Camp 124th St.Inf.
Near Jackson's Bluff April 13th 1864

Cousin Phil,

It has been some time since I wrote to you and it may surprise you to see this heading of this letter, but we are going for Vicksburg; as fast as we can or at least I suppose we shall see the fortifications of that strong hold, though there is a rumor through Camp that our Division has been detached for some special duty though we are not sure what that duty is. We have already had thirteen days siege at the Spanish Fort just below here and might before last our Brigade charged on the works and the rebels surrendered. That is what could get away and took over six hundred prisoners nearly fifty prisoners of artillery and these battle flags, our loss was less than fifty killed and wounded.
Since then the fortifications around Blakely have been taken with all the artillery and two thousand prisoners and it is said two or three gunboats, as now the way is clear to Mobile if we were only across the river. It is only some ten miles distant, I guess we shall move somewhere soon for we are having four days ration issued to us which looks like marching. Today we have heard in a way that is considered reliable that Richmond has at last fallen. I hope it is true for I think the war will end last long perhaps before any time is out that is just five months from to-day. I have not heard from Old Dutchess except from Mother for a long time not since I wrote to you before. Mother however keeps me pretty well posted as to the local news. I hope that the next letter I write
to you will be from Mobile, but as likely as not we shall be ordered in some other direction. We are in the 3rd Brigade (Com'd by Col. Settles) of the 3rd Division (Com'd by Gen. Carr) of the 16th Army Corps. Write the above so that you can see the papers where you are, and what we are doing.

Abel prisoners have been passing all day, they seem the best provided with clothing &c. if any I have even seen, most seemed in very good spirits though some looked sullen enough. Many on the same that we took at Ickesboro, it surprised me to see the number of little boys among them, they did not appear to like "Stella's sagger" as they called the colored troops which composed part of the force that fought them.

You must excuse the writing this for you can see the ink and pen both are miserable.
We are having fine warm weather here but this is a dismal place, a continued pitch pine forest.
Give my best respects to all friends.

I was going to tell you to direct to the 16th A.C. but I guess it would be better not to for fear we are defeated.

My health is very fair. Good night.

Yours sincerely,

Alfred X. Shars.

[Signature]