

recd. Sept. 3?

[1]

U. S. S. Inaguchama

At Anchor — Two miles off Fort Gordon, Hatteras Inlet

August 30th 1861.

My dear Father —



So much has occurred since mailing my hasty scrawl off "Cape of Virginia" that I hardly know where to begin, what to say and what to leave unsaid. Doubtless long ere this epistle reaches you — you will ^{have} read flaming sensation accounts of the "Hatteras Inlet" fight, but as all such accounts are of a necessity distorted in a manner so that an eye witness would not recognize even the principal incidents of the affair in question, I will attempt ~~to~~ a hurried letter the contents devoted in great measure in detailing what I myself was witness to —
To begin —

On the morning of the 28th inst we made land a little to the S^W of Cape Hatteras, about 10 A. M. saw several ships of war, about whose upper spars (all we could see of the ships) curled huge bodies of smoke. About 11 A. M. we made out that the abovementioned vessels were engaged in a heavy cannonade — what they were firing at no one could imagine, not even our Captain, some thinking it was "general Target Practice", and thus believing that we were engaging some shore batteries, in a little while this latter surmise was proved to be correct as we could

a field work and a fortification on shore, returning the fire of our ships. Now all was excitement. The drum & fife beat to quarters and at a few minutes before 12 M. we were hotly engaged in the action ourselves. Not liking my position in the ward room, I crawled out on the spar deck through an after cuddy hatch, which was open, and placing myself on an empty arm chest with a fine glass in my hand, in the rear of our "After Pivot Gun" was spectator to as grand a bombardment as was ever seen on our Coast. The "Minnesota", "Wabash", "Cumberland", Pawnee, "Harriet Lane", "Monticello" and several small gunboats, with the "Inoquahama" for inside of them all were keeping up a constant fire of shell upon the enemy's batteries. About 2 P.M. the enemy hauled down the secession flag and hoisted the stars & stripes, we ceased firing, and gave three cheers, imagining that they confessed themselves whipped, but not so, as we shortly discovered ~~at~~ upon sending two small gun boats to assist the three hundred men we had on shore the in taking possession of the fortifications; the large Fort (a regularly built Fort)

fired several shots at ~~the~~ our boats, doing them some damage, and at the same time hoisted their flag. It seems that hoisting our Colors was a mere ruse, in order that they might safely transfer their men from the battery to the fort -

(distant apart, about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile) upon discovering this treachery we reopened our fire and kept it up ~~for~~ until about five o'clock P.M. I have forgotten to mention that we discovered on the "sound" side of the Fort several steamboats evidently laden with reinforcements for the enemy, but afraid to land them in face of our fire. At dark we hauled off shore and went to about ten miles from land. In the morning, in company with the fleet we took up our position, again much nearer to the enemy than any other vessel, and only distant from the Fort about $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles, we came to anchor (for the first time) and only used our three large Pivot Guns. The havoc won was fearful, shell after shell in quick succession falling in the fort, tearing everything within reach into atoms, filling the air with fragments of stone, iron, mortar and canvas (there were tents in the fort). The sight was indeed grand. Some forty shell were thrown at our ships, some overreaching but the greater number falling short. We opened fire at 8 A.M. and at 11.30 A.M. the enemy hoisted a white flag, and as they did so the steamboats in the "Sound" (Pamlico) made every effort possible to reach the fort before our men (soldiers from Fort Monroe & Marines from the Squadron) could take them prisoners. but this was not to be, as we at once opened our fire on the steamboats making them turn their course and in company with the several

Schooners, leave for the interior.

We now sent our small gun boats around through the 'Inlet' to the rear of the fort. The 'Harriet Lane' attempting to enter the ~~fort~~ Sound grounded on a bar, and we all fear she is a total loss.

The report today is that enemy (now all prisoners) were six hundred strong, Commanded nearly altogether by ex-U.S. Navy officers Commodore Barron being in charge. The reason of our receiving no damage was that so incessantly did we throw our shell into the fort that the enemy did not have sufficient time to train their guns. So said Com^{dr} Barron to our Captain this morning. We will now take charge of this part of the Coast and soon will make an attack on "Beaufort." Continue to write direct to Hampton Roads as I last told you. No time to say more, as the "Minnesota" sails shortly for the "Roads" and will carry our mail. This being written in the greatest haste, you must excuse all errors.

With a abundance of love to dear Mother, ~~Grand~~ Yourself Grandfather, Aunts & kind regards to all enquiring friends

I remain

ever your affect

Son,



Washie

P.S.

(Nine killed on their side) none on ours) forty severely wounded - many more slightly, and "they say" five hundred prisoners. The fort mounted 26 guns - the battery-five - All of which were dismounted by our fire.