

On Picket March 31st 1862

Dear Mother

I do not know where I am except that I am out on picket about two miles from Big Bethel. Our men made a reconnaissance on that place the other day but did not find it occupied so they returned to camp. I should have went along that day but was on picket and could not go. There was about thirty thousand went out that day it was a grand sight to see them go marching by. They all expected to have a fight but came back home disappointed. I have been here just a week to day, and have been on picket three times. it suits me exactly we take three or four prisoners every day and sometimes shoot at some when they are so far off that we cant hurt them any. One of the Massachusetts boys got paid last night for not shooting straight enough, a rebel scout crawled up and shot him in the leg but did not hurt him verry bad I have just had a good dinner, out of a secesh pig that the boys killed this morning we lay violent hands on every pig that comes in the way, they have to go a good ways to keep out of the way we get some turkeys and chickens and sometimes oysters and Clams. I spent part of one day in looking over the ruins of Hampton that the rebels burnt last summer. I think it must have been one of the most beautiful towns in the United States before it was burnt. One of the Oldest Churches in America was standing there and that was burnt with the rest The rebels have dug at every corner of it for the corner stone expecting to find some treasure but whether they did or not I cant tell. The town was well fortified on three sides with earth breast works but it seems that it did them no good as they were obliged to leave without making a stand.

You need not be surprised if you hear of Richmond being ours in one more week They will probably not give fight untill they get there. I do not think they can hold that long, there is enough Artillery here now to knock Richmond all to pieces in one day and they keep bringing in more everyday I thought I knew what it was to be a soldier when I left Washington but I find that I did not know anything about it at all We do not have any tents only what we make of our rubber blankets stretched over a stick that keeps the rain off and we keep warm the best way we can it is verry warm and pleasant during the day but the nights are verry cold. I have not found any fault yet and shall not as long as I get enough to Eat. Ed makes one of the poorest kind of soldier, he is not good for any thing at all no more than he was at home last summer. Tell Lib that she need not expect a letter from me untill I get an answer to my last I sent her a letter and a photograph at the same time and have not heard from her since. You will direct your letter to Fortress Monroe after this and I shall probably get them some time or other

Your aff Son

CJH