

C.S. Charleston
Charleston Harbor
Feb 8th 1864

My Dear Dear Sister,

I have just heard of your sad bereavement. I came down from Florence, (on my return from Newbern, N. C.), with Cousin Dewar & he told me that first I had heard of it. Let me mourn with you sister for the loss of him who, although I knew but a short time, I considered worthy of your love & who has never seemed like a stranger to me but more like of the same family.

I have just returned from a long but exciting expedition. When we left here we didn't know how long we would be gone or where we were going to. We took 75 men & 5 officers to Willmington N.C. where we were joined by 35 men & 4 officers where we also shipped 2 launches with Howitzers & two small boats[.] We then went to Kingston N.C. & joined Cap J. T. Wood CSN who had 10 boats & 125 men & officers. While going on we rode in the boats which were lashed on flat cars. After hauling the boats down to the Neuse river with muleteams we embarked & pulled down the river 50 miles; to within a few miles of Newbern. Our army under Gen. Pickets moved down at the same time to within 1 ½ miles of the city. Our object was to attack the gunboats & take them while the army attacked the land forces. Last Monday night a week ago tonight we proceeded down the river & passing the enemies batteries boarded the U. S. Strmr Underwriter (four guns & 90 men) which was made fast to the wharf abreast one of their batteries & took her after a sharp hand to hand fight with pistols & cutlasses. We lost 4 killed – poor Midm Saunders among the number of 16 wounded & 4 missing. We took 26 of the enemy (6 officers and 20 men) the rest were either killed or jumped overboard. The batteries on shore opened fire on us as soon as we

took the ship & as we could not slip her chains or take her up the river on account of her great draft, we took all the prisoners into our boats & left for our camp. The army failed to take advantage of this & attack the front thereby losing the only chance of a fight with land forces unassisted by gunboats. We intended to've boarded as many as three gunboats but they couldn't be found on that side of the city. Gen. Baron is under arrest for not attacking the enemy when ordered. The army falling back we also withdrew up the river to Kingston & dispersed to join out respective commands. I returned yesterday morning & go on duty today. Going on I saw Pa & sister at Mars Bluff & returning I met Mr. Saunders at Willmington. I heard at Florence that Pete had left the Hospital & was to join his company this week. I wish he would stand his examination for Asst Surgeon either in the army or navy. Pete is on leave & is in Raleigh N. C. on business I believe.

I hear that you've moved up to Armore. Don't you find it very lonely up there now? I hope you will move back to Roseville, for a time at least, where you will have company & keep up your spirits better than living by yourself. I hope the end of next summer will find us a free & independent people destined to be prosperous & happy. It is destined to be so finally & I hope it will be so in a short time so that we may the sooner commence anew. Give love to all & write soon to your afft bro

R. H. Bacot