

The Channel through the blockade is very narrow & we had to anchor one of our schooners & three barges & go on with the other schooner & two barges. I never saw such close chasing of vessels, but we got through safely & up to Cumberland. There we got a pilot, & were ordered up here. I thought the vessels were thick down below, but you should see the river here. There is hardly room for a sail boat to pass through the fleet. The *Em City*, *Commodore*, *Knickerbocker*, *A. R. Spaulding*, *Delinois*, *Sea Shore*, *Dan<sup>r</sup> Webster*, *Smith America*, & all the other boats you ever heard of are here. There are some two hundred schooners & barges also lying within half a mile of us, & one can almost walk from shore to shore on their decks. Nobody thinks anything

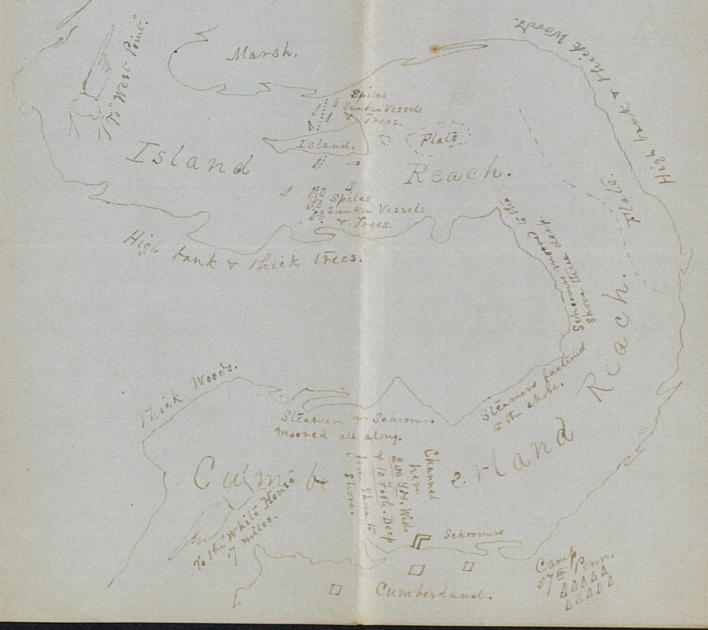
On board *Str. Achilles*  
White House, Va.  
May 23<sup>d</sup> 1862.

Dearest Mother

I generally fall on my feet you know, & as you will see by the date of this, I am once more with the boat. I left Baltimore on Monday afternoon as I told you I should do, & got to Old Point the next morning. I got my pass for this place without any trouble, from the Sr. Master, & went on board the "*Secor*," - the mail boat for York river. I knew the *Achilles* was somewhere in the river, but how far she had gone up I did not know, as I had to keep a look out ahead. When we got to Yorktown I took the glass from the Captain, & saw the boat lying on the Gloucester side of the river beside a schooner. I got off there

& hired a Coniatans to take me over  
 in his boat, & got on board the A.  
 just at dinner time. I was very  
 fortunate to catch her as I did, for  
 she had merely stopped to cool up, and  
 a few hours later we started for Cum-  
 berland. Not a soul on board had ever  
 been there, & not one of us knew where  
 it was. We were told that it was  
 twenty miles up the river, so we ran  
 until dark - eight o'clock, & then came  
 to anchor for the night. The next  
 morning we started quite early, expect-  
 ing to get there by breakfast time, but  
 it was four o'clock in the afternoon  
 before we came in sight of the place.  
 Then we found out it was a little  
 over fifty-five miles. The Camunkey  
 river is the crookedest stream that  
 ever ran. It is full of sharp turns  
 & short "reaches." In some places  
 it is so narrow that I could almost  
 jump as here on either side as

we came up. The bank on the  
 starboard side is very high, while  
 there is nothing but a marsh  
 on the port side. It was very  
 funny to look across the flats  
 & see vessels sailing along, seem-  
 ingly on the land, while in reality  
 it was merely a turn in the river.  
 Just below Cumberland is "Island  
 Reach" when the river runs some-  
 thing like this



from hospital duty at Fort Mifflin  
some time since. I presume his  
present direction is, Surgeon  
of 20<sup>th</sup> Mass. Vol., Col. Lee commanding,  
- Sedgwick's Division, Dana's  
Brigade. All letters sent to  
Wash<sup>g</sup> will be forwarded to him.

I hope to be able to see him be-  
fore long, & I will ascertain  
what is most needed in his  
department. While I think  
of it, - did Father get the "Log  
Book" I sent on from Norfolk?

I have a good deal to do in  
the letter writing line just now,  
for I have the whole batch  
of letters I found in Wash<sup>g</sup> to  
answer, - only seventeen! It  
will be very good amusement for  
my leisure hours for the next  
two weeks. My friends are  
very good to me. I hear from  
nearly every body, & a letter from

5.

of running into another boat, for  
it is impossible to move with-  
out doing so. We have been very  
fortunate, - have done no damage,  
& have had none done to us. When  
we got here last night with our  
tow, Col. Ingalls ordered us back to  
"Island Head" to bring up the others  
we had anchored. We ran down  
to Cumberland, & came to there  
for the night. I went in swim-  
ing off the side of the boat, & it  
was splendid diving in sixty  
feet of water. Of course it  
is fresh here, & not so pleasant  
to swim in as salt, but anything  
is refreshing after the intensely  
hot weather we have been having.

Hot - it beats New York August.  
I have been wearing an undress  
uniform, of a shirt & pair of  
pants, for the last two days.  
Fortunately we got a little Lee in

Balt. or I don't know what we should have done. The water here is pretty good, - infinitely better than what we have been using, but it does not seem to satisfy the thirst, so I had the steward make us a pitcher of "Switchel," - molasses & water, with ginger etc, stirred in, & a very little of that goes further than four times the same amount of water. Capt. A. got some old canvass & we made an awning out of it for the upper deck, so we are as comfortable as we can be under the circumstances.

This morning we brought up the rest of our tow & anchored them here, & are now waiting orders what to do next. We had a tremendous thunder shower & hail storm this afternoon, but it does not seem to be much cooler to night for it. The men have

been fishing for eels all the evening but with no very great success so far. I was on shore this afternoon & up near the hospital. There are not many troops now here, - merely a few on guard. The army is at Boston bridge, some twelve miles off. If I knew how long we were going to lie here, I would try & go over, but I don't care about missing the boat again just yet.

There are some few graves on the shore here already. I saw only one with a headboard, & on that was, "Philip Stoy, Co. H, 4<sup>th</sup> N.Y. I." That regiment has suffered very much I believe. There will be work for us all down here in another week, for I am afraid the fight before Richmond is going to be a hard one. I hear that Kate Hayward is now with his regiment. He was relieved

James river! I have changed  
my mind a little about Rich-  
mond, & now I give one Clellan  
until the 2<sup>d</sup> of June - my birthday,  
to get into the city. I think  
however he will be there a day  
or two before that date. I  
think letters sent to Ft. Monroe  
will be the most likely to find  
me just now, as I shall write  
to Eugenine Dimsey to draw  
out all letters for me. Di-  
rect them "On Board Ste. Achilles".

This is a mixed up letter,  
but I can't help it. -

Best love to all at home.  
Please remember me to those  
who inquire.

Your loving  
Appleton.

9.  
here is a real treat. It pays  
me for writing twice over. I got  
a letter from Jennie Miles urging  
me to come up there. She wants  
me to come up in July & make  
them a long visit. I should  
like nothing better, but I don't  
know that I shall be able to  
go. How is Paul Elliot? Lou,  
does not say a word about  
him, so I presume he is about  
the same. Margie Hayward  
was in Plymouth when she wrote,  
but I suppose she is in Rox-  
bury again by this time. - she  
seems to have had a very plea-  
sant time this spring. Have  
the musketiers arrived in N.S.  
yet? They are very troublesome  
here. - their singing is not as  
sweet as I have heard. Straw-  
berries are quite plenty in Norfolk,  
also green peas &c. - I wonder

if Gen. Wool allows them to be sent North. I wish they would order our boat up to Norfolk for a week, & then to Richmond. I could enjoy to have enough of strawberries in that time, to last me until I get home. There were two articles I wanted which I did not get in the Carpet bag I rec<sup>d</sup> on Friday - Paper collars, & a Cravat. I had to supply myself with both in Balt. The rest came very handy & I am much obliged.

I am quite well with exception of a slight sore throat, which pains me a good deal in swallowing. It is nothing but a cold & I presume I shall get over it in a few days.

There is no one on board really well I believe. Changing the water so constantly has played the mischief with a good many, & the rest have either headaches

or are homesick, or have something or other the matter with them. Nothing at all serious.

As a general thing our health on board has been very good. I am burnt a good deal by the sun & expect to be about black by the time I see you once more.

Where are you going this summer? I suppose you and Grandmother will start off somewhere, in June, & the rest will scatter as usual. Is it going to be Catskill again this year, or Boston & vicinity?

Or Brattleton once more?

I think it very uncertain when this letter will reach you - it will take until Monday next at all events.

By that time we may be on our way to Baltimore again - or we may be on our way up