10-11-1861

Letter from William H. Turner to Thomas S. Armstrong

William H. Turner

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Camp Beach  
Oct. 11, 1861

Friend T. S.,

I am seated to address you a few sentences but I can scarce hope that they will ever reach you as our postal arrangements are of the worst kind. First, you would like to know something of the fights that it has been my fortune to share.

Our first engagement was a smart skirmish on the Kanawha Valley 12 miles below Charleston. This was not a victory because we ran out of ammunition and we were compelled to retire for the night. The rebels fled the next day. I was also in the late battle fought by General S. Floyd. I was by the side of Col. Lowe when he fell. For 3 terrible fires I was beneath an awful fire and for my conduct in that engagement...
I have been promised a furlough two days after the fight. Our company with 2 others were sent to guard a ferry on Sandy River here for 3 days. We were annoyed by "Bush Wheeler", who fired from the rocks trees and thickets every time they got a sight of one of us. The consequence was some of our brave boys were made to hide the duty. At the burial of one of them a scene was enacted which will never be forgotten by those who saw it. The four fellows had been shot in the stomach. The wounds through the neck & head had died instantly. That night at precisely 12 O'clock in a deep mountain gorge surrounded by a dense wood. His comrades were made by his captain to lend their times in his grave to serve revenge on him. They kept their oath and more than one traitor has been made to give his head.

I have seen much of this part of the state. I have seen much scenery that was wild & romantic in the extreme but the place where we are now encamped is surpassing anything that it has been my lot to witness. We are at what is called lower lock. There is a perpendicular ledge of 1000 ft. high & the foot of this. The muddy waters of the river come raving, thundering & dashing as if it would carry the mountain along with it. The eye is caught by the southward, and it seems that mountain is piled on mountain as far as the eye can reach. The spray of leades which you will find enclosed grew on the steep of this rocky cliff and on the spot where it is said that there was an indian looked into the river. Yours truly

P.S. Noth seen direct to Sandy Bridge in Care of Capt. Less. Give my regards to Mr. Williams.
I heard that he is in the Navy; how is it?

My best wishes to the family.

My compliments to Miss Whitfield.
October 11, 1861

Camp Beach

Oct 11 1861

Friend T.S.

I am seated to address you a few sentences but I can scarce hope that they will ever reach you as our postal arrangements are of the worst kind.

First, you would like to know something of the fights that it has been my fortune to share. Our first engagement was a smart skirmish on the Panawha Valley, 12 miles below Charleston.

This was not a victory because we ran out of ammunition and we were compelled to retire for the night. The rebels fled the next day. I was also in the late battle fought by Rosecrans & Floyd & was at the side of Col. Lowe when he fell. For 3 terrible hrs I was beneath an awful fire and for my conduct in that engagement, I have been promised a Lieutenancy.

Two days after the fight, our company with 2 others were sent to guard a ferry on Ganley River. Here for 3 days we were annoyed by Bush Whackars who fired from the rocks and thickets every time they got a sight of one of us. The consequence was some of our brave boys were made to bite the dust. At the burial of one of these, a scene was enacted which will never be forgotten by those who saw it.

The poor fellow had been shot by the murderers through the neck & had died instantly. That night, at precisely 12 o'clock, in a deep mountain gorge surrounded by a dense wood, his comrads were made by his captain to bend their knees on his grave & sware revenge & well they have kept their oath and more than one traitor has been made to give up the ghost.

I have seen much of this part of the state & have seen much scenery that was wild & romantic in the extreme but the place where we are now encamped surpasses anything it has been my lot to witness. We are what is called Lovers Leap. There is a perpendicular ledge of rocks 1060 feet high at the foot of this. The ________ waters of New river come roaring, thundering, & dashing as if it would carry the mountain along with it. Casting your eye southward, and it seems that the mountain is piled on mountain as far as they eye can reach. The sprig of ceades(?) which you will find enclosed grew on the verge of this mighty cliff and on the spot where it is said that there was an Indian girl who leaped into the river.

Yours truly,

W.H. Turner

P.S. Write soon. Direct to Ganley Bridge in care of Capt Legg

Comp E 12 Reg O.V.M.
Give me Wilbur's address. I heard he was in the navy. How is it?

W.H.T.

My best wishes to the family & my compliments to Miss Spissetts(?)