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2-11-1862

## Letter to Margaret E. Cahill, 1862 February 11

Thomas W. Cahill

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Ship Island Feb 11<sup>th</sup> 1862

My Dear Wife, I take hold once  
 more though I am completely tired out  
 writing continually and not an answer yet  
 nothing from you since Nov 25<sup>th</sup>. We have seen  
 a "Philadelphia Inquirer" of Jan 12. 18. & 20<sup>th</sup>  
 by that of the 20<sup>th</sup> we learn of the arrival of the Rhode  
 Island which took our mail; Capt<sup>l</sup> Churchill  
 Acting Master of that vessel told me he would  
 endeavor to see you and let you know person-  
 ally how we were situated but I scarcely expected  
 him to do so. he is a neighbor of Adjutant Halls  
 and when he left expected to come back in command  
 of a gun boat; he promised to give us every faci-  
 lity for our mails; The only chance we have  
 of getting a mail now is by the navy ba-  
 at from the Naval Lyceum Brooklyn, The  
 Reg<sup>t</sup> continues in good health and is rapidly improving  
 in drill we have had Brigade drills for the last ten days



on the Evolutions of the line? Col Scott's tactics. if we could only obtain our clothing we would be all  
 right as we have little or nothing to do but drill 6 or 8 hours a day the men are getting badly off  
 for under clothes and shoes. and at this time we have not a pound of tobacco on the island  
 and never had any liquor only think of that since the 22 November I succeeded in getting  
 some Cigars from Herrity before he ran <sup>out</sup> and have perhaps a hundred left I am pretty sure  
 of them I have to dodge the Navy officers when they come on shore my light blue pants are giving  
 out and my dress coat shows signs of wear I am trying to get some Navy flannel to make  
 an Every day coat I think I can get some at 50 cts a yard if I had <sup>shoulder</sup> buttons and the str  
 aps. I have <sup>hardly</sup> braached on my under clothes yet and my boots are all sound I ride about  
 8 hours a day steadily; I sent poor old Jack to the East End of the Island to  
 day I hardly think he will ever be the slightest use he was ordered shot last  
 week by the Board of survey but I had not the heart to do it so I turned him  
 loose to take his chances. I obtained 70 dress coats which were sent on here for the 12<sup>th</sup>  
 Maine Regt and 175 light blue pants the coats I distributed, the pants being an  
 odd colour I had to give a pair to each of the sergeants and to the Band so  
 as not to spoil the line in this way I used about half of the number some 200 pair  
 of pants which I received from the Governor a dark blue so called turned  
 out most miserable I had a board of survey called upon them last week  
 and they reported <sup>them</sup> to be worth only 25<sup>cts</sup> a pair and the General ordered them issued  
 at that price; which I have done it does not seem possible but we must



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hear from Head Quarters soon if the Rhode  
Island reached home on the 1<sup>st</sup> the vessel  
that took her place should be on the  
return trip by the first of February  
and should be nearly due here now and  
if we do not hear from home by then I do  
not know what we shall do so far we  
have spent a very pleasant winter the oats  
that dropped from our horses feeding  
are growing beautifully where they  
are not nibbled off they are eight or ten  
inches high at this time and what herbage  
there is is quite green I made up a box  
to send home containing some specimens  
of the Cactus which grows wild here and  
intended to send it with about a dozen  
of those little shells with Shaw and  
put them in a large box which went.  
A Brien had got ready but saw on  
somebody loathed about getting  
it on board ship and it was left  
behind. We expect the 1<sup>st</sup> Surgeon  
of the 26<sup>th</sup> will go home next week  
and it makes I am afraid our Dr.  
a little homesick I should be in a  
pretty fix if he should take it in his head  
to go with such an assistant as we have.  
I do not think there is much danger though  
of his going though he feels awfully lone at  
not hearing from home.  
Feb 12<sup>th</sup> Sat 90 "Cock this morning the  
long looked for Constitution dropped an  
chor in the Harbor. and after all this  
horrible suspense not a letter does she bring  
us it seems her mails were transferred  
to the steamer "Tensacola" at Fortress Monroe  
expecting she would be here before her it is said  
that our paymaster is on board of her



we learn by the Constitution that the ship  
 "Kingfisher" was wrecked on her return trip  
 so that my poor little pig met a watery grave  
 and all the shells that I took so much pains  
 to get are lost with a large lot of beauties  
 which I trust the Board Master sent with  
 them; but I suppose you have learnt  
 all these things through Mr. Higginson  
 the Lieut <sup>Col</sup> Brotherton who went home in her  
 If the Paymaster comes in the Pensaco  
 la as I said and pays us off in full  
 to Jan 1<sup>st</sup> I will remit what I think  
 I may not need through Adams Express  
 Co who have sent out an Agent here by  
 the Constitution which is a great ad-  
 vantage to us as the Officers and  
 Men can remit through him in large  
 or small quantities he intends to  
 remain with the Command and if  
 you send out anything of any value  
 you can take their receipt for it on New Haven



and that will make them responsible for it I have not received a single  
article by this not a line not a scrap of paper save some reports  
and blanks I expected a great many packages to be add-  
ressed to me for other folks at least, we did however get  
hold of a rumor which I had not yet been able to trace to its source  
of the death of Patrick Mahers father if this should be true  
I wish you would express my sympathies with the family in their  
bereavement I had received a letter from his wife with a box containing  
a great variety of articles and in the letter she says that Croup is very  
prevalent in New Haven which makes me fear for the little ones. I hope  
you have not had any trouble with them, I am enjoying excellent health  
better than I ever had I think, though my labor is pretty severe more  
so than any one would suppose The old Genl keeps our Regt and the 26<sup>th</sup>.  
on the jump all the time; The Maine 12<sup>th</sup> and the "Eastern Bay State"  
Regts arrived on the Constitution and ~~that~~ they had a hard time of it and  
look ten times worse and evidently suffered more than we did, no  
wonder for they were on board ship 42 days, our men begin  
to think they were pretty lucky so after all, they are in excellent  
health and spirits; That Cad Capt Nelson came out here with  
over a hundred men in a company which he says he enlisted for the Eastern  
Bay State Regt and only turned over to me 27 men which he says are all that belong



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to me, but I think I will investigate  
the matter a little; I sent him an order  
to report to me with his Command for duty  
which startled him not a little; I think  
he is in a tight spot: he says he resigned  
his Connecticut Commission but I do not know  
anything about that and shall not tell. I  
heard from the Governor and if he has resigned  
and it has been accepted I will take every Con-  
necticut man from him I do not want him. But  
I do want the men I wish you would try to send me  
two or three pair of very light blue or green double  
spectacles as I am afraid the glare of the sun in hot weather  
on the white sand will affect my eyes. the very thinnest  
and lightest Calcutta will be best. I mean by double glasses  
those having 4 lenses each; the Navy flannel I hope  
of has not yet come to hand. I do not know what  
I can get any on as I intended to use it to make a  
light uniform coat: Sent of "Greenwich  
kind back by the Constitution <sup>the</sup> ~~to~~ ~~cross water~~  
I mentioned with those shells you will find  
papers describing ~~with~~ <sup>your</sup> them

I wish if the opportunity offers that, would  
send me 1/2 a dozen small bottles of Red Ink  
in some body's of Bore that is coming out here  
marking them plainly for me. The Consti-  
tution leaves tomorrow morning Every body is well here,  
and that Cake still holds good. I have not heard that there is  
any <sup>thing</sup> on board the Constitution for me. there is a steam boat load of  
stuff in the harbor but is quite stormy and she cannot be brought  
along side the dock to night. I hope you sent Johnny his fiddle  
strings as he has none. I do not know what we are going  
to do out here. there is now 4,000 men on this Island  
and there is not room for many more. There is  
some small villages on the coast ~~near~~ <sup>opposite</sup>  
this Island and we may go over and take some  
of them; there is a reporter for the New York Herald  
down here who is going to remain some time so  
you will probably have some glowing account  
of things out here. You must take them with a grain of  
allowance. Col. Mepley of the Maine 12<sup>th</sup> is out here with his  
family and the wife of two of the officers I do not know who  
sent they are going home tomorrow or not good bye. It's the  
babies for me and tell them I will try and get home some  
time. I hope I expect to talk about the some times  
your loving husband  
Feb 14<sup>th</sup> 1862  
J. W. Capell