
Voices of the Past

The Letters of Abial Edwards

Civil War

1865

Washington DC.

May 26th 1865

My Dear Anna

Your kind letter of the 22nd is before me & I now hasten to answer it. Tis a cold rainy day. very disaggreable This week has been very buisy with us Tuesday The Potomac Army our Div & Sherridans Cavalry was reviewed It was a spendid day just cool enough to be pleasant. I went out on the Review with General Beal. As we entered the city we met the crowd estimated at 50,000 People. Our welcome will be long remembered and every soldier there felt himself honored being in that Review. The streets were gaily decorated over the Columns & so was the houses. The First that met us with a banner inscribed "Welcome Brave heroes Welcome Home" The next was. "The only national debt we never can pay is the debt we owe our Brave Soldiers But the most interesting was as we came to the Stage on which the Pres & Lieut Gen Grant sat I had a good view of them also General Sherman Gen Thomas Gen Howard Hancock & numerous others It was a sight long to be remembered. The was but one thing to mar our pleasure That was the thought that our beloved President A Lincoln should have lived to see this which his hard work has done for us. Wends the Western Army was Reviewed I also saw that. It was full as grand as the first days Review Those who saw it will never forget it never. You ask what I am doing not much simply takeing care of the mail. You also ask when I am comeing home. I think not before fall if we do then as they intend to keep the veterans I would like much to come home now. For the war is ended and I want to make my self a home. only think 22 this month (28 May). 4 years more of war would have left me an old man surely "Grown old before my time" Even now I feel worn out & much older than I really am but Thank God our hard hips are ended & the Rebels whipped I regret no hardships that has passed out rather feel proud of it. Many of my friends at these Hed Qurs leave for home this next week having served nearly 3 years. It seems hard to part with them I assure you. They are bound to me by nearer ties than could have formed in civil life shoulder to shoulder we have stood through all. It seems like seperating with Brothers. God Bless Them & Guard them wherever they are. is my earnest prayer The Copperheads say the soldiers will come home completely demoralized I say it is not so. Every good noble feeling has been enlarged while in the army although as they will be very rough yet beneath that rough surface beats a hearts so warm & true as never beat beneath the rest of a stay at home fop who would scornfully step aside so that his broadcloth should not come in contact with the army blue (I love that same blue) I have often noticed the same thing here in the city of Washington as our poor one armed boys went by. The city gaily dressed and how careful he was not to touch the noble fellow. It would cause me to feel very bitter I assure you Anna. The Army has been a grand school to foster ones best impulses here he has learned the best & most useful lessons of life & we can go back to a citizens life feeling proud of our position in the years of 61-5. I hope they will let us home this fall but I shall have to wait with patience Please excuse poor letter Anna & poor writeing as I came from the city a short time ago & I feel almost numb with the cold. Write soon & often & oblige thy True Friend

Abial H. Edwards

Hd Qs 1st B 1st D 19th __ C

Washington D.C.