

Head Quarters June 19th 18

Wilson's Landing on James River

Mr Arter Dear Father

I Recd your letter a
ago wrote you 6th and would of answe
but my time being so occupied I could
a moment for myself. we have to work
and both late and early we are cald o
morning at 3 o'clock and kept to it until nine
evening. occasionally we are cald out on a supp
ing an attack from the Rebels. so far we have
came in contact with the Rebs. but should we be
attacked we will have to try our hand. our work
sence we left home has been mostly to work on
the fortifications & making roads for the main army
to move on. it is astonishing to see the amount of work that
is done. we have had to make roads where you
would think it imposible. this whole country lays very
Low and as a general thing is swampy. you have heard
of what they call the wildersep. and by the By it is
well named. to give you a history. as far as I have seen of
the country. it lays very low. with pine trees growing up
in it as thick as they can grow. running up as straight
as an arrow ~~from~~ a height from 30 to 40 feet. with a kind

vine growing up, so thick that a rabbit
at through with gagers on, running up to
the trees making a perfect mat. on
where we now are, the pines grow larger
intersperced with other kinds of trees, such as maple
honest white oak &c as a general thing the
trees to no size, the land looks very poor the
as I have seen where they farm looks very
thin, composed of white clay, as far as I
country over since we left Washington City
the country appears to be entirely deserted and
vast from the ravages of our army, I have not
a field enclosed with a fence, and what
crops was put out, there is no care taking of it,
in fact as ^{far as our army} ~~fact as our~~ reaches, the whole country
is laid waist, and it will take years before it
can be brought back to what it was before the war,
all the fine mansions have been destroyed, the
camp we now lay on is said to be one of the finest
locations on James River, it is entirely deserted, not a
soul on or near it, they do say the owner Mr Wilson
and his sons are all in the rebel army, it was at
this point, that General Wild had the fight with
General Fitz Hugh Lee about the 16th of May, and
whipped him most shamefully, the dead rebels can be
seen laying around over the battle ground now

we left Washington City some Two Weeks
since that time I have seen a good
country. first we Reported at the wharf
is on the Pamunka River. that was a port
Gen Grant recd his supplies, to carry on
we was immediately ordered to city on
the James River at the mouth of the ~~the~~
Appomattox. at this point. was quite a
city. but since our men came in, this
been almost destroyed there is not an
family living here now. on looking it over
some of the nicest parks I ever saw, at ~~the~~
It is the head Quarters for Gen Butlers Blac
from here we were ordered to Bermuda Hundred. it is
here now where Gen Grant receives his supplies as
he has shifted his army from the Pamunka to
this Point where he commenced his operations
against Petersburg. we was immediately ordered from
this point to the Point of Rocks on the Appomattox River
here we laid from Monday to Thursday evening. meanwhile
Gen Grant Gen Mead & Gen Butler mapped some one hundred
and Fifty Thousand Troops. to commence their campaign
against Gen Burgard Johnson & other Generals.
they commenced their operations on Wednesday morning
June 15th and I have no doubt that there has been some
of the hardest fighting in the whole campaign

ace that is Point of rocks. can be seen the
ay where General Grant & Butler is a fighting.
was for three days, ^{9 nights} the time our Regiment laid at that
heard one continual sound from the artillery & Rifles.
rising therefrom would raise therefrom until the whole
ould ^{be} darkened so as a person could not hardly
tion from when I was I could look the whole thing
t was one of the grandest sights I ever looked upon, but
he sacrifice of no doubt of Hundreds yes I may say
our Brave men. Oh what a sorrowful sight to
see as I have seen regiment after regiment march
lose heavy Fortifications for the purpose of scaling them
capture the enemy which is inside. knowing at the same time
ences were entirely against them. on those heavy Fortifications
around Petersburg which the Rebs held, they put the negroes to work
to take them. Fort Walker being the outside and strongest
Fort of the rebs. was taking entirely by the blacks. It is said by the history
ours own Grant himself that at this fort was the hardest fight of the whole war
this fort was took on wednesday evening. commencing the attack about 10
o'clock & was took about 8 & silenced. meanwhile the negroes were repulsed
some 4 or 5 times and would rally until they finally succeeded in reaching
the top of the works. then the tug of war commenced. the Rebs yelling to
them to come on and they would make another fort Pillow case. the
Blacks could not see it that way. on the taking of the fort the Blacks
minded every Reb that was left supposing to be some 1000 hundred. I saw
& and talked with quite a number of Blacks that was in that engagement
they say when they took the fort the Rebs begged of them to spare their
lives but their orders was to remember Fort Pillow and that was the
way they remembered it. this engagement I was in a position that I
could see the whole thing. Fort Stephens the inside fort was taking
the next evening. the Gun Boats & heavy Siege Guns plaid on it all
day keeping up one continual volley along in the afternoon

The Fort was silenced at which time the negroes
 went over and took possession as they did the other which
 they now hold. they here also remembered Fort Pillow all in
 fact all of the heavy works around Petersburg was taken
 by the blacks the idea that the whites will not take part
 when the blacks are engaged is entirely plaid out. I find
 by talking with the white troops that they have no objection to the
 blacks troops taking a position with them in the field, and if
 necessary they lead the column and take all the honor
 It is in this department Gen Butler where the main portion
 of the colored army is. I have seen regiment after Regiment
 passing backward and forward. Cavalry Artillery & infantry
 they are the finest looking men in the field, as a general
 thing they are large, mostly young, and of all colors.
 from the white to as black as a crow and nearly all
 of them has been slaves. I must bring this to a close
 as I have already wrote more than I expected
 I must close for to day as I am just detailed to go with
 a lot of men on picket. Tuesday Jun 21st will I have got
 in again from my Picket duty, and thought I would finish my
 letter in this section every thing is Rebell from what I can understand
 there is not a union man in the whole country some of the boys
 have been out back from this place some five miles foraging they all
 say they have not seen a white man in that distance, the women
 all claim they are cesesh, and that their cause is right, all
 through the country the farms are entirely deserted and not a man
 to do any work, the blacks have all ran off & the whites have been
 conscripted, the houses are nearly all vacant, the women come

6.
together & you will find a house full of them. when ever there
is any corn planted & wheat sown it is left, the corn has
not been touched since it was planted. when I was out
yesterday I see 100 acres just growing up in the weeds & not a
rail to be seen that bring the case as far as I have been
It looks like starvation, what little is left our army scour
the county & take what they can find, there is a party of
a lot of men started out from this camp this morning and
and went out with conveyances they take every thing they can
find, such as horses cows hogs sheep grain pigs and
every thing they can get hold of. It appears hard to go
into a house when there is not a man near and take
every thing can be found. when there is ~~no~~ one but
women & children, and they a crying & Beggary as our
men are taking away every thing they can find, it is right
in this section when rebellion exist in its worst. O that this
cursed Rebellion may cease and that the people may return
to that Government which is the best of all others, this location is
said to be one of the finest from the mouth of James River
to Richmond, it is a point the Rebels prize very much, on account
it is the best natural point to cut off the supplies which our men
up to Gen Grant's army. there is three Regiments of us here the
143^d 163^d col Miller commanding and a Artillery Co and also
there is also two gunboats laying at the landing in case we
should be attacked that they they may help take care of their
cases. as every body knows the rebels hate the gun boats more than the
Devil

I saw a case the other evening where a Gun Boat made
the Rebs Schedaddle. as our Regt was coming down
the River to this point the Rebs planted themselves with a
Battery on the shore. I suppose to try what our boat was
made of some of the boatmen discovered them and held
up, & signaled a gun boat which came up and fired
about a doz shels into their shebang, and they lit out in a
little less than no time. the James River is a very nice
river. & is navigable for the largest Crafts. there is Boats
in sight all the time carrying forward supplies the tide
runs clear up to to this point, and is salty for miles
up, at this landing it is nice & pure and a most
splendid beach. which makes it nice for the boys
to swim in, which they do no little at there is
some very nice fish caught mostly cat fish and
lots of ells. I see the boys here as long as my arm
and by the bye the first ell I ever saw was caught here.

8
I Recd Two Letters to day from my wife and also a Letter
one wrote 5th of June the other 15th which I assure you was
gladly Recd, and was also Glad to hear you was all
well, & was getting along as well as, could be expected
in regard to the General news of the army of the Potomack
you are able to get them as soon as I can get them here
the news is here that General Grant holds Petersburg
if such is the case good By Richmond as it is ac
knowledged on all hands that is the key to it. The weather
here is not so very warm, I have seen it warmer in Ohio
but the nights is very cold can bare 3 or 4 Blankets very
comfortable, there has been no rain since we left the city of
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ENDS HERE - NO SIGNATURE