

Aug. 10, 1863
No. 129
Mrs. Andrew Upson
Plantsville, Conn.

(Yellow envelope postmarked Alexandria Va. Aug. 11 1863 with a 3-cent stamp. Letter is on one large sheet of unlined stationery folded in half and is written on four sides in ink)

Distribution Camp –
Aug 10th, 1863

My Dear Wife,

Yours of the 7th is just recd. It ought to have been here yesterday – I only got two letters from you last week – 1st about James Atwater – I recd. his letter written from Forrest Hall on Tuesday about 6 o'clock P.M. It was sent to Fort Ethan Allen & so round here – But he had also sent word to Peck & he brought the letter to me about 3 o'clock that afternoon – Although very busy I dropped everything & went up to McKelvey to request a pass – He was cross & would not give it unless I brought a permit from Capt. Davis – Davis was no where to be found – Once more I tried McKelvey, but he continued gruff & immovable – By that time it was four o'clock & I put off till next day – In the morning I could not leave for we had been ordered to turn in our guns & equipment – But after dinner, I stirred myself – Had more trouble about a pass & did not get off until nearly 2 ½ P.M. It was awful hot walking – But I put ahead, reaching Georgetown & soon had the corporal at liberty – Found there also one of my own company who had gone (*Pg. 2*) to Washington on a pass, staid over his time & got picked up – He was a happy fellow – They were both hungry & as it was near tea I stopped at Hammacks, a famous restaurant, & we had a good supper – Then we returned to camp – Tell Mrs. A. not to make herself the least uneasy about this matter – James is in good health & spirits – When he told me about the doings of Finch & Riley I felt indignant & determined to write to the latter – I have already done so & when he gets the missive some ideas will get into his fate – As for Finch he is too small game – but his patriotism will get a ventilation before long –

Alas! The death of Charles Lewis came like a thunderbolt – Poor, poor Fannie! God console her – I looked the lists all over after Gettysburg for his name & consoled myself much that it was not to be found – The last time I saw him was the morning we crossed the Rappahannock at Kelly's ford - His corps went over before us during the night – We followed & passed to the head of the column – As we were moving off a large meadow he saw us & came out – We walked along together some ways & I told him about his wife – He was in fine spirits – then - It is sad, sad enough that so many noble fellows are carried down to the grave by this war – But such is the (*Pg. 3*) sacrifice required – Yet I cannot feel that his life has been thrown away – He was one of the high toned, true hearts & whenever I met him he left upon my mind the highest impressions of his patriotism – Assure Fannie of my profoundest sympathies in this season of her affliction – But also console her with the testimony that I do not doubt will arise from his comrades speaking his praise – The thought occurs that the name of a noble husband, though dead, is better

(8-10-1863)

than the presence of one without honor & the disposition to sacrifice for country – Yet how great her loss! By as much as he was a true man by so much more will she realize the burden of this event – God help her & all the sorrowing widows of these calamitous days – And may the rebellion soon end – At all events may all be true to the mission allotted us & shrink not though called upon to face death, widowhood, orphanage & many dark hours - You need borrow no trouble about me – My health is as good as ever – Have no looseness of bowels & no lack of appetite – Am a perfectly healthy man for anything known to myself at this writing – Feel well & guess the heat would not fetch me down on a march, though it is very trying – But I see little probability of marching or any real camp experience – Have begun our mess (**Pg. 4**) again today – But it is difficult to live very well – Now that peaches have come I expect to enjoy them – They sell here for 2cts. each – rather high – Will probably get some cheaper, but at this camp the huckster take every advantage – We hear that our regt. is at Kelly's Ford – Charles B. Jones arrived here on Saturday – He tells me that Capt. Woodruff was to leave New Haven in a day or so – If that is the case I have probably missed him again – But from what you write as to Col. Wooster I am hopeful as to the future – About going to the regt. my idea is that I should be better off in front than here – You know confinement never agrees with me. I like the country & green fields – Then too the excitement of life there is suitable to ones wholesome condition – Soberly, I should gain in flesh if put back to hard tack & open air – Weighed 127 yesterday – That is a little better than my usual summer ponderosity – You, I see, are feeling the hot weather & also Frank – Should not be surprised to hear that someone is sick – But we have great occasion for gratitude to God – He has shown us great kindness & mercy to us all – Let us think of it more & acknowledge with becoming thankfulness his fatherly goodness & care – One thing more for Mrs. Atwater – Tell her James' standing among his comrades is not a whit impaired - We all know that he would have come back – The course of Finch & Riley is shameful – I should have told you all about it – But thinking his folks were uninformed I intended to leave them & you so – It seems James wrote all about it – I am sorry that I did not as the matter has turned – It was fortunate for him that an officer who could vouch to his character was near – Vedder would do nothing – I went to him the first day, when McK – would not allow me a pass & requested him to send an order for James – He refused; I told him the soldier belonged to my company – Said he, (written up side of page in right margin) “there is one of my company, too, there: I don't care anything about them” – I was half tempted to knock (written upside down on this page in upper margin) him down – But it is all right now – Vedder is bearish at times – (*end of letter no further copy*)