

In Camp at Officers Hill Va
Dec 1st 1862.

Amie -

I received yours of the 17th a few days ago. and until now I have hardly had time to answer so you must excuse the delay.

Since writing to you before, and since father returned home I saw his visit to us, our regiment has taken quite a moon. We left our camp at Laurel just one week ago to day and came to Washington by railroad. From there the regt. commenced to march to our present camp, at three in the afternoon Monday. crossing the Cham Bridge, seven miles above Washington, and passing within sight of Fort Ethan Allen, the men

reached this camp at eleven o'clock
at night. They made their bed for
the remainder of the night upon
the ground with a rubber blanket
under and a wollen blanket and
a cloudy sky over them. I did
not get to camp until the next
morning, being with the ambulance
which was detained in climbing
the hill. just after crossing
the Cham Bridge. It was two o'clock
Tuesday morning before the last
of the 22 baggage waggons suc-
ceeded in climbing the hill, which
was but half a mile long.

Our regiment is brigaded
with the 11th R.I., 40th Mass and
22^d conu. regiments, and togeth
we form the second brigade
of Abernethy's ^{Division} Genl. McIntyres
Corps. Our Brig Genl. name is
Robt Cowdin, and from what I
have seen of him I judge him

to be a very good Genl.
The 1st Brigade which was
encamped at Ft. Ethan Allen
received orders and marched
last night. to the front where
there ~~there~~ is a prospect of their
seeing something of active war.
For tis thought that Genl Burn-
side has the inclination to use
troops to fight with, rather than
to excavate swamps.

You wrote of being up
to Mr Grover on a visit. I saw
Mrs Grover the day that our
regt marched through Washington
also Ed. and Mrs Brown. They
were at Mrs Bishops. Henry
Bishop is one of the ambulance
drivers and he was in Wash-
ington to day. He says that
Mrs. Brown and Grover are
making preparations to visit
our camp within a day or two.

You may believe I shall be glad to see them. The face of a stranger if he is from the north, looks natural, and one is almost persuaded that he is acquainted.

Since war has made of Virginia, one of the most curious looking countries that I have ever seen, it is around here, nothing but one immense waste, that approaches near to a desert than anything else I can imagine. The hills upon which we are now encamped, was two years ago, so we are told, a beautiful farm, well fenced and cultivated. Now there remains not a vestige of fence, and the surface resembles a well packed brick yard with innumerable small square holes, dug, which look as though the dirt had been taken away for some such purpose, as making bricks, but which in reality were dug for winter quarters for regiments, encamped about here last winter. By climbing a knob a short distance from here one can see in the distance Upton's Hill Falls Church, Halls Hill, Fairfax Seminary, the Potomac, Washington, and hundreds of camps, in every direction where his eye can reach.

Upon Upton's Hill, two miles from us we are encamped the 142nd, 38th & 4th Regts N.Y. Our's is the 141st so that we are near together both in number and distance. 60 of our men were left at General Hospital when we came here, but more of them are very sick quite a number being what are called by the surgeons, "dead beats" or in other words "chirps". I must close, write soon again if not as before Very truly Yours Henry Dier

Mizere Hill Va
January 31st 1863.

Annie

Your of the 23rd inst is at hand and I will try and answer, although I know not what to write, except it be that I am well, and that would not be news, for you are expecting that we all are well, and nothing concerning our health is news, unless it is that we are unwell.

We are experiencing almost the first weather we have had this winter that has born any resemblance to our Northern winters.

It commenced snowing the 28th, and continued until yesterday morning, when it ceased

with nearly twelve inches of snow on the ground. The weather has not been cold enough however to keep much of it, for to day the ground is only just covered so as to look white. I almost began to think that we were to pass through the winter entirely without having any snow. For it has been as warm as many of our April days are, within ten days in fact such have been most of our days until recently. —

The Paymaster has been paying the boys since yesterday. some of the pay that has been so long due them, although there is but a small part of the pay being paid (one month and a few odd days) the boys are as happy as can be, and are devising all sorts of comforts to purchase with their money. Mauley are however sending their money to their

friends at home. The good tidings which we all hoped to hear from Fredericksburg has, as does nearly all our expected good news, turned out to be bad news. Instead of Genl Burnside crossing and fighting the rebels and gaining a decisive victory as most of his army were confident he would, the departments at Washington have caused him to be superseded. also his two best Genls. Franklin and Sumner, have been ordered to Washington for some purpose or other, no one knows what, and a man much inferior in rank has taken his place.

It appears to me that the government is acting towards Burnside as they did with Fremont in the west, and with about the same motive, i.e. to give to a greater favorite the laurels which are already won by him, It may

be that the Government is acting
for the best, and exerting the ener-
gies of the armies in the proper
manner, to prevent bringing order
out of the present chaos, but if
it is so, it is being done in a way
which the sounder minds, such
as I possess, are incapable of un-
derstanding; Every thing seems to go too
slow, but perhaps I am too factious,
to great expectations - am too im-
patient - although I doubt whether
it is possible for any one to be too
anxious for the restoration of
the government. There is once in a
while a gleam of hope sent from
the West, where they are at work
but we cannot expect that there
everything can be done,

We have received news that
at Peckburg the Army is again
at work, and of course we hope
that something may be accomplished
there, although to what extent any
thing decisive will be done, we
cannot tell until the future shall
reveal it, It seems folly to hope for
anything like a return to peace when
such scenes as have lately occurred at
Albany and Harrisburg are being
enacted, Still I must close
hoping to soon hear from you
again I am,

Very Truly Yours,
Henry Rice

Newbern N.C.

Oct. 16th 1863.

Annier,

I received your letter of 29th ult. a few days ago by a mail that was put off at Morehead City from a mail boat on its way to Charleston, but I have had no means of returning any answer. A mail was received at this place to day direct from New York, and the boat returns tomorrow. I will write early and by thus doing I think I shall be in time for the mail. Many of the mails leave here with so little notice, that, unless letters have been laying in the office for a few days we miss our opportunity of sending.

We are having a very full time here yet - nothing being done in the way of "crushing the rebellion" unless I might say that patiently waiting

For an opportunity to do something
might be called doing ~~some~~ our
part. I am confident that there
are but very few men here but would
much rather do their part and
take their chances in an active
campaign than remain thus
idle. Four regiments have left
here within a few days to rein-
force General Foster at Fortress Mon-
roe but with what object I am
unable to say - two regiments have
been sent here ^{during the last week} ~~within a few days~~
from Newport News and Yorktown

The mail brought me a letter
to day from Mother of late Aug.
9th - the family were all well,
and Mother writes that Elvira is
an unusually lively place now -
she is, as usual, hard at work. Has
half a dozen or more boarders and
I do not know what else she may
be doing to keep her busy - I have
written several times begging her

to turn her boarders adrift
and try and not wear herself
out with work. but I am almost
convinced that it would wear
on her worse if she should not
have the privilege of working as
hard as she can. Her health is
good this fall. No conscripts
have been received here yet. I have
been half inclined, during the last
few hours, ~~to~~ asking to go to my reg-
iment. My papers of the 13th (the
latest we have here) state that
the Eleventh and probably the
Twelfth Army Corps have been
detached from the army of
the Potomac and sent to reinforce
Genl Rosecrans. and if the state-
ment is correct my regiment is
now in Tennessee. I should like
very much to go to that army
and witness some of the real
work. and should very much like
to see the boys of the regiment

~~and~~ again - The last time I heard from the Regt. it was reduced by sickness so much that only four hundred men could be reported for duty. You will remember the regiment left Elmira only a little more than a year ago, over nine hundred strong - I fear I should miss many with whom I had become acquainted should I now return to the regiment - Captain Whitford is in Elmira yet after the conscription

Act, I believe you used to have a class in the colored Sabbath School in Elmira - You ought to see some of the colored schools that are in operation here - There are a great many blacks in the town and nearly every one under twenty five years of age are attending day schools - The schools are under the charge of Chaplain James of the 25th Mass Vol - and most of the teachers are young ladies from Massachusetts - who have volunteered to teach them - A Colony of blacks has been formed on Roanoke Island, principally the families of colored soldiers - This Colony is also under the superintendance of Chaplain James - who has by his own exertions purchased a saw and grist mill by contributions furnished him, and established a regular settlement - Write soon

Very truly yours Henry Rice

P.S. The next letter I will endeavor to be more brief or else have paper large enough to require writing all to me in one and have sent this time as you will see

Medical Directors Office
Newburn N.C.

Direct to -