

JACKSONVILLE FLORIDA

7TH JULY 1861

DEAR MOTHER.

MY COMPANY MARCHED TO HERE FROM MARION COUNTY ONE WEEK AGO, THOUGH YOU AND FATHER MAY NOT UNDERSTAND WHY I HAVE LISTED AND JOINED WITH WHOM FATHER CALLS REBELS BUT I AM DOING WHAT I FEEL TO BE RIGHT IN MY MIND.

CAPTAIN BREVARD ADDRESSED THE COMPANY YESTERDAY, TELLING US THAT THERE WAS STILL TIME TO MAKE OUR PEACE AND GO IN THAT SPIRIT, THE RUMOUR IS THAT WE ARE TO BE MUSTERED INTO THE REGULAR ARMY SOON AND THE SOONER THE BETTER, UNLIKE MOST OF THE TATTLE I'VE HEARD SINCE MAKING MY MARK THIS PIECE APPEARS TO BE WELL FOUNDED, THE CAPTAINS SERVANT A BLACK FELLOW CALLED JOSEPH GOT IT WHILE HE WAS PRESSING THE OFFICERS COAT.

WHILE THE TURMOIL THAT IS WAR CLUTCHES AT THIS SORRY LAND THREE THINGS SEEM TO REMAIN CONSTANT, ONE IS ARMY CAMPS, TWO IS A HATRED FOR THE NORTH AND THREE IS GOSSIP, ABOUT TWENTY: LICK MY SHOE STORIES COMES IN, YESTERDAY IT WAS THAT WE WERE HEADING UP INTO CAROLINA, ANOTHER WAS THAT WE WERE BEING DRAFTED AS MARINES AND YET ANOTHER WAS THAT A FORCE OF 1,000 FRENCH WERE LANDING AT PENSACOLA READY TO HELP, SOLDIERS GOSSIP NEVER STOPS AND THE SPECULATION THAT BUZZES AROUND THE CAMP COULD WELL BE LIKENED TO A SWARM OF ANGRY HORNETS.

COMPANIES HAVE BEEN MARCHING IN FROM ALL OVER THE STATE, ALL WITH VERY INTERESTING NAMES, NOT THAT OURS IS ANY MORE NORMAL, THERE ARE COLUMBIA RIFLES THE ST. JOHNS GREY'S THE HAMILTON BLUES AND MORE, I BELIEVE WE ARE DESIGNATED COMPANY E BUT THAT IS ANOTHER RUMOUR.

I AM MUCH INTERESTED AS TO WHAT THEY WILL PAY US WITH, WHAT IT WILL LOOK LIKE I WONDER? WE ARE TO BE PAID ONCE WE ARE MUSTERED PROPER, WILL JEFFERSON DAVIS BE ON THE BILLS? I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING ONE, NOT JUST FOR THE MATERIAL BENEFITS THEREIN BUT FOR MY OWN STUDIOUS CURIOSITY.

I HAVE BROUGHT FOUR BOOKS WITH ME, WAVERLY BY WALTER SCOTT ANOTHER BY A DR ABOUT THE NATURE OF THE WEST AND ANOTHER ABOUT THE EARLY INDIAN WARS, THESE AND OF COURSE THE GOOD BOOK WILL I HOPE BRING ME THROUGH HANDSOMELY UNTIL CHRISTMAS, WHICH IS WHEN THE OFFICERS PROMISE US WE WILL BE HOME.

WE ARE BEGUN TO BE DRILLED MOST ARDUOUSLY, MARCHING, COUNTER MARCHING, EVOLUTIONS FROM COLUMN INTO LINE AND BACK AGAIN, THEN OF COURSE THE BAYONET DRILLS AGAINST LARGE SACKS.

A HUMOROUS EVENT HAPPENED A FEW DAYS AGO, IT SEEMS A NEARBY FARMER HAD LET OPEN HIS PIG PEN, NATURALLY THE SWINE WANDERED, WE SOLDIERS DO NOT GET THE MOST VARIED DIET SO ESPYING THESE WORTHIES A GROUP OF FIVE MEN MANFULLY TRIED TO OBTAIN THEM, ONE WAS PROCURED, THE NEXT NIGHT AS THE ANIMAL WAS TIED UP THE FARMER, WISHING HIS PROPERTY BACK SALLIED FORTH TO REGAIN IT, HAVING BEEN REBUFFED BY A SADLY HAPLESS LIEUTENANT WHO COULD NOT FIND THE CULPRITS NOR THE ANIMAL, IT HAVING BEEN SECRETED, HE RETURNED WITH HIS SHOTGUN, HE FOUND THE BEAST, SECURED IT AND WAS ON HIS WAY BACK WHEN A SENTRY, THINKING HE A DESERTER CALLED HIM AND OPENED FIRE, THE PIG BEGAN TO SQUEAL MOST LOUDLY AND THE FARMER RETURNED FIRE, THE ENTIRE CAMP WAS STOOD TO ARMS AND COME MORNING OUR SLEEP DEPRIVED MEN WERE GREETED BY A LONE MAN WITH AN EMPTY SHOTGUN AND A PIG TIED TO HIS BELT, ALL THE MAN SAID BEFORE GOING HOME WAS "MY PIG, THAT'LL TEACH YA" THE SERGEANT THEN PROMPTLY TRIED TO RECRUIT HIM SAYING "IF YOU CAN BUSHWACK A COMPANY OF A HUNDRED MEN THEN WHAT'LL YE DO AGAINST AN ARMY" THE FARMER IS NOW A CORPORAL!

I THINK IT ONLY PROPER THAT YOU RESTRAIN YOUNG BILLY FROM JOINING THE ARMY, AND I AM STRONGLY IN YOUR CAMP AS HE IS NOT YET ADVANCED IN YEARS THOUGH HE WOULD PROBABLY BE RECRUITED AS A BANDSMEN, IF HE GIVES YOU TROUBLE FEEL AT LIBERTY TO READ HIM THIS AS HE WILL NO DOUBT BE OVERAWED BY NUMBERS.

I AM IN HALE SPIRITS AND HEALTHY AS A HORSE, HEALTHIER THAN I EVER HAVE BEEN AND UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES YOU HAVE NO NEED TO FEAR FOR ME.

I PRAY EACH NIGHT I PRAY THAT YOU WILL REMAIN SAFE AND HAPPY AND I DO SO NOW, KEEP SAFE AND IN GOOD CHEER, WHEN I HAVE FURTHER NEWS I WILL WRITE AGAIN.

I WILL ALWAYS REMAIN YOUR AFFECTIONATE SON.

JOSH D PROVAN

HAMMOCK GUARDS.

