

12-27-1862

Letter from Thomas S. Armstrong to Editor

Thomas S. Armstrong

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From the 122d Regiment.

MOOREFIELD, Hardy county, Va.

Dec. 27, 1862.

DEAR EDITOR:

We left Petersburg at 9 A. M. Dec. 22d, and travelled down the south branch to Moorefield, the distance being 11 miles. We marched well, as we had left our knapsacks behind. We arrived at M. at two in the afternoon, a nice town in a splendid looking valley, surrounded by mountains. General Milroy and Staff passed us this forenoon. We passed through Moorefield with drums beating. The regiment showed to good advantage, marching to the step. Soon we were climbing Branch mountain, passing along a splendid road that wound around the sides of the mountains in a zigzag manner. At six o'clock P. M. we encamped, feeling as if the 122d was about "played out." The men marched fast and steady all day. We soon drowned our sorrows in a good cup of coffee and a good supper, for I tell you I find that hard crackers go good when I am hungry. Such is the experience of all I have talked with on that subject, i. e. the cracker question. We traveled 21 miles to day.

December 23d.—We slept cool last night, as it was a cold night. About 8½ o'clock we were on our way "left in front." The men were somewhat used up from yesterday's march. Not so much straggling to-day. The country still mountainous, with cliffs and rocks abounding, making the scenery grand. Toward evening we came to the Paps called "Hanging Rock." Here were on each side of the road huge jagged cliffs projecting far out and being some hundreds of feet high. Every eye of our regiment seemed to be rivited on those rocks, for it was said that probably there might be bushwhackers up there. We encamped on Lost River, 22 miles east of Moorefield. Soon came in four cavalymen, three of whom had been wounded at those rocks by bushwhackers firing down upon them. Two of them were wounded severely. Dr. Houston dressed their wounds. They were carrying dispatches to Gen. Clusseret. The occurrence produced quite an excitement in camp and aroused the ire of the whole regiment. It is said that this Lost River runs under ground awhile, then emerges and is called Cacapon River. We traveled twelve miles.

December 24th.—At three o'clock A. M. we were aroused. Major Granger took two or three hundred men and started in advance of the regiment. About half-past 5 o'clock Colonel Ball with the rest of the Regiment started. We marched along, keeping silent and nothing was to be heard but the tramp of the men and the rattling of the wagons in the rear. We marched at a fair rate. The Lieutenant Colonel rode past saying, "If you see any suspicious looking persons on the mountains, put them to sleep." At 10 o'clock we reached Wardensville, 29 miles east of Moorefield, 29 miles west of Winchester, and 6½ miles west of the corners of Hampton, Hardy and Shenandoah counties. We found the rest of the boys at Wardensville. We marched past the "ville" and pitched our tents in a nice grove where was fought a few days since, the battle of White Oak Point. A few ~~men~~ ^{men} on both sides were killed. The trees were perforated in many places by bullets. To-day we traveled 7 miles. A fine day. The people here talk about "your army" and "our army."

December 25th.—"Christmas Gift," and a "Happy Christmas," &c greeted us this morning. But under what different circumstances than is usual! It seemed good to the Col to put a veto on our going down to town without a pass to-day, hence we did not go down and ask some of our secesh friends to ask us to eat a Christmas dinner with said secesh friends. But as for the officers of company I, we can speak of that which we do know—that Mess No. 3 invited the trio to come and help eat chicken, chicken soup, and kroust. We did it ample service, especially your humble servant.

December 26th.—Capt. Baird with a squad of cavalry came with an order for us to return to Moorefield. We started at 8 A. M. and took three prisoners with us. Our wagons in front. We marched well to day. At night we were 10½ miles from Moorefield.

December 27th.—We were aroused at 4 A. M. Got ready and off we started, "left in front." We had no grub this morning. But soon a wagon from the the 110th O. V. with provisions came. We reached Moorefield at noon. Our Regiment is in good health. We stand marching very well.

T. S. ARMSTRONG.

A Serenade to Fort Lafayette Prisoners.

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Leonard

January 3, 1863

From the 122d Regiment¹

Moorefield, Hardy county, Va
December 27, 1862

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¹ Daily Zanesville Courier, January 3, 1863, P. 2

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