

Beaufort, SC

July 6, 1862

Dearest Sister,

Your letter of the 9th just reached me a few days ago while we were at Hilton Head where it had been forwarded to me from Key West. I was very glad to hear from you and now as I am settled down once more in my tent, I can answer.

This is a most magnificent place – far superior to any place I ever saw. The houses are palaces while the yards filled with shade trees, and flowers are beyond description. Upon the arrival of our troops here the inhabitants with but one exception, left, and the niggers. And soldiers committed fearful havoc away from the furniture. Over a million dollars worth is supposed to have been destroyed. I went into a house the other day and found nine broken pianos there. If we had arrived here sooner I might have sent you one as a great many were sent North but our General has ordered everything to be gathered and delivered to the Quartermaster for the use of the government.

I had intended if we remained at Key West to surprise you all by visiting you this summer but the idea is given up now. The enemy in considerable force is within 12 miles of us and General Brannan says he brought our Regiment up here to drive them off. So there is a prospect of a brush, and at that time I must be on hand. I may however see the General and I know if he will grant a furlough to anyone, he will to me. However, if there is any show for a brush I will not ask it nor would accept it. You will, I am afraid have to wait some time yet on me. Pap writes that I should come home as you and Sis Shaw were coming up and it would be a good time to flirt. I can't imagine why I should think I am fond of that business.

My pony that I had intended for Lizzie I was compelled to leave at Key West as I could get no chance to send him North. I was sorry, but it could not be helped. However, Lizzie shall have one if her uncle is fortunate enough to get home again.

Our picket lines are only divided by a small stream for nine miles up. On the 4th, the Rebels tried to drive in ours, and a boat came across to burn our ferry house. A

cannon ball was sent right through the boat drowning and killing the whole family. One half of our Regiment is out there now and the rest of us will go out next week.

If you go home, I want you to treat Maria Hendricks as she deserves. Do not yield one iota to her. Treat her as an inferior than as a superior. If she makes the first advances well and good – if not, have nothing whatever to do with her. Yesterday Bill got in a bust again and behaved very badly. I will not allow him to enter my tent, nor go in my company tents. He is a poor cowardly skunk of no character, no stamina. He even tried to injure me in my company and among the officers. But he might as well have saved his time as I am too well known. I have reported him to the Colonel and will do my best to have him sent home, as I want nothing to do with him.

I don't understand a paragraph in your letter in which you say Hat is heart whole again. Why should she be otherwise? She is not of that character as to break her heart for anyone much less a reckless haram-scarum individual such as my humble self. If I am to believe that all I hear I must be an awful fellow. On every side the word "flirt" meets me and yet I can for the life of me not see the cause. Why even in Key West they tried to saddle it on me. But so it goes. There are some splendid ladies there (we saw none here). You ought to have seen the family. Years fell like rain and wasn't I affected? Well these soldiers do get spoiled and no mistake. Never let your husband go to war if you wish to keep him. But what nonsense.

There are some friends I left at Key West where I shall never forget and if I live will meet them again. Write soon. Direct to Port Royal, S.C. Remember me to all friends. Did you get a box of shells.

Your Bro –

Shindel

Note in margin: My men are all in good fighting trim.