

you, if it should be my lot to get killed or die, I want you not to grieve after me at all for I hope when I am no more here on Earth that I will be at rest in heaven. Mary I may be deceased but I hope you will still pursue your course as you have been doing. Let us try to be prepared to meet God in peace. So I bid you farewell."

With the above, Young has taken the time to create a multicolored pen and ink drawing of a woman, finely dressed, and enclosed it in the envelope. Presumably, this woman is his remembrance of how Mary looked as he left her at home. Commonly called a "doodling," it is a nice example of a Civil War soldier's drawing that was based from memory where he might be thinking of his home, wife, or children and would compose a picture. **Figure 14** shows the drawing Young Hitch created on Jun 8 1863.

June 12 finds Young Hitch near Yazoo City, MS, "*Enjoying moderate health But verry mutch fatigued from my march. I footed it forty miles in about two days.*"¹⁴¹ He had not seen his Company in almost a month and describes them as looking bad, "*I found the boys (in) my mess all but M.R. Garrett in moderate health. Garrett is sorter puny. Our men generally look bad. They seem to be verry mutch worn down.*" We see Hitch has found his friend Miles Garrett still in poor health but, even the rest of Company I is worn ragged too from endless weeks of marching, traveling, sickness, poor diet, weather and other stresses of being at war. Nevertheless, Hitch seems very glad to be back with his unit. He mentions Mr. Forrester again and then his Captain, "*Mr. I. Forrester was the only one of Com (I) that went on with me from the hospital. I got with Capt. Babb yesterday morning.*" Again, we see I. Forrester who is probably Isaac Forrester and "Captain Babb." The Captain is the Newton Babb we encountered earlier. He was originally elected Lieutenant in the old failed McKittrick's Company in April 1862 but was later determined too young to serve at the time. He eventually becomes part of Company I as a 1st lieutenant and then a captain soon thereafter. Babb will end up dying of disease in a Georgia hospital on Nov 6 1863.

Young Hitch does not have much decent to say about Yazoo City saying it is "*undoubtedly must be the Stern End of Miss.*" – a less than glowing review of the area! Company I and the rest of the 16th SCVI are camped 3 miles west of there on Short Creek, about 30 miles northwest of Vicksburg but, "*With the exception of a pretty shade, it is surely the roughest country that you ever saw, although verry rich.*" Hitch is a little disappointed that he has not gotten more letters from Mary other than one from May 22 that was waiting for him when he arrived at the camp. He writes, "*I was verry glad to meet up with him but would have been more so if he had brought me a letter. Mary I rec a letter from you bearing date May 22nd I got the letter from the boys when I got to camp. It is the only letter that I have got since the one that Mr. Brown brought to me. I have wrote to you regular as mutch as once a week & expect to as near as I can. The Capt said when I first come up with him that he thought he had a letter for me but if he did he has lost it on the way.*" It seems Captain Babb may have misplaced one or two of Mary Hitch's letters to Young!

¹⁴¹ Appendix, Item LXV.

"Oh Lordy!"

A letter from Jun 15 1863 comes next, from Young in Camp Woods, MS (postmarked Canton, MS) to wife Mary¹⁴². It is a short one with some news that they are about to go on the move, "*We have just*



Figure 14 - Young Hitch's drawing included with his Jun 8 1863 letter. (Mowbray Collection, Salisbury University)

¹⁴² Appendix, Item LXVI.

been stript of our knapsacks and all the baggage that we can spare. The weather is warm & hard marching to be done. Where I don't know. I have brought my turn down to one blanket, one oilcloth, shirt, pants, drawers, socks and gloves besides the suit on my back. Probably I yet have more than I can carry. You need not think strange if you do not get letters from us soon as the communication will be stopt." Then a brief note that Little Berry Edwards and Mat Garrett are doing fine but Miles Garrett has gone to the hospital.

His next letter to Mary is written the very next day, June 16, from Madison County, MS, probably near the town of Canton and the 16th regiment is not yet moving but Hitch expects they may by June 17¹⁴³. *"Dear Mary I will write a few lines to you this morning perhaps I may not have the opportunity of writeing again soon. We may start to march tomorrow. Where I can't tell but maybe to Vicksburg. If so, we will have several days marching to do. And probably some fighting to be done before we can get thare."* Vicksburg was in its 23rd day of a long siege and word was probably swirling around the camps that they would be setting out to relieve the citizens there and Pemberton's army.

Young provides more details of the 16th SCVI and the camp he is in near Canton, MS; *"The 16 has not yet come up with any Yankeys yet but I fear that they will in the course of ten, fifteen or twenty days. We come here last Sunday Evening we may leave here tomorrow it will not be many days before we leave at most. This country is alive with our soldiers. The face of the hole earth all most covered with men waggons horses mules and beefs."* He was among and viewing General Johnston's whole army there at the time which consisted of Breckinridge's, Loring's, French's and Walker's divisions as well as Jackson's Cavalry division. Hitch and the 16th were part of Walker's division, under Gist's brigade. With all the army gathered, the soldiers must have been convinced they would see regular fighting action within days.

The food in the camps while on the road has paled in comparison to the good fare that Company I had gotten while in the camp near Charleston. Hitch gives us a look at what they are eating:

"Mary, no doubt but you think that we are liveing verry hard. Yes we are living hard, indeed we are. Our fare at Charleston was a feast to our fare here. We get a plenty of corn meal and beef. The meal is so coarse it is allmost impossible to turn a hocake. I have found several whole grains of corn in the bread. The only chance to get any of the brand & silks out is to get the meal in a pan & shake it until the brand & silks rise to the top & then blow them off. Probably when we get on the march we will get some bacon. I hope those times will not continue as they now are. I think there will be a change soon, either for the better or the worse. I hope it may be for the better for us. Although there may a many a noble fellow fall before it is decided. I have wrote to you concerning our fare not to trouble you but just to let you know. Our water is standing pon water, the creek at home would be mutch better. The water is the worst thing we have to contend with."

Corn meal is the staple part of diet on the road for the soldiers and, it seems they are getting plenty of beef as their protein with the army supporting cattle as it marches. The corn meal has gotten pretty

¹⁴³ Appendix, Item LXVII.

“Oh Lordy!”

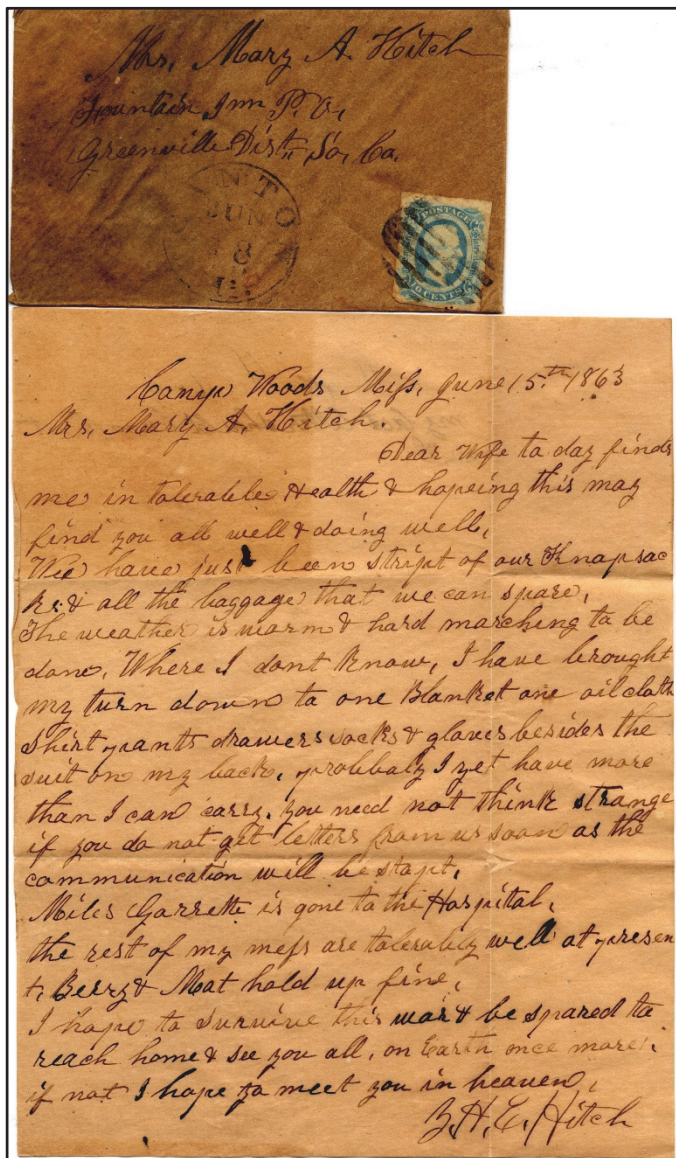


Figure 15 - Young Hitch's letter to Mary A. Hitch dated Jun 15 1863 from Camp Woods, MS. Note the franking on the letter of the 10c Jefferson Davis CSA stamp with June 18 Canton, MS postmark. (Mowbray Collection, Nabb Center, Salisbury University)

poor lately as Young relates, it is poorly and coarsely ground and includes the byproducts of corn silks and bran. Water is not very good either as they are using stagnant pond water instead of healthier and better tasting spring or flowing creek water. Hitch exclaims that the “*water is the worst thing we have to contend with*” and he is correct in more ways than he knows. Not only is it bad tasting, but it harbors disease and parasites as well and is a major source of illness among the troops.

By Jun 22 1863, Hitch writes another letter to Mary and they have remained in Madison County, MS¹⁴⁴. With time on his hands while they await their next move, Young pens a longer letter with interesting information about his camp and even the hospital where he was confined while in Meridian a month earlier. Hitch is now fearful again of contracting the measles as Little Berry Edwards has been stricken with them and Hitch is in close proximity to him day and night – even sleeping directly next to him. Here is some of the news directly from the words of Young Hitch:

“My health is not as good as it has been. I have taken some medicine this morning & hope to be better soon. I have a severe cold & may be taking the measles. But it is not time for me to take them from L.B. yet. But if I don't take them from him, I don't know how I will take them for I lay by his side last

Thursday night & he had a high fever & severe cough. L.B.'s case is the only case of measles that I know of in camp. I () talked in camp today that there is some probability of us being sent back to So. Ca. soon but I fear it will not be our lot to be so fortunate to get back so near home. Our regt would shout at the order to start back to Adams Run. As me it would please me verry mutch, then I could hear from home oftener & see people from home.”

At this point, the talk around camp includes the possibility to get stationed back in South Carolina as the urgency to march on Vicksburg seems to have passed. While Hitch and the rest of the 16th regiment

¹⁴⁴ Appendix, Item LXVIII.