

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 8 P.M. 1861

Dearest Mother,

An opportunity offered, by which letters can be sent directly to Lewisburg tomorrow, induces me at this hour to undertake a letter to you. We still occupy our position on the top of Big Sewel. We have here with us 3 infantry & 1 cavalry regts. [regiments] belonging to the Wise Legion, and one or two batteries; Gen'l [General] Floyd's brigade composed of 5 regiments; Gen'l [General] Loring's forces, in which I think there are 5 regts. [regiments]. All of our forces amount to about (according to my estimate only probably correct) 11 or 12000, of whom about 10000 are fit for duty. Gen'l [General] Lee has command of the whole. I have not had the opportunity of renewing the acquaintance I formed with him, the summer before the last, both at Grandma's & at Arlington. He is always employed & surrounded by persons. Gen'l [General] Loring was here for several days, but as I have not seen him lately I conclude he has left. Our line of fortifications extends for about 2 miles North & South. The enemy is stationed about 2 miles West of us on the extreme summit of Sewel, which I may as well mention is 29 miles West of Lewisburg. We can plainly see their tents and even distinguished individuals. Our pickets are very close and often interchange fires. We hear the enemy's hand distinctly almost every night, and their drums beating tattoo and reveille [sic, reveille]. Their music is very sweet. Just at dark this evening, we were edified by their band to some extent. We have also a band attached to a fine Mississippi regt. [regiment] which surprised us the other day by marching into camp. We had not a band in the Legion and had heard nothing of the kind for some time. While I write the 2 camps are beating their drums at a most terrific rate. They number about 8 or 10000, at a guess. Our food is cooked about a mile & a half east of here, to prevent the enemy from observing our whereabouts, as we are stationed in a wood and are not visible to them. I have determined now, if practicable, to accept the 3<sup>rd</sup> Lieutenancy in this company. The pay per month is \$80.--\$960 per year, a good salary for a youngster of 18. Of course I should prefer to have an office if I could get one. Pa wants me to go home. I have been thinking seriously of joining the Botts' Greys at Manassas and today, of going to the University as the session opened 1<sup>st</sup> Oct. This latter plan was only thought of during a shell of "blues", otherwise "home-sickness", and did not impress me very seriously. I feel that my country needs my services, and that in time to come I shall not regret having been engaged in "The 2<sup>nd</sup> War for Independence." Another important consideration too, is that I shall enjoy the benefits resulting from the success of the struggle, and surely I should be willing to bear my part in it. A soldier, & particularly a private's life is a very hard one, subjected to all kinds of weather, heat and cold, poor food, and that often in small allowance, long marches &c. [etc.]. I think I shall be better qualified to enjoy home and its luxuries and pleasures after the war. We have now but 2 meals per day one at 9 AM, the other at 4 P.M. At each of them we are allowed a piece of boiled fresh beef, half a tin full of soup, 2 small biscuit, and a cup of coffee without sugar, or milk. You may judge of the quality of the bread by the fact there is no soda in it, merely the dough baked in skillets, and the other day I ate a biscuit that must have weighed over a pound, being only about half done. It is said efforts are being made to surround the enemy, but Gen'l [General] Lee keeps all his plans so quiet, that I cannot vouch for the truth of it. Gen'l [General] L [Lee] is dressed plainly but neatly. He wears a black slouch hat with a gold cord around it, a dark blue coat with two rows of buttons, blue pants and boots. I think maybe it was his old army uniform. Loring had the same kind of hat & a black velvet coat. Gen'l [General] Wise has not yet returned from Richmond. I would not be surprised if there should be a fight

tomorrow. Good night. [writing continued on the side of the page] I will try and add a few more lines in the morning. Your son, Eugene.