

Before Petersburg Va
July 23^d, 1864

My dear father
Hours pass wearily
when we have no mails of all
things else the soldier watches the
mails and how many are seen turning
away when it has been distributed
with looks of sadness, and hear them
say "Strange I do not hear from
home" now untill I became a
soldier could I understand why
Poets sung of "home sweet-home" and
could our friends at home know
how much soldiers prized anything
from home I think they would

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(Coll. 184, Box 1/9)
MMN #64490

Date: July 23, 1864

Description: John P. Sheahan on Petersburg trenches

at least write oftener. when we get letters from home we forget that we are soldiers, the long march the danger of the battle field, the aching wound are all forgotten and the soldier goes home on an airy furlough, he stands where he used to stand months or perhaps years before, he sees the old school house on the hill, in mine he is at home, his mother stands ready to greet him he takes again the hands of long parted friends who bid him welcome from successful war, he walks familiar streets greeted on every side by those who now pride themselves upon the acquaintance of a returned soldier.

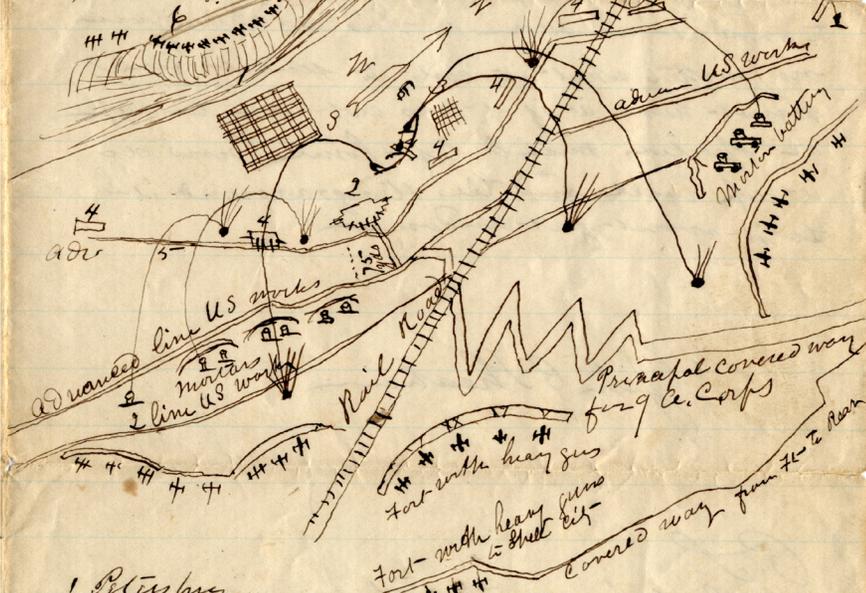
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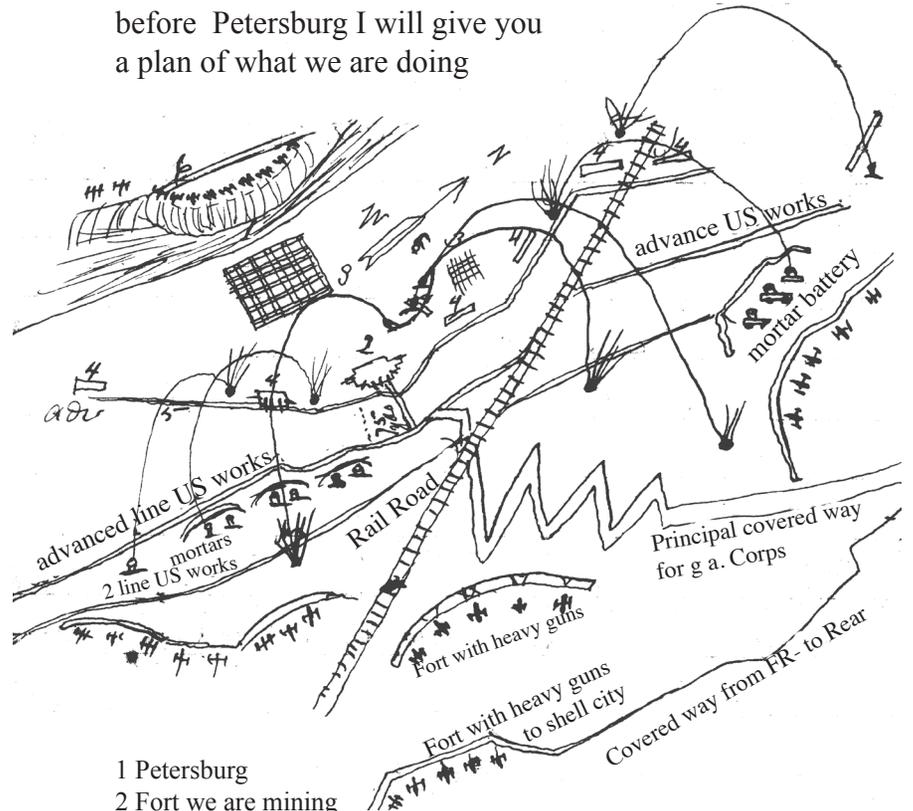
We are still in the trenches before Petersburg I will give you a plan of what we are doing



- 1 Petersburg
 - 2 Fort we are mining
 - 3 Small village to right of Petersburg
 - 4 Rebel forts
 - 5 Rebel line of works
 - 6 Rebel artillery on heights beyond the river which commands the city.
- Shell from mortar bursting
line showing course of shell this is a line of fire in the night
a covered way is a deep ditch with the dirt thrown towards the enemy

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[drawing] Shell from mortar bursting line showing course of shell this is a line of fire in the night
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This will give you a very correct
idea of the situation. The Rebs have
opened their mortars and the pieces
are flying round like humming birds

O by the way I forget to tell you
to do that jacket of mine up in good
shape and send it to me by mail I
need it very much have it well cleaned
with a damp sponge now dont forget
to send it as soon as this reaches you.
no matter what it costs to send it for I
must have it if it has not been cut up
or spoiled since I left home now do
it up well and tie strings around it
so it wont get undone

John P Sheahan

P.S.
a leaf from the tree under which
I wrote this letter I had a leaf picked
to put in this when a bullet came crashing
through the limbs of the tree above my
head and cut a little limb which fell
at my feet I will send you one of its
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