

C. S. Neuse – (ance)

March 19th '64

Kinston N.C.

Dear Sis,

I find it exceedingly dull here as the town is completely deserted by all of its respectable inhabitants & I know none of those living in the country round about. We (the Officers of the Neuse, viz; Lt Comdg B.P. Loyal, 1st Lt F.L. Hage, Masters Worth & Bacot, Engineers Tucker & Edwards & Asst Surg King) live in a small house on the Street, which is the terminus of Col Washington's Avenue, & about a quarter of a mile from our future home the Neus'ance. I am afraid that name will prove but too appropriate. Her "Iron fixing's" are not done her engines are not ready, her quarters & storerooms are not near ready & "Last but not least" the river is falling about 12 inches a day & we will have to trust to Providence for another rise when the vessel is finished; finally to complete our misery we have a crew of long; Lank. "Tar Heels" (N.C.'s from the "Piney woods") Our two guns are mounted & we drill the crew every morning at 9 & every evening at 5:30 o'clock. We have one or two good men for a "Neucleus" but I'm afraid the others can never learn anything about a gunboat. You ought to see them in the boats! It is too ridiculous. That are all legs & arms & while working at the guns their legs get "Tangled" in the tackles & they are always in the wrong place & in each other's way. We are having "Camels" built, with which we hope to lighten the vessel over the Shoals &c in the river. Also two large Lighters for carrying coal &c I suppose we will be ready by the 1st of May I hope so at least, for the Yankees obstructed the river once & the freshet washed them away & of course if they have time they will do it again in a more

effectual manner; but Gen Hoke says if we keep the gunboats off he will take the batteries that cover the works obstructions & give us an opportunity to clear the river out. – Then we will try the works below & if successful may Cooperate with the “Albemarle” (the vessel building at Halifax on the Roanoke) in an attack on Roanoke island, which is one of the most important Strategic points, now in possession of the enemy, in N. C. We cant hold, if retaken, without we have possession of Roanoke island. Cap Loyal’s is not here with him; he says She often speaks of Sister Jacque as one of her best friends. The Cap himself is a very nice man & a perfect gentleman Our other officers seem to be very good men. The vessel herself will be very close & warm this summer, but we will be richly repaid for all inconveniencies if we are permitted to succeed in capturing Newbern & Roanoke island. Our paymaster has just arrived & will leave again tomorrow he has no money & will not pay off. We couldn’t spend it if he did (as ther’s nothing to buy) so will wait. Love to all. Remember me to Miss Clarke. As ever your affect bro

R. H. B.