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William C. Nelson to Maria C. Nelson (4 September 1861)

William Cowper Nelson

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Camp Esau. near Pensacola, Fla
September 7th 1861.

My Dear Mother; I have been
anxiously expecting an answer to
my last letter, for the past week, but
although Mr. Hill has arrived bringing
epistles for many, he failed to bring
one for me. I deferred writing until his
arrival, thinking that I would surely
get a letter by him, but as he brought
none. I concluded to wait a day or
two longer in the hope of getting one
by mail, but "hope deferred maketh
the heart sick," and I have ac-
cordingly resolved to write anyhow.
We have not moved yet, nor do I think
there is any probability of our being
moved, although that has been the
constant theme of conversation for

the past week, the last rumor is that we will be ordered Mississippi City, or to the coast of Texas, it is too absurd to deserve any consideration.

The fleet here received an addition of three vessels yesterday and one to day whether their arrival prognosticates anything serious I am unable to state; but the fact that the dry dock (which has been lying in the bay between Dickens and (the hay yard)) was burnt night before last, seems to indicate that it does, the light of the burning mass was plainly seen from our Camp, and was the occasion of our drum being beat, and ourselves formed into line, where we remained about 15 minutes and were then dismissed to our quarters.

Last week one of the members of our company died, I was one of the detachment that went down to the hospital to bury him, it rained

Very hard while we were on our way, and consequently we were completely soaked before we arrived there as we had no place to stop, nor anything to protect us from the rain. We waited till the rain ceased, and then paid our last sad tribute to a departed comrade, coming back I stopped for a while to see some of my Alabama friends, and further on as I passed Col. Strong's, I saw Mrs. Chalmers sitting in the porch, she invited me in, I complied; after sitting awhile, dinner was announced, Col. Chalmers invited me to dine with them, and as they were alone, I accepted. We had quite a nice dinner, one dish that I had not seen before in Florida, namely sweet potatoes, strange to say I felt perfectly at ease, although it was the first time in 5 months I had sat at the same board with a lady, it was really a pleasure to be helped to a dish whether you wanted it or not.

As winter is drawing on I consider it necessary that I should inform you of the articles I shall need, which I think it would be best to send at your earliest convenience, I shall want my entire grey suit, (coat, pants and vest) the one I wore last winter, Two pairs of ^{pants} heavy brown or gray mixed jeans, lined with domestic, One roundabout of the same material, lined throughout, with side pockets, it should be long enough to come some four inches below the waist band of the pants, One heavy vest of jeans, hirsy or Jersey.

These things could all be sent in my old black trunk, It would perhaps be advisable also to send my old overcoat, as I have no rubber coat, You can send as many pair of socks, as you chose, with these articles I think I can manage to get through the winter, without freezing, Love to all friends

Your Affectionate Son
Will. C. Nelson