

GEORGE REED'S APRIL 20, 1861 LETTER HOME

Narrator: George Reed was an 18-year-old farm laborer when he was called up with the Davis Guards to defend Washington. The troops made good progress until they got to Baltimore, where the regiment was attacked by a mob. Before they made it through, four soldiers and nine civilians were dead, the first casualties from hostile fire of the Civil War; it was the 19th of April, 1861. The next day, George wrote to his uncle, Nathan Reed in Natick, Massachusetts:

George Reed: Dear Uncle I now take this Opportunity to write to you to Let you know that I still Live. I am now in the White house in the Gallery over the Senate Chambers. ... We had quite a Little Brush at Baltimore and lost 3 of our men. They Lost 8 of the Rebels they threwed stones into the cars and tore up the Track but as soon as we fired they Scattered. ... I hope I Shall Live to come Back to Massachusetts and see you all. ... We left home Tuesday Morning 3 o'Clock. Father he felt rather Bad to have us go off. But it is all for the Best. Give my love to Dan & Aunt and Frank and all inquiring Friends. ... We are to stay here 3 months to go where we are ordered we shall See some warm work Before we come back. I think Virginia, she has gone, but the arsenal at Harpers Ferry has been Blown up. I do not think of any more News So Good By. Be of Good Cheer. It is hard But fair. From your Nephew George A. Reed Washington D C. ...

Narrator: George Reed enlisted twice more after his 90 day stint, reaching the rank of lieutenant by the end of the war. He worked for the railroad and became a Framingham selectman, state representative and state senator. He died in 1923 at the age of 80.