

Letter from Samuel Busey to his mother

White River Landing
Sept. 18th, 1864

My Dear Mother:

I have been writing to Lizzie Jo. Sim and others expecting of course that you would get the full benyfit of my letters (if anything in them) which I have no doubt you did. This evening I have had to myself. Have been reading from Blackwoods Magazine "The administration in India." Getting enough of that I laid it aside & concluded to write you a letter hoping that a line from your "wandering Boy" will be at least acceptable.

My health is fast improving and I have strong hopes of soon regaining my former strength and flesh. Tomorrow myself and two other Officers are going out Bare hunting—more for the bennyfit of our health than for Bare though they are plenty in the Woods four miles from here. We are camped on an Island as large prehaps as two or three Townships. It has three small insignificant Plantations on it, in all prehaps about four hundred acres. The balance of the Island is Swamps, cottonwood forest and Brambles--one or two lakes. The lakes are absolutely full of fish from minus up to fifty lbs. Our Men are catching them by the hundred—even go into the water and club them to death--as fine fish as you ever saw. The woods are literally full of squirrel and deer and other wild game are plenty. John Busey killed a fine doe the other day not more than two miles from camp. This is a change in camp life very rare and adds an interest to our present situation that prehaps is necessary to make us contented for we have little else to cheer us save the good reports from other parts of the Army. We have for sometime been playing Se-saw between the Departments of "The Cumberland" and West "The Gulph." It is decided now I am informed officially that when this White River campaign is over we will join "Sherman" at Atlanta--and I think this campaign is now over--don't believe that any considerable Rebel force has been in this section of country for some time. I would not be surprised if we are at Cairo about the first next month. Yet all my conjecturs may prove false. I forget that we should not try to read the future, but believe with the Poet--

"Full wisely hath the all-foreseeing Heaven
Hid coming sorrows from our anxious eyes
And held in front a cloud, when Man hath striven
To read his destiny."

We are having fine weather and most beautiful cool nights. I sleep sweetly & last night dreampt of home. Today was a beautiful Sabbath.

"Heaven O'erhung the rebelling earth today
One blue unclouded arch."

"To-morrow may be dark with rain and gloom—
We'l fear not but take with thanks the present hour.etc.—"

I have learned not to trouble myself much about probable future movements and be contented wherever I am. Although I would like much to be with you and my friends at our old home. I am contented and believe as much as ever it is my duty to stay where I am.

I would sooner die for my country than live with the consciousness of having acted the coward and I believe that you with all the tender love of a Mother for an erring son would rather see me planted in a Soldiers Grave than have me desert my Country in its greatest need.

With a firm reliance in him who rules the destinies of Men, and the justice of our cause I shall, if called upon, lead the Stars and Stripes into many more Battles, and hope to return soon to join you in our old family circle and spend many pleasant days in the home of my childhood. Made sweet by so many pleasant memories. Remember me to my Brothers & Sisters and accept my love,

Yours truly

S. T. Busey