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Transcription:

[*Columbia Spy*, 7 March 1863, page 2, columns 3-4]

NEWPORT NEWS, VA.,
February 23, 1863

Dear Spy: — We have settled down very comfortably in our new camp, and although we have been here but a short time, the morals of our corps is wonderfully improved. The mails are very regular, and we receive New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington papers, one day after publication; we receive them too at the reasonable price of five cents per copy—in the Army of the Potomac we had to pay ten. You are kind enough to send us the SPY gratis, which is to us far more interesting than all the others combined.

I am very sorry that the Stevens bill for enlisting the darkies did not become a law. Several, including Bill Brown, have applied for admission into this regiment. Of course *slab feet* will not be admitted into the 45th; but they might organize companies and regiments of their own, or go into the regular army. We hear that the good people of Columbia are in great tribulation over the increase in "*de cullud population*," Is not this same class of good people rather hard to please? Are they not opposed to negro soldiers, as well as opposed to negro migration into Pennsylvania? Are they not opposed to entering the army themselves, or permitting their friends so to do? And further, are not the same people opposed to the war and to the Government, and in hearty sympathy with the rebels? Are not all of these opposing principles (!) the sum and substance of the creed of the peace party? Now would it not be better to encourage negro emigration—in view of the draft that must soon take place under the conscription bill? In the South Ward, where the last draft was so oppressive to the white population, could not the darkies fill up the next quota, providing the peace men hang back themselves? The truth is, we must have soldiers, and if whites will not come, why should they object to the blacks coming? If an able-bodied white man objects to enlisting blacks, the white man have the preference, providing he is not in favor of compromise or peace—both of which mean Southern Confederacy. That class of men are not wanted in the army, and should not exist out of it.

It is rumored that General Burnside will relieve General Dix at Fortress Monroe, and that our corps will be divided—one Division at Newbern, one at Norfolk, and one remaining here at Fortress Monroe. This is to us good news. Burnside is the idol of the 9th corps. I am inclined to believe that the news will prove true, and that our regiment will be stationed either in Fortress Monroe or at Norfolk. The 45th is regarded as the most soldier-like and best disciplined regiment in the corps, and will no doubt be placed in the most important position. It is universally conceded that the morale of our men—their conduct and character—will equal if not exceed that of any other regiment in the service. This is a subject of general remark by officers of other regiments. If you doubt it, or if any of your readers doubt it, pay us a visit and judge for yourselves.



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Quarter-Master McClure, Commissary-Sergeant Roath, private Joseph B. Bostick, and drummer Rollie Roberts, have arrived from home. They bring such glad tidings, and speak so much of home comforts and pleasures, that the home-visiting mania is seizing all of us. Even I propose petitioning for a furlough, in order to get my eye on the good old town, and the girls I love so much.

Respectfully &c “45.”

Address: —Company “K” 45th Regt. (Col. Welsh’s) Penna. Vols., 9th Army Corps. Via Fortress Monroe, Va.

[Transcribed by MTA, November 2020.]

Scope and Content Note:

"Army Correspondence." Newport News, Virginia, 23 February 1863. This portion of the article discusses disappointment that the Stevens bill for enlisting [men of color] did not become law, men of color serving in the U.S. Army, the draft and use of substitutes, political views on the war and people of color migrating to Pennsylvania, and General Burnside. Incomplete article from The Columbia Spy. 1863.

