



Contrabands and Freedmen's Cemetery Memorial Design Competition 2008

Alexandria Va. Nov. 5th, 1862

My Dear Friend [Mrs. Amy Kirby Post]

I have not for a moment forgotten what thee said to me in the store a few days before I left home. That if I came here & found the Contrabands needing every thing that thee would make an effort to send me something for them. I have been waiting to know precisely where I w[oul]d stop before writing thee, but today hearing Mrs. Post of Rochester very kindly inquired after, I hasten to send thee a line. I came to Alex[andria] yesterday from Washington brining my trunks with me intending to make this my base of operations. I have not suited myself with a boarding place yet, but today when I called on the Commissaries for the Contrabands, I found one of them to be Mr. Pierce of Rochester who formerly kept the National [Hotel]. He boards at the Scott House kept by Mr. & Mrs. Kimball, & he thought I could get board there. I went to Mrs. K[imball and] inquired for Susan Humphrey who had boarded with her I think in Chicago, & also for Mrs. Post with whom she felt acquainted through Mrs. H[umphrey]. I think it will be a desirable place to board & if I can get a lady to take a room with me I may go there. It is a large, fine house, but people here wish to make the most of every room, for there are no empty houses here now. Some other time I will explain this. Now if some of the good folks of N[ew] Y[ork] w[oul]d send another lady here, I w[oul]d like it very much & there would be plenty for her to do. If the folks in Rochester knew the state of things here in Alex[andria] they w[oul]d make an effort I am very sure to help them. I tell thee little of what I've seen today. In the old Slave pen there are several rooms. In the small room (a brick floor I discovered through the dirt) with one window were 20 women & children, many of them sick, a little fire wh[ich] they were huddled around, c[oul]d not all get to it at once, & they were wrapped in their old rags. The weather has changed & they feel the cold very much now. They are furnished with a very little wood, & there are now many sick children that will die for the want of fire. I wish thee w[oul]d come & see for thyself. There were other rooms quite as wretched as this. I have been to another wretched old place, the stairs & floor hardly safe to tread on, the places where windows have been are boarded up. There were two rooms above & one below. In one of those upper rooms were 2 or 3 women & 13 little children, 2 or 3 sick, one of them badly burnt, a little fire, some of these were orphans, for instance, one woman had brought away 3 of her own & 3 of her sister, who was dead. The mothers of the rest were out at work. In another room was one woman & 7 children, the mothers of some of these were away to work. They say the Union ladies pay them .75 & .50 for working, but the secesh women wont pay them but two or three levies [?], & sometimes after they have worked for them some time, they won't pay them anything, say they have not done "it well." One wellspoken woman said, "her master Jerry Moden, I reckon you've heard of him, he was a Congress man in Washington [i.e., Whig Representative Jeremiah Morton, 1799-1878, served 1849-1851 from the Ninth District of Virginia and lived in Orange County]. He said fore he would see one of his niggers free he would put em all in a barn & burn em up, & if they went to the Yankees they w[oul]d stone them in 3 days. When the masters heard the Yankees were coming they tried to get off the children & the young men & women, it was in the night, they had loaded some of them into wagons.["] This woman started with her 3 children, only partly dressed, one in her arms, the others 3 or 4 yrs. old, went 6 miles through the woods that night. Any thing rather than be taken! The woman that brought away 6 said she fell twice with one in her arms & hurt its back, & it died after she got here. When they came here some of them rode part way, but some of them were "walked very fast" all the way, some of them died from fatigue & exposure, some took colds that they have not got over yet. They say the Union soldiers were good to them & told them to come along, & when they work for them they get their pay. Some of the men here say they have worked 3 mo. for the Govt. & have had no pay yet. They all have just such rations as the soldier. Every thing is good, they all say they have enough that is good to eat. More & better than they had been used to. In the lower room in this house was an old woman washing for several children who had been left with her by their mothers to take care of for the day. She wanted most of anything some planks to make a bedstead. Nothing in the room that looked like a bed or bedding. She had a bag or two of old clothes. She lies on the floor at night, & she says her bones ache so in the morning, the floor is damp, & if she can only have something to keep her off the floor it is all she wants. When I told her what I had come here for, & was going to stay here, "Oh!" said she, "I hope you will live forever! The Lord bless you! The Lord bless you!["] & an old man there broke forth into raptures. My friend, do you know that it seems to me that the Lord has sent me here? I have never undertaken any thing before when it has seemed so very plain that the Lord has directed my life & will continue to do so. I went to the Commissary & told him of this old woman. He said there were several such places, & if he c[oul]d get a load of boards he would take them around. He had ordered wood, but it did not come. I went again this P.M. & took this old woman a pair of stockings. I wish you could have seen her. It seems wrong to me that I have left any thing at home or that I have laid up any thing to keep. Oh, such a state of

things as exists in Alex[andria]. It seems that there is nobody to manage things. Today 200 or 300 sick soldiers were sent here from Fairfax Seminary. When they got here nobody c[oul]d tell them where to go or what to do. They drove to a place used as a hospital near the P[ost] Office. For 4 hrs. some of them lay there in those ambulances in the cold. Some went into the building & onto the steps. Mr. Gladwin found them. He got some tea for them. Officers riding about all the time that care no more for the comforts of the soldiers than they care for the beasts. Mr. Gladwin went to one & tried to get some brandy or wine for them, he had it but would not let it go. He went to the Provost Marshal & got a bottle of confiscated whisky & gave them a spoonful a piece. Since then some have been sent to the Convalescent Camp. Others are suffering here tonight, & these are some of the men who have gone forth so nobly to fight the battles of our country! It makes me sick of my country, sick of mankind. I hate the sight of shoulderstraps & white gloves. Mr. Gladwin is a Baptist minister, he has been here some time. I don't know who supports him. He receives supplies from various places for soldiers & for contrabands. He has started 2 or 3 schools in W[ashington] & 2 or 3 here. He is very active & I think does a great deal of good. He has done a great deal for the sick, they have had no physician. Yesterday Dr. Ripley of Rochester was appointed physician for the contrabands. Mr. Gladwin would like to be Superintendent. He is acquainted in Rochester. I wish thee would ask Frederick Douglass if he knows anything about him. There are others that want the place of Supernt & party spirit shows itself in this as in every thing else. He boards where I am & also a Rev. Mr. [J.W.] Warwick sent by the Bap[tist] Publication Soc[iety] to visit & distribute tracts among soldiers & contrabands. Their things are sent by Adams Express. I was told in W[ashington] to have boxes sent by Harnden's Express & I expect some from Cayuga Co[unty, New York]. Do send something, bedding, clothing, shoes, stockings, my poor ones even will be acceptable, warm clothing for children of all ages & necessaries for the sick are very desirable. It appears to me we have no right to any luxuries while such a state of things exists. I am willing to live with just enough to keep me strong & in good health. I cannot get board for less than \$5 a week. I wish thee c[oul]d see what I get for that. If it is not too much trouble I wish thee would show this to Mrs. Barnes. It will save me some writing, & I do not get much time to write, & I am going to write for contributions to various places in N.Y. I shall write to Mrs. B. in a few days. Direct boxes to Julia A. Wilbur, No. 69 St. Asaph Street, South, Alexandria, Va. The Express Co[mpany] will leave a box at the door. You can prepay charges if you choose, & let me know it by letter if you do so.

With great respect, In haste, Truly thy friend,
Julia A. Wilbur.

[A fragment possibly not originally associated with the letter above, but dated November 5, 1862 in modern pencil notation by librarian.]

[P.S.] Can't thee help me by writing to some of thy friends in Philadelphia, New York or on Long Island to send some supplies for the contrabands here[?] I w[oul]d be delighted to receive & distribute them. I have a letter of introduction to the Mayor of Alex[andria] from Ja[me]s S. Hallowell of Washington. Is he a relative of William Hallowell? I have met with the best kind of people in Washington, so kind, so interested in my success, I have not lost all faith in mankind yet, whatever I may do hereafter. When a man like Mr. Van Santmore says "Miss Wilbur, It seems to me that God has sent you here just at this time," It is very encouraging. I wish Anna Barnes c[oul]d be here & work with me, or Mrs. Coleman. My hand is numb & lame, & I know my writing looks bad. I can hardly read it myself, please excuse.

[From the Family Papers of Isaac and Amy Kirby Post, 1817-1918, Rush Rhees Library, the University of Rochester]

Alexandria Va. Nov. 12th, 1862

My Dear Mrs. [Anna M. Cornell] Barnes [Secretary of the RLASS],

Three w[ee]ks to day since I left home & not a letter have I had yet! I am having a crying spell. When I get over it I shall probably feel better. Not that I am homesick, for I have not regretted for a moment that I came, for woman's presence more than any thing else is needed among these poor creatures. I have a mind to appeal to Eliza Gurney to send some woman here to help me.

Let me tell you of to-day, & it is not 3 o'clock yet, (I despair of making any body understand the grim, mixed up state of things that exists here. Slavery has poisoned every thing, from the top to the bottom of society, its evils are felt from center to circumference.) Mr. Whipple, for instance boards here, & spends most of his time among these freed people in this part of the city. Why he does it, I dont know. His precise status is a mystery to me. Well, Rev. J.W. Warwick boards here. He is employed by the Bap[tist] Publication Soc[iety] as colporter among the soldiers & contrabands. I can see through him. Rev. Mr. Gladwin boards here. He is busy from morning till night, back & forth to W[ashington], receiving clothing, bedding & necessaries for the sick, & distributing them among soldiers & contrabands. [H]e has meetings among them & does various other things, gets schools agoing &c. It is very evident that he wants to be made superintendent of the whole concern here. I should have no objections to this. He assumes a great deal of authority over them. I w[oul]d like to think well of all these. I had rather not lose faith in mankind entirely. This morning (but stop a moment, Mr. Whipple goes around the first thing in the morning to see how they are & how many have died during the night) at breakfast he said "There were 3 dead ones," please keep in mind that this is only in his school house & the 3 story building they use as a place

for the sick. I said I w[ould] like to go around there with him when he went again. We did so, Mr. Gladwin went with us & also a gentleman from W[ashington]. We went to the school house first. A man had died there while Mr. Whipple was at breakfast, & he lay in a small room. The school house is as large as a common church, one large room & 2 small ones. All along the sides are families, that is a woman or two, the children, what they call their beds, their cooking utensils, & fire in an old stove perhaps, pipe goes out the window. The space in the middle is vacant, that is when the men are away at work. Then most of them were eating, some very sick ones too. A coffin was brought, the dead man was put in & carried off, he had been dead 2 hrs. perhaps. (Yesterday I saw one taken off in the same way)

There are women here that need woman's care & counsel & kind words. They have little self-respect or womanly feeling, & men treat them accordingly. Oh! that these poor creatures sh[ould] be where there are none but white men to care for them & minister to their most delicate necessities. I was sick. I was disgusted. I was discouraged for a while, but I feel now that this very state of things, this peculiar feature of their wants, requires woman's presence among them. My delicacy, my fastidiousness must be laid aside if I come in contact with these. Ask most any of them what the matter is? & they will say "I have such a misery in my stomach." They seem to think they are all stomach.

Well then we went over to the other house, some of the sick are getting better, but some have consumption. In this were 3 dead children, 2 coffins must answer for these, for one little one about half as long as your arm c[ould] be put in with one of the others. Mr. Gladwin hadn't time to hold any funeral services, but he sent a colored man who exhorts occasionally, to make a prayer in the rooms where they were.

I came away with as much as I c[ould] bear. I went then to Burge & Pierce the commissaries for the contrabands. Mr. B[urge] is a young man from N[ew] Y[ork] city who does this as he w[ould] any other work. I dont think he appreciates the situation of these people, or has their good at heart particularly. I don't think he means to treat them unkindly. But he has no respect for them especially the women. So he is not likely to make the women any better. He gave me his opinion of those in the school house too. I was vexed & provoked & cried about it, but that dont help the matter. [A] thousand more men & women c[ould] be employed if they were here. They want them in hospitals to cook & wash, people want to hire them. A few days since they sent over from W[ashington] for 500 & there were none to send, every man can get work. Mr. Burge attends to all this, he goes all over the city, for they are in every part of it. Mr. P[ierce] deals out the rations mostly. Mr. B[urge] drives them as if they were horses or dogs, & yet I think he means well, & he supposes this is the way to treat them.

While I was there several hundred sick soldiers from Harper's Ferry passed on their way to the Convalescent Camp. After they passed I came out. Some lagged behind, too weak & tried to keep up. One young man sat down on the P[ost] O[ffice] steps. I c[ould] not pass him without speaking to him. He was Geo[rge] Smith of Irondequoit {New York}, of the 108th Reg[iment New York Volunteer Infantry]. [T]he poor fellow, he had been sick 4 w[ee]ks in a regimental Hospital, & fared pretty well, but he said some of them had only shelter tents, these I believe are made of 2 blankets. He said Sarah White's son was at Loudon Heights, & Vinton's son was sick in Hos[pital] at Harpers F[erry]. If thee sees Eliza Wing please tell her this. Day before yesterday more than 7000 came from H[arper's] Ferry to the Convalescent Camp, & yesterday many more, & to day these that I saw perhaps 2000 in all.

Yesterday P.M. I went up there with Mr. Gladwin. Hundreds of them were sitting or lying about hardly able to sit up. No tents for them yet. They said they c[ould] not fare any worse here than they had fared. They were all from the Northern States. I found several of the 108th from Rochester [New York], one of the 13th [Regiment New York Volunteer Infantry] from Chili [New York], whose folks I know well. Many of them fare hard at this camp. It is said there are 16000 there. Then near this is the stragglers camp, & the recruiting camp [and] the camp for paroled prisoners, & an encampment near of Conn[ecticut] men fit for duty. [T]hey looked fine as they were drilling yesterday. One can look over all these at once, & it is a remarkable sight. It is worth a journey to Alex[andria], I think, to see what is in the vicinity of this city. No wonder people are getting sick of war. When I got back to day I found Mr. Channing had been here, & he left a note saying I w[ould] hear from Dr. Breed to day or to morrow. I am sorry I did not see Mr. C[hanning]. He has a chaplaincy in a new hospital.

I think I have told you about the Wolfe St[reet] Hospital on the opposite cor[ner]. I cant look up without looking into it. The two large confiscated houses ---- on another corner of a large 2 story old brick house which they call the Quaker Church, this is full too, & these 3 buildings constitute one hospital. Suffering & misery meet me at any time. A young man from Erie Co[unty, New York] has been here a few days to get the discharge of some of his friends. A V[ermon]t man is here to get his son discharged from this Hos[pital]. A lady is here to see her husband, who has been in this Hos[pital] all summer, & they will not let him go. I think there are more colored people here than white people, very few white women in the st[reet]. Houses are full, cant get a room for anything. An aggravated case of enforcement of Fugitive Slave Law occurred in W[ashington] last Friday. Now Gen. Wadsworth has gone they feel as if there is no one to help them. If they get a pro slavery gov[ernor] there will be a terrible state of things there. I'll not tell you about my boarding house yet, but I cant stay here if I can get another.

I wrote thee on the 7th inst[ant] & take it for granted thee has got it. I may have to send more money back, several bills have been returned to me. I think they are good and w[ould] pass readily in W[ashington] & I would to see Mr. Channing about it.

Oh, what a place this is. I have had a good deal of experience within the last few days. I wish I had room & time to tell thee all of it. Please do write, or has thee written & do I not get letters? I hope the Rochester Ladies' Anti Slavery Society

will flourish as never before. Please ask [Frederick] Douglass to send his paper to me, & will thee pay him a dollar for me. [M]y subscription was out in Oct[ober], I think. Put all the Anti Slavery reading in the box you send that you can.

With respect to all the ladies,
J.A. Wilbur

[From the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society Papers, 1851-1868, William L. Clements Library, the University of Michigan]

Alexandria Nov[ember] 25th [18]62

My Dear Mrs. Barnes

I think I have written thee 4 letters, but have received but one from thyself. Yesterday I had letters from Eliza Wing & Amy Post & F[rederick] Douglass. Aunt Elizabeth & Eliza are doing something for us, & so is Amy Post, & F[rederick] Douglass has \$50 for the contrabands & wishes to know how to lay it out. There are several old decrepit women who sit in cold rooms & want a warm shawl to throw about their shoulders. Nothing of the kind is sent to us. Then there are women who work by the day, & go out with little clothing & nothing to put round them. I think if you w[ould] buy a quantity of those old fashioned coarse woolled shawls it w[ould] be a good plan, & some of those knitted hoods that come cheap. Women need dresses very much, & chemises & petticoats, & we want blankets & quilts & pillows & pillow cases. Many of them could keep their rooms quite tidy & comfortable if they only had bedsteads, but now all their bedding is on the floor, & as a consequence gets very dirty. Mr. Channing came here to day & brought me \$20 from the Association in W[ashington] to do with as I think best. Some of them have bedsteads made of rough boards, wh[ich] keep their beds off the floor & answer a good purpose. I think I will have some made for there is nothing they need more & use some of this \$20 for the purpose, but lumber is dear here. To morrow I will see what I can do.

One feature of the case I have not alluded to yet, but I will mention it now that thee may know under what disadvantages we labor at present. There have been 29 cases of small Pox taken to the pest house, & there are 3 or 4 col[ore]d persons taking care of them. It has had a chance to spread very extensively, & I have been into several places where it is. I mean to keep away from it, but it has occurred in so many places that I think there will be a great deal of it here. No measures are taken to arrest it as I am aware of. There is a great deal of sickness here among Northerners I am told. The water here is bad. I comes from Goose Creek, & every rain makes it oily. There is an emaciated sick woman in the brick house, with a cotton skirt & a small cape on her neck. She is generally rolled up in a blanket on the floor, but yesterday morning she was sitting by the fire place. I c[ould] not see any fire, & another woman too with but little clothing. While I was there a load of wood came & was distributed, 2 or 3 sticks for each room. I have nothing for this woman, so I went begging, called on two rich secesh ladies & stated the case. They asked immediately if she was col[ore]d & a contraband. "They had nothing for contrabands, they ought to have staid at their comfortable homes where they were well taken care of, & those that brought them here might take care of them now." I did not prosecute my begging any further.

Mr. G[ladwin] received a box from Phila[delphia] Saturday, & I hoped there was some clothing in it. But it was filled with books & shoes. What an absurdity to send books now to these people, shivering & half naked. There is another huge box in W[ashington] for Mr. G[ladwin] wh[ich] he will probably get to morrow. I do hope there is something in it we can use at once. Mr. G[ladwin] has a quantity of sheets but he does not give many of them out. I dont understand Mr. G[ladwin]'s way of doing things. He says I may take some of these to morrow & give them out, & I believe I shall take some of the shoes too. My way w[ould] be to distribute these things when they are needed at once, & when things come to me I shall do so.

Mr. G[ladwin] has been here some time & is hoping to be appointed Super[intende]nt by government. But somehow the folks in W[ashington] dont seem to think him the man for the place exactly. I think it will be decided shortly however. I am in a place where I dare not say a word one way or the other. If I could see thee a few hours I c[ould] tell the many things which it will not pay to write. Mr. G[ladwin] says "he c[ould] go north & get a thousand dollars worth of things in a short time, he can get any thing that we want." Then I say "Why don't you go there & get them? But he never tells me why.

There is a Mrs. Winsor here from Cortland Co[unty, New York] near Homer. Her husband has been in Wolfe St[reet] Hos[pital] since May. He cant get discharged as she hoped he c[ould], so she has concluded to stay here if she can be supported by the folks in Cortland Co[unty, New York]. She appears to be a good sort of person, no prejudice against color, is boarding at Mr. Seaton's, & w[ould] like to labor with me for the Contrabands. She has just received letter from Hon. H.S. Randall, who speaks very highly of he fathers family & gives her a good recommend[ation]. I hope she will be employed here & we will probably know before long. She says there are a good many A[nti]-Slavery folks about them, & she knows Mrs. Dawley. Think of a little brown woman like myself penetrating into the holes & dens of this secesh city, sometimes alone & sometimes with a man or two. The 19th Conn[ecticut] Reg[imen]t is the Provost Guard of the city, & they are encamped a little bit to the west. They are a fine body of men & are stationed in & about the city, at Fishtown & at the Engine House where 200 contraband men eat, their rations being cooked there & most of them sleep there, & one very shrewd col[ore]d man has charge of them & scolds them & makes them stand round; in the evening they have meetings there. Mr. Warwick preaches to them sometimes. Some of these Conn[ecticut] men are always stationed there, & every

thing is orderly. There are always a sergeant & 3 or 4 men. They are very intelligent & civil & polite. They tell me that the soldiers here are becoming so demoralized, in other words so immoral, that it is frightful to think of it. They see these col[ore]d men every day, & they speak well of them too. Sometimes when I am in the street I see 20 col[ore]d persons to one white person. I am told there are 4 times as many blacks as whites here.

I left Mr. Seaton's last Thursday & came here to board. I c[oul]d not stay there any longer. To an ordinary amount of dirt I will not object, but to have it in every thing & all the which & every where is too much. There is much about the people to like. Their daughter Virginia in her 15th year died quite suddenly last Monday. Had I time & room I w[oul]d like to tell thee about this event & the funeral too. [It] was in the style of the most respectable white folks. We who boarded there were the only white folks present, & we went to the grave with them. The ways of the people here are not our ways. I am glad [Frederick] Douglass intends to come here. He says it will seem strange to retread the soil of slavery. But if he comes & sees for himself he may be able to do them more good.

The House where I now am was once a boarding school kept by Caleb Hallowell, who when the war broke out returned to Phila[delphia]. Mr. Kimball is employed by Gov[ernment] to board the railroad men, sometimes more & sometimes less. Now most of them are gone to Acquia Creek. I seldom see any of these boarders. I take my meals with the family, which consists of Mr. K[imball] & wife, 2 daughters grown up, & one son a young man. They are Union folks of course, but there are more or less here all the while who w[oul]d as soon go with one side as the other. In the parlor below is a young Lieut[enant] belongs to Sickles Brigade. Came here to look after a wounded comrade, but finds he is dead. He says "he w[oul]d never have enlisted had he known what he does now. He has been in Va. A good deal & he thinks the South is in the right & we are in te wrong, but his resignation w[oul]d not be accepted unless he confesses he has changed his mind, but that w[oul]d not be honorable & he w[oul]d be hissed out of the army, & there are thousands who have the same opinion, & he thinks we can't succeed against the South &c." If there are many such disloyal men at heart as this in our army is it a wonder that we dont succeed? Now such men will not fight if they have a chance. Now he goes back & is numbered with Union soldiers! Oh! dear. What are we coming too?

I have a small room comfortable enough, right over where they wash dishes. But perhaps I shall get used to the rattling. I have to pay \$7 a w[ee]k. This includes all but washing. I have had none done yet. The folks here are pleasant & agreeable, they are not much interested in my work, but they dont oppose it. In some respects it is not a desirable place but it is the best I can get at present, & it is near Mr. Seaton's where my co-laborers board & it is near the Old School House & the brick house, & some other houses where the contrabands live. I intend to be vaccinated to-morrow. Mrs. K[imball] thinks she knows a reliable D[octo]r & will go with me. She is very good to me. I was very sick last night, more than I have been in a long time, but I feel better to day. I did not sleep much, & whenever I closed my eyes I could see Contrabands with hideous features & sick soldiers & other unpleasant sights.

I shall have to be careful of my living & avoid drinking the water as much as possible.

The weather is pleasant now but quite cool. The yards are green yet, & beautiful roses & chrysanthemums are in blossom. I saw Mr. Dennis last Saturday. He says the Cayuga [County, New York] folks did not hear from him as soon as they expected & they sent their box to N[ew] Y[ork City] but he advised me to write to Emily Howland & W.H. Chase, & I have done so. Mr. Hamlin Pres[ident] of te Freedmens Relief Asso[ciatio]n is dead, & it is a great loss to the slave & the Freedmen.

Mr. [D.B.] Nichols the Super[intende]nt in W[ashington] is not at all efficient & the 2 matrons [are] very much tried with him. They w[oul]d without him I think. Not one person in a thousand is fitted for such a place.

The contrabands here always have good food & plenty of it, but they suffer for want of wood....

[From the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society Papers, 1851-1868, William L. Clements Library, the University of Michigan]

Alexandria Va. Dec[ember] 22d, 1862

Dear Mrs. Barnes

After writing thee all about the particulars here, I always feel relieved, & every time I write thee I think I've told thee all, & I shall not have occasion to write very soon again. I wrote thee on the 15th inst[ant] & now there is ever so much more I want to tell thee, & I am sure thee will excuse my long letter when I tell thee there is not a woman in Alex[andria] now who sympathizes with me in my work. I meet with some who do not oppose it, with others who are indifferent, & others still who hate & despise the whole subject. Mrs. Winsor went to Falmouth last week & may stay there with her husband. Perhaps she will come here & stay. I have missed her very much since she has been away. I wish I c[oul]d tell thee just how things are in Alex[andria]. But it w[oul]d require an abler pen than mine to do it.

But in my particular sphere affairs are becoming complicated. The plot thickens. I have seen a new feature of life in Alex[andria] since I wrote thee last. I saw on Friday a man brought into the hospital who was riddled with bullets, & when I remarked that he looked good natured he said "he might as well laugh as cry about it." But poor man, he had some reason to laugh, for he had not been in a house before since last spring, & now he was in a ---- house & laid upon a nice clean bed. I mean to profit by his example & certainly I am very far from being discouraged. (Becky has just come in to read a lesson. She is a full grown Topsy. She is 15 & was freed in the Dist[ri]ct of Columbia] by the eman[cipation] Bill. Mr. K[imball] pays her \$2/a w[ee]k. She is a very desirable girl for a servant.)

I think I told thee in my last that we had got a good room for our things. Well, another room had been cleaned for the Doctor's office & another still for Mr. Whipple (I have no idea how many rooms some of these large houses have) He & Mr. Warwick are going to sleep there. I had turned my rations over to Mr. Whipple & he c[ould] do his own cooking, & c[ould] live cheap.

Mr. W[hipple] does a great deal of work for these people, & Mr. Gladwin pays him a little money once in a while. If Mr. G[ladwin] ever gets this appointment of super[intende]nt, I think he means to employ Mr. W[hipple]. But Mr. G[ladwin] is yet in suspense. We wish to have Mr. W[hipple] stay at our rooms to take care of things. Nothing is safe here unless you have a firm hold of it. We have had the cellar cleaned too in order to make the rooms fit to be occupied. But you have little idea how a house looks after soldiers & contrabands have lived in it. Neither can you imagine how it smells. But, we felt encouraged, as if we had accomplished a great deal. I think I told thee that contrabands live in some of the rooms yet. In a room in the attic was an old man & woman. [T]he window was boarded up (for these folks like to live in the dark) & a stove pipe went through the boards. It is 2 squares from Mr. Kimball's. Yesterday Col. [Gabriel] DeKorponay [of the 28th Pennsylvania Infantry] & Col. [James A.] Tait, the Provost Mar[shal] Gen[eral] dined here. They left about 3 P.M. & just after I went out, I saw folks running & I saw smoke, & in a few moments I saw that 53 S[ain]t Asaph [Street] was on fire. The roof caught from this stove pipe, & it might have been put out, but it was not done. The engines are slow like every thing else here, the water was frozen, the hose were rotten. The Union folks did not try very hard to save the secesh half of the house, & the secesh part of the crowd had a spite against our half, & the result is the whole building is in ruins. Every thing was taken out. We lost nothing, our — were guarded by 3 soldiers until we c[ould] put them into a room for the night. There was a great crowd. But such a fire & such a performance c[ould] not have occurred outside of Alex[andria]. If it were not for soldiers we sh[ould] be badly off here. Col. Tait was obliged to leave, & he gave the Command to Col. De K[orponay] who arrested 20 men & sent them to the slave pen, wh[ich] is the common receptacle of all mischief.

To day has been a hard one. Col. Tait is called a rough, coarse man, & I have been a little shy of him, & he is a pro-slavery Dem[ocrat] Mr. K[imball] tells me, but my short acquaintance with him I mean to turn to account. Col. T[ait] thinks Miss Jennie Kimball's company is very agreeable, & she went with me this morning to see him. [H]e has the disposal of confiscated houses. He was very gracious & bland & he assured me that there were rooms to be found I should have them. In the P.M. I went to him again & he said there was a room in a bank, carpeted & furnished all nice, that I c[ould] have if ladies only were to occupy it, but he c[ould] not have men use it nor niggers going out & in. I told him I thought it w[ould] not answer, & I would like a small house, & he has men out looking for a house.

When I first went to see the barracks I was so disappointed that I was about sick, & I felt that I w[ould] move the earth but what I w[ould] have them different. Can you believe it? [T]he rooms are 10 ft. by 12 ft. Each building 150 ft. long with 2 rows of rooms, the upper part all in one room & a stairway at each end. These families were to be kept in these 10 by 12 boxes through the day, then go out doors & up into this upper part & then sleep altogether! just as if they were cattle. My Dear friend, I felt that if there was no other way to remedy this that I would appeal to the President. I know he w[ould] not permit such an outrage to be put upon these helpless people. Mr. G[ladwin] was with me, & before I c[ould] sleep I went to Capt. Wyman, & the Quartermaster &c. &c., & they agreed to divide the chamber above as it is below, & have a trap door & a step ladder in each room to go into the room above, so that each family may live by itself, & the other two buildings we might arrange as we wanted them.

To day we have been there again, & they are not doing as they agreed, & since so many white boys around there carrying off the boards, the work men say they steal every thing, & they cant get a guard. We parted right off to the Pro[vost] Marshal's & 6 soldiers were detailed to guard those buildings. Oh! such a time. Then we go to the Quartermaster again, & they promise again that they shall be made as we want them. Mr. Burge is a great trial to us, he put a family into one of those rooms, & they put a pipe into a ventilator, & if we had not been there they w[ould] all have been burnt up probably. Then we had to go to the Pro[vost] Mar[shal] about that. Mr. Burge is usually drunk in the P.M.

Dr. Ripley is not seen by us sometimes for several days. [H]e gives but little attention to these people. Dr. Spencer says Dr. Ripley is a thief & a quack, & Col. Tait says Dr. R[ipley] is a thief, & he should be turned off at once—but he gets his appointment from the surgeon general. I think I shall have to go to him & the medical director, & ask to have him dismissed. It is not pleasant for me to do this. But shall we let these folks die?

The ladies here are getting up a Christmas dinner for all the hospitals & the Convalescent Camp. The officers, especially Col. De K[orponay], are very much engaged about it. Tickets to the circus were sold for a dollar last evening & the avails go towards the dinner, & Col. De K[orponay] in the morning spent of the whole. He has bought \$100 worth of tickets. I am glad for the sake of the soldiers. Contrabands are of less account than ever just now. It was a bad time for us to be burnt out. But I am not discouraged. Have had a letter from Eliza Gurney enclosing \$5. This is all she feels right to pay now as she has been helping contrabands in various other quarters. We have just received two [barrels] of corn meal & a [barrel] of potatoes from N[ew] Y[ork] & these are to be distributed among the contrabands for Christmas.

Good night.

Tuesday 23d.

I verily believe I have walked 10 mi[les] to day. The only good building the contrabands occupy is a double, three story, brick house in Washington St[reet], nearly opposite the school house, & there are old wooden buildings near it. Well, Capt. Wyman called this morning to say that I might have half of this house, & Mrs Munsell might have the other half for a

boarding house.

I would like to have you see a house that soldiers have been quartered in for one year, & contrabands for another year. You would think that all the rain in the sweet heavens c[oul]d never wash it clean, & years of purification c[oul]d never sweeten it. Capt. W[yman] says they shall be moved from this house first. But we must have one room now to put our things in & the room we want is where the women are confined. Mr. W[hipple] & I went there this morning to tell them they must leave this room & go into another. They said there were two women that had'nt been "laid in" but a week, but we c[oul]d not help it, they must go into a room on the other side of the hall. [B]ut in this room were 2 or 3 women rolled up on the floor. Mr. W[hipple] unrolled one & she was broken out with small pox so we let the room be to day. I parted off to Mr. Burge, but he c[oul]dn't be found, off attending to small pox cases. Capt. Wyman told me nothing short of omnipotence c[oul]d enable him to do any thing more than he is doing. A certain number of ambulances are all the while carrying small pox cases out to the pest houses (soldiers are taken to Washington), & when I ask why some cannot be used for this purpose, Capt. W[yman] says they are needed now to go after evergreens to trim the hospitals for Christmas. Then I met Mr. Burge. He says "5 soldiers lay dead yesterday that they could not bury for the want of ambulances, but they c[oul]d be sent off after evergreens & officers can have them detailed for their uses." A great country this! Mr. B[urge] says it is difficult to get drivers for small pox ambulances, 2 or 3 of his drivers have it already. He says he will have that woman moved as soon as the ambulances come back.

Then I went to the barracks. Oh, --- they are going right on with the 2d. building as they did with the first. The orders dont seem to reach the workmen. I am in the south part of the city, the barrack in the west part & the Quarter Master, carpenters &c. in the extreme north. Mr. Gladwin has gone, & I can accomplish a great deal more when I am alone. I may as well say it here as any where that Mr. G[ladwin] is not liked very well by these officers & business men, but as Capt. W[yman] says he is willing to overlook some things in Mr. G[ladwin] because he seems to mean well & does a great deal of good. I have been to the Quartermasters & can't find him.

I have been to Col. Tait again to tell him I have a house so that he can call in his two men, & I have asked him if he thinks I can get some of the rooms furnished. [H]e thinks I can by making my wants known to the Quarter Master.

Good night.

Dec. 24th.

Before 9 o'clock went to Quarter Master's, not in, but saw Mr. Clark who acts for him. He is a very gentlemanly person. He heard me patiently, & said he would go up to the barrack, & I met him there & also two foremen, & now I think they all understand it.

In the first building the partitions will be taken down & the rooms made twice as large, & only half as many stoves will be needed, & half as many doors. The 2d. building will be arranged as I want it, & the position of the 3d. building will be as I decided to have it. Mr. C[lark] agrees with me in my plans, & gave positive orders to the workmen to let me have my way.

It is taking a great deal of responsibility upon myself, but somebody must take it. I have accomplished more in these two days alone than I w[oul]d in a month with Mr. G[ladwin]. I have got the barracks agoing as I want them. I have got a large 3 story house to use for my own purposes, & think I shall get 2 or 3 rooms furnished. But I am like the man who drew the elephant. I don't know what to do with my large house now that I have got it.

Capt. Wyman says now about the barracks "that all he thought of was to get a shelter over the heads of these people." I think he tells the truth, But he says "when I get these buildings done he may want me to build a house for him." I mistrust he is making fun of me. He is a nice pleasant man apparently. I wish you had heard him talk to Mr. Burge yesterday. He said "I want you to understand that Miss Wilbur has authority from the President of the U.S. to take charge of these people, & you must help him all you can, & so & so." As the man said I may as well laugh as cry, & I do laugh, for things are so queer here. Capt. W[yman] understands it, but others give me give me credit for more authority than I really have. Then I went to my brick house. The small pox woman was moved out last night, the room was fumigated, & the rest will go on living there. They are cleaning no room for us to day. You see Mr. Burge rides about the city & sits on his horse & gives orders. (I wonder if I cant have an ambulance detailed for my use?)

When I went to the brick house this morning the people from our room were piling into a great 4 horse wagon. The two women who had "been laid in only a week" were there with their babies, & ever so many were there to see them load up & start off. Instead of putting them in another room, Mr. B[urge] is sending them to another house. It looked hard. I c[oul]d have cried, but that would not have helped the matter. Just after Mr. Burge rode off, I saw two women on the other side of the street. Mr. W[hipple] said one of them was broken out with small pox & wants a place to go to, he told her to run & catch up with a small pox ambulance. I said she had better go into a house near where Mr. W[hipple] had just found a boy who is getting over it, a house right by the one that was burned & hundreds of folks were going out & in there during the fire.

Things have got to a bad pass here. Mr. B[urge] said the other night a man with small pox was sent over from the Maryland side & in the morning he found him sitting by his store door. Mr. Pierce has been very sick with it, but is now well enough to go out.

Small pox ambulances may be seen in every part of the city. I think it is all over & all around us. The 19th. Conn[ecticut] Reg[imen]t is encamped a little west of us. An officer of this Reg[imen]t told Mr. W[hipple] last night that

90 of their men had black measles, but we know when they talk about black measles, that it is very likely to be small pox. I mean to be vaccinated again to morrow if it does cost a dollar. I hear that there is a great deal of it in Washington. How dreadful it will be if it is in the army. The poor soldiers.

At the pest house where contrabands are sent, 5 or 6 die every day. Then as many as that die here in the city probably. Mr. Parker says he attends 2 or 3 funerals a day among the free colored people. I think you can see citizen's funerals every day, then the soldiers besides. At a hospital near us 8 died in two days last week.

You at a distance cant imagine what a place this is at present. It was last Friday that 700 wounded were brought here. All day long the ambulances were busy in moving them from the boats to the hospitals. A great many slightly wounded were able to walk & will soon be well. In one hos[pital] I saw one ward filled up. Their wounds had been well dressed, & they say they were well cared, they have plenty of blankets & they were moved just as carefully as could be & laid on those clean white beds as tenderly as it c[oul]d have been done at home. These men were very dirty, but they were washed & had clean shirts & drawers put on them, & I'll venture there was many a glad heart last Friday night although the body was sick & wounded. I found James Means, from Rochester, wounded in the head by a shell & his right arm paralyzed, but he knew me, he was a number 12 scholar. Among all those wounded, suffering men, I heard not a groan nor a complaint.

This is Christmas eve. I have written this long letter to show thee if possible what every day life is here. Christmas is the greatest day in the year. Two Christmas trees have been trimmed here this eve for Col. De K[orponay] to give to Gen. Slough's children. He invites us all to dine at his camp to morrow. Some time I'll tell thee more about this Hungarian Colonel. For more than a week I have been expecting a letter from thee. Please write soon. Remember me to all the ladies of the Soc[iety] & accept my love for thyself. Julia A. Wilbur.

[From the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society Papers, 1851-1868, William L. Clements Library, the University of Michigan]

Alexandria, [January] 15th, 1863

My Dear Mrs. Barnes

Thy letter of Jan[uary] 1st. was duly received, & my memorandum says I have not written thee since the 24th of Dec[ember], so I suppose I may wish thee a Happy New Year.

This P.M. I was completely fagged out, & I have had to stay in my room to rest. Sister Frances intended to see you on her return home & she will tell you some things, & Charlotte will tell you more, but they were not here long enough to see a great deal. They didn't go to Fishtown & see the worst places. They seemed afraid of contamination, & wonder how I can stay here. Things were quiet about the time they were here, but ever so many things have happened since. Mr. Gladwin returned on Tuesday, he was away three weeks, & I began to think he was not coming back. He has been sick. How much he accomplished in the way of inducing people to send us supplies I know not.

Mr. Warwick has gone to Phila[delphia]. [H]is wife is in the insane asylum, he has 3 small children & is out of funds, & I think he will not come back. Mr. Whipple was the only help I had for 3 w[ee]ks, & he attended to the sick too. Dr. Ripley is worse than nobody. He is sick now. They think he has small pox.

Mr. G[ladwin] has engaged Dr. Bigelow of N[ew] Y[ork] to come here & we are expecting him every day. Last evening I was very much surprised to see Harriet Jacobs. She came to me with a letter from Benj[ami]n Tatham, stating that "the Com[mittee] of Rep[resentative]s of their Soc[iety] had engaged H[arriet] Jacobs to go to Alex[andria] to aid the Colored Refugees as matron, & to appropriate the clothing & other things wh[ich] they have sent & may send for those people. She is to keep a record of the names of all persons & a list of articles furnished to them to prevent fraud or mistakes, & he requests Mr. G[ladwin] to deliver the goods to her as she may want them, also to give her a list of what is here," &c. I dont know how this strikes thee but it struck me very unpleasantly. It seems almost like an insult to us. I think H[arriet] Jacobs is a very nice person, & well calculated to give personal attention to those people; to mind the sick & care for them in various ways. She can do these things much better than I can, & I am glad she has come, & we want just such a person here. I welcome her with all my heart.

But the other feature of the case does not please me. When they sent their boxes, they sent a list of the articles in them, & requested us all to take part in the distribution. They are yet at the Ex[press] Office, & the charges are \$19. They are directed to Mr. Gladwin, & for that reason they have been left in the office till he came back.

We have but one room for the things, & that is not half large enough. We cannot spread them out & it is a great deal of work to look over a pile of things every time an article is wanted, & to keep account of every article wh[ich] is given out w[oul]d take the whole time of one person. As far as we can we satisfy ourselves that persons are needy & deserving before we give them any thing, & then give what is adapted to their want if we have it. Nothing further has been required of me by those who have sent goods to me. I have received 2 boxes from Homer [Cortland County, New York], two bales from Wheatland [Monroe County, New York], one large bale from Rochester & one [barrel] from Niagara Co[unty], New York].

A large box from Boston sent to Mrs. Sawyer, a nurse in Hos[pital], she sent to our room for us to distribute. I have told Mrs. Jacobs that if we receive the N[ew] Y[ork] boxes, our room is not large enough to keep the things separate. If we had more rooms she c[oul]d have one for those goods. I do not wish to do any thing to make her feel unpleasant. But if the

N[ew] Y[ork] folks do not think us trusty & honest why, then, I wish they w[oul]d send no goods to us.

That is a valuable lot of things you sent from R[ochester] & I shall be careful how they are distributed, shall do it myself. The shawls are considered great prizes, & I try to make them understand who sent them. I wish to thank F[rederick] Douglass for following my suggestion.

Drawers are not much needed. I w[oul]d not have any new cloth made into drawers. But chemises are always wanted. I wish somebody would send us some bonnets. I dont like to see women go through the streets bareheaded. Any kind of bonnets & hoods w[oul]d be acceptable. Not a half dozen aprons for women have been sent us, but every woman needs one or two aprons.

In the Niagara barrell were 7 bed quilts, a coverlid & a blanket, several large dresses & under clothes & hoods, all from one lady.

Cant you get Walmsly to donate some bonnets, or some other milliner? I think, as you say, that it is not worth while to buy new cloth to make up. Gather up what old clothes you can & that will suffice now, for we are getting a very good supply from various other quarters.

I have been to the barracks to day with Mrs. Jacobs. I think they will be done in a week or two.

Some of the soldiers here act very meanly towards the colored folks, & I one was heard to say he would burn the barracks when they are finished. I am very much afraid they will be burnt. 20 very clean smart looking people came last night from the south, & staid at the School House. They did'nt like the looks of the place here, & they went on to W[ashington] this morning.

The small pox is raging here among whites as well as colored. The whites stay in their houses & of course it will spread. In the house where our room is we found a woman to day who is getting over it. I think there have been more or less cases in the house all the while.

A friend in W[ashington] paid me the money on the check thee sent me. As far as my pay is concerned, I will abide with whatever the society is willing to do. Expecting of course, to have my board paid, I shall stay here at present whether the society pay me anything more than board or not. But I cannot offer to stay long in that way, for I am subject to other expenses beside my board. This is the dirtiest, worst place to use up clothes that I ever saw, & when the warm weather comes I must have some thin clothing, & stationery is quite an item.

I think I can do good here, & I feel it my duty to stay here this winter even if I had to do it at my own expense.

Saturday, [January] 17th.

Yesterday I went with Mr. G[ladwin] to W[ashington] in ambulance & had a hard cold ride. We brought back 2 boxes sent by the Freedmen's Society in N[ew] Y[ork] of wh[ich] Dr. Tyng is President. They contain 40 pillows, 17 tin cups & 22 bed quilts.

Oh! What a city this is. It appears Alex[andria] is included in Western V[irginia], & Mayor McKenzie of this city has just been elected member of Con[gress]. He is not considered a very loyal man. Now who has elected him? We have no reason to think that there are a dozen Union men here that are voters. There are plenty of secesh who say they are Unionists, & they have probably elected McK[enzie], & in a little while they will have it all their own way here. There is a very bad spirit abroad here at present.

Many of the soldiers are angry because they have been so long without pay, & they lay every thing to the nigger, he has caused the war, & now he is freed, & government is helping them & the soldiers are mad, & they take every opportunity to insult & abuse the negroes.

Please write soon. My respects to the ladies of the society. I have written this in a disturbed state of mind. Please excuse what seems strange. With much love to yourself. I am as ever truly thine.

Julia A. Wilbur.

[From the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society Papers, 1851-1868, William L. Clements Library, the University of Michigan]

Alexandria [January] 23d. [1863]

My Dear Friend [Mrs. Amy Kirby Post],

I wrote you on the 17th. inst[ant] & suppose I told you all about things up to that time. Had letters from sister Frances & Mary Julia today. F[rances] says thee told her thee would try to get some person to come here & Help me. But, Mrs. Barnes, as things are at present, I can do very well with Mrs. Jacobs' help. I think I wrote thee that she had been sent here by the Friends in N[ew] Y[ork]. She is very useful & I like her so far. I presume she is a reliable woman. But oh! dear, I have been disappointed in so many people. I don't know but I shall lose my faith in all mankind, womankind included.

The barracks are not done, they are waiting for lumber. Then perhaps we shall have to wait to get stoves from the North. When these rooms are done, & the people arranged in some sort of order, then more can be done for them, &

several persons can help to advantage. But there is rather a queer state of things here now. So please dont send any body at present. It may appear strange that I make this requests, but I cannot explain now. Dr. Bigelow of N[ew] Y[ork] came a few days since, but he has not decided to stay. [I]f he does not he will send some other person. Dr. B[igelow] is a person of fine appearance, of decided character, & I think of high social position. I will say to thee confidentially that Mr. Gladwin is a great trial to us, & it will be an unfortunate day for those poor people when he is made superintendent. I expect the matter will be decided today.

I have spoken to thee of J. Dennis in W[ashington]. I am told he has a southern wife. She is a gay lady & wants to shoot any nigger, one of the real explosion kind of women. Mr. G[ladwin] went there the other day to see Mr. D[ennis]. Mrs. D[ennis] treats him very badly. She didnt strike Mr. G[ladwin] but she wanted to do so. Mrs. Jacobs went there. Mrs. D[ennis] didnt kick her out of doors, but she might about as well have done it.

Both Mrs. Jacobs & myself received a letter from Mr. Dennis yesterday¹. I have an irresistible inclination to send it to thee, perhaps it is a naughty thing for me to do so. But please be sure & send it back to me. I think I shall not answer it. I had not counted on this phase of the subject.

I w[oul]d like so much to tell thee of a hundred things or so, but I can not write them intelligently, had I time.

There are 3 ladies & 2 gentlemen visiting here from Mass[achusetts] (Milford). Mrs. Thayer, one of them, is a sister of Mrs. Kimball. They are all Unionists & genuine abolitionists. F[rederick] Douglass visits at Mrs. Thayer's, & she has a great regard for him. They have been round with me to see the contrabands, & are very much interested. I enjoy their co[mpany] very much. These visitors are under a good deal of restraint, for Mr. K[imball]'s family have no sympathy for these poor people (excepting Mrs. K[imball], who does not exactly oppose us) Mr. K[imball] is very bitter against the administration, & says "the South had cause for war but the North had no cause,"—he abhors the niggers. Yet, I expect to keep on friendly terms with them, & they treat me very kindly.

When my new bonnet comes from Rochester, I am going to W[ashington] & mean to see Mrs. Breed again. I suppose Emily Howland is there now.

I have received a barrel of goods from a friend in Dutchess Co[unty, New York] & she is to send another. A large box has just come from Phila[delphia]. I suppose Mrs. Post will be sending a box soon.

I know of no better way to send by Express. The agent here told me that if you would see the agent when the goods are started, you might get them out for half the price perhaps, but it can't be done at this end of the route.

I sat down to write thee a very few lines, & behold the result.

A letter from Lydia Strang yesterday. The Wheatland [New York] folks are going to send more things. Aunt Eliza Wilbur sends a piece of factory & some other things & \$2 in money.

It has been raining here for 3 days, but now, at noon it is clearing up. I observe that the subject of small pox is being agitated in Congress. It is probably worse in W[ashington] than it is here.

Mrs. Jacobs has the Daily Tribune, which I am glad to see, for I can see [the New York] Herald at any time.

We have had reports that the army has moved across the Rappahannock & that there has been fighting, but the reports want confirmation.

Please give my kind respects to the ladies of the society. I hope they will continue to be interested & keep up good courage.

Remember me to thy father & mother. With love to thyself

Truly thy friend

Julia A Wilbur

(I am economizing in the paper department)

[From the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society Papers, 1851-1868, William L. Clements Library, the University of Michigan]

1 Washington [January] 21st [18]63 Julia Wilbur

Dear Friend

I have a letter from B[enjamin] Tatham, saying there are five boxes on the way for Alexandria and as I am not well enough to go down and am not certain about Hannah [sic] Jacobs' Address, will thou please to see her and ascertain if she has a safe place to receive and keep the goods until she can distribute them. Please to see what kind of a place she has, and write me what thou thinks of it and the number and street where it is located, also the number and street where thou boards. When thou comes up again if thou will go to the Patent Office and send the Colored boy who sits near the door of the Record Room over for me I will come over and see thee. I would invite thee to call at my office but my wife is so nervous about small pox she is afraid to have people come to the house. & if thou will write me a note previously stating the day & hour thou will be at some place I will try to meet thee. I enclose a letter with this for H[arriet] Jacobs which please hand to her soon as convenient and oblige.

Thy friend

J. Dennis Jr.

Alexandria Jan. 23d, 1863

My Dear Friend [Mrs. Amy Kirby Post]

I would not believe that it is 2 mos. since I wrote you, if my memorandum did not say so. Time has passed very rapidly with me. Perhaps it is not too late to wish you a Happy N[ew] Year. I have been just 3 mos. from home. I wonder where I shall be 3 mos. hence! In this uncertain & unsettled state of things, In this disputed territory, in this queer old, dirty, benighted city, containing hardly Unionists enough to make it safe to take a long breath, In such a place we can hardly calculate a week ahead. For instance, I find a [business] house here who ship goods from N.Y. City. I arrange to have boxes sent to this firm. They are sent, but before they can get them, some of the firm have skeddaddled, & now I am watching the arrivals at this port, hoping I shall get the two boxes sent by Miss Howland. She has already sent two by express. The agent here says that perhaps you can make arrangements where they are started to get them through at half price, but it cannot be done at this end of the route. *Please direct your box or bale to "Miss Julia A. Wilbur, Cor. Washington & Wolfe st[reet]s, Alexandria, Virginia. Please send a list of the goods & their value, & a duplicate receipt from the office in a letter to me about the time you send your box. It's not necessary to send to care of another person. Things have come safe so far, & they will be left at our room. My letters direct [to] simply "Julia A. Wilbur, Alexandria, Va."*

Harriet Jacobs came here about a week ago. She is sent by the Friends Society in N.Y. I am very glad to have her here. She can do many things better than I can do. She is to act as matron & distribute the goods that the Friends in N[ew] Y[ork] send to Alex[andria]. There is so much small pox here we cannot go to many places. I mean to keep out of the [contrabands'] rooms when it is. If Mr. K[imball]'s folks thought I ever came in contact with it they w[oul]d not board me. Mrs. Jacobs got into a dark room today where a man had it, & when she went to her boarding place (a colored family) she was told that if she went where small pox was, they could not board her. It is hard work to keep away from these people for we want to know all about them & attend to the sick. A few days since a woman took me into a room where her daughter had it, & I didn't like it very well. They try to conceal those that have it for fear they will be taken away, so a whole family will be exposed. There are enough of us now to attend to the work that we can do, but if the new buildings [Prince Street contraband barracks?] are ever done & occupied, then more help will be needed. But until there is less small pox, I w[oul]d advise people to keep away. When they leave the pest house they need entire suits of clothes, & second hand clothing for men, women & children is in demand. There is no particular necessity for sending your box immediately. Wait till you get entirely ready, for we have a pretty good supply now. We hold onto the bed quilts as much as we can, till they go into the new rooms, for we want them to have clean beds. We need a good deal of bedding, & towels & basins & pails & dishes we shall want too. Please give my love to Mrs. C[oleman] & tell her I will answer her letter soon. Remember me to your family & Sarah & Mary Hallowell. I would like to hear from you often, & w[oul]d like to tell you many things if I had more time. Very kindly & truly

Your friend Julia A. Wilbur.

[From the Family Papers of Isaac and Amy Kirby Post, 1817-1918, Rush Rhees Library, the University of Rochester]

[An incomplete letter to Amy Post, missing at least one page but dated February 20, 1863 in modern pencil notation by librarian.]

...such as women's dress, shawls &c. In one room there I saw a woman who had nothing on but a chemise & a little cape. A good deal has been done for them there, but they have a very inefficient supernt & the two matrons can't do as they would. Unless a person goes into this work with their whole heart & soul, they will not do these poor creatures much good. Now I will confess that I have heretofore felt a repugnance to Col[ore]d persons, didn't like to touch them. But that feeling has left me. I can do for them just as easily as I can for white persons. Is it because I have seen so many of them, or is the good Lord smoothing the way for me? Virginia Seaton died very suddenly before I left Mr. Seaton's. She was in her 15th y[ea]r. It was a sad event. They are an affectionate family, & they feel the loss deeply. I c[oul]d do just as much for that girl as I c[oul]d for a white person, but I have seen the time when I c[oul]d not. She was laid out beautifully & had an elegant coffin, & all was in the best style, but we boarders were all the white persons who came near them. We went to the grave with them.

I think there are 4 times as many colored people here as there are white people. I am now on the Cor[ner] of Duke & Columbia [Columbus] streets at Mr. Kimball's. Price & Birch's Slave Pen is on Duke st[reet] about in sight, & a little further on is Bruin's Slave Pen. I am told that just before the war broke out. Many slaves were taken from M[arylan]d further South, & generally stopped over night at these Slave Pens. They were driven through here chained & handcuffed by fifties & by hundreds, women with children on their backs. I am told they were horrid sights. Last Friday when I went into the Slave Pen, I went into the [slave pen] prison too. Disorderly soldiers & secesh are confined there now. There were dungeons under the floor, but they have been filled up since our troops took possession, & a roof made over the prison wh[ich] is a brick wall as high as a 2 story house. But to understand it thee will have to come & see it. It is now the most wicked looking place that I ever saw.

When we left W[ashington] on Saturday it was nearly dark. When we got to the Long Bridge the draw was broken so that there was no crossing, & there was no way to get to Alex[andria] but to go round by Georgetown & over the

Aqueduct Bridge, 6 or 7 miles further. It was very dark & neither Mr. G[ladwin] or the driver knew the way. When the guard did not happen to be drunk we c[ould] get some information, & get safely back about 8 o'clock. It was a perilous ride & a rough one & cold too, & I wonder that I endured it without being sick. Mr. G[ladwin] is down sick today. Well, if I don't take the small pox I shall be fortunate. There is considerable of it among the Contrabands, & I have been where it is several times, but I have written nothing to our folks at home of this, they w[ould] only worry about me. Mrs. Kimball is surprised to hear of Susan Humphry's marriage. They know Holland Richman very well.

I am glad thee went to Irondequoit [New York]. I have a letter from Eliza Wing today & they will send me something. The Cayuga [County, New York] box I didn't get. They did not hear from J. Dennis [Jr. in Washington] as soon as they expected so they sent it to N[ew] Y[ork]. But I have written to Emily Howland & Mrs. H. Chase & hope they will send something. I hope Frederick Douglass will come here. I had a letter from him today. I am glad thee has written to Cayuga Co[unty]. I think they will help us.

Thee says F[rederick] Douglass has \$50 today out for you. If you could buy several woollen shawls, the old fashion, coarse, warm ones that we see piled up in stores, I think they w[ould] not cost more than \$2 or \$3 a piece, & they would be very useful. There are several old and sick women who want a shawl or sack to throw around them as they sit in those broken & cold rooms with little or no fire, & those women who go out to work need them very much, & some cheap woollen hoods w[ould] be useful. Women's dresses are needed as much as anything. Shoes & stockings & undergarments are much needed, so are blankets & quilts. Anything warm is acceptable now, but there are several cases where dresses & shawls or quilted skirts or flannel ones would be so good just now. I hope Julia G. Crofts will keep Great Britain up to the giving point, & as thee says I think we have to thank her for a great deal. The house where I am now is where Caleb Hallowell had a boarding school. When the war broke out he went back to Phila[delphia]. His brother James Hallowell is in W[ashington] in the P[ost] O[ffice] Dep[artmen]t. Are they related to William H[allowell?]. I hope thee can read my writing without too much trouble. I am ashamed of it, for I can hardly read it myself. But somehow I can't write any better. I shall write to Mrs. C[oleman] as soon as I can. Please give my love to her, & remember me to thy family, & accept the kindest regards from yours truly Julia A. Wilbur.

[From the Family Papers of Isaac and Amy Kirby Post, 1817-1918, Rush Rhees Library, the University of Rochester]

Alexandria Feb. 27th. 1863

My Dear Mrs. Barnes,

"Well! here is another letter from Julia. What can she find to write about again so soon?["] Ah! but 12 days in Alex[andria] is vastly different from 12 days in Rochester, especially in these onsertain times.

Officials here hardly know whether they have a head on their shoulders or not. Col. Tait, the Pro[vost] Mar[shal] Gen[eral], was arrested a few days since for passing secesh through the lines, & is now being courtmartialled.

We hear also that Gen. Slough, Mil[itary] Gov[ernor] of Alex[andria] is arrested, & his arrest has grown out of his removal of Capt. Wyman.

An indignation meeting was called in relation to the removal of Capt. W[yman], so you see he has friends besides myself. I am told that Gen. S[lough] was in Kansas when Jim Lane was prosecuted for murder. Slough was the attorney & pursued Lane vindictively. Gen. S[lough] has done a great deal to suppress drinking here, & he deserves credit for it, but neither he nor Col. Wells, the new Provost, believe in the negro at all. They mean to give the contrabands no chance, & then make all out of them they can.

They say the barracks shall be rented to those that can pay, & Mr. G[ladwin] tells them "that these people can afford to pay rent, & they want to pay" &c. I told Col. Wells that "I was sure neither the Pres[ident] nor Sec[retary of War] Stanton intended these buildings should be rented; they were designed for the poor & helpless & widows & children, & I thought there would be enough of these to fill them." Said he, "It makes no difference to me what the Pres[ident] & Sec[retary] S[Stanton] intended, the buildings shall be rented." He says he wants them all put there together, & there must be 16 in a room. He answered me very short, & of course I cried. All my plans for the improvement of these people seem about to be thwarted. I have been so tried this week. Dr. Bigelow has got back, & Thursday Col. Wells asked Dr. B[igelow], Mr. G[ladwin] & myself to come to his office to arrange about moving the people & some other things. (I presume none of these gentlemen ever condescended so much before. I think they dared not do otherwise. Mr. G[ladwin] "says I am out of my sphere, & he does not like to see a woman wear men's clothes." I gave him a talking to & he has been as meek as Moses ever since. Dr. Spencer, Mr. Whipple & Mrs. J[acobs] say "it was just what he needed.") Col. W[ells] modified his orders a little after I put in my plea in behalf of these poor creatures. He says the poorest ones may be put in first, & then he shall fill up with those who can pay rent. After asking for & explaining it twice, he says I can have the control of one room & the chambers above it. (I want them for young women to sleep in by themselves.) I told you about Capt. W[yman]'s putting that brick house in my possession. Col. Wells says "he ignores all that Capt. W[yman] did." Then I asked "if Mrs. J[acobs] & myself could be allowed the use of that room & hall where we received & distributed goods, & which I had had cleaned & whiewashed at my own expense." He said 'yes.' This was necessary on part for Mr. G[ladwin] has called it "his office" & has a bed there much to our annoyance.

There are two houses together. Gen. S[lough] told Dr. B[igelow] that he must make a hospital of one of the buildings

that the contrabands were in, & this is the only good one, so Dr. B[igelow] has decided to take it. Col. W[ells] has ordered it to be vacated first, & yesterday we began to take them to the new rooms. Oh, such a time!

The North house is to be fixed up right off for a hospital. The iron bedsteads & every thing necessary has been sent from W[ashington] & they are in a ware house, & it will be just as good & nice as any other hospital, because the medical director does this. Gen. S[lough] & Col. W[ells] has nothing to do with this. But, will you believe it? Dr. B[igelow] asked Col. W[ells] if he could not have the control of both houses, in case he should want both for hospital. But Col. W[ells] was man enough to say "that there would be time enough for that when the South house was needed. Now it is not needed for a hospital, & we can have the S[outh] house to use for our purposes. Mrs. Jacobs wants a room there to live in. I suppose Mr. G[ladwin] will want a room to sleep in, &c. I have told him, there is no room fo his bed where our goods are. But I think Dr. B[igelow] will manage to get Mrs. J[acobs] & myself out of that house. He acts as if he meant to control the whole of us. I must tell you this of him: Claremont, wh[ich] was Com[modore?] Forrest's mansion, 4 mi[les] from Alex[andria], is our pest house now. It is defaced half ruined by soldiers. We have had it 2 months. Been 140 cases of smallpox there at once, a great many there now. Dr. B[igelow] says he mean to have all the orphans taken out there & kept, & the same old women & nurses that take care of the sick can take care of the children. Would you think that such an idea could enter the head of a sane, Christian man, wh[ich] he proposes to be? I believe you can think of some of the objections that I made to this. 'Why' said he, "it is a good plan to send them all there & put them through the pock house" & "he dont mean to have friends running there to see them either." If this is not the essence of inhumanity I w[oul]d like to know where it can be found. My first impressions of Dr. B[igelow] are proving to be correct.

Col. Wells does not manifest the least feeling for these people. He shows no more regard for the decencies & proprieties of life, nor for the wishes or comforts of these people than if they were so many horses.

Thankful am I that things were so far along before he was made Provost. During the past 10 days I have explored the two houses where we are. They contained 115 perons, then the old School House, only 5 families there, the rest are all single men. Then an immense building on cor[ner] King & Columbus [Streets], containing 101 colored & 19 white persons, some having small pox. Then 63 Cameron St[reet] where were 47 colored & 8 whites, some small pox. Then some old tenements on Pitt St[reet]. Mr. W[hipple] went with me to these places. We noted the circumstances of each one, to know whether they were fit subjects for the barracks. Since then I have been alone to several places; & Mr. G[ladwin] & Mr. W[hipple] have been in another direction & taken the names of several hundreds. These people are much more comfortable than they were 3 mo[nth]s ago. Many of them have taken care of themselves ever since they have been here. Others would do so could they rent buildings. There are a great many widows with children, who have a hard time, but in some cases it is astonishing to see how well they get along. There is one family I found on an alley a few feet wide, where none of us had been before: several small houses, some owned by secesh, wh[ich] are rented to contrabands. Here was a man been sick since Christmas. His wife is half blind, have 9 children, 6 with them. The man & one son who have worked for gov[ernment] draw rations. One boy while at work had his leg broken. A girl of 7 y[ea]rs was all the help the mother had. They pay \$4 a month for rent of two miserable rooms; buy their wood, (\$10 a cord) been sick a great deal. A secesh Doctor makes them pay \$1 for each visit, & they buy their own medicines. They did'nt know tha there was any body here to help them. Three bits of old blankets in the loft was the bed for the children. I told them they c[oul]d go to the barracks, But the man said "he had rather live by himself & Be independent, & if he could only be helped to a little wood he could get along. When government agrees to pay \$25 a month, it witholds \$5 for taxes. This man said he was willing to have this done 'to help the poor'. What an idea!

Mr. Burdge has a furlough for 10 days, & has gone to N[ew] Y[ork], so I sent this man to Mr. Pierce for wood. I told them they must employ no more secesh doctors, but must come to our room when they wanted one, & he must come the next day for some clothes. He is a well disposed, intelligent little man. We fitted them out as far as we could, & they were so thankful. In one room in this alley there were 3 that had had small pox there but were nearly well. (I was vaccinated again yesterday)

I have called on a good many of the F.F.V.s. There are several families of Washingtons. Then there are Pendletons & Harrisons & Peytons & Berkleys. When I see some of those who are so nearly white, it makes one so sick & disgusted with white mankind in general, that I almost despair of ever accomplishing any good here. But I do pray that I may not forget for a moment that these poor women have been more sinned against than sinning, & that I may ever be patient with them & make all the allowance I ought to. Why, the servant girls in this house are constantly tormented & insulted by men who board here & wear the garb of gentlemen. They seem to think that a colored girl can't be virtuous. Becky says "I want to get out of this place. I cant go in the street but what the men wink at me, & they look at me so."

Many of these people have been with the army. The young women are seduced by the soldiers. Some of these have children, & a good many soldier's children we have to take care of, just like other contrabands. Some folks are willing to help soldiers but not contrabands. You may say do such, that by helping contrabands, they help at the same time the families of soldiers.

We have had a sad case in our brick house this week. There was a girl who came to me six w[ee]ks ago. She has been in a room there ever since. I have never seen her smile. Old maid as I am, I have had to lay aside my fastidiousness & delicacy.

Although you are a sensible woman, I think I could frighten you were I to tell you of things that have come under my observation. Mrs. Barnes, there is nothing I would like better than to comply with your requests & with some of the

incidents that I know, & some of the tales I hear. I mean to do it. I must do it. But I shall have to leave other work. I have not spent one evening in the parlor for two or three weeks. I have wished to do so. I think it is profitable to become acquainted with many of the people that come here. There are several new boarders now, several ladies. Lieut. Grinnell has just brought his new, young wife from Akron, Ohio. I like him very much although he will not allow that the negro is a man. He is a frank, pleasant, genial fellow, says his wife "is a little black abolitionist." She says she is an abolitionist to the back bone, & she wants to go around with me every day. I was glad to hear this, & yesterday she went with me on an exploring tour. We called at the barracks &c. Poor little woman! She saw so much to disturb her that she could'nt sleep much last night. But she has been with me again to day. The Lieut[enant] likes to have her go.

I have time to write only the most necessary letters. I neglect most all my friends. I have not written to Charlotte & sis in a long time.

Col. Wells told Mr. G[ladwin] to superintend the moving of these people, it will take several days. I wish you c[oul]d see them. Col. W[ells] has consented to let Parker & Robinson have the old S[chool] House for their school, but it will need making all over.

Leland has had a school at the old S[chool] H[ouse], but he now has it at the new room at the barracks, & Amanda has brought her school over from the Slave pen. There are 75 scholars there now, But oh! dear, the idea of calling it a school. Leland & Amanda can read a very little. Mr. G[ladwin] takes every body to see this school. He takes his meals at the Marshall House lately, & he seizes upon every bdy that is in the least inclined & takes them around, & some of them go away with the impression that Mr. G[ladwin] is the most self sacrificing, & humane & pious & benevolent man living, as Judge Russell thought & published in the Boston Papers. (I heard Dr. Shaw remark that Mr. G[ladwin] hates negroes as much as Slough & Wells. To hear him talk one w[oul]d think he had done all that has been done here, & that he carries all Alex[andria] on his shoulders. He has done a good deal among the contrabands & soldiers, But between the two stools he may yet fall to the ground. Poor man, we feel sorry for him, but yet we dont want him here. He treated a poor old woman so yesterday that Mrs. Jacobs had to speak, her feelings were very much hurt. It amounts to a conviction in my mind, but may I be forgiven if it is wrong. I do think he has been a slave driver, for he takes to it so naturally. He has said to me several times "Oh! Miss Wilbur, if you had been on the plantation as much as I have & knew these people as well as I do you w[oul]d find there is no other way to get along with them." This has been his reply, when I have said I did not believe in threatening to flog them & scolding them as if they were criminals. For he has done these things & I have been so tried. I presume you will call this the Gladwin Letter.

Last Sunday was very tempestuous, like a northern storm. Snow fell to a foot in depth, & when I saw a New Hampshire soldier shovelling the side walk in front of a Hos[pital], He said "it seemed as natural as life." Sleighs were used for two days. And such sleighs! I w[oul]d like to get one to take north. Then we had sposh & slop & mud & rain. & Thursday morning I saw the 6th. reg[imen]t of Mich[igan] Cav[alry] marching through this & going south. I can make no arrangements with the present Pro[vost] Marshal to have boxes directed to him. I do not think he w[oul]d help us if he could. Had a letter from Friend Dennis yesterday, advises me to ask Gen. Slough to pay the Express charges, but I know better than to do this. To ask this will only make matters worse for us.

I received your letter of the 22d. Inst[ant] & it did me much good. Your letters always renew my courage & give me fresh hopes. You can hardly imagine how comforting it is, to know that the Society aproves what I have done, & that they have confidence in my judgement, & that they still mean to work on & feel interested. Since I wrote thee last I have received 3 [barrels] from Farmington [Ontario County, New York], mostly old clothing, & 4 [barrels] from Worcester Mass[achusetts], from Capt. Wyman's friends, containing some very good things & 40 p[ai]rs new shoes.

I have not received a Douglass Paper since I have been here. I wish I could get time to write for it. I have seen no W[ashington] folks since I wrote thee. I mean to go there once more before Congress adjourns. I wish thee could come & stay a week here. I am expecting a friend from Dutchess Co[unty, New York] soon, Miss S.A. Ferris, a maiden in advanced years like myself.

I wish you c[oul]d send a few white cotton (full) shirts. Some of these young women will have them if they have to pay 3 or 4 levies [?] a yard at the stores, 25 & 31 cents is much cheaper than we can get cloth here. I dont know of any thing else at present that it would be worth while to buy & Make up unless it be women's dresses. Cant one get for summer some cheaper material than calico for Sunday dresses, some old style, thin dress goods? Please send an invoice & the cost of the articles, & then shall I ask half price or more? I hope to receive the shawls soon.

As the subject is inexhaustible I May as well stop here. Love for Miss Porter. Please remember me kindly to the ladies of the Soc[iety] & thy mother. Truly thine Julia A Wilbur.

[From the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society Papers, 1851-1868, William L. Clements Library, the University of Michigan]

Alex[andria] Mar[ch] 10th. 1863

My Dear Mrs. Barnes,

The box & barrel arrived all safe last Saturday evening. I opened them yesterday morning. The shawls & the women's dresses had been anxiously looked for by a great many persons. I could sell 100 women's dresses right off & 20 more shawls. "Aunt Mary" wanted 2 Sunday dresses. There was but one for her. She took the Alpaca for \$3.00. Several persons wanted it, but she spoke for it first. [T]he new calico dress was an aggravation as only one c[oul]d have it. There were 3 or 4 old dresses in the barrel, & two of these must go to small pox women. 3 or 4 summer dresses is all I have now & Mrs. Jacobs has none. She expects some soon. She received new plaid linsey & striped cotton mostly, & some of the women wont look at them hardly & say "they never wore linsey." In some of her first boxes there were skirts & sacks of a gray cloth, the worst looking stuff I ever saw. Some w[oul]d'nt take it as a gift. She has told them not to send any more of that kind. Some of the dresses in the Phila[delphia] boxes are so narrow that they cant be worn over hoops, & are so far behind the times that these people wont buy them. All the dresses sent to me are such as white folks wear, & I can dispose of them at once. Those gray sacks that you sent they dont fancy. Every thing else that I have had goes off readily. I have given these away, except 3 that I have yet.

I wish somebody w[oul]d send aprons. I think I c[oul]d sell a good many for as much as they might cost you. They w[oul]d like gingham, or something stout for working. There has been such a call for shawls & dresses, & I have kept putting them off. I wish you could have seen the rush to day. I disposed of 110 pieces. This includes what I sold wh[ich] amounts to \$25. I have never taken in so much money before in one day, & perhaps none shall again. At the close of this month I mean to send you a report for February & March. Mrs. Jacobs has been giving out things all day too. The 1st. 2 months I was here, I had not much to give out, & as I sold nothing, kept no account of the number of pieces. I now wish I had done so from the first, But how could I anticipate such an extension business? It takes me an hour or two every evening to post my accounts.

I suppose thee will see that the Mendon [New York] barrel is duly acknowledged. There were 5 or 6 quilted skirts. These always go off at once. (they are called 'wads') Every thing in the [barrel] was acceptable, & but few of the contents are at our room now. Please thank them for us.

Mrs. Jacobs & I have been very much tried of late. Did I tell you in my last that Dr. Bigelow says he means to take all the orphans to the smallpox hos[pital]? Of course Mrs. J[acobs] feels as indignant as I do. I told her that I had concluded that it was not my duty to remain quiet & see this outrage go on. So last Saturday for the first time we called on Gen. Slough. Mrs. J[acobs] asked him "if we might gather all the little orphans & put them in a room at the barracks & we c[oul]d employ a woman to take care of them." He said "Yes, it was a very laudable object." Then I told him why we asked it, & that Dr. B[igelow] said he should take them to the pest house. Said he "Dr. Bigelow has no right to do any such thing." Then I told him that I wished to have the guard removed from the room that they use at the barracks, & he said they need not be quartered there.

My friend, this was really a great undertaking for us; we are in such a state of nervous excitement, that we were all of a trouble, & we had such a head ache too! Mrs. Jacobs spoke very handsomely to him, & when pleading for these children said she "I Have been a slave myself." He is a very reserved & unapproachable man, but he listened to us quite as kindly as we expected, & we obtained all we asked for. Monday P.M. we called on the Pro[vost] Mar[shal]. This I dread more than to call on the Governor, but we composed ourselves & agreed not to cry if we could help it, & went to the office. I introduced Mrs. J[acobs] & Col. Wells condescended to talk with us a little while.

Mr. Gladwin is contriving to have every room at the "Freedmen's Home" (I call it) rented. That is he tries to put one family into every room that must pay rent, \$4 a mo[nth], & then fill it up with others, & in this way these 36 rooms w[oul]d rent for \$1800 a year. Why, it is oppressive & extortionate. I cannot endure it in silence. It took Mr. G[ladwin] to contrive this. I was sure that Col. Wells did not intend this, so I asked him. But he meant to put those who are too poor to pay rent into as many rooms as they needed, & when these were all accommodated, then fill up the rest with those who are able to pay rent. I would not object to this, & I think I shall carry this point. When the coal was taken up there, Mr. G[ladwin] told them they must pay for it. I think he means to extort every cent from those he can. But the Provost said to us that rations & coal would be found them, so I think Mr. G[ladwin] will have to back out of that. There the guard have been such a nuisance! 5 or 6 soldiers quartered right in the midst of those women & children! I asked Col. Wells to remove them. Those people need to be protected perhaps from outsiders, but they themselves need no watching. He says he thinks he will remove them entirely. There is always a guard of 35 men at the slave pen which is near, & he says if these people are disturbed they can give the alarm. I had a little rather have a guard on the outside for a while longer, but I dont want them inside of the enclosure. All these things have disturbed & worried us, & these are not all. The rooms at the Home have not all been filled yet. Mr. G[ladwin] is trying to get some body to go in that will pay, & in this way there will be probably a good many left out who ought to go there. I was up there yesterday & my "ear was pained, my soul was sick." How some of these poor women struggle to get along. Last fall the rations were very ample, now many of them dont get more than half rations, when we are told that "government is feeding them," no candles are allowed to well ones, & the soap amounts to nearly nothing. I mean to get time soon to take note of every person in those rooms. Mr. G[ladwin] manages so with the schools & the meetings, that I am not alone in thinking we might as well not have any. Dr. Bigelow thought it would take a week or 10 days perhaps to get things agoing, but he finds that he can't hurry the authorities any more than the rest of us can. They have not begun to clean the houses yet where we are. Every item we get or have done has to go through a long

process. The hospital is needed very much, & Mr. G[ladwin]'s bed is in our room yet. It is so annoying & so in the way but he "don't see it."

I would like nothing better than to write something for you. But how can I? Before these rooms are filled Mrs. J[acobs] & I want to hunt up the poor scattering families. Mr. G[ladwin] won't do it. Then we went to get the orphans before D. B[igelow] gets them. Then we want to fix the rooms & beds &c. Then there are sick persons that we have to see to. Here at Mr. K[imball]'s one or more of the servants are sick all the while. I have to see to them some. Oh! how I w[oul]d like to go into the kitchen & read to them every evening & teach them, but I can't do it. Sunday evening I spent in the parlor which is the first time in 2 or 3 w[ee]ks. Then we have to get places for girls, & then afterwards we want to go & see them.

There is a Conn[ecticut] lady taking care of a sick man at a secesh house on Royal st[reet]. She says & others say that they abuse a young girl that lives there dreadfully. She has been their slave & she does not know but she is yet. If there was a place to put the girl a little while I should try to get her away. I hope I can yet do so.

I find more & more to do every day. Then all the work to do at the Room! & Mr. G[ladwin] & Dr. B[igelow] to annoy & vex us. In order to write what thee wishes me to, I must be composed & quiet, & not be driven with work, & such a state I have not been in in some time. Some things that I have to do now can't be put off. If I should wait Mr. G[ladwin] would get somethings fixed so that we could not undo them. Mrs. J[acobs] says nothing more about going away. She begins to see what she can do now, & I hope she will keep well & be able to do it. She has considerable discussion of character & she does not mean to be imposed upon by Mr. G[ladwin] or Dr. B[igelow]. We like Dr. Shaw, but, on the 4th. inst[ant] I went to W[ashington]. I called at Dr. B[reed]'s. Mrs. Breed was sick. [T]hen I walked through the mud & mire to the Contrabands Home away up to Q st[reet]. Mary Seaving from Cayuga Co[unty, New York] is there helping Miss Howland. They don't work with Misses Patton & Doyle. Their rooms are separate, & business is kept separate. Miss H[owland] says "The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." They are in such a muddy, unhealthy place, so many are sick. But they have 3 physicians. I had rather take things here in Alex[andria] & go on with them, than to work in that camp. The people don't look as comfortable & as much improved as they do here, but perhaps it is because they are constantly having new arrivals.

I went to the Capitol. I was there about an hour before the Senate adjourned & heard a little speaking. Then the Proclamation of the President for convening the Senate again. I saw it convene & the new & the re-elected senators take the oath of office.

Some Tract Soc[iety] man who has been here & been taken around by Mr. G[ladwin] has written a long article in the "Home Evangelist" about the Contrabands here. There are so many wrong statements, & perversions of facts, that I wish very much to answer it, but I have not the time. Dr. S[haw] says "it is most all lies." But you see Mr. G[ladwin] is very highly spoken of in the article. Dr. Breed says he goes twice a week to the Sec[retary] of War, & he assures him Mr. G[ladwin] shall not be superintendent here, but he fears that Mr. Watson, the Assist[ant] Sec[retary] "will slip him in sometime." Mr. Tatham thinks he stopped it when he was in W[ashington] last. Mr. Cushman is the man they are trying to get. But Mr. G[ladwin] agrees with Gen. Slough & Col. Wells in so many things, that they may insist upon his appointment yet.

There is a new feature in affairs here. It would take the pen of a ready writer to keep up with the news. For a week or two past, every day there are companies of 20 or 30 or 40 Refugees from Richmond coming in here. They comprise men, women, children & babies, & are a forlorn looking people. I walked along with some of them yesterday as they were going to the Pro[vost] Marshall's, & I talked with the women. They can't live in R[ichmond] any longer, nothing to eat. [T]here are provisions there but they are so high they can't buy them. Calico is \$2.50 a y[ar]d. They leave with a pass from the British Consul, & I suppose they are not naturalized. They are very ignorant. They walk most all the way, they take the cars at Fairfax.

Night before last some of the Rebs came to Fairfax C[ourt] H[ouse] & took Gen. Stoughton out of his bed & carried him off with his guard. I presume they will come to Alex[andria] next.

Col. Beecher is being courtmartialled here to day, for disloyalty. He has been heard to say that rather than to have the war close before Slavery is destroyed, he would have [the war] continue. If this is treason they had better make the most of it. Oh! what people.

The moreen is precisely what I want. Obligated to thee for thy trouble.

With the present Provost Marshals we should not be likely to make any arrangements to receive our goods free of expense. The thing has been stopped in W[ashington], I believe since Capt. Todd has been Provost. My brother in law has a furlough of 15 days & called here on his way home after an absence of nearly 2 y[ea]rs.

I dont hear from Mrs. Post any more. I was expecting a box from her. I wonder if they have given it up? I do not expect to receive as many goods as I have done heretofore, & then I shall have more time for other things.

With love to the Society, to thy mother & thyself. Good night, Julia.

[From the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society Papers, 1851-1868, William L. Clements Library, the University of Michigan]

East Avon [New York] Aug[ust] 8th. [18]63

My Dear Mrs. B[arnes],

I supposed I should go to Rochester before this time, but I have not been well since I have been at home. [F]or a few days I have not been able to do any thing, & I have so much to do!

I have had 3 letters from Mrs. Breed, urging me to hasten back & take the place of matron in the Colored Home. They have been obliged to dismiss Miss Hall. But I do not feel capable of filling such a place as it should be filled. I have seen cousin Phebe Cornell. She is ready to serve these people, & at her own expense if she only knew how. She is not quite ready to say that she will take this place, should they like to have her do so. I have written to Mrs. B[reed] about Phebe. Do you know of any more suitable person?

These letters have worried me. I have had Washington & Georgetown on my mind as well as Alexandria lately. I do not sleep much, but when I do I live over again all my experience with those people, & if I talk much of them during the day I am sure to lose a night's rest.

Then I did not hear from Alex[andria], & I have been so anxious about them. I knew they would suffer. But last night I had the first letter from Mrs. Jacobs, & oh! I wish I was ready to go back now. I sometimes think I could get well faster there than I can here.

I will copy a part of Mrs. J[acobs]'s letter, & then I am sure you will think with me that if the devil doesn't catch Mr. G[ladwin] there is no use having any devil. She says in excuse for not writing before,

For the last 10 days I have scarce had a moment to myself. Every night we have had a fresh arrival of Refugees. I am up & at the Barracks by 6 o'clock, hurrying as many as I can out among their friends before Mr. Gladwin reports them for Washington. Saturday I had 3 h[ou]rs ahead of him, he found out that I had interfered, he came in great distress & said that I w[oul]d be the cause of his being arrested. I requested that we both might be arrested & then I would explain why I had interfered with these people. [H]e thought better of it & let the matter rest.

The secesh did not get on board the steamer until the Wednesday after you left. Fifteen minutes before the time of sailing, there was a report that a Telegram had been received from the War Dept. saying Richmond had surrendered & there was no place to take them. Many of them had sold their furniture cheap to the colored people & wanted it back, but they w[oul]d not give it up.

Next event was on Saturday. Poor Lucinda came to me in trouble begging I w[oul]d go to the Barracks & see how Mr. G[ladwin] was cutting up. It was about noon & very hot. I went up & found Mr. G[ladwin] had ordered two wagons to be there in the P.M. to take 40 to Arlington. I told him you requested that I should keep these people in your house until your return. He referred me to Mr. Richardson who was standing near taking down their names. Mr. R[ichardson] said his orders from Gen. Slough were to take those that were supported by government. Lucinda said "I don't want the rations if they will let me alone." I stopped the rations knowing it was the best way to effect my purpose at that time. Nearly all in the Barracks were cut off, also the outside ones. Matilda with her little baby 10 w[ee]ks old was cut off. Monday she went with her two children to service. She was sick with a cold, got wet through in a drenching rain, [and] next morning was brought to the hospital. Speechless & as I thought in a dying condition, was very ill for two weeks & is now recovering slowly. I sent her two children to your house. Poor Matilda in her delirium called constantly on Miss Wilbur & Mrs. Jacobs to take her babies.

The next thing, Mr. G[ladwin] came to make inquiries about your room. I told him he could not have it. I occupied it myself. He then went to the Barracks, brought down a stove & a man & woman to wait on him & do his cooking. [H]e wanted to put the stove up in my room & make a kitchen of t. I told him he could not have it. He then insisted on putting it up in the dining room & did put it there. I went to him next morning told him he had the two largest bedrooms in the house for himself & servants, he must either put that stove in the kitchen or the attic. I wanted part of the dining room for a living room. He began to talk about messing. I told him I did'nt want to mess with them. That day I had the stove carried to the kitchen. He has a Corporal detached to help do his dirty work. [H]e has been messing for 3 w[ee]ks, has not had a cup, spoon, knife or plate, neither a seat to sit on, borrows from one to another. [H]e had Gen. Slough's two sons to dine with him last Sabbath, & I gave him a little Sabbath lecture before them. During all the morning he had been like a crazy man, hunting up the poor refugees to send them to Washington, sent away 70 of the finest looking women & children I have seen yet. Poor Amanda came to me most heart broken, her mother was among them, & Mr. G[ladwin] would not let them stay with her. I sent her to Gen. Slough. He gave her a nore to Mr. G[ladwin] to let them remain with their children. Mr. G[ladwin] was so angry that he slapped Amanda's little girl.

Last night 50 came. I don't think he has found many of them. I sent them away as early as possible. I am doing all I can to make him complain of me. Last Friday "presented a document against him."

I have copied this that you may learn from another source than myself, how Mr. G[ladwin] performs & how these poor people are made to suffer through his cruelty. Mrs. J[acobs] is not in the least afraid of him, & I am so glad she is there. Perhaps it is best that I am away now, for if I should get too mad I might get into a fight with the Rev. Albert Gladwin.

I could not sleep last night for thinking of these poor people, & I wish I was ready to go to them now. I feel that my place is in Alex[andria]. I am sure I can do more & better for these people than a stranger can. I shall think no more of going to Georgetown, but I am very anxious that the Colored Home should be a success.

"Lucinda" is the woman who has charge of my orphan room. "Matilda" is a woman who has suffered her whole life only as a slave woman can suffer, & she thinks I am the best friend she ever had. Her baby's name is Julia Wilbur Washington.

I would like to go to city [of Rochester, New York] next week if I am well enough, but my sisters are coming from Niagara Co[unty, New York], & I do not know when I shall go. Please write.

Truly yours, Julia

[From the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society Papers, 1851-1868, William L. Clements Library, the University of Michigan]

Alex[andria] Friday Oct[ober] 2d. [18]63

My Dear Mrs. B[arnes],

Alone in my room on cor[ner] Washington & Wolfe st[ree]t sitting on a chair without a back & writing on a dry goods box. We are having a real Virginia storm of wind & rain. The rain was very much needed for it was very dry. On the morning of the 21st. Sept[ember], cousin P[hebe] Cornell met me in Avon & we started in the rain. Since then it has been bright & warm. Nothing marvellous occurred on our journey. It was rather pleasant than otherwise & we reached Washington next morning at 10.

The agent at Avon telegraphed to Rochester for a ticket for me & the conductor brought it up, & I saved something by so doing, but fare is considerable more than it was a year ago. It is \$12.50 to Washington, & cost \$15 to get to Alexandria. We went to Dr. Breed's & took tea, & they enquired after thee. They have a matron for the Colored Home, so Phebe is not needed there.

We went to the Contraband Camp in W[ashington]. It is in a much better condition than it has ever been before. They have colored surgeons now & the hospital is in nice order.

The people in Alex[andria] were very glad to see me. Those that have been here some time are doing well. But there are fresh arrivals nearly every day. Some of them stop here, the rest go on to Washington. The blockade of Alex[andria] has been raised.

The city has quite a business appearance. The streets are cleaned, & some building is in progress. It is quiet & orderly here too. Only for a few days past the 11th. & 12[th] Corps have been passing through here to join Rosecrans in Tenn[essee]. This made great commotion, for there was an immense number of cavalry, & they all stop here.

Grantville numbers about 100 houses now, & they are building a school house too. Milly Washington who was teaching when I went away is dead. Little Julia Wilbur Washington is dead too so is Abraham Lincoln Agee. There have been a large number of deaths, but there is not much sickness now.

Phebe left for home last Tuesday & was to stop in Baltimore a few days. She will see thee when she returns & explain the reason why she does not stay longer. She was much interested in all she saw. Last Sunday we had an ambulance & Phebe & Mrs. Jacobs & myself went to the Contraband Camp near Arlington. (From all accounts Mr. Nichols, the Super[intende]nt is a great deal worse than Mr. Gladwin.) We went to Camp Chase 2 mi[les] from Ft. Albany where the 2d. Colored Reg[imen]t is encamped. Then to Camp Todd where there are 2[00] or 300 contrabands who live in log huts, which were built & once occupied by a Maine Reg[imen]t. At Arlington many of them have fever & ague, & there are a great many deaths. Then we went to the Convalescent Camp. It contains about 6000 soldiers now. Phebe has not a very favorable impression of Washington or Alex[andria]; indeed, W[ashington] is the dirtiest place I ever saw, & Alex[andria] smells the worst, & Phebe was almost devoured by mosquitoes.

I take my meals at a boarding house near & pay \$4 a week, which is the best I can do at present.

W[illiam]m Cromwell & Henry Dickinson of N[ew] Y[ork] have been here to day. Dr. Bigelow has had them to himself about an hour, & I presume they think Dr. B[igelow] is all right.

Complaints against Mr. Gladwin have been sent to the Sec[retary] of War, & referred, of course to Gen. Slough, who is angry because they were not made to him first. The people he has misused have been called to witness against him, (to day & yesterday) & Sec[retary] Stanton, praising Mr. Gladwin, & telling the good he has done. I presume Col. W[ells] & Gen. S[lough] will have it all their own way. We did not think a year ago that at this time there would be a dozen people quarreling over the contrabands, & almost fighting for places here, but it is so. The 3 other doctors are all down on Dr. Bigelow, & Dr. B[igelow] wants to be super[intende]nt, & Mr. Whipple wants to be Super[intende]nt too, but like the rest he is wholly unfit for such a place. I cannot even guess what is to be done.

There is so much wrong done to these people. I am told that a whipping post was erected in the Court House y[ar]d in the summer & 3 men were publicly whipped, but Gen. Slough says the last man has been whipped while he is governor.

Some of the people that come in bring things with them, others bring nothing but what they have on. They come to us for a change & we have little or nothing to give them. Some need things very much, clothing & bedding, & the sooner

you send what you can the better it will be. I hope thee will not forget the work for the little girls, for if I have nothing for them to do pretty soon, some one else will get the start of me.

I wish thee w[oul]d send these reports to the following persons as soon as convenient. I wish particularly that the N[ew] Y[ork] folks & some others may have them as soon as possible.

Mr. McGeorge, (Teacher), Poughkeepsie, N.Y.
Mr. George Corliss, Poughkeepsie N.Y.
Oliver Johnson, 48 Beekman St. N. York
Henry Dickinson, 83 Beekman St. New York
Benjamin Tatham 82 Beekman St. New York
William Cromwell 85 Franklin St. New York
Rev. Dr. Tyng, Pres[ident] of National Freedmen's Asso[ciation], New York
Robert Dale Owen, No. 143 Sec[ond] Avenue, cor[ner of] E. 9th. St. New York
Dr. S.G. Howe, Boston, Mass[achusetts]
Col. McKaye, No. 143 Sec[ond] Avenue, cor[ner of] E. 9th. St. New York
Mrs. Philander Knight, Little York, Cortland Co. N.Y.
Mrs. Liba Thayer, Milford Mass.
Mrs. Ann B. Earle, Worcester, Mass.
Mrs. Floyd Dann East Avon N.Y.
Dr. Taintor, East Avon, N.Y.
Eliza Wilburn, East Avon N.Y.
Miss Alvira E. Hartwell East Avon N.Y.
Miss S.A. Ferriss Pine Plains, N.Y.
Mrs. R.R. Green Homer, N.Y.
Mrs. C.R. Winans, Avon, N.Y.
Mrs. H.B. Smith Avon, N.Y.
Mrs. Seth Morehouse East Avon N.Y.
Mrs. Charlotte Winsor, Little York, Cortland Co. N.Y.
Mary Wilbur, Stanfordville, N.Y.
William Lloyd Garrison, Boston [Massachusetts]
Dr. James McCune Smith New York
Mrs. Lydia Maria Child, West Newton Mass.
Miss Susan B. Anthony, Office of the Women's Loyal National League, Room No. 20,
Cooper Institute, New York
Mrs. Cornelia Post, West Taghkanic, Columbia Co. N.Y.
Mr. Hiram Lapha, Ghent, Columbia Co. N.Y.

To some of the Friends in Mendon & Wheatland & Farmington. Perhaps I am asking too much (?)

Mrs. Jacobs is going to New York in a few days. I do not know how long she will be gone.

She will try to get money to build a school house here & have a free school. She intends to have her daughter come here & teach.

Moseby [sic] & his guerrillas came within 2 miles of Alex[andria] a few nights since & took some Union men prisoners.

Lest I tire thy patience I will leave thee rest till next time.

Good night.

Hope to here from thee soon.

Truly thine

Julia A. Wilbur.

[From the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society Papers, 1851-1868, William L. Clements Library, the University of Michigan]

Alex[andria] Nov[ember] 20th. 1863

My Dear Secretary [Mrs. Barnes],

I have a good thing to tell you. Just heard this minute that a day or two since, that a man came up the river in a boat, & went within the stockades & seized 2 or 3 women & was going off with them, but they hollowed so that some person called for a guard, & an officer happened to be riding by & asked what the matter was. The man said they were his servants & he was going to take them home, & was going to the Pro[vost] Mar[shal]'s first. The officer said, "very well, that is the place for you to go." The women were sent back; they rolled on the ground for joy & thanked God they were free again. The man was sent to the old Cap[it]ol Prison, his boat was seized & a gunboat sent down a few miles for the rest of his servants. This is like an oasis in the desert.

Mrs. Jacobs & her daughter Louisa, an elegant girl, came this P.M. She has brought another colored girl for teacher, but left her in W[ashington] for a few days. I do not think there will be any chance to teach unless they can get a room for themselves, for what the Baptists dont call their ground, the Presbyterians have got, & established a mission as they call it. Mr. Crow & wife are here, but the money he expends towards building a school house & church he expects to get back again from these people, & it will be a pay school. It seems too bad that they cannot have free schools.

Now I'll give thee yesterday's performance. About 2 P.M. a girl came to tell me that the Corporal was up to the Home & turning every thing out of my room, & also all te old women & furniture out of Mrs. Jacobs room. I stepped to Mr. Gladwin's door & told him what was going on, & asked if he knew it? "Yes, & he should have the rooms himself, & he should put them all into another room together. I said no more, but wrote a line to Gen. Slough, telling him what the rooms were used for, & they met a necessity for which no other provision had been made, that not a word had been said to me about it, & I asked if the old women might remain where they had been till Mrs. J[acobs] returned, & if I might be allowed to retain a room just as I had done. I am careful to be very respectful & kept a duplicate of the letter. This P.M. I asked Mr. G[ladwin] if he knew the Pro[vost] Mar[shal] had given me that room. He said "no, but there was a new Pro[vost] Mar[shal] now, & he, Mr. G[ladwin] had the control of things now. This P.M. I got a letter from Rollin C. Gale, Acting Adjutant Gen[eral], as follows: "Miss J[ulija] Wilbur, Your communication to the General Commanding in reference to rooms in the Contraband Barracks has been referred to Mr. Gladwin, Super[intende]nt, for his action. Respectfully &c." I did not suppose they would add insult to injury, for this is nothing less. But Mrs. J[acobs] says that Gen. S[lough] was in W[ashington] to day, & I think he has not seen my letter, neither that of his adjutant. This will not be the last of the affair.

Mrs. J[acobs] says the N[ew] Y[ork] Committee are coming on soon, & if Mr. G[ladwin] can be removed it will be done. On the whole, I am not sorry this has happened. It will hasten Mr. G[ladwin] to the end of his rope. But the Mil[itary] Gov[ernor] has a great deal of power, & may have it all his own way.

Col. Greene who has had charge of all the contraband affairs here & in W[ashington] has been sent to the West, & now there is hope of having that contemptible Nichols removed. You would hardly believe the stories that are told of Nichols. Phebe can tell thee what Dr. Calkins told her. But I'll let them pass, & attend to things in our own city.

They have at last received orders to build a hospital in spite of Dr. Bigelow, & Dr. Hines says it will be done in 2 weeks, but I know better than this! They are now preparing the ground for the building. Hines is surgeon in charge & Pettijohn & Bigelow are both assistants, but they think they will work Dr. B[igelow] out before long & work Dr. Shaw in.

Dr. P[ettijohn] says there is no danger of Mrs. Bigelow's being matron here, & if Mrs. Jacobs does not want the place, perhaps they will allow me to propose one. I should think Mrs. Jacobs had enough to do without this, but as her daughter has come, perhaps she will undertake it. I have spent 2 half days at Newtown, to be called Arnoldsville, & it will take another half day yet to visit all the houses. Grantville is so large that I have given up the idea of visiting it all.

I have met with some very interesting people. I would like to have time & room to tell thee about them. I cant begin to night about Mr. Arnold. I should not know when to stop. Some other time I'll tell thee.

Last week with Miss Collier I visited every room in all the old government buildings on the wharf, old mill & all. I am going to arrange all the items, & give them to Benj[amin] Tatham when he comes, & you shall have them too. Mr. G[ladwin] spends a large share of the time in his room, which] is next to mine, & the people are coming & going & talking about rents all the time nearly. This & praying is about all he does, & then sends the Corporal around to get the rents, & if a person objects, he will be sent to the Slave pen prison at once. It seems to me that the thing can't go on much longer. Mr. Arnold told us yesterday that he had seen Mr. G[ladwin]'s books, & he received for the barracks about \$150 a month. He is searching out all the old ruins that government claims to put these people into & make them pay rent for them.

The people at Newtown have been ordered to build chimnies to ther houses, & some of them don't know what to do, for they have already spent every cent they had to put up the shanties.

Phebe's box came last Saturday, & it has done a great deal of good. A large share of the things are gone already, & nearly all the things that were in the trunk that were appropriate to the season. Mrs. J[acobs] does not expect any thing till the last of next week.

The Soldier's Rest is guarded by 75 of the Invalid Corps. They are kept very strict. I was there a few days ago, & had some Anti Slavery & temperance tracts. [T]hey almost grabbed them, they have no reading there now. I wish I had those books Dewey gave me. They are just what these men w[oul]d like. I hope they are not all spoiled. Mary Julia says I can get no insurance for my damages, but I am sorry about it.

I received the 3 democrats that I wanted. Thanks for thy trouble, & I would also thank somebody for the regular Weekly Democrat. The bugles sounded nearly an hour ago. Good night.

Saturday evening.

This morning Mrs. J[acobs] went to see Gen. Slough, who sent for Mr. Gladwin, & there was a rich time. Ge. S[lough] was very severe with Mr. G[ladwin]. He threatened him with the Slave pen several times. Mr. G[ladwin] contradicted himself, & complained of Mrs. J[acobs] & I, that Mrs. J[acobs] had slandered him &c. She told how he had used me about the room last summer, & other things. He asked how many rooms I had here. Mrs. J[acobs] told him, one small one. He said to Mr. G[ladwin] "I distinctly told you not to turn her out of that room" (It is evident Mr. G[ladwin] intended to turn us all out of this house in a few days. [H]e w[oul]d have told the Pro[vost] Mar[shal] that he needed all the house & we did nothing here.) Gen. S[lough] said I had done some good but I had done harm too, & I could have no rooms at the barracks. But Mrs. J[acobs] can have a room there for the old women. I am sorry for the people, for this room had been very useful. I have no place for my sewing school now. He evidently has a spite against me. Mr. G[ladwin] said he would resign if these women staid here. Gen. S[lough] said "very well, I will write your resignation, there are other persons who can be had, you have said so several times, but you don't frighten us.["] When he told Gen. S[lough] that our rooms at the two barracks would rent for \$90, Gen. S[lough] said "what is that to you whether they rent for 10 c[en]ts or \$90. I've told you not to press these people for rent, but let them pay a low price if they were able. & a great deal more was said. Gen. S[lough] said if there was another house to be had, we or Mr. G[ladwin] might have it. We may not live in the same house much longer. But I don't think we shall be any worse off for this talk. Mr. G[ladwin] wants all this house for himself & teachers. He says he superintends 7 schools. I have not seen him to day, but they say he looks very crest-fallen. I think this will hasten his removal, & when Mr. Tatham comes, the rent subject will be brought up.

When Sam[ue]l May & wife from Mass[achusetts] returned from here Capt Wyman rode all the way to Baltimore for the sake of talking to them to convince them that Mr. Gladwin was just the man for the place, & he had done so much good. Mr. May says Capt. W[yman] to have lost all the Anti-Slavery he ever had.

Mrs. May is coming here again. Mrs. Jacobs says she helped her grandmother make the wedding cake for Dr. Wright that was hung at Norfolk.

Mrs. J[acobs] had an interesting time at Norfolk & Fortress Monroe. Great many nice colored folks in Norfolk. Please write me soon. We have had warm, pleasant weather, but to day it has rained incessantly. I have only been out to my meals.

How do the people of R[ochester] feel at the prospect of a rebel invasion? I wonder what will come next.

Please remember me to all the ladies. Love to your Mother & your self. Julia

[P.S.] I believe things are improving here. I can bide my time, & thank God that so much has been done.

[From the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society Papers, 1851-1868, William L. Clements Library, the University of Michigan]

Alex[andria] Mar[ch] 5th. [18]64.

My Dear Mrs. B[arnes]

The box came yesterday, & it did my eyes good to see such nice things. I was delighted with the Shawl, & was so glad you sent it. I wanted no other kind, & could not exactly describe it to you. I saw one of this kind in W[ashington] the other day, & for fear you would not send this kind, I thought it best not to get any. You could not have pleased me better. And this morning your kind letter came saying "the Shawl is a gift from the Society." Many thanks to the ladies for such a nice present, & I shall appreciate it accordingly. I have not decided yet to keep the one you sent first, but it shall be no loss to the Society.

The plaid shawl you have sent is as nice a one as I ever saw. There is no mark on it, & I cannot guess at the cost. Of course it has cost more than \$5. The girl did not intend to pay over \$5. However, I will make the best disposition of it that I can, But I would like to know how much it cost, as it is so nice. I will keep it a few days till I hear from thee. I w[oul]d not like to make any great mistake about it. The calico is marked, but the cotton I am not sure about, unless a pencil mark means 32 c[en]ts per y[ar]d.

It is fortunate that the last blankets you sent had not the government mark upon them, they are all gone but one. I have had blankets this winter with U.S. upon them & they were not marked "condemned" either, & all such will probably be taken from the people, & in some cases those without U.S. have been taken. An order was given a few days since to seize every thing in citizens' possession with the U.S. mark upon it, and all soldiers clothing. Some colored men were stripped entirely & the houses searched too. When camps are broken, old clothes are left lying about & the contrabands take & wash them & make them useful, & they beg sometimes certain articles including blankets. & this order comes very hard upon them. If they can show that they bought them of Mrs. J[acobs] & I, it would not help them any. The Pro[vost] Mar[shal] told me yesterday that blankets & other goods find their way north & are sold there. I suppose this is a necessary order. It would be safe to send white blankets (but they should be coarse). But very few bed quilts have been sent to us this winter.

The reason I have said nothing in particular about boys clothes is, that Mrs. J[acobs] generally has a supply of these, & of girls clothes also. Piece goods for men's clothes have been sent to her lately, & cotton & calico, & she is desired to dispose of some things for what they cost.

Since the Army moved some new people have come in here, & a large number have gone to W[ashington]. I wish I could have some more second hand clothing. I think I will write to Poughkeepsie & see if I cannot get some. I suppose some of the Rochester folks think they have done all their duty now, & they did do well as I see by the papers. Old clothes are sent here from N[ew] Y[ork] as well as new ones.

About a month ago I did feel as if I might do more good somewhere else perhaps. That in W[ashington] the people were suffering more than they were here. But Mrs. Breed & some others are moving in that matter now, & there is a prospect of some relief being extended to those who are scattered about in the suburbs of the city, who have no rations, no medical attendance & pay high rents. They will not get to Arlington if they can help it. What discourages me more than any thing else is the fact that Nichols remains at A[rlington] yet, after so much has been proved against him. Benj[amin] Tatham went home feeling sure that Nichols w[ould] be removed immediately, but Col. Greene keeps him there no doubt. Greene is trying to be made the Gen[eral] in Chief of Freedmen, & many are in favor of him, but another party have in their possession too many damaging facts in regard to him to make him sure of the office. Now, to come nearer home. I was told yesterday that Gen. Slough is to be removed, & Gen. Briggs is talked of as his successor. Complaints have been made of Gen. S[lough] lately. The 12 mounted orderlies & the band of music kept for his pleasure & at Government expense is not approved by all in authority, & there are other things too. The defaulting Q[uartermaster] M[aster] & his chief clerk have been released from Old Capitol [Prison] unconditionally, & there was a jollification here when they came back.

Last Saturday Mr. Gladwin told Mrs. J[acobs] that he wanted this house & we might go in to the other house. He must have an office, a sleeping room & a spare sleeping room, & a reception room, & the highest room was wanted for Miss Collins & Miss Owen, Mr. O[wen]'s daughter, who has come to teach, also rooms for his men & servants &c. How many do you think he has of these? There are Mr. Owen, Secretary & toady, the Corporal who collects rents, carries dispatches &c., Mr. Axe, who teaches at Barracks, Peter Washington & wife Susan, the latter does most of the cooking for all these, washing for some of them, & cleaning, & is paid nothing. Peter preaches for Mr. G[ladwin] & keeps up prayer meetings, goes for rations, saws the wood, washes dishes or cooks, makes fires or any thing else. & a boy who does errands, cleans knives & blacks boots & washes dishes. Mr. G[ladwin] pays Peter \$15 a month. Mr. O[wen] & Miss Owen [&] the Corporal & Mr. Axe & Peter & Susan draw full rations, wood, coal &c. Mr. Gladwin lives off of these. Peter buys all the milk & they are all mean enough to let him do it. Mr. G[ladwin] has been known to buy a little butter. He is the greatest sponger I ever saw.

Neither Mrs. J[acobs] nor I will go into the other house. The only 3 front rooms the surgeon has. The others look out into a narrow back yard. The sick, the dying & the dead that we have seen there for the year past would haunt us. We could'nt live there if there was room enough. So Mrs. J[acobs] told Mr. G[ladwin] She would not go out out of this house unless Gen. Slough ordered her to do so, & then she should go to him & ask if she could'nt remain here until she c[ould] send to Mr. Tatham & he could come & find her a house. "Oh! I don't want you to go to Gen. Slough, don't do that. I did'nt know but you w[ould] rather go in there & be by yourselves." The idea of putting us out & putting 2 other women in here! I think he has given it up, but I can't tell, he is not apt to give up any thing. He is thoroughly selfish. I am already ashamed of such a gossiping letter, & will dismiss Mr. G[ladwin].

If there was a room that Mrs. J[acobs] & I c[ould] furnish together for a sitting room we w[ould] like it, but there's not, & then we are sure of nothing. My room is well enough now for the purpose for wh[ich] I use it; my bed is comfortable, I have a bit of carpet for the middle of the floor, which is enough, & I am entirely reconciled to the room. It is a queer way to live I'll allow. When ladies come I take them in to my room. If I had a large clothes press or wardrobe to put things away out of sight. I w[ould]d'nt mind the bed so much, & would like to have a little furniture, & then I could receive visitors in it. But those that I once knew here have found out I have no place to receive co[mpany] & many do not come any more. If I have to leave here I must try to find a boarding place, but it will cost perhaps \$2.00 a week more. I have a woman come & do my washing once in 4 w[ee]ks, & I do my ironing so that item is not large, but I have to do my part of cleaning halls, stairs &c. & with all of Mr Gladwin's men tramping through them, & our customers too, a great deal of cleaning is required.

Mrs. J[acobs] says when she goes away in the summer she shall not come back, & that may make it more necessary for me, or someone else, to stay here. I am willing to stay here if it seems best, but it may be necessary for me to go home soon, as my father will probably leave his place this spring, & I wish to be there when the things are moved. I may wish to be absent 2 or 3 w[ee]ks, & then I will come back & stay later perhaps than I did last summer.

As to the salary, my friend, it does not worry me at all. I never did look out for myself very well, but as my board does not cost as much as it did last year, on account of my dispensing with some privileges, I thought with thyself, that they might be willing to increase the salary. I have \$100 now that I w[ould]d like to send you, I have sent Phebe C[ornell] \$50 & the Worcester Society \$60, as they buy & keep sending more goods. The contents of the last barrel of the W[orcester] Society cost \$92, But I only send back a part of what I take for their goods.

As the army advances & spring opens, more people will come in, & we shall keep wanting more clothing & bedding.

Last evening, Frederick Brown, brother of John, spoke here, also Downing & Redmond. The two latter & Mr. Smith & Peter Downing have been here & in W[ashington] about 3 mo[nths] & they do these people, both contrabands & others, immense good. They have good success too in recruiting.

I dreamed of thy mother last night, & of thyself also, but thee was crying. I am glad to hear that thy mother & thy baby are better. I went to the Hos[pital] yesterday. Moved 3 weeks ago. No washing done yet, & several have died. The sick are allowed only the miserable rations that are issued under the new orders, poor flour 5 days & wormy indian meal

2 days in a w[ee]k. No drink for men, but women & children have 10 lbs. of rye coffee, or 15 oz. of tea to every 100 rations. Dr. Bentley is trying to get something more for them. There are about 20 inmates now, & they have 50 or 60 bedsteads.

I sometimes get almost sick of the world. A few days since I went to the County jail to see the young woman who was whipped, but the jailor kept near us all the while. I thank thyself & Mrs. Porter for wishing me to have a more comfortable place, but never mind now. I may see thee soon.

Penn'a. Freedmen's Relief Association, No. 207 I Street, Washington, D.C.

[From the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society Papers, 1851-1868, William L. Clements Library, the University of Michigan]

Washington Feb[ruary] 8th. [18]65

My Dear Miss Porter,

I do so wish to hear from Rochester. I wrote you on the 17th. Jan[uary] & Mrs. Marsh on the 21st Jan[uary], but have yet received no reply.

I closed up my business in Alex[andria] last week, cleaned my feet of the sacred soil & with the assistance of Uncle Samuel emigrated with my goods & chattels to 207 I street, Washington, D.C. (Please put the number on your letters & then they will be left at our door, we are a long way from the Post Office).

I came over last Friday. Since then I have been exercising my ingenuity to make our abode comfortable. My sister is with me. The fixings of my room are mostly of native pine & I have driven a vast amount of nails. Our room is 15½ ft. by 10½ ft. & I have a piece of old carpet about 3 y[ar]ds square in the middle. The floor is so leaky that it cannot be cleaned often nor thoroughly, for it would spoil the wall below in the "reception room." I would like matting enough to cover this room, & if the ladies are disposed to send some in the next Box, or give me permission to buy it here, I would consider it a favor. I have some money on hand but I shall not probably sell any thing for some time yet.

Have you ever received that bundle from Avon [New York]? I have wished for it all winter. I want some more Reports very, very much. The one doz[en] that I have had went but a little way, & I want them more now than I ever shall again, & I would like a few of the old ones also.

A Box came to day from Mendon [New York], it is valued at \$200. It was got up through Cousin P[hebe] Cornell's influence. And I have received \$12 from my friends in Dutchess Co[unty, New York].

I sent you \$100 by Charlotte. I suppose you received it?

I do not know how yet how I shall manage about board. The weather has been terrible since last Friday, some days I have not been out only to the baker's. Yesterday it snowed & hailed & rained. To day it is all sposh, & the crossingsm are almost impassible. In a few days it may be dusty. It is very bad for the poor who live in the shanties & old homes. There are several soup houses here now, & Government has distributed blankets & wood. I forget whether I wrote you in my last of the terrible amount of suffering here?

Gladwin has been superseded certainly but we think Gen. Slough will do all he can to get him another place, in Savannah perhaps. The Gen[eral] intends to go there soon to be Mil[itary] Gov[ernor]. There are so many teachers & missionaries in Alex[andria] that things are getting quite mixed up.

I have become acquainted with Gov. Pierpont & family & I like them very much. He is really Anti Slavery (although a Virginian) & the ladies gave me a quantity of 2d. hand clothing & went out with me some.

I feel really bad on leaving Alex[andria]. When I told one woman that I was going away she said "There I'm done broke now." But they will get along after this winter I hope. [I]t is hard for many of them now.

The electoral vote was taken this P.M. & every body almost has been to the Capitol. I did not know it until after it was over. I have been to Congress but once this winter. I would like to have been there when the House passed the [13th] Amendment to the Constitution.

With kind regards to all my friends. Please write at your earliest convenience & oblige. Yours very truly
Julia A. Wilbur

P.S. This \$3 note was sent to me from Dutchess [County, New York]. It is good I suppose but will not pass here. Please send me green backs for it.

[From the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society Papers, 1851-1868, William L. Clements Library, the University of Michigan]

During the war, the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society received donations from groups and individuals from the above-mentioned towns in New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts. They also known to have received funds and clothing from anti-slavery and freedmen's aid societies in Birmingham, Bristol, Liverpool, Leeds, Mansfield, Halifax and Burwick-on-Tweed, England; Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Montrose, and Dalkeith, Scotland; and Dublin and County Tyrone, Ireland. Individual contributors included such prominent anti-slavery activists as Frederick Douglass (and his daughter, Rosa, and son, Lewis), Harriet Tubman, Lewis Tappan and Julia Griffiths Crofts. Douglass gave at least one lecture whose proceeds went to the Society. He also forwarded to the Society moneys contributed by some of the organizations in the British Isles. The lion's share of the revenues were spent on the Alexandria "agency," including board and salary for Julia Wilbur and for the purchase and shipping of clothes and other goods.