

August 3, 1863

(Letter with no envelope is on one large sheet of unlined stationery folded in half and is written on four sides in ink.)

Camp Distribution

Aug. 3d, 1863

My Dear Wife,

Yours of July 31st, was rec. today having been remailed from Fort Ethan Allen – Glad to know of your welfare – Though subjected to great heat so that your complaints are some what loud I find in the latter evidence that you are safe – I notice that as long as a woman can use her tongue pretty freely she is not likely to go off all of a sudden – But don't complain of heat up there – This is the place to take a bake – The air is like a furnace – These broad bare spaces glow with air & sand that feels as though right from an oven –

Have just recd. orders to report to Capt. Davis, who has charge of this camp – He is the same officer to whom I was ordered when first coming here – But at that time he was in Convalescent Camp – About the period we went to Chain Bridge he was put in command of Camp Distribution – Smith is also under similar orders as myself – I understand they intend to organize two companies out of such men in this camp as do not belong (**Pg. 2**) to the army of the Potomac to be under us – What particular duty will be put upon us then we are not informed – Probably, though, camp guard will be the principal employment – Smith nor myself are pleased with this new turn of affairs – The fact is we are both indisposed to lead lazy lives – But what can we do? Everything goes by orders - & some of them are hard to take – worse than physic – I can hear about marches & fights – pickets & reconnaissance – but these employments that compel ardent minds to putter away on trifles fail to satisfy me – I do not see much here to gratify my aspirations – Maybe duties will grow in importance with wider experience – Somebody had to stay here – They have need of officers, more or less – But it appears to one that a kind of unfavorable impression attaches to a man who is any where except with his regiment – I suppose you will be more pleased than otherwise with this disposition of myself – Smith & I will take quarters together – Shall not get as good as before – Those buildings are all occupied – But we have our eyes on a good tent that is soon to be left by an officer who goes into the invalid corps – Whether we can keep Carter for cook is (**Pg. 3**) doubtful – He belongs to the Potomac Army & all attached there will be sent forward in a few days – My company of 99 men will be entirely scattered – I have got acquainted with most of them & they express themselves in very friendly terms – I have not heard of any but wishes himself back on the hills near Fort Ethan Allen – To-morrow shall turn over all the guns & equipments to the ordnance officer – Have been quite busy the last two days getting things into shape – There is a powerful sight of work necessary to square up - Full reports must be made of everything rec. down to the last cartridge expended – You would be surprised at the exactness of accounts – No little difficulty arises every day & multitudes of officers are unable by any honest means to put themselves right – The amount of lying in the world is as much as must keep the Devil & all his clerks busy – The experience of this short expedition to Chain Bridge & back so far as respects acquaintance with forms & requirements is worth very much – So you

(8-3-1863)

see even away from my regiment I am learning much & various things – I have just recd. yours of the 2d – We sent up to the fort & got our mail – I thought it would be just like you to go down to the depot last Saturday – (*Pg. 4*) I imagined myself stepping off the cars & doing a little kissing soon after on a certain pair of lips – Alas! That proposed journey & the joys to follow was not fated to us – Hope you relished the meal prepared – Several of these officers have their wives in camp – On either side of us is a tent with female occupants – Capt. Davis has his wife & a little boy with him on my right – On the left is Capt. Marston with a wife & three daughters – one about 16 – She takes a fancy to Smith – foolish girl – Not but that she shows good sense in her preference, but he has an Annie of whom I have heard glowing accounts – It seems quite domestic to see these children about – But I hope mine obey better Capt. Davis' boy – He appears to lack the judgment of old wise Solomon in governing his child – Mr. Smith & myself, are occupying temporarily a doctors tent – He is quite a naturalist & the shelves of his dispensary are as well furnished with impaled bugs & preserved reptiles & snakes as with the nostrums & tinctures that are dealt out to sick soldiers – Outside he had two moccasin snakes in a cage when we came – But the air of camp did not seem to agree with them & yesterday they curled up & died – I am not sorry – His butterflies & moths are very pretty – The Dr. himself is sick, but convalescent – I expect to go to W. to-morrow if setting up my company does not take to long – Hear our pay master has gone to the front, but don't know the truth of the report – If so it will be some days before he gets back – I have recd. no letters from H. D. Smith since my furlough – You must tell my friends of my changes – Direct as formerly except Camp Convalescent – That geranium leaf is very fragrant –

(Written sideways on first page in upper margin.)

I think lately about that bed of pinks – Are they out yet? Would give much for a good whiff of their celestial fragrance – Now is the time when I should most enjoy the flowers – How is your plat in front? –

Have recd. several presses from you & wish you to send every one – Give my high esteem to Rev. H. B. – Would be glad to listen to his pulpit exercises – As for Dan Finch I think he had better let our boys alone – He may be as vigilant as he pleases in some cases but good sense ought to have told him to let James come back without any such hunting – I will give him a blessing if he is not more discreet – And now there is only room to think of affections kindled anew, all for you -

A.U.