

Camp in Maryland, nearly oppo-  
site Shepardstown, Va. Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> 1862.  
Dear Sister.

I received your letter of  
Sept. 21<sup>st</sup> night before last and took this  
opportunity to answer it. I also received  
at the same time letters from a very former  
cousin in Sarah's H. and Angelina's H.  
I will tell you now before I write any  
more all that I know about Fred. I have  
inquired of all that I think would know  
anything about it and can find only one  
who remembers of seeing Fred after the  
retreat commenced. This was a Mr Walker  
of our company, the same about Windsor  
wrote you about. He says that after  
the regiment had begun to fall back  
he passed Fred and said to him,  
"Come over here you are going to fall  
back." Fred was about ten feet from  
him then. He had not ceased firing as  
I understand Mr W. to say. Fred said  
"Yes" and came after him. A little way  
from there, there was a ditch they had  
to cross on the retreat. Mr Walker  
says he saw Fred just before crossing  
the ditch, but did not see Fred cross or see  
him after this. This is all that I can find  
out about him. although as you may

suppose I have made every inquiry that  
I think would be of any use. I cannot learn  
so any other person saw him after the  
retreat began. He was not wounded then  
and of course we know not whether he  
was after or not. You say in your  
letter of the 21<sup>st</sup> Sept. as follows. "In one  
letter you say 'wounded in side by piece  
of shell'". I think one of us have made a  
mistake, either myself in writing or you  
in reading. It was John Jordan who was  
wounded in the side and I should have said  
so. If I did not it is a mistake of mine  
so I never understood that Fred was hurt  
at all. but I do know that he was ~~not~~ taken  
the retreat commenced. This is all I can  
tell you. I would not withhold any thing from  
your knowledge be it ever so good or bad.  
You ask several questions which I will  
answer so best I can. The retreat was not  
until near night. Our ambulances did not go  
to the field until the next day as it was  
not possible, and this may lead you to in-  
quire, why did they not go that night. I will  
tell you. The ambulances are kept in the rear  
of the army during an action and it  
takes some time for them to come up.  
If a flag of truce must pass over for  
permission for troops to bury our dead.

and take off wounded. That is the reason  
our wounded were not taken off sooner.  
You say a little require the suspense  
Father and you are in danger and so Fred.  
Perhaps I do not. As to you self, you know  
I have always been in the habit of taking things  
so calmly as possible and now I must say  
that I do not look on the dark side at all  
but all the time I hope for the best. If I  
should give way to feelings here it would  
do no good. but at the same time I feel  
for Fred and think of his situation was  
much perhaps as you do. But it does me  
no any good to look at the dark side.  
I can write no more about him now  
but if I hear any more from him you  
shall know immediately. I have been to  
visit the Dr. Bayo this afternoon. He is  
enjoying pretty good health at present  
He looks hard and tough, just as if he could  
go through with considerable hard work.  
All the others are well as usual.  
I think I & I are getting along first rate  
enjoying a tolerable good share of health.  
You say I never never would give  
my consent to your going near this  
accursed war were you at home now  
Do not feel so. you could not refuse  
my going now were I there & wished to go  
but I do not.

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I have been in fight but once as yet.  
Perhaps shall never again but if I  
do I am determined no one shall see me  
hold back or show that I am afraid to  
face the grey backs. They are no enemy  
at all in an open field but will fight  
well if they get the advantage of us  
in position. The fight I was in was  
across the river one week ago Saturday.  
I'm retreating the rebels killed us well as  
we crossed the river. The water would  
now and then boys up around us as a ball  
struck it. still few were hurt in crossing.  
It's getting dark here and I must stop  
soon. Mrs. Whites letters have been received  
for which you can assure her she has my  
warmest thanks. Although a stranger to  
me yet her friendship for you makes me  
feel almost as though I heard from you  
when she writes. I hope she will take the  
trouble to write again. If I can possibly  
answer her letters I will do so, but under  
present circumstances I cannot write home  
more than once when I would like to do so.  
We have no conveniences for writing here.  
Do send you these few scratches I had to borrow  
paper, ink, pen, envelope, and stamp.  
Remember me to Dr. Burdett & a wife & Gunston  
Love to all reserving a good share for yourself  
From your Obedt Edward G. Churchill.

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Camp in Maryland nearly opposite Shepardstown, Virginia

October 1st 1862

Dear Sister,

I received your letter of September 21st night before last and take this opportunity to answer it. I also received at the same time letters from Aunt Jane, cousin Sarah L. H. and Angeline E. Ellis.

I will tell you now before I write anymore all that I know about Fred. I have enquired of all that I think would know anything about it and can find only one who remembers of seeing Fred after the retreat commenced. This was a Mr. [William S.] Walker of our company — the same Lieutenant [that] Winsor wrote you about. He says that after the regiment had begun to fall back, he passed Fred and said to him, “Come, Fred, are you not going to fall back?” Fred was about ten feet from him then.

He had not ceased firing as I understand Mr. Walker to say. Fred said, "Yes," and came after him. A little way from there, there was a ditch they had to cross on the retreat. Mr. Walker says he saw Fred just before crossing the ditch but did not see Fred cross or see him after this. This is all that I can find out about him although, as you may suppose, I have made every inquiry that I think would be of any use. I cannot learn as any other person saw him after the retreat began. He was not wounded then and of course we know not whether he was after or not.

You say in your letter of the 21st September as follows, "In one letter you say "wounded in side by piece of shell." I think one of us have made a mistake — either myself in writing or you in reading. It was John Jordan <sup>1</sup> who was wounded in the side and I should have said so, If I did not, it is a mistake of mine as I never understood that Fred was hurt at all. But I do know that he was not when the retreat commenced. This is all I can tell you. I would not withhold anything from your knowledge be it ever so good or bad.

You ask several questions which I will answer as best I can. The retreat was not until near night. Our ambulances did not go to the field until the next day as it was not possible, and this may lead you to enquire, "Why did they not go that night?"

I will tell you. The ambulances are kept in the rear of the army during an action and it takes some time for them to come up. Then a flag of truce must pass over for permission for troops to bury our dead and take off wounded. That is the reason our wounded were not taken off sooner.

You say I little realize the suspense Father and you are in in regard to Fred. Perhaps I do not. As to myself, you know I have always been in the habit of taking things as calmly as possible and now I must say that I do not look on the dark side at all but all the time I hope for the best. If I should give way to feelings here, it would do no good. But at the same time, I feel for Fred and think of his situation as much perhaps as you do. But it does no one any good to look at the dark side. I can write no more about him now but if I hear anymore from him, you shall know immediately.

I have been to visit the 32nd [Massachusetts] boys this afternoon. Teddy is enjoying pretty good health at present. He looks hardy and tough, just as if he could go through with considerable hard work. All the others are well as usual. Frank & I are getting along first rate enjoying a tolerable good share of health.

You say "I never never ever would give my consent to your going near this accursed war were you at home now." Do not feel so. You could not refuse my going now more were I there & wished to go, could you now. I have been in [a] fight but once as yet [and] perhaps shall never again. But if I do, I am determined no one shall see me hold back or show that I am afraid to face the greybacks. They are no enemy at all in an open field but will fight well if they get the advantage of us in position. The fight I was in was across the river one week ago Saturday. In retreating, the Rebs pelted us well as we crossed the river. The water would now and then leap up around us as a ball struck it. Still few were hurt in crossing.

It's getting dark here and I must stop soon. Mrs. White's letters have been received for which you can assure her she has my warmest thanks. Although a stranger to me yet, her friendship for you makes me feel almost as though I heard from you when she writes. I hope she will take the trouble to write again.

If I can possibly answer her letters, I will do so but under present circumstances I cannot write home more than once where I would like to 3 or 4 times. We have no conveniences for writing here. To send you these few scribbles, I had to borrow paper, ink, pen, envelope, and stamp.

Remember me to Bradford K & wife & grandma. Love to all reserving a good share for yourself. From your brother, — Edmund F. Churchill

# Bio of Edmund Findlay Churchill

Born in 1842 child of Isaiah Churchill (1806-1880) and Polly Stevens Parker (1809-1894) of Plympton, Plymouth County, Massachusetts.

Edmund enlisted on 9 August 1862 with Co. E, 18th Massachusetts Infantry and served in the same company as his twin brother, Isaiah F. Churchill, and another brother, Frederick ("Fred") S. Churchill. He was promoted to the rank of Sergeant on 1 May 1863. He was further engaged with the regiment in 1863 at Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, and Rappahannock Station. He was again engaged in the Overland Campaign from 1 May 1864, including the Battle of the Wilderness. He was wounded at the battle of Laurel Hill, Virginia on 8 May 1864, when struck in the head by a ricocheting bullet and knocked unconscious by the concussion of a shell. He was mustered out of military service on 2 September 1864 at the expiration of his three-year enlistment. Edmund passed away in 1921

<sup>1</sup> John Jordan of Plympton, Massachusetts, died on 14 September 1862 of the wound he received at 2nd Bull Run.