

21.

Camp 60th Va Regiment
Narrows. Giles. Co. [County] Novr. 12th '63
Thursday

My Dear Parents,

I wrote you from Abingdon about 3 weeks ago. I have not had an opportunity of writing again until the present. We were ordered to Abingdon at the time the enemy advanced upon that place. Whilst there we were temporarily assigned to Genl. [General] Wharton's (a Culpepper man) Brigade, all the forces there being put under commd. [command] of Maj. Genl. [Major General] Robt. [Robert] Ransom, of N.C. but subject to Genl. [General] Jones orders as the commander of the Depmt. [Department] From Abingdon we were ordered to Wytheville, a raid, being anticipated, on that place from the direction of Kanawha Valley. We remained in Wythe County, encamped some 7 miles from the town, at a very strong [sic, strong] base in the mountain until last Saturday when we recd. [received] orders to proceed with all dispatch to the Narrows. This order was occasioned by the retrial and defeat of Genl. [General] Echols force. I can perhaps give you a more correct account of the affairs that have occurred here lately than you can get from Yankee sources. Genl. [General] Averil [sic, Averell] with a body of Cavalry estimated at 3000, came down from the North West and attacked Genl. [General] Wm. [William] S. Jackson (Col.) at Group Mountain [sic, Droop Mountain] 15 miles above Frankfort, & 25 miles above Lewisburg. Jackson sent to Echols for reinforcements, and the latter immediately marched to his assistance. They fought from 1 to 4 P.M. on Friday last the 6th inst. [instant] Echols had with him only the 22nd Derick's Battalion, a regt. [regiment] of cavalry and a battery or two. Edgar's Batt. [battalion] was stationed on a road some 11 miles distant, and was not engaged. There were also a regt. [regiment] of cavalry and two Cos. [companies] of Partizan Rangers [sic, Partisan Rangers] not engaged. During the operations attending the fight 5 Regts. [regiments] advanced from Kanawha Valley by the turnpike, and threatened Echols rear. Echols is said to have fought them bravely, in a close fight, but the cavalry (ours) broke his ranks and he commenced a precipitate retreat. He reached Salt Pond mountain about 8 miles, East of Pearisburg, 2 days and a half after the fight, a distance of 85 miles with some 300 to 500 men. Edgar's Battalion came in yesterday, having made its way over the mountains. Accompanying it were some 150 of the 22nd who were also cut off from their command. Maj. [Major] Baily, of the 22nd fell mortally wounded while carrying his colors in front of his Regt. [regiment]. He died day before yesterday. Genl. [General] Echols estimates his loss at 300. Genl. [General] Imboden, I understand met Averil [sic, Averell] near Covington and repulsed him. The enemy who were at Lewisburg (5 Regts. [regiments]) have retreated to Kanawha Valley. Averil [sic, Averell] has returned to the North-West. The Court House and several buildings in Lewisburg were burnt. Echols has some 800 men with him now. He will advance towards Lewisburg again in a few days Col. [Colonel] McCausland's Regt. [regiment] reached here on Saturday morning last from Princeton. We had a very hard march from Wythe overland. On Sunday we marched about 32 miles, and bivouacked in the snow. On Monday we reached Pearisburg, and occupied the huts built last winter by Clark's Battalion. That night I slept in a hay loft at Pearisburg. Tuesday morning we reached this place. It is highly probably that our Regiment will accompany Echols on his return to Greenbrier. Though not if McCausland who is greatly attached to us can help it. Genl. [General] Wm. [William] E. Jones commands a Brigade of cavalry under Ransom. He is thought very highly of here. He made a good start by capturing 850 Yankees at Rogersville in Tennessee. We had a delightful time while we were in Wythe. The people were exceedingly kind, in fact more so than any with whom we have been since the war commenced. I went to see several very nice ladies and had some good music. I met with several families of Crockett's, very wealthy, & "bon ton" society. Please excuse this letter as I have to scribble it off under most [continued on side of page 4] adverse circumstances. Your devoted son, Eugene F. I enclose Mr. Harding's last letter. I dined with him day before yesterday on our arrival here.

[Continued on page 1 upside down] I met here a sergeant in the signal corps, Norris, from Clarke a nephew of the blind Norris who lived near Berryville. He says he knows Tom Byrd, Pa., & is related to Richd. [Richard] Byrd of Winchester. Dr. Blackburn, Family, Cousin Lizzie K, and Cousin S.

[Continued on pages 2 and 3 in margins] How I should like it if you and other ladies at home could knit about 40 pairs of socks, for my company so that I could bring them out with me next winter. Each family might garnish one or two pairs. The men are almost entirely without them, and are refugees from home and unable to get them. I hope to have the pleasure of find you all. You have not told me what you think of my marrying next winter (?).