

Big Sewell Mountain Wednesday 9AM
September 18th 1861

Dearest Mother,

I began a letter the other day which I intended to enclose in one of Pa's to yourself, but the very night about 2 o'clock we were awakened & ordered to cook provisions enough to last 3 days. This occurred at Camp Dogwood, from which place I sent a letter to you, directed to Lexington not knowing you had returned until Pa's arrival. If you will have my letter sent on from Lex'n [Lexington] (I doubt not there are several there) you will get this one in which I gave you a full description of the Dogwood Gap, fortifications, &c. [& etc.] As I told you, we were awakened at about 2 ock [o'clock] Friday morning. We immediately set to work and prepared breakfast. As there was no conveyance we had to content ourselves with walking and I with carrying my handtrunk, a task which proved almost too much for me. However now I don't regret it: We began our retreat and passed all the regiments of Floyd's brigade on the way, and also a North Carolina and Georgia regiment. At 9 A.M. we arrived at Mrs. Tyree's just at the foot of the big Sewel on the other side, where we managed with some difficulty to get a breakfast of coffee bread and butter. Almost everything in this county is eaten up. There will certainly be a starvation here next year. Mrs. T's is 12 miles east of Dogwood. After resting about ½ hour, we continued our journey to a shady place near the top of the mountain some 4 or 5 miles from Mrs. T's, where we laid down and took a nap. When we woke up we heard that the troops had been ordered to stop. We continued our journey and reached Mr. Frazier's, a hotel 110 miles east of Mrs. Tyree's, at about 6 ½ [6:30] P.M. I carried my handtrunk nearly all the way, and was completely broken down. Pa was very tired too. This was the longest day's march that I ever made - 23 miles. The next morning, after taking my measure for a pair of shoes, Pa started off in a stage for Lewisburg. I remained there that day as I heard our troops were coming on. The next day Sunday at about 4 PM I started for the top of the mountain. I am now in camp at Col [Colonel] Spaulding's regiment. Before I forget it I will give you my direction: E.F.G 3rd regiment Wise Legion Lewisburg. Gen'l [General] Hemminson's regiment is about a mile west of this and nearer the top of the mountain, Col [Colonel] Richardson's reg't [regiment] about 3/4 of a mile east. The cavalry is stationed near the latter; the artillery near our's. Yesterday Gen'l [General] Wise had the regiments drawn up at their diff [different] camps and made them a speech. He said that the night previous until a late hour the officers including himself and Floyd, had been engaged in a military consultation, that they had agreed to make a stand here on the mountain for which they thought that had more than sufficient forces, that hardly an hour afterwards Gen'l [General] Floyd had left the position with his whole army and commenced another retreat, leaving his position on the top of the mountain. He moreover said he meant to keep his position here until provisions failed & the roads got better and if the enemy attacked us we would fight to the last man. His speech was filled with bitter satire against Floyd. He also mentioned a victory our cavalry had gained. An expedition had been sent out, under command of Col J. Lucius Davis, while we were at Dogwood, intending to go down, on the south side of the Kanawha River to Charleston and burn some steamers and capture some stores. These, said Gen'l [General] Wise, had met the enemy routed them completely, killing 50, taking 48 prisoners, driving off 60 head of cattle, and capturing a quantity of ammunition and baggage & then retreated successfully. He also said that if there should be a tale of retreat, that tale should be a very long one, and he would be at the tail-end of it. His speech was vociferously applauded. Fortifications are now being thrown up with rapidity. I have a very great idea of leaving the Wise Legion and going down to Manassas

& join the Botts' Greys. Gen'l [General] Henningsen is Wise's right hand man. He seems to consult him on all occasions. Gen'l H [General Henningsen] from his voice, seems to be a foreigner, -- very tall and rather spare, in dress very plain. I have seen some dozen or more who were in Nicaragua with him, and are now in the Legion. Gen'l W [General Wise] I have heard is an Episcopalian, but I don't believe it, because he is a regular curser & swearer. There is a great rivalry between him and Floyd. Someone ought to be sent out to take command of this department. [writing continues on the top of page 4] I am now trying to get a position. If I don't succeed soon I will leave. I must close-

Your loving Son. Eugene