

Camp of the 53 near Richmond, Va.  
May 10, 1865

(J. C. Esarey to his wife)

Dear Wife: Having an opportunity this evening I will try and address you a few lines to let you know of my whereabouts and that I am well and hearty; hoping these few lines may reach you safe and find you and Johnny well. I received your kind letter the 7th day of May. I was glad to hear from you but sorry to hear you were in declining health. I hope you have recovered ere now. I received one from Jont the same time which I will answer as soon as I can. We were lying 14 miles from Raleigh on the Neuse River when I received your letter that morning we started for Richmond. We marched very hard, making from 20 miles to 28 miles per day. We came through Forrestville Ridge, way and several little towns, crossed the Roanoke River above Weldon, then we struck the Boystown plank road; then is when marching took place. The weather was intensely warm. The boys fell out of ranks in large numbers. Several were sun struck. We passed through by Dinwiddie Courthouse, thence through near Fort Darling, next through Petersburg and yesterday we reached this point. Our camp is on a high knoll just in the edge of Manchester city on the south side of the James River. We can see nearly all over Richmond. It has a fine appearance from here. Old Libby Prison is in plain view of us, the place where many brave boys have started to death. We expect to leave here in a few days for Alexandria. This will be another hard march. The last ten days have been the hardest soldiering that I have ever seen yet, though I stood it very well except my feet and they were blistered all over. It ran some of the surplus fat off of me. The boys are all well except A. H. Sprinkle. He is very much under the weather. Wilk Gibson was left sick at Goldsboro. I heard from him the 18th of April. He was still living and able to sit up some. I expect you would like to know something us coming home. I can't give you much satisfaction about it yet, for there are 100 rumors about it already. Some say we will be mustered out by the last of June, others say the last of July; so you need not look for me yet for a while. Though I may get home sooner than I think, so do the best you can for I expect all the crop will be made before I come home. You said something about the oats but did not say where you sowed them. Just have the place worked to the best advantage you can for I cannot give you any advice about it. Hire the work done and don't expose yourself for I expect you have seen a very lonesome and hard time the last 7 months, but I hope it is almost over, for I hope to soon make our once happy home the same home of happiness to us again. I will be glad if the fruit is not killed. I will be at home in time for my share of it. You can tell Mark to plant 5 or 6 watermelon hills for me this year. You wrote that the babe had forgotten me. It is the same with me. I have entirely forgotten

how he looks though I would know him now I believe if I could see him. You seemed too disheartened about the mail. You must not get so for I will write every chance I get. You said that you had not received but one letter from me in three months. I expect you have got several since then. Tell John Ewing to write as often as he can. Tell Abb to write and all the rest of the neighbors to write often and give me all the news. So I will close, hoping soon to hear from home. So goodby for this time.

Still remaining your husband as ever. J. C. Esarey to his wife.  
Direct thus: Co. G 53 Ind. Vet. Vol. Inf't. 4th Div. 17th A.C.