Cairo Ills. April 11th, 1864

My Dear Brother,

Here we are once more in the outer edge of civilization, in this summary, water-coffin town. Camped in a spot where we had to look up to see the steamers on the Ohio tent above the level of the town, whose streets still are on inundated with the ships and boats used by the inhabitants in former inundations, and which I think will be required again pretty soon if the river continues to rise. I feel very jubilant at the idea of again being so near home, where it will not take a month to get an answer to a letter, and I hope I have seen the last of Vicksburg and the backs of the Mississippi. Although the weather was good after leaving Vicksburg, we had rather a tedious voyage, being crowded like sheep in a pen, as the boat we were on was from New Orleans, and had aboard the 14th Wisconsin Cavalry and the 5th Indiana, all Veterans from Texas going home on furlough. Who of course had all the best places selected before we came on board, and so we had to shift as we could, below stairs, and my bed mate slept under the travelling forge of the Battery, where we bumped our heads on the Assembling bolts at every motion, and had to eat our meals very temperate since I assure you.
lying full length on our blankets, the very closure
spread limits of our dormitory, making it impossible
to sit up, unless we stuck our feet through a wheel for
a hundred men to stumble over in the gangway.

To give you all the dates of our movements, I shall
transcribe a page or two of my little pocket Diary kept in
pencil, and which I find far more convenient than
the cumbersome pen and ink Journal that I used to keep.

February Saturday, April 9th.

Fine weather. Troops going on board
transports all day. Our boys impatient to be off. Williams,
Dave (my bunkmate) and I now dwell in the cabin with
Trinces. My position of Trustee of the Union Library on account
of leaving the Post.

Sunday, 10th. Head ordered to go on
board the Palatia this afternoon. Countermanded to join out
by the officers that we would not have till tomorrow morning.
Then at 12 P.M. orders came again and we had to tumble
aboard the J. C. Snow, in an awful hurry. Everything in
confusion and everybody, especially the new boys, in a
terrible stir. Williams left behind. Left the wharf at anchor
and steamed up river.

Monday 11th. Passed Providence,

this forenoon. 4th Wis are the greatest gambler Demons and
decide to be very flush of money.

Tuesday, 12th. Made
very good progress today, and stopped seldom. Passed St. Louis
at W.A.M. DeSoto costing town, saw 12 Cantons during
the day, mostly at anchor. Wednesday, 13th. Passed Helena
before daylight. Made Memphis at black. Great excitement
about 1st. Fellow being captured by Forrest. 11th Ohio Battery
are theimps fired into yesterday. Guerrillas in the river.
Thursday, 14th. Disembarked this morning, marched through town and camped in the suburbs about 2 miles from the river. Put up tents, and made ourselves comfortable. All troops, moving either way, are stopped to guard the city till Forrest’s intentions in regard to it are discovered. The fort has been abandoned by him, and boats run by in safety. Friday, 15th. Made preparations to stay in camp for some time, but orders came about noon, and we broke up camp, and went aboard the same boat as before. Found William on the river, he having come up on the Savannah. Left Memphis this evening.

Saturday, 16th. Passed Fort Pillow at daylight. Embarked at anchor there. Banks of the river at the fort high and bluff. Passed several boats by racing. Stopped a long time to send up about more than very high, handmade. Stopped at Columbus at daylight for a short time. Arrived in Cairo at 9 A.M. Entered up the Ohio about a mile above town, dismounted, and went into camp north of the city, in the midst of a cold, drizzly rain. Camping ground low and muddy.

That was yesterday, and today we are as comfortable as could be expected, the rain having stopped, and enough lumber for tents having been gathered during the night. Speaking of gathering, I noticed several cups of milk at breakfast this morning which considering the price of that commodity in towns, fettin’s and the strapping condition of all our boys,1 estimated suspicious especially as several female specimens of the same sort was to be seen about daylight tied...
with halter straps to some of our gun carriages.
I got your letter postmarked 28th March, before
leaving Vicksburg, and also a letter from Father of
the 30th which I will answer soon if we find that we
cannot go on furlough from here, for which we will
try as soon as things are more settled here.

The most of our Army Corps is here in camp, and
the rumor is that we are not to leave for a month,
but this can hardly be, and I think I can wait for
before going to Huntsville, till the arrival of some more
troops. I wish it could be managed so that Father could
come down and see us, for I am afraid that it will
be impossible to obtain furlough. The fare to Chicago
from here is about 12 dollars, and 40 from there to Chicago,
if he sold wood and meat he could make 35 dollars
which he could use from Williams and my money and
be welcome to it. I would be worth 2 months pay to
see him down here, and it would be of great benefit
to him, I know. The Spring labor could spare him for a
few days.

I fully agree with the ideas of emigration advanced by you, and shall do my best to further
your plans, as I am convinced it is by far the best thing
the family could do. More of this in my next.

You got your letter to mine at Memphis, where I
also found a letter from Dave, which smelled
villainously of smoke and Matches and wet street
and burnt powder, besides a slight scent of the
horse-stable. On the whole it was a good letter,
which is more than one can expect of this group.

Yours Affly. Thos. C. Christie.