

Gift of Lucia Kilby

Transcribed from a copy of
the original - July 1986 -
by C. Knuepfer

Camp in Rappahannock August 31st 1862

Dear Brother

It has been a long time since I heard from you and as I suppose you are expecting to hear from me, I will now try and tell you of some of our doings - since I saw you last.

It would be vain for me to endeavor to give you a complete history of all our movements and actions, as it would require a great deal of time and paper, but I will relate some few particulars, in the first place I will tell you where I am, and where our army is. I am with our baggage train in Rappahannock County, on the road leading to Sperryville to Warrenton and Manassas, and about forty miles from New Market, have been here some five or six days expecting orders every day to move up to the Army, which left a week ago to-day, and are now in the neighborhood of Manassas. For the past several days we could learn nothing from them, and were kept in quite a state of suspense as to their whereabouts, until yesterday, we learnt something from them, there has been another hard fought battle upon the same ground of that of the 21st July 61, only the ground reversed, we occupying that upon which the Yankees fought & they occupying ours. ('Tis surpassingly strange) and they have met that same fate which has ever been their doom when they run against the ubiquitous Jackson, I have not been able to learn the full particulars, but enough to know that the victory is ours, with a number of prisoners and quantities of Quartermaster and Commissary stores the no. killed and wounded I do not know, but 'tis sad to relate that our brave, gallant young Col. J. F. Neff is no more - he fell gallantly at the head of the 33 Regt. He went through all the battles unharmed from Manassas, and now has fallen on the field of Manassas. It has cast quite a gloom over the few from his command who are here. He was beloved and respected by all. He was a brave, kind and good officer; we are now left without a field officer, the Major having lost his right arm at the battle of Cedar Run the 9th inst. Our brigade it seems is almost always put in front, and has suffered very much in nearly every fight. From what I learn the Yanks are now in a bad way or rather good for us, as they are almost surrounded, "Jackson" having cut off their retreat to Washington. Gen. Smith, from Fredericksburg, & Gen. Hill & Longstreet in the front, so that they must fight their way through or surrender. There has been fighting for several days, & thus far we are gaining the advantage - all seems to be working for our advantage and good. I pray that we may capture the entire Army with Pope and McClellan. I could not begin to tell you of the Army we have, which has ^{gone on} they seemed to have sprung up on all directions, and I cannot form an idea of the numbers, and it is certainly a very hard matter to get any information here. You can ask dozens of men and they cannot tell, you might as well ask an old dog.

You have to catch wherever you can, there seems to be but little inclination with those who do know, to give a fellow any information.

Bro, there has been some hard fought battles, of which I have seen the effects. That near Richmond and on the Chickahominy was awful to witness. I travelled for twenty-five miles and it was almost a continuous battle-field along the whole line. I saw numbers of dead men - Yanks- who were laying for days unburied and perhaps were not buried at all. It was an awful sight to see, and I never want to witness such a scene again. I was truly glad when we left the low swampy country along the Chickahominy and also Richmond. I never was more tired of any country as that.

Bro, 'twere useless for me to lead you through all our marching and countermarching from the Valley to the Chickahominy & Richmond and from Richmond here, we have been going nearly all the time, perhaps resting for a few days, and have endured many hardships etc. (our force certainly can be termed the foot cavelry.) The men have passed through many battles since we left the Valley. Thus far I have escaped very well - my health is good, and have no very hard duty to perform, & have plenty

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to eat, etc. Would that it were so with all. Oh how many a home has been made desolate within the past two months. How many a poor lone wife grieves the loss of a husband, or Mother a son, etc. It is heart rending to think of the misery, etc. that has been produced by this sad civil war. Would that it would soon cease. I hope that if our present victories are followed up it may be the means of bringing about a treaty of peace, and that we may be able to return to our homes once more in peace & quiet.

I am getting real tired of soldier's life and want to get home once again. It seems as though I would not then care if I ever saw a gun or any other war material hereafter. I have not been at home since we came down the Valley. I did not get out home when I last saw you. You may know I begin to want to see Kate and the little ones very much. I hear from them occasionally. Little Mary M. is waiting very patiently for me to get home. Would that I could be at home - had I known that the war would have lasted this long, I think I would have been at home. Brother, how long do you think this war will last? I hope it will close ere long, for I do not want to be out another winter. I cannot form any idea of future. I see and I hear a great deal about our prospects, etc., but I do not place confidence in anything, but will try and patiently await coming events.

I suppose you have been annoyed very much by the Yankees, during their stay, and I am truly truly glad they have left you now. I should like to see you all very much. I suppose it appears quite lonely, as but little business can be carried on. I was truly sorry to hear of Cousin Ned being killed in Tenn?. I have not seen Billy since we left Gordonsville - he was left at the camp there sick. I heard from him about a week ago - he was better. He had an attack of cholera morbus.

Bro, you must write me and give me all the news. I feel anxious to hear from you, for I tell you it does one much good to hear from my friends at home. It is lonely here. I cannot tell when I shall get home. I trust it may be soon, but it may be a long time. Give my love to ^{*}Bill and all my friends. Have you been to see Kate? I think you & Bill might go to see her, and I also think if we go to Manassas, you might come to see us.

If you can get any sugar conveniently, I wish you would get some for Kate and send it to her. I know she would be glad to get it.

I suppose you have heard of all our movements & fights of late, and maybe more correct than I could tell you. Our army is still victorious and pressing the enemy. I am quite anxious to learn all the particulars and would much rather be with the Regiment than here. Don't fail to write immediately, direct to Gordonsville, Va., Stonewall Brigade, "Jackson's Corps", care Capt. A. Martin, 33 Regt VACAV? forward without delay, and it will follow wherever we go.

Excuse my scrawl, I am quite well.

Your affectionate Brother,

B. B. (WEIRMAN)

* Bill - read "BELL", short for Isabella, his sister who lived in Edenburg, in Shenandoah Valley.

Moore's Store is about 10 mi. W. of Mt. Jackson

"My great grandfather was a merchant who operated a store at Moore's Store and lived until 1918." - Lucia Kilby

This letter was written to "B.B."s brother, John Weirman