

Fredricksburg

January 3, 1863

Miss Bethiah Taylor

Dear Cousin Bethiah,

I take my old rusty pen in hand to answer your welcome letter that I received last night. It found me well. I read it over two or three times before I retired. I have been looking in every male (sp?) for a letter from you. It came at last. You have got one on the way. Betti, we have got us up a nice little shanty with nice little fireplace in one corner, so we are enjoying ourselves first rate. I think that we shall stay here quite a spell for the most of the officers has gone to Washington to have a drunk. I got a letter from Will the other day. They all well. Betti,

They is a balloon goes up here every day. Sigal went up in it the other day. I wish that you could see it.

I write to you so often that do not have much news to write. You spoke of deserting. I calculate to stay with them one year and then if don't let me go home I shall bid them good day for I think that they can settle this thing in that time if they are a mind to and if I start I shall go safe but they will be a good many that will leave as soon as they get their pay.

That is all they are waiting for but you need not be alarmed about my leaving till next Fall. George Griswold here the other day and Eliel (sp?) went and staid all night with him. I should of went but I did not feel very well. He is first Lutennant (sp). His Regt was in the battle and was badly cut up but his Co. was kept back on a reserve. They was not in much danger. He is as sick of it as any of us. He sent me a plug of tabacko by Ehiel (sp?) (Elial?). I think that I shall go and see him Sunday. He is camped two miles from here.

Betti how I would like to be there to take a meal with you but there is no use of talking never mind it is a long road that never turns. I hope that this will turn before long but there is not much prospect of it now. I must stop and drink my coffee now. It is a boiling now. I wish that you could sit by and take a cup with me. I guess that you would want some sugar and cream in it. I am just out of that. I should have to borrow if I should have company. Well I have took my coffee and sit here with my pipe in my mouth whiffing away thinking of old Portland. Tell George Cattel if he will write to me that I will give him a sheet of Folscap full of Old Virginia. The Regt band has commenced playing they are playing Listen to the Mockingbird. It makes me think of old times. Tell Mart (sp?) to write and send me some postage stamps. He said that he sent me twenty the letter he sent the money in but I could not find them. Betti, you must write a little sooner this time. Give my love to Celes (sp?) and — and Seill (sp?). Here is a present to you. You must be very careful and not use it much for you will tarnish it. I bought me one of these packages of paper and this pin was in it. I wish that I could find a gold one like it. I would get it and send it to you. I think it is as pretty as any I ever saw. Be sure and answer soon. Remember me to Uncle and Aunt. Give my love to all my ——— friends except a good share for yourself. So good by.

O. M. Taylor

Oscar M. Taylor, Pvt., Co. E