

Camp near Williamsburgh [Roper church crossed out]

May 7<sup>th</sup>, 1862

Dear Father, [Elisha Whipple]

On Saturday night (the 3<sup>rd</sup>) the Rebels evacuated their Fort's on the whole front of our lines, and on Sunday we occupied their strongholds and commenced pursuing in hot haste their retreating columns and today is the first time I have had an opportunity to write a word since. I am well and tougher than ever before in my life and we are all in good spirits for the rebellion is about wiped out. The Sesesh are flying in all directions and as often as they make a stand we drive them out.

We had a battle here Monday and Tuesday in the morning. Our Reg. was in the reserve and the enemy undertook to shell us out, but not one of the 92<sup>nd</sup> or 93<sup>rd</sup> was either killed or wounded. There were some however taken very sick very suddenly, powder sick we think, for the shells whistled over and around us crashing through the trees and tearing up the earth terribly for awhile. But we fell on our faces when they burst and no one was injured, and although we were in the woods out of range of the bullets the roar of musketry & cannons told us that some one was having hot times.

We are in camp now, but artillery, infantry and cavalry in such numbers as would almost stagger belief are still hurrying on after our "dear friends" towards Richmond. We have not heard a cannon today and our boys are some 10 or 12 miles ahead of us, and we conclude we are not to see anymore fighting. We learn from the prisoners taken that they are terribly frightened.

I will write again immediately and you must do the same. Direct to Washington as usual. I don't know when I can send this as we have outrun our mail entirely. My ink is used up and I must stop. [Courtland] Cooper is sick back to Camp Clarkson. The other boys are all well.

Yours,

John