

Sep 17th, 1862
No. 5th

Mrs. Andrew Upson
Plantsville, Conn.

(Envelope is postmarked Washington with a 3-cent stamp. Letter is on two sheets of lined stationery folded in half and is written on eight sides in ink.)

Arlington Heights
Sep 17th, 1862

My Dear Wife,

You will see we have changed our location – We had barely got settled on East Capitol Hill & expected to stay for some time when the order came to pull up & start off – This was Tuesday noon – Companies were formed & ammunition distributed & all set about packing up – It did not take us to long as at New Haven. We were soon ready to strike tents; but teams could not be had for only three companies – These were at once dispatched & the rest of us ordered to be ready in the morning – Accordingly we composed ourselves & enjoyed a good rest. I tried the ground with only a rubber blanket beneath & fathers check above – Waked up alright – Had our breakfast loaded up & started. Our route was past the Capitol, down Pennsylvania (**Pg. 2**) Avenue & over Long Bridge onto the sacred soil of Virginia – In the city we passed the old Capitol filled with rebel prisoners who gazed at us through the grates – Though soldiers throng Washington at all times I noticed that the attention of all was given to us – Probably each new Regt. is thus viewed & criticized – Many inquired where we came from & how long since we went in to camp – After we crossed the river the ground began to rise & on the hills we could see forts & camps, while guards & soldiers & wagon trains thronged the way – It was a muggy, faint, hot sort of morning – fortunately it had rained last night so that we had no dust to eat as would have been the case had we marched yesterday – The boys sweat profusely but stood up bravely - The Colonel gave (**Pg. 3**) us three halts, but after we began to rise the hills & even before it was evident several of our men were with difficulty keeping up – They finally fell out & sat down to rest – We passed on & at the next rest they all brought up but one – He got in after we reached our destination – but others carried the gun & knapsack -

We are now again settled about 4 miles west of Washington – Five regiments, new ones have crossed Long Bridge today & are encamped all about us – Further on in every direction camps are seen & men blacken the fields – All is bustle & noise & warlike preparations – We arrived about 10 o'clock – After our tents were pitched I seized the opportunity to make a reconnaissance – Proceeding to the west I came to the summit of the first range of the hills – Here (**Pg. 4**) rifle pits extend across the road & wind along on either hand – Back of these stood a row of men with guns in their hands & close by commanding the road & fields were brass 12 powders – I followed down our pit for a long ways – It ran around on the brow of the elevations crooking this way & that & ended in a deep valley – On the opposite slope above stood a fort from which surly black

(9-17-1862)

fellows looking like huge butlers in the distance surveyed the country around – For miles the trees had been cut down & the eye ranged over a great extent – I climbed up the steep & found the fort surrounded by abattis - next a moat, then three parapet on top of which were piled bags of sand with regular spaces for rifles – Going round to the fort I had free admittance, my straps serving me & for the first time stood inside of a manned fort – Everything was in shape & as neat as a parlor – Surveying the country on all sides (**Pg. 5**) I was first struck by the number of forts & camps in sight – next by the natural beauty of the country – The soil here is a yellowish clay – generally without stone – it is a productive soil if rightly managed – To the N.E. lay Washington. The Capitol with its fine unfinished dome rising far above all other buildings - The extreme horizon beyond was a succession of hills, slopes, ridges & vales affording by their relation form & setting a series of beautiful pictures – The Potomac lay like glistening silver in the mountain valley – opened by long bridge with it's myriads of moving men & teams & bearing on its bosom countless transports with here & there the black sides of a gunboat or armed vessel - Rising from the river westward on either hand were similar sweeps of hill & valley, formerly crowned with their majestic forests but now strewn with trees & brush the evidence of devastating war. (**Pg. 6**) Interspersed through all these undulations & relieving the brown shade of ruined vegetation as well as the green of that surviving the white tents of scores of camps caught the eye - On the highest Elevations were mantled entrenchments & over them the Stars & Stripes – The sight was beautiful & inspiring despite the significance of what had taken place or what was still going on – I am agreeably surprised at the general features of this region – The country is better than I had supposed – One of the signal corps stood by a 32 pound Parrott, his flag of black ground with a white square in the center flying within reach – He pointed out to me Munson's hill where you recollect the rebels looked at us so long last fall – It appeared about 4 miles distance – Our troops occupy it now & how much further I can't say – Alexandria seminary was plainly visible now crowded with hospital patients – In the lien distance (**Pg. 7**) beyond fork Blenker could be discerned: I looked at it through the glass which lay ready pointed – The sentinels going their rounds, the signal flag at its position, guns, sandbags & abbatis & all other evidences of preparation showed that in these forts Uncle Sam is ready – If there is any reliance to be placed in fortifications & guns & rifles pits & men I don't see how the rebels can get to the Potomac on this route - But enough of this – So far as I can judge Gen Casey is fitting up a new division & here he is gathering all the regiments composing it – The 15th, 21st & 20th Ct. are now here the 7th R.I. the 138 N.Y. the 11 N.H. a battery I believe from Pa. Above, below & on either side are other regiments sufficient to form a large corps – This locality – literally swarms with men; but whether anything will be accomplished remains to be seen – I have not seen any big (**Pg. 8**) officers long enough to form an opinion about them - In fact our Brigadier has only flashed upon my vision for ½ a minute & disappeared – Gen. Casey rode past us yesterday while we were marching hither – He is I should judge more than 60 years old –

(9-17-1862)

Our Brig is young & expected to have done finely over in New Mexico – It is a little irregular that such a union of scriptural names occurs in these two officers Casey's designation is Silas while our brigadier comes before us with the angelic Gabriel & the Apostolic Paul. If they unite the characteristics of these divine heroes in the smallest degree you may look out for big things from this division - End

I send back the old continental shinplaster – wish you to lay it up safely – Alonzo Hough & C.H. Hotchkiss recd. letters tonight – These are the first that have come to our company - We all expect a mail tomorrow – You may believe we have done our duty so far as writing is concerned – 3 or 4 hundred letters have already been sent out from our boys - Lou heard of a new daughter & we gave him a congratulation that was appropriate.

(Written on 1st page upside down)

- Love to all – direct to me as I told you
- Lieut. Andrew Upson
- Co E. 20th Regt C. V.
- Washington, D.C.