

March 3rd, 1863
No. 57

Mrs. Andrew Upson
Plantsville, Conn.

(Envelope is postmarked Washington, D.C. Mar. 6 with a 3- cent stamp. Letter is on two sheets of lined stationery, which is stained, folded in half and written on 8 sides in ink.)

Stafford Co. House, Va.
Feb (line goes through the word.) March 3d, 1863

My Dear Wife,

The box has at last come & I have just finished overhauling its contents – The things are mostly in good condition although it has been so long on the way – Have not had time to examine the articles minutely but am surprised to find such a quantity & variety in so small a measure – You folks at home do succeed admirably in cramming – Tomorrow morning I shall inspect with great care all these tokens of your kindness & show my appreciation by appropriating each without ceremony – The apples had begun to decay & there is a little mold on the bread – One bunch of paper is slightly touched as you see the upper corner of this sheet, the first used – But in this respect I am much more fortunate than David or Lt. Lewis, who also had, one a bbl & the (**Pg. 2**) other a box, with much nearly spoiled - A great many others through the regt. are in the same fix – The express matter got in today a big pile of it too there was – Sorry it did not arrive two weeks since; for we have been living so well lately that we did not feel the need of such donations as when we first encamped at this place – But still anything from home is ever welcome & for a few days we can snap our fingers at the brigade Commissary & keep clear of his cloth roofed grocery – I found you had put in leather, cakes, bread, apples, paper, envelopes, ink, a tea pot full of dried grape skins, 3 cans just such as I want, each stuffed with something nice, a towel, awl, nails, fish line & hooks, a little bottle, the contents of which I have not looked at, dried beef, pop corn & some pan or other in the bottom not yet taken out – Also a small package for Sergeant Stannard & one for Leiut. Atwater – What (**Pg. 3**) more day light will exhibit is to be seen – But it is a comfort to have a stock of writing materials on hand & now only time is wanting to restore them to you all marked over – Maria's loaf is all right & I shall remember her by grateful missive soon - Coming in from the picket this A.M. I found your letter of the 25th waiting for me & today's mail brought the one of date 27th – The S. Major showed wonderful shrewdness in keeping our letters till he got home before mailing them – I have since sent twice by others; if they don't act wiser I will confine my attentions entirely to U.S. facilities – We had a charming day on picket – The birds were merry as they could be; Gaga gee & his black choir kept up a constant song near by my post – While phebes & blue birds & robins & numberless little songsters tuned their throats to hail the genial advent of spring – Towards night the wild geese came squawking along & after ran (**Pg. 4**) set the terrapins & I know not what other amphibious vocalists continued the vernal harmonia -

(3-3-1863)

We were on the brink of Aquia Creek, a few rods from the landing to which our forage is brought from below on barges towed by a little steam tug – During the day hundreds of wagons & horses come there for hay & oats & it has the appearance of a great business place – There are no houses but such as the soldiers have put up – One of the men with me had some fish hooks & we fixed up some lines out of an old oat sack & succeeded in catching eleven fair sized cat fish today – Tonight we had enough fish to give us a taste & as your hooks & lines have arrived so timely I expect to angle some rebels out of the streams if none can be caught on terra firma – Shall always hereafter carry along the apparatus & when my picketing happens to be along side Va. streams it need not surprise you to hear that I use bob & sinker as well as sword & pistol –

(Pg. 5) Wednesday Morning March 4th – We are having plenty to do – In addition to picketing, building corduroys xc. we are called upon to recite evenings at the Lt. Cols. from the tactics & then next day squad & company drill takes up the time of such as are left after all other calls have been attended to – You would perhaps scarcely believe that on these drills the whole number of men in our company is sometimes less than 10 – I shall today not exceed that number – We never see all the members of a company together now except on a march – But it surprised me to see how small our dress parades are – The line is not half as long as it used to be at Pleasant Valley – Sickness, death, discharges & the wear & service of war rapidly diminishes a regt. – The express matter undergoes an examination now at Corps Head Quarters – Boxes & barrels are opened to **(Pg. 6)** guard against the introduction of Liquors & especially citizens clothing – You must know that many came to the war out of no good motives & such are always looking out for a chance to get away – Some pretend sickness or bodily ailment & I doubt not in every company there is more or less shirking & deception – Some are very apt to be sick when stormy weather or especial hard duty is to be encountered – In time this class become known individually & their reputation is not the most pleasant to carry – But it has been ascertained that many were having clothes sent them which they could put on & thus more readily desert – Houston tells me we had 9 wagon loads of express matter to the 20th – One box was found containing a full citizens rig to a soldier in Co. H. & he was arrested on the spot – Houston says they did not open my box notwithstanding he told them it probably **(Pg. 7)** was well charge with whisky, for he knew the officer to whom it was directed xc. xc. – A good many complain of loosing much from their boxes such as butter, apples & other things – No doubt there is a world of rascality about us – Where boxes ly at one place long some are pretty sure to get robbed – It is shameful that so much time is necessary to get things through –

You speak of my furlough – On some accounts it would please me to be at home election day but I should not take hold of politics any further than to indicate my hostility to the Tom Seymour party – Of choice I prefer to wait till the spring is a little more advanced in order to arrange farm matters; besides I should more enjoy the visit if the weather is warm & the going good – There is only one reason to incline me to come before May or June – That is the probability of active operations – But anyhow my turn would not come **(Pg. 8)** as soon as you indicate. So we must be as contented as possible – I expect confidently to see home & have a blissful time – My luck is good ever since enlisting & for it my heart overflows with gratitude –

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I feel some solicitude over Willie – Mary has got through so many troubles that we have begun to entertain a sort of belief that she will weather whatever befalls her – But I don't understand how it is that tough healthy boy is so feeble & unlike himself – Once in a while the thought comes over me that I shall hear some of you are dead – But I never allow it to remain – God has wonderfully preserved us all so far & let us be thankful to Him – The weather is quite cold this morning – A sudden change – Yesterday we sweat coming in from picket like summer time – Today overcoats & mittens are necessary – Messrs Pratt, Smith & Alfred Hotchkiss are expected here tomorrow – Visitors are getting to be so common that we don't go into ecstasies over them as at first – Has my Jan. report been recd.? Shall begin Februarys soon & make it short – Here again you have two sheets – Hope you see in them what I really feel – Strong love for any wife & little ones –

Truly
A.U.

(Written on first page top margin)

Didn't mention that nice roll of butter – Now that we have a big supply on hand how provoking if we should suddenly get marching orders – But I guess there is no fear of leaving here for a month.