

Camp Foote, Hartford
Aug. 17th 1862

My Dear Wife

We arrived here yesterday all well & safe. Waited all day in expectation of choosing officers but it was deferred to this morning. We made choice of I. R. Bronson (?) Capt, James L. ^{Isaac} ~~Townsend~~ (?) 1st Lieutenant, Mr. Fiske, 2nd Lieutenant, the other officers are for the future. We stayed last night in the hospital tent with poor accommodations and a probability of the same tonight. But as good as I expected. Our quarters I think will be assigned us tomorrow. I am feeling better than I expected to and were it not for some little anxiety about the dear ones at home, I should be in first rate spirits. All manner of reports are hourly circulated with regard to our starting, but I think it will be some days first. I still hope to have a stay at home. There is nothing particular further to tell you I know of.

So I close.

R. W. Benton

If you wish to write direct it to

R. W. Benton
1st Regt.
Camp Foote
Hartford, Conn.

written in the utmost haste

New York Tuesday noon

Aug 26th 1862

My absent but ever dear Wife-

Supposing you would be glad to hear as soon as possible how we progress. I am at your service a few moments. We are lying at the wharf in N.Y. waiting for the Propeller to arrive with the troops that could not be transported on this boat, the City of Hartford. We left yesterday afternoon starting from the Camp ground about two o'clock and I can tell you it was a sad scene. I don't know that I saw one smiling, joyous face in all Hartford as we marched through the streets. It seemed as though the City all full to overflowing with sad hearts, made sad by adieus and farewells. As we started down the river its banks were lined with loyal people cheering us on to a patriotic work. At about eleven o'clock we passed Faulkland Island light, I instinctively rushed to the side of the boat, threw a kiss in your direction for you and the rest, (threw the blessing of an absent husband & father on the breeze)? and turned sadly away wishing that it was day time and I could see Arthur's boat with you all on board coming along side so that I could see your dear faces once more before we leave for Dixie, but it could not be so. So I was obliged to bid farewell - at least for a time - to the hills and vales of old Connecticut that I have often traversed with delight and which I hope to see again ere I die. I believe that there is nothing so well calculated to make us appreciate the blessings we enjoy as deprivation. And I told S. D. Crittendon I believe if I ever returned again it would be to enjoy life far better than before.

was the 14th's wagoner

Thursday, the 28th. I now sit writing in plain sight of the Capitol in the City of Washington. Tuesday forenoon we started for this place going first to Elizabethport, from thence to Harrisburg, from thence to Baltimore reaching this place this morning at daylight. We were treated quite well in Baltimore and every place we have passed. In Easton, Pa. we passed close to an embankment going quite slow and as I examined (?) in my SCORES (?) caught (?) it giving us a hearty goodbye. Where we are to go now I do not know. but I suppose to Arlington Heights to be drilled. Last night was the first I have really suffered. We were packed in close freight cars in which we rode all night, the heat was extreme, but after Cutting (?) off one board (?) and getting a little more air we contrived to live it through. But my paper is used up and I must close. I am in better health than I have enjoyed for a long time. Yours now and ever.

R. W. Benton

Fort Ethan Allen Aug. 31 1862

My Dearest Wife

Although it is the Sabbath there is no preaching here as it is raining. So I spend the time writing to you. First of all I say I am quite well though I think when I tell you the circumstances you will think it strange. Before noon the day that I wrote you last we were ordered to march for Camp Chase which is as near as I can judge not far from six miles from Washington on the Virginia side. So we shouldered our duds and started. It was uncomfortably hot and dusty beyond all reason but a soldier has no business to be tired or complain, we reached there about six o'clock perfectly dripping with sweat, covered with dust less than an inch thick, actually the dust rose in such clouds that men and horses could not be seen at a distance of more than from ten to fifteen rods according to circumstances a great part of the way. Some of our strongest men - George Hall of N.G. was one - were obliged to have their knapsacks put on board of baggage wagons and hardly reached camp at that but somehow my strength held out wonderfully. We pitched our tents and were soon sleeping soundly on the ground beneath hoping to have a good night's rest but in this we were disappointed for a three A.M. on Friday we called out our guns and ammunition distributed in the dark and with as little noise as possible, we were then given two crackers apiece and a cup of coffee, a rubber blanket and ordered to march we knew not whither, after marching awhile we were informed that it was supposed the rebels were intending to make a demonstration at Chain (?) Bridge some six miles above on the Potomack. We reached that place before noon some of our men behind who were too tired to go with us, not

finding the rebels at that place we were marched two or three further in a westerly direction almost all the way up hill to Fort Ethan Allen where we were directed to () outside the Fort and in case of attack occupy the rifle pits and here we have remained until the present time and how much longer may I cannot tell neither do I care if we could be made comfortable but as it is with our tents knapsacks blankets and overcoats we know not where, with nought to sleep on but the ground and nothing to cover us but the heavens and a rubber blanket, a wet day and the prospect of a wet night, with nothing to eat but bread and Salt port eaten raw or roasted in the fire on the point of a stick, with no coffee that is decent, we cannot be expected to be quite satisfied . But we hope hope for better things. Yesterday, we heard the booming of cannon almost all day, and it is reported that there has been another great battle fought terminating in our favor. You will probably know the truth sooner than we. George Hall, Odelle Chittenden & Henry B. Dudley we left about tired out and when we arrived here several of our men were nearly exhausted. Henry Parmellie went to the hospital today but I think he is not dangerously sick, ditto Samuel Seward, Oliver Evarts (?) also I am afraid will give out. But we hope for the best. We think and talk of and about the friends we love at home very very often and wish to be with them, but if it is the Lord's will that we remain here we are willing although we may be called to do and suffer. I hope and trust that you will daily pray for our reunion but if we meet not here I hope we meet in a better world where partners are unknown.

Yours truly, R. W. Benton