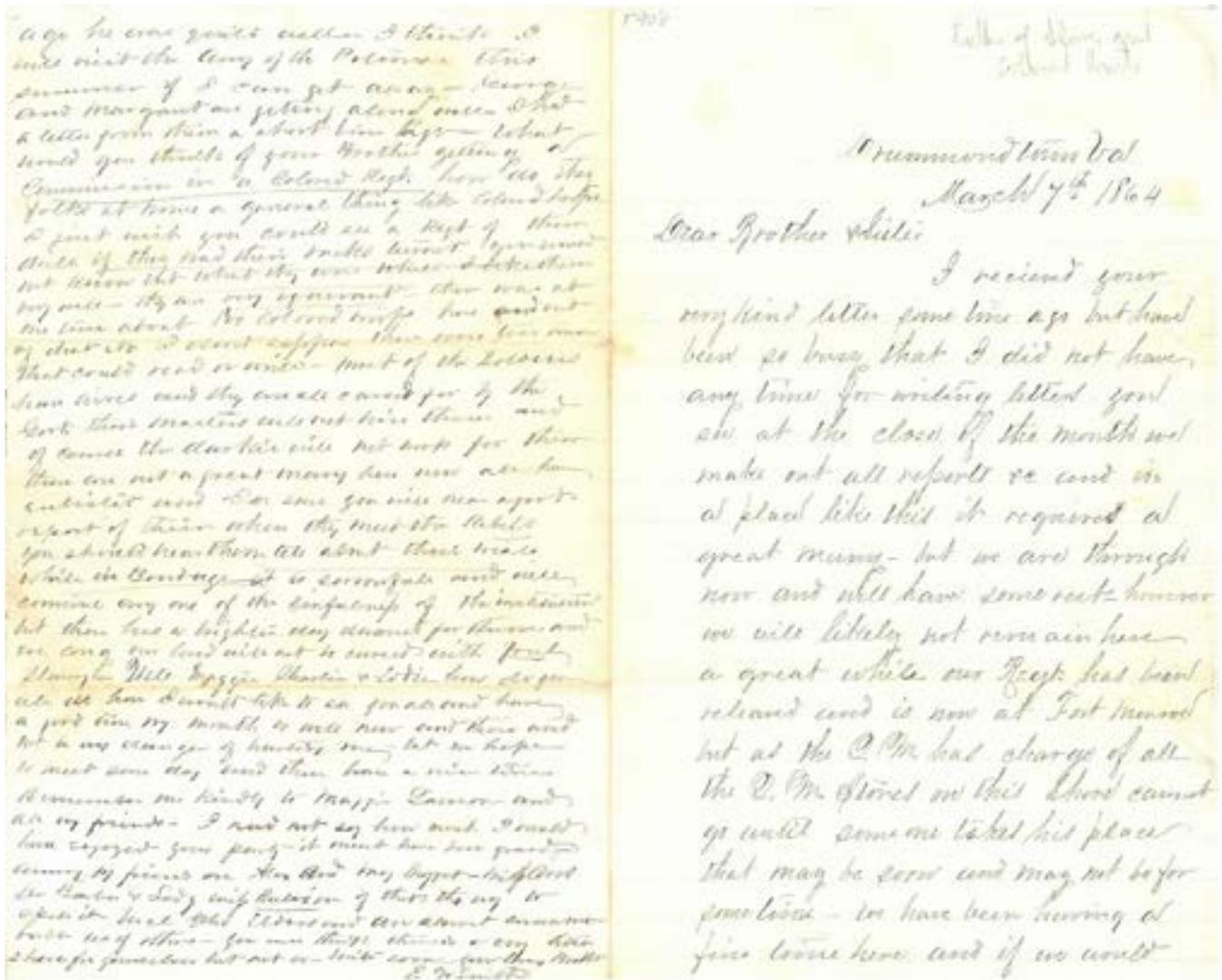


Lithograph of US 54th Massachusetts Regiment



E.W. Smith Letter and transcription





remain for six months I don't think
we would be easily taken away. This
is certainly a delightful place. The
country is level and the soil well adapted
for raising Potatoes Corn &c. and some
Cotton and I would venture to say if
I had a Factory here could make cotton
in a short time but the inhabitants have
waited so long in their Slaves for shipping
and now they are gone and the owners
don't know how it works some of them
offer very good chances to rent and if
I was a married man don't know
but that I would accept I have been
thinking seriously about it. It is a
lot to do a general thing on my side
a great many of them are doctors and
even among themselves seem jealous of
each other. a great deal of the property
is owned by such as the Sons of
Birmingham &c. who gather are the
F. F. W. although they seem distant when
you visit them they are extremely hospitable

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and by the way I have formed the
acquaintance of the sons of the fair
daughters of the South and must say
there are some of them perfect ladies
and one of them told me last evening
that she was not afraid of a Yankee
but she was at one time she thought
there are some fine fellows among
them. never mind we will make them
Girls out of them you had better let
Mr. Alder look out for the C. W.
give him warning to keep his heart
locked up against the fair ones of the South
if he knew I was writing this he would
give me peace. Well I am I am
very sorry I cannot do anything for
the ladies of your country but by all means
give them my address you know it has
to get letters and I may get some post
out of it I do I will let you know when
you see any of the Brothers give them
my best wishes and kind regards
I had a letter from Charles a few days

Drummondtown Va

March 7th, 1864

I received your very kind letter some time ago but have been so busy that I did not have any time for writing letters. You see at the close of the month we make out all reports & in a place like this it requires a great many. But we are through now and will have some rest. However we will be likely not remain here a great while our Regt. has been releaved and is not at Fort Monroe but as the [Quartermaster] has charge of all the Q.M. stores on this shore cannot go until someone takes his place that may soon and may not be for some time. We have been having a fine time here and if we would remain for six months I don't think we would be [easily] taken away. This is certainly a delightful place the country is level and the soil well adapted for raising Potatoes Corn Oats—and even Cotton and I would venture to say if I had a farm here could make a fortune in a short time. But in the inhabitants have trusted to long in their slaves for a living and now they are gone and the owners dont know how to work some of them offer very good chances to rent and if I was a married man dont know but that I would accept I have been thinking serious about it. The inhabitants [as] a general thing are very selfish a great many of them aristocrats and even among themselves seem jealous of each other. A great deal of the property is owned by such as the Wises Winders Nottinghams &c, who you know are the FFVs [First Families of Virginia] although they seem distant when you meet them they are extremely hospitable.

Any by the way I have formed the acquaintance of some of the fair Daughters of the South and must say there are some of them perfect Ladies and one of them told me last evening that she was not afraid of a Yankee but she was at one time she thinks there are some fine fellows among them. Never mind we will make Union Girls out of them. You had better tell Mrs Elder to look out for the Q.M. give him warning to keep his heart locked up against the fair ones of the South if he know I was writing this he would give me a jossen [“joshin”]. Well [Nannie?] I am very sorry I cannot do something for the Ladies of your country but by all means give them my address you know I love to get letters and I may get some good ones if I do I will let you know. When you see any of the Brookvilles, give them my best wishes and kind regards. I had a letter from Charles a few days ago he was quite well. I think I will visit the Army of the Potomac this summer if I can get away. George and Margaret are getting along well I had a letter from them a short time ago. What would you think of your Brother getting a commission in a Colored Regt. How do they folks at home a general thing like Colored Troops I just wish you could see a Regt. of them drill if they had their backs turned you would not know but what they were white. I like them very well. They are very ignorant. There was at one time about 800 Colored Troops here and out of that [number] I don't suppose they were ten men that could read or write. Most of the soldiers have wives and they are call cared for by the Govt. their masters will not hire them and of course the darkies will not work for them. There are not a great many here now all have enlisted and I'm sure you will hear a good report of them when they meet the Rebels. You should hear them talk about their trials while in Bondage it is sorrowful and will convinve anyone of the sinfulness of the institution but there has a brighter day dawned for them ere long our land will not be cursed with foul slavery. Well Maggie Charlie + [Eddie?] how do you all do how I would like to see you all and have a good time my mouth is well and there wood not be any danger of hurting me. But we hope to meet some day and there have a nice time.

Remember me kindly to Maggie [Garner?] and all my friends. I had not say how much I would have enjoyed your party. It must have been grand. Among my friends are Alex and May [Moffat?]. Miss and Dr. Barber and Lady miss Rubison if that's the way to spell it. Mr & Mrs Elders and almost innumerable [number] of others. You will think there is a very little share for yourselves but not so. Write soon. Your Loving Brother.

E.W. Smith