

Camp Butler, Newport News, Va.

Friday evening, July 26th 1861.

My dear wife:

I begin a letter to you tonight unless
if I should consult my feelings I should go to bed.
I have been pretty hard at work today and all
time. We get up pretty early and most of the
time go to bed late so that we need a nap in
the middle of the day. I got only a short one today -
I sent to the fort fourteen "contrabands" this morning -
^{Seven} ~~Five~~ of them were children and the oldest was but
seven years old, unless they ~~younger~~ did not all be-
long to the same family. The youngest was but three
months old - July 27.

Saturday. P.M., I was too tired last night to finish
this letter so must do what I can today - Just now
we are having a gentle rain and I sit here on our
bed rolled up in a heap, covered with a rubber blanket
so that it may not get wet. The Capt. is just going
to write too - I have been rather busy today as well
as yesterday. I sent twelve negroes down to the fort
this morning, seven of whom were children, of about
the same age as yesterday -

You complain because I do not tell you of what is
going to happen. I wrote to you a week ago that
we had an order to be ready to move in three days