

[On stationery of the New York Branch, U.S. Christian Commission, 30 Bible House, New York.]

F Co. 154 Regt. 2 Div. 20 Army Corps.
Blairs Landing March 1st 1865
Head Quarters
Camp Sherman
At Blairs Landing S.C.
March 1st 1865

Dear Ann

This is a cold wet and dismal morning It has been raining for several days and it is getting very muddy about our camp=

The other day some of us went down the river to our old Camp to get some lumber=&c We went down about two miles and half and landed and soon the tide went out and left our boat high and dry in the mud!

It was a very beautiful spot or rather it had been

It had been once the home of a very wealthy Planter and one of the oldest Plantations in this State but of course now there are only the remnants of the ruins left. The house was burnt up long ago and the negro huts pulled down to make tents for the soldiers but some of the noble Shade trees are yet left and the shape of the once splendid flower garden and borders are yet to be seen--and some of the flowers and shrubs are alive some rose bushes a magnolia tree and an orange tree--the April Lillies were in bloom both yellow and white of course I took a brush of them with me it was something odd to see April lillies in the month of Feb. the Peach trees were also in full bloom

I also found some fennel and mustard and took some with me for greens. I was very much delighted to find some flowers but my heart was made sad on looking a round and seeing the desolation of a Home so complete "utterly destroyed" and that is only one among many thousands that has suffered the same fate by this cruel war

We loaded our boat with boards but it was still low water and of course we could not get off untill the tide came in It began to rain and to grow dark and most of us were with out coats or vests myself among the number but I had on two woolen shirts after two hours waiting the waters returned and we "pushed our boat from shore" and got to camp at nine o clock somewhat hungry and a little wet

But I have the flowers yet in my tent I look at them just now you know it does me much good to have flowers to look at I wish I could send this brush to you for you will not have any for some time yet----

Please excuse this for I had to write it in a hurry

My health is quite good I send my love to you all I hear nothing about our going away from here 8 of the boys are sick with the small pox

most Truly your
W Charles

(On New York Branch, U.S. Christian Commission stationery.)

F Co. 154 Regt. 2 Div. 20 Army Corps.
March 3d 1865
Camp Sherman
Blairs Landing S.C.
March 3, 1865

Dear Ann

On the morning of March 1st I sent a letter to you. in the afternoon to my great joy Wm. E. Jones and Capt. Cheney came here and some other boys of our Regiment I was more than glad to see them, and to hear from home home The shirts and socks you sent me are very nice. I will not wear the shirt for some time for I am not in need of a shirt just now but at the same time I feel very thankful to you for sending it. It is a very handsome one all most to gay for me to wear here in the swamps of South Carolina but maybe there will be a time when I can wear it with some satisfaction

Wm has staid with me and will be here on the same duty as long as we remain here that will make it pleasant for both of us I am so glad that He has come home alive It is a great wonder that he did not die while he was in the hands of the rebels

I have no news only that my health continues very good A blessing for wich I feel very thankfull indeed but am afraid that I am not thankfull enough.

I am also very thankfull that such good news from home has reached me it makes me feel happy and contented to know that you are all well at home

Had a long talk with Capt Cheney last night giving me the history of matters and things in Freedom &c I understand by what he says that the family of Alfred Lewis that is his sisters & mother do not treat Jane very well that is to bad. the poor girl has trouble enough with ou being ill treated by them

Give my warmest love to Dacky & Mang_ and father & mother Joel & all the rest of the household you will keep the largest portion yourself and the Dear little boy & girl May God Our Heavenly Father bless them & you all of you and may we live to meet again is the warmest prayer of Yours very truly

W. Charles

We have not heard a word from Sherman for several days

(On stationery of the New York Branch, U.S. Christian Commission)

Head Quarters
Camp Sherman
Blairs Landing S.C.
March 5 1865

Dear Ann

It being the sabbath day, and having a little time to myself this afternoon I thought it best for me to write a few lines to you thinking that perhaps that through the week I should have no time to do it, As there is some talk of moving again but I do not think that we shall go from here this week still we may. Where they will send us is of course unknown to us.

We had some rain during the past week and had but very little sun shine but to day the Great light has come out, in all its glory, and it is warm enough in the shade

I have no news to send to you I wish you had sent me a few more words in that bundle you sent me by Wm. Jones. A few words from you would do me much good for it has been so long since I have had a letter from you

The chaplain has just come to my tent door and says that he will preach under the big tree by the Hospital in thirty minnits and wishes me to get a stand and a chair for him &c &c and I must try to find one Well Billy Jones and myself fixed a place for the Chaplain to stand on and got a very nice little table and put my oil cloth over it, and also a chair the man came with the Bible and Hymn Books, but the order came for most of us to go and draw rations so we gave up preaching for to day, very much to the disapointment of some of us

One man died of the small Pox yesterday Six more are very sick with the same disease It continues very sickly here So I do hope that we shall not remain here much longer My own health continues very good! much better than when I came here that is I do not cough but little now and have an excellent appetite. I have worked pretty hard since I am here and that has done me much good While at Bridgeport I talked to much, and became very hoarse but now my voice is all right

I am so glad that Billy Jones has come and had the good luck of being detailed to the same duty for he is such a good boy

We are very well satisfied with our position.

Please give my love to all the family and best wishes to all enquiring friends

Truly Yours

W. Charles

Head Quarters
Camp Sherman
Blairs Landing S.C.
March 11 1865

Dear Ann

I have no particular news to send to you to day only that I am well Day before yesterday we had a very severe thunder storm, lasting for a long time, and last night and to day the weather is much cooler, almost to cool for comfort.

Wm. Jones & Capt Cheney are both well.

You must excuse this letter for its ugliness, this pen mine will not make a mark only about half of the time. Give my love to all Am looking every day for a letter from you. I see no signs of our going away from here but for all that we may go tomorrow. Good by

Truly Yours

W Charles

P.S. I understand by those that have lately come from the north that the snow is very deep there. But if you have wood enough for the stove and enough to eat to keep you from hunger you will get along first rate I do hope that you are not suffering for any thing.=
Will write again in a day or two=

W.C.

Head Quarters
Camp Sherman
Blairs Landing S.C.
March ___ 1865

Dear Ann "Anwyl Ann"

You see by the above date that I am still at this place and no more prospects of getting away than there was two weeks ago.

Wm. Jones has gone to Hilton Head to day, in charge of some sick men the rest of my men, or rather the rest of the Hospital Guards have gone up the river with the Doctor to get some lumber So now and then I have a few minnits to my self

Yesterday and the day before there was about 1,000 more soldiers come here some of them were very badly frozen on the way from New York to Hilton Head. some 15 or 20 of them were sent back this morning their feet were so badly frozen that they could not walk or even stand up at all. It is said that one or two had frose to death, and were thrown over board. So you must have had very cold weather up there.

I have no news it is reported here that Sherman has had a Battle with the Rebels under Beauregard near Charlotte North Carolina and had lost (17,000) seventeen thousand men= but I do not believe that the report can be true But I am afraid that Shermans army will be over powered by the combined forces of the enemy

(continued)

(March 11, 1865 continued)

Any how there will be some very hard fighting for the Rebels are going to fight as long as they can keep their army together.

The army under Lee must be whiped or captured before it is possible to have Peace. It is all foolishness to think of Peace untill that is done

Head Quarters
Camp Sherman
Blairs Landing S.C.
March 14 1865

Dear Ann

I do not feel much like writing this morning because I feel a little tired yesterday some of us went up the river about 4 miles to get some boards &c. of course we took our dinner with us and went up with the tide. After a while we got to where was once a splendid plantation or a cotton and rice farm some of the negro houses were left and also part of a very large Barn= We got all the lumber we wanted, and started to come back about 2 o'clock the tide was running out pretty fast We got along bully for a while, but before we reach the main river our boat got a ground and all we could do was to wait for the tide to come back which would be 4 hours! so of course it would be late in the night before we would be in camp so we went a shore made some coffee and found lots of flowers and just before dark our boat swung loose and we started once more on our voyage But I tell you it was hard work to row against the tide and the wind too was against us-- --

We enjoyed ourselves however first rate, and about ten o'clock we reached camp, made a little more coffee and went to bed, to dream of home and those that are far a way. Billy Jones says that he dreamed of being in Arcade and that there was a Rail Road there!

We have just got the boards up from the boat and they are cutting them up to make bunks in the Hospital. There is no news here worth sending to you Some Rebel Cavalry said to be Wheelers men drove in our Pickets yesterday at Pocotaligo and there was some little fighting, we heard the musketry as we were going up the river but did not think that there was any fighting going on! I have not heard any thing from there this morning quite a number of troops went from here up there last night and most likely the Rebels will not show themselves again My health continues very good= I think this is the most sickly place I ever was in

(On New York Branch, U.S. Christian Commission stationery.)

March 16, 1865

Dear Ann

The wind blows very hard to day and some rain and having a little time to myself, so you see that little time will be occupied in writing a few words to you

There is no news here worth sending to you. some rebel deserters and negroes come to us every day We have things fixed up quite comfortable. it has cost us a heap of hard work because we had nothing to do with. Yesterday we made our tent larger, it is very comfortable now.

We were to go down the river this afternoon to get some Oysters but the wind blows to hard so we will not go. there is any quantity of them here but they are small and not as good as the northern Oysters, but they taste very good

I do not hear a word about our going from here and looks to me as if we would be here for some time yet maybe a month or more We expect a boat from Hilton Head to day. I hope the mail will come and in it a letter from you

Billy Jones enjoys good health here and is gaining in flesh.

Well how much sugar is Tommie and Frances Ann going to make this spring! as much as will sweeten one cup of coffee for Dat when he comes home!

Wm Jones brought a little mapple sugar with him It did taste so good

Only about six months more and Dat will be at home if he lives only think of it only six month, that will soon pass, then! Oh! then! What a happy time I hope we will have

How does the fodder hold out will you have enough How many cows will Dack_ & Ma_g_ milk next summer?

How is Jimmy? as lame as ever & how is the old dog trim Give my love to Dack_ & Ma_g_ and say to them that it would give great joy to have a talk with them. continue to pray for me Dear friends

Hoping that you are all in good health.

I am yours

W. Charles

Head Quarters
Camp Sherman
Blairs Landing S.C.
March 21 1865

Dear Ann,

Yesterday late in the afternoon the steamboat Genl Hooker came up from Hilton Head and brought a pretty big mail and to my great joy a letter from you, dated the 7th of this month. I am so glad to learn that you were all well. William Jones told me that Uncle Tom had started for the Regiment but did not know if he had got to it or not most likely he reached Savannah before the Regiment left there.

I have no news whatever to send to you. My health continues very good thus far. My health has continued to improve since we came here but many have sicken and died and of course my turn may come any hour. I try to feel contented and to be ready for any thing that may happen that is the best is it not. You did not say whether Joel was there or not. Did Mary go with him that is if he has gone back. It sounds rather strange to me to have you write of deep snow and the road difficult to travel &c. for where I am the trees have put on their mantle of new green and the flowers are all in their glory!!

I saw Peach trees in bloom more than a month ago, and strawberries nearly two weeks ago. Major H. Cheney was in our tent for a little while last evening. He looks first rate but is very anxious to get a letter from home, for he supposes that an increase in his family has taken place before now.

Wm Jones is well and has gained some in flesh since he came here.

I hardly know what to say to you about sending any letters to me at this place.

I see no signs of our going from here so you can send two or three more if you like to this place because I may be here for a good while yet.

Wm Jones sends his best respects to you all.

It rained some with us last night and the wind blows hard to day. Yesterday was quite a hot day but the nights are cool almost to cool to sleep good.

Last night I had all sorts of dreams I was at home and the world over pretty near.

The other night I dreamed that little Sissy fell into some water and when I picked her up she seemed to be quite dead! I pressed her close to my breast and breathed into her mouth, and in a little while she came to herself again and went off to play with Tommy! You ask in your letter "what I have to do in the Hospital"-- that is a very hard question to answer because I have so many things to do.

There are six men and myself. We are called The Hospital Guards, (but very little guarding have we done yet.) when a soldier dies in the hospital we have the charge of burying him and go as his escort to the grave (or pall bearers) and after the body is put in the grave and a little dirt dropped upon the coffin, the guards fire two volleys over the grave that is twelve shots, then the chaplain if there is one to be found gives out a hymn, reads, prays &c. and the poor soldier is left all alone in his narrow house of clay.= A military

(continued)

(March 21, 1865 continued)

funeral is grand impressive and very solemn when conducted properly. But here in "the field" many a soldier bids farewell to all things earthly and is thrown into the grave without as much as a board under or over him.-----

When ever any sick go from here either to Hilton head or Beaufort one of us has to go. so by one thing and an other we are kept busy most of the time

I am very thankful that Tommy & Sissy and yourself send lots of kisses to Dat for he was very much in need of them!!!!!! of course the same compliment is returned

To be sure the time is growing shorter "only six months" just think of it. then then Oh! then but we will wait and ask Our Heavenly Father to spair our lives untill then. Please give my warmest love to Dack_ & Mang_ and to father & Mother & the rest of the family It has been raining most of the afternoon it is now five o'clock and looks a little lighter May God bless you all is the earnest prayer of

Yours Very truly

W Charles

(On New York Branch, U.S. Christian Commission stationery.)

Head Quarters
Camp Sherman
Blairs Landing S.C.

Dear Ann

I must try to send you a few words this morning to let you know that I am well. That is about all that I can say for I have no news whatever to send to you there are all sorts of Rumors but none of them worth repeating. This is the worst place for news that I have ever been in No mail and no papers

I do not think that we shall remain here much longer at least I hope that we shall not. of course it is a very unhealthy place and will be come more so as the weather gets warmer Four of the boys are sick with the small pox two have died of Typhoid pneumonia a kind of inflammation of the lung

I intended to write to you on the 22nd of this month Sissy's Birthday but was sent off to Hilton Head and had no time, but had plenty of time to ask God to bless my child, and I believe that He will do it The dear child do you suppose that I would know her if I should see her any wheres from home among strangers I don't hardly think that I would know her but still I might. Well the time will soon come when we can renew our acquaintence and I hope that we shall never be strangers any more for ever I am sure that I would know Tommy if he was among ten thousand, and yet maybe I am mistaken any how I would like very much to have the trial. It is raining very hard just now, has been raining some for two days It is quite warm and spring like Is Tommie going to make any mapple sugar this spring Tell him to make Dat a little cake and keep it untill he comes home= Can Dackey get any one to help him this season or are the men all gone Give my love to him & Ma_g_7 father and mother, also to Uncle Sampson's folks I will try to write to Mrs. Jane A. Lewis in a few days I have not written to Lockport in a great while. I sent a letter to Sister Mag. from here

It is reported that we are to go to Charleston in a few days
Hoping that you are all well

I remain yours

Very Truly

W. Charles

(On stationery of the U.S. Christian Commission)

March 26 1865
Head Quarters
Camp Sherman
Blairs Landing S.C.

Dear Ann

This blessed Sabbath morning finds us very comfortable We got up early and got breakfast which consisted of mackerel coffee Hard Tack & apple sauce! Read a while in the Bible, then read "boby nail adnod" the seven first chapters of the Revelations, then washed and put on clean clothes through out. now it is just ten o'clock, so you see we have not been idle this morning. The wind blew very cold last night and it continues quite chilly yet. Doubtless we shall complain of too much heat in a few days

My health continues first rate although lately the toothache has bothered me a good deal

Within a few days about fourteen hundred of the troops here have left, it is said to go to Morehead City North Carolina, but when we shall all go is more than we know maybe in a week and maybe not in a month. I do wish they would send us somewhere from here perhaps it will be to a worse place but the change will be something

I have no news to send to you this morning. It was reported here last night that there had been an other Battle in North Carolina and that Sherman & Schofield had joined their forces I hope that it is true

It is also stated that the Rebel Army is leaving Richmond and going towards Lynchburg

Billy Jones is well and sends his best respects to you all he has not heard from home or from his Brother John since he came here

Major H. Cheney is also enjoying first rate health and looks much better than when he first came. neither has he heard as yet any thing from home I do not see why Joel does not write to me maybe he has and the letter gone to the Regiment in fact I believe that I wrote to him to direct to the Regiment so I will not hear anything from him for some time

I saw some Rose Buds yesterday also Lilacs almost ready to bloom when will your Roses and Lilacs be out. not these two months yet will they? Ah I would not live in such a cold country if I was you!!

We shall have preaching this afternoon But I am going to take a walk pretty soon. And how I do wish that yourself and the children were here to go with me that they might pick the wild flowers, and play among the green leaves and listen to the birds sing and that we might also sing and praise our Maker and our Saviour who hath been so good to us Do you not think that we could sing a little if we were together again. I am quite sure we could.= there are some very nice little birds here that sing very pretty. I hear one just now that seems to be doing his utmost to make his song of praise sweet and acceptable unto the Good Master who even careth for little birds Oh! what a comfort it is to know that Our Father is so great and so good