

July 18. 1876



Miss Lilla Bogert  
Bozeman  
Montana

Camp on Yellowstone

Near mouth of Rosebud

May 28<sup>th</sup> 1876

My darling little Yeb.

Mr. McCormick arrived today with his boat load of stuff and had three boxes for me - one with "mustache" nets & hat - one with "hask" and one with "groceries". I am ever so much obliged for all. I have just seen "Bub" and he wants to enclose a note to you. A company of Infantry and Roe's company of Cavalry will start back tomorrow morning to meet the supply train & bring it to our camp. I think we will run short of rations before it reaches us. I am fully satisfied that your cakes will be nice and "Bub" is tickled half to death over your kindness. Mr. McCormick was only three days & a half coming down the river. Chestnut arrived with his boat load on the 23<sup>rd</sup> inst.

Mr. McCormick is going to carry back the mail & it is probably the last one you will have from us for a long time as Maj. Benham is ordered to draw in the line of couriers & not to send any more mail until further orders. We are now right in the midst of hostile Sioux. There is a large camp about 15 miles from us on the other side of the river. (about two thousand) They don't care a darn for us & we don't care a darn for them. Gibbon has orders to keep on this side of the river and we expect Generals Terry & Crook with their commands in a short

time on the other side when we  
 will have lots of fun -  
 We have the worst of it so far.  
 The Sioux killed two men of Capt. Ball's  
 Company & one citizen teamster on the  
 23<sup>rd</sup> inst about 3 miles from camp. They  
 left the camp after breakfast in the  
 morning without permission and  
 went out to the bluffs above after game.  
 They were surrounded by a large party of  
 Indians & slaughtered. Two companies of  
 Cavalry were sent in pursuit. About noon  
 I took a squad of men and went out  
 with Dr. Reuling to bring in the bodies.  
 We found them in the hills and it was  
 a sight to make ones blood run cold.  
 Stoker of "H" Company had about two  
 bullet holes in his body - was scalped  
 and had two butcher knives driven into  
 his head. Rahmeir of "H" Company  
 had his head smashed in with  
 a rock & was a horrible sight.  
 I had the bodies put into an ambulance  
 and took them to camp. We buried  
 the three men at the foot of a large  
 tree at sundown & had the usual  
 salute fired over the grave and taps  
 sounded. The officers then repaired  
 to my tent & we drank an eight gallon  
 keg of beer that Chestnut had brought  
 down & sang songs until nearly mid-  
 night. I sang several songs for the  
 fellows, but could not at the same  
 time help thinking of the poor men  
 we had just buried & how soon some  
 of us might be in the same place.  
 "In the midst of life we are in death"

I have my new hat and am as well  
 off as before I got into the river.  
 Ball & Thompson left camp last  
 night for Tongue River on a boat.  
 I did not go with them because I have  
 been there once & did not think it  
 worth while. We sent a few men  
 in a small boat last night down  
 the river to communicate with Gen  
 Jerry's command. I think we will  
 be back in July some time. God  
 knows I hope so. Gen Ebbson I  
 know wants I get back. He dont  
 know half so much about Indian  
 fighting as he thought he did & I  
 think he is considerably "rattled".  
 It is now about 11 o'clock P.M. & as  
 we expect an attack in an hour  
 or two I will close & get my  
 pistols ready & make my will.  
 Everything I leave to my own darling  
 Lilla and she shall have all that  
 is left of me when I return.  
 Good bye darling. God bless you!  
 your own Charlie

P.S. Katie has my trunk key, which  
 you must get if I don't return  
 C.

Miss Lilla Bogert

Bozeman

Montana

May 28 - 1876

Miss Lilla Boyer

Bozeman

Montana

June 14, 1876

Camp on Yellowstone river in  
near mouth of Rosebud

June 14<sup>th</sup> 1876

My darling Lilla

It has been nearly three weeks since we sent a mail to Ellis - At that time we were camped about where we are at present but during that time we have been down nearly to the mouth of Powder river at which point we found the steamer "Far West" loaded with supplies for Gen. Terry's expedition - The steamer came up & landed at our camp - Gen Terry was aboard & we all went on to see him & had a good time - He is a very pleasant gentleman - Gen Custer is on the other side of the river with the entire 7<sup>th</sup> regiment of Cavalry & four companies of Infy - We started back for this point the day after meeting Terry & the boat went back to Glendwin Creek to bring supplies up to Powder river, which is Terry's base - We expect the boat up here

in a few days + the troops will be  
here also on the opposite side of the river  
Gen Crook is probably in our vicinity  
now but we have heard nothing from  
him as yet. The Sioux are supposed  
to be on the opposite side + Jerry +  
Crook will hoop them up + we will prevent  
them from crossing + making their escape.  
We have seen no Indians since the three  
men were killed. Thompson + Wheelan  
start on a scout to Fort Pease tomorrow  
morning. The mail party will accompany  
the to Pease + then go ahead with the mail.  
It was lots of excitement for us to see  
the steambot + they had everything aboard  
that one could wish for. Lemons, ale  
Whiskey, cigars + such. Gen Brisson  
has just come in to my tent + says  
tell my sweet heart that we will  
probably be back in July sometime +  
that is the best we can do for her.  
I am sure I hope we will for we  
are all getting tired of this.

Everything you sent came all right  
on the train + all the boys have been  
luxuriating in + praising your cakes -  
I have given several big lunches and  
we have lots of jam. This is our  
seventy-fifth day out + it seems a long  
time to me. Does it to you? I am  
enjoying good health. Some of the officers  
+ a good many of the men have been  
quite sick. I think they drink too  
much river water. You will probably  
have a chance to write me when you  
get this as the party will return to  
us. It does seem an age since I heard  
from you + I do want to see you so  
badly. Don't fail to write me a good  
long letter + now good night + good bye  
my own dear sweet little darling.  
I send you heaps of kisses. Love has  
the officers all wish to be remembered to  
to you.

your own loving  
Charlie

Charlie's Letter

July 4 - 1876

Camp on Rosebud

May 23<sup>rd</sup> 77

Darling Pet

Tomorrow we will

send in a mail to the Cant  
onment - Yesterday a letter  
mail came out to us - the  
first for about six weeks.

Two letters from you. One  
commenced on April  
7<sup>th</sup> & the other on April  
29<sup>th</sup>. Was awfully glad  
to hear & am so glad  
that you are feeling well  
& getting along comfortably  
I rec'd more mail than  
ever before in my life at  
one time - Heard from  
Father, Frank, Emma, and  
Medary & several Official  
letters, Also a letter from

Galameau my old striker,  
 who wants to get back into  
 the Army, having busted in  
 business - Arn. Miles went  
 in a few days after the  
 fight & left Ball in command  
 of our battalion & three  
 Comp's of Inftry. We have  
 had no troubles with Indians  
 since we thrashed them  
 so beautifully on the 7<sup>th</sup> inst.  
 I wrote you about it &  
 also Zealand, suppose  
 you have seen it all  
 in the papers ere this,  
 Miles is coming out soon  
 & believe with a train load  
 of supplies & more troops,  
 & will operate all around  
 this part of the country.  
 We would like to get into the  
 Cantonment for a few days  
 to get something good to eat

but dont suppose we will  
 The boats from Ellis are  
 not of much advantage  
 to us this summer - It  
 is hardly worth while for  
 you to send anything nice  
 to eat as it would probably  
 spoil before I got it -  
 Ball took us out on a  
 scout a few days ago  
 leaving the train behind  
 with the outfit. We had  
 a perfectly horrible time.  
 A cold rain prevailed  
 for three days & nights &  
 we were all soaked &  
 nearly frozen during that  
 time - Nothing to eat but  
 buffalo meat & hard tack,  
 quite a number of the men  
 are sick & the horses

suffered terribly. I did not enjoy it at all but don't feel any the worse for it now. Nothing seems to affect my health in the field. We are having no play this summer, Miles didn't get as down here for fun. I think he is quite proud of our battalion since Old Bris left - We are living quite poorly now - Nothing but beef & bread - No potatoes or vegetables of any kind no butter nor whiskey but "we don't care".

Norwood is about half crazy & the company is almost in a state of mutiny - Hamelton is very unhappy with him - I have nothing to do with him and therefore don't care a damn -

I am performing the duties of Adj as usual & have no trouble with anyone. I think Horwood dislikes me & would like to get hold of me. Ball talks of relieving him from command of the Company & sending him in to the confinement of things get any worse in the Company. Dr Brown pans out better than we thought he would but is half scared to death all the time for fear of Indians. He & Douglas & I mess together. The 11<sup>th</sup> Aug<sup>st</sup> & other troops are now going up the river to build the new post at mouth of Little Horn. Don't know whether we will get up there or not.

I suppose <sup>6</sup> Hop is back  
by this time & making  
love to my girl - It don't  
worry me any - I am  
not afraid of her going  
back on me - Would  
like to have had some of  
Marshall's furch.

Ours have such things here  
Will take one with him  
when we return in the  
fall - Fuller is still  
at the Cantonment doing  
well - Aint you sorry I  
was not wounded so  
as to have you back to  
Ells on sick leave.

I understand Jimmy Shaw  
came near killing Mrs  
Bris - pity he dont  
tackel Old Bris -  
Weather beautiful today

Am writing in my tent  
 & am very comfortable -  
 We will probably loaf  
 around here several  
 days waiting for supplies  
 &c - This a very pretty  
 country but the water is  
 horrible to drink - full  
 of alkali - Ought to be  
 mixed with a little  
 whiskey - Wish I could  
 be with you today & get  
 a good square meal  
 & a glass of beer -

There is nothing more to write  
 I can tell you nothing  
 definite about our movements  
 more than I have done -  
 but will write as often as  
 couriers go in - Don't think  
 we will have another fight  
 for some time - Don't seem  
 to be many Indians in

the Country - We dont  
 hanker after much more  
 fighting - Got away  
 with enough glory the  
 other day - Might get  
 licked next time.

We want to go home &  
 be crowned with laurels  
 & have wine opened to  
 God by Darling - Write  
 me every chance - I dont  
 know when we will meet  
 again but of course we  
 will some time - Don't  
 think they will keep us here  
 for good - I get awfully  
 tired of this some times when  
 we sit down to hard  
 work & beef, but it agrees  
 with me all the same  
 I send a thousand kisses  
 & all my love - Love to  
 your father & feel  
 your own Charlie

Camp on Yellowstone

July 4<sup>th</sup> 1876

My darling Lellie

We are again in camp on the Fort Pease bottoms about two miles above

the pass. I wrote you last from the mouth of Rosebud. you speak of Mr McCormick having arrived without a letter for you. If such is the case he must have lost it for I have written you by every mail since we left Ellis. Mr McCormick tells me that he came away & forgot a letter that had been handed him for me but says I will get it by next mail. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of June the

Steamer Far West arrived at our camp opposite the mouth of Rosebud. Gen Terry & staff aboard. Gen Custer with the entire 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Cavalry also arrived the same day on the opposite bank. Custer was then ordered to march for the Little Horn & we were ordered to march up the river to Pease where the boat would meet us and

ferry us across the river so that we might also go to the Little Horn. & it was arranged that both commands would get there about the same time. We arrived at Pease Jun 23<sup>rd</sup> & crossed the following day leaving all our transportation at Pease & using pack mules to carry our

rations &c. Gen. Gibbon was sick & remained on the boat but afterwards joined us. Gen Terry accompanied us with his staff & the boat was ordered to go on up to the mouth of the Little Horn & meet us there. We arrived at the Little Horn on the morning of the 26<sup>th</sup>. At this point three Crow Indians who had been sent with Custer from

the mouth of Rosebud, came in & reported that a big fight had occurred above us on the Little Horn & that Custer's command had been slaughtered. This story was not credited as everybody thought it impossible for such a disaster to occur. We then marched on up the

stream. We, of the cavalry, wanted Gibbon  
to let us go ahead, but he kept us with  
the Infantry & consequently our progress was  
slow. The next morning we came upon the  
ground where the village had stood & we  
soon saw that a fight had occurred.  
The bodies of twenty odd Indians were found  
& the ground was strewn with Indian  
camp equipage & dead horses, showing that  
the Indians had left in a hurry. About  
this time Lieut Bradley, who was marching  
up the other side of the Little Horn with  
a detachment of mounted Infantry sent in  
word to Gen Terry that he had found the  
bodies of twenty five cavalymen in a  
ravine. After this messengers came in  
two days before. It seems that before  
they attacked the village Custer divided  
his command, sending Reno with three  
companies in at one point & taking  
five companies himself at another point  
& leaving the remaining four companies in  
reserve. This was a great mistake. Custer  
evidently underestimated the Indians & was  
too confident of success. The village was  
nearly four miles long & there were about

was some distance ahead with his company  
sent back word that he had just found Col.  
Reno with part of the regiment in a fortified  
position on top of a hill. We marched on  
& some of the Indians came down from the  
hill & met us & you never saw a more  
joyful set of fellows. They said we had  
saved them all from being slaughtered.  
It seems the Indians had discovered  
our approach while we were still several  
miles away & had packed up & fled.

I believe if we had been allowed to go  
ahead with the cavalry when we first  
got the news we could have routed them  
& made them drop all their property.  
Such however may not be the case and  
we might have met Custer's fate. When  
we found Reno's command they asked  
where Custer was. & when we told them  
that Custer & his men had all been slaugh-  
tered about two miles below them they  
were perfectly shocked as they had seen  
nothing of him since the fight began.

rapidly from Bradley as he continued  
to find more bodies until the number  
had reached over two hundred. We then  
began to wonder what had become of the  
rest of the regiment & were afraid for a  
while that they had all been slaughtered.  
In a few minutes however Capt Ball who

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May 23-1877

Miss Lilla Bogert  
Buzemans

four thousand warriors whereas Custer had only about six hundred & fifty men all told. The Indians fought desperately & met the troops as they came to the attack. The Sioux had evidently assembled expecting an attack & were prepared for it and intended to fight. It is their home & they had to fight if they ever intended to. Custer & the five companies which he took with him were all killed although it is evident they fought desperately & must have killed a great many Indians. A Crow Indian who was with him says they killed more Indians than there were white men. The bodies of all the soldiers & officers were stripped & horribly mutilated. I tell you it was a sickening sight and I never want to see the like again. Reno with his three companies was repulsed & driven on to a hill where he met Capt Benteen with the other four companies & they made a stand & the Indians fought them until

they saw us coming + would have kept on until they had finished them if we had not arrived. There were over fifty wounded men with Ben + we had 2 mule letters for them to be carried on mules. The fight commenced on Sunday the 25<sup>th</sup> of June + lasted two days. I don't suppose Custer's part of it lasted more than an hour or so. If Custer had not exceeded his orders we would also have been in the fight with him + might have been there a little before him in which case I presume there would not have been a grease spot left of us. Custer was so confident + so anxious to do it all himself that he made forced marches + arrived at the camp about two days before he should have. He was afraid we might get there first + clean up the village. When we were at the mouth of Rosebud Terry offered to come over our four companies of Cav. + send us with the 7<sup>th</sup> Cav. but Custer said no, he had all he wanted + was only afraid of not

finding the Indians. On the 28<sup>th</sup> we started  
back for the mouth of the Little Horn to  
carry our wounded men to the boat and  
arrived during the night of the 29<sup>th</sup>.

The boat then started back for Peace & we also  
returned arriving day before yesterday &  
crossed to the Fort Peace side. The entire

outfit is now here including Col Ross with  
what is left of the 7<sup>th</sup> Reg. Fifteen Officers

& about 350 men were killed. Seven of the

Officers were married. Mrs Calhoun now  
at Fort Lincoln lost her husband, three

brothers & a nephew. She was a Custer  
& there were three Custers in the fight.

The Indians got about three hundred carbines  
& pistols & about ten thousand dollars in

specimens from the Officers & men.

We buried all the dead before leaving.

Gen Terry is here & has sent the boat down  
the river for more troops & supplies & we

are to wait here until they come, probably  
two weeks or more. We will then cross

over & go for the Sioux again. I see  
that Gen Crook is in the field with 28 Comp's

I duty in  
the Dept of  
the Platte.  
Some know  
how some  
he will be  
able to get  
it.

Fort Base Mont

July 18 7876

My darling Lilla

It is now a little  
after 6 o'clock A.M. & all the  
Officers are still asleep. I was  
awakened a few minutes ago  
by a man who said Major  
Thompson wanted to see me.  
Thompson has been quite sick  
for several days & is now very  
sick & so weak that <sup>he</sup> can't raise  
his head from the pillow. It is  
the same old story. Too much  
rum. He wanted me to get  
him a little brandy, saying  
it wouldn't stay on his  
stomach, but would do him  
good. I didn't know whether  
it would be right or not.

but sent to the hospital tent  
& got him a little. Poor  
Thompson! you never saw  
a more perfect wreck than  
he looks to be & is this morn-  
ing. No one is to blame but  
himself however. Don't say  
anything about this.

A mail party was  
ordered to start for Ellis last  
night, but was afterwards kept  
back on account of the non-  
arrival of Mc Cormick. He  
will probably be here to day  
& the mail party go to night.  
Gen. Terry has dispatches from  
Sheridan, saying that he has  
ordered twelve more companies  
of infantry to join us, six from  
the Dept. of the Lakes & six  
from Dept. of Missouri. When  
they arrive Terry is ordered

to proceed with the campaign.  
In the mean time we will re-  
main in a garrison condition  
on the Fort Pease bottom.

Gen Terry started  
down the river day before yester-  
day on the Josephine & will  
return upon the Far West, which  
is expected in a day or two.

It will be from  
two to three weeks before our  
re-inforcements arrive & when  
they do come I suppose we  
will fool around the country  
for a month or two longer.

No one seems to know where  
Crook is or what he is doing.  
We have several couriers out  
trying to find him, but it is  
a very dangerous business &  
quite doubtful about their  
succeeding. The general im-  
pression is that Crook don't

want to find us. Gen Terry  
ranks him & of course would  
take command if we met.  
Crook, I imagine, like Custer,  
wants to do it all himself.  
I am sure I hope he will  
succeed & that mighty quest  
for we are all getting terribly  
sick of this business & want  
to get home. The party going  
to Delta will get a boat and  
return to the command with  
clothing for the men & other  
supplies. I believe I have  
enough to last me through  
except boots & pants which I  
have at the pass & have sent  
for. We live very well except  
being short of fresh meat. I  
don't think we have had any  
for a week or more. Benham  
has been directed to send Lewis  
Clark down as soon as possible  
It requires an order from  
Sheridan to relieve Ror from  
duty in this Dept. & order him

Col Smith of Terry's staff who went down to Lincoln on the Far West writes that the scene among the ladies at Lincoln when they heard the news was heart rending.

The fight left seven widows at Lincoln & most of them have little or nothing left to support them. They will get a pension which will be just about enough to buy black bordered letter paper for six months use.

About sixty Crow warriors arrived a few days ago & more are coming I believe. They think the Sioux have scattered & gone into the Big Horn mountains which will be a horrible place to get them out of. I hope we may be able to finish this business now & avoid a winter campaign.

"Bub" has received letters from both Miss Baker & Miss Black informing him of their intended marriage. He told me of it & don't seem to be at all worried. Thompson teased him a little about it & told him he ought to have received one of the three (meaning Miss Barber, Miss Baker & Miss Black). "Bub" said he was willing to do the fair thing, but didn't see how he could be expected to marry all three of them or hurt the feelings of any two by marrying the third.

It is now time for breakfast & I will finish this letter after Mr. McCormick comes.

Taylor brought me a letter from you the other day. Hamilton & Mrs. Wheelan don't correspond very regular but for people who are in love

All the Officers are well except Thompson. The remaining 7 Cad Officers are a nice set of fellows & are quite an acquisition to our Camp Society.

4 o'clock P.M.

Mr. McCormick has not arrived as yet & the mail party will leave tonight anyway. "Bub" has just handed me a note to enclose to you - I suppose as all his sweet-hearts have gone back on him, he must write to his friends sweethearts. I was very much in hopes the book would come today from Ellis & it may possibly arrive before dark. You don't know how much I would like to get back to my own darling Lilla, but God only knows when that will be. I think however it will not

be so long as is generally  
anticipated. I can imagine  
meeting you with all the res-  
olution depicted on your coun-  
tenance which you speak of.

That is all nonsense - you will  
do just as I say, because if you  
don't I will take it across -

Good bye darling love - God bless you  
a thousand kisses - Love to all -

I will add a little if the boat  
comes before the mail post; leave  
yours - Charlie

(41)  
If we have any more news before  
the mail goes I will write it.  
And now good bye again God bless  
my own darling yet I send a  
thousand kisses & all my loves  
I have none for anyone else in  
the world — your loving

Charlie

Aug. 24 - Crook's command moved  
out  $\frac{1}{2}$  day. Ferris moves tomorrow.  
Indians are reported crossing in  
small parties below. I think we will  
wind up at Buford in fifteen or twenty  
days & then return toallis by way of Peck  
& Carroll, but I may be wrong.  
I enclose an order on E. G. MacLay & Co.

for #58 - Please give to Breeland for  
"Bub" & me - "Bub" sends regards -  
your cake sent by Mr Clark was  
splendid & went like hot cakes  
principally among my friends in  
Crook's command - Am now so  
much obliged for it also for the  
mushrooms & such - Crook's Officers  
have had nothing but bacon  
hard tack & coffee for weeks  
& the way they go for our things  
is perfectly lovely - Good bye darling

As ever  
Charlie

I will write again from Buford  
or before if possible

Miss Lilla Bogert  
Bozeman  
Montana

June 28, 1896

Camp on Little Horn

June 28 - 76

Darling Lil-

We are camped  
on Custer's battle ground  
with what is left of his  
regiment - Custer is killed  
with fifteen (15) of his  
officers + three hundred  
men - Our command  
is all right up to now.  
Custer's entire regiment  
would have been killed  
if we had not arrived  
Dont know when we  
will be back. All right  
Darling

yours  
Charlie

Miss  
Lilla Bogert  
Bozeman  
Montana