

Sunday Morn [morning] 8AM. Sept 22/61 [September 22, 1861]

Dearest Mother,

According to my request in one of my former letters, I yesterday rec'd [received] yours of the 4th enclosing the envelope and sheet of paper. Though this sheet will by no means contain all I wish to write, ~~and~~ [sic, crossed out] being much smaller than I usually send, yet it will be a pleasure to you to receive even this small sheet, I am sure. The day before yesterday, I sent a note to Pa, enclosing a letter to yourself. Doubtless it has already been forwarded, and will reach you before this. Evening before the last, but one, that is the 19th we changed our location somewhat. We moved up on a high hill commanding a view of all the surrounding mountains. Well fortified, it would be impregnable to any other mode of attack than that of surrounding and starving out and this cannot be done by the enemy with our present force. Gen'l [General] Wise would not retreat though ordered to do so by Gen'l [General] Floyd. I think Gen'l [General] Henningsen is the author of all the present movements as he is Gen'l W's [General Wise's] chief advisor, and seems to be at the head of everything. Col [Colonel] Richardson's regiment is also upon this hill. A little palisade of logs and dirt is thrown up on the side of the hill fronting towards the turnpike. Col [Colonel] Anderson's (Henningsen's) regiment has gone on the other side of Big Sewell some 6 or 7 miles from here. I took a walk yesterday some 3 or 4 miles until I got nearly half way up the Mount, when I met a picket and had to halt and retrace my steps. There were pickets from that place all the way up the Mountain and cavalry scouts there. I was told by the corporal of the picket that it had been fired on. Gen'l [General] Wise went down in person, with the advancing party. There are various reports as to the position of the enemy, but that are some distance down the road. Gen'l [General] Floyd is fortifying at Meadow Bluff, for what what reason I do not know, unless he expects the enemy to drive us back there. The men in the Legion are very eager for a fight. They have been driven about so long that they are almost discouraged. The militia 3 or 400 in number are on the Wilderness road leading from Meadow Bluff to a ford of the Gauley river, where it was reported the enemy were advancing. It is said that Gen'l [General] Lee is at Meadow Bluff (17 miles this side of Lewisburg). I will try & find out the truth so as to let you know. I expect to see Pa out here in a day or two. I will devote the rest of my paper to answering your letter directly. About our fare, it is composed of beef (when we get any meat at all), bread and coffee. The latter often without sugar, -- mostly flour bread. Occasionally though it has not the case for some time. No vegetables except what we get ourselves from the country or buy. I have learned how to cook meat and coffee, have not yet tried bread, but could bake it I think pretty well. We use soda in our bread and bake cakes in a skillet & fry our meat in a pan. We have frequently had eatables from Greenbrier sent on by the friends of the mess. Yesterday evening Mr. Beall came in and bought a pitcher of butter a bag of biscuits some jelly, cheese, ham, chicken &c. [& etc.], upon which we have been feasting. Next as to sleep: We always endeavour to get something between us and the ground. Generally we get straw or hay, sometimes boards. We have now fixed ourselves beds something like Johnny Baldwin's. We laid two parallel trimmed saplings down, fixing them with pegs, across these we laid a no. of smaller saplings, and over the whole paced a quantity of hay, mowed on the top of this hill. This we formed a very comfortable bed some foot or more above the ground. It has been raining almost continually since we came up here. Again: the sabbath day generally as you have heard is employed in military society in marches, fights, alarms &c. [& etc.] This is about the 3rd or 4th sunday we have had rest. I employ my time in writing to you, reading the testament and thinking of olden times and home. There is a Presbyterian Minister in the company who

exercises a very moral influence on the company & yet there are a great many evil influences. We have but little fruit--sometimes apples. I have faith in John Sanborn yet. Pa could not get the oil cloth. This is the first letter I have rec. [received] from you. I do write often. Don't wait for my letters. [writing continues on top of page 1] Your letter short as it is affords me exceeding pleasure. I wish I had Uncle G's sword. Goodbye

Your loving son.

E. F. Cordell

We cannot get envelopes in Lewisburg now. All sold out.