

Camp near Fairfax Station.
Dec. 21th. 1862.


Dear Father,

It is a pleasant sabbath morning and as I am not on duty today I take my seat on my knapsack to pen a few lines to let you know how I am getting along I am in good health at present although I feel rather old from the effects of our hard march for we have had a hard march. I can assure you we left the ferry and marched seven days we marched through rain mud and everything else some days we did not stop long enough to eat our rations but eat them as we were walking along our rations consisted of eight hard crackers per day with a small allowance of coffee it was rather hard but then its honest I s'pose there was a good

many of the boys left their
knapsacks side of the road unable
to go farther ^{with them} we passed near
the old battle ground of Bulls Run
and encamped on Manassas plains one
night we marched down to within
25 miles of Fredericksburg we could
hear the cannon roar quite plain
they sounded like distant thunder
we all expected to go into battle but
we turned about and marched
back we marched from four o'clock
in the morning untill dark without
stopping long enough to make a cup
of coffee we came back the same
road we went down on and arrived
here just dark and you may well
believe that we were ~~very~~ tired we
spread our blankets on the ground and
slep soundly untill morning when we
learned that we were going to rest
awhile I think that we all needed it

yesterday I was sent out as a scout
to see if there was anything wrong
around the camp well I poked around
untill I got away from camp about
four miles I saw a man over to a house
chopping wood I went over to where he
was and sat down and had quite a
talk with him he said that he was
a true yankee and I thought that
he was a true union man he asked
me to go in and warm I went in and
took a seat the woman enquired
what regi I belonged to and where
I was from I told her where I was
from my name and that my
Father's name was Luther Welch
she jumped from her chair and
took my hand said she young
man did you know that you
were talking with your cousin
my cousin said I that cant be for
I had no ~~to~~ doubt but what

the woman was crazy but I
soon found different I found
out that I was at Mr Holsters
I have heard you speak of him
I think they are very nice
folks I think I had a good
visit with Mrs Holster she
asked me more questions than
I could answer in a week I sat
supper and bid them good bye
and started campward I tell
you that supper made me
think of home they sent
their best respects to you all
and to all the folks up there
they urged me to stay all
night but that would not
do I think if we stay here
long I will go over there again
from them I learned that
we are encamped on land owned
by Ansel Whedon who used
to live here his house is pulled
down and things have gone to
rack fences are burned and
it is rather desolate around
here



we don't get much war news lately
I hear that McClellan is about
coming in command once more
I for one hope he will I think
he is the ablest General that
the north has. Well John I
received your letters last night
I was very glad to hear from
you Sarah wrote that there was
to be a donations up there
I am most afraid that I shall
not get up ^{there in time} if I don't you may
make up your mind that if
I have the good luck to get
home all right that I shall
make up loss time that's all
but we have about thirty two
months time to put in yet
but that's nothing to what
this war is but to come to
the nice thing about it

staying here three years
 and living on hard crackers
 in nothing to be sneezed
 at but you know that
 I always make the best
 of a poor trade I dont
 call this a poor trade yet
 but if the rebs aint whipped
 before long I shall ~~change~~
~~there~~ alter my mind I am
 afraid I am sorry to tell
 you that we have lost Leroy
 he enlisted in the 93 regiment
 his mother would not let him
 go but did not take his name
 of the papers they come and
 took him to the regiment
 I find that he enlisted in first
 I did hate to see him go for he
 has been a brother to me a
 better boy never lived than
 he was I received a letter

from him last night
he was well Dowd is all
right myself and him are
poking around all the
time we come pretty near
getting trapped the other night
we were out in the pine woods
two miles from our men
we didnt have our guns it
was very dark we heard a
noise we kept mum we soon
found that the rebs were
about we drew our revolvers
and stood ready there was
five of them but they
did not see us there would
have been a small battle if
they had write as soon as
you get this and let me know
how Smith and Philo gets along
I have not heard from them since
we marched they staid in the

old camp sick but
 I must close write
 soon excuse all mistakes
 give my love to all from
 your ~~brother~~
 Henry

P.S. John I want you
 to send me a pair of ~~rubber~~
 rubber suspenders you can
 do them up in a paper and send
 them by mail perhaps you would
 like to know how I got back from
 Holsters Rich & Durham was
 with me we got lost in the woods
 and at dark found ourselves
 five miles from camp the pines
 were so thick that you could
 not see four rods in the daytime
 so you ^{can} judge about how dark it was
 that but we got around all right
 at last but that walk did beat me
 there was plenty of roads they
 lead in every direction but the only
 Send a few stamps in your next letter
 from your Brother Henry



Mr Suther Welch
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