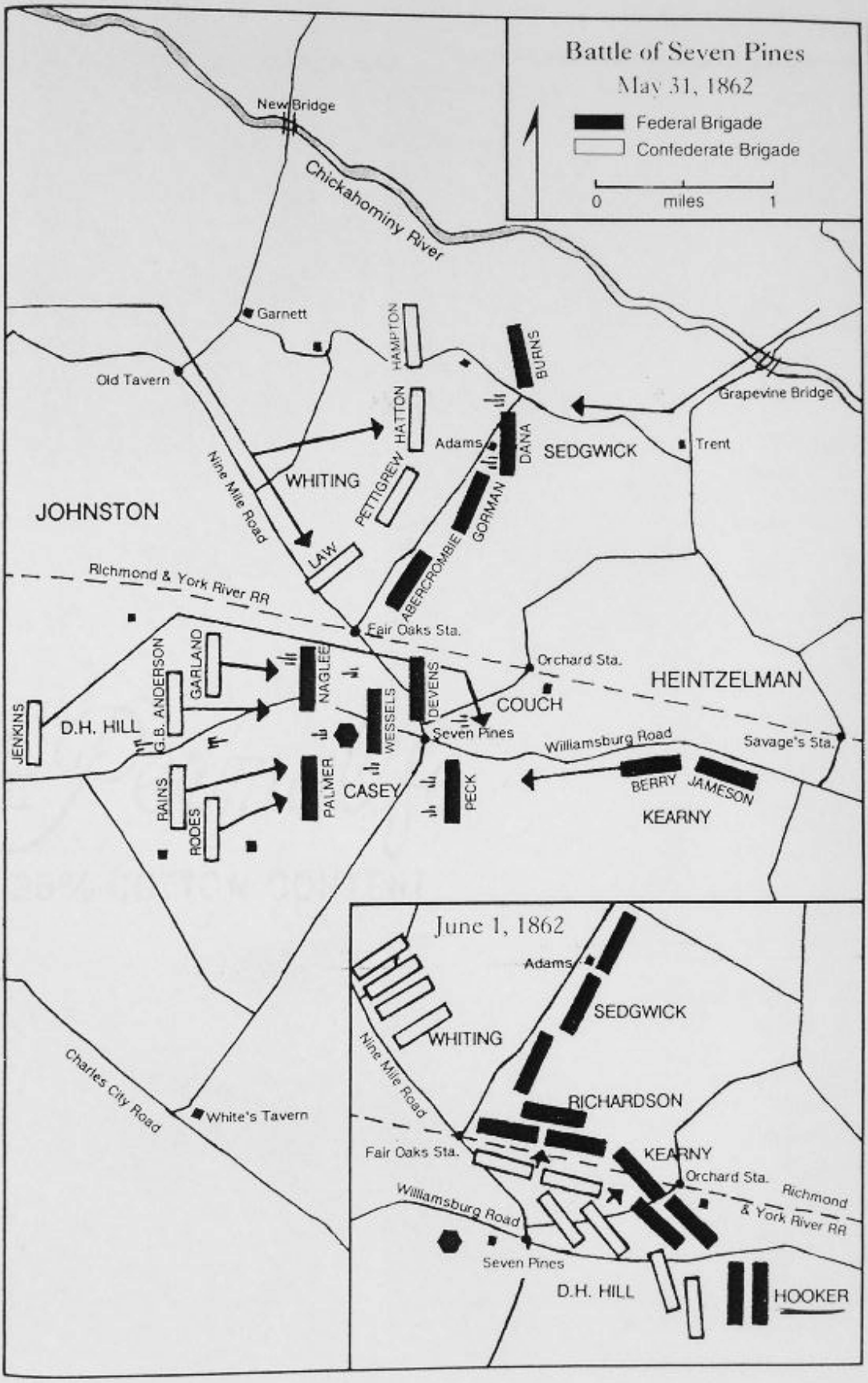


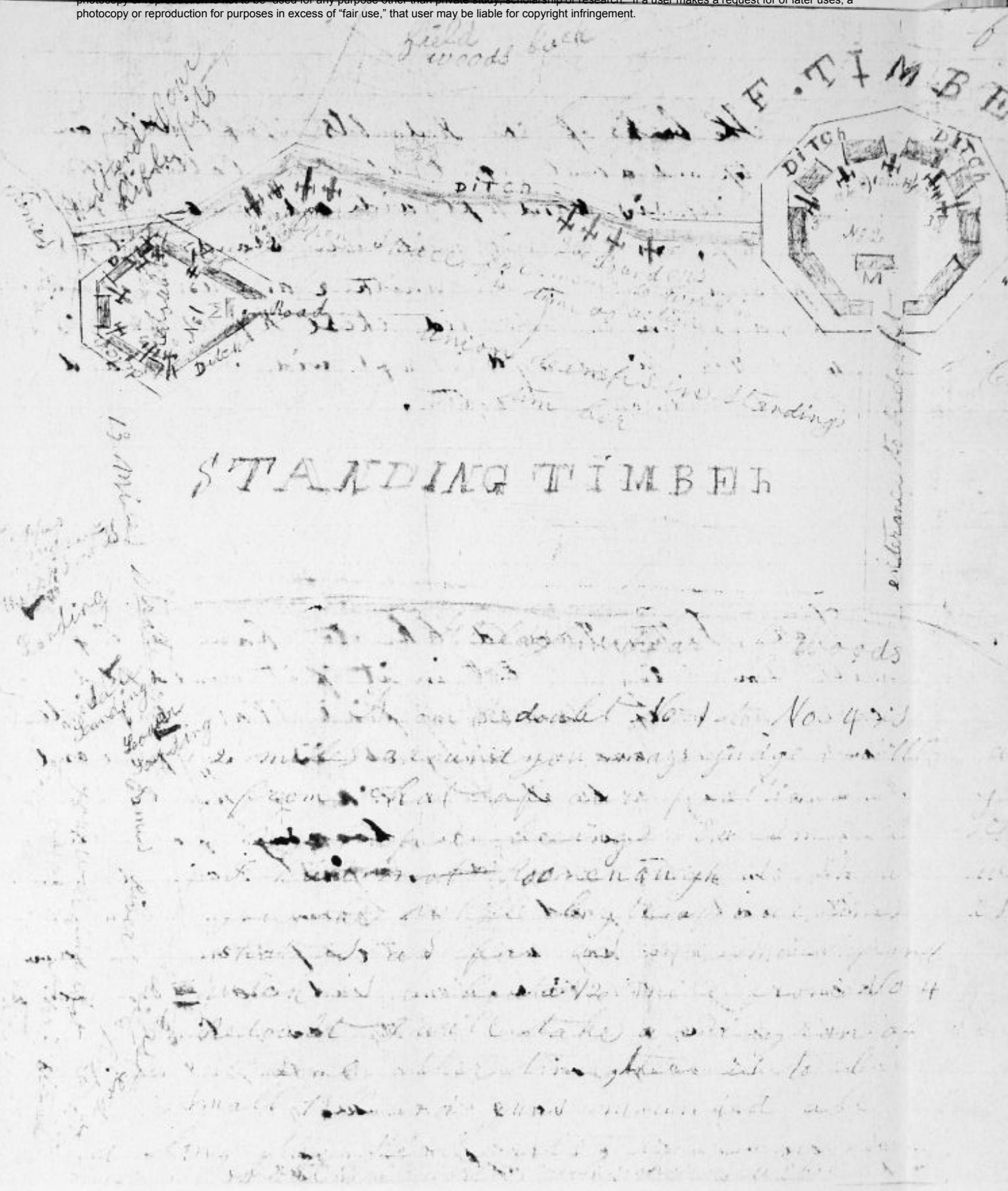


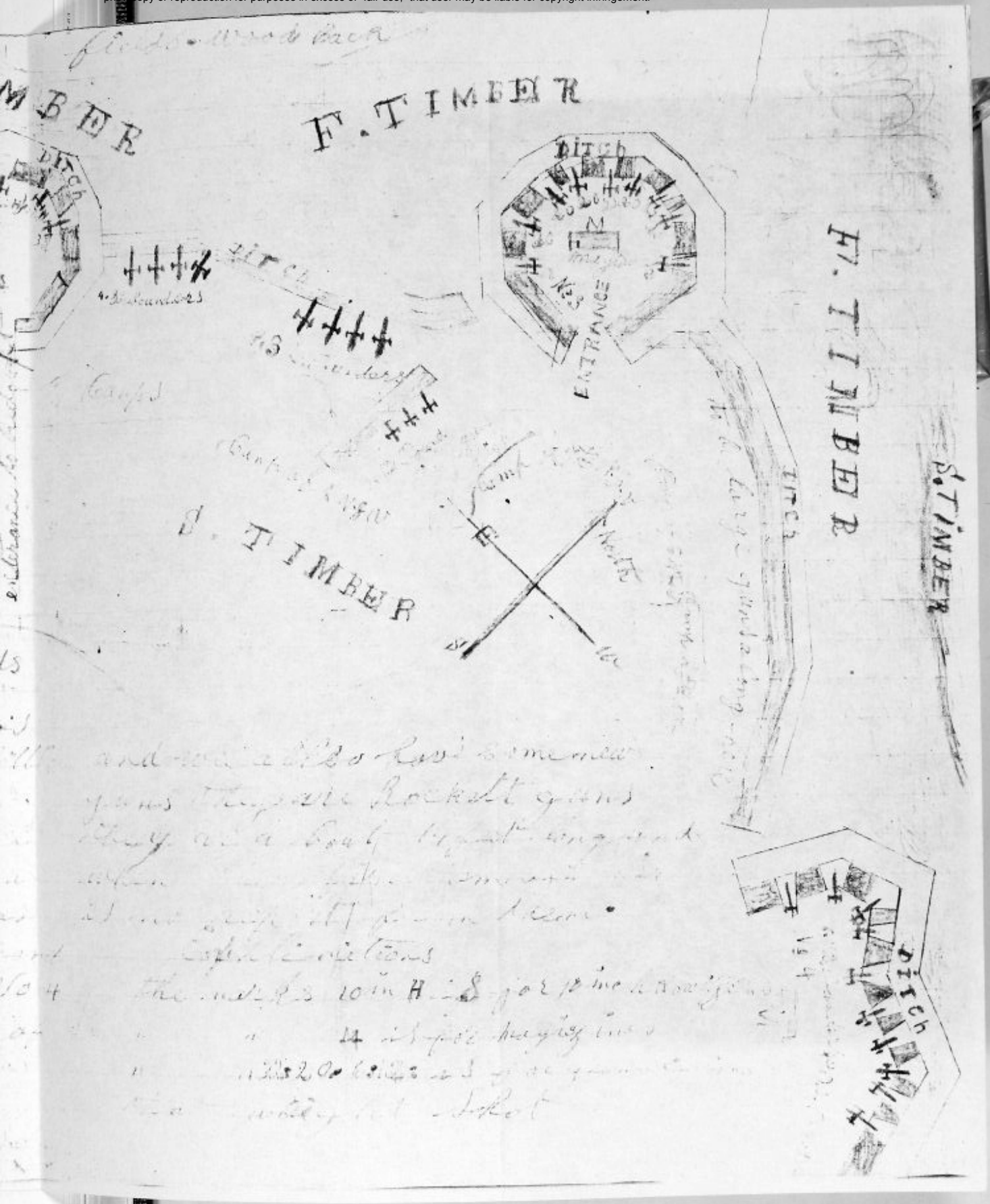


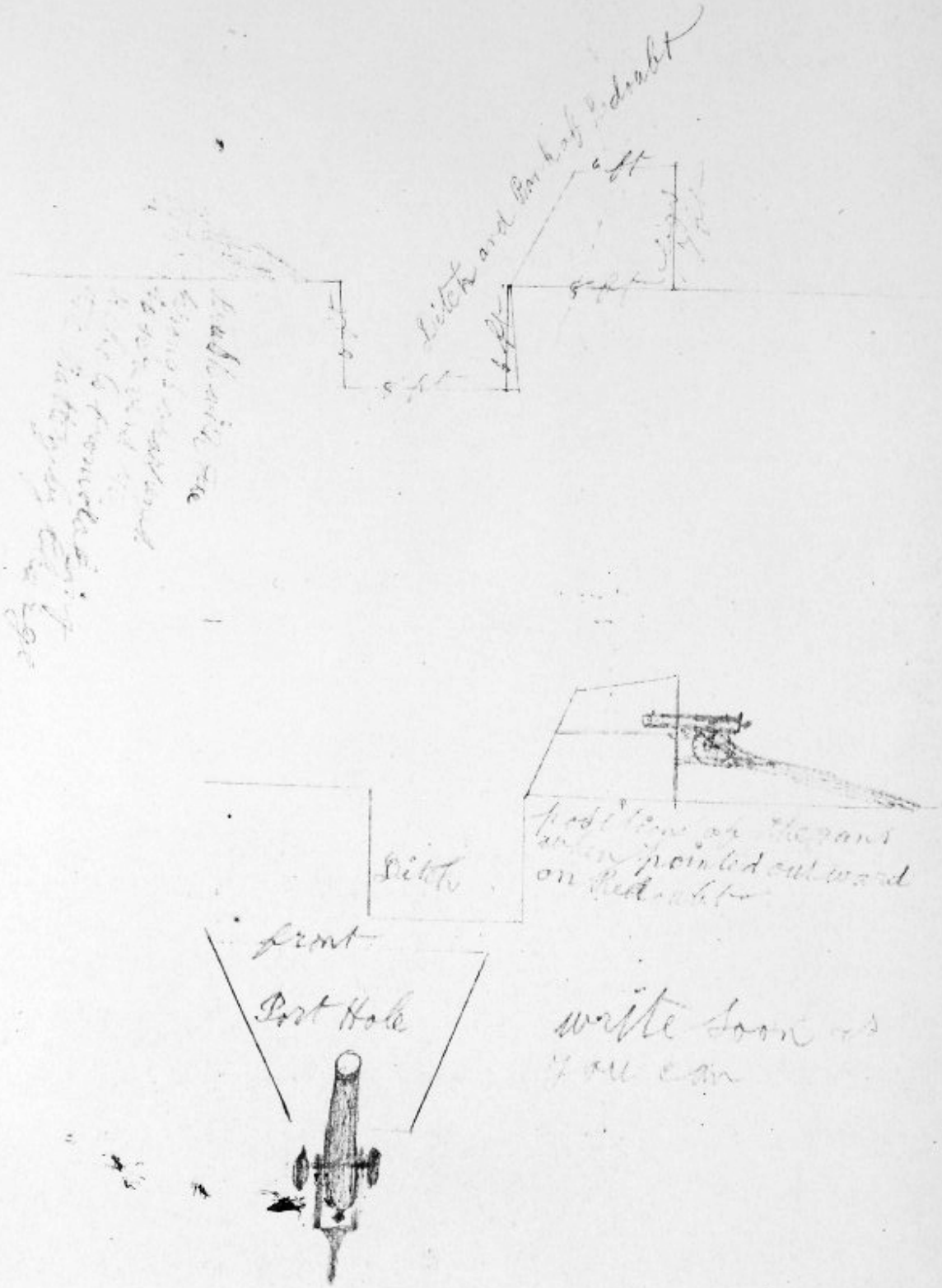








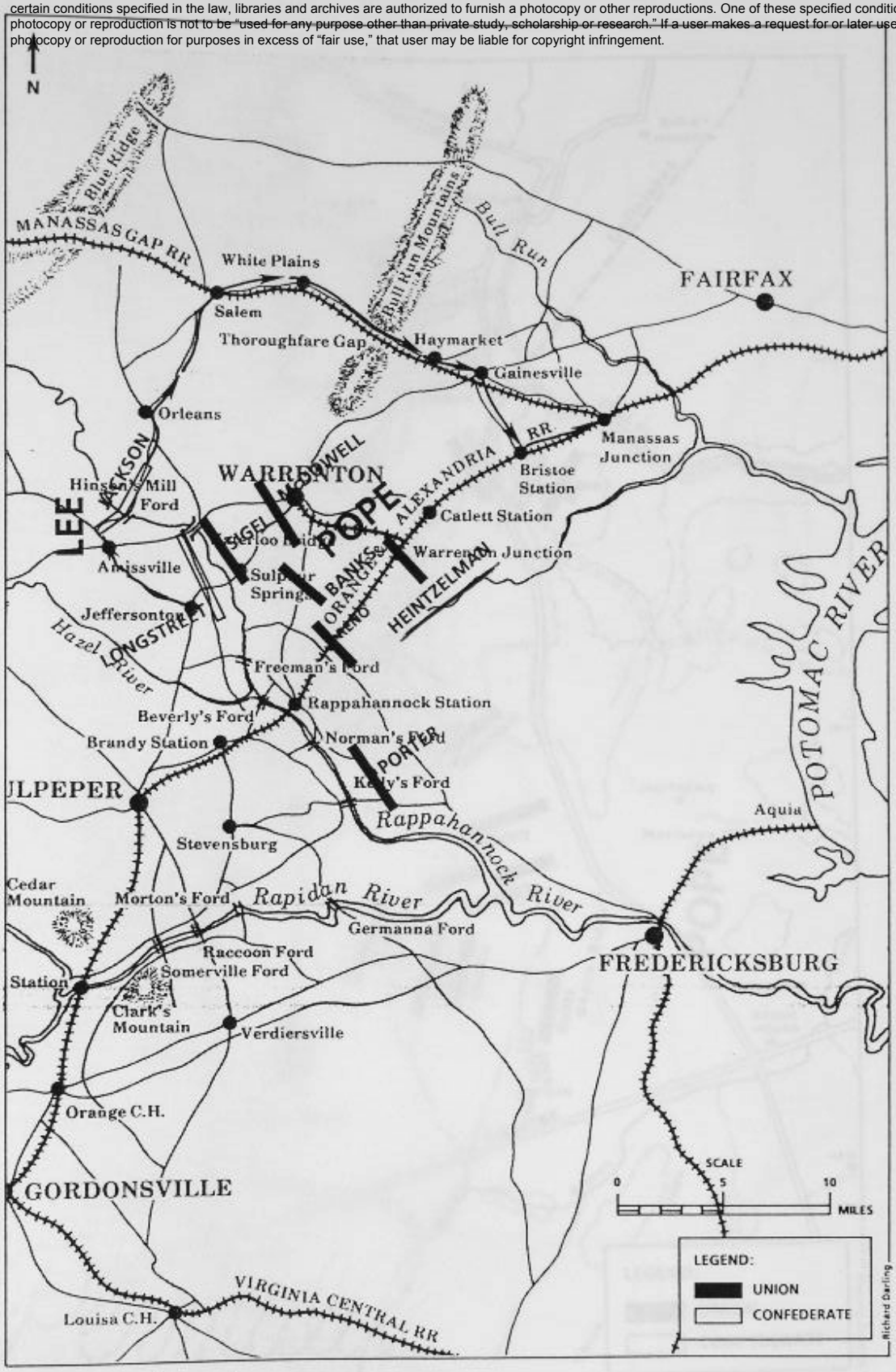




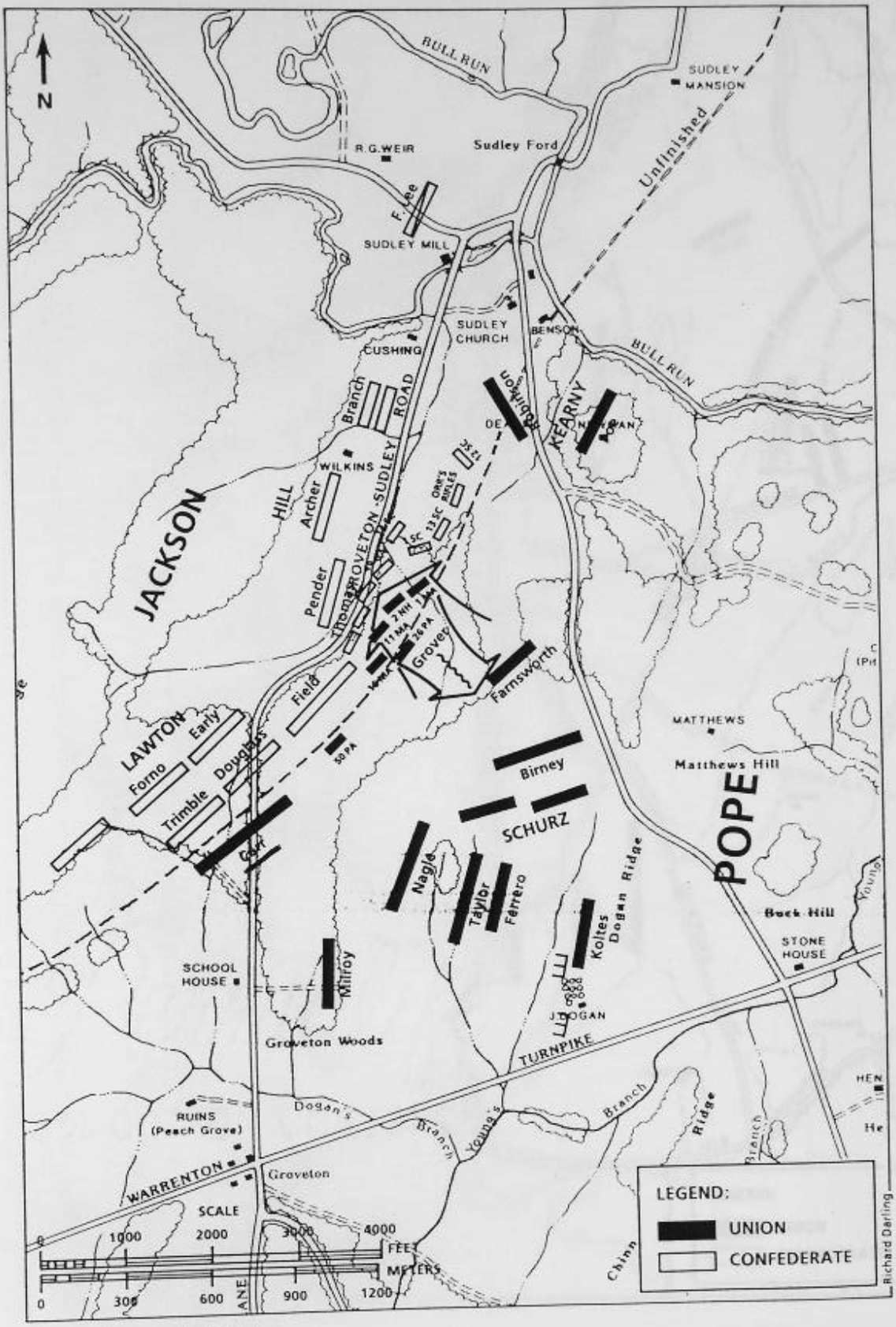
Dear
with
cost
Does co
I am no
thing
pay
letter
to you
recieved
that
at presen
to give
mother
present

The banks of the Redoubts is 6 ft wide on top and about 8 feet at the bottom, the Ditch is 8 and 10 ft wide and from 6 to 8 ft deep, on the side wich we stand is logs placed on top of one another and dirt throwen a gainst on the out side these Rifle pits is 4 ft 9 in high and is 20 ft wide on top and 6 feet wide on the botton.

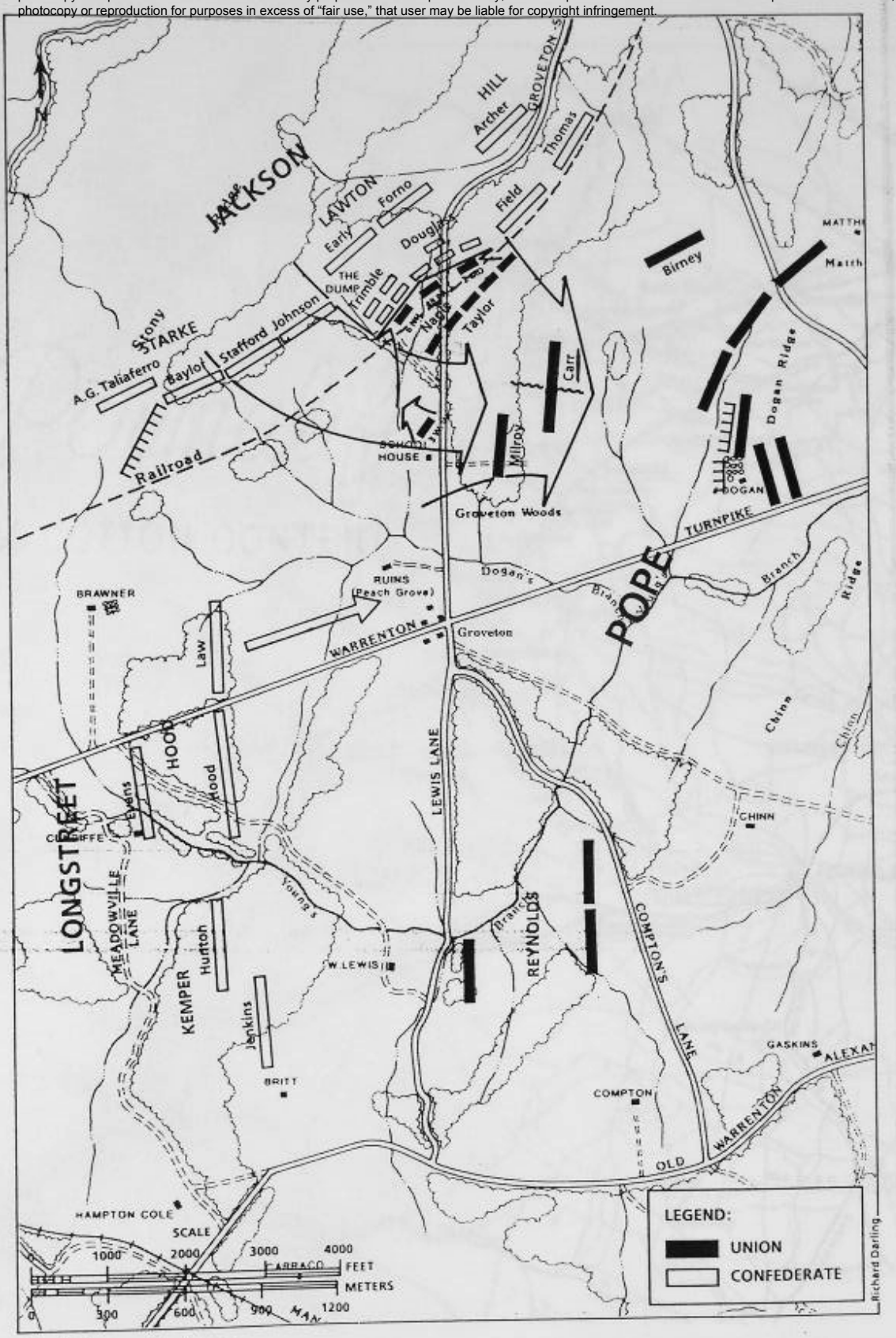
Dear Father, I would like to have a box with some thing to Eat in it if it would not cost to much trouble I find that boxes does come here and as our grub is very poor and I am not very well I would like to have some thing from home we are looking for the pay master every day. I just recieved your letter and was glad to her from home I wrote to you the other day wich letter I presume you have recieved by this time. I am glad that you recieved that money, we have pretty easy times here at present and if you keep me in stamps I will try to give you what news I know. give my love to mother and all the rest of the Cobb family nomore at present from your most obedient son William T Cobb



Jackson's flank march

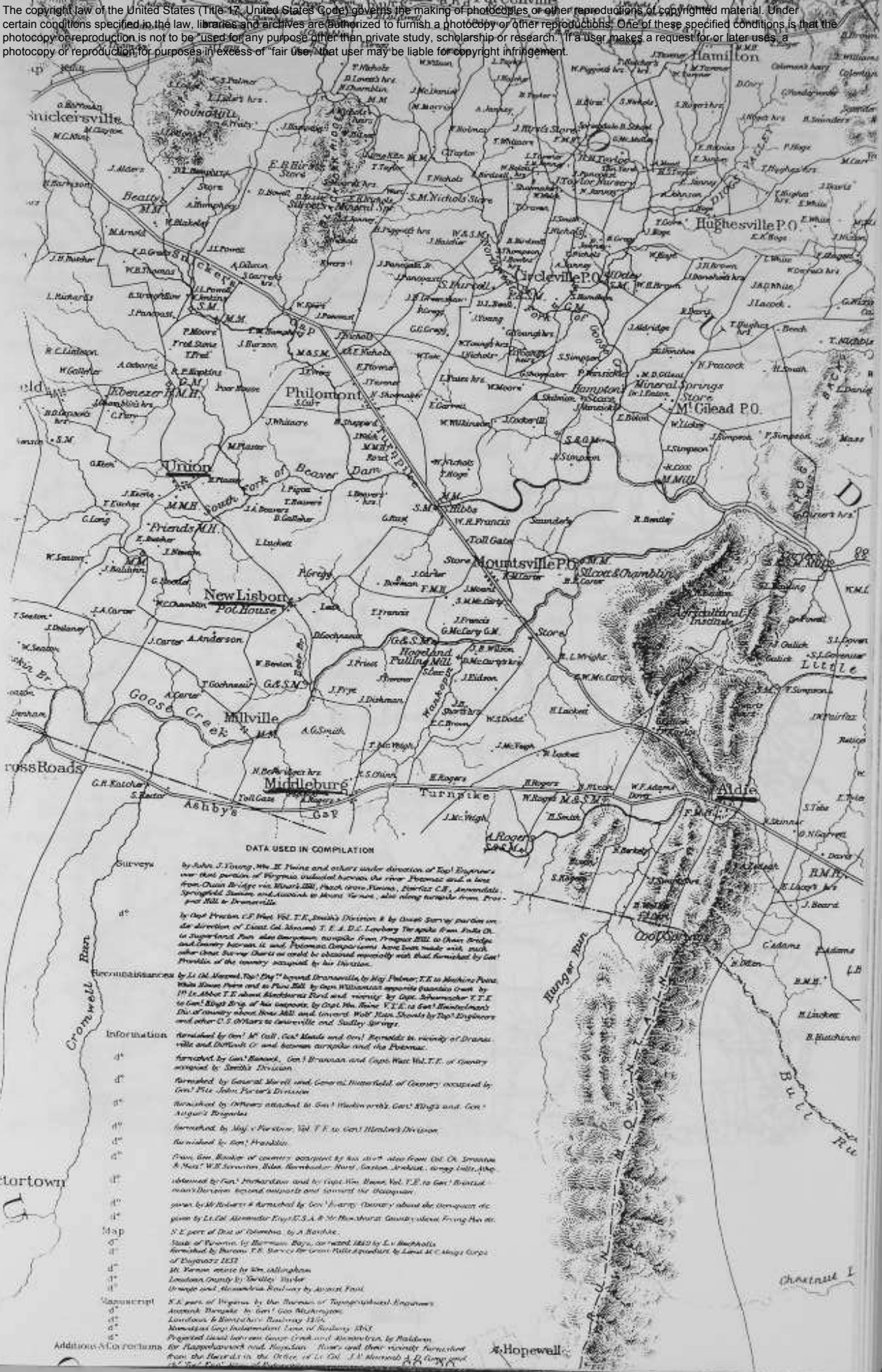


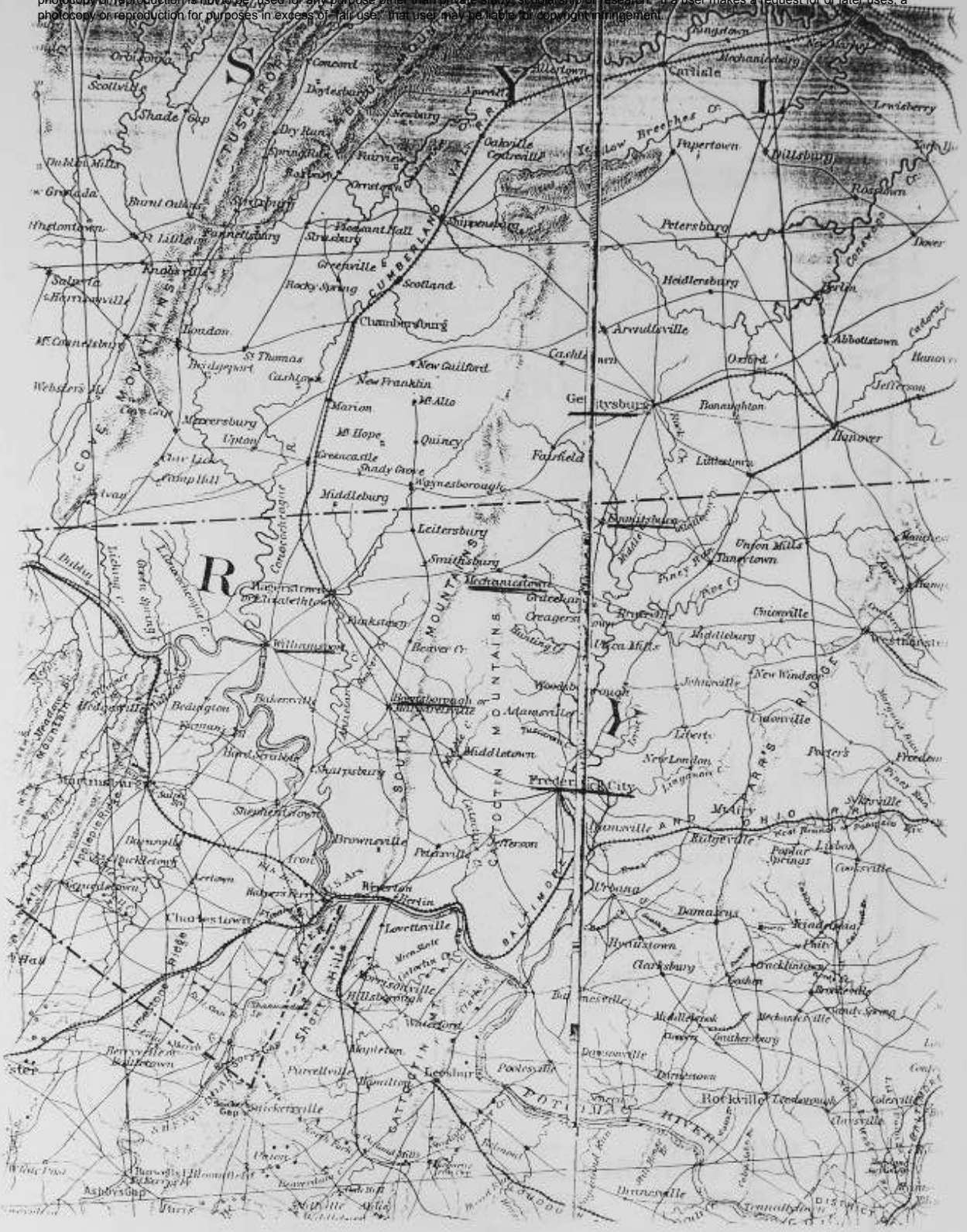
Grover's attack, 3 P.M.

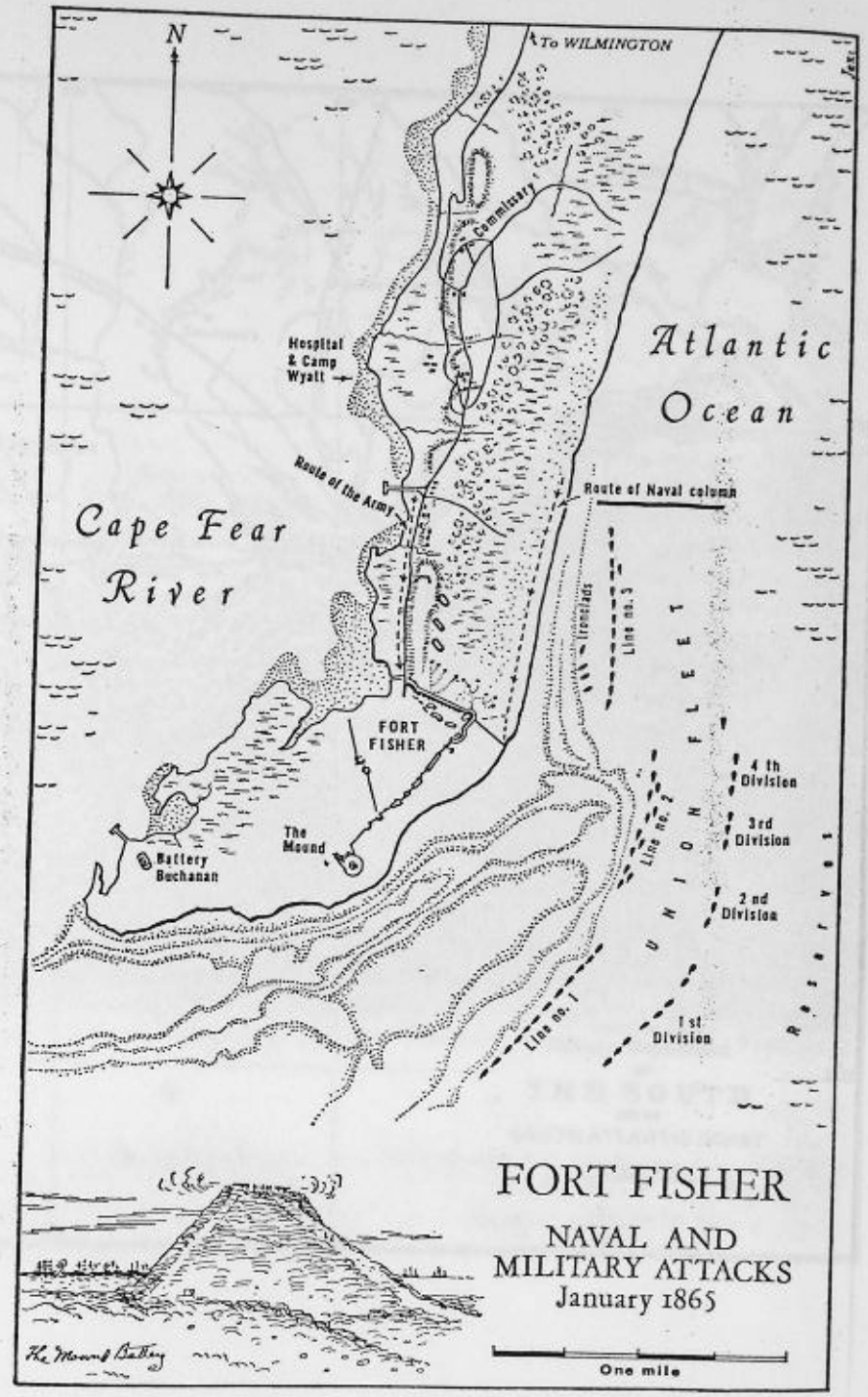


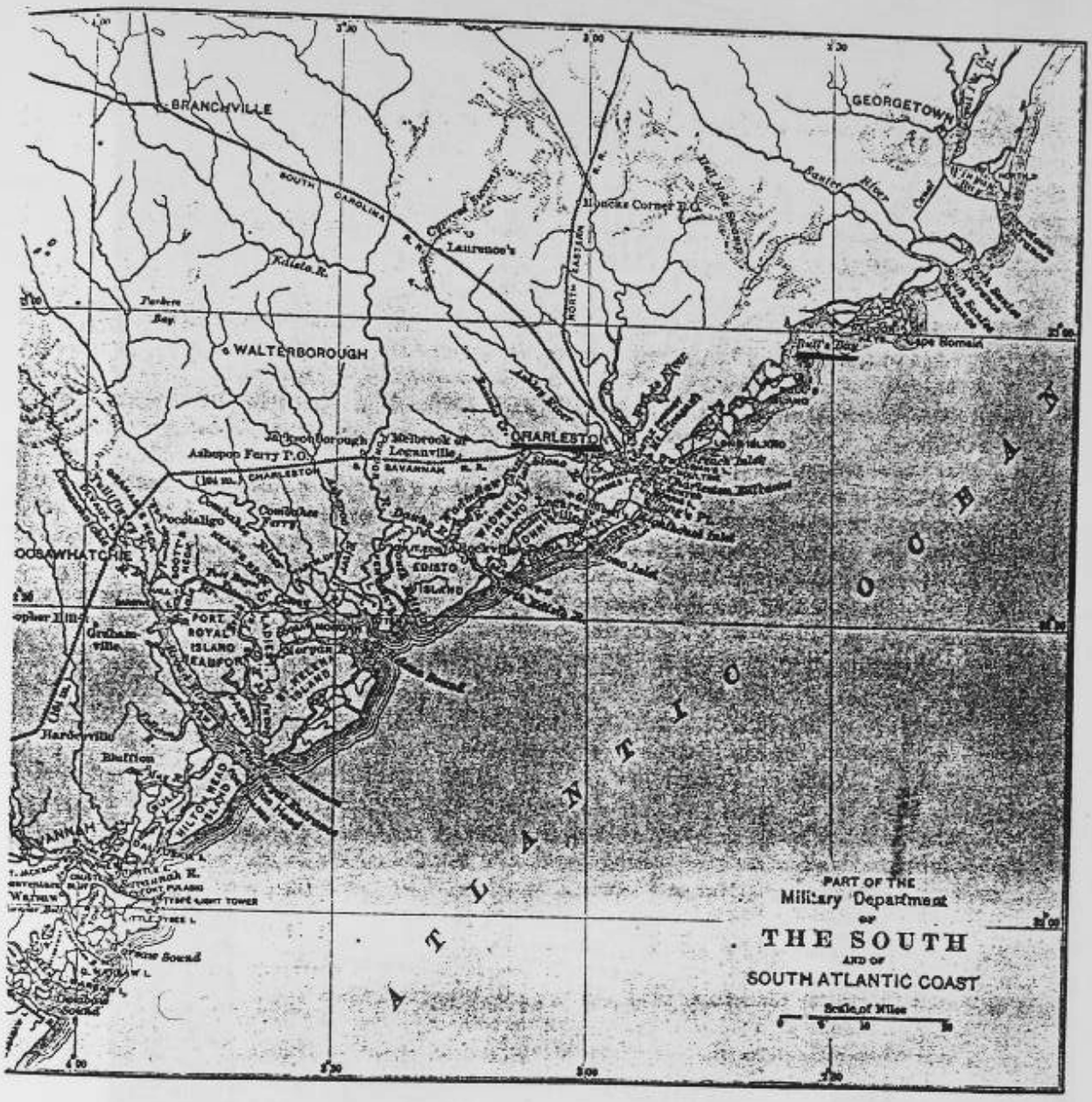
Nagle's attack, 4 P.M.

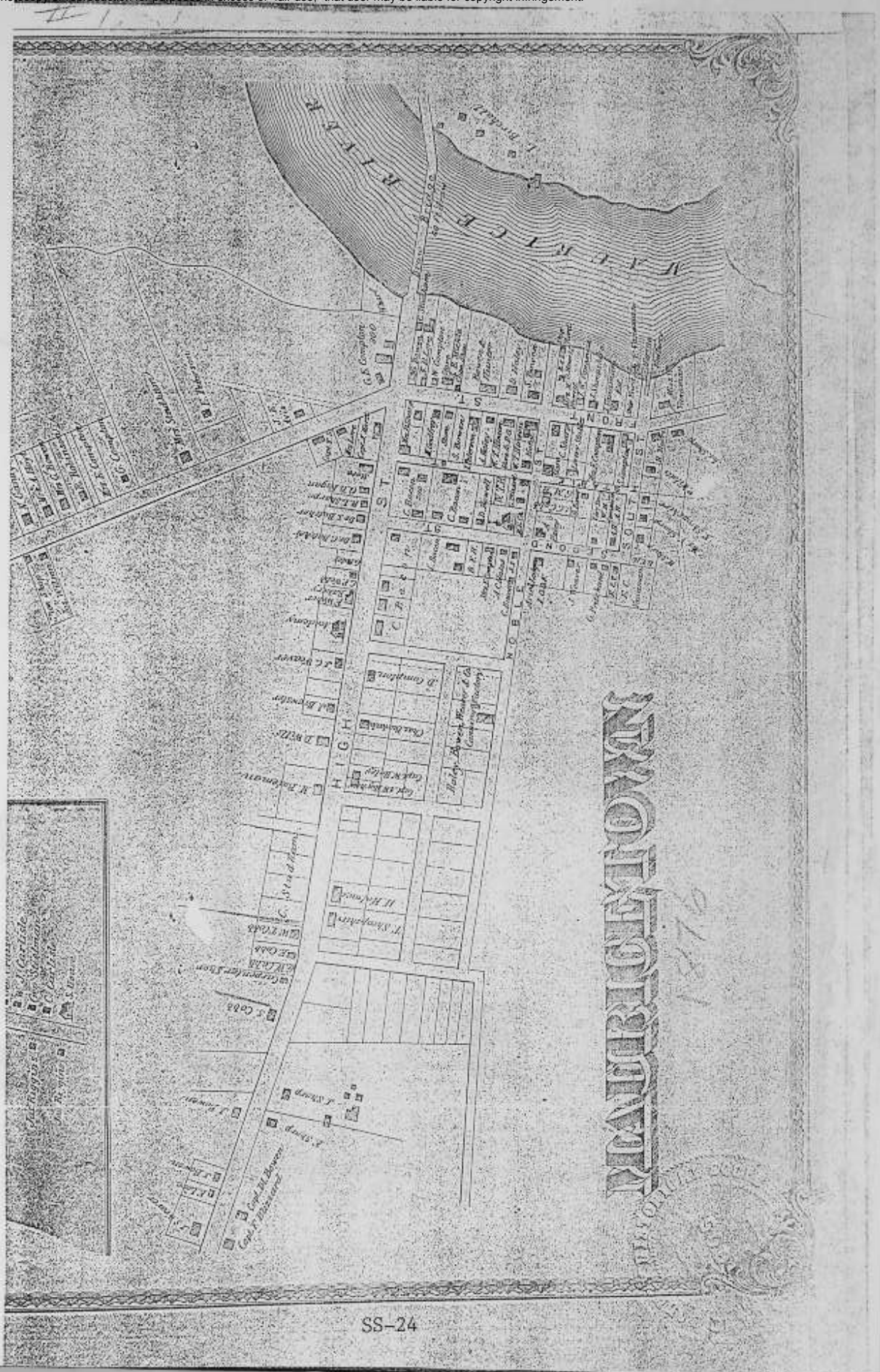
To accompany report of Maj. Gen. John Pope. U.S.A.
SERIES I VOL. XII. PART 2. PAGE 12.



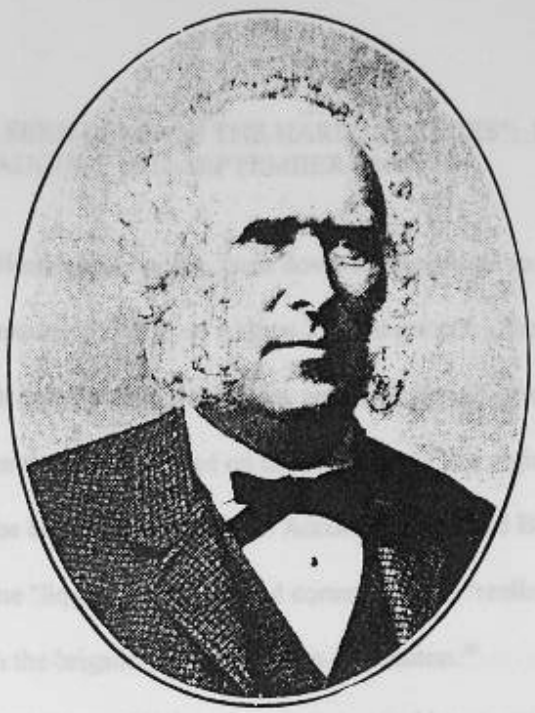


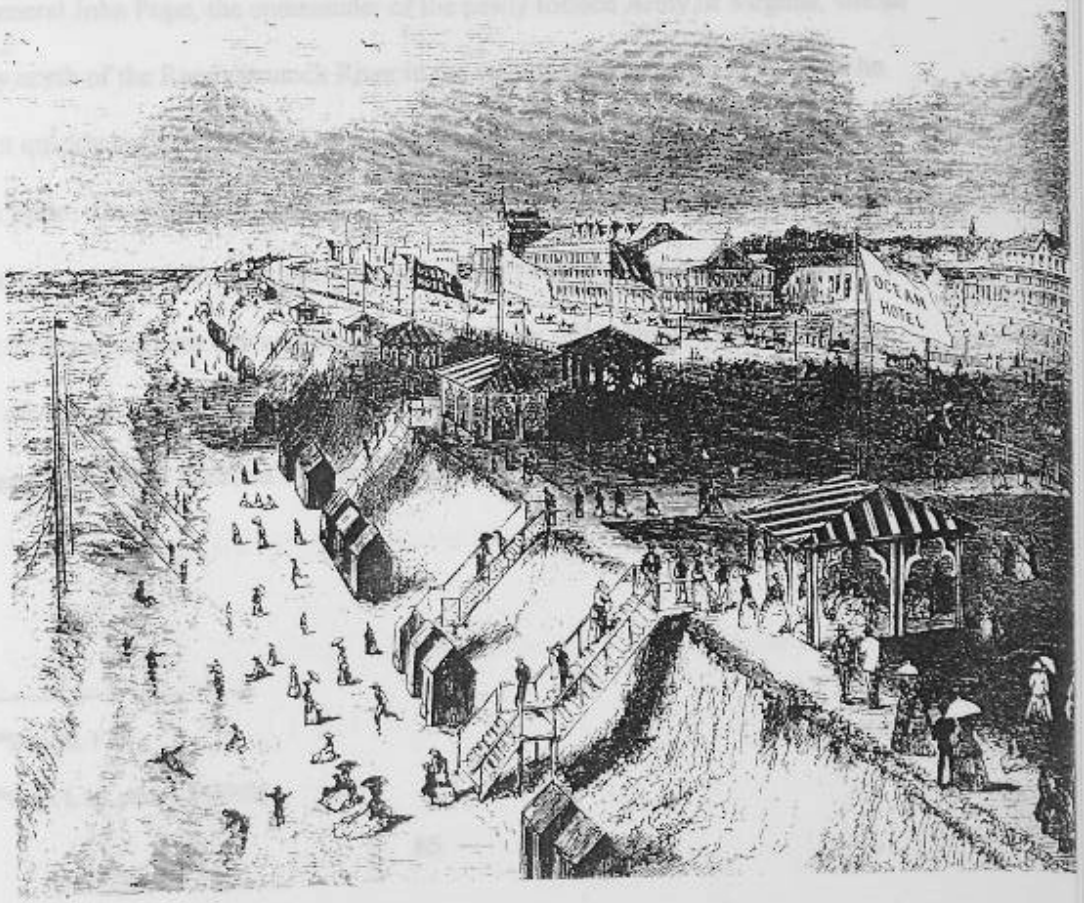






This is a copy of the photo I have of the Cobb House. I presume this is Margaret Cobb with some of her children. Since my great-grandmother was the first girl, she is probably the girl in the right of the picture. PW





PART IV: "WEE HAVE SEEN SOME OF THE HARDEST TIMES": SECOND BULL RUN, AUGUST 1862-SEPTEMBER 1862

After marching from Harrison's Landing, back down the Peninsula to Yorktown, Cobb's brigade boarded the steamship *Baltic* on August 21, and set sail. The next day the ship ran aground and the Fifth and Seventh New Jersey were transferred to a lighter ship and sent to Aquia Creek; from there they moved on to Alexandria. The regiment then marched to the outskirts of the city and set up camp. According to Alfred Bellard some thirsty soldiers picked up some "liquod potations" and commenced to "reeling around the streets drunk."[58] On the 26th the brigade took the cars to Warrenton.[59]

Hooker's Division and the rest of Heintzelman's Corps had been sent to join Major General John Pope, the commander of the newly formed Army of Virginia, whose forces lay north of the Rappahannock River in the vicinity of Warrenton. Lee knew he had to act quickly before the rest of McClellan's army arrived from the Peninsula to reinforce Pope. On August 25, Lee sent Stuart's cavalry and Stonewall Jackson's men westward around Pope's army in order to get in Pope's rear and cut communications. Lee intended to arrive the next day with the rest of the Army of Northern Virginia. By nightfall of August 26, Jackson had taken Bristoe Station and Manassas Junction on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad between Pope's army and Washington. That night Pope

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[58]Donald, 128.

[59]*O.R.*, I, 12, part II, 453-454.

discovered Jackson in his rear, separated from the rest of Lee's army, and saw an opportunity to crush him.[60]

The next morning Pope ordered the Union forces to about face and advance on Gainesville and Manassas. Stonewall Jackson's artillery and infantry fire tore apart the First Jersey Brigade (First, Second, Third, and Fourth New Jersey) just deployed after arriving near Bull Run Bridge by railroad.[61] Splashing across Kettle Run, Federals ran into Major General Richard S. Ewell's Georgians and Louisianians. Cobb's Second Jersey Brigade, now commanded by Colonel Joseph Carr and which had added the 2nd New York and the 115th Pennsylvania to its ranks, led the advance. Carr led three regiments, including the Fifth, straight along the railroad while Hooker led two others to the left. The Confederates unloaded heavy fire on Carr's men, but when Hooker arrived with his regiments and the rest of the division and its artillery, Ewell was forced to withdraw. The Fifth lost no men in the fight, but the division as a whole had suffered 300 casualties. The Federals had driven Ewell from Bristoe, but Ewell had succeeded in heading off the Union advance, allowing Jackson time to maneuver at his own pace.[62]

That night Pope issued an order that would have all his men converge upon Manassas Junction to strike Jackson. But when General Kearney arrived at the junction on the afternoon of the 28th, Jackson had already gone. In search of Jackson, Pope ordered Kearney, Hooker and the commander of the Ninth Corps, Major General Jesse L.

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[60]John J. Hennessy, *Return to Bull Run: The Campaign and Battle of Second Manassas* (New York, 1993), 116-118.

[61]Hennessy 118, 124-127.

[62]Hennessy, 131-135; Donald, 129-131.

Reno, to march to Centreville, mistakenly thinking Jackson there. After having found Jackson and engaging him at Groveton, Pope, early on August 29, ordered Kearney to march to Manassas from Centreville. Neither Hooker, now resting near Bull Run, nor Reno had yet reached Centreville but were ordered to continue their march and follow Kearney's route to Manassas from the east.[63] When Hooker reached the battlefield he was ordered to support the center of Major General Franz Sigel's attack on Jackson's position along an unfinished railroad. Two regiments of Carr's brigade, one being the Fifth New Jersey, were sent to fill a gap in the Union line. They fought the Confederates for two hours--the same men they faced at Kettle Run--until they were withdrawn. By the end of the day, 48 of the 350 men remaining in the Fifth were casualties.[64]

Having suffered heavy losses, the Fifth played only a small role on the second day of fighting. As General James Longstreet's men were driving back the Union left, the regiment was called up to support an artillery battery. When the regiment was ordered to support the infantry, the artillery pieces they had been guarding were taken and turned on the Federals. Arriving on the far left, the regiment soon fell back in the face of artillery fire and kept falling back until it reached Centreville.[65] At the Second Battle of Bull Run, as at the first, the Union army was routed. The next day, September 1, General Kearny,

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[63]Hennessy 194-200.

[64]Hennessy, 223, 260-261; Donald, 134.

[65]Donald, 140-143.

who had been promoted to Major General in July, was killed at Chantilly after wandering into Confederate lines.[66]

After the battle, the Fifth New Jersey, depleted and tattered, remained in the defense of Washington rather than join the rest of the army into Maryland. Cobb claimed that Brigadier General Cuvier Grover took command of Hooker's Division when Hooker was promoted to Major General, but Hooker had already achieved this rank in May 1862. When Hooker was sent northward into Maryland with command of the First Corps of the Army of the Potomac, Brigadier General Daniel E. Sickles, not Grover, took command of his division. Cobb did not discuss the Battle of Antietam (Sharpsburg, September 17, 1862) nor the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation issued in its wake.

[66]Boatner, 449.

CORRESPONDENCE, AUGUST 26-SEPTEMBER 29, 1862

Camp near Alexandrew Va Augst 26th 1862

Dero Father

I recieved yours of the 16th on the 21st I recieved it on board of the Steem Ship Baltics wich wee Shiped on board at Yorktown and come to this Place whare wee will leave in a few days for the Shannandoah Valey there is Sommaney troops here a head of us that wee cant get on the Cars to leave here for our destination wee have no tents pitched for wee expect to leave evry hour but wee have not gon yet, I have not got much time to write to you for the mail leaves Shortly and will have to write fast wee left Harrisons Landing on the 14th and marched all the way down the Paninusla and Shiped at yorktown for here wee had a raney time of it the first day and night that wee was on board of the Ship but the soecond day and night was vary nice for us. I sent my sword and sash home by one of our band men I will give you directions how to get them they are in Bridgeton. if you send for them the Directions is as follows. Call at Samuel Reeves She [*Shoe?*] Store and in quire for Edward .C. Collines Bridgetown give my love to all of the family Ed and mother no more at pre[s]ant

from your most Dutiful Son.

W. T. Cobb

I am in a hurry write soon

Camp near Alexandrews Va Sep 6th 1862

Dear Father

I recieved yours of the 18inst and was vary glad to here from home once more. I wrote to you when wee arrived here from the Panintula and have not had aney chance to write to you befor. Since I wrote to you last wee have seen some of the hardest times that wee have seen since wee come out here. wee arrived here at Alexa on the 26th of Augst and stayed here two days wee then embarked on board of the Cars for Warington [*Warrenton*] whare wee arr[i]ved a little befor dark, wee cooked our Coffee and eat our last hard tack (Hard Crackers) wee then laid down for the night wee had laid there 4 hours when wee herd firing in the direction from whence wee came, the next morning wee was ordered to moove at day light wich wee did, and strange to say wee went rite back on the vary Road that wee come (but not in Cars but on foot) well wee suspected something wrong by taking that course. wee marched untill after noon when wee over took the Enimy, wee give them battle and if wee didant make them take out it is a caution wee Run them down a hill and kept up such a terable firing and Hooraying that they broke and run like Sheep befor us wee killed a grate number of them and wounded maney more they did us little damage wee took a good lot of Prisonors with Guns and other war empliments. wee then went on a bout 3 miles farther and stoped for the night, wee being pretty well dired out after marching 10 miles and fighting a battle in the bargin

after resting about half an hour orders come for our Regiment to go a bout 4 miles to the Northwast to do picket duty, well you may judge our feelings with recieving these orders but wee never flinch from nothing wee went and Captured 14 prisinors during the night wee went to whare the rest of the Brigade was encamped wee lay there about 2 hours when wee started off a gain and wee went through Manasses junction and turned the Road to Centerville at sundown wee stoped at Bull Run whare the black horse Cavilry Charged on our men in the Three months service. wee laid there untill 2 Ock the next morning when wee started off again wee marched through Centerville and took the Road to the left (wich leads towards the Blue Ridge) wee went 6 miles down this Road and Come on the field of action once more whare the Shot Shell Grape Canister and Bulits was flying in evry direction well wee went in to it in good earnest and fought about 2 hours when was relieved wee went out in to a large Field and laid under a heavy fire of shot & s[h]ell the remainder of the day (nothing to eat all day wee was like a drove of half starved hounds rady to fight with hunger) wee lay her[e] all night with vary little Sleep the next morning the Ball opened a gane and at 2 Ock wee was brought into it agane and after fightin for 2 hours a trying to Stop a flank movement of the enimy wee was ordered out on account of the enimy getting in front on our right and in our rear

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[written at the top of the next page with a line around it]

I did not get a [s]cratch in the fights and I am well and in better helth than I have had for 2 months past,

[*the page continues*]

Continuation of the other Sheet

you may guess our situation with fireing on 3 sides of us, wee went out as cool as if nothing had happened wee marched out under the protection of our Artilary wich stood on a hill and you have laughed to See the Johney Rebs Run when wee got out of the way of our Artilary they broke and run like so maney Sheep, by this time wee found that the enimy was out flanking us on our left and wee was ordered to fall back this was a bout 4 1/2 Ock in the afternoon wich wee done in good order wee marched all night a waiding up to our middles through Creek and Brooks over Stoney Roads up hill and down hill through Drenching Raines Sokeing to the vary Skinn on our Backs and not a man Complained for that day wee had recieved some Raw Pork and hard Tack wich was our onley want for rest wee did not look for (and have not since wee left the Panitula wich was on the 15th of last month wich wee struck our tents and have not had them pitched untill yasterday wee pitched them. wee have slept under our tents but they was not pitched wee roled up in them at nights so wee have slept since the 15th of last month no Blankets and no knapsack wee used our haver sacks for a pillow and glad to get that, this is a Small Spesiman of our condition for wee are allmost naked I have not got a shirt to my back and no Stockings to ware and would not have had aney Shoes to my feet but I got a pair on the Battle field as maney others did wich wee took from what ever cource [*source*] wee could obtain them this is owing to us having orders to send our KnapSacks and all of our Clothng away when wee was at Harrisons Landing but wee will

draw new Clothes to day or to morrow wee will get a new fit out Compleet) I will give you a few words wich pased betwen Gens Banks. Hooker. Carney. Sigal. Says Gen Hooker to Gen Banks (on the night of our arrivel at Warington) I have but a few men and they are worn out but I will take them down the R. Road and cut of[f] Jackson and if you do not send Some one down there Washington is gon, I will take the lead and make the first attacket on the enimy. Gen[l] Carney Said that he would take the advance the Second day and support Gen[l] Hooker. Gen[l] Sigal Said he would take the advance on the third day Supported by Gens Hooker & Carney so wee went it is my belief that if the army of the Potoma[c] had bin 6 hours later the whole army of the valley would have bin captured I see the case vary plane but wee got them out of a scrape and are all right. I am acton Orderly Sergent and expect will be O.S. but I dont want that position. the Stamps that you sent me first got wet so that I cant use them but the last ones I have all right. give this to Ed when you read it and tell him that I have no more paper or I would write to him. wee have a plainty to eat and are doing well. wee lay a bout 2 miles from Alex[ra] I would like to see some boddy from home. give my love to mother and all of the rest of the Cobb family write soon nomore at presant

from your most dutiful Son

W. T. Cobb

[*written in the right margin of the last page*]

write soon & tell Ed to write

Camp near Alexandra Va Sep^{t} 14th 1862

Der Father

I have just recieved the box that you sent to me and I was glad to get it. Some of the articles in it was spoiled but the majarity of the things was good. the sigars. Cherries. and some of the Cakes ware good the Bread and some of the Cakes ware spoiled the Chees was spoiled also the ham is as good as ever and I am a going to have a good supper off of it. I have just recieved a letter from George and was vary glad to here from home George did not give me maney important news, he told me that you had recieved my Sword Sash & watch wich I am vary glad to hear from, he also give me a list of the volunteers from our Place wich I am vary glad to here for I think it is time that some of our mauricetown (Cowards) is turned into Soldiers, it makes little differance to me now how much fighting there is for wee are a laying here in the defence of Washington wee lay near Fort Lyon and wee are rady to meet the Johney Rebs at aney moment if they See propper to pay us a visit wich I hardly think they will do, the new troops is doing the fighting now and wee are a laying back getting rested wich wee vary much need. I will give you a list of our Grub wich wee now have, viz, 1 Loaf of Bread evry morning (warm at that) fresh Beef two days in five. Potatoes. Good Salt Pork. Salt Beef. Mixed vegitabls. Beens. Coffee. Sugar. and then the Boys go out a forageing at knights and get Peaches. Grapes. Green Corn. Sweet Potatoes. tomatoes. and what other vegitables they

can find. Chickines. Gees. Turkeys. Ducks and when they can find them they kill pigs. but all of these are vary nigh gon for there is so maney of these Old Soldiers a round here that they have taken vary nigh evry thing that they can get. I will give you one example night befor last 15 men went out of our Companey and when they come back they had 17 pairs of Chickines and about 5 bushels of Sweet Potatoes, 2 bushels of Peches. and the remainder was loaded with apples and round Potatoes they went 7 miles to get them, they started after tattoo at night and did not get back untill 4 Ock in the morning this is a spesimen of Soldiers life when in Camp wee have it differant now from when wee was on the Panintula, I wish you to send me a box and I will send you the money for it I will tell you what I want. viz your and mothers Ambrotype, 100 sigars in a box and some small letter paper and envelopes and 2 pars of Cotten socks. 1 Calico Shirt. 1 Pocket Handkirchief. and if you can get aney Caned fruit send me some. and if you want to send aney Cakes you can put a patition in the Box. dont for get the paper for it is vary hard to get out here. you may think it vary queer in my sending home for such articles but wee cant get them out here unles it is in a box and if you send them as soon as you can I will be likely to get them rite off for there is an Express office in Alexandra, when you send me the box send me a letter and tell me what it costs and when wee get paid I will Send you the money, if you can find aney butter no difference how strong Send it a long. tell mother to send me a big Cake. I would like 2 lb of Sugar. and send me a few Stamps in a letter, I will stop writeing at presant. I am acton O.S. and expect to bee if our O.S. is

made SergentMajor. nomor give my love to all

from your most obediant Son

W^{m}.T. Cobb

Camp Near Alexandria Va= Sep 18th 1861 [1862][67]

Der Father,

I recieved your letter the day after I wrote my last letter to you. and I was vary glad to here from home a gain. I wrote in my last letter that I wanted a box of things and I will give you directions how to send it. you will have to send it to Philadelp[hi]a and put it on board of one of the following Steemers viz James Jerome Capt Jerome, C.C. Alger, Capt Fenton, S. Seymore, Capt Shore, these Steemers leaves Phila= evry Wensday. and Saturday at 12 AM the line is called Hands Line" for Alexandra, Georgetown, and Washington, and it comes through in 36 hours, the Boats leaves No 14 North Warves, Agent for the Loine Thomas webster Jr, Wee Lay near F^{t} Lyons yet but wee do not know how long wee will stay here for wee have had orders to be rady to moove at a moments notice and wee dont know how soon wee will leave here but I hope not vary soon for I want to get some rest befor I leave here wee are in Gen= Grovers

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[67]This letter, though dated 1861, seems to have been written in 1862. In the previous letter (September 14, 1862) Cobb mentioned the watch he sent home and in this letter answers a question about it. In addition, Hooker was promoted to Brigadier General, U.S. Army, around this time. Hooker had held the rank of Major General, U.S. Volunteers, since May 1862.

Division now since Gen= Hooker has bin made major General but Gen= Hooker has command of us for wee are in his Corps and wee are glad of it for he is a General that wee can trust in, if you see fit to send me aney thing to eat in the Box you can do so, Something like Sweet Potatoes, Round Potatoes. Onions. Cakes and somethang of that sort. dont forget the Sigars for these ones that I got in my box Smokes so well that I would like to have some more, I receive the Pioneer evry week and thank you vary much for getting it for me. I will Send you Some pay for these things when wee get paid off, wee have just sent our Pay Roles in and I expect wee will [be] Paid off in the course of two or three weeks. I have nothing mor of importance at presant so I will Close with sending my love to mother and all of [the] Rest of the family,

N.B. you wanted to know who should have that watch I sent it to you and I want you to get it and lock it up untill I Come home I dont want it used, I would rather give the last shirt on my back than to loos that watch or seal. you get the watch and keep it for me for when I come home I want it, nomore,

From your most Obedant Son

W.T. Cobb

Camp near Alexandra Va= Sepr 29th 1862

Der Father

I recieved your letter three Days ago and would have written befor but as wee was on picket and the Consiquince was that I had no chance to answer it befor, wee Come off of picket yasterday, our picket duty here is not vary havy. there is no Rebs around here and when wee go out on picket wee get all of the apples that wee can eat but wee have so far to go that wee cant bring aney home with us wich wee would like to do. our duty out here is to detect Spies no man or person is allowed to pas in or out of our picket lines without apass Signed by general Grover wee Caught two Spes yasterday morning and brought them in to head quarters and I have not seen them since, wee can get all the Chest nuts that wee want for there is a plainty of them down here I have had several good messes boiled and can get them at aney time, but wee get vary few Beens wee useto get Beens. Potatoes. Onions. Dride Pees. Beets and several other eatables but wee get non of them now, I would like for you to send me a dollar for I could get some tomattoes, I want a mess of Stewed tomattoes So bad that I think if I had a mess I could nearly dance over them there is a plainty of them to Sell out here and I would like to have Some of them, I expect that wee will be paid off pretty Soon but I am a fraid that it will bee to late to get them, I wrote to Zeak the other day but have not recieved an answer yet but I look for one to day from him he is in the 17th Reg of N.J.V if Mother

makes aney Shirts for me you can send them in the mail and I will get them, if you get my box Started and you get the Recipt for it send it to me so that I can present it to the Agent here at Alexandra to get the box, the next time you write tell me whare Ed is and how he likes the new Schooner, give my best respects to Boss Blew & Joe Vaniman Mr. Collines and in fact to all that worked in the yard when I worked there, wee have Sibley[68] tents at presant and live in them first rate wee have our beds Raised on Stakes from the grond and wee have good Sleeping bunks. Give my love to mother the Children and your Self in cluded No more at presant write Soon,

from your most Obed[t] Son

William .T. Cobb O.S.

N.B. I am getting as fat as a big [*pig*].

[68]Large cone-shaped tents resembling teepees designed to hold about 12 men, though often it would hold many more. Wiley, 55.

PART V: "IT IS ONLEY GOOD FUNN FOR US OLD INFANTRY BOYS TO GET IN TO A CAVILRY FIGHT": FREDERICKSBURG, CHANCELLORSVILLE, ALDIE, UPPERVILLE, AND GETTYSBURG, OCTOBER 1862-SEPTEMBER 1863

In October 1862, Colonel Starr resigned command of the Fifth New Jersey to return as captain of what was the Second U.S. Dragoons. After a reorganization of all the regular cavalry in August 1861, many regiments were renamed; the Second U.S. Dragoons became the Second U.S. Cavalry. Having fought and gained honor under these names, the cavalry regiments apparently did not appreciate losing them: the name Dragoons was still being used when Cobb was recruited by Starr to join the regiment. Those selected for cavalry duty left Alexandria at the end of October 1862, taking the train to Carlisle Barracks in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, to be mounted and trained.[69]

After training, the men joined the regiment in Northern Virginia and continued to act, as the regiment had since March 1862, as part of Army of the Potomac's Provost Guard.[70] In September 1862, Brigadier General Marsena R. Patrick, who at Antietam had led the Third Brigade, First Division, First Corps, was given command of the Provost Guard.[71] Because the Second U.S. Cavalry was attached to the guard, the regiment escaped the slaughter at Fredericksburg (December 11-13, 1862). Major General Ambrose E. Burnside, who in November had replaced McClellan as commander of the Army of the Potomac, had orchestrated the bloody assaults on the town's heights.

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[69]Donald, 158-159, 162; Albert Gallatin Brackett, *History of the United States Cavalry from the Formation of the Federal Government to the First of June, 1863* (New York, 1865), 218-219;

[70]Dyer, 1690.

[71]Dyer, 280; Boatner, 622.

Shortly after Fredericksburg, Lincoln appointed Hooker to succeed Burnside. In an attempt to better coordinate his army's cavalry, Hooker brought all the Army of the Potomac's cavalry into one corps in February 1863 and placed it under the command of Major General George Stoneman. Stoneman then divided the corps into three divisions and one Reserve Brigade made up five understrength regiments of Regulars; the Second U.S. was one of these understrength regiments in the brigade. Brigadier General John Buford commanded the Reserve Brigade.[72]

During February and March 1863, both Union and Confederate cavalry spent most of their time exploring fords along the Rappahannock, looking for ways to get into the enemy's rear to obtain information and cut communications lines. An engagement at Kelly's Ford on March 17, though a Union defeat, showed the increasing competence of Federal cavalry. The next month, as part of Hooker's plan to take the main body of the army around Lee's army at Fredericksburg, Stoneman's corps left Falmouth on April 13 to cross the Rappahannock and raid Lee's lines of communications two weeks before the main force of the army was to follow behind. Because of heavy rains the corps was unable to cross until April 29.[73]

By April 29, Cobb was back at Falmouth on guard duty and did not see action in Stoneman's Raid. Cobb described the cannonading the Federals unleashed to divert attention from Hooker's movements above Fredericksburg. Hooker's attempts ultimately failed when he halted his 70,000 men near Chancellorsville rather than attack the

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[72]Stephen Z. Starr, *The Union Cavalry in the Civil War* (3 vols., Baton Rouge, 1979), vol. 1, 339.

[73]Donald, 201; Boatner, 803.

Confederates. Lee sent 26,000 men under Stonewall Jackson to flank the Union right and Jackson successfully rolled up the Federal's right flank at Chancellorsville on May 2. Hooker soon had his army back across the river.[74]

As the armies licked their wounds, Hooker replaced Stoneman with Major General Alfred Pleasanton. When Pleasanton was appointed on May 22, the Reserve Brigade had only 830 serviceable horses for 2226 men. By June 3, Lee had begun marching his army from Fredericksburg in a move that would eventually take him behind the Bull Run and Blue Ridge Mountains northward into Maryland and Pennsylvania. Buford was sent to find the Confederates, eventually locating them in Culpeper County. On June 9, the Union cavalry splashed across Beverly and Kelly's Ford and attacked a surprised Jeb Stuart at Brandy Station. After twelve hours of fighting among nearly 20,000 cavalrymen, the Federal cavalry finally earned a measure of respect.[75]

As Lee moved northward--not westward toward Vicksburg as Cobb suspected--the Union cavalry continually tried to penetrate Stuart's cavalry screen. Cobb rejoined his regiment and brigade--now part of the First Division of cavalry led by Buford--in time to see some action at Aldie, Middleburg, and Upperville (June 19-21). Three days after Stuart began what would be an infamous ride around the Union army on June 25, Buford was across the Potomac in Middletown, Maryland. Major General George Meade had just replaced Hooker at the head of the army when Pleasanton promoted Captain Wesley Merritt to brigadier general and placed Merritt in command of the Reserve

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[74]Long, 343; Denney, 279.

[75]Starr, 36.

Brigade in Buford's Division in place of Samuel Starr. Starr, who back in April had been promoted to major of the Sixth U.S. Cavalry, would lose his right arm on the third day of Gettysburg.[76]

Buford detached Merritt and the divisional trains and headed for Gettysburg, arriving there on June 30. After Buford held off Major General Henry Heth's Confederate division for two hours on July 1, he began to move to the Union left flank. The next day, as Merritt was slowly making his way from Mechanicstown to Emmittsburg, Buford left Gettysburg, desiring to refit his men, and eventually arrived at Westminster, Maryland, early on July 3. That afternoon around 1:45 p.m. the advance on the Federal center--Pickett's Charge--ensued. Meanwhile Merritt, marching from Emmittsburg, reached the Union left at 3:00 p.m. After skirmishing for a hour and a half, Merritt's men attacked along the Emmittsburg Road, only to be in full retreat thirty minutes later. The three days saw 17 men in the Second U.S. Cavalry killed, wounded, or missing.[77]

Both armies badly shaken, Buford reunited his division near Frederick on July 4. He moved through Middletown to Boonsboro hoping to capture the retreating Confederate trains unable to cross the Potomac at Williamsport due to the heavy rains. On July 6, Buford met the Rebels at Williamsport and was repulsed.[78]

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[76]Starr, 416-418; William H. Powell, *Powell's Records of Living Officers of the United States Army* (Philadelphia, 1890), 564.

[77]Starr, 423, 426; Longacre, 169, 205, 235, 240-241; *O.R.*, I, 27, 185.

[78]Longacre, 255-258

As fighting continued around Boonsboro on July 10, Cobb received a gun-shot would in his left hand. While the records available tell slightly different stories, it appears that his hand was dressed by the regimental surgeon before he was sent to a temporary hospital in Boonsboro. On July 15 he was admitted to the General Hospital in Frederick, and was then transferred to the General Hospital in Annapolis. He remained in Annapolis until August 29 when he was sent to the General Hospital in Baltimore. From there he was transferred on September 4 to the convalescent camp at Carlisle Barracks.[79]

While doctors and nurses were tending to Cobb, the New York City Riots broke out on July 13. The next day, July 14, Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia were south of the Potomac River.

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[79]Declaration for Invalid Pension, Pension Records, August 30, 1879, National Archives; Second U.S. Cavalry, Medical Records, National Archives. The chronology of Cobb's travels while wounded was pieced together from the above records that contained some discrepancies. The Second U.S. Cavalry Medical Records indicate that, after staying in Frederick, Cobb was sent to Washington on July 18 with a flesh wound in the palm of his *right* hand. But the record from Annapolis says the wound was in his *left* hand, as did Cobb himself in his Declaration for Invalid Pension in 1879. Moreover, there is no record of a hospital stay in Washington, nor did Cobb mention one in his pension declaration. Finally, Cobb recollected that after being seen by the regimental surgeon, he went to Boonsboro, then to Frederick, then to Baltimore, then to Annapolis which again contradicts the Second U.S. Cavalry Medical Records.

CORRESPONDENCE: NOVEMBER 2, 1862-JULY 1, 1863

Carlisle Barricks November 2nd 1862

Der Father

You m[a]y think it vary Strange of my not writeing Sooner but it has took us So long to come here that you would have thaught that wee have gon on a trip a round the world, but wee have bin comeing from Alexandra to Carlisle whare wee are now in barricks, you may wander what has brought me here. I will tell you I have joined the Regular Service to go in a Cavelry Regiment it is the 2nd U.S. Dragoons and our Old Colonel is Captain now but I expect he will be permoted to Major befor long I onley Enlisted for the remainder of my three years wich is a little over 21 Months I think that I have carried a knapsack long enough and so I thought that I would try riding on horse back a while, wee arrived here last night after dark and wee was tired enough to[o] after riding in the Cars all the way from Washington and wee come through so vary Slow that wee were almost tired to deth. I would like for you to write to Forgison [*Fergueson*][80] and tell him to Direct the Pioneer to 2nd U.S. Dragoons near Carlisle Pen[a] and when you write to me direct the same I cant tell what Companey I will be in yet but when I find out I will write and let you know, I expect that wee will get our pay Some time Soon at least I hope so for I want some money from Uncle Sam he owes me nearly 4 monthes pay, when wee get paid off I would like for you to come out here and see me when you

[80]James B. Ferguson, editor of the *Pioneer*.

write let me know what you think about it you can come to Harrisburg and the cars runs right down here to Carlisle it is onley 24 miles from Harrisburg down here I will Stop writeing at the presant give my love to Mother and to all of the Cobb familey, I will write soon agane when wee get squared away. you must write soon and let me know how the folks is a getting along nomore at presant

from your obediant Son

William ,T, Cobb

Carlisle Barricks November 12th 1862

Dear Father

I received your letter of the 4th and was glad to here from home once more. I have not much to Say at presant, you was saying that you would like to know how much it cost to come out here I cant tell you how much it costs to come out here, wee have not got our pay yet and I dont know when wee will get it wee may get it pretty soon and it may bee Some time befor wee get paid wee have not got aney money since wee was at Harrisons landing and wee begin to want Some, I would like for you to come out here and see me and wee might get paid about the time you come and I could give you Some money, you can come a direct rout to Carlisle and have no trouble in finding the Barricks when you get here. if you come out here I will pay you for the time you loose and your expe[n]ses out here and back if you come dont for get to bring me something from home I would like to have my Flute in particular. give my love to Mother and all the rest of

the Cobb family this is all of the paper and Stamps that I have. if you have aney mor money than you know what to do with it send me a little untill wee get paid. write soon and let me know when you are a comeing out here I would like for you to bring Mother out with you for I want to see her vary bad also. wee have had a fine Sleighing Snow here but it has all disappeared and weather is vary fine now, I will close writeing at presant write soon and give me the news,

from your most obediand Son

W^{m} .T. Cobb

N.B. Direct as befor 2nd U.S. Dragoons Near Carlisle P.a

Camp of the 2nd U.S. Cavilry near Washington Dec^{br} 28th 18,62

Dear Father

I recieved yours of the 21st and was much pleased to here from you once more but I would rather See you than to here from you, wee are in the same encampment that was in when I last wrote to you and I expect that wee will lay here for a few weeks yet perhaps not on this same ground but within the vasinity of Washington, reports are that wee are a going to do provost duty in Washington I cant say how true it is but Cap^{tn}

Starr is provost Marshell of Washington[81] and I think that wee will go over there on duty there is but 4 Companeys of us here and I think the case looks vary probible, we have not got all of our arms yet and wee cannot tell how long befor wee will get them, it is vary nigh New years down here and I expect that it is a getting pretty well a long towards it up there at aney rate wee wont have it much befor you do, wee had a vary nice day on Christmas but it was a vary dull Christmas with us and I would like to have Something for New Years and to do So I Shall have to get you to Send me a New Years Dinner you can send it by Harndens Express and I will bee pretty sure to get it but if you send it by Adams there will be no sertainty in my getting it, if you do Send it to me Direct it to 2nd U.S. Drag^s Co ,B, near Washngton D,C, Via Harndens Express C^o and if you get a recipt send it to me one day after you send the box, and I will go to the office and get the box, if you Send one Send it as Soon as posible, I am sorry to here that our boys has had Such bad luck but among us So maney wee could not expect for all to escape, if you here of the mising write and let me know and give me a few more particulars I am sorry that Zeak lost his tobacco for it is a vary Scarce article out here in the armey if you send me a box send me some Smokeing tobacco you can get it to Danl Wills, I expect that wee will be paid off by the middle of next month and then I can get Some paper and Enveopes So that I can write pretty often to you, I am glad to here you Say that you think that there will be good times around home this winter, I will now close my letter by Sending my

[81]Starr was appointed Provost Marshall of Washington in May 1861, but there is no indication that he held this post in December 1862. Powell, 562-564.

love to Mother the Children and your Self and wishing you all a Happy New Year,

Nomore at presant

from you most dutiful Son,

Wm .T. Cobb

NB write Soon

Camp near Falmouth Feb 6th 1863

Der Father

I have bin looking for a letter for some time and have not recieved aney it has bin So long since I recieved a letter that I hardley know weather I could read aney other persons writeing or not, I have not got vary good paper to write uppon but it is all that I got and you must excuse me for not writeing on better paper if you want me to write more you must send me Some paper and envelopes for I cant get aney out here without money, I have a little piece of buisness to do and I want you to help me if you will, I will tell you what it is I want to get a Commision in the Regular armey and for you to help me you will have to write to John. T. Nixon[82] at Washington and tell him that if he

[82]John Thompson Nixon (1820-1889) was born in Fairfield, Cumberland County, New Jersey. He served in the NJ State Assembly (1848-1850)--acting as speaker of the Assembly in 1850--before being elected as a Republican to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1858. After serving two terms (March 4, 1859-March 3, 1863) he decided not to run again, returning to his law practice in Bridgeton, NJ. Clifford P.

will try for me I will get all the recomendation that will be required and if he will get me one I will pay him well for it, I will tell you what I want A Second Liut^{cy} [*Lieutenancy*] in C^{o} (B) 2nd U.S. Cavl^{ry} and if he cannot obtain one for this companey I would like to get one in the 7th Reg^{t} of Cavly wich is a new Reg^{t} tell him that if he can obtain one for me it makes no differance what Reg^{mt} it is in, I will have to send this letter without aney stamps it is the first that I have sent without a Stamp for some time, wee have a plenty of mud down here for it rains nearly evry other day and keeps it vary bad under foot, wee are Provost Guar[d] yet and I expect that wee will remain so while wee are in the armey of the Potomac, if you will Send me some paper and envelopes with a few Stamps I will write often I am just agoing to go up to the express office to See if there is aney box there for me I expect that you have sent it by this time, I will close by sending my love to Mother, Edd, Call, and all of the Cobb family, yourself included, wee have not got aney pay yet and dont know when wee will get aney, there is 103$ due me now and I dont know how much more ther will be due me before wee get paid off. nomore at presant

from your most obdt Son

W^{m}.T. Cobb

Reynolds, chief compiler, *Biographical Dictionary of the United States Congress* (Washington: 1961), 1572.

Camp of 2nd U.S. Cavy March 15th 1863

Der Father

I recieved your two last letters, the ones that Spoke about Nixons letter to you but they come too late for me to do aney thing and So I will drop it for this time but will try Some other time, I recieved the money you Sent me and was glad to have it but I cannot get aney post Stamps out here and wee have to pay such prises out here that a little money does not go vary far I dont know how long befor wee will bee paid off but I hope it will bee pretty Soon, my bed fellow got a box a day or two a go and the things in it is vary good I will tell you what he has got, Six cans of Roast Turkey, Six cans of Roast Chicken, Six Cans of Butter 3 Cans of fresh Apples 3 Cans of Cranberry Jam and several other Cans with differant kinds of Fruit in them, and the best of it is that I have the privilage of eating as much as I want he wrote for his box the same time that I wrote for mine but he got his and I did not and now I would like for you to send me a box with some of the same kind of articles as I have mentioned befor you can by sending to Philadelphia obtain aney thing you want if you send aney box dont send aney thing that will spoil I want to buy this box myself and if you will buy the things and send them to me I will pay you when I get paid off, I dont want you to pay as much as a box will cost out of your owen pocket for me but I will send you ther money as soon as wee get paid, I would like for you to send it as soon as you can for there is so maney that has go[t] boxes

since I sent for mine that I thought that I would try for another myself, wee expect to be paid in a few days and I hope so, wee have just come off of a scout wee went out about twainty Five miles beyound our pickets to see whare the Johneys was wee found them but it was nights only that wee would go near there lines wee went in side of their lines night befor last and wee looked around four or five hours and satisfide ourselves about them and then wee started back, wee was out two days and nights it was a lively but a vary hard trip wee had to bee vary care full how wee went for wee was the only regiment of Union troops that there was out there and wee about twainty Fife miles in the Enimeys land, wee have quite a considerable [amount] of duty to do and I dont get much time to write wee have to go out on picket evry Eight days and stay three days when wee go out and so you can juge about what time I have you must not waite for me to answer your letters but you must write pretty often and I will answer them when I get the chaunce when you write to me again let me know how Ed is a geting a long and all of the news around home for I want to know, I was over to see our boys the other day and found them in good spirits. give my love to Mother and all of the family and tell them that I cannot get aney furlow but I will come home some time, I will now close by sending my love to all in quireing friends. the Collines family. Wills faimly and above all the Cobb family your self in Cluded Nomor at presant

from you most Ob^{d} Son

William .T. Cobb

Camp of 2nd U.S. Cavly March 27th 1863

Dear Father

I recieved yours of the 17th inst and was vary glad to here from home again, you said that you guessed that I had for gotten home but you are mistaken there for although I am in the armey I think of home evry hour in the day and it is my last thought at night you think that I have forgotten home but it is not so I would like to bee at home once more to stay but not to stay untill the war is over for there is use for me out here at presant and it requires the help of evry true American Citison that you know as well as I can tell you, I wrote a letter to you on the 16th of this Month when you wrote your letter I do not expect that you had recieved my letter, but I expect that you have recieved it by this time at least I hope so you mentioned in your letter that you had sent me a box but by the time it gets here it will be worth vary little but that matters little to me so I get the box for the tobacco will not be spoiled and that is the main point with me at presant for I smoke a grate deal and it is a grate comfert for me to set down and have a good smoke, you wished to know why I did not write more I will tell you wee have so much duty to do that I have little chance to write or do aney thing else you wished to know if I would let you have som money you know I would if I get it but I have got to get it first when I get it you can have it with the gratest of plasure but I have a question for you could you let me have a little money to get som small articles with such as paper envelopes

penns ink and a few other articles with, I cannot tell you when I will get paid but I hope it will bee soon, I have nine months pay due me now and expect to have tenn monthes due me befor I get aney money, I haveant much time to write when you write to Ed give him a Brothers respects wich is of the best kind I have not much more to say but you wished to know if I knew aney thing of our moovements I am not able to give you aney information as regards to is [*it*] but wee expect to moove soon, I will close by sending my love to Mother. Call. and all of the Cobb family and all in quireing friend your share included, I am in better helth than I have bin in for a long time nomor at presant write soon and often

from your most O^{bdt} Son

W^{m} .T. Cobb

write when ever you feel like it and I will answer whe[ne]ver I have the tim[e]

Camp near Acquia Creek V^{a} April 29th 1,63

Dear Father

I recieved yours of the 7th ins^{t} and was vary glad to here from home once more I would have written befor but wee have bin so buisey that I have not had time to write wee have bin out on a Reconnisance and wee had a pr[e]tty hard time of it, there was

Some few of us Sent back to Acquia Creek to do guard duty and it fell to my lot to bee one of the party that come back and I am not Sorry for it, there is a grate Cannonading a going on up in front to day I expect that there is a battle in vogue by the noise that they mak, I recieved the money that you sent me and I am vary much obliged to you for it for it done me some good I bought bread with it and eat it up on the march wich done me quite a good deal of good it is hardley worth while for me to tell you aney about our Scout for you will See an account of it in the Papers, but I will give you a Slight idah [idea] of it, one night for inst encamped in a woods after dark and fed our horses got some Coffee and wee would have sleped some but the rain come down in Such torrants that wee could not lay down so wee had to eathe[r] sit or stand untill about 12 Ock when our Squadren was ordered to mount wee did it wee started for Kelleys Ford wee went through Old Roads, through swamps and mos all other impasable places, you may guess how nice it was with the wet brush a strikeing us in the Face and Eyes well wee rode in this manner untill daylight when wee Come to the River wee Struck our Course up Streem wee had not proseedded far when we had a salute from the opposite side of the River wich made us get out of that in quite a hurry, this is a Sample of our Scout, I will have to Close pretty Soon, I recieved my box the other day I went to the 24th N.J.V. and Zeak told me that there was a box in there Comisary with my name on it I went to See and found it there but there was nothing good in it but it is a mystry to me how it Should get in the 24th N.J. Vollˢ and directed to the 2nd U.S. Cᵃᵛˡʸ. you must excuse my bad writin for my paper is wet and I have a vary poor penn wich makes vary bad writeing but I hope that you can make it out, I want to goo up to the Front this afternoon to see what is a

going on for if there is aney fighting a going on I want to have a hand in it and I think that I will go up on the Cars this afternoon. I will close by Sending my love to mother and all of the children and also to Ed=and Call and to all inquiring friends, tell mother that I am as fat as a pig and as harty as a buck it is pretty hard for me to get enough to eat now, but if wee ever get paid off I will get filled up for once I think, Nomore at presant write when ever you feel like it and never mind my answering them for I will write when ever I have time and materials to write with,

from your Most Obeidant Son

William .T. Cobb

Camp at Head Quarters Armey of the Potomac May 30th 1,63

Der Father

I have not herd from home for some time and not knowing when I should hear from you I thought I would write a few lines to you to let you know how to direct, as I am not with the Regiment at presant and I expect you Direct your letters to the Regiment the same as you did here to for but my not beeing with the Regiment is the cause of my not hereing from home, wee are a doing Provost Duty at the Hed Quarters of the armey of the Potomac, wee see pretty easy times at presant I will give you an Ideah of what wee are a doing, and what our Business is, our Business is to take Straglers to the

differant Corp[s] Head Quarters to wich the[y] Belong and by doing so wee have to go all over the armey of the Potomac and wee have a good chance to see what is a going on wee also have to go as Orderleys for the Generals here at head quarters also withe their Staff when it is recqusite [*requisite*] for us to, and part of our Business is to Search Sutlers Stores to See that they have no Liquer with them that is a piece of work that the most of our Boys like to do for if a Suttler is caught with Liquer and will give them a Bottle or two they will let him go. as regards to my Self I do not use it and if I get hold on aney of them I will take them up for it. when a Sutler is found with Liquer he has all of his goods Convescated and looses not onley the Liquer but his whole Cargo of goods and in my oppinion it is a law wich is a vary good one here in the armey wee see vary easy times here wee get the Best of Army Fair here wee get soft Bread hot from the Oven evry day and wee get hams and good ones at that wee get Pork, Beens, Sugar, Coffee, Potatoes, Rice, Fresh Beef, ane a few other articles too tigious [*tedious*] to mention at present, I was up to See our Boys two or three days a go and found them all in good Spirits and [they] long for the time to come when they will walk on Jersey Soil. they Say that if they had as long to Stay as I have they would go crasey I should considder them vary week minded if they would for I have bin in Uncle Sams Service over two years now and I have not went crase yet. I have not quite fifteen monthes to Stay yet but I have a will to help me out with and I have found So far since I come in the armey that all is required is a good and Strong will and he will get a long. when you write to me Direct Provost Guard Cav[ry] Detachment in care of Gen[l] Patrick via Washington D.C. I will close by Sending my love to mother and all of the Children also

to Ed= and Call and keep a good Shair for your Self. No more at presant

from your Most Ob' Son

William .T. Cobb

write Soon

Camp at Head Quarters Armey of the Potomac June 7th 1863

Dear Father

I recieved your letter of the 1st ins' day befor yasterday and I was glad to here from home once more. I have not much news to tell you this time but I will tell you what I do know, a part of our armey Crossed the river day befor yasterday in three differant places but what there in tentions whare is not knowing [known] to evry boddy but I will tell you what it is for, Old Joe [Hooker] had an ideah that they was evacuateing over here and a going to Vicksburg and hee did not want them to leave him in that manner So he crosed over to attracked their attention while General Grant give them a good floging out west. I will give you a Sketch of our Crossing wee Crossed at the U.S. Ford and about a mile below Fredricks burg and our lower Crossing is a bout 8 miles below Fredricks burg wee done it up in good style wee had pretty heavy Cannonading at Fredricks burg but not vary [much] at eather of the other places wee have three or four One hundred and

Twenty pound Sige Guns opposite Fredericks burg wich Soon Silanced there guns and wee Soon had our Pontoons laid and our Infantry was Soon acrost. there is a little joke wich I will relate to you haveing a good position on the hill on this side of the River wee could see evry moovement in boath armeys well the Johnneys was a laying in there Rifle pits a waiting our Infentry to Come up and then open on them but our Artilary beeing in good position Could Shell the pitts wich they lay in but they did not do it untill our boys got Clost enough for the Johneys to rais and fire on them and just as they began to fire on our men our Artilary opend on them and wee give them Shells so fast that they could not fire on our men nor run all they could do was to lay down in their pitts out of the way of our heavy Shells and while they lay in there our Infantry Charge[d] the pitts and took them prisinors befor they was aware of what was a going on, wee took two Regiments of them this Rather astonished them but wee got them and wee had vary fiew lost in the in gagement it was but a piece of Sport to our boys to go over as the[y] know what it was for, when you write to me the next time I would like to have Some Post Stamps if you will for there is vary few out here, when you write again direct as you did the last you sent to me, in Care of Ge^{n} Patrick Provst Martial, army of Potomac Cav^{ly} Detachment. I will Close by sending my love to Mother, Ed, Call, and all of the Children your Self included nomore at presant write soon

from your Most Ob^{t} Son

W^{m} ,T, Cobb

N.B. I saw our Boys last Sunday I was with them all day.

Camp on the Mountaines June 25th 1863

Dear Father

I recieved yours of the 20th yasterday and was vary glad to here from home once more. I have left General Patrickes and come to my Companey. I Joined my Companey just in time to come out on this last Raid with them and I would rather bee with them than aney whare else for wee go all over the State of Verginia and wee get all wee can eat and drink. there is no end to Cherreys down here and wee get all wee want of them. and milk wee can get all wee want of that to. and in fact to take this Raiding Business in to Consideration it is the Best business that I ever done Since I come a Soldiering well to the Raid wee left Warington Junction on the 10th of June I believe and went up to Thurroughfare [*Thoroughfare*] Gap and stayed there two days watching the Rebs then left there and Started for a Small town Called Aldie it is Situated about 20 miles below Leesburg and it is in a Gap in the mountaines that Runes from Bull Run to Point of Rocks (I have not herd the name of them) well wee got here after three days march and (the Dusty Rods I never saw the like befor) here wee had a fight with the Rebs Cavilry drove them through the Gap and wee did not attacked them aney more that day. but the next day wee went through the Gap and wee had one lively time that day you better believe I will give you a little discription of our march that day. wee took the Road that leads to Winchester and went about a mile and a Quarter when wee saw some Rebs in a strip of

Woods. wee went out as Skirmishers to find out how maney there was of them wee soon routted them out of that went on about a mile farther found some more done the same as befor and so wee had it for 10 or 12 miles when wee came to a small town called New Lisben here there ware Cross Roads one Runing to ,Union, one to Upperville one to Middleburg and the one wee had come run to Aldie. wee had but one brigade of Cavilry was all the troops that wee had, while behind a piece of woods the Rebs had two Brigades awaiting for us to take the Road to ,Union, and then the[y] would come up in our Rear and Cut us off and take us if they could but the yankeys was to[o] Sharp for them in Stead of us a takeing the Union Road wee too[k] to Middleburg Road and went down that on a full Galop the Rebs Soon Seene that they was out Generaled and Come after us at full Speed, but wee wanted to Show fighht, wee turned [into] a strip of woods but [*put*] our battarys in Position and brought our Cavilry in position to Support our Battary and then dismounted about 400 men and sent them up to a Stone fence (wich is the onely kind that they have down here) this work was done in less than five minutes, at this

[written at the bottom of the page] Continued

[written at the top of the next page] Concluded

moment up come the Johneys full tilt when the first thing that they knew they got a Shower of grape and Canister afrom our Battary and then our boys that was a long the

Stone wall began to let go with there Carbines the Rebs began to let go at us but wee was too well Sheltered by the Stone wall. the fight lasted about 20 minutes [in] wich wee had not one man Scrached the Johneys loss was some 10 or 12, when they left they left us as fast as they come after us the[y] did not bother us aney mor that day the next day wee got Reenforcements and drove them a crost the valey Captured 7 pieces of artilary 6 or 8 hundread Prisionors and as maney horses wee have just got in off of the Raid after haveing Several hard fights (what they Call hard fights in Cavilry but it is onley good funn for us old Infantry boys to get in to a Cavilry fight, after this you will Direct to the Companey, C° .B. 2nd U.S.S Cavlry I have vary nigh a years pay Due me now I will give you an account of it. Commenceing July 1st 1862,

	$ cts
One monthes Privates pay	13.00
3 months Sergeants pay at $17 per month	51.00
Pay Due me from the volunteer:	$64.00

5 mor days will make a up the year wich is Due me. and to count it in it will make 8 monthes Pay at $13 per month wich is $104 and add my vo[l]unteer pay to that will Make 168 Dollars and take out $13.91cts will leave me $154.09.cts wich will make quite a pile when I get it, I will close my letter by Sending my love to Mother and all of the Children your Self included write soon and often and if you do not recieve aney from me you

must write for I donot all ways get a chaunce to write nomore at presant

from your most Obd^{t}

William .T. Cobb

On Pickett near Mackaicsville= [*Mechanicstown*] M^{d} July 1st, 1,63

Dear Father

I wrote a letter to you when wee was on the mountaines in Verginia but I did not get to mail it untill wee come here and I mailed it as soon as wee got her. wee come here 4 days ago and have bin a doing pickt duty ever since when wee come here wee come through Fredrick City M^{d} and here wee found the Union people and they use us vary well if a man has money here he can live vary well I will give you a few prices that wee have to pay for articales here for a large loaf of Bread, 15^{cts} for Buscuit 25^{cts} a doz. butter 20^{cts} per lb. eggs 10^{cts} Milk 3 and 4^{cts} a quart, and evry thing else in proportion and them that have money can live vary well but them that has no money has to go without, but when it comes to the cherry question wee stand as good a sight as aney boddy, wee have had vary dry weather down here for the last tow [*two*] monthes untill with in a week past wich it has rained nearly all of the time and wee have a grate deal more rain than wee wish for at present I recieve the Pioneer weekley now and I am vary glad to get it I would like for you to write oftener to me than you do and I want you to tell Zeak and

Charley Bacon to write to me tell them that I am well and as good a Soldier as I evere was, I will not enter on aney of our marches but I will tell you that I am a setting in a fine Clump of large Oaks with my hors tied to one and I am a seting under another one a writeing to you I just come from some Cherry trees about 4 Rods from whare I now set and I feel as if I would not need aney mor Cherres for the next half hour and perhaps longer, I do not know when I will ever get aney mor pay yasterday I was mustered in for pay wich makes twelve monthes pay due me and I would like to get it if I do not get my pay I will not be able to let you have that money that you was a speeking a bout some time a go but I am in hopes that I will get it pretty soon, I will close my letter for it it is a getting late and I must go and see if there is some hard tack in my haversack, if you can get aney money to send me a little I would repay you when I get what is due me, I dislike to to [*sic*] make a request of this kind but since I Joined the Companey I have not had the best of grub and none too much of it when wee are on the march three days Rations has to do us Five, and oftimes in this case a little money dose not come a miss, give my love to mother and all of the Children Call and all and keep a share for your self nomore [written up the side margin] at present

from your most dutifull Son

W^{m} .T. Cobb

<u>write soon as possible</u>

[written at the top of page 3 of the letter]

<u>write to Ed and tell him to write to me, give my love to him.</u>

PART VI: "WEE TALK AS FRIENDLY AS IF THERE WAS NOTHING THE MATTER AT ALL": PICKET AND RECONNAISSANCE IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA, SEPTEMBER 1863-APRIL 1864

While Cobb recovered at Carlisle, his entire regiment was sent to the new cavalry depot at Giesboro in Southeast Washington to be remounted and refitted and to recruit more men. Cobb claimed he rejoined his regiment on September 26. No letter remains that speaks of his participation in the Bristoe Campaign in the Fall 1863 in which Lee drove Meade from the Rappahannock back to Centreville. After tearing up some railroad tracks, Lee withdrew to the Rappahannock. Meade followed Lee and drove him back over the river. Lee continued south and, by November 10, he was again south of the Rapidan.[83]

Then Meade took the offensive. He crossed the Rapidan and on November 27 found Lee's army on the western bank of a tributary of the Rapidan called Mine Run. When Major General Gouverneur K. Warren commanding the Second Corps found the Confederate right too strong for an attack on November 30, Meade called off the assault. The next day Meade began his retreat back to Brandy Station to set up winter quarters.[84]

In late February 1864, Brigadier General Judson Kilpatrick set off for Richmond with 3,500 cavalrymen to break the defenses of Richmond and free some Union prisoners. Meanwhile, on February 28, the Second U.S. Cavalry joined Brigadier General George Custer on a raid near Charlottesville to divert attention away from

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[83]Miller, 31, 35; Denney, 332, 333; Williams, vol. 2, 767-770.

[84]Williams, vol. 2, 772-773.

Kilpatrick, burning and looting as they went. After running into some Confederate horse artillery, Custer withdrew to Stanardsville. Custer met more resistance from a brigade of Stuart's cavalry, and after some charges and countercharges, Custer retreated towards Culpeper.[85]

Cobb discussed few of these actions in which the Second was involved. Either he did not participate or the letters do not survive. After his wounding, Cobb seems to have spent his cavalry days on picket duty and reconnaissance missions. Most of his time on duty was spent along the Rapidan River, with his camp about eight miles south of Culpeper along the Orange and Alexandria Railroad at Mitchell's Station.

[85]Denney, 379; Shelby Foote, *The Civil War: A Narrative* (3 vols., New York, 1963), vol. 2, 910-911.

CORRESPONDENCE, SEPTEMBER 30, 1863-MARCH 31, 1864

Camp Beaufort Sepr 30th 1863

Dear Father

I recieved yours when at Carlisle and was glad to here from you, I have left Carlisle and Joined my Regt last Saturday and I am vary glad to see some of my Companey again, wee lay near Washington a bout 2 miles on the south side of the East branch wee have a vary nice Camp here it is on a vary high hill and wee have a good view of the Potomac a[nd] the City of Alexandra, wee have pretty good times here wee drill once a day and wee have good living here but wee do not know how long it will last there is some new Barrick a getting Built about a mile from here and they say that they are for us to go in to this winter but I could not say to aney sertainty how true it is but I hope it is so,

I wish you would write to Ed and tell him that I recieved his letter but it was to late for me to writ to him, and tell Call that when I get some paper I will write to her, for I am short of paper and Envelopes, and no money to buy aney with, you told me when you was to see me that you had sent me some money but it is not here I would be vary glad to be paid now it is the Oppinion of all hands that wee will be paid pretty soon, when you write Direct as usual tell Zeak to write, when you write give me Ed^{s} directions, I will close by sending my love to Mother and all of the Children Ed, and

Call included and in fact all inquiring friends your self not forgotten, no more at presant, write soon,

from your Most Ob^{dt} Son

W^{m}. T. Cobb

Camp Near Culpeper V^{a} Decr 15th 1.63

Dear Father

I recieved yours day befor yasterday and was vary glad to here from you, also to here that you are a geting better, you said that you had your Owen [*own*] planing about the house that you are to build for Ed Compton and if I dont see a fine house when I come home I shal lay it to the fault of the builder and so you had better but [*put*] the Extries on pretty well or I may find fault with the workmanship and also with the Planing of it, you stated that the Haleys Vill [*Haleysville*] Church was a getting along vary well and as I always was an attendant of that Church I feel it my duty to do some thng for it and I propose to make itt a presant of a fine Bible and if you will I wish you to inform those that has that part at it to attend to and get their permision and also let me know when it will be finished so that I can send the money (if I get Paid) in time, I think that they will Except [*accept*] the offer from a Soldier, if I get paid I will send the Money to you and let you puches [*purchase*] the Bible and you can represent it in my name, you

can tell the People of haleys ville that at [*as*] I have allways bin an attendant of their Church I make this request, when you write I wish you to give me a list of Prises of the best Bibles that will do for a Church, there is vary litle doing out here at presant. wee are doing Provost Duty in Culpeper and have vary nice times of it, I will Close by sending my love to Mother, Call, Ed= and all of the Cobb family your self included write soon

from your most O^{bt} Son

W^{m} .T. Cobb

Camp Near Mitchels Station Jan^{ry} 1st 1863 [*1864*][86]

Dear Father

A happy New Year to you all, and may it bee a happy one to you, I recieved your Christmas Presant and was much pleased with it, I am allso vary well pleased with the few lines that mother wrote to me I wish to know whare they ware Composed at or at least who the Comprs [*composers*] was, you did not tell me a bout [what] that Bible would cost I would like to know about it for I want to give the new chirch some thing, I have got but one stamp and I will have to make mutch of it I would like to have some stamps if you will send them to me, I have made a rais of a little money that I borrowed

[86]Cobb seems to have misdated his next two letters as they both relate to the new Haleyville church finished in 1864.

or I cannot say it was borrowed for it is money that I Loaned when I was in my Old Regt= and they have bin Paid and I got what was Due me from the men that Owed me, If you will I would like for you to send me 3$ worth of stamps and use the rest for a New Years Dinner for the Cobb family as soon as I get some more money I will send some more, I will Close by sending my love to Mother and all of the Cobb family. No more at presant

from you most Ob' Son

William .T. Cobb

[*This letter was sent to Cobb by Reverend S. Townsend]*

Mauricetown, N.J. Jan 12th 1864.

Mr Wm B. Cobb.

Dear Friend,

I learn through your father that you had a special desire to find the Bible for the new church at Haleyville: a very laudable desire, and I have used my best endeavors that it should be gratified, but the way does not seem to be clear after all.

I suppose your father informed you that about three days before he recieved your first letter in regard to it I had been to Phil[da] and spoken to Dr Wishart[87] to find the Bible and Hymn Book. I thought however I would make a change, let Dr Wishart find the communion sett, & you find the Bible. I wrote to him to that effect, and supposed it was satisfactory, though I recieved no answer from him. But within a few days I hear from him that he was not pleased with the alteration, - had spoken for the Bible before he got my letter - was much pleased with the privelege of furnishing it - in memory of his father who preached a long time at Haley's - and was sorry I wrote concerning a change &c. So my Dear friend, it seems your generous offer was a little behind time, and now permit me to suggest the next best plan.

The cushion, cord, and fixtures will cost from 8 to 10 dollars, - the altar chairs - sofa chairs - will cost 10 dollars, - the Communion Sett of Brittania ware - will cost 14 dols - you want to give some present to the Church - choose either one of these - send word through your father, & it shall be called <u>your present</u> and so announced.

I am quite sure this will be satisfactory to you. I am very anxious it should, and if I could make a better arrangement I would, for I would do any thing in my power to gratify the feelings of a dear Soldier Friend, for I have the highest possible respect for them.

I know we all owe you a lasting debt of gratitude for the noble manner in which you have rushed to the defence of your Country in this the time of her peril, and for the

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[87]Dr. Wishart was known for his "Pine Tree Tar Cordial" frequently advertised in the *Pioneer* as a cure-all for everything from scrofula (tuberculosis) to bleeding piles (hemorrhoids). *Pioneer*, April 30, 1864, 2.

unspeakable and long continued perils which you have borne, while we have been enjoying our quiet homes.

May God bless you: - and may you decide at the begining of this New Year to be a praying man, - a happy Christian man, and then if you persevere, all will be well for life or death.

With much respect, Yours Truly, S. Townsend.

Please write soon to your father--

Camp Near Mitchels Station Janry 17th 1863 [*1864*]

Dear Father

I recieved a letter from Mr Townsand the Pastor of our District, and he told me that he had sent to Dr Wishhart and Dr Wishart did not like the arranegmants vary well, and he wished to make the presant in memory of his father wich of corse I am willing he should do Mr Townsand told me that there ware several other articals wanted and I would as leave present one of them as the bible I will send Mr Townsands Letter to you and you can get aney of the articals that you wish and I will send you the Money when I get it,[88] you will tell Mr Townsand that I am perfectly satisfide with letting Dr Wishart

[88]The *Pioneer* reported (again incorrectly stating Cobb's middle intial) that on a cold February morning "a splendid Bible and Hymn Book [given] by Dr. L.Q.C Wishart...and the Communion Set [given] by Wm. B. Cobb" were seen by newcomers at the church's dedication. *Pioneer*, February 27, 1864, 2.

present the Bible & Book, There is no news at presant out here, I will close by sending my love to Mother and all the rest of the family yourself in Cluded nomore at presant, pleas attend to this buisniss for me,

from your most Ob[t] Son

William .T. Cobb

Camp Near Mitchels Station V[a] March 31[st] 1.64

Dear Father

I just recieved your letter and was vary glad to here from you and from the folks at home,

you was a speaking about the Order that you saw in the paper. I will tell you the su[b]stance of that order, it is this, there is a grate many Old Reg[ts] has reenlisted with the exception of a few men and they ware transferred to other Reg[ts] and now there Old Reg[ts] has returned from furlow they are to return to them again. this is the substance of the order it has no allusion to Regulars at all, so you see that there is little hope in that quarter for me, I will write but a short letter this time for I want to write to E[d] yet to night for I am a going on pickett to morrow you must excuse the shortness of my letter but time is prescious with us at the presant so I will close by sending my love to Mother and

all the rest of the Cobb family also keep a shair for yourself Pleas write soon and I will write when I get time nomore at presant from your mos Obe Son

Wm .T. Cobb

[*The following note was written by Edwin on an empty leaf of the above letter.*]

Fortress Monroe April 4th 64

Dear Father,

I got this to day from Will and I guess he made A mistake in directing it and you got my letter. I am well; we began discharging to day and will get out Wednesday; I expect we have got 14 days [?] and going on 15. I have no reason to complain so far: but think I am lucky in escaping the heavy weather wee had the last two weeks. give my love to Mother and all the rest of the folks yourself included,

Yours fraternally

E. Cobb

[*Cobb sent this letter to his father by mistake*]

Camp Near Mitchel's Station Vᵃ March 31st 1.64

Dear Brother

It has bin a long time since I have written to you and I have just recieved a letter from Father and he gave me your Address and [I] take the plasure of writeing a few lines to you wee have so much duty to do at presant that I have hardley time to write, wee average two nights in bed out of Seven I expect to get to night in bed and tomorrow I expect to go on pickett and stay two days, Perhaps you would like to know something about our Pickett Duty.

Well wee go out in the Morning, and when wee get to our respective post wee divide off into releaves and then wee are posted well the first that wee do after wee get posted is to exchange papers with the Rebs, the next is to have a talk on Politicks, War matters and then wind up with talking about the wooman [*women*], and if wee have aney surplus Clothing to sell wee make a trade with them, I will give you a speciman of our tradeing for inst one of our boys had a pair of Boot to sell took them down to the River and inquired of [a] Reb what he would give for them the Reb replied that he would give 30 dollars in our Green Backs and 6 large plugs of navy tobacco when our boy said that it was a bargaine the Boots ware ware [*sic*] accordingly sent over (by means of a little boit [*boat*] mad[e] for the purpeous wich has a long string attached to it and a stone to the

other end the stone is throwen acrost to [*the*] river (wich is vary narrow) and puled over by the other party) Johney then puts the 30 Dollars and the tobacco on the boat and throwes the stone back the boat is then bulled [*pulled*] over and the yank pocketts the 30$ of Uncle Sams best issue, and perhaps befor he leaves another Reb will bring some tobacco down to sell and so times goes with us, I give you that as an instant but I migh mention Dozines of such instances, wee talk as friendly as if there was nothing the matter at all, when you get this you must answer it and when my time is out this summer I want you to give me a birth with you and if there is aney site for you and I to get a vessel in pardnership I will go in with you provide that when I get out of the service you will give me a chance, pleas answer this as soon as you recieve it when you write home give my love to Call and to all of the Cobb family, my regards to John Outen, a large shair of my love to you Dirct, C° B 2nd U.S. Cavalry via Washington D.C.

Nomor at presant from

your most affectionate Brothe[r]

Wm .T. Cobb To Proff E. Cobb

PART VII: "I NEVER SAW MEN FALL SO FAST IN MY LIFE": PATROLLING THE HIGH SEAS, AND THE FALL OF FORT FISHER AND CHARLESTON, APRIL 1864-JULY 1865

In March 1864, the War Department issued General Order No. 91 which allowed any man who could prove that he was a "mariner by vocation, or an able seaman, or ordinary seaman" to transfer into naval service.[89] Obtaining such a transfer, Cobb was mustered into the U.S. Navy on April 26, 1864, in Baltimore, Maryland, for one year and six months. At the rank of Ordinary Seaman, he was assigned to the receiving ship *Allegheny*.[90]

Receiving ships were generally old vessels that transported new recruits to their assigned vessels. Accommodating over 1,000 men, these ships also served as home to sailors when long-term repairs were being made to their vessels.[91] Originally an iron-hulled steam gunboat, the *Allegheny* had been operating in its new role as a receiving ship in Baltimore when the war broke out. As the situation in Baltimore became unstable early in the war, the ship was towed across Baltimore Harbor to Fort McHenry where it could rest safe, protected by Federal guns. Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles then

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[89]Robert M. Browning, *From Cape Charles to Cape Fear: The North Atlantic Blockading Squadron During the Civil War* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1993), 206, fn 23.

[90]Second U.S. Cavalry, Muster Rolls, Register of Enlistments, National Archives; Receiving Ship "Allegheny," Muster Roll, April 30, 1864, National Archives.

[91]Browning, 201.

ordered the ship sent to Annapolis to protect that city. When the safety of ships in Baltimore again could be assured, the *Allegheny* returned and continued its duties.[92]

While on the *Allegheny*, Cobb heard of newly-promoted Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant's movements toward Richmond after the Battles of the Wilderness (May 5) and Spotsylvania (May 10). Yet the Army of the Potomac continued to suffer heavy losses, and by July 1864 those at home as well as those in the service wondered if the war would ever end. As Grant and Sherman appeared to be stalled in front of Petersburg and Atlanta, frustration found its way into the pages of the *Pioneer* as well as in some unusual places. When building Ed Compton's house, Samuel Cobb wrote this supplication on the base of one of the columns:

> Samuel Cobb Mauricetown, New Jersey July 15, 1864 Oh God, crush out the rebellion and restore permanent union, peace and universal freedom.[93]

The war was dragging on and men were still being drafted; but despite the frustration, the Union army offensives continued to deplete irreplacable Confederate forces.

Cobb soon left the *Allegheny* and went aboard the steamer *Daylight*. The vessel served with the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron enforcing the naval blockade of the southern coast. Early in the war, this ship had served as a guard and picket ship, intercepting four vessels containing contraband cargo. She participated in the attacks on

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[92]*Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships* (2 vols., Washington, 1991), vol. 1, part A, 190-191.

[93]The base of the column is on display at the Mauricetown Historical Society Library located in the former home of Ed Compton that Samuel Cobb helped build in 1864.

Fort Macon, N.C., in April 1862, and on Fort Fisher, N.C., in November of that year.[94]

Before long Cobb transferred again, this time to the wooden-hulled, screw sloop-of-war *Shenandoah*. The ship's guns included one 150-pound parrot rifle (not 200-pound as Cobb stated), two eleven-inch Dahlgren smooth bores, one thirty-pound parrot rifle, two twenty-four-pound howitzer rifles, and two heavy twelve-pound howitzer smooth bores. The ship had returned in August 1863 to the Philadelphia Navy Yard after patrolling as far north as Halifax, Nova Scotia, in search of the Confederate raiders *Tacony* and *Florida*. The sloop then sailed to join the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron at New Inlet, N.C., outside of Wilmington on September 8.

The *Shenandoah* spent most of the next fifteen months patrolling the waters between Wilmington and Nassau. During the war British ships were arriving regularly at Nassau loaded with supplies and war material for the Confederacy. To get the supplies to Confederate ports both Confederate and British ships had to run the blockade, outrunning ships like the *Shenandoah* attempting to enforce the blockade.[95]

On December 3, 1864, the *Shenandoah* arrived at Green Bay in the Bahamas under the suspicion that Confederate ships intending to disrupt Union commerce were being fitted out there. After finding no evidence of this activity, the ship sailed back to North Carolina to join the rest of the fleet in its Christmas Eve attack on Fort Fisher which guarded Wilmington. Doing "good service" according to Rear-Admiral Porter

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[94]*Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, vol. 1, 247.

[95]*Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, vol. 1, 480-481; David D. Porter, *The Naval History of the Civil War* (Secaucus, NJ, 1984), 622-623

commanding the fleet, the *Shenandoah* bombarded the soon-silenced fort and continued shelling the fort into the night.[96]

On Christmas Day, firing resumed in an attempt to cover the assault of three thousand army troops sent to capture the fort. The troops advanced on the fort in the late afternoon as Confederate guns poured out grape and canister fire from its heavy guns. After advancing to within seventy-five yards of the fort, the men retreated amidst continuing fire, General Benjamin Butler having decided that the fort was too strong to be taken by an assault. Most of the troops reembarked during the night, though about 700 to 1000 men were stranded on shore; those stranded would be returned to their ships in the next two days.[97]

A second attempt to take Fort Fisher was made in January 1865. On the 13th, the *Shenandoah's* boats helped to land an army force of eight thousand men led by Major General Alfred A. Terry. This force of 4000, comprised largely of the same force that had first assaulted the fort, was supplemented with two brigades of black troops. Union vessels bombarded the fort on the 13th and 14th, disabling Confederate guns to prepare the way for this force. In addition to the army, 1,600 sailors and 400 marines from various ships volunteered to be a storming party. The captain of the *Shenandoah*, Daniel B. Ridgely, sent fifty-four sailors, including Cobb, and fourteen marines ashore under Lieutenant Smith W. Nichols. Union guns began firing at 10:00 a.m. on the 15th as the

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[96]*Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, vol. 1, 481; Porter, 697.

[97]Virgil C. Jones, The Civil War at Sea (3 vols., New York, 1962), vol. 3, 332-334; Denney, 508.

sailors and marines headed for shore. At 3:00 p.m. the Union barrage ceased and the assault began.[98]

Colonel William Lamb, commanding the fort and the 1,800 Confederates inside, began firing on the entire naval force headed by Lieutenant Commander K. Randolph Breese. As the sailors and Marines advanced, cutlasses and revolvers in hand, the Confederates unleashed rifle fire and grape and canister. Some Union men managed to reach the top of the parapet before scrambling back to the sea. Although repulsed, these men had distracted the Confederates long enough to allow the army to take the western end of the fort. Supported by gunfire from the Union fleet, the army fought through the bomb-proofs, often in hand-to-hand combat, eventually driving the Confederates out of the fort. Major James Reilly, who took command after Lamb was wounded, surrendered the fort and his men at 10 p.m. Union casualties numbered about 1,000, while the Confederates lost about half that many. The naval column had suffered seventy-four dead, two-hundred eight-nine wounded, and twenty missing. The men from the *Shenandoah's* landing party returned with six wounded men and five missing.[99]

The next day, a powder magazine at Fort Fisher exploded. It appears that some Union soldiers, accidentally ignited the powder while exploring the magazine. The explosion added more men the list of Federal casualties.

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[98]*Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, vol. 1, 481; ones, 341, 347-350; Denney 516-517; *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion.* (Thirty vols. and index, Washington: 1894-1927), I, XI, 539. Subsequently referred to as *O.R.N.*

[99]*Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, vol. 1, 481; Denney, 517, Jones, 351-359; Fox, 539; *O.R.N.*, I, XI, 443.

The *Shenandoah* transported men to shore hospitals after the battle at Fort Fisher. A few days later it joined Admiral John A. Dahlgren's South Atlantic Blockading Squadron in Charleston. In February, the sloop joined several other ships in landing troops at Bull's Bay, north of Charleston, in an attempt to divert attention from Major General William T. Sherman's men moving northward through South Carolina. On January 17, Confederate forces, afraid of being cut off by Sherman's men in their rear, evacuated Charleston hoping to reach Robert E. Lee's army in Richmond and Petersburg. The next day Union forces entered the city.[100]

The *Shenandoah* returned to the Philadelphia Navy Yard in March. On April 9, Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox. A few days later on the 14th, Lincoln was shot in Ford's Theater by John Wilkes Booth. The next day Lincoln died and the *Shenandoah* was decommissioned. Sometime after the fall of Charleston, Cobb had transferred to the receiving ship *Princeton* on which he served until being discharged on June 11, 1865.[101]

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[100]*Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, vol. 1, 481; Porter, 760-761; *Civil War Naval Chronology*, V-39-42.

[101]*Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, vol. 1, 481; Muster Roll, Return of the Receiving Ship *Princeton*, June 17, 1865, National Archives.

CORRESPONDENCE, MAY 24, 1864-JULY 30, 1865

U.S. Reciving Ship Alleghany May 24th 1864

Dear Father

As I have not recieved aney letters from you for a long time I thought that I would write a few lines to asertain weather you are all forgotten how to write or not if you have you can get some one else to write for you.

I sent my Discharge about 2 weeks a go and have not hered from it yet I am affrid that that it has not gon home and if it has not or if it has I wish you to write and let me know a bout it for it is a good one and I donot wish to loose it

their is not much news on board of our ship to tell you at presant but the news from the Army is vary good and I hope that they will Continue as good as the[y] have bin for the last week or so,

when I last wrote to you I did not feel vary well and did not write much. I have read the New Gospel of Peace, the Ship wrecks, the Way to Prosper[102] and in fact about all the Book [t]hat you sent me, the Book Called the way to Prosper is Continualy being

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[102]William Falconer (1732-1769), a British poet, wrote *Shipwrecks* some time before being lost at sea in 1769. Cotton Mather (1663-1728) in *The Way to Prosperity* (Boston, 1690) instructed men on living the good life. Especially interesting was Richard Grant White's (1821-1885) *The New Gospel of Peace According to St. Benjamin* (New York, 1863). White used biblical language to create a fascinating allegorical tale in which Abe the Honest, Litulmak (McClellan), John the Boaster (John Pope), George the Meade, and others, were pitted against the unholy alliance of Jeph the Repudiator (Jefferson Davis), Robbutleeh (Robert E. Lee), the Dimmichrats of the North (Northern Democrats), and the Pahdees (the Irish) who were fiendishly trying to end the war. Cobb's father sent these to maintain and strengthen his son's moral and patriotic spirit.

read it has went around of the Ships Company, I am a studying Navigation and I am a geting a long vary well,

I send my Regards and thanks to the Ladys Relief Assosiation for their gifts to me,[103] and you must tell mother that I am vary thankful for the articles that she put in to the Box for the[y] are of the gratest importance to me and will bee of grate use to me. I find a vast differance in being here and in the army, here I have a good Hammack and matress to sleep on at Night and I know whare it is, but in the Army I had no bed to lay on but the ground and in the Mo[r]ning I would not know weather I would get to lay down or not at night, and if I did perhaps it would be in the mud,

I will close for the presant by sending my love to Mother and all of the family your self included, also all inquiring friends, Pleas write soon. I have no more stamps,

from your Most Ob[t]. Son

William .T. Cobb

U.S.N.

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[103]Mauricetown seems to have had an association similar to the Ladies' Soldiers Relief Association of Bridgeton, NJ. Formed in December 1861, the Bridgeton Association--and those like it all over the country--sent quilts, night shirts, blankets, drawers, books, magazines, food of all kinds, and many other items to soldiers in various theaters of the war. *Pioneer*, March 1, 1862, 2.

On board U.S. Reciving Ship Alleghany June 6th 1864

Dear Father

I recieved your vary welcome letter on the 4th inst and was vary glad to here from home once more and that all was well I had began to fear that some of the family was sick by your not writeing sooner but I am vary glad to find it differant.

you was saying in your letter that you was so buisey that you could hardly get time to write but I think that you might give George the proper materials to write with and let him write to me when you have not time, and when you have time then you could write me a few lines.

you was speaking about the draft you said that Ed Haley was drafted he can get into the Navy if he wishes to by applying for a transfer,

I do not know how long I will remain here, but I hope that I will get a way soon and Captor [*capture*] some Blockcade Runers for I want to make some prise money befor the War Closes.

their is no News to send you at the presant but if you have a mind to you can send to the Editor of the Pioneer and have him to Direct it here. I have read most all of the Books that you sent me. The New Gospel of Peace is vary good. Homers Illiade is too much for me. I found the letter that you was a speaking a bout and was glad Enough of

it, among the maney things that was in my Box I found a white shirt, it is something that I have not worn since I left home.

I use my slate and pensil a considerable [amount] and I hope by the time that my time is out, to be a good Navigator, you did not say what you thought of my Discharge the next time you write I want you to let me know what you think of it. I will close for the presant by sending my love to Mother, and all of our family your self included direct as befor Nomore at presant

from your most Ob^{t} Son

William .T. Cobb

U.S.N.

On board U.S. S^{tr} Daylight off Fort^{ss} Monroe Augst 5th 1,64

Dear Father

Yours of the 30th inst Come to hand this morning, I was vary glad to here from home but I was vary sorry to here the news of your situation, and if such a thing is posibl do not have the place mortgaged if you can avoid it aney how at all, and this is the first that I knew of my having aney ground there, I will tell you what I will do, I will sign an allotment of 10$ to you per Month for the remainder of my time as soon as I get a chance but I can not tell how long befor I will get a chance but when I get a chance you may look

for it I will let you know if it will save a mortgage on the place it is all that I can do for the presant.

Augst 7th 11 AM

As wee have come from Ft Monroe and arrived at Norfolk I will finish my letter, wee are in the Dry Dock at the Navy yard of Gosport Near Norfolk, wee will get over huled here I do not know how long it will take us but not over two weeks, wee was out to sea but on account of our Boilers being in bad order wee put back for repaires. You were speaking a bout my sending ten Dolls to bee mad a life member of the Sosiety but it is imposible for me to get one cent for they do not pay off untill the expiration of term but my time will bee out in the course of time and I will have a chance to Do some thing for my self, if you can get a long aney how at all without puting the place under obligations do so for I do not want it done if it costs all that I make the remainder of my time, I will have to stop for the presant by sending my love to Mother and all the Children yourself included, write soon Direct as befor Directed U.S. Str Daylight North Atlantic Blockcading Squadren via Ft Monroe Va

no more at presant

from your Most Obt Son

William ,T, Cobb

U.S.N.

On board U.S.S. Shenandoah Sep^{tr} 10th 1864

Dear Father

I have not written to you for Some time and as I have bin transferred from the Daylight to the U.S. S^{tr} Shenandoah I thought I would write and let you know the ship that I am now in. I wish you to tell G. Wills the ships name that I am now in and tell him to write to me, tell Call the ships name so that she Can write to me

the ship that I am now in is not a blockade vessel she is a Cruicer she goes to sea and Cruises betwen Willmington and Halafax her armor is 1 30lb^{s} Parrott 1, 200^{lbs} Parrot 2, 11^{in} gunes wee carry havy mettle she is a sloop-of-war- I like her vary much- when wee go to sea wee stay not over 30 days at a time, I wish you to write soon Direct U.S.S. Shenandoah via F^{ts} Monre North Atlantic Blockading Squaren, give my love to mother and all the Children yourself included Nomore at presant

from your most Ob^{t} Son

W^{m} .T. Cobb

write soon Pleas Excuse this short letter sircumstances will not permit me to write longer (not time at present)

On board U.S.S. Shenandoah Sep^{tr} 14th 1,64

Dear Father

I[t] has not bin vary long since I last wrote to you. I made an allotment of half pay for you to day it will begin on the 1st of next Month my pay is $16 per Month and I alloted half of that for it will take the rest to get Clothes with as wee have to pay for our own Clothes here the Government dose not furnish us with Clothes as in the army you can draw it evry month or let it run for two or three Months just as you pleas the 1st Month will be up on the last of October and if you want to draw that months you will have to go (or send by mail) betwen the 1st and 10th of November and so on. Directions Jos. S. Chambers Navy Agent 3^{ed} P^{t} below Chestnut Philadelphia, this money you can use if you need it I send it to you and the family it is a small sum but it may do some good in the Family, wee expect to go to sea to morrow wee are going a cruiceing [*cruising*] betwen the Islands of the West Indies and perhaps will not be back here befor spring and wee may be back here in a few weeks please write soon Direct as befor. give my love to Mother and all of the Children and tell them that I have a little over a year to stay and then I want to Come home to stay. I am well and hope you are all the, same, I also send my love to you. I will Close for the presant. write soon. Direct

Shenandoah insted of Daylight Nomere at presant,

from your most Ob[t]

W[m] .T. Cobb U.S.N.

Page N° 1

On board U.S.S. S[h]enandoah off Norfolk Navy Yard

Nov[br] 13. 1,64

Der Father

As I have another oppertunity of writeing I take it in writing to you. wee left Key west about a week a go and come North wee stoped at Beaufort and then proseeded on to Norfolk whare wee now lay. wee had a vary good passage on, it is vary cold here for the time of year. it is much colder here than it was at key west, when wee come here wee went to Coaling ship. and the vessel that wee took Coal out of was the Sch[r] (Page N° 2) Fredrick Tylor the vessel that Lorenzo Ogden sailed and Acy Robines and Whitefield Sropshire sailed her once I met on board of her, an old [friend] of mine it is Alfried Harris Hudsons Son wee had a good time to geather. I was on board of the vessel with him untill nine Oclock last night. he told me all the news the [*that*] he knew. he is a comeing home when he comes to Phil[a] this time he is only a comeing home to stay one day. I give him a green coconut and he said that he was a going to take it down home

with him to show to some of the Mauricetown folks that never [saw] a green coconut. I put my name on it so that if aney one sees it they will know who sent it from (Page N° 3) the Sunny South. Alfried said that he would try to get over to our house to tell you what I had to say and look, when George wrote last he siad that you wanted to know what I am on board of this ship I will tell you, I am an ordinary seaman I get $16 per month, half of which I have allotted to you it begines on the first of September there is two monthes pay (atl[e]ast half pay I should have said) due you will go (or send) to Phil[a] for it. I am well and harty, as I hope you all are at home. I would bee vary glad to come home to see Mother, your self, and all the Children. George told me that he was a going to sea with E[d] I am vary glad that he can help you, but I am sorry that he has to leave home so soon (Page N° 4) but as he is under Ed[s] Controle perhaps he will do well enough. you must charge Ed vary carefull to be carefull of him, and when my time is out I want to go with him my self and then I will learn george Navigation. I will close for the presant by sending my love to Mother, Your self, and all the family. Pleas to write soon as you get this. Direct as befor. Nomore at presant but I still remain your most ob[dt] Son

W[m] .T. Cobb U.S.N.

On board U.S. Ship Shenandoah Dec^br [2?]^nd 1.64

Dear Father

I recieved yours Day before yasterday and was glad to here from home a gane. I had begin to think that you had forgotten me but I find you have not. you was a speaking a bout the 8$ per Month that I allotted to you I give you the privlage of useing it if you wish but in case you do not want to use it you may keep it untill my time is out then I will have some thing to start with, but if you need it use it for I would rather you would use it than to have need for it and not do so. I hope that E^d Compton will make up to you what you have lost on his house, I wish you to write often, write as soon as you here from my time [*sic*]. I would be vary glad to help you on the Big Schooner, but I have become so acquainted with Navigation that I expect that I shal go to sea the remainder of my life unless something better affords. I have 10 months and 29 days more to stay that is not long to one who gets use to it as I am, wee do not know how long wee will stay here but I hope not long for I want to get into warm weather, I wish you to write to E^d tell him whare I am and to write to me and I will answer it. also send my love to E^d & George, W I will Close fore the presant by sending my love to Mother, Anna, Fremont, Clinton, also your self, I wish you to write soon. Direct as befor, Nomore at presant.

from your Most Ob^td Son

W^m .T. Cobb U.S.N.

On board U.S.S. Shenandoah

Under Fort Fisher N.C. Jan^{ry} 17th 1865

Dear Father

As I have not written to you for some time I take the presant oppertunity in writeing you a few lines to notify you that Fort Fisher the Key (to the so Called Confederacy) is ours wee took it this you may rely uppon for I was an Eye witness to the same when you read the papers you are not sertain of the fact but I know it to bee so, when you read the papers you may read an account of the sailors and how they showed their Bravery when chargeing on the Fort I was in the Charge, now to the Detales of the affair, wee left Beaufort on the 12th [of January] and come down here, wee arrived here that night and come too, off the Fort untill morning when wee Began the Engagement wee Bombbarded the Fort all that day (the 13th) and all day on the 14th and on the Morning of the 15th at 9 O^{ck} wee was ordered to Man all boats, Armed and Equiped, (previous to this all the men that was to go on shore was picked out,) wee was Called the stormeing party. at 10 O^{ck} wee landed and started up the Beach towards the fort and from this time (out) wee was under fire. our ships kept up the Bombbardments from whare wee landed to the Fort was a bout 2 1/2 Miles wee Crawled on our hands and knees untill wee got with in a half a mile of the Fort when the signal was given to Charge and then wee started on a full Run. wee Run untill wee come up to a stockade that they had a

long the Beach when wee lay flat uppon the Beach, (the instant wee started on the Charge the Rebs let fly Grape, Canister, and Shots from Small arms, and wee had to face it all with nothing in our hands but a Saber and Revolver, but wee did not Stop wee kept on untill wee reached the Stockade but that did not afford aney protection to us for the beach was So level and the fort so high that they could Shoot down uppon us whilst wee had to lay and take it as fast as they could Shoot. Father I have bin in a grate number of Battles But for the Space of time I never Saw men fall So fast in my life. I cannot Discribe it with pen and paper but I will do the best I can. for ,Example, there was 1 Shower of Canister Come through the ranks whare I was running up the beach and out of about Twenty that Stood with in 8 paces of me there was but four of us that come out of that Shower, I had not gon twenty feet farther when another Shower come and done the Same as the first and So on untill wee got Clear of there fire way down the beach, after wee got to the Stockade wee lay there Some time, when wee began to Cheer and tride to get to the Fort but there was a ditch about fourty feet wide, and the Side of the Fort was about fifty feet high So wee Saw that there was little use of us trying to get in to the Fort in that way, So wee lay Still for a few minutes longer when the Signal was given for us to fall back, wich wee did, in our falling back is when wee lost the most men for the Rebs let loose Grape and Canister faster than ever, whilst wee lay under the Fort wee could See a Rebel General on the Fort A waving his Sward and wee could here him telling his men to give it to them (meaning us) and well they did give it to us, wee fired Several Shots at him but our Revolvers would not reach him, he was a bout fourty yards from us, but one Sailor got a dead Marines Musket and fired at him the first Shot Mist

him but the next time he fired he hit him and woonded him, whilst wee was makeing the attacked on the Fort in front there was two thousand Soldiers come up in rear and got into the Fort befor the Rebs knew it, they had gained three Mounds when the[y] (Rebs that had bin Drawn over to the Side whare wee was,) found out that they was out witted) I understand Since wee come back that it was only intended for us to go up on the Sea Side of the Fort and Charge So as to Draw the Rebs to whare wee was So that the Soldiers Could have a chance to get in to the rear of it, the reason why the Rebs did not mistrust the trick was on account of, on the Side whare the Soldiers was they onley presented a Small Skirmish line in front the main boddy laying behind Some rifle pits and as Soon as wee got the Signal to Charge the Soldiers done the Same, So the Rebs was all on our Side and none whare the Soldiers was (but wee Blue Jackets had to Suffer the Penelty, the Rebs Say that they Never Saw a braver piece of work done in their lives![104] by this time it was Sundown wee reformed and went to help the Soldiers which wee did with a will, wee fought untill a few minutes befor 10 Ock at Night when the Fort was Surrendered to ,US, as soon as the Fort was Surrendered wee Signaled to the fleet and Such another noise you never hered, of men huraying, Steam whistles Screaming, Rocketts, the air was a live with rocketts of all Collars, I have Seen a grate maney Forth of July[s] Celebrated but this beat all that I ever did see, it done me mor good to See it for I

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[104]Colonel Lamb noted that following the "murderous fire" that swept the naval column, "the bravery of the officers could not restrain their men from panic and retreat...we witnessed what had never been seen before, a disorderly rout of American sailors and marines." *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (4 vols., New York: Century Company, 1884-1888), vol. 4, 650.

Lieutenant Commander Breese later commented that "the mistake was in expecting a body of sailors, collected hastily from different ships, unknown to each other, armed with swords and pistols to stand against veteran soldiers." Boatner, 294.

had an active part in gaining the Fort, wee remained on Shore all night picking up what ever wee could from the Fort, a bout 9 Ock on the morning of the 16th the magazine in the fort Exploded I would not under tak to discribe the Scenes after [the] explosion but is was awful to See, up to this morning they have dug 150 out which was covered up in the Sand from the Explosion,[105] there was a bout 2,000 Blue Jacketts there and about three Regiments of Soldiers that took the Fort (the Storming Party) there was about 300 Blue Jacketts killed and woonded bout how many Soldiers I am not able to Say, there is about 70 guns in the Fort, wee took 25,000, Prisinors besides the Munitions of war,[106] wee found wires leading to torpedoes on the Beach and in fact all a round the fort but the[y] had no time to Blow us up, also wires leading to torpedoes out in the river, I will give you a more minute account of the affare Some other time, as a trophy I have a Revolver which I brought off with me there is a grate maney wants it but I will not let it go, I will Say for my Self that I did not get hert, but I was awful hungry after being on Shore 36 hours a runing through Sand with no water and nothing to Eeat,, I will close by Sending my love to mother and all the family your Self included - Read this to all who it may consern, Pleas write Soon Direct as befor No more at presant

from you most Obdt Son

William ,T, Cobb U.S.N.

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[105]The 13,000 pounds of gunpowder killed twenty-five men and wounded sixty-six; thirteen were never found. Boatner, 294; Denney, 518.

[106]Nearly 400 sailors were killed, wounded, or missing. The Federals had captured around 1,900 prisoners and 169 guns (47 of which were heavy guns). Jones, 361; Boatner, 293.

Charleston S.C. February 22nd 1,65

Dear Father

As I have not written to you for Some time I thought as long as wee have taken this place I would write you a few lines, wee lay with in two hundred yards of the wharf, I hahve not bin on Shore yet but wee expect to get liberty to go on Shore to See the place in a few days by what I can see from the Ship, the lower part of the City is pretty well tore to piecies but the upper part is not distroyed much, the Rebs has not distroyed much of there Earth works they left them as they Stood, I will give you the plan of attacked, Sherman made the attacked on the South west Side the monitors on the South East Side and wee (with 800 soldiers on the North East Side), there was about 150 Sailors wee went around in a bay on the N.E. side Caled Bulls Bay wee landed the Soldiers in the day time and when Night come wee would take them off ag[a]in and land them again the next day and wee kept on at that until the Rebs thought that wee had ten or twelve thousand troops and they began to think that wee would Cut their Retreat off so they made good their retreat while they had a chance, while wee was on the Expidition wee liveed on the Country wee have fresh mutton, fresh pork, Beef and many other articales, wee was a whole weeke on the Expidition and wee had to live on what ever wee could pick up, the People here Say that if it had not bin for us a comeing up in there rear that the rebs would not have left as soon as the[y] did. the People here Say that they are vary

glad that wee have taken posesien of the City, I do not know how long wee will Stay here but if the Admeral goes to Washington wee will Stay here for Some time for our Cap^{tn} is Senior Cap^{tn} of the fleet, and wee m[a]y Stay here for a long time, when you write to me Send me Some Stamps if you pleas for I am out, I try to make my grog money keep me in Stamps but while I was on that Expidition Some one took all that I had So I have to go a beging now which I do not like, tell mother that I would bee vary glad to see her and the Children but they will have to wait a while yet befor I can come home, tell them that I am now at the place whare the first gun was fired on the flag, tell them that wee Celebrated Washingtons Birth Day here in Charleston wee have a grand display of flags all the Ships in the fleet is dressed in flags and each Ship fired twenty one guns in honour of Washington and to night there is to be a grand display of lights and Rockets is to be throwen also, give my love to Mother the Children and your self in cluded Please wr[i]te soon nomer at presant

from your most obt. Son

W^{m} .T. Cobb

U.S.N.

Wilmington N.C. July 30th 1,65

Dear Father

wee arrived here day befor yasterday wee have bin to Georgetown and discharged our cargo but on account of the vessel leaking vary badly wee could not go to Barbados and wee had to come here to Wilmington to haul out on the railway whare we lay at presant wee found a vary large leak in her [starboard?] seam I am in hope that when wee go off of the railway that she will not leak as bad as she had bin doing for it has bin as much as we wanted to do to keep her free I did not write from Georgetown for there is no regular post office there there is none but a military post office there now we do not know whare wee are a going to as yet but befor I send this I will find out and tell you whare to direct I am well as a person can be and I am getting as fat as a pig I like Capt Newel very well and I dont wish to sail with a better man and Mr [Ensign?] the mate is as nice a man as can be found in a days travel, in fact we have a vary good crew all through I am vary well satisfied the Capt is a going to get a load of spirits and rosin to bring north when we come when you write tell me whare Ed is and how he is making out also how [Fremont?] is let me know if one of the folks from the city has bin down or not If there is aney of them there give them my love and tell them that I am alive and well give my love to Mother and all of the children send [love] to George and [Linda?]

I will close for the presant by sending my love to you along with the rest of the Cobb family no more at presant

from your most Af^{t} Son

W^{m} .T. Cobb

N.B. I wish you wuld have me propsed in the O. of O.F. so that I can be elected at aney time that I might stop in the river W.T.C.

EPILOGUE

When William Cobb returned home from the war, he resumed his work as a carpenter and a ship joiner.[107] After being home only a few months, the twenty-five-year-old veteran married twenty-three-year-old Hester D. Compton of Haleyville in the new Methodist church. The grave of Cobb's first wife, Emma, lay within yards of the church in which Reverend Levi J. Rhodes married the couple. Hester gave Cobb three children, Alice, born March 25, 1866; Lincoln Henry, February 10, 1868; and Oscar P., June 13, 1870.[108]

In August 1879, Cobb applied for an invalid pension claiming he was "wholly incapacitated for regular manual labor" due to the gun shot wound in his left hand and the deafness caused by a premature firing of the *Shenandoah's* guns at Fort Fisher. The pension was not granted until October 1888. At some point between 1880 and 1884, the Cobbs moved to Long Branch, New Jersey, in Monmouth County, on the Atlantic coast of central New Jersey. There, despite his "incapacities," he joined the National Guard of the state of New Jersey in June 1884. By the time of the Spanish-American War in 1898 he had risen from the rank of private in Company B, 3rd Regiment, to First Lieutenant, finally obtaining that commission he had always wanted.[109]

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[107]U.S. Census, 1870 and 1880, New Jersey, Cumberland County.

[108]U.S. Census, 1870, New Jersey, Cumberland County; William T. Cobb, Pension Records, National Archives.

[109]William T. Cobb, Spanish-American War Records, New Jersey State Archives; New Jersey National Guard, Individual Records, William T. Cobb, New Jersey State Archives.

In order to serve in the Spanish-American War at the age of 58, Cobb applied to be restored to the rolls--thus suspending his pension payments--and reentered the army with his national guard regiment which became the 3rd New Jersey Volunteer Infantry. The company muster roll from May 12, 1898, states that Cobb was suffering only from "Slight Hemorhoids" and a "Slight defect in hearing." He was promoted to Captain in December 1898 when Vice Captain Charles Morriss resigned. Following a brief bout with tonsillitis, and the ratification of the Treaty of Paris on February 6, 1899, Captain Cobb was discharged.[110]

Returning to the rank of First Lieutenant after the war, Cobb was moved to Company K of the 3rd National Guard Regiment. In June 1900, a sixty-year-old Cobb was induced to resign his position due to "severe deafness," and applied to have his pension continued. Back in February he had applied for a state medal issued to those who had rendered long and faithful service in the Militia and National Guard. Whether or not Cobb was awarded this honor for his fifteen years of service is unknown.[111]

Cobb collected his last pension payment of $22 on November 4, 1912. After a respectable 72 years, Cobb died of "apoplexy" (a stroke) on January 14, 1913, forty-eight years after the eve of the assault on Fort Fisher. Hester remained in Long Branch and continued to receive his pension until she died in August 1925.[112]

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[110]William T. Cobb, Spanish-American War Records, New Jersey State Archives.

[111]New Jersey National Guard, Individual Records, William T. Cobb, New Jersey State Archives.

[112]William T. Cobb, Pension Records, National Archives; Certificate and Record of Death for William T. Cobb, State of New Jersey, Bureau of Vital Statistics.

Had Hester travelled to the site of her husband's first major engagement in the Civil War--Williamsburg, Virginia--before she died, she might have come across a roadside stand selling bread, Coca-Cola, and Civil War relics.[113] Among the muskets, swords, and unexploded artillery shells, perhaps she would have found a box of spent Minie balls. Running the balls through her fingers she might have wondered if any one of these had flown near her husband. Fortunately none hit Cobb on that day. And even though he had a bullet skip across his back at Fair Oaks and a gun-shot wound in his hand after Gettysburg, he survived the war, having served in the infantry, cavalry, and navy, and could then return home, and marry her. How very different her life would have been--and how short his would have been--had any of these bullets fatally struck her William Tell.

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[113]"A Look Back," *The Daily Press,* Williamsburg, Virginia, October, 9, 1994, H3. Such a roadside stand did exist and was photographed around 1922.

APPENDIX

[*This letter from Edwin to his father describes the battle between the* Merrimac *and* Virginia]

Hattares Inlet March 20th 1862

Dear Father,

We arrived here the 10th, and a tedious time we've had of it, I did not go out in that woesterly wind, that come out the day I got out the river, and the vesalt [*vessel*] is satisfactory too me, although Ive no doubt some of our wiseacres passed premature judgement on it. The Schooner J Frambes came out the day I come out the river, and he got down to Hattaras, and took the wind too the Eastward and hauled off shore, and blowed his sails away, when the wind came out to the W, away he went across the stream and he fell in with another Schr and borrowed a Mainsail, and then he got here just 14 hours ahead of us, I come out the Capes with Con & [San Marto?] and I run the land down and they run straight from Chincoteague, I run out of the wind at Cape Charles and they run out of it at Body [*Bodie*] Island. I took the wind S.E. and went in to Fortress Monroe, and that is why we are behind them. I left Old Point Paddys Day at sunrise and the next morning at 7 o clock was off the bar, our [lag?] days are up too day, we come over the [?] yesterday to wait orders. I cant tell anything about when or where we will discharge.

I saw the Battle at Fort Monroe between the Merrimack and our little Infernal Machine (for she is nearer that than any thing men ever contrived before), talk about excitement I rather guess there was some, I got underway to go up and see the fun but the Flagship ordered us out again. I was alongside the Monitor with the boat and all the injury she sustained that could be seen was several places where shot and shell had scaled the paint off the gun, the Capt of a French Man of War was aboard of her and said she would sink the combined Navies of the world, and cannot be taken herself. Her armament is 2 11 inch Rifled Dahlgren guns, that throws steel pointed shells. I see them fire a shell out of the Union Guns that wighed 520 lbs and 50^{lbs}, of powder to drive it, she weighs 52,005 lbs and 15 inch bore and is 3 feet in diameter at the breech, nice little pocket pistol is it not.

I see the papers say the Minnesotta was well pepered, that is all humbug. I sailed all around her and could only see where she was struck 3 times, a shell through her Ensign flying [Gibboon?] shot away, and one shot under her Counter, that much I have seen, and 2 or 3 shells entered her ports, and that is what newspaper corresspondants called riddled and disabled, but I want you to understand it was no place for nervous gentlemen during the battle, it was a perfect Thunderstorm of shot and shells, and it would have done you good too have heard 10000, throats cheering when the Merrimack turned tail too, it was comical (as well as terrible) too see the little Monitor sculling around the huge Monster, just like a little wiffet around a bull. I cant give you all the particulars now but will when I get home. I am well as is all hands. I,ve plenty of company and plenty to eat and nothing to do, but cant get a paper, Send me the Press if

possible and I'll pay the expense, give my love to Call, Mother and all the children and keep some for yourself. So no more present but still Remain [?]

F.L.T. [First Lieutenant]

E. Cobb

P S Direct thus

Edwin Cobb

Schr C. W. Holmes Hatteras Inlet N.C.

Care of Capt Barnes

write soon as you get this and let me know how to direct to Will. Hurrah for Uncle Samuel I,m for the Union Right or Wrong keep me square in the Lodge, by all means.

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