

Jan 11, 1863  
No. 37

Mrs. Andrew Upson  
Plantsville, Conn.

*(Envelope is yellow with embossed American flag. Postmark is unclear with a 3-cent stamp. Letter is on two sheets of lined stationery folded in half and one half sheet, and is written on 10 sides in ink.)*

Near Stafford Co. House  
Jan. 25th, 1863 –

My Dear Wife –

I suppose you have some kind of a map by which our various wanderings & locations can be traced – I wrote you from Dumfries hastily, having only a few moments at that time – But we remained where I penned the brief page until next morning at 8 – A storm had been threatening all day – It broke upon us about 9 & a drenching night followed – We had a glorious fire of hickory logs - The Capt. who was unwell, went to the hospital tent – Lt. Lewis, having failed to bring along his rubber blanket, stood up by the blazing logs – David & I stretched ourselves under our blankets, laying down first a rubber, next a woolen, then our own bodies, & spreading above two woolen & lastly a rubber, piecing the latter out with my gum overcoat – We slept till 12 when the water began to get under us & also into my face – (**Pg. 2**) We turned out expecting to sleep standing the balance of the night – I'm in some way displaced my boots after I had gone to bed & they had caught a good supply of water – I upset them & ran in my feet for there was no other resort, put on my rubber overcoat & joined Lt. Lewis in watching the quarrel between water & fire, of course giving our sympathies to the latter – David was more determined & before I knew it had fixed the two rubber blankets into a shelter tent – We crept in & slept some without getting badly wet – The bugle roused us before light, we cooked our tea & ham while the rain poured down – The prospect ahead was anything but agreeable – But it won't do for soldiers to hesitate, though the men fell in very tardily – We started off in mud & rain such as you never saw I think – And so we marched till nearly noon before it held up – It was awful to see what trouble the mules got, the way some of the soldiers swore must have somewhat (**Pg. 3**) taken the Devil by surprise – Between 1 & 2 we came to a creek that risen above the shave bridge, such as answers at low water – The Trains & Artillery could not ford & no course was left but to build a bridge – I went down with the Capt. & worked there till night – The regt. encamped back from the creek on the hillside – David & I got up our shelter tent again & he had obtained a bundle of straw so that we were really as comfortable as pigs & I guess slept as soundly – Of course we had a fire & didn't spare the wood – On the whole the men got along much better than you would believe – There was more or less rain & all the time a thick mist – Our blankets too were very damp & I expected to take cold sleeping on them – I got my feet & stockings perfectly dry before going to bed & perhaps that is the reason that I escaped – We left the next day about 12, that is the regt. did, I was out trying to get provisions; for our haversacks were getting (**Pg. 4**) low - & when I returned the boys had an hour the

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start of me – It took me just two hours to catch up in which time I passed 7 regiments – The traveling was soft enough sometimes wading in thin mud – About 5 we came to Acquia Creek & found it impossible to cross without another bridge – All encamped, our regt. in a very cold, wet, pine grove – The men were now almost entirely out of provisions & the trains so far behind that we could get none from that source – I had a piece of ham & a cup of tea but made up my mind that I should not go hungry next day – David & I & several other fellows went to an adjoining oak grove & fixed our shelters there – this displeased the Capt. - He would have acted wiser had he taken the whole Co. & done likewise – A party of Co. Ds men were near us & I had some talk with them about several cattle near by – We were all of a mind that fresh beef would do us good – I went to bed about 10 & an hour after was waked up & invited to go down a short distance & help myself to a quarter of beef – The D men had killed a young creature & were already cooking a savory supper – I turned (**Pg. 5**) out & went down – Got the largest part of a fine quarter & the tongue – carried it off to our fire, cut off the meat, gave the rest to another squad & in an hour was abed again & slept till morning – Our breakfast was fried beef & tea – no bread – no fixings but salt & a small trifle of butter. But we were thankful for so much & cracked our jokes as if provided with everything – Marched about noon & arrived before night within one mile of Staf. Co. Ho. – The next morning the whole regt. was ordered on picket – We had to take all our luggage because as yet we had no stationary camp – It was hard to take the back track, yet we had to until we got to the Creek crossed at 1 the day before & then up that ½ a mile & thence back parallel with the road, stationing men once in a certain distance – Our course was through thick bushes & big woods, over hills, across ravines & open field, all day long – Night overtook us before the whole line was posted – half of our Co. were stationed & I should have been with them but had been previously ordered to Co B. only one of their officers being on duty. We all stopped when it became dark & made ourselves comfortable – But I must say this was the hardest day I have seen since we (**Pg. 6**) became soldiers – The men were tired by the previous march & ought to have been allowed rest before beginning such duty – By 9 o'clock Saturday night we had our wood & were ready to lie down – Guess I pictured you pretty happily situated & should not have taken it ill had some big giant dropped me into your midst – During the night it rained though the temperature is mild - Yesterday morning we lay around our fires till after 10 before starting to finish the line of the day before – I enjoyed very much reading over the sweet hymns of Zion & imagined you getting ready to go to church. About noon the sun came out & it was as pleasant as an October day – Could not make it seem like winter – We traveled until about 2 when finding that I should not be wanted in Co. B. all of ours were far behind. I & Jim turned our faces towards camp as near as we could judge – This whole country is half woods & you might wander a week & never get anywhere – But we came (**Pg. 7**) out right after 2 hours tramping & soon after the men came straggling in, having been relieved by another regt. – By 5 P.M. most of the 20th had returned & now at 5 ½ I sit on a big stump, facing to the west, where the sun still shines beautifully & am writing this note – Back of me lies a monster white oak which we cut down the first night of our arrival beside which our fire was built & along in front of it we rested as we shall do

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tonight – Jim has started anew the fire & is preparing to get supper – We hear that a mail has arrived which I hope is true for yours written two weeks today is the last news I have from home, except that C. Hotchkiss got a letter Wednesday night, which said he had a bbl on the way with something for me also.

The mail has come – two letters for me one commenced by Ida & also one written by you dated the 19th – I see you knew nothing of our marching orders – You (**Pg. 8**) probably got word Monday the day we started – I feel very sorry you misconstrue so constantly all my remarks about your habit of borrowing trouble – It has not been my purpose to utter any harsh words for I have felt that you were doing nobly – But somehow jump at wrong conclusions whenever I attempt to relieve your mind by pleasantries of ridicule – Enough of this – I shall cultivate silence on some topics after this – Hope Julia Ann will stay with you at least until the children are in a condition to rest – I am getting exercised about father – What is the matter with him? Does he take anything to help his troubles – If he gets very low I wish you to let me know – Don't believe I could get a furlough even to attend his funeral should he be called away, which I hope may not be yet these years – But try to make him comfortable & encourage him to take his ease & not do any work – (**Pg. 9**) About that New Haven bill I guess there is some mistake – Send me a copy of it – anyway you need not try to pay it until I get something – The paymaster is along & some regts. in this corps have recd. their wages to within 2 months – Perhaps we officers shall be treated in the same way, Uncle Sam keeping back enough to prevent us from running away -

Monday Morning – Got a good rest last night – The men complained of feeling old this morning & would like to rest a day or two – I don't know as I am the worse for the wear of our last weeks work – My load was large, for I brought an extra blanket & when leaving camp at Fairfax Station discovered a good feather pillow, which I brought along & have found out that it contains a big lot of comfort – I think we shall remain here a month or more – Have heard (**Pg. 10**) nothing of war news until last night. We shall get the papers again here – I learn that our supplies come from Brooks Station, 4 miles south of Stafford Co. House on the RR leading to Fredericksburg - We are only 12 miles from that point. I wish you would send me a cheap copy of "Great Expectations" – I am almost starved for want of some reading – I could carry such a volume & it would afford me a vast comfort once in a while to pull it out & enjoy the pictures of Dickens – I had rather have this than things to eat, though some of your cooking would not be neglected – It would be sent by mail – I am out of postage stamps & must have some of them too – Well you think I want a great many things probably – I hope before long the money for them can be returned – Anyhow it is earned & sooner or later will come – This water is damp & the ink spreads – Besides it is badly daubed & I suppose all my letters look dirty - Consider the circumstances & be thankful that you get them even so - That picture for the children I will get as soon as a chance offers –

My love to all –

Yours

A. Upson