5-15-1863

Letter from Thomas S. Armstrong to Jacob G. Armstrong

Thomas S. Armstrong

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Winchester Va
May 15th 1863

Dear Brother Jacob,

Some of the news received May 9th and the many things and great hardening Camp at last got time to another your letter, I had no time to the conclusion that you had forgotten me. I was glad to hear that you are all well and that you are doing a thriving business in the farming line 25 acres of town land 1/4 acre later 1/4 acre sugar cane the latter for “casses for our young cats & kittens” the millers do not lose that box but I have plenty of butter to eat. Yeri Black brought a great pot of butter & lots of fruit. Stephen W. Van Runkle is detached as Brigadier General & works in the Commissary Department & Bm Nelson is Brigade Blacksmith They have both lost their positions in the Company. I would like to see your 100 lambs.
While you are hauling manure & planting corn this week, remember, we got
"We expect to hear of some stirring times this week of Hooker's Army." Well,
I hope they did come & we did not meet with the success we anticipated.
Hooker was unsuccessful & he was driven back. But his cavalry did well, so has all the balance of the cavalry & "Stonewall" is dead. You have the news to day that Grant has took Fort with 20,000 prisoners and 100 pieces of artillery. I don't believe it however. But think of a Canadian.

I am very well. Was on grand guard last night & cut post duty. I had the company out to get food on the ground, & in the rush pits when Johnson lay down. When Patterson came down to Bunkie Hill then wheels & looks to the direction & Johnson surprised made straight for Manassas.

We lost the Battle of Bull Run on the 17th of July, 1861. The day that I had been waiting for Washington & heard the firing of the artillery. We are now on your last. I have been on a scout of 100 miles gone 5 days. Started May 15th, got back May 24th. We went to New Market in the South East corner of Shenandoah County. Look at the map. We had 15 men captured from us Aug 11th. I am well and healthy. The hard March gave us hard, we had to sleep on the ground, and naming the capture from Rebels. Kettie 10, 24th. Back last having no man Kettie 0. But my feet were awful done. To make about 1500 miles for 1 mile & 1500 x 100 = 15,000 steps. Took me 6 and 5 days which makes it hard on the feet.
We will in all likehood stay here this summer & will guard this place. I get along very well. Have my health first rate have plenty of money have a good bed which is made of plank & mattress & black sheep in it we have plenty of clothes the captain calls our bed the bungalow & we have one on which they call the monitor. Will I get a letter from mother with the 3rd must I will send a sketch of my travels on that locomotive paper soon likely did you see the last one? Tell mother I still remember her as "my mother" I want to see Uncle return to my J. is located in Co. before I return home. Will you write me a letter soon. My love to all.

Your Bw

Thos. S. Armstrong
May 15, 1863

Addressed to Mr. Jacob G. Armstrong

Norwich, Muskingum Co., Ohio

Winchester Va

May 15th 1863

Dear Brother Jacob

Yours of the 3rd was received May 9th and thro many things and great hindering causes I at least get time to answer your letter. I had most come to the conclusion that you had forgotten me. I was glad to hear that you are all well and that you are doing a thriving business in the farming line. 25 acres of corn, 2 of oats, 3/4 acre taters, 1/4 acre sugar cane, the latter for "lasses for our______ cake & fritters."

McMillens did not lose their box, but I have plenty of butter to eat. Lieut Black brought a great pot of butter & lots o' fruit. Stephen W Van Kirk is detailed as Brigade Teamster & works in the commissary Department & Ben Wilson is Brigade Blacksmith. They have both lost their positions in the company. I should like to see your 100 lambs.

While you are hauling manure & planting corn this week, commencing May 3rd, "we expect to hear of some stirring times this week of Hooker's army." Well Jacob they did come & we did not meet with the success we anticipated. Hooker was unsuccessful & he was driven back but his cavalry did well so all has the balance of the cavalry & "Stonewall" is dead & we have news of the day that Grant has Vicksburg and 100 pieces of artillery. I don't believe it however, but think it a canard.

I am very well. Was on grand guard last night or out past dark I had the company out. We stood on the ground & _____ the rifle pits where Johnson lay when Patterson came down to Bunker Hill, then wheeled & took the other direction & Johnson surprised made straight for Manassas & we lost the Battle of Bull Run on the 21st day of July 1861. The day that Wilbur was at Washington & heard the firing of the Artillery.

Since I wrote to you last, I have been on a scout of 100 miles, gone 5 days. Started May 4 & got back May 9th. We went to New Market in the South East corner of Shenandoah County. Look at the map. We had 5 men captured from our Regt Co. G.

I am well & hearty tho that march gave us ______. We had to sleep on the ground and it rained. We captured some Rebels, killed 1 or 2 & got back safe, having no man killed. O but my feet were awful sore. It takes about 1800 steps for 1 mile & 1800 x 100 = 180000 steps I took in five days which makes it hard on ones feet.

We will in all likelihood stay here this summer & will guard this place. I get along finely. Have my health first rate, have plenty of money, have a good bed which I made of plank. Lieut Black
sleeps in it. We have plenty of clothes. The Capn calls our bed The Ironsides & he and Jeff have one they call The Monitor. Well I got a letter from Matilda written the 3rd inst. I will send you a short sketch of our travels on that scout to the paper soon likely. Did you see the last ones? Tell mother I still remember her as "My Mother."

I want to see peace return to my distracted country before I return home. Well you must write me a letter soon. My love to all.

Your bro

Thos S. Armstrong