

USS SHARK

Florida Keys Sea Heritage Journal

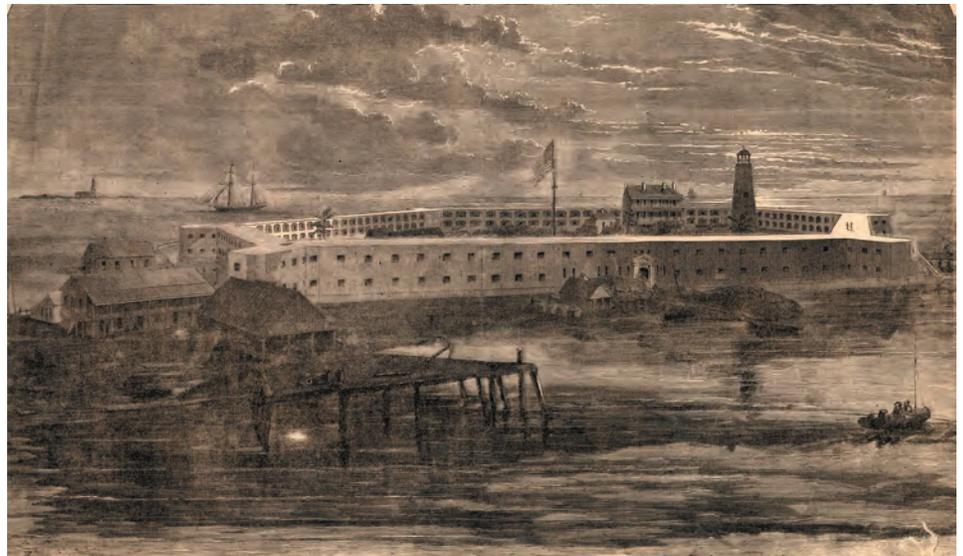
VOL. 24 NO. 3

SUMMER 2014

OFFICIAL QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE KEY WEST MARITIME HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Sergeant Calvin Shedd at Fort Jefferson

Calvin Shedd was a carpenter turned soldier from Enfield, New Hampshire who served in the Union Army from 1861-63. As a first sergeant and later a second lieutenant with the 7th New Hampshire Volunteer Regiment, Shedd witnessed first-hand the hardships of a soldier's life at Fort Jefferson during the Civil War. Arriving in the Tortugas in March, 1862, Shedd's unit departed less than four months later. During that time, Shedd and his fellow New Englanders experienced unbearable heat, mosquitoes, sickness, boredom, poor food, overcrowding and death from disease. The following includes letters written by Shedd to his wife, S. Augusta Shedd, and three daughters in New Hampshire. These letters begin when he leaves New York for Fort Jefferson. This transcript makes changes in Shedd's punctuation and spelling to improve the readability with change the meaning. Upon leaving Florida, the 7th New Hampshire Volunteers were sent to the coast of South Carolina. The regiment, however, was plagued with ill health and was ordered to St. Augustine to recuperate. Over the next months, Shedd suffers



Fort Jefferson in 1861. Photo credit: Harpers Weekly of February 23, 1861.

from chronic dysentery and spends much of his time in the general hospital in Hilton Head. Unable to rejoin his unit and pronounced unfit for active duty, Calvin Shedd was formally discharged from service on December 31, 1863.

New York City Feb. 9th 62.

Dear Wife & Children,

I don't know as I can write much. I have not slept over 1/2 hour for 2 nights. I have got a breeding sore or something of the kind on the end of my right fore finger and can hardly hold a pencil. I am pretty well other

wise the Regiment expects to go Tuesday or Wednesday it may not quite as soon. We go in the bark **Tycoon** & ship **S.R. Mallory** the Regiment is growing weaker every day we stay here in these barracks there is a great many sick. I have been to see the surgeon for the first time this month with my finger, he told me to poultice it with bread poultice. I have and it is easier this p.m. I am trying another pencil I don't know as you can make it out. I have not heard whether you have received that money yet and feel a

(Continued on page 3)

SocietyNews by Tom Hambright



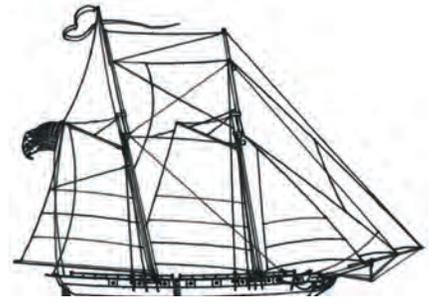
Matilda Rhoda Agnes Clark Folker Hackley C1895. Photo credit: Jane Fairfax Ream Jones.

For the reader of the Hackley' Diary over the years it was printed the Florida Keys Journal known his wife was Matilda. Now through the courtesy of Jane Fairfax Ream Jones, a descent of William and Matilda Hackley, we have a photo of Matilda in her later years.

Matilda Rhoda Agnes Clark Folker was born in Charleston,

South Carolina on July 17, 1825. She married William R. Hackley in Key West on August 12, 1841. They had five daughters, the first lived only lived one day, and three sons who did not survive to adulthood.

William R. died in Memphis, Tennessee on February 2, 1867, Matilda died in Pensacola, Florida on March 2, 1902.



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Editor: Tom Hambright

Letters and articles are welcome. Please write to: Editor, Florida Keys Sea Heritage Journal, KWMHS, P.O. Box 695, Key West, FL 33041 or visit our web site Keywestmaritime.org.

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(Shedd from page 1)

little anxious about it I hope it is all safe. We all feel anxious to get out of these infernal barracks and don't much care where we can go so we can leave here. Sam is well, stands it better than most of the men. Tell Henry I will write to him when we get where there is anything to write about, give my love to them all. Tell Mrs. Clark I have got her box of snuff. I write so bad and my finger pains me so I will close with love to all and Blessing I will try and write again before we go.

Yours Ever,

CS.

March 2, 1862.

Off Fort Jefferson at anchor 1/2 mile from shore. We arrived here this morning at 10 o'clock and at 2 o'clock I received yours of the 16th the mail leaves at 6 this eve. I received your other letter when we were leaving NY coming down from the harbor was very glad to hear from you and the money. I write in haste this time. We have been 17 days on the passage in the barque **Tycoon**, four companies on board, six companies on the ship which has not arrived. A few days out a man of Company A died and was cast into the sea this morning. One of our company by the name of Dewey died just as they dropped anchor. They are to bury him on the Island. I was not sea sick but want of sleep and my cold made me sick for the first ten days out my finger has been so bad that I could not write on the passage. It is better now it will peel off nail and all in a few days it has been a bad finger. It is as warm as June or July if it was not for the sea breeze we should die. My finger is so stiff I cannot write very well.

We expect to go on shore as soon as the other ship arrives. When we go on shore I will write a description of the Fort which looks very imposing from the outside. The hot weather has broke my cold and sore throat I feel very much better but very uncomfortable from humors which have broken out all over me which make me itch badly. Take it together we have had a rather hard time on the passage meals a day poor at that and scanty since the men get over their sickness. The beef is so saltily we cannot eat it. I live on hard bread and a pint of the meanest coffee a day with some potatoes. Our pork is quite good tho fat but very bad to eat in this climate. We hope to fare better ashore. Friend Thayer was sea sick for a number of days and could not eat anything but is better now. If we can beg buy or steal anything good we share it together. I would give a dollar for good water I could drink this afternoon the water stinks worse than a hog pen it is said there is not a drop of water on the Island it has to be brought from Key West I think. Write often and send me some papers most any papers you can get hold of after you read them the Weekly Tribune, Boston Journal or most anything we heard to day of the victory in Kentucky and Tennessee which makes us feel well. Direct mail to Fort Jefferson Florida Tortugas Company C 7th NH Vol. There are quite a number of sharks swimming round the vessel. They would like a soldier to eat. I suppose some think they smell the corpse which is about to be carried away the escort is already formed. I had to borrow \$15.00 to make out that money and I shall have to pay a heavy interest but I shall have some money to send you if pay day ever comes. That will help you to live better let the debts go to the devil and try and live comfortable.

I wish I had some money to send you but have not. We don't live half so well as state prisoners or town paupers but I don't want you to live so. There has been times on board here that I would have given \$ 5.00 for a good meal if I had money as I used to have. I have forgotten to acknowledge the receipt of some of your letters. I think I have read all of them. Dear Ada Anna and Lilly I was very glad to receive your letters and will write you soon. I wish you to write me often if it is only a line apiece. I think of you very often and hope you will be good and kind to each other and to Mother, and if I never see you again to remember that Father loves you very much. I wish you to be happy and to enjoy yourselves as much as you can. Thayer has written a description of the voyage and he says you must ask his wife to read it to you. I presume it is written much better than I could write it in fact I know it is I will close with love to all and I think of you all, night and day many times.

From your Husband, Father & Brother,

C. Shedd.

Fort Jefferson, Fla. March 6th, 1862.

Dear Ones at home,

I wrote you last Sunday before we came ashore and will try and write something more. Companies. A & F got ashore Sunday p.m. Monday Company C got ashore about noon. We had a blow and Company G had to stay till Wednesday p.m. We feel very anxious about the ship that the other six companies are on board of there are strange rumors about her. It appears, the captain of her put

(Continued on page 4)

(Shedd from page 3)

his mate in command of her, and he came here in the steamer that arrived before we did although she did not leave New York till ten days after we did, some say he, and his mate, are secesh and that the mate has run her ashore or delivered her over to the rebels. There was a rumor yesterday that she lay under the guns of the Rebel batteries at Pensacola. Adjutant Henderson and the Captain of the **Tycoon** have gone to Key West to see if any tidings of her may be heard, we are thanking our stars that we came on the good barque **Tycoon**, Captain Lewis. I have seen a little of four phases of soldiers life in camp in barracks on board of transport & in garrison. I have not seen enough of garrison duty yet to judge how I shall like it but presume I shall before I get away from here. The best portion of a soldiers life is in his first camp. Barrack life such as we had in N.Y. is very disagreeable, and I have not words to describe the filth and stench bad air and bad everything. On board of transport stowed as full as it can be with men between decks and all of the best part of the ship appropriated to the use of about 10 officers they are the ones to write glowing accounts of soldier life and how well used and contented & happy the men are. We are cursed with incompetent officers like all the rest of the Regiment only we think more so and especially Company C, one of them ought to be keeping a country tavern where he could patronize his own bar. Another ought to be keeping a singing school and attending Methodist Prayer meetings where he got his reputation. If the devil don't laugh in his sleeve at some of his doings since begun to enlist for the army. He (the devil) is no Judge of mean men. The other you know

something about clever enough for a farmer or school master but as much out of place here as a fish in the fire. I have got some wrath treasured up against him against the day of wrath if I live till that time don't report me for writing what I have about them. I would not change places with either of them. I would not swap the good will and popularity I have got with the company for either of their offices. Here they have been in the service over four months and not one of them can go through the Manual of Arms or drill the company in it and they are ashamed of themselves. We have had a fuss with the cooks and got them kicked out and now we have got the best cook in the company put in and that is E. L. Thayer for one he is the best. Sprague is good but not equal to Ned the company are much pleased to have him take hold of it, our grub has not been fit for a decent dog there has been none since I left camp and all that I should have been glad to have gone to your swill-tub and I could have made a good meal out of potatoes meal & pumpkin as you used to make it last fall. Hurra Hurro Hurrou Bully We have had the first good dinner soup since we left camp & all the boys feel mighty good over the new cooks we think now if they can get stuff to cook they will cook it well, While I think of it I will say that my health is so much better than it was that I like to have forgot that I had any my belly is so full that it is almost uncomfortable. There is one company of regulars & three companies of Wilson Zouaves here we expect they will go to Santa Rosa Island soon. God speed them for they are an awful hard outfit. We go swimming once or twice a day and they say it is the coldest it has been this winter and they think we are awful tough to go into the water, but the water is even warmer than I knew salt water at the north. There is

said to be about 1,500 people on the Fort. Workmen and their families, their are men, women, children, slaves. Men women & children a good many of them they were the first slaves I ever saw. I have not talked with any of them yet they appear to be pretty well contented on the outside all I know about them is they are awful Black. There are beef cattle, horses, mules, a cow & calf, goats, cocks & hens, parrots, a few small birds in the Fort. There is quite a number of trees here Black and Red Mangroves they do not bear any fruit. There are also a number of Cocoa Nut trees with nuts on every tree they are a curious looking thing the nuts are different sizes from an egg to a quart bowl some of the trees have as many as a hundred nuts on them it is said they never get ripe here on account of the soil which is mostly coral land or rather no soil at all. We have pitched our tents in a Grove of Mangroves, Company G, are in the Grove of Cocanuts One of our Corporals found a Scorpion in his blanket this morning there are lots of them here delightful things to lay with they are liable to crawl into our tents at any time it is said that the Black Scorpions sting is almost sure death, the grey ones are not so bad. To cure the sting they turn whiskey into a man till he is dead drunk the boys feel rather afraid of them. I lay next the door of the tent where they can have a good chance to crawl over me. We have just got through out first dress parade here we done about as well as the regulars and Zouaves done last night. We had a smart shower here today about noon there is very little rainfall here it is said. It beats all to see the price the Sutler charges here for his goods shoes worth 1.25 are 3.00, butter 40, soda biscuit 20, white sugar 19, brown 12, nuts 20, hats worth 33 north 1.12, apples 2 & 3 for 10, dates 20, figs 35, there

are no oranges or lemons in the Fort it is said that they are plenty & cheap at Key West. I have taken off my undershirt & drawers & stockings The only trouble I have bodily is my finger the nail is all loose and it is festering again. I think I have got it cold in going into the water and washing the humor that is broken out on me is some better I don't have scratch but half the time now the men most all of them have it, it breaks out a red blotch and a little fester.

7th a.m. we have had a hard blow all last night the sand flies gone, A U.S. Gunboat arrived here last night but no tidings of the **Mallory** yet, we fear they have met with some great misfortune we had rather loose all the rest of the officers in the Regiment than Colonel Putman.

My Dear Daughter Ada,

I should like to see you very much I think of you very often. There is lots of coral and sea shells here, and I mean to get some of them and send home if I have a chance they are off on the sand keys one or two miles from the Fort. A man gave me a crawfish yesterday they are very much like a lobster except the long claws, and I cannot tell them apart by the taste. There are quite a number of boys & girls in the Fort they all go barefooted and bare legged and most of them bareheaded they are as swarthy as Indians. There are cats and dogs here hens & chickens and two ducks or geese. I don't know which they are, very pretty. The coral here is almost white it grows like trees with trunks and branches. I should have said it is built in that shape for it is made by a little insect not so large as the head of a pin. It is said to be of a green color in the water on these Islands and it has to be boiled and laid in the sun to make it white. When the wind blows here the waves break over the coral reefs and it sounds like heavy cannon or thunder. The waves are called breakers. Reef is

where the coral is most to the top of the water and it stops the force of the waves and they break over in a great sheet of white foam, as high as a house. A sand key is a low sandy island only a little above the water they look like a white streak in the water when at a distance. Give my love to Annah & Lilly be good girls and write a line to me when mother writes.

From your,

Father C. Shedd.

I will write again soon if nothing happens remember me to all inquiring friends. I wish you would write to father again before long.

Yours & C.S.

I shall lose my bedfellow by Ned going to cooking for which I am sorry.

Fort Jefferson, Fla., March 15
1862.

Dear Wife & Children,

I was very glad to hear from you. Yours of the 24th of February came to hand yesterday. I have written you twice from here & to Mr. Huse which he will show you. You caution me about eating fruit no danger of that at all that I have had was 3 lemons that I paid 15 cents for everything is about twice as high as at the north. There is a Rebel schooner lying here in a sinking condition that was taken by a Yankee gunboat, the crew cut a hole to sink her but our men were to quick for them. The gunboat fired 26 shots at her before she hove too but without injury. She is loaded with fruit & liquors. After the crew made the hole in her they took to their boats and escaped somehow.

I have not heard the particulars. There was a prize crew of six put on board to take her to Key West but they could not keep her afloat and were nearly worn out when they arrived here and sent for soldiers to work the pump they run her aground with 5-foot of water in her hold. Gen. Brannan, Commander of the Department of Key West was here & inspected our Regiment yesterday we paraded with all our traps and we had a sweat of it. The three companies of Zouaves left for Fort Pickens last eve we were very happy to part with them and the Guard House is to let this morning. The small pox has broken out and some 15 men have been sent to Bird Island supposed to be sick with it. Levi Le Page from my squad is there, his Brother John is sick in the tent I don't know but he has got it. I don't feel frightened as some do Ned & I can kill out all of these bully farmers. We have done our duty every day while they are sick about half the time and shirk duty the rest, the good soldiers are scarce in this regiment that is that do their duty from since of patriotism & love of country. I can't find a man that sticks up to the rack as I do. I feel the same courage to keep on as I did when I enlisted, although if the war was over I should wish to be at home for a soldiers life as such, I don't like it I can tell you, and I never have seen the man yet that did. Sam has been well all the time till within a day or two has had a sore throat but is some better today and on duty as Corporal of Water Guard. I think he has not missed a tour of duty since he enlisted he is one of the best soldiers for duty on the company. Neds religion is all just like mine. Ned & Dodge have to cook out doors for the whole company and have a hard time of it but we have better grub than we had
(Continued on page 6)

(Shedd from page 5)

from the other cooks when they had a stove and kitchen. Read the coarse writing on the next page first. My health is good for this climate, appetite good although I feel weak and languish as one feels in hot days in spring. I am writing in my tent sitting on my bunk with nothing on but shirt & trousers bare armed & barefooted warm at that (the mails are not reliable don't think strange if you don't hear from me every week or fortnight.)

My Dear Annah & Libby (I shall write again soon I write every time the mail leaves for Key West). I wrote to Ada in my last and I will drop a line to you. There is a little black hen with nine tiny chicks scratching at the door of my tent some are black striped & yellow & white they are cunning little things they pick up bread crumbs that the soldiers drop. Corporal Brown makes dough for them every day we don't know who they belong to they stay around our tents all the time. I want to see you very much and I think of you very often. The moon shines brighter than in N. H. so bright that we can see to read by its light very well and I love to look at it for I think that you may be looking at it the same time although so far away. Flies are as thick here as you ever saw them in dog days they are very troublesome. You must write to me when mother writes be good & jolly goodbye.

From Your Father,

C. Shedd

Sam & a dozen more in Company C have got variculoid or small pox I am not very sick. I don't feel much afraid of it. Tell every body you see to send papers to the boys for we are outside all civilization we get no

news until it is a month old. Write me about town meeting and what scandal there is floating round the village a little more the mail leaves tonight.

16th on guard today or I should have written

Yours as Ever,
C. Shedd.

Fort Jefferson, Fla., March 24,
1862.

Dear Wife & Children,

I have a chance to send this by Lt. House's waiter Billy Smith who goes to Lebanon. Captain George has resigned starts for Key West today. Lt. House is in command of Company C and as big a lunk head on military as George was the best part of the company think it is a poor swap. Now don't be frightened our men are dying at the rate of one a day of small pox. L. L. Page of my squad is dead of it & his brother Corporal Page is very sick. I have been expecting to have it for a few days I am just able to sit up & write the Surgeon has just left me he says I shall not have it and I shall be out in a few days. This is the first time I have been on sick list since I enlisted. We have had no mail for two or three weeks and I long to hear how you are getting on write often no matter if a number of letters come by the same mail. I want to hear about town meeting what C & H are doing in shop & McConnell & Heath in Tannery. Don't worry about me for I think I shall be out soon as my health has been first rate appetite good could eat double rations easy. Mr. Thayer is writing I don't know what he can find for news I can't think of any. Give my respects to I. H. Hayes tell him I should be very happy to have him send me a paper the oftener the better. We have got to learn the drill

on big guns, I like that. After I learn that I shall be pretty well posted up on drill. Patriotism is pretty well played out in this Regiment, all the men talk of is being discharged. They want to go home and act like a parcel of boys and would be about as reliable in active service. I shall have this letter smoked so don't be afraid of it.

I will close with love to all,

C. Shedd.

I should write more but don't feel able.

Fort Jefferson, Fla., March
26, 1862, 7 p.m.

Dear Wife & Children,

I wrote you three days ago and will drop you another line for I was so fortunate & happy to receive yours of March 2d this p.m. was very glad to hear you were all well. I presume this will go from Key West that is if Smith goes in the steamer in the same mail with the other for the mail boat leaves here early in the morning. I am better than I was at the time of writing before so as to be out considerable. I have a rather bad diarrhea that is easier than it was this morning think. I shall be well of it in a day or two. I never had the headache before this scrape in my life. We are in the extreme southern end of Dixie away from everything and everybody we get no news till it is three weeks old it is rumored here that Manassas, Richmond, Norfolk & New Orleans are taken but don't suppose the whole of it is true. Mr. Thayer wishes you to have Mrs. T. direct his mail to Fort Jefferson, Fla. It is very monotonous here. At 5:30 reveille, 6:15 breakfast, 8 guard mount, 9 company drill, 12 dinner, 4 company drill, 5:30 dress parade, 6 supper, 8:30 tattoo & roll call, 9 taps & to bed and it is about alike

every day and the men are wishing themselves in the field where they would have active service & see some Rebels. We are facing death in another way two more of our men Mr. Sprague & Hardy died one yesterday the other today of small pox we hope that will be all from Company C. Sam had it very light is now able to act as nurse for the rest he saw the worst of it before he went to the Island I think. There is no sign of pay day I am afraid we shall not get it till the first of May or later. The regulars say pay day comes very seldom here. You wish me to write about planting. I hardly know what to write I have thought it would perhaps it would be best to get someone to plant a small garden enough to use what manure there is or so much as may be necessary and the rest use on potatoes, so as to get enough for your own use again. I have thought it better to let some one take the manure and put more of their own with it enough to manure the land well and give you such portion as they could afford perhaps Bobbitt would like to take it but before you decide I would get Mr. Huse to advise and see about it perhaps he could make a better trade than you could. You will have to use your own judgment in a great measure, have great care of the trees. Another thing that is a cow if you wish to keep one. If you could hire one with the privilege of buying in June or July probably my pay will get to you by that time. If ever you can look round and see what can be done it takes so long for a letter to reach you that you will have to judge of these things as well as you can for before you could write me and get an answer it will be to late for these fixings. Ned is hearty as a buck looks first rate never have seen him look so well since I knew him he is in good

spirits. Burrell is well also Frank Lee & Dodge. You spoke of Roberts going back to his Regiment I would not go at this late day if I was in his place if I did not know more about the business than he does unless he has learned something since I knew him. There is altogether too many fools for commissioned officer. The letters have got to be in the office at taps and I must close good night keep jolly as possible hope for the best comes soon enough kiss the children for me.

Yours ever,

C. Shedd.

Fort Jefferson, Fla., Apr 2d
1862.

Dear Wife & Children,

There is a mail to leave tomorrow at 9 a.m. and will drop you a line. I am writing lying on my back don't be frightened I am better than I have been had a turn of gravel since I got over the diarrhea. I think it is owing to the water & standing in the position of a soldier so much. I think I shall be able to do duty in a day or two. Corporal J. C. Page died last night of small pox, which makes three out of my squad. I hope it is the last the doctor thinks there will be no more cases. There has been 9 deaths from it in the Regiment 4 of Company C, 5 of Company G. Sam is well and acting as nurse to others, I think there will be several of Company C discharged and a number from other Companies. Thos. Watts is the only one you know, I think he has the consumption or something very near to it. The latest news we have is March 15th which tells us of goodly progress in the war and hope it will continue. We have got the election returns and don't know

what it means that Enfield has gone as it has we think there was some monkey about it. I wish you would write to father occasionally and if I don't send you money in season to get a cow just give him a hint of it and perhaps he would help you always providing you want to keep one also look out for a pig if I had been at home I intended this year to build a yard beside the wall on north side of cow yard to come out even with the stone post and nearly to end of wall the other way and let the pig have some sunshine, but if you have to hire it done I would not bother with it and I would not bother with a pig unless you feel able, Perhaps Henry would engage you a good one. I would not get a cow unless you are sure she is gentle for it would be better to let the pasture than to have an ugly cow to deal with. I would keep from 5 to 8 hens if you can get them if you don't keep a pig that is if you think it best. I want you to do just as you please about all of these things the land, cow, pig, hens, pasture and all. I am afraid the legislation will stop the pay of families if there is any talk of it please write me as soon as you hear of it. There was a mail arrived last Monday some of the boys got letters & papers I presume you wrote a day to late you must write a little oftener and I shall get them every mail. Some of the boys went out in a boat yesterday and harpooned a shark and brought him ashore he was about 8 foot long an ugly looking customer. I have got a piece of his backbone to remember him by. There was 6 rifled cannons arrived here the other day they are to be mounted on top of the walls. Our grub will make us all sick. I am afraid the coffee stinks so that no one but a soldier could drink it or the tea either, our bread is all
(Continued on page 8)

(Shedd from page 7)

made of damaged flour and it is pretty hard for a man that don't feel very well but I don't complain for soldiers get used to most anything. I write you things just as they are not as some write that we are a parodies for I think the truth is the best to know at all times even if it is not so pleasant it is reliable. We are to have some new clothes pants, blouse shirt, stockings shoes, drawers & mosquito bars. Burrell is quite unwell with diarrhea & gravel very much like me. It is rumored that we shall be ordered to Key West or Fort Pickens or Ship Island or some other place. I should like to see active service somewhere I don't care much where it is for we don't seem to be doing the Country much service, But I suppose it is just as necessary to keep this Fort well defended as any other, but I want to see a rebel before I am discharged I don't think of more to write my love to all

Yours Ever,

C. Shedd.

Fort Jefferson, Fla, Apr, 7th 62.

Dear Wife & Children,

I am on guard duty today and have time to write but a word as the mail leaves at 3 o'clock, Of which I have been just informed. I have nothing of importance to write, my health is better but I am not very well, but think I shall be able to do duty if nothing breaks, Regularly it is very warm here in daytime the nights are cooler and very damp heavy dew, which will keep ones clothes damp all through like a smart shower. Lieutenant Williams has resigned and has written home to that effect, He has had the offer of 1st Lieutenant but will not take

it if his resignation is accepted he will probably go home soon but the company would be better satisfied to have him stay and rank up. Than to have those that will rank up if he leaves. I have about concluded that I had rather be the best Drill Sergeant in the Regiment than to hold a commission for the officers are hated by the men awfully and I have got the good will of the whole company or all that I care about. I wrote you about the small pox it is abating I think Corporal Page is the last death that will occur from it. It is sad to have the men dying so from home & friendless for the army is the most awful place for demoralization, a man dies and he is forgotten in an hour. Land returned from the Island he is well & rugged swarthy as a South American he has had a terrible experience there of small pox. He was not sick a day himself. I think of sending a small box of shells & coral if I can buy some one that is going home, for you to remember me by if I never see NH again, but I hope to, and in a few months or a year at most, but it's impossible to tell anything about it, The last news we have heard was March 15th the fact is we are away from everything down to the extreme southern portion of the West Indies, we are probably further south than any other regiment will go in this war you can tell where we are. I suppose better than I can as I have none and could not get sight of one since we were first ordered here. I have got a new shirt, shoes and mosquito bars but we have not yet our pants, cap or blouse, yet and some of the Boys are wearing their drawers for pants. Frank Lee is nearly naked from his waist down and a great many are naked where they sit down unless they have their drawers on, My pants are whole as when I had them and the best looking pants in the regiment, it is all in

taking care of them, and not fooling round. You know I was never very bad on clothes. I have my shirts washed out at six cents each. The rest of it I do myself. Mr. Sweetser, that you saw at Manchester, is in my squad now. He found a scorpion in his blanket but we are not as afraid of them as we were for the doctor says he can cure their sting easy. Another man found one in his box where he keeps his bread, which made him swear awfully. I fear this letter will not be very interesting and I will close while I have room with love to all.

Yours Ever,

C Shedd.

Write often

Fort Jefferson Apr, 19th 1862

Dear Wife & Children,

I have had no mail since I wrote you before but will commence a letter against the time the next mail leaves. My health is very good I am on duty every day. It is very warm drilling. I sweat as much as I should in haying at home. Colonel Putman has not arrived but we expect him & Gen. Brannan with staff today or Monday. It is very monotonous here, on guard once in about 10 days the next day off duty till dress parade, the day after on Regiment police when I have to boss 16 men but do not work much myself. The rest of the time it is battalion drill at 9 a.m., company drill at 4 p.m., dress parade at 5:30, roll call at 8:30, taps at 9 when we are all in bed. And every day equipment to clean & keep in order. So that there is but very little leisure time and the men get sick of one thing right over again every day. I have been off the Key last Tuesday but once & I must tell you about it. Lieutenants

House & Williams Sergeant Davis & self got a sail boat & started for East Key the wind shifted and we had to boat a long time but at least we arrived the sea was rather rough & we got pretty wet. Williams was pretty well frightened but got quieted down after I laughed at him a spell. By the way I will tell what we were after and don't laugh it was birds eggs, We had but an hour & a quarter to stay. Oh! How we wished we could have had all day & oh how I wished you all could have been there & see the thousands on thousands of birds black & white about the size of wild pigeons they were very pretty & their cries were almost deafening & so tame that I could have caught hundreds with my hands but it was no fun to catch them they were so tame it was eggs we wanted & I never worked much harder than I did hunting them the Island is covered with bushes from four to eight feet high crooked scraggy things & grow in the coral sand. The birds lay one egg in a place they build no nest but hollow out the sand slightly. The eggs are about the size of a pullets with spots a little darker than a turkey's. House found 75, Williams 51, Davis 48, self 52 & I have lived the best that I have since enlisted I paid 20 cents for 1/2 pound of stinking butter & lived high on poached & boiled eggs. Williams poached some did not like them & gave the rest away, I expect it was because they were wild birds eggs. I like them as well as hen's eggs. Three of the boys went over Thursday and got over 400 they were gone all day, I mean to go again they are the only luxury I have had. The men are awful grouchy & growing uglier every day for they expect House will be Captain, Sergeant Lane 1st Lieutenant, Sergeant Prescott 2d Lieutenant and they hate all of them awfully. The last is between you &

I all but 4 or 5 in the company want me for captain but that cannot be probably for they cannot have their say and I should hate awfully to hold a commission under any of them for they are all mighty mean men & will have their hands full to handle the Company. They are all afraid & jealous of me and know the feelings of the Company, consequently I am a thorn in their sides that hurts them bad & will hurt them worse if they don't use me better than they have done.

Sunday 20th. Last night the schooner **Tortugas** arrived from Key West with news of a great fight on the Mississippi it is reported here that 20,000 Union & 4,000 Rebels are killed we think it must be exaggerated I presume you have heard all the particulars long ago & we are very anxious too. The **Tortugas** brought no Mail and I am very anxious to hear from you don't know how glad I am to get a letter from home bringing words of sympathy & love in the words of the poet. It is joy unspeakable to know that they miss me at home. I am perfectly disgusted with the officers of the 7th they don't seem to know as much as they did at Camp Hale when we came here there was a lot of beef cattle in the Fort. The Colonel had them all carried over to Hog Island to prevent them from eating the officers, they being the greenest things in the Fort not excepting a brood of young ducks. I have got a pint dish tin plate & basin two saucers & one cup knife fork & spoon I think I am well provided with kitchen furniture. I think coffee & tea tastes much better from a cup & saucer than an old black tin cup. I broke one cup & bought another cup & saucer that is the reason I have two. It is very pleasant but hot I sit on my bunk as I write look out of a port-hole on the waters of the Gulf of Mexico breaking on the reef

restless as the passions of man. It is rather dull after one gets accustomed to it. Sam has had a touch of the rheumatism in his left knee which made him quite lame for several days he is now nearly recovered & is otherwise well he would like to have his folks write him. He sends his regards to all. There is a good many men sick yet one was buried yesterday from Company I. He died of consumption. Some of the men are too lazy to write home, but I judge you by myself; ie you wish me to write every mail that leaves here & I have done so although my letters have been rather dull and uninteresting the fact is there is nothing to write about here after it is once told over.

21st. The Old Light Keeper here has two slaves one a girl about 20 years old I should judge & a boy about 15 bright & keen as a brier, when the Zouaves left the boy left with them his master found it out & recovered him. The rule is here that a Master shall not whip a slave without permission from the Commander of the Post. So the old fellow went to Colonel Putman & requested leave to whip the Boy, stating that he deserved it. Col. Putman very quietly heard him through with his statements & request when he looked up at him & with emphasis said "You Go to Hell" and took no further notice of him. It is showery here today cool & quite refreshing. House is Officer of the Guard today after Guard Mount & review when he was marching the Guard to its Post he made one of his usual blunders and scattered the men over half the parade ground. I would resign a commission mighty quick if I held one, if I did not forget more every day than he knows.

22nd. The mail leaves this p.m. & I will close it. We are expecting a mail every hour and very anxious to

(Continued on page 10)

(Shedd from page 9)

hear the particulars of the big fight some here think it will decide the war & that we shall be discharged soon but I don't think so there are some things that make me think that we shall be ordered from here into active service but it is only guess work. I find that men's judgements are varied very much by their wishes and that which they desire most, ie, a discharge will come immediately in that they will be disappointed. The goats have got a number of kids they are cunning little things. I wish the children could see them. There are king birds, swallows & golden robins here in the Fort among the trees but not many of them. Mr. Sweetser has just brought in a young bird that is very tame he is running round on the floor catching flies. I think Miner is a little homesick but he won't own up to it. He & Everett are tending for the Sutler when he is not on duty. I want you to write often & long letters so that I shall keep posted on what is going on in Enfield & vicinity. They are getting more strict one Captain put 9 men in the Guard House today for not being at drill & House has ordered one man of Company C in for failing to be at battalion drill this a.m. I have just been to dinner we had boiled pork, potatoes & a piece of bread & a dish of rain water with wiggles in it. We drink lots of wiggles & the bread is well filled with black bugs about 1/4 of an inch long we pick out some of them & eat the rest there is scarcely anything that turns my stomach now it has got to be proof against dirt & nastiness

Yours Ever,

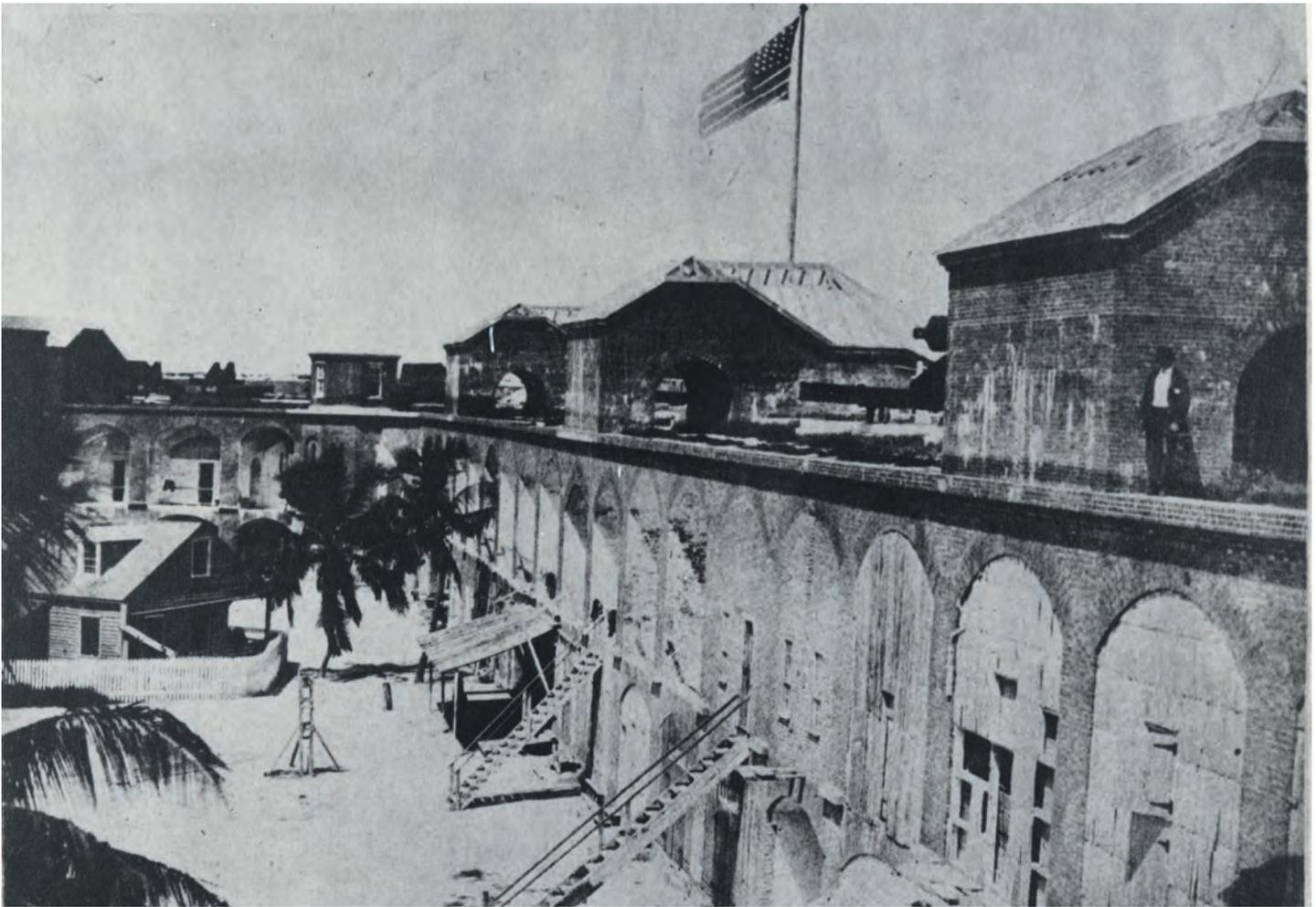
C. Shedd.

Fort Jefferson, Fla., Apr, 25th
1862 2 p.m.

Dear Wife,

I have just heard that the mail leaves at 4 this p.m. I came off guard at 9 and am very dull & stupid. I was very happy yesterday to received yours of 19th & 31st, also several papers, that of the 13th should have been here the mail before the last ie, the 1st of April. I have already acknowledged yours of the 23rd the papers are very old but convenient as we use all the paper we can get to wipe our dishes, we seldom wash them. We are very neat in our eating department every one takes care of his own dishes. I was most happy to hear that you were all well. Ada, Annah & Libby I thank you all very much for your letters and am very happy to hear that you have had such good times sliding, I should have had a slide with you. I am much surprised to hear of the domestic troubles of Mr. Je?. I don't know but my judgement may be at fault and washed under present circumstances, but I must confess that I could not blame him much if he had really done that which he is accused of the way he has been situated for the last few years, he has my sympathy. Col. Putman arrived yesterday I formed the guard in good style & stood at present arms when he passed through the Sally Port. He raised his cap to us & looked bully & pleased the Regiment thinks more of him than all the rest of the officers. General Brannan did not come as expected. You wished to know about Williams's resignation I have written about it before as you will see if you have got my previous letters. The steamer **Rhode Island** brought the mail yesterday & has gone to Pickens and Ship Island & when she returns ?Lt. Williams hopes to go home in her he has got his mind set on going home & is very anxious to start but is uncertain when he

will have his resignation accepted he was in hopes that the General would have come yesterday so that the question could have been settled immediately. There is Mrs. Colonel Abbott, Mrs. Captain Langdon of the Regulars & Mrs. Robinson the Post Sutler's wife they swell out big here. Mrs. Abbott especially is much remarked for men of good judgement think that she is ridiculous on some of her airs. Mr. Thayer is better he had quite a sick spell has now quite recovered. Shaker is busy Sunday's & evenings teaching the slaves to read they are extremely pleased when they can spell words of three letters they astonish themselves in the progress they make. The boys plague Shaker about his Blacks and ask him what he reads to them. He answered the other night when asked the question. By God, I read the Bible to them. Shaker is a brick we have a great deal of fun with him & fat Healy my squad have the most sport of any squad in the company. The reason is I expect that they like their Sergeant I don't know but you will think I praise myself to much but I endeavor to write things just as they are. I fear this will prove rather a dull epistle the fact is I am about played out on subjects to write about we are so out of the way of everybody. Charley Lane got the pox in N.Y. & has not done a days duty since he left there. He is expecting a discharge soon the Government can't cure him in this climate. I pity him don't tell of him to his prejudices he is a hard boy but we wish him well. Our small pox patients have all returned from Bird Key & I think it is played out thank God. It is reported that there is 400 men under the Doctors care for almost every disease under the sun there is only about 30 in each



The Interior of Fort Jefferson during the Civil War. Photo credit: National Archives.

Company to do regular duty many of them would get well quick if they were ordered home such almighty shirks I think never were seen before

Yours Ever,

C. Shedd.

Fort Jefferson, Fla., Apr, 30th 62

Dear Wife,

The mail leaves tomorrow & I commence a line informing you that I am very well going flesh and in better spirits than I was three or four weeks ago. It is boiling hot here today we went out at 9 o'clock for inspection & muster for pay stood in line 2 1/4 hours under the sun of the tropics. If we had worn our knapsacks it would have been a

hard one with our woolen shirts & thick coats. It is thought doubtful if Lieutenant Williams' resignation will be accepted he is very anxious to leave I think & expected to have been away before this. There is a good deal of bugling going on if he leaves the company are going in for me for his place but I done think they can make it work for soldiers are not supposed to have any minds of their own. I don't know what to write that will interest you. I am of the opinion that we are stuck for a year here at least this is merely my opinion and you must take it for what it is worth. We have had no news for a long time & are extremely ravenous for some we have not heard about the big fight yet. The sergeants of Company C have to recite lessons in tactics every other night & we have commenced drill on heavy artillery.

The sergeants are chiefs of polices. I can skunk the crowd on them. I suppose I have a right to brag to you I don't dare to anyone else, so you can believe as much as you care to we shall have to get lessons in artillery drill in a few days so that we shall be pretty busy. Some of the boys have gone egging I bargained with my Corporal Wm... Tilton I am to pay his share of the boat & he is to give me half he gets there is so many goes then that they done get as many as they did, but if I can get a couple of dozens I shall be satisfied, it will give me several good meals. There has been a steamer hovering round here in sight part of the time that is a little suspicious & the Colonel advised the boys to take their arms with them today as he says there are secesshes prowling

(Continued on page 12)

(Shedd from page 11)

round in these waters but did not take his advice & it would be a joke if they got taken in & done for

May 1st.

I wish you a pleasant May Day it is very hot here again today two of the hottest days since we arrived. I have learned since yesterday that Williams' resignation has not been sent to Key West yet expect it will go in this mail so the report that it will not be accepted is premature. Payday don't come yet & I think it doubtful if it comes till six months are due the currency here is Sutlers tickets which are the meanest kind of shin-plasters. They have got a big turtle confined in a cage inside of the breakwater he is 4 feet long & 3 foot wide his head as large as a man different shape of course & instead of feet & claws as the turtles north he has flippers or fins he will swim very lively. It is said they will lay as many as a hundred eggs as large as a goose they commence laying in May & June. I had forgot almost about my taxes you will not have money enough to pay them make them wait till I am paid off. Sam is a little lame yet but so to do duty. It is rumored that the mails are, or to be cut off, if so I shall feel very lonely. I hope not. There is I think a gain in the general health of the Regiment although there are many sick yet you will find this letter dull but I think of nothing else & will close.

Yours Ever,

C. Shedd.

Fort Jefferson May 4th 1862.

My Dear Family,

I am extremely happy to acknowledge the receipt of four letters & seven papers three letters

from you & one from Mr. Huse for which please give him & take for yourselves many thanks. I continue in good health & spirits, with an increasing love for the old Stars and Stripes. The papers I have received give the first particulars I have heard of the great Battle at Pittsburgh. We are joyful for the victory but sad on account of the fearful slaughter. So many men hurled into eternity on account of the cursed system of Slavery. Tell everybody that I am in favor of wiping out the whole thing root & branch, there will never be a better time or one more favorable. In this mail I received yours of the 7th, 15th & 21st of April. I am much pained to hear of the great damage done, especially for Mr. Washburn. I feel very bad for his great misfortune please give him my respects. I don't know how you will get along for wood & other things, but don't go cold pull down the fences & burn them or anything else that is handy. I wish I had some money to send you, it is rumored that we shall be paid off the 10th, but I am rather doubtful about it, Don't pay any bills whatever until you get where you can spare it, I don't know what you will do for clothes for the children I presume it is time they had them before this I don't know what to advise in the matter so won't say anything about it & charge it to slavery. Give my respects to Mrs. Pillsbury & tell her I wish she would come here & tear my night-cap when I have it on some night my bunk is wide & the mosquitoes cant get in. I would try & make everything lovely & the goose hang high. I sent four flowers in my last as you will see if you have got them, there are no seeds in the desert & but few flowers that I have seen those I sent grow on a running vine on the sand the Lord only knows how for there is no soil.

May 5th. It is boiling hot again today nothing but the burning sun

overhead & heated sand under foot, it is 9 p.m. I write in my shirt & pants & sweat like a man mowing with mosquitoes thick as flies in Dog days. It seems as hot or hotter than NH's July & August weather give my thanks to P.A. Hayes for papers sent. I am writing on a new table that I have just finished of rough boards that I stole of Uncle Sam. Last Saturday I commanded a fatigue party of 25 men taking flour out of a bastion & piling it in the casemates there is flour enough here to fill the new grist mill so we shall not be without bread just yet. There was a fishing smack arrived here Saturday with 4 big turtles as large over as a good sized table they have killed 3 of them the other lays on his back with a bunch of shavings for a pillow I pity the poor fellow for he must suffer terribly they are very meek honest looking chaps. Those peas that I got at E. Lebanon's want very tall stout bushes they ought to be as large as ones 6 or 8 feet high & they are warranted to bear all summer the vines should be set 12 to 15 inches apart i.e. each side of the bushes & 6 or 8 in the other way. Manure them well. I wish you to keep watch of the cherry trees for I wish to decide this year whether they are good for anything if they don't bear this year I think I shall graft them with the common cherry if I ever get home.

May 7th. It is heat every day I expect there will be a mail leave in a day or two & I will try & write a little more. Lieutenant Williams seems to feel the death of his child very much he has written a new resignation & sent it he seems more anxious to get home although the Colonel is satisfied with him & he can have the 1st Lieutenancy if he will take it he has acted very honorably if any one casts reflection on him please tell them from me that I would do the same myself under the same

circumstances. A small steamer arrived this eve from Key West with a number of our boys that have been there & got their discharge 4 from Company C.: T. Watts, Bassett, George, & Kelly. George is the captain's son. I have just heard that the steamer sails tonight so I don't know when this will go.

8th. Glorious news if true that New Orleans is taken with out firing a gun. With a rumor that Yorktown is done likewise I think the latter may be premature. I have just come off guard this morning & feel rather stupid it is thought the steamer **Philadelphia** is in sight & we hope for another mail if it is so.

9th. The steamer proved to be as expected & had a mail in which was yours of the 24th of April. I was very glad to hear that you were well & heartily respond to your prayer that our children may be spared. There are no signs of pay-day yet I wish I could borrow some to sent you but-cannot some of the men pay 25 & 50 percent interest-till payday for money to spend here. I will not do that if I can help it can't you borrow some to get along till I can send some tell the children that they are doing service in their Country's cause in being short of clothes if it was not for the troublesome times. I should be in condition to do better by them I should hope. Lieutenant Williams papers came back unsigned he has made out some more I don't know the cause. It looks dark & there is lightning & thunder I think we shall have a shower. Cloudy weather is the exception here we have on an average 26 days of clear weather in a month we are having quite a hurricane our quarters are almost shifting with air-slacked. Lime which is piled at one end of them the wind whisks it around nicely. The sergeants and some of the corporals are ordered to the Colonel's quarters for examination. My turn is at 12

tomorrow. The mail leaves at 6 p.m. & I will write my experience of it.

May 10th. 10 a.m. I have just fired my first shell made an excellent shot it bursted just right & would have knocked the bowels out of 9 meeting houses. I should pity a vessel that is hit with one of the bloody things. 2 p.m. I have just passed through the fiery ordeal but can't tell for some days whether I am scorched or not I answered most of the questions I think passably well. There was the Colonel. Lt. Colonel & Major all round the table. Colonel Putman asked all the questions and was very affable. He questioned me on tactics, regulations, history, geography and the Bible & I had to write an official letter to a captain. I expect this examination is with a view to promotion & if House & Williams would do as they ought to I should have it but I shall ask no favors of them. Lane will have the commission I probably shall remain about the same all right. I have to go to work on my equipment & prepare for inspection tomorrow morning. Ned is tip top so is Sam except a little rheumatic we cook & eat in bastion C just at the end of our quarters we have got tables earthen plates, bowls, cups & saucers, if we could have home vittuals we could live like fighting cooks.

My love to all,

C Shedd.

I shall write to Mr. Huse in a few days. I have been busy or should have written before.

Fort Jefferson May 13, 1862

My Dear Wife and Children,

It is with great pleasure that I acknowledge the receipt of yours

of the 29th & 2d inst. In connection with the glorious news from Yorktown, Ft. Macon, New Orleans & C. I continue in good health for this climate, a northern man has little energy here at the best. It is cooler than last week. We gave 3 times 3 over the occupation of Yorktown we think it is the hardest blow of the war we have not got the full particulars. I am very happy to hear that you are all well & pray that you may continue so. The time drags on in the usual monotonous manner as garrison life always does all there is to interest one here is the occasional arrival or departure of a vessel. Let Harris Esq. go to the Devil, don't ask him for the pay for that ladder again if he is so infernal mean as that. He gave me an order for a ladder the length of his roof & he knows it as well as I do. Captain George went home in the schooner **Messenger**, he was wrecked on the North Carolina shore, the vessel lost passengers & crew saved. He was rather coolly received at home so we have heard. The citizens talk of presenting him with a wooden sword for his gallantry in the war. Such a set of shiftless peeps as we have got for officers in this regiment is awful to contemplate & I respect Williams more and more for he knows and owns that he is not fitted for the place & says that is one great or the greatest reason of his resignation. I think it is very doubtful if he gets home before the regiment does & it is hard to tell when that will be. We, a few of us are spoiling for a fight which we never shall see we shall have no exploits or hair breadth escapes to relate when we get home there is no chance to flesh my maiden sword (or anything else). Watts and the other boys that are discharged are waiting for their final papers & transportation to go

(Continued on page 14)

(Shedd from page 13)

home. We had boiled mutton & broth with hard bread for dinner the best dinner we have had for 2 weeks notwithstanding worms 1 inch long that came out of the bread were crawling on the table yesterday, there was one full an inch long on my plate. I poked him off, and continued my dinner. Nothing is supposed to turn a soldiers stomach. Orderly Lane is very mad at me we were drilling on the big guns he commanded the battery I was chief of one of the pieces he ordered me to give certain orders to the men. I replied, that it was the generals duty, he replied with some temper, that it was not so & he would leave it to Smith (one of the regulars that is detailed to drill us, I said very well, in a minute or two, Smith came along, he asked him, I said nothing, Smith said I was right. Mr. Orderly dropped his tail pretty quick that is the way he has come out every time that he has tried to teach his Uncle Dudley. The men see these things & know what is what. Sam is well & sits by me when I write, it is evening Gile is writing on the other side of the table. Four of my boys are playing cards at the other end of the casemate the others are out, Our candle is stuck in a junk bottle we have to burn sperm candles in this climate. I wore the first hole in my stockings last week as large as a dime which I shall have to mend.

May 14th I am on guard today & the mail leaves at 6 p.m., Tell Ada that I thank her for her nice letter she writes better than many older ones do. It is possible that we may go to Pickens or South Carolina there are any quantity of rumors. If this letter proves more than you can bear let me know & I will not write so much it is hard work to fill a sheet out of nothing or next to it.

Love to all,

C Shedd

I have put in a few little shells in the children's letters to be divided as you think best one or two for each of them.

Fort Jefferson May 19th 1862

My Dear Girl

I have written to the babies directed to Ada with Annah & Lillys inside. So this is all to yourself. I have cut off the picture leaves for them as I thought it would please them to have letters alike. I continue in good health & spirits. I have forgotten whether I have written you since I received yours of the 4th inst if not I will now acknowledge the receipt and the pleasure it gave me to know that the dear ones at home were all well. It is very warm here now 100 in the shade. General Brannan Staff & Brigade Surgeon with band arrived here last Thursday & stayed till Saturday morning, It was a great treat for us to hear some music for we are about sick of the everlasting Fife & Drum. It was very hot so that the General did not inspect us. For which we were very thankful. You will recollect I spoke of being examined by the Colonel. I have a little secret to tell you & don't mention it at present. I have it from one who has seen the figures also from Lieutenant Clark whom the Major told that I passed the best examination of any man in the Regiment, what do you think of that now? You have always thought that I did not know much but I tell you that you must not twit me of being foolish again if you do I shall refer you to Colonels Putman & Abbott & Major Smith of the renowned 7th Regiment N.H. Vols. Lane & Davis were very good but the Colonel says that Prescott is not fit for an orderly

so that keeps him where he is & makes Davis orderly of they choose to Prescott 2d & your Uncle Dudley 3d great promotion that. Only the first Sergeant outranks the rest are all alike if their warrants are of the same date so the 5th Sergeant is as high in rank as the 2d or 3d.

May 20th We have commenced drill at six a.m. before breakfast. The officers & sergeants on skirmish drill from 2 to 3. Regiment drill 4 to 5, dress parade at 6 p.m. It is awful hot work from 2 to 5 but I can stand it if the rest of the day. There is a bet between two officers of \$20.00 that we shall leave here within two weeks but I don't see it, although there are any quantity of rumors that we shall leave very soon & to all parts of the U.S. Rumors are not worth much I don't see anything to convince me that we shall go at present. I wish to go to South Carolina very much & help wipe out the nest egg of Secession Lieutenant Williams is persistent in his efforts to resign he has sent in as many as 4 or 5. I guess the last one will go to Port Royal to General Hunter he is the Commander of this Division the Colonel neglected to send some of the others and told Williams that it would not be granted the agent

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told him this last time that it would not be granted. Williams replied it would be according to what the Colonel wrote on it. I have got an awful longing to see you & the children I don't know but I shall get homesick yet if I do I shall not tell of it as the rest of the men do or many of them. I don't eat as much in three days here as I did at home in one. Sam is rheumatic yet, not very bad, he got lousy as a hen has his hair cut as short as scissors will cut it he looks like the devil, makes fun for the whole Company. Burrell is well wishes to be remembered to all his friends. Frank Lee is full of the devil as ever. Dodge is in the Guard House has had a Court Martial & sentenced to two months imprisonment &

wear a 24 pound ball & chain attached to his leg that is tough. In the first place he was saucy disobeyed orders of one of the Sergeants for which he was first under arrest, was sent to work sawing wood. He refused & threatened to whip the Provost Sergeant and they tied him up by his thumbs; & resisted when they put him in the Guard House & tried to strike the Sergeant. Last night he got into a fight & whipped one of his fellow prisoners & is pretty tough generals don't speak of this to his prejudice at home for he will be punished enough. I pity him we are looking for a mail every day are anxious to hear of the progress of the war for thereby hangs our prospects of going home & for that time and the close of the war.

I devoutly wish and to see my Dear Wife,

C. Shedd

Good morning. It is cooler here with a good breeze here. No mail

arrived or left. I thought I would scratch a work or two. No signs of a paymaster yet I wish he would come so that I could send you some money. There has a schooner arrived this morning with a report that there is a mail at Key West for us. We are very anxious for it, as there is a rumor that there has been, a great battle at Williamsburgh, & that the Federal Army was victorious with great slaughter on both sides. I have had no papers for a time, I presume there are some on the way but have been delayed or miscarried. Another rumor that Norfolk has fallen you don't know how odd it seems to be so behind on news. The Colonel & other officers with some women went to Loggerhead Island last night got back a little before reveille this morning I expect they had a good time Col Put looked sleepy on drill this morning House & Williams eat in our

Kitchen & are so [] tight in their living that it gives occasion for much fault finding for some of the men think they live on our Rations on the other hand if they have naything better that we do the men will blow about that It is almighty strange that men as old as they are should be so ignorant of human nature. they are not fit to be Officers on that acct if they were well qualified on all others PM the mail leaves at 6. there has a Brig stoped here with recruits going to Ship Island we get no reliable news I think of nothing more that will interest Keep up good spirits & be happy as possible. there has a Steamer hove in sight we hope with a mail. it may be only passing by. please remember me to all who take the trouble to enquire and not others and except my best love to yourself.

My Dear Wife,

C. Shedd

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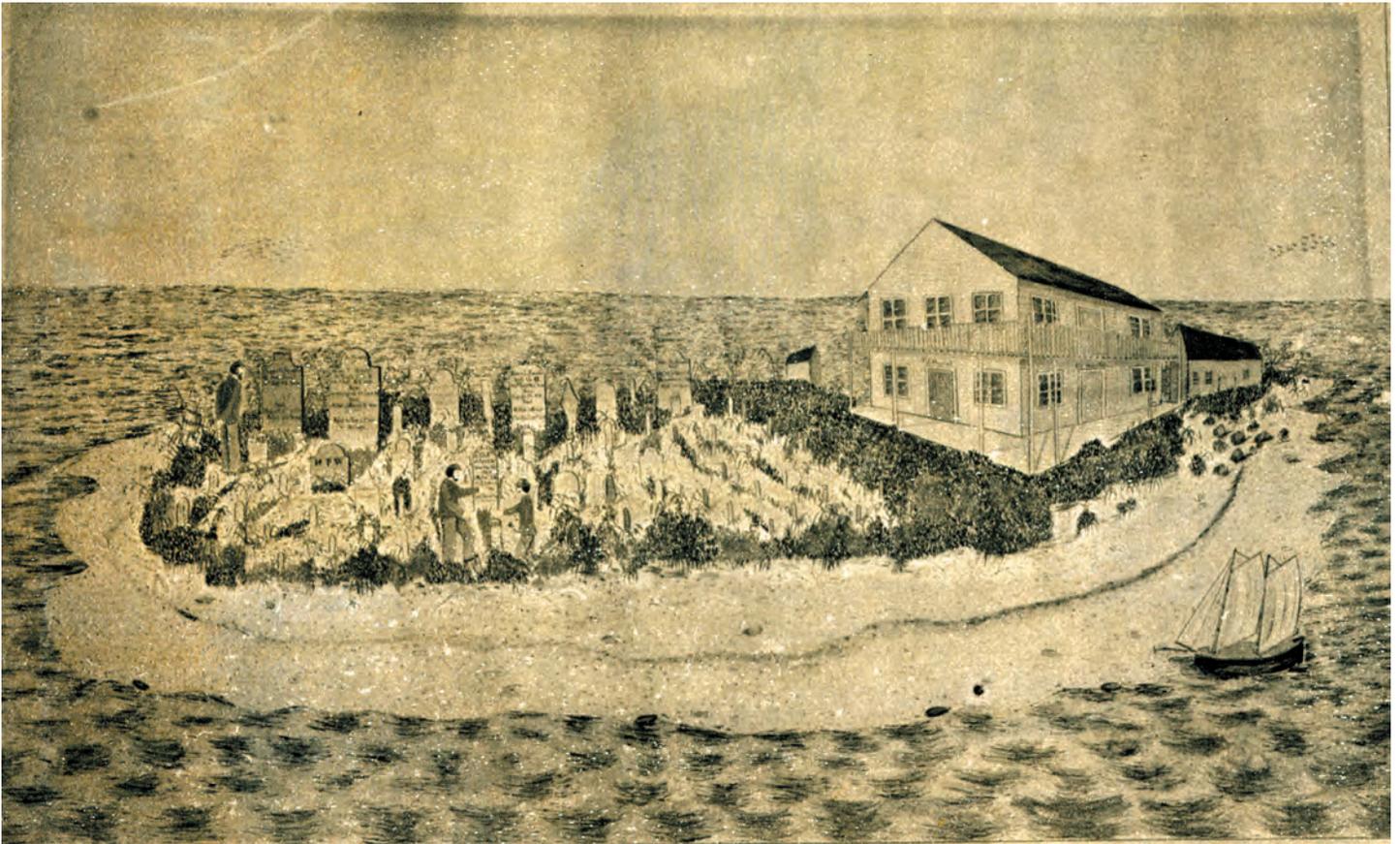
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A watercolor by unknown artist about 1864 of the Hospital and Cemetery that was on Sand Key at the Torugas. The Island was later washed away in a storm. Photo credit: Monroe County Library.

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