Colonel of the Bucktails: Civil War Letters of Charles Frederick Taylor

Charles Frederick Taylor, the youngest brother of Bayard Taylor, the noted author, poet, and world traveler, was for a brief time Colonel of the celebrated "Bucktail" regiment of the Pennsylvania Reserve Corps. His letters have remained in the family since his death at Gettysburg and are now in the possession of Charles F. Hobson, one of the present editors and great-grandson of Annie Taylor Carey, Colonel Taylor's sister.

Taylor was born in West Chester, Pennsylvania, February 6, 1840, the youngest child of Joseph and Rebecca Way Taylor. He was a descendant of colonial settlers of English and German ancestry, including Robert Taylor, "a rich Quaker" who came to the new world in 1681. At the time of his son's birth, Joseph Taylor was completing a three-year term as sheriff of Chester County. Shortly thereafter the Taylors moved to "Hazeldell," the family farm near Kennett Square. There Fred received his early education in the village school, supplementing this with home instruction, and later attended the academy taught by his cousin, Dr. Franklin Taylor. Though hampered by feeble health as a youth, Fred was a promising scholar, demonstrating a special aptitude for the study of languages. At the age of fifteen he announced his intention to attend college and pursue an academic career. Bayard, who had not attended college, gently advised against such a step, not wishing to see his brother become "a mere bookworm, unfit for the active, energetic life of the present time." If, however, Fred were deter-

mined upon this course, he recommended Harvard as "decidedly the first institution in the country."² Fred stuck by his decision, but instead of enrolling at an established eastern college, he chose to enter the University of Michigan, at Ann Arbor, in the fall of 1855. Under the dynamic and progressive leadership of President Henry Philip Tappan, the University of Michigan was rapidly acquiring a reputation as one of the outstanding institutions of higher learning in the United States.³

At the end of his first year at the University Fred received an irresistible invitation from Bayard, already famous as an author of popular travel accounts, to join him on a European tour. The two brothers, accompanied by their sisters, Annie and Emma, sailed from New York in July, 1856, and landed at Liverpool. After traveling through England, France, Germany, Switzerland and Italy, Fred and his sisters spent the winter in Lausanne, while Bayard journeyed to Sweden and Lapland. They rejoined their brother at Gotha in May, 1857, a few weeks before returning to America. The European trip was a broadening educational experience for Fred and brought the added benefit of improved health. "I feel that I have begun almost a new life," he wrote, "everything seems under such a different aspect—I scarcely know how to express what I feel."⁴ Much of his time in Europe was spent studying languages. He became proficient in French and competent in German, which he studied "by means of the French."⁵

Fred resumed his studies at Ann Arbor in the fall of 1857, but owing to financial difficulties he was forced to abandon his goal of becoming a scholar. He left college at the end of the spring term of 1858 and returned to Kennett Square to take over the management of Hazeldell, which he hoped to make a profitable farm through the application of progressive agricultural techniques. In his eagerness to make the necessary improvements, however, the youthful farmer incurred numerous and pressing debts, a situation aggravated by a general economic depression. With some embarrassment

⁴ C. F. Taylor to Bayard Taylor, Apr. 20, 1857, Taylor Family MSS, in possession of Charles F. Hobson, Charlottesville, Va., hereinafter cited as Taylor MSS.
⁵ C. F. Taylor to Bayard Taylor, Jan. 19, 1857, ibid.
he had to call on Bayard to pay his bills. Nevertheless undaunted, he responded to the challenge with renewed determination and confidence: "I believe that it will only depend upon myself whether this farm carried on properly will be self-sustaining and more, or not; and I am desirous of testing my own capabilities. . . . I have a heart for the work and I think I have energy enough to carry it through." By the spring of 1861 the outlook at Hazeldell was much brighter, and Fred declared that he would soon "be able to make farming something more than mere drudgery."

Once again, however, circumstances intervened to force a change of plans. Along with many other Pennsylvania farmers in the spring of 1861, Fred Taylor responded with alacrity to President Lincoln's call for volunteers on the outbreak of the Civil War. On April 20, he called a meeting of the neighborhood men in the Kennett Borough Hall and organized a company of riflemen. A few weeks later Taylor, who had unanimously been elected captain, and his men marched to Camp Curtin, near Harrisburg, where they were incorporated into the 42nd Regiment, 13th Reserves. Recruited and organized by Thomas Leiper Kane, this regiment was soon to win fame as the "Bucktails." The Chester countians became Company H, the twenty-one-year-old Taylor retaining the captaincy.

The Bucktails, having become a part of the Army of the Potomac during the summer of 1861, saw little action during the first six months of the war. Most of their time was spent in an endless round of drilling and marching in the vicinity of Washington. In the spring of 1862, while the main body of the regiment participated in McClellan's Peninsular Campaign, four Bucktail companies, including Taylor's, were attached to General George D. Bayard's "Flying Brigade" in the Valley of Virginia, where Stonewall Jackson was conducting a brilliant series of diversionary raids. At Harrisonburg on June 6, 1862, Taylor experienced his first real test of combat. Ordered to reinforce two regiments of cavalry which had been ambushed in the woods, the small Bucktail battalion, under the command of Colonel Kane, encountered a superior force of Con-

6 C. F. Taylor to Bayard Taylor, Jan. 31, Mar. 7, 1861, ibid.
7 Bayard Taylor to R. H. Stoddard, Apr. 21, 1861, Taylor, I, 375-376.
8 The two regimental histories of the Bucktails are Thomson and Rauch, Bucktails, and Edwin N. Glover, Bucktailed Wildcats (New York, 1960).
federates under Turner Ashby. "The situation was hopeless," Taylor later recalled. Caught in "a raging crossfire," the men "broke cover and ran." Captain Taylor, second in command and not seeing Colonel Kane, who had been wounded, succeeded in rallying the men for "one good volley" for the purpose of making an orderly retreat. Most of the survivors managed to escape, but Taylor and the wounded Kane were taken prisoner. Though his clothes were "badly torn" by bullets, Taylor miraculously was unhurt.9

The two captured Bucktail officers, after being rescued and then recaptured, were subsequently paroled. Taylor spent the next four months in frustrating inactivity at Annapolis while waiting for news of his exchange so that he could rejoin his regiment. He did enjoy one pleasant diversion, however. He met Alice Green, the daughter of his hostess, and later became engaged to her. Unfortunately, little is known of the romance, for the letters she wrote to Fred after his departure from Annapolis were later destroyed. The Taylor family evidently disapproved of the match because Miss Green's father was a slaveholder.

By the end of his first year of service Captain Taylor had established a solid reputation as a first-rate officer. He took seriously the duties and responsibilities of his position and won the respect of his men and fellow officers, most of whom were much older than he. As early as January, 1862, he was given temporary command of the regiment while Kane was absent from camp. This experience considerably boosted his self-confidence: "It is no slight honor to command successfully a regt. such as this even for so short a period. Every thing goes now evenly as in our best days and I am not presumptuous . . . to attribute this change in some slight measure to my own efforts while in command."10 A natural leader ("I seem to have some aptitude for this business," he confided to his sister), Taylor thrived on military life. The war quickened his mental and emotional ascent to adulthood, already at an advanced stage before the conflict began. "This war has killed off much worthless trash,

10 C. F. Taylor to Annie Taylor, Jan. 1, 1862, Taylor MSS.
has ruined many of promise,” he admitted, “but still more it has brought out and developed and educated.”

A gallant and popular officer, self-assured and ambitious, Taylor was destined for promotion. His immediate goal was to obtain command of a regiment, preferably the Bucktails. By state law officers of the volunteer corps were elected by the men and then received their commissions from the governor. In the first Bucktail election Kane had been chosen colonel, but he subsequently deferred to the more experienced Charles John Biddle, who had fought in the Mexican War. The latter resigned in December, 1861, to enter Congress. In the subsequent election Kane was defeated by Hugh W. McNeil. In that election Taylor, though not yet twenty-two, was urged to become a candidate, being told that he could be elected over both, but he prudently declined. Time and circumstance—plus no little personal initiative—eventually brought him a colonel’s commission. While Taylor was biding his time at Annapolis, Kane was promoted to brigadier general and McNeil was killed at Antietam. The latter’s death left the regiment without a field officer. Taylor, as senior captain, expected to assume command of the Bucktails and receive the colonelcy if only he could be released from his parole in time. The election system had by this time been abolished by order of the Secretary of War, but the state law requiring election of officers had not yet been repealed. Accordingly, Taylor, in conjunction with Edward A. Irvin and William R. Hartshorne, arranged to have a petition circulated among the officers and men of the regiment requesting that Taylor be commissioned colonel, Irvin, lieutenant-colonel, and Hartshorne, major. The petition was then sent up the chain of command: General Truman Seymour, brigade commander, General George G. Meade, division commander, General John F. Reynolds, corps commander, and Governor Andrew Gregg Curtin—all of whom were favorably disposed. The Governor, however, refrained from issuing the commissions until after the state legislature changed the law in February, 1863.

Taylor finally received word of his exchange during the second

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11 C. F. Taylor to Annie Taylor, May 4, 1862, *ibid.*
12 *Bucktails*, 32–35, 70, 82–85; C. F. Taylor to Annie Taylor, Jan. 20, 1862, Taylor MSS.
13 *Bucktails*, 219–220; C. F. Taylor to Annie Taylor, Sept. 11, 24, 1862; E. A. Irvin to C. F. Taylor, Oct. 15, 1862; C. F. Taylor to Bayard Taylor, Oct. 25, 1862, Taylor MSS.
week in November, 1862. Though not yet officially appointed colonel, he was ordered to take command of the Bucktails. Rejoining the regiment south of Alexandria, Virginia, the new commander was greeted with "a hearty cheer." He found the regiment in poor condition—"I shall have enough to do in reorganizing it for a time," he wrote. The task was all the more urgent, he realized, for "we shall probably have a fight at Fredericksburg." The battle of Fredericksburg began less than a month later, and for the Union forces under the command of Ambrose Burnside it was a disaster. Superiority of numbers was more than offset by disadvantage of position, as a series of Federal charges were bloodily repulsed by Confederate artillery and musket fire. The Bucktails suffered heavy losses—190 out of 300 who entered the fight, according to Taylor, who was wounded in the arm after his horse was shot beneath him. Despite the terrible toll the Bucktails acquitted themselves well under difficult circumstances. In his report General Reynolds singled out Taylor as "among those conspicuous for coolness and judgment."

After the fiasco at Fredericksburg the battered and fatigued Bucktails enjoyed a welcome respite from fighting, not participating in another major engagement until Gettysburg. They were assigned to the defense of Washington and encamped at Fairfax Station in northern Virginia. By late March, 1863, Taylor could report that the regiment was once again "in excellent working order." Earlier that month—after what had seemed an interminable delay—he had received his coveted colonel’s commission. "I am, perhaps, the youngest Colonel, in point of years, in the service and do not undervalue the honor or the responsibilities it brings with it," he wrote to Bayard. To his sister he confidently declared that he would "earn an honorable reputation as Colonel or even fill with credit a still higher position."

14 C. F. Taylor to Annie Taylor, Nov. 23, 1862, ibid.
17 C. F. Taylor to Annie Taylor, Mar. 26, 1863, Taylor MSS.
18 C. F. Taylor to Bayard Taylor, Apr. 8, 1863; C. F. Taylor to Annie Taylor, Apr. 1, 1863, ibid. According to Bucktails, 275, Taylor was the youngest colonel in the Army of the Potomac, having received his commission just after his 23rd birthday. See also New York Tribune, July 10, 1863.
With the approach of warm weather the young Colonel was anxious to return to action. The present duty was "tiresome" and did "not suit the impatient 'Bucktail,'" he complained. He was elated when orders came in late June to move at a moment's notice: "I presume we shall have a stirring campaign. I am very glad of it. We have been here long enough." Soon the Bucktails were once again on home soil—at Gettysburg, where the two great armies under Robert E. Lee and George G. Meade were converging. The Pennsylvania Reserves were ordered to defend Little Round Top, and the Bucktails were in the thick of the fierce fighting which took place there on July 2. Late in the afternoon of that day Colonel Taylor, on foot, led a charge down the hill across Plum Run and up the slope to the stone wall. After a brief stand at the wall the Confederates, thoroughly routed, retreated through the woods to the wheat field, but the Bucktails, their colonel constantly urging them forward, pushed on in hot pursuit. Near the edge of the wheat field Taylor, seeing that he was well in advance of the line and unsupported, ordered a halt. It was too late, however. A much larger force of Confederates opened fire on him and his group of about twenty men. The Colonel was about to step behind a tree for shelter when a sharpshooter's bullet pierced his heart. He died on the spot a few minutes later.

The body was recovered and sent back to Kennett Square. The funeral took place on July 8, 1863, "in the midst of a pouring rain," attended mostly by "old men and women." Among those present in mourning was Alice Green, to whom Taylor had recently been engaged. Burial was at Longwood Cemetery, not far from Hazel-dell. In death Taylor received a number of generous tributes. Brigadier General Samuel W. Crawford spoke of Taylor as "the gallant and brave leader of the Bucktail Regiment," who "fell

19 C. F. Taylor to Marie Hansen Taylor (Mrs. Bayard Taylor), Apr. 8, 1863, C. F. Taylor to Annie Taylor, June 24, 1863, Taylor MSS.
21 A woman who was present at the funeral reported that "a young lady he became acquainted with while a paroled prisoner at Annapolis (and whose father was a slaveholder) was present in mourning. Fred was unfortunate in all the engagements in which he took part." See extracts of Deborah Pennock to William S. Jackson, July 9, 1863, and Margaret B. Jackson to William S. Jackson, July 9, 1863, in Taylor MSS.
while leading his regiment to the charge. No braver soldier and patriot has given his life to the cause." According to an anonymous writer in a Gettysburg paper, Taylor had "a bright and glorious career" before him, "but in surrendering so gallant a young life in a cause so patriotic, history must embalm his memory." Bayard Taylor, in Europe when he learned of his brother's death, wrote that he "had brighter hopes for him than for myself: he was better and nobler than I." He wrote a short poem to commemorate his fallen brother, as did his poet friends, Richard H. Stoddard and George H. Boker. In 1905, the Regimental Association of the Bucktails erected a granite marker over the spot where Colonel Taylor fell.

Taylor's principal correspondent during the war was his sister Annie. Eight years older than Fred, she took over the difficult responsibility of running the farm during her brother's absence. That she was a strong-willed and rather formidable lady is clearly brought out in her summary dismissal of Michael, an Irish hired hand, for voting the "Secesh" (Democratic) ticket in the elections of 1862.

The Papers of James Madison
Oxford College of Emory University

Charles F. Hobson
Arnold Shankman

Camp Curtin, Harrisburg
June 10, 1861

My dear Sister,

Your two letters have been received since my last. I have no idea that I am particularly smart but think Caleb Pierce Esq. shamefully stupid. I cautioned him to say nothing in regard to the matter until it should become public. As soon as it was definitely arranged that we should form one company in Kane's regiment he [Kane] came to me in the presence of Pierce saying that he intended to appoint

23 Bayard Taylor to Rebecca Way Taylor, July 24, 1863, Taylor, I, 413; see also the poem by D.B.S. in Frank Moore, comp., The Rebellion Record (New York, 1861-1865), VII, 52.
24 Bucktails, 444-447.
25 Annie Taylor to C. F. Taylor, Oct. 22, 1863, Taylor MSS.
me Major. Since then the Governor\(^1\) has decided that the company officers shall elect the regimental officers. I have every prospect of being elected especially as I am backed by Col. Kane himself—you can understand then that it should not be noised about here in advance.

Col. Kane is in Phila. at present but will return today when the regiment will be organized at once. In case all turns out well I shall in all probability report to you in person within a day or two. He (Kane) is a splendid man. The second in command or Lieut. Col. will be an officer who was a Major in the regular service during the Mexican War and acquitted himself with much honor.\(^2\) We shall certainly have the crack regiment of the service.

Tell Hannah the basket of provisions was a great treat to the men the cheese in particular being much praised. Of late we have been the recipients of numerous delicacies from Harrisburg people and others such as butter, onions, radishes, salad etc. The company is now full entirely and the last men will be sworn in today. Not one man has been in the hospital as yet[,] the only ailings being cold or head-aches often more imaginary than real.

Later J[ohn] Pierce is going home on furlough for a few days as he is unwell. I send this by him. The Regt will be organized tomorrow by order of Gen. [George] McCall. I will inform you at once.

Affectionately,

C. F. Taylor

Cumberland, Md.
July 9, 1861

My dear Sister:

We recd. on Sunday evening at our last camp orders to march in 30 minutes to this place. Col. [Lew] Wallace with his Indiana Zouaves having left here at 4 o’clock for Martinsburg, Va. Col. Biddle had left the day before to take his seat in Congress. Col. Kane came in command of the Regt. therefore and appointed me acting Lieut. Col. We left two companies in command of the bag-

\(^1\) Andrew Gregg Curtin.

\(^2\) Charles John Biddle (1819–1873).
gage-train which should come on the next day and set out about ten o'clock with the remaining eight. Col. Kane pushed on in advance leaving me in command. The distance is only seven miles which we made in two hours without halting[,] the men carrying their knapsacks, haversacks, canteens, guns and 40 rounds of cartridges each. This is a small town of 7 or 800 [sic, 800 intended] inhabitants on the Potomac on the other side of which is Virginia. The people were all abed[,] having no idea of our coming, but the measured tramp of the men and the horses hoofs soon aroused them. In many houses we could hear the women run shrieking about[,] crying that the secessionists had come to murder them all. We had recd., from apparently reliable sources, news that the enemy were coming down upon the town in force in view of the fact that the Zouaves had left—hence our hurried night-march. We marched on through the town with as little noise as possible when the column was divided into two detachments. Col. Kane taking three companies up the canal beyond the road upon which we learned the enemy were approaching and sending me with the remaining five companies to post them on some wooded heights to the left. We had everything slyly arranged so as to close in behind them had they advanced and cut off their retreat. I sent out picket-guards a mile in every approachable direction when the men were allowed to find shelter under the pines and sleep on their arms. The night passed however without alarm and yesterday morning we returned from the hills and took up our quarters on the opposite side of the town where Col. Wallace's command had been encamped. As we were forming yesterday who should ride up before the line but Col. Biddle[,] having heard of our orders to march he preferred giving up his seat in Congress to the command of the Regt. when his services might seem to be needed.8 He was hailed with a perfect outburst of cheers and is now with us. I am at present acting Major in place of Major [Charles] Stone who is off recruiting men and will not probably be back within ten days. The prospect now is that Biddle will be made a Brigadier General—in that case I will have

8 Biddle was elected to Congress to replace Edward Joy Morris, who had resigned to become the American minister to Turkey. In July, 1863, after he had left Congress, Biddle helped organize militia forces to repel the Confederate troops invading Pennsylvania. Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, June 30, 1863; Johnstown Democrat, July 8, 1863.
the Major's place. This you need not mention outside. You can send this letter if you see fit to Germany.\textsuperscript{4} Tell Mother however that I have a long letter on hand to her but have not yet finished it owing to our precipitate movements. This is simply a hurried sketch of our doings but you will all probably be interested to have it as early as possible. Passing through town yesterday I heard an old grey-headed nigger say "Bress de Lord we've got 'em on our side again." Send me two or three towels by Roney. Write me soon to Cumberland, Md.

Affectionately

C. F. Taylor

Camp near Lewinsville, Va.
December 6, 1861

My dear Sister;

I have not written you since the receipt of your letter containing a copy of your letter to Howard.\textsuperscript{5} I was busy on a long court martial at the time which occupied me several days. Since then we have been in great trouble. Col. Biddle left us very suddenly. Our Major [Stone] is absent sick—Col. Kane has been unwell and employed upon a general court martial; all of which circumstances have combined to render the labors of company commanders much more confining than usual. We feel Biddle's loss more than I can tell you. If he has "made an ass of himself" (as Bayard writes) politically, he is nevertheless a thorough soldier and officer and a man very much endeared to us all personally. I was greatly astonished to read his letter; it is so unlike him.\textsuperscript{6} No election has been ordered yet although his resignation has been officially accepted. The men,

\textsuperscript{4} Bayard was then living in Germany.
\textsuperscript{5} Howard was one of Fred's older brothers.
\textsuperscript{6} Shortly before Biddle took his seat in Congress a number of his friends planned a gala banquet in his honor. Though unable to attend the dinner, the congressman-elect sent a letter to George Mifflin Dallas, one of the organizers of the affair, in which he referred to "the twin tormentors of [national] discord—the Abolitionists of the North and the Secessionists of the South." Elsewhere in the note he pledged to protect the "cherished" civil rights and liberties of his constituents from executive usurpation. Unionists, who considered the letter to be an attack on the Lincoln administration, denounced Biddle for his partisanship. Philadelphia \textit{Inquirer}, Nov. 28, 1861; Ebensburg \textit{Democrat and Sentinel}, Dec. 4, 1861.
as well as the officers, have a voice and I greatly fear that Kane will not be elected. He has not the hold upon the men that I supposed. Besides other influences are at work which, under the miserable system of electing officers, will have the effect to take away many votes from him. We will have the matter decided soon I suppose. Tomorrow we are going to change the position of our camp and build log huts. It is beginning to get rather cool in our canvass houses. . . . I had some photographs taken the other day in Washington which I will send you tomorrow. I will close this now that it may get off today. With much love to all.

Your affectionate brother,
C. F. Taylor

Camp 1st Rifles, P.R. Vols.
Jany. 20, 1862

My dear Sister;

I write you a line in the midst of intense excitement. Gov. Curtin has ordered that the men of the Regt. shall elect a Colonel and an election has been ordered for day after tomorrow. One of the Captains of the Regt. [Hugh W. McNeil] has been placed in nomination in opposition to Kane. The vote will be very close. I have done my best to prevent ill-feeling in the contest. I have been besought to allow my name to go forth as a candidate and have been told that I could have been elected over both. I trust I have pursued the proper course in refusing.

This is only for the family remember. I shall write you as soon as the result is known. We are almost swamped in mud here.

Ever affectionately
Chas. Frederick Taylor

Camp Pierpont, Va.
Feb. 2nd, 1862

My dear Sister;

I am now on duty as Recorder of the Board of Examination, having been detailed by Genl. McCall. The Board consists of Brig.

7 The vote was not as close as Fred had anticipated. McNeil beat Kane by 223 votes.
C. F. Taylor to Annie, Jan. 23, 1862, Taylor MSS.
Generals Reynolds, Meade and [Edward] Ord and will probably sit for two or three weeks unless we should move. It is a very pleasant duty. We are in sessions from three to four hours daily always winding up the day's proceedings with dinner. The object is to examine into the competency of all commissioned officers from Lieutenants up to Colonels. My detail is intended as a compliment. It relieves me for the time from all camp and picket duty. We are living very comfortably—[Lieutenant Joel] Swayne and myself—in our log hut. We read much, play at chess and smoke. [Roger] Sherman still messes with us. We have several conveniences since you were here—a book shelf, better table, etc. We are not extravagant though we frequently have roast mutton and browned potatoes, cranberry sauce, rice soup and such luxuries. The cost of our mess for each one for the last month and a half, including the pay of the cook, was only fourteen dollars—not quite $2.50 per week. The only thing in which I am really extravagant is in going to Washington at least once in two weeks for the sake of taking a good bath. It does me more good than anything I know of. Col. Kane has left us—I think for good. He has sent in his resignation. McNeil's commission came today and he will assume command tomorrow.

With love,

Ever your affectionate brother,

Chas. Frederick Taylor

Camp near Falmouth, Va.

May 4, 1862

My dear Sister;

Mr. Lang brought me your letter two days ago. I have been revelling in this glorious spring weather—riding every day so that I know every house and wood, road and bridle path within our picket-line. Our major [Stone] is a capital, clever fellow and keeps two horses in fine condition, one of which, being young, I have kindly volunteered to train in his gaits. We have an officers' mess, comprising the Col., Major and eight Captains with Qr. Master and adjutant. I am Purveyor-General. We live as well as we can but we had to take tea tonight without tea or coffee and bread without
butter. This country is almost totally destitute of provisions. Some few things are brought over from Fredericksburg; but are greedily snatched up and sell at almost fabulous prices for example as follows: half-pound loaves 10 cts., butter (when you get it) 75 cts., eggs 40 cts., molasses 50 cts. per qt., ginger cakes 12 1/2 cts., etc. The commissary dept. is usually well supplied with necessaries, but just now the stock is exhausted.

If one had the facilities a fortune could be made in a week. I think I wrote you that our camp was pleasantly located in a woods. We are however terribly pestered with the abominable wood ticks—lizards, scorpions and snakes also abound. I was walking yesterday with Charley when we came across and killed a moccasin snake—said to be more poisonous than the rattle-snake. They are small however and comparatively harmless. This life and climate agree with me wonderfully. I was never in better health and weigh with light clothing 162 pounds! Yesterday Charley and I called at a house, near here, where Gen. Washington's grand-nephew lives and became acquainted with his daughters, the old Genl's great-grand nieces. They are F.F.V.'s of the bluest blood, being to all appearances very poor and very proud. We were very kindly treated; notwithstanding the hatred everybody here has for the Yankees and the outrageous stories they have been led to believe concerning us. The women are especially violent and wicked as she-devils. One lady (?) told Col. Kane, who has been suffering from an attack of the ague, that she was glad a Federal officer had the ague and hoped it would shake him to death. Another said she considered it a religious duty to hate the Yankees. Yesterday Secretaries Stanton and Seward were down here and took a ride across the canal-boat bridge through Fredericksburg. We have not occupied the city in force and the Rebel pickets come down the road to within a mile of the city and watch our movements. We are expecting however to move across at any moment now. We have one substantial bridge built upon canal-boats and the pontoniers are placing a pontoon bridge today. You will hear any news from other points quicker than we. The news of the evacuation of Yorktown, which we have

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8 Lieutenant Charles Lamborn of the 30th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, Company A, was a good friend of Fred's. The two had attended the University of Michigan at the same time and Lamborn was to marry Fred's sister Emma.
just learned, without particulars, puzzles us somewhat. You will see
the confirmation of Gen. Ord as Maj. Genl. of Vols. The probability
is that he will be placed in command of our division and McCall
superseded. In this event I apprehend some trouble among our
B.G.'s.

I have had many a longing to be at home this spring and many a
wish that this war were ended to satisfaction. A year ago I did not
think I was leaving such a burden upon you. Yet I do not see what
other course I could have pursued. I seem to have some aptitude
for this business and when the time came something impelled me
irresistibly into the step I took. I have gained much in experience—
real, practical, worldly wisdom—and have not, I trust, allowed the
corrupting influences of the field and camp to demoralize me. This
war has killed off much worthless trash, has ruined many of promise;
but still more it has brought out and developed and educated.
Swayne and myself sleep in a splendid bed, made out of small poles
covered with cedlar boughs then with our blankets. Our mail currier
[sic] is ready to go—Goodbye—Love to all.

Your loving brother,
Chas. Frederick Taylor

Old House, at Home
8th July, 1862

My dear Brother [Bayard];

It has been more than two weeks now since I first came home.
For a few days in the beginning however I was confined to the
house by a slight attack of rheumatism and a feeling of utter bodily
prostration and, during the past week, I have been to Harrisburg
and Washington, where a number of wounded and sick of my com-
pany are so that I only now have the opportunity to write you the
details of our march, capture, imprisonment etc. After you left us
at Alexandria, our plans were changed and we marched out, in the
latter part of April, by way of Manassas, to Falmouth, on the
Rappahannock, opposite Fredericksburg. On the 25th May, an
order came from Genl. [Irwin] McDowell, transferring four com-
panies of our Regt (including mine) to Bayard's Cavalry Brigade,
Ord's Division, to be under Kane's command. We marched at once
to join the Brigade, encamped nine miles down the river. The same
day we marched back with the Brigade, crossed the river and went
five miles in the direction of Gordonsville. The following day we
returned and advanced fifteen miles on the Richmond road and the
next day ten more, bringing us within forty miles of Richmond and
fifteen miles of some of McClellan’s forces at Hanover Court House
Junction. From this point, we were ordered to return and proceed,
with all possible dispatch, to the Shenandoah. I should have men-
tioned that we found no enemy except one or two stray picquets
[sic]. We retraced our steps, recrossed the river, marched by Catletts
and Manassas and entered the Valley at Front Royal. At Strasburg,
we came up with Jackson’s rear and started in pursuit, being one
hour and a half ahead of [General John C.] Fremont, who had come
down from the north. We formed his advance thenceforth, skirmish-
ing daily with the enemy’s rear-guard and taking a great many
prisoners. At Mt. Jackson, we could not save the bridge and were
delayed two days by the floods in getting down a pontoon bridge
at Harrisonburg, 35 miles beyond, we again came up with the
enemy. Two Regts. of cavalry were sent forward to find out the
position and strength of the enemy’s rear-guard. The Infantry and
Artillery were ordered to camping-grounds. It was 3 o’clock P.M.
when we arrived (June 6th), having marched 18 miles—at 6 o’clock,
the report reached us that the cavalry had fallen into an ambuscade,
four miles beyond, been routed and lost, in officers and men, fifty
or sixty killed and prisoners. Our battalion was immediately formed
and marched out, some cavalry accompanying us. We numbered, all
told, 115 men. We were to proceed with caution, as skirmishers,
recover if possible the dead bodies of the cavalymen and find out
what they failed to do. Some of Fremont’s scouts had been out and,
coming back, reported the enemy in small force (two or three
hundred in all) but in ambush. They also assured us that there were
none nearer than the point where the cavalry had been attacked—
four miles off. We had gone a mile and a half through the fields—
parallel to the road—and, entered a woods, halted for the purpose
of throwing forward skirmishers. The dispositions for that purpose
had not been made when a volley was poured into us from the
thick bushes in front and not more than 150 ft. distant. We at once
took such cover as could be had and returned the fire. After 15 or
20 minutes firing the enemy had fallen back and we thought the field ours. A number of our men had been wounded and we had been looking vainly for reinforcements, one or two infantry regiments being encamped within 10 minutes march of us. [General Turner] Ashby who was in command of the Rebels soon reformed his men and led them forward at a charge, having a front of 4 Regts. We kept their center at bay but their flanks being unopposed pressed forward and, unobserved by us, coming down through the bushes, gave us a raking crossfire. The situation was hopeless, our men broke cover and ran—Kane was wounded, in the leg, rather early in the fight, but I was not aware of it. However, being second in command and not seeing him, I made a last effort to rally the men behind a fence that we might check the enemy somewhat by one good volley and, before he recovered, effect our escape. I succeeded in forming about 20 men behind the fence and, as the enemy advanced, cheering, gave him a volley which had the desired effect. All of our men escaped except the killed and three or four who had been mortally wounded. Myself and one man of my company were however cut off before we could effect our escape, the enemy were so close upon us. Kane was afterward found upon the field wounded. We three were all the prisoners they captured. I afterwards learned they lost, in two Regts alone, 50 killed (including Ashby) and 150 wounded. I should have told you before, that we had been marching 13 days continuously, averaging 19 miles per day on the shortest possible allowance of food; namely: 4 1/2 day's rations of crackers, 2 of coffee and sugar, 3 1/2 of salt pork. This severe march will account for our reduced numbers, one half our battalion having given out on the way. I fared myself no better than the men, but fortunately had strength to carry me through. After the fight I was taken six miles through the mud and darkness to the camp of the 58th Va., commanded by a brother of Gov. [John] Letcher. The treatment of the enemy was kind and consideret [sic] throughout. They brought me a board to sleep on and gave me a cartridge box for a pillow. I slept without trouble I can assure you. The following day I was sent out to Genl. [R. S.] Ewell's Head-Quarters. He was pleased to speak very complimentary of our conduct and behaved very handsomely toward me. I have since seen a general order of his, published in the Richmond papers, authorizing two Regts. of his
command to carry a "Bucktail at the peak of their color-lance for
gallant conduct in a fight with the famous Bucktail Regt. of Penna."
Genl. Ewell sent me to Port Republic with a note to the officer in
command there to grant me parole and allow me every facility to
attend upon Col. Kane, whose wound, it was feared might prove
serious. On the following day we were then recaptured by a cavalry-
force of [General James] Shields' command and, almost immedi-
ately, retaken by the enemy, who took likewise some of the cavalry.
I suppose they have written you from home that I escaped without
hurt. My clothes alone were badly torn by the bullets. I had some
miraculous escapes, having been singled out, as I was told, by no
less than twenty-five men. After our second capture we were hurried
forward to Staunton, the next day went by rail to Charlottesville,
then to Lynchburg, then Petersburg. We remained there two days
and, on the third, were sent on board our Flag of Truce Boat at
City Point. I could not keep down a yell as I jumped onto the
deck. We were only held a week as prisoners. I was witness, during
that time, to a great many amusing incidents, which I would like
to relate to you. At Petersburg, the officer in command (Genl
[Robert] Ransom) learned by some means, that I was your brother.
He said to Kane, when I was not present, "Why, his Brother is a
noted abolitionist; but he seems a perfect Gentleman." "Sir,"
Kane replied with a crushing air, "he is my friend!"
The latter part of this letter is written here at Annapolis where I
was ordered to report some ten days ago to the officer in command
of the Camp of Instruction, for such duty, not incompatible with
my parole, as I might be assigned to. All officers and soldiers on
parole are ordered to do likewise. There is yet, however, no camp
of instruction here and I have had nothing to do. I had a long talk
with Gov. Curtin some days ago on the car. He called to me, having
recognized me at once. He said I should have command of one of
the new Penna Regts and that he would do what he could to have
me exchanged. I feel this cannot be accomplished, as the authorities
at Richmond refuse to make any more individual exchanges until a
regular system shall have been agreed upon between them and our
Government. This it seems cannot be effected. It is rumored that
we, who are on parole, will be sent to garrison the posts on the
Canadian Frontier. Matters at home are getting on as well as could
be expected. I was there nearly two weeks. I have been enabled,
with my surplus pay to square off a number of old scores. In two months more every thing will be cleared off without touching the crops!

I met a few days ago Mr. George P. Smith of Pittsburg[h], who said he met you in Egypt, having traveled with Achmet as Dragoman. He said he had no doubt that you would soon be full minister. He also told me to say to you when I wrote that, if you wished to find out what was going on at Washington (behind the curtains) to write to him at the Continental Hotel Phila. Give my love to Marie and Lily. I hope you will write to me. I shall write again as soon as I know anything definite as to my future movements. With much love

Ever affectionately your brother
Chas Frederick Taylor

Annapolis
Sunday, Aug. 31, 1862

My dear Brother;

When I wrote you I did not think I would be so long confined here. For two weeks I enjoyed the rest and quiet very much, but it is now nearly two months since I first came and I cannot say when I may be exchanged. In the meantime I have missed and am missing everything. The crisis of the Rebellion has arrived and passed perhaps at this moment. A great battle has been raging and may still be going on in front of Washington. The cannonading we have heard here at times. The latest rumors last evening are too good to be true. You will understand if you receive the papers the position of the opposing armies. Jackson’s forces, according to these rumors, have been utterly annihilated—10,000 killed and wounded, 12,000 prisoners including Jackson. Our loss also severe in killed and wounded. Today we can learn nothing. I am in such a state of

9 Bayard had hopes of being named American minister to Russia. This position, however, was to go to Cassius M. Clay.
10 Marie Hansen Taylor was Bayard Taylor’s second wife.
11 Lily Taylor was Bayard’s daughter.
12 Fred is referring to the Second Battle of Bull Run. Jackson, of course, was not captured. At this battle southern troops suffered 9,108 killed and wounded, and Union casualties numbered 10,096. Thomas Livermore, Numbers and Losses in the Civil War in America (Bloomington, 1957), 88–89.
restless anxiety that I am half sick and good-for-nothing. I can imagine what you will feel when you hear the first tidings of the terrible conflict, which were carried out in yesterday's steamer and will reach you distorted through English channels. Our army is no doubt equal in number to the enemy, but there are a great many new troops. Several divisions of McClellan's army have not yet been able to come up. I cannot talk of this any more. I have made every exertion to get exchanged, and cannot imagine why it has not been accomplished. Kane was exchanged two weeks ago and is now in the field, although a cripple. I heard from him a few days before he left. He sent me a copy of a letter he sent to the Adjt. Genl. in my behalf—very strong and very "Kanish"—and lead me to expect that I might soon join him. Since then I have heard nothing although I have written repeatedly to all the Depts. and to all of my friends who I thought might have influence. The rules are so strict now that it is impossible to get to Washington even for a day without special authority from the War Dept. I managed to get home for two days last week to see Emma— the only time I have been away since coming here. They told me in West Chester that I should have had command of the Chester Co. Regt. had I been exchanged at the time it was organized. They say I shall certainly have command of one of the new Regts if I am exchanged before they are all in the field.

I am very thankful to Genl. [Simon] Cameron for his good intention toward me in writing to the President to appoint me a Paymaster in the Army. I wish you would give to him my very sincere thanks. I should without hesitation accept such an appointment if tendered me. I hope you have received my letter long before this. I will leave this open until morning and send you the latest news. I will ask to be remembered to Genl. Cameron, to whom I was introduced at the time of the grand review when I commanded the Regt; also to the young ladies who may possibly remember me. With very much love to Marie, Lily and yourself.

I am
Ever your loving brother
Chas Frederick Taylor

18 Emma Taylor was Fred's sister.
Sept. 1st. There is still nothing definite this morning. The last is the two armies are confronting one another, both heavily reinforced. The Bull Run Battle Field is being fought over with terrible fury. The next forty-eight hours will no doubt see either the Army of Lee and Jackson broken and routed or Maryland invaded and Washington besieged. And I have to stay here and draw rations for a hundred lazy men!

C.F.T.

Harrisburg
October 15, 1862

My Dear Taylor

I reached here this afternoon, feeling comfortably having got a nap on my way to Phila & a jolly old sleep this morning. I called an hour ago on Gov. Curtin. He was exceedingly pleasant & gave me every assurance that he was decidedly prepossessed in favor of the worthy trio I have the honor to represent. He approved of our plan of petition & only desired us to give him anything at all as expressive of the wish of the regt & he will at once issue our commissions. You will please write to the Gov. & mention Hartshorn's [sic] case. We must secure his success along with our own by all means. There is some competition for the majorship & Hartshorn [sic] must be sustained by us, as he is doing all in his power to assist us. Don't neglect to write.

I will write you again soon.
Yours very truly & sincerely
E. A. Irvin

Oct. 22nd, 1862

My dear Fred,

There have been several important changes since you left. The first is Mike is discharged. After all he went to the election & voted

14 This is the petition mentioned in the introduction to these letters.
the Secession ticket!! We felt truly & conscientiously that we could not employ him any more. This course was pursued by most of the loyal & Union loving people. It was the only means that gave us a victory. We have received unbounded praise. "Splendid! the best thing you ever did, etc."

[Annie Taylor]

Annapolis, Md.
October 25, 1862

My dear Brother:

It is now nearly two months since my last letter to you was written and I am still confined to this place. I received yesterday, from home, your last letter to mother (Sept. 24). You will have been somewhat encouraged, I trust, by the course of events in this country when this reaches you; but there is still great cause of anxiety for the future. At one time, the renewed vigor of the Government and a more determined policy seemed to promise important results, but the adoption of this policy must have been too long delayed. The North is again divided by party lines and the political campaign is as bitter this fall as I ever knew it to be. The Army, too, is demoralized. There is no use disguising the fact. We were shamefully, disgracefully whipped before Washington. The subsequent battles in Maryland, in a measure, washed away that disgrace, but we could not rejoice with the thought of Harper's Ferry and the bold and splendid raid of Stuart through Pennsylvania still fresh. Our armies of the East, with some few exceptions, have brought only discredit to our arms. If it were not for the Western Division, the record of the past eighteen months would be, to us, a humiliating page in the history of this war.

I am not much given to despondency, but the situation is dismal enough now, I can assure you. We seem to be verging every day more rapidly toward a war with England, revolutions at the North.

15 Less than two weeks before Fred wrote this letter, Jeb Stuart and his cavalry forces raided southern Pennsylvania around Chambersburg. This "invasion" coincided with the 1862 state elections in which Democrats boosted their representation in Congress and the legislature.
and a Military Despotism. Unless some thing decisive is accomplished before Christmas, and even then, I shall scarcely be surprised at anything.

Another great battle seems imminent between McClellan and Lee near Winchester. The fact that Lee is willing to give battle in that position goes to prove that his force is large and that he feels confident of the result.

Saturday, Nov. 1st. While writing the above, I had a letter stating that Col. Ludlow (one of the commissioners of the exchange of prisoners on our side) would go to Aiken's Landing on Tuesday of this week and would effect my exchange at once and send me a certificate to that effect. I have, therefore, delayed sending this, hoping I might be able to tell you that I was on my way to rejoin my regiment. I have not yet received the certificate of exchange, but certainly will by Monday or Tuesday, so that when this starts by the steamer on Wednesday I will again be in the field.

You must have noticed in the papers the heavy losses of our regiment. It is now without a field officer and has been since the battle at Antietam. I did receive notice that I had been appointed Major, but I have heard nothing from it and conclude that the appointment has not been acted upon as yet. I am however the Senior Captain and will have command the moment I rejoin it. I shall insist upon receiving the Colonelcy. I have a petition signed by all the men and nearly all the officers present with the regiment asking that I may receive the appointment. The elective system has been abolished in the Reserve Corps by order of the Secretary of War. I do not deem it proper in me to urge the matter too strongly in my present condition; but as soon as I am at liberty I shall insist upon it as my right. I do not think there will be any great difficulty. The Governor is very favorable to me, also Reynolds, who commands the Corps, Meade, who commands the Division and [Truman] Seymour, who commands the Brigade. It will be a distinguished honor to command that old regiment and I would rather be its colonel than command half the Brigades in the Army.

I have spoken with several gentlemen in regard to your prospects for the succession—[George] Boker, Mr. Smith &. At that time, three or four weeks ago, they thought matters looked badly for you. Mr. Smith thought you were too confident of Cameron's influence
in your favor, saying that he (C.) only regarded personal obligations in so far as they might aid him in carrying out his own views. He told me to find out whether our members to the State Legislature were favorable to Cameron for U.S. Senator and if so, to indicate to them that they should require his whole influence in your favor in exchange for their support of him as U.S. Senator. I had no opportunity to attend to the matter but told Pap, who promised to see [Cousin] Frank [Taylor] as the fittest person to do any such thing. I understand [Cassius M.] Clay still says he expects he shall have to go back to Russia after all.

I shall write you soon again. I send much love to Marie and Lily.

Ever your loving brother,
Chas Frederick Taylor

Camp near Falmouth
Dec. 16, 1862

My dear Mother,

I reported yesterday to my regiment for duty, but last night the whole army recrossed the river and I have concluded to rest a few days with Capt. Hall where I have comfortable quarters. My arm is better and is not going to give me much trouble. My regiment suffered terribly. We lost out of three hundred who entered the fight, one hundred and ninety killed, wounded and missing. A large number are wounded, many slightly like myself. The loss in the Division was in fact frightful and nothing was gained. I will write you often until I am quite well. Have no concern however. I have told you exactly how bad I was hurt.

With much love
Your aff. son
Chas Frederick Taylor

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16 Cameron was unsuccessful in his bid for election to the U.S. Senate, losing to Charles Rollin Buckalew of Bloomsburg, Columbia County. Pap was Joseph Taylor, Fred’s father.

17 It is impossible to determine whether Fred is referring to Captain Michael Hall of Battery D, First Pennsylvania Light Artillery, or Captain James A. Hall of the Second Maine Battery. The latter of these two was stationed near Falmouth around Dec. 18, 1862. O.R., Ser. I, XXI, 483.

18 At Fredericksburg Fred was wounded twice and his horse was killed under him. New York Tribune, July 10, 1863.
My dear Sister:

I have had the past few days some very vexatious things to happen in the regiment. Yesterday morning fifteen men of one company, six of another and two of a third stacked their arms in defiance of all authority (not particularly mine) and refused to serve until they were paid. I said not a word to them but immediately ordered their arrest and started to Division Headquarters to have a military commission assemble to try them and pass sentence at once, so that they might be punished summarily. When I returned they had all taken their arms again. I then had an inspection of the Regiment and a parade as usual on Sundays and neither did nor said anything that showed I was aware of anything unusual having taken place. They were all humiliated especially as they got no sympathy but only taunts and ridicule from the rest of the regiment. I resolved however to punish them and this morning ordered them to turn in the arms they had and take inferior ones in exchange, which some of the men had been obliged to take. All but seven refused to do this so they (the remaining sixteen) have been arrested, placed in irons, and sent to the Provost guard house to await trial by court martial which will assuredly pass very severe sentence upon them. I have been terribly enraged at this proceeding and as a consequence feel the effects of the mental excitement. I cannot find relief for a passion by swearing and blustering. This is the first time my authority as a commanding officer has ever been set at defiance, although the intention was not to defy my authority. The men have six and many eight months pay due them and are really suffering for the want of their money and some evil fellow has induced a few weak men to this course.

We have been expecting to march for the past day or two though it seems not so probable tonight. Gen. [Abner] Doubleday, of Fort Sumter notoriety, has today assumed command of our Division.\textsuperscript{19}

I send much love to all

Ever your affectionate brother,

Chas. Frederick Taylor

You can address your letters \textit{Colonel C.F.T.}.

\textsuperscript{19} Doubleday was stationed in Charleston Harbor in 1860–1861, and aimed the first shot fired from Fort Sumter in reply to the Confederate bombardment.
My dear Sister:

Our Brigade was ordered to take post here four days ago. We are on the Orange and Alexandria rail-road about seventeen miles from the latter place and four from Fairfax Court House, where we have been up to this time. This change, in connection with other things, looks as though the Reserves would not get out of the "Defences" for some time. The prospect of another campaign, such as we had last year, it is true, is not very delightful; yet as these warm days come on, I cannot but feel restive and long to be with one of the great armies East or West.

I wrote you from Washington the other day, where I went to be mustered into service. I also sent a note to be thrown into Bank. I waited until the last minute, hoping to be able to send the money, which I could have done had I been able to get mustered back as I expected. I trust the note was discounted. I shall be able to pay it all at maturity. My pay is materially increased, while it costs me no more to live than as a Captain. I have lived more economically since my return to the Regt. than ever before and have spared no effort to save every possible dollar. I have paid from my salary as Captain from Nov. 1 to Feb. 28(,) $465(,) $250—money borrowed last winter, which I sent to you, have lived during that time and have enough to last me until May 1st, six months, making an average expenditure of $35 per month for my personal use.

It cost me much more than this last year. I might, in fact, have saved more than I did in some respects, yet I did not waste any in dissipation.

Now during the ensuing year I agree to send you $1200—which I know you shall need. I will still have ample to live upon.

I would like above all things to get home for a few days; but have not made application as yet and unless it is very necessary I will not at present. At my age, the Colonelcy of a Regt., which has the reputation throughout the country that mine has, is a great honor and at the same time a great responsibility. There is probably no Colonel in the service so young. A great many young men, since the war began, who were very good company officers, have made sad failures as commanders of Regts. I have accepted the position
knowing very well what is expected of me and feeling quite sure that it is possible for me to earn an honorable reputation as Colonel or even fill with credit a still higher position. I say this with no vainglorious feeling. I am not unduly ambitious of promotion. I think I have shown this before, but I am ambitious of a high reputation as an officer in the Army, and, in order to deserve that my utmost energies and whatever ability I may have will be required. A newspaper reputation and a substantial reputation in the service are very different things, as the history of this war has shown.

I have not written you very frequently of late, because some one has been going from here nearly every week and our life here has been without incident. We have been trying to catch [John S.] Mosby, but our foolish cavalry have always disturbed our plans.

I never was in better health. In fact during the whole winter, although I have lived in a tent without [a] floor, I have been perfectly well. I pay great attention to my living. My cook has learned to prepare a capital dinner out of such plain supplies as our commissariat affords. We get milk, butter, eggs, and apples from the farmers and from the commissary ham, pork, beef, rice, beans, potatoes, onions, sugar, coffee, etc. So we have rice puddings, bread puddings, omlettes, apple pies, charlotte, natur-geochichte, etc. Of course we have roast beef and potatoes in every imaginable way. Now can you suggest anything else that could be prepared from the articles I have enumerated? We have had no mail for some days, but one will be in today. I hope to have a letter from home. It is a long time since I have had one.

If you have had such weather as we have had here, it has been impossible to do much spring work as yet.

I have an opportunity of sending this to Washington today. Why don't you send me Bayard's letters when you get them? When do you look for him at home? I saw Genl. Cameron the other day in Washington. He said he had written Bayard lately and had advised him to come back [from Europe]. He also said he and Mrs. Cameron were going down soon to see you.

With love to all
I am ever affectionately
Chas Fredk Taylor

Mosby was one of the Confederacy's most celebrated guerilla raiders.
Head Quarters
1st Rifle Regt.
P.R.V.C.
June 24, 1863

My dear Sister:

We have at last orders to prepare to move at a moment's notice. I think we will join Hooker's Army. We are busy turning in tents, reducing baggage, preparing rations, etc. I shall write you whenever an opportunity may offer. Your last letter received yesterday. I presume we shall have a stirring campaign. I am very glad of it. We have been here long enough. Love to all.

Ever your affectionate brother,
Ch. F. Taylor

On Picket near Sharpsburg & Hagerstown Rd.
Saturday July 11th, 1863

Miss Annie Taylor,

Yours of the 6th is just received. You ask concerning the fall of a brother. I am very sorry that what little information I had was not sent immediately but relying on others more capable is my excuse.

He fell at (I suppose about 6 o'clock) in the extreme front—he was urging the men forward [and] about the last words he spoke before he fell were to a rebel reg't not over fifty yards in front of us. He called to them to hault [sic] & surrender. He fell, I was with him in an instant—he told me where he was wounded & asked for water[,] after taking a little water—blood began to come from his mouth & he seemed to want to say something. All I could understand was "Mum" "Mum." I do not think that he lasted over two minutes. I helped to carry him off the field & took charge of what few things he had about him, which things I afterwards turned over to Capt. [John] Yerkes.

Lieut. [George] Ludlow, Co. E of this reg't was with the body & told me he would have it sent home. So I went back to the front & next day found that Lieut. Ludlow had taken the body to a hosp.
& there left it—when two of our boys[,] Richard West,21 [Pvt.] W[illiam] T. Gause found it & did all they could under the circumstances.

Believing I have told you all as best I could, I remain very respectfully

Your most obedient servt.

Aaron Baker

21 The muster roll of the regiment lists no Richard West; perhaps Baker meant Private Joseph D. West. Bucktails, 414.