

MACK TO NAN

On the James River

City Point. Jeneral Hospital. Sondag June 19th 1864

Dear Nancy I will now right a Short letter to you hoping it will find you well and in good Spirits. Nan I am now at the Jeneral hospital at the place called Citty Point. it is about 22 miles from Richman and about 12 miles from Peters burg. where the terable conflict is now going on. I will tell you why I am here. I told you in my other letter that Tom and I was wounded. but my wound is nothing it is not scarcely any Sore but I have Caught Cold and we had to double quick about a quarter of a mile the other day when we charged on the rebs. So you know that two much hard exercise does not agree with me. I have a considerable cough and Some pain in my brest. So I thought that I wood rest and recruit up for a few days. now Nan I am not bad nor dangerous nor in any way for getting so. So you need not give your Self any trouble about me. I will go back to my Regt in a day or two. I was to the boat landing today which is about 15 miles from this hospital. I Saw 5 hundred of our wounded boys get on the boat and Start for washington Tom also went I expect that Tom will get a furlow home when he gets to Washington. he told me he wood if they wood give him one. Sargent Stone had his right arm broken he went two Ed Hohms was killed this was done the 17th I have not bin with the regt Since that day. The rest of the boys have been in 2 charges Since that one that I was in. I have not heard from them yet. I dont know but what they are all killed or wounded but I do hope they are not hurt. Dewitt and Andy Jim Beard was all right when I left them. Nan it is the offalest Sight that I ever Saw or ever want to See again. I mean when I was at the Division hospital I Stayed there one day and night. there is the place where the amputate limbs. I Saw them lay men on the Surgeons table and Cut there legs and arms off oh the pain the groans that are to be wittnessed there. it is offal. God deliver me from the Sight again. we left there this morning it is about 10 miles from here there were 3 or 4 hundred of us Came here after. Nan this is a nice place here. we met the Christian Commission here. Nan this Christian Commission is the grandest thing that ever has been got up. Oh the tender care that they have for the Sick and wounded Soldiers. the[y] have Female nurses and male nurses. Ladies of the most refined Society I should think from there appearance. and the kindness that they bestow to us Seams like the Care of a wife or mother at home. they do all they can to make the distressed comfortable. they take a great deal of pain in washing the dirty Soldiers dressing there wounds and giveing them to Eat. they furnish Clean clothes to those that need them. furnish us with paper and envelopes. good tracts and reading papers. Nan this is an independent Society from Uncle Sam. which I think that the merciful Heavenly Father has Sent out to do good to the Sick. O how thankful I am that a merciful god rules over us. I think this Christian Society will be greatly rewarded in heaven now I will close for to day. good by Mac Nan

Monday Morning June 20th 1864

Now I will right a few more lines and Close my letter. I have rote about all that I Can think of. O yes I will say that Lieut Sherman had his right hand Shot off. I have not heard any thing from Al Since he left the regt. I wood like to know where he is. I hant had any letters from you for about 2 weeks. but the reason I can account for. about the time that our male came we was ordered on a march her[e] and the day that I left the regt the male came to the regt after I left So I expect there are 3 or 4 letters for me at the regt. or I hope So any how. now I will Close this letter. and I will right again as soon as I get to the regt again then I can tell you more news than I can now. I may not go back for a few days I am very well Contented to Stay here for I have nothing to do and I am better fed than I am at the regt and I dont have to fight any here no it is all Union here. I went to the Sutlers yesterday and got me Some Ink paper and envelopes So I Can right now for a while again I was Clear out of both. now Nan I want you to right to me as Soon and often as you Can. Nan keep up good Cheer. and do not worry your mind about me for I will Come out all right. Nan take good Care of your Self do not expose your Self nor work to hard. for I want you

to get along the best kind I hope that I will be permitted to Come home this fall. Now Nan tak[e] good Care of your Self. and pray for me and I will pray for You and my Self. give my love to all the friends. good by Mc Nan

Note: This letter of Sunday, June 19, 1864, seems to have been preceded by another letter written on or about June 10 & 11. I do not, however, find the intervening letter. On page 9 of his diary I find the following entry: "Henry Mc Ewing Wounded and taken sick on the 17th of June 1864. Left the Regt on the 17th went to the division hospital staid there until the 19th of June, then moved to City Point hospital. Detailed for nurse on the 28th day of June."

AEE

Note: The letter of June 19th is written on special stationery with the following inscription: "United States Christian Commission. Individual Relief Department. The UNITED STATES CHRISTIAN COMMISSION seeks to afford a sure and effective medium of communication between the wounded or sick soldier--whether in the Camp or in Field or General Hospitals--and his home friends. This is done by furnishing facilities for writing and by writing for those who are not themselves able. Soldiers, for whom special inquiries are made of us, will be sought out if possible and relieved and their condition made known to those asking. All letters of this character should give the Corps, Division, Regiment, and Company of the soldier, as also the Hospital in which he is supposed to be. Address, UNITED STATES CHRISTIAN COMMISSION, 500 H Street, Washington,D.C."

In Photographic History of the Civil War we learn, "The Christian Commission was second as a civilian agency relief only to the Sanitary Commission. . . . Never before in the history of warfare did so many lawyers, merchants, ministers, and thousands of the people who stayed at home, combine to bring friendship and comfort to the sufferers in the field. It is recorded in the 'Annals of the United States Christian Commission' by the Reverend Lemuel Moss, its Home Secretary, that its business committee collected no less that \$5,478,280.31 for the soldiers." (Vol. VII, p. 17) The primary mission of both the Christian Commission and the Sanitary Commission seems to parallel the purpose of the International Red Cross, which was developed by the Swiss humanitarian Henri Dunant about the same time.

James Beard was 38 years old when he mustered in with the other Hillsdale men on April 8, 1864. He was taken prisoner during the siege of Petersburg on July 30 of that year. Sergeant John W. Stone was in the same group of Hillsdale enlistees, as was Sergeant Edwin C. Holmes, who was killed in action at Petersburg the day before Mack wrote this letter. Edward A. Sherman, also from Hillsdale, was commissioned first lieutenant on April 1, 1864, and died in action at Petersburg along with Holmes.

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