



Pittsburg Landing Tenn River  
 April 12, 1862

Dear Wife

April 12-62

I will try and give you some idea of what has transpired here since I wrote you last. I wrote you at Fort Henry, nothing of particular interest transpired on the trip up from there, except that we found 3 intelligent Contrabands at Ft Henry, who had run away from their masters, 60 miles across the country, stolen a boat load of Desech Corn, and took it to our troops, we liked their looks pretty well, and took them along with us as servants. I am of the opinion that they have ceased to be slaves. We were told that a Rebel Battery was planted between Fort Henry and Savannah, and we hove to and tied up to trees under a high bluff to stay for the night. We threw out Pickets on each side of the River, so as not to be taken by surprise. Ed O'Brien had charge of one Squad, and they had a fine time. We planted our guns on each side of the Boat, loaded our side arms, and were pretty well prepared for the reception of the enemy. Lieut Smyth and myself spread our Blankets on the upper deck in the open air, and were soon asleep, when we were awakened by a hurricane that tore the trees (to which we were fastened) out by the roots, and one fell across the bow of the boat, doing no damage of any account. The wind was of short duration and





and we were soon all right again. No enemy visited us, in fact they had all been driven back and were concentrating at Corinth. We heard of the Battle at Savannah, and were ~~only~~ sorry that we were too late to take a part in it. I am not competent to give you an account of the Battle, no person can form an idea of its magnitude without being here to look over the Battle Ground. Donelson sinks into utter insignificance when compared with it. On Sunday morning at 7 O'clock when most of our men were quietly eating their breakfast, they were met upon by the enemy, and bullets flew thick and fast, but completely missed, and soon their Artillery commenced a raking fire. Our men were soon drawn up in line of battle when the tug of war came. Our fences were driven, and it almost seems that <sup>the</sup> enemy might have driven an army into the river had they had 2 hours more daylight, but thanks to Gen Burn and his noble army, they threw away their whole equipments, except Arms and ammunition, and arrived here in season to give them Hell on Monday morning. On Sunday we were whipped, our Batteries taken, but on Monday they were repulsed, our Batteries retaken, 49 Pieces of the enemies Guns taken, hundreds of their horses killed and thousands of the rebels made to bite the dust. The Gun Boats opened a terrible fire on them, mowing down whole companies, trees 2 feet in



diameter are cut completely off by their shots,  
and the air filled with fragments of their  
bursting Shells. I rode over the ground yesterday  
to see the ~~rock~~ fragments. Gen Lee perhaps  
is aware that the fighting was in the timber,  
well there is not a tree but <sup>that</sup> is riddled  
with bullets, and broken muskets, cannon,  
Cuirasses, Shells, Helmets, Tom hats, Caps,  
Coats, Pants, Centige boxes, harnesses, Knapsacks  
dead horses &c, &c, <sup>cover the ground</sup> It is a horrible sight, but  
the devilish Rebels were forced to retreat, and  
have lost more in killed and wounded  
than we have, though they have taken more  
prisoners than we have. Gen Grant is  
censured for letting the enemy take us by  
surprise, and I think it is high time  
that such men be removed. Gen Halleck  
arrived last night, and will take com-  
mand in person, so we may expect better  
things. Our men fought bravely and only  
fell back when it would have been folly  
for them to have done otherwise. The Rebels  
canteens contained Whisky and gunpowder,  
what do you think of furnishing such stuff  
to men? well they fought desperately, and  
evidently are well drilled. Since we came  
here it has rained continually and it  
would now be impossible for either army  
to move, therefore we cannot tell when the fight  
will be resumed, though it is highly probable  
the next fight will be at Corinth, which is  
some 22 miles from here and 18 miles  
from the river, My own opinion is that it  
will be some two weeks hence, and we



whip them, I feel more like fighting now,  
that I am in desert, than run before, and  
am now getting a good ready to do the  
best I can. I would rather leave a widow  
than return to you with the stigma, covered  
further attached to my name, so expect me  
to fight and trust that I may come out  
unharm'd. I feel confident that I will  
not fall. I have visited Capt Stevens,  
he has had a leg amputated just below  
the knee, and is doing well, left yester-  
day for Savannah. Capt Marble is wounded  
in the leg, but will not lose the leg, have  
not seen him as he left for Savannah  
before we arrived. I visited Col Kirk yester-  
day, found him wounded in the breast, he  
will recover, and said to me "I will be with  
you at Corinth boys". Maj Semmes' Brig had  
left. The 34th fought bravely, and also the  
46th. Officers and men all did themselves  
honor in both Regiments. Col Davis is believed  
to be fatally wounded. I have not heard  
a word from home since March 20th  
of March, and I assure that I feel anxious  
to hear. My health is very good indeed.  
The boys are generally well and eager for  
an engagement with the Rebels. If Pers had  
come along as a Suttler he could have made a fortune,  
and I really wish he had come, as the Suttlers are  
generally swindlers and it would be a luxury  
for our boys to trade with a man who had a  
little of the milk of human kindness in his  
breast. Good courage wife and Angels guard  
and guide you and our blessed Children.

Yours John