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Camp Florence, Alabama

June 14th, 1862

My Dear Wife

As this is the first opportunity [opportunity] I have had to write to you for a week I suppose you will begin to think that I have forgotten to write. But not so for I have wanted to write to you every day and did write one letter on the march with my pencil and sent to you from Iuka, where we stopped to rest for one day. We have been on the march ever since Corinth was evacuated and have at length arrived at the Tennessee river opposite the city of Florence Alabama one of the richest southern towns I was never as surprised in my life as I was at the difference there is between northern Miss. & Alabama Miss is nothing but a rough broken forest with a farm partly cleared up ever[y] ten miles while Alabama is all under cultivation and some of the largest and finest mansions I ever saw. The second day that we marched in this state I started in the morning before the Regt & followed the Rail Road in company with Sgt Major Green of our Regt and several boys out of Cotters Battery and when struck the wagon road I found that we were about five miles ahead of the troops and we stopped to rest and while resting we saw a large mansion about one half mile from the road (as the planters in this country never build there[their] houses near the road always having a nice graveled road and park in front of them) we thought we would go up and get some dinner. So we all went up and called at the door and asked if we could get some dinner. But our answer was no sir we have nothing to eat for ourselves and wont let you have anything to eat. I thought it very strange that a man living in as good style as he was, certainly had something to eat but said nothing more but started through his negro quarters which were pretty extensive as he had, so his overseer told me 200 slaves men women & children we went down to the bottom of the hill (as all there[their] planters build there mansions on elevated ground) and found a splendid spring

fixed up in splendid style and fine shade trees all around we concluded that would be a nice place to wait untill the Regt came up we had not been there long before there was about forty soldiers & officers come to the same place to rest and then the little niggers began to come around as thick as fleas some of them perfectly naked others with nothing but there shirts on and commenced dancing and singing plantation songs all secesh but they would be union if they dare but there massas were all secesh and would flog them like the debbil[devil?] if they would sing union ones. After we had been there a few minutes the big niggers began to come around us as it was Saturday afternoon and they had there holiday and they are the blackest niggers that I ever saw regular full blood African and they brought down there fiddles banjos & bones and gave us some plantation sport we had all the sport we wanted with the niggers then I talked with some of them and they told us that there master had plenty of grubb but would not sell it to union soldiers but would give it to the secesh soldiers and that he had two sons in the secesh army but had not heard from them since the battle of Shiloh but said if they had fallen it was in a good cause that is the way they all talk through some parts of this state but where we are now they are pretty near all union. We passed through Tuscumbia a very fine town five miles here but it was pretty well vacated all we saw was niggers but it was last Sunday morning early and I suppose the white population were not up yet. We arrived here Sunday afternoon and our Regt and the 26th Regt were ordered to build a couple of flat boats to ferry the troops across the river on and I was detailed to take charge of the men and build the boats, that is the reason that I did not get time to write to you before and I have just got the boats finished and started down the river to what is called the lower landing where the most of the troops are lying and we expect to move forwarded tomorrow so you must not be uneasy if you do not get letters regular from me as when we are on the wing we have no chance to write or mail letters but I will try and send you a letter once a week and oftener if I can and when we get into camp I will write every other day as usual. The Capt has been over in the city of Florence and says they are all very fine people living there and they sent us over some very nice bread apples plums potatoes horseradish and other vegetables so that we are living very well now. But I am going to come home to you just as soon as I can after we get through marching again as there is no chance to get away while on the wing. Give my regards to all the folks and all my love to you and Arthur. I would write more but I have not time as we have to get ready to march just as soon as we can. Kiss our dear little baby for me every day his dear papa and your affectionate husband.

J. W. Davidson
