


10-26-1862

Letter from Thomas S. Armstrong to Editor

Thomas S. Armstrong

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From the 122d Regiment—Parkersburg.

CAMP UNION, NEAR PARKERSBURG, Va. Oct. 26.

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 the Little Kanawha. Our 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. 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 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 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 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 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. The boys thought she was a secesh 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 Blannerhasset's Island. After two miles of hard rowing, we landed on the east end, just at 12 o'clock, then struck through the Spanish needles and cuckle bur patches over driftwood &c. 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 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 ware 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 plotted that treason which 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, 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 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' 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 – Parkersburg¹

Camp Union, near Parkersburg, Va. Oct. 26

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