

Key West,
May 23, 1862

Dearest Friends,

I have been in Camp all day. I came off duty this morning and it looked so much for rain I did not go out. Besides I had a visitor who just left at 2 o'clock. I then took a nap and was awakened by the Church bells ringing for the 4 o'clock church. So I think I can write a letter yet before supper although I have no idea when the mail will leave. Your letters of the 11th was duly recd. The news continues glorious. Mrs. Piers behaved beautifully but you need not mind her. I told Piers and he felt mad at her. She is continually complaining of him in her letters. He is too good a man for her by a hundred percent. Just keep those shells until he gets home. I took another trip last week up on the reefs. We caught one Turtle that weighed 460 pounds, over two turtle eggs, any quantity of fish, while I gathered a lot of beautiful shells.

A number of our Captains being sick, I am doing duty with my Company although two days last week I was compelled to do that of a Field Officer's. Our Colonel and Chaplain are both in the Hospital - the Chaplain is very sick. The Lieut. Col. and Adjutant came out this week. Of the ten Captains but 4 are for duty. While the officers are so unfortunate the men are improving. My men are in fine order. But one (Gardner) in the Hospital and he is convalescent. As for myself I never enjoyed better health. The people here tell me I look like a native. You can imagine when I tell you I was on duty 3 days last week, two days as Field Officer of [the] day and one day in Provost Guard.

A change has taken place in our Brigade since my last. One Regiment, the 91st at Y, has been sent to Pensacola to reinforce Gen. Arnold. Gen. Butler sent here for the whole available force but Gen. Brannan refused to let us go. Therefore, I see little hope of us getting away from here before the war closes unless Gen. Hunter finds something for us to do in the vicinity of Charleston. As this is the most healthy spot in the Department I feel but little inclination to leave it unless we go into

active service. Besides we are pretty well acquainted here now. Yesterday I received a splendid mince pie having upon it the enclosed note. So you will see we make friends wherever we go. I have a number of acquaintances here I value very highly. The Collector's family particularly.

I will send you by the next mail a copy of the "Key West Herald" a paper got up here by Harry and Jake Keefer. I think it will do pretty well for Key West.

While I am writing one of my men came in and informed me that the *Baltic* is in so a mail will go North in a day or two. Also, a prize captured by the *Bainbridge* loaded with 900 bales of cotton.

The Union men of town here are incensed at the opinion of Judge Marvin, the U.S. Judge here, who has decided that the prize steamer *Circassian* is an English vessel and has ordered her to be released. She was caught by the steam *Somerset* under English colors. There is no doubt but what she intended running the blockade. This Judge Marvin is a double faced individual whose secesh proclivities cannot be concealed. All his decisions lean toward them. Union men receive little mercy at his hands, in the shape of salvage, when before him. No men of war should send prizes here to be adjudicated if there exists the least possible loophole for them to escape. The U.S. District Attorney refused to practice under him because he decided to allow Winer Bethel, a noted secessionist, a member of convention that declared the State out of the Union, to practice.

Supper will be ready and I must hurry up. I enclose for your benefit a couple of orders. They will give you an idea of things in general. A couple of my boys were out Fishing today and caught 32 crawfish, the same as lobsters. They are fine and my boys are cooking me a fine meal of them for supper. I wish you had a couple. I am sure you would like them if you did not look at them.

Do not be alarmed, Mother. I take the best care of myself. Besides I have a young lady that will take care of me when I get too lazy to do it myself. So I am well

prepared. Just take care of yourselves at home and I will be all right in this region. Could you send me your photographs. I would like to have them all. If we remain here all summer I will try and get a furlough in July or August for a couple of weeks. Tell John Youngman I have rec'd no Gazette for several weeks. I will send Annie a box of shells by the *Baltic*. Remember me to Grandmother and all friends. Write soon and often. God bless you.

Yours,

Shindel