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Letter from Thomas S. Armstrong to Editor

Thomas S. Armstrong

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From the 122d Regiment—Parkersburg.


After a pleasant ride down the Old Muskingum to Marietta, and thence by rail, to Parkersburg, Virginia, we find ourselves in camp Union, a place about two miles from the Ohio river and about half a mile from Little City, where the camp is in a beautiful grove. There are more camps than the 122d here. Right below us is the 110th O. V. and part of the 11th Va. occupying the city at 3 o'clock A. M. Friday. At daybreak we landed and marched to the Railroad. Here I took my first view of the sacred soil of Old Virginia. Here is a noble and historical name. Across the river in Marietta where the first settlement in Virginia was made, it looks somewhat old. Two of us went down to the bluff overlooking the Ohio, where we met a fine looking gentleman who said "call around boys in half an hour and get some breakfast;" we did so. He showed us the site of the town, the fort, and the well, and the Black House. But, says he, the river has washed off 75 yards of the bank where the fort stood.

12½ A. M. we landed on the shore at Parkersburg, put out pickets and encamped on the shore. Black and I took a stroll up into town, rather a business place, but the war has stopped business somewhat. Altogether the Ohio is so low that navigation has stopped here. We saw the "Richmond House," "Virginia House," and "M. E. Church South." The citizens made no demonstration whatever, except one young lady dressed in blue, riding along, who waved a handkerchief to us as we came over. She rode along our line, talking with many of the officers and men. I found a secret spy. I found one of the citizens who is in Union, and is a daughter of Judge Jackson, of this town. Oct. 25th, Saturday, cloudy and a drizzling rain. I went to the landing, saw the tents, etc., on the wagon, then got a skirt at the Mill and started with two others for Blennerhassett's Island. After two miles of hard rowing, we landed on the east end, just at 12 o'clock, then stuck through the saps and streams of needles and cack, and finally reached the landing. We found all wood of black walnut, oak and sycamore and emerged from them in open space and proceeded along the level road to a little farm house on the bank. We knocked and the lady of the house told us the history of the Old Mansion, now occupied by a wood pile and the excavation where stood the main house, and yonder is the well Old Blanny dug; we went and drank of its pure waters and looked down into it. It is about 40 feet deep. As we looked at the grounds we thought that here Aaron Burr spotted that treason which has made him so famous and gave this place its notoriety. Our friends told us that when Burr was here they had some great dances, the young folks coming down from Marietta. I thought of Wirt's speech while at that well. There is less than 200 acres that belonged to Old Blanny. It now belongs to Neal of Parkersburg, and is reated by two farmers for raising corn. The view is lovely, and breaks the rising sun, bounded by tall oaks, black walnut and sycamore, with vines nearly covering them. The country here is infested with Seech the reputed Union. Our regiment is in good condition.

I will write more soon. Our destination is unknown as yet.

Yours Respectfully,

THOS. S. ARMSTRONG.
October 26, 1862

From the 122d Regiment – Parkersburg

Camp Union, near Parkersburg, Va. Oct. 26

After a pleasant ride down the Old Muskingum to Marietta, thence by rail to Parkersburg, Virginia, we find ourselves in camp Union, a place about two miles from the Ohio River and about half a mile from the Little Kanawha. Our camp is in a beautiful grove. There are more camps than the 122d here. Right below us is the 100th O.V. and part of the 11th Va occupies Parkersburg. We arrived at Point Harmar at 3 o’clock A.M. Friday. At daybreak we landed and marched to the Railroad. Here I took my first view of the sacred soil of Old Virginia. Here is Harmar of historical fame. Across the river is Marietta where the first settlement in Ohio was made. It looks somewhat old. Two of us went down to the bluff overlooking the Ohio, where we met a gentleman who said “Call around boys in half an hour and we’ll get some breakfast;” we did so. He showed us the site of the fort, and the well, and the Block House. But, says he, the river has washed off 75 yards of the bank where the fort stood.

12 ½ A.M. we landed on the shore at Parkersburg and encamped on the shore upon the stones. Lieut. Black and I took a stroll up into town, rather a business place, but the war has stopped business somewhat. Also, the Ohio is so low that navigation has stopped. Here we saw “Richmond House,” “Virginia House,” and “M.E. Church South.” The citizens made no demonstration whatever, except one young lade dressed in blue, riding along, she waved with a handkerchief to us as we came over. She rode along our line, talking with many of the officers and men. The boys thought she was a secsh spy. I found from one of the citizens that she is Union, and is a daughter of Judge Jackson of this town. Oct 25th, Saturday, cloudy and a drizzling rain. I went to the Landing, saw the trunks, &c. on the wagon, then got a skiff at the mill and started with two others for Blennerhassett’s Island. After two mils of hard rowing, we landed on the east end., just at 12 o’clock, then struck through the Spanish needles and cockle bur patches over driftwood and through a small wood of black walnut, oak, and sycamore and emerged from them into an open space and proceeded along the level road to a little farm house on the bank. We knocked and he lady of the house told us the history of the Old Mansion, now occupied by a wood pile and the excavation where stood the ware house, and yonder is the well “Old Blanny dug;” we went and drank its pure waters and looked down into it. It is about 40 feet deep. As we looked at the grounds, we thought that here Aaron Burr plotted the treason that has made him so famous and gave this place its notoriety. Our friend told us that when Burr was here they had some great dances, and the young folks coming down from Marietta. I thought of Wirt’s speech while at that well. There is less than 200 acres that belonged to “Old Blanney.” It now belongs to Neal of Parkersburg, and is rented by farmers for raising corn. The soil is very rich. The view is splendid toward the rising sun, bounded by tall oaks, black walnut, and sycamore, with vines nearly covering them.

The country here is infested with Secesh tho’ repented Union. Our regiment is in good condition.

I will write more soon. Our destination is unknown as yet.

Yours Respectfully,

THOS S. ARMSTRONG

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1 Daily Courier, October 29, 1862, p. 3