

James A. Harden papersMS.0476

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1860-1866



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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

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Unit ID

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Unit Date

1860-1866

Language

English

Creator

Harden, James A. (James Abel), 1841-1927

Extent

27 items

Physical Location

Manuscripts stacks

Repository

Virginia Military Institute Archives

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

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Preferred Citation

James A. Harden papers, 1860-1866. MS-0476. VMI Archives, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Virginia.

Contents Note

James Abel Harden was born on December 8, 1841 in Greenville, Augusta County, Virginia to Daniel Madison Harden (1813-1887) of Kentucky and Eliza Ann Gibbons (1815-1848) of Virginia. He came to VMI on June 4, 1861 to receive military training. After a few weeks Harden enlisted in the 36th Virginia Regiment and was appointed sergeant major on Aug 10, 1861. He is shown as Acting Assistant Adjutant General in the 2nd Brigade Army of the Kanawha in November 1861. He resigned and was discharged on March 25, 1862 and became Acting Adjutant for the 23rd Virginia Battalion sometime in the summer of 1862. Harden was appointed 1st lieutenant and Adjutant of the 23rd Battalion on November 20, 1862. He was praised for "distinguished gallantry" at Droop Mountain in November, 1863. He was captured at the Third Battle of Winchester and held at Ft. Delaware, Delaware where he was released on oath June 12, 1865.

In 1880 Harden married Winnie Ella Berkey (1859-1921) of Buckingham County, Virginia and the couple had eight children: Susan Mary Harden, Annie Tupper Harden, David Humphreys Harden, James Edwin Harden, Mildred Lee Harden, Robert Edward Harden, Benhamin Bee Harden, and Dixie Mae Harden.

Harden died on September 7, 1942 in Dillwyn, Virginia.

Scope and Contents

The bulk of the collection consists of letters written by James A. Harden to his sister, covering wartime events experienced by his unit as well as his time at Ft. Delaware, Delaware. The collection also includes one letter (dated June 6, 1861) written while Harden was at VMI and other items.

Keywords

Confederate States of America. Army—Virginia Infantry Battalion, 23rd
Soldiers—Virginia—Correspondence
Virginia—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Personal narratives—Confederate
Virginia—History—Civil War, 1861-1865
Virginia Military Institute—Alumni—Biography
Virginia Military Institute—Cadet life—1860-1869
Virginia Military Institute—Class of 1864
Virginia Military Institute—Civil War, 1861-1865
United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Prisoners and prisons
Prisoners of war
Fort Delaware (Del.)
Confederate States of America. Army—Virginia Infantry Regiment, 36th

Online Access

James A. Harden's outgoing correspondence is available online.

Description of Subordinate Components

Outgoing correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4190

Unit Date 1861-1865

Language English

Extent 18 items

Letter to sister

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4178

Unit Date 1861 June 6

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from VMI, Lexington, Virginia. Letter regards arrival at VMI and daily life as a cadet.

Keywords

Virginia Military Institute—Cadet life—1860-1869

Virginia Military Institute—Class of 1864

Correspondence

Transcription

V.M. Institute June 6th, 1861

My Dear Sister, I suppose you have heard ere this my whereabouts - I passed through Staunton on yesterday week and would have called to see you but the cars were behind hand that day and the stage left immediately after cars got there and I did not have time to do so. I went to Uncle Jim Burn's and intended coming to see you from there but heard that your school was out and you had gone to Mt. Solon and as I did not have time to come there I left for this place on Monday last where I have been ever since. I entered as a regular cadet. I am well and getting along very well- am very lonesome and often long for a letter from you- have rec'd no letters from anyone since I have been here. I rec'd a letter from you the day I left the University- but have not been able to answer it since- and here I have not time to do anything of that kind- keep a feller running to roll call, drums, drills and lecture every two minutes almost. When a feller comes here he has to give up his liberty in every respect- it is just like you were in jail. Can't leave barracks hardly without permission. I have no news of any importance to write you- in fact I haven't heard any news or seen a newspaper since I have been here. I suppose you have rec'd a letter from Uncle Jimmy or Aunt [Min] ere this. They told me they would write and let you know where I was for I did not know when I should have an opportunity to write. There is that infernal drum again.

Returned. I have but time to say Good Bye and write very soon. Love to all. Your Loving Bro- James.

Direct to Cadet Jas. A. Harden V. M. Institute Lexington, Va Never ~Darling~

Letter to Daniel M. Harden

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4179

Unit Date 1861 August 21

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from Camp at Fairfax Station, Virginia. Letter discusses the importance of military schools that "will serve as a nucleus around which to build up a Southern Army."

Keywords

Military schools -- Southern States

Soldiers -- Confederate States of America -- Correspondence

Transcription

Camp at Fairfax Station Aug 21st 1861

Dear Father, I received yours Lou's and Billy's notes day before yesterday. My advice to Billy would be to return to the Institute. All the Military schools in the land will be in operation, and others will doubtless

spring up these will serve as a nucleus around which to build up a Southern Army. No education in future will hardly be considered complete that does not embrace a knowledge of tactics. It seems to me impolitic to draw Southern boys into the war, when we have enough able-bodied men to fight our battles, and especially when there is a probability that these boys will render more effective service to their country at a future day. Billy has been at the Institute one year and laid a foundation for his education and I see no good reason why he should not continue to build upon it. I do not think the fact of a war being in progress should do away with the intellectual training of one generation. Two of the Corps of Professors at the Institute have been ordered to return by the 1st of October, the places of the others will be supplied, at least this is the arrangement at present. I suppose by Fall, the cadets whose martial spirit now inclines them to remain in the army, will return to the Institute. Billy spoke of returning as drill master. Since the battle of Manassas, the men would be indignant to talk to them about a drill-master as they call themselves old soldiers.

There is no position in this Regiment, or any other, in which Billy could draw pay, and remain only a month or so. But if it is his desire to join the army for the war, and this meets with your approval, I don't think there is any doubt about his obtaining a situation in this Regiment as 3rd Lieut. of Capt. Brown's Company at a salary of eighty (\$80) a month. Capt. Brown's 3rd Lieut. has resigned and the vacancy will be to fill, and I asked the Captain the probability of Billy's election. He consulted with his men, and told me he did not think there would be any doubt about it. The resignation of the Lieut. has just been sent in and whilst it will certainly be accepted, it will not be heard from for three or four weeks. I can postpone the election until the 1st October, if necessary. This is all I can do for Billy at present, you & he can take it under consideration & report. But tell Billy if he decides to take the post- I want him to understand that Genl. Elzey don't give furloughs & that I don't want to be troubled by loaning money- clothes, or treating to ice cream that if he comes he must come with the determination to "hoe his own row"- He has been in the army long enough to know what it is & what will be expected of him. Of course I will cheerfully administer to his wants should he get sick, but Billy understands he remembers my lectures about his sponging and complaining at Winchester.

But enough on this subject for the present. I have been directed to make a requisition for 40 rounds of cartridges in addition to what I have and now have a good deal on hand. I am told 17 loads of boats went to Aquia Creek a few days since. I was at Fairfax C.H. yesterday- the whole country around is one grand encampment. We have a good deal of sickness in our camp- not less than 150 cases- of this number about twenty have the remittent fever. Some of my men I fear will die. A. B. Bridges who married (Robt. Miller's) widow died in the hospital at Richmond with the fever- he was delirious when he reached Gordonsville. We lost another man last week with the fever on his way home near camp & gave them all the attention we can. I am sorry to hear of Mr. Steven's illness- but hope he is well by this time. Let me hear from you soon. Your affectionate son. Jim

My regards to Miss Matilda & Mr. Stevens family.

Letter to sister

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4194

Unit Date 1861 October 3

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from "Camp at Rich Hill on Big Sewell Mountain," Virginia. Letter regards daily life in the 36th Virginia Infantry Regiment, including troop movements and enemy locations.

Keywords

Confederate States of America. Army—Virginia Infantry Regiment, 36th
Lee, Robert E. (Robert Edward), 1807-1870

Transcription

Camp at Rich Hill on Big Sewell Mountain Oct. 3rd/61

My Dear Sister: I wrote you some days ago from Meadow Bluff but did not get an opportunity to send it. When I wrote it we were under orders to march the next morning, where I did not know- but now, as I am at our journeys end I can tell you. We are encamped in full view of the enemy. We being on the Eastern or first top of Big Sewell Mountain and they being on the Western or second top- the mountain having two tops about one and a half miles apart with a deep ravine between. We are now in close quarters certain- so much so that we can readily distinguish them drilling with the naked eye. We can see everything quite plain. Since I wrote last a new order of things have come around. Gen. Lee now commands here. Gen. Wise has been superceded by Gen. Floyd and the two commands have been united.

Wise has been ordered to Richmond and has gone. Gen. Loving is here with his forces. If we have a fight Loving will command the right wing- Lee the centre and Floyd the left wing. Our force has been

considerably increased but is not near strong enough. The enemy's reported strength at their position on top of Sewell is twelve thousand (12,000)- but then they have nearly as many more between them and Charleston. So that our little force of two thousand would be no where without they attack us in position. One thing certain I don't think it will ever do for us to attack them with this force. But something must soon be done. We cannot remain in sight of one another long without something being done and what is more our men cannot stand it- being on half rations all the time all they get is three biscuits a day and a piece of tough beef- and soldiers can't live in this country where it rains every other day and cold enough to freeze them on any such food as that. We have had several very heavy frosts here. Last Saturday morning a soldier from a Miss. [Mississippi] Regiment was found dead in a wagon supposed to have frozen to death. It rained all Thursday night and all day Friday night very hard and it was as cold as January and the poor fellow not having any tent along with them (having in obedience to orders left them at Meadow Bluff) froze to death. But his is only one of many deaths that occur here every day. Poor fellows! They take sick and have no one to take care of them and die from neglect. You can hardly pass a house without seeing a dead man and often you find them in barns and stables in the stalls where horses have been and nobody to bury them. I was told the other day by a man who said he saw three dead men lying in a stable and had been there so long they were actually putrifying[sic]- and I shouldn't be surprised if it were so- every house from here to the White Sul. [Sulfur] is a hospital. I should like to see some of those Manassas boys out here awhile- they would see some to grumble at.

There is to be a decisive battle fought here ere long whether we shall winter in Charleston or not and I don't care how soon for I am tired undergoing such hardships and doing nothing. I want to get into better quarters somewhere. I don't care where much- can't get as much as a hand full of hay- have to lie on the cold wet ground (in fact nothing but mud) and get up in the morning with rheumatism and sore throat and if it was not but for Lottie's piano cover I would have had to taken it on the naked ground and I believe I would have been dead long had it not have been for it. But I still have pretty good health- have a bad cold occasionally but I don't mind that much.

How are all at home? I should like very much to see you all. Have you seen Lottie yet- don't you think she is a beauty? I wish I could see her now.

But I must close as it is getting too dark to see how to write. I long for a letter- do write very soon. Give my best love to all at home also Uncle [Jo Burns?] family and tell Mollie to write. Tell Aunt [Minta?] that I wish often for some of her good biscuits and chickens- tell her to be sure to write very soon. Direct to the care of Col. McCausland, 36th Reg. Va. Vols. Floyd's Brigade, Charleston, Va. and if we whip the Yankees I will get it there; if not I will get it wherever I may be. Best love to all- tell Uncle Jimmy to write often. Good Bye. May God Bless you my dear Sister in the prayer of Your Loving Bro. James.

Letter to sister

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4180

Unit Date 1862 January 4

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from "Camp near Manassas," Virginia. Letter regards daily life in camp.

Keywords

Soldiers -- Confederate States of America -- Correspondence

Transcription

Camp near Manassas Jany 4th 1862

Dear Sister Your welcome note of the 30th inst reached me today. The bouquet retained its freshness and fragrance- and am much oblige to all parties interested in getting it up. Remember me kindly to them, and tell Miss Matilda that I will try and send her one in return, in the spring, especially as she took so much pains to fix it for a Colonel. Tell her the complaint among the Commissioned Officers here is that the smiles are all bestowed on the men in ranks. Well they justly deserve them. I believe I was acting as Brigadier when I last wrote, Col. Hill has returned and I am done playing "Big Indian" but after a week's experience in that capacity I don't think it is as vexatious position as that of little Colonel.

Genl. Elzey came up from Centreville today. He is still complaining with rheumatism. He does my Regiment the compliment to have his body guard detailed from it. He says the Baltimorians & Tennesseans stole from him. (Geddie Effinger my roommate has just come and give me a scolding about not having a good fire). But I must tell you that I am in my "shanty". We moved in last night. You will see from the enclosed picture that it bears a striking resemblance to the habitations along the line of the rail-road in Northern Georgia only it is a better building. My kitchen is not quite completed. I eat in my tent this morning with snow on it, this is as near a Valley Forge scene as I have yet experienced. The ground is covered with snow, but it is very slight and the first winter weather we have had yet. My men are nearly all in their huts. And now I must tell you something else in connection with our Winter

Quarters. I was at Genl. E. K. Smith's House today (I will tell you why I went there directly) for some time. He told me that Genl. Johnston wanted us to remain at Centreville and it was some time before he could prevail upon him to let us come here, so you see we are among the "favored few". I was at Centreville yesterday. Many Regiments are still in their tents & will probably be all winter.

Note to sister

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4181

Unit Date 1863 November 11

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from camp in Giles County, Virginia. Note explains that they have "had a desperate fight. We fought four to one & were whipped very badly-looking for reinforcements."

Keywords

Confederate States of America. Army—Virginia Infantry Battalion, 23rd

Transcription

Camp Giles Co. Va. Nov 11th 1863

My Dear Sister- I have but time to write you that I am safe- have had a desperate fight. We fought four to one & were whipped very badly- looking for reinforcements- will start back tomorrow. My love to all- will write again soon. Your loving Bro James

Letter to sister

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4182

Unit Date 1863 December 3

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from camp near Lewisburg, West Virginia. Letter regards heavy losses in battle, a "visit to the Yankees," and family news.

Keywords

Confederate States of America. Army—Virginia Infantry Battalion, 23rd

Transcription

Camp Near Lewisburg December 3rd, 1863

My Dear Sister, I rec'd your kind & affectionate letter some days ago and reply at my earliest opportunity. When we retreated to Giles Co. & started back to this point I left my desk & all my writing apparatuses behind & they did not get up until a week ago when I started on a flag of truce to the enemy & did not get back until last night. As I have been so long delayed in writing to you I suppose it is unnecessary to give you any detailed account of the late fight as you have I suppose seen several accounts in the papers. It was the hardest & most disastrous fight we have ever had in this portion of the country.

This Batt. & the 22nd Regt. bore the brunt of the fight. What our loss is I do not know, certainly very heavy though. It will be some gratification to you to know that I was highly complimented in Genl. Echols official report (for my conduct in the fight) to the War Dept, though it does not become me to speak of it to anyone but yourself & I desire that you will not speak of it. I have just returned from a very pleasant & sociable visit to the Yankees. We were treated very kindly indeed. We remained with them three days & four nights had "sure 'nuff" coffee three times a day & everything good that any one could desire, egg-nog & whiskey included. I send you a Yankee paper of as late a date as I could get. I got a letter from L. last night and found it waiting my return. She is well & "all right", does not give any satisfactory reasons for her long delay- but I suppose I will have to give her a slight lecture & forgive her. She inquired after you- says she heard you were going to her neighborhood Christmas- hopes you will. If you do, you must go to see her. Her Mother has been very ill this fall- still is so.

Everything is very dull here now. I have not been to see any ladies since the fight, expect to do so as soon as I can get some clothes washed. Has Lizzie Van Lear returned from Salem yet? When I got home last night I found an invitation from and Aunt of hers, Mrs. Alex Arbuckle to visit some ladies at her house- but I rec'd it too late to go. She is a very nice lady, has been very kind to us. When we retreated from here the Col. & I left some clothing at her house & the Yankees heard of it & went & searched the house & destroyed it together with a great deal of her clothing & of her family. I lost some valuable clothing but saved the most of what I had. I do not know when I will be able to get a leave of absence. I would like you to buy me some yarn and knit me a pair of suspenders if you will. Do not make them more than 1 ½ inches wide. I will come to see you all as soon as I can. Aunt Mint is mistaken about my

not writing to them. I have written twice I think without a reply. I will write again tonight. Give my best love to all. My love to Kate Duck & all friends when you write again. Good bye. Your Loving Bro James
After you have finished reading the Yankee paper send it to Uncle Jimmie

Letter to sister

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4183

Unit Date 1864 January 5

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from "Camp near Lewisburg." Letter regards troop movements to avoid the enemy, James A. Harden's health, and a potential visit at the end of the month.

Keywords

Soldiers -- Confederate States of America -- Correspondence

Transcription

Camp near Lewisburg January 5th 1864 My Dear Sister: I rec'd your letter together with the one you wrote for Uncle J. on Christmas day. I am sorry I was not able to spend Christmas with you all- have enjoyed myself tolerably well.

Since I wrote you last we have been run again by the Yankees- retreated to Salt Sulphur Springs ahead of Averill going in the direction of Salem. Into position on Sweet Springs Mt. to fight him, but he heard of us being there & took another road- have come back near Lewisburg- 5 miles on the Union Road- are encamped in a miserable place- don't think it possible to supply ourselves here very long. I am anxious to see you all- don't know when I'll be able to come. May come last of the month- don't look for me though- don't feel very well today. If you have an opportunity to send my trunk key to Uncle J. do so & if you don't have one send it in a letter. I will have to go there & get some clothes before I come to Salem. Love to all. Excuse me- have the Blues Yours devotionally James

Letter to sister

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4184

Unit Date 1864 May 19

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from Staunton, Virginia. Letter regards troop movement to meet General Robert E. Lee's army.

Keywords

Soldiers -- Confederate States of America -- Correspondence

Lee, Robert E. (Robert Edward), 1807-1870

Transcription

Staunton Va. May 19th 1864

My Dear Sister, We are here waiting to get on the cars. Will leave here this evening for [left blank by Hardin]. Gen. Lee's army I think. We are nearly worn out entirely- have been on the march for ten or fifteen days. The news from all quarters is glorious- hope it may continue. Give my best to all. I will write again very soon. Good Bye. Your most devoted Brother, James

Letter to sister

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4195

Unit Date 1864 May 26

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from headquarters, 23rd Virginia Battalion. Letter mentions that James A. Harden is "right side up with care" and that they "have plenty of men & they are in fine spirits."

Keywords

Confederate States of America. Army—Virginia Infantry Battalion, 23rd

Transcription

Head Qrs. 23rd Va. Batt. May 26, 1864

My Dear Sister: I write you to let you know that I am still "right side up with care". No fighting today- have had nothing but skirmishing since we have been here. We are just as sure to whip Grant if he

attacks us here as the sun will shine tomorrow. We have plenty of men & they are in fine spirits. Do not be uneasy about me if you do not hear from me often. I have no means very seldom of writing. If I am hurt you will hear of it very soon. Yours devotedly, James My best love to all

Letter to sister

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4196

Unit Date 1864 June 4

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from "Camp near the Chickahominy, Old Battlefield of Gaines Mill," Virginia. Letter describes the Battle of Cold Harbor, Virginia.

Keywords

Cold Harbor, Battle of, Va., 1864

Transcription

Camp near the Chickahominy Old Battlefield of Gaines Mill June 4th, 1864

My Dear Sister We had a heavy fight yesterday & repulsed the enemy at all points with heavy loss- our loss comparatively small. The enemy overpowered the left of our Brigade & had possession of their works for a short time but were soon driven from them with great slaughter. I have lost several friends- one very dear. One Capt. J. K. Thompson 22nd Regt. it is feared mortally wounded. A more gallant boy and a better friend never lived. I loved him as a brother. I want to see him but am very sick. We were relived in the trenches last night after 10 days very hard service. I am still not with my command but if I get any worse I shall be compelled to go to the rear. Tell Sam Barber that Lt. Donaldson is captured. Lt. Arnold killed and a good many of the Ka. Riflemen wounded captured. Adj. Craig killed. Col. Edgar bayonet wound in shoulder- slight. We are in good spirits & determined to whip Grant. Have no fears. Write to Uncle J. I am safe. Pray for men- all the Adj. in the Brigade are either killed or wounded except me. My time may come next. Best love to all. Good Bye. Your loving Bro. James

Letter to sister

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4185

Unit Date 1864 July 22

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from near Strasburg, Virginia. Letter regards a fight at Snickers Ferry, Virginia on July 18, 1864 and a decline in mood.

Keywords

Soldiers -- Confederate States of America -- Correspondence

Transcription

Near Strasburg Va July 22nd 1864

My Dear Sister: I wrote you a few days ago by private hands from near Snickers Ferry but will write you again now. We got here this morning from Middletown and have been in line of battle all day awaiting the approach of the enemy who have been pursuing us ever since we left the Potomac- but they ceased today. I thought this morning that we would have a battle today. They were following us all day yesterday & drove in our pickets last night about 10 o'clock and but from some cause they have stopped. They are reported to be in very heavy force & moving up in several different columns. They have been rather getting the better of us since we left the Potomac. They have captured a few portion of our wagon train several times and day before yesterday routed Ramseur's Division by bad management on his part. He lost between 4 and 600 men- Jim [Ba---] was slightly wounded in the shoulder by a spent ball. He was to see me yesterday- said he was going back to duty yesterday evening. Gen. Lilley (Bob) was wounded & captured. This took place two miles below Winchester. Our Division was not on that road. I am much in hopes we will go on back up the Valley and take some rest and get something to eat for I am worn out and half starved for something that is fit to eat. I feel no interest in anything except just so far as I am personally concerned. I am dispirited. I have changed shirts but once since I left Staunton & some garments I haven't changed at all. I have but one change along but and they are dirty & I can neither get the chance nor time to get them washed. With all these afflictions I cannot say that I feel well- but still I am not sick for I am much better off than a great many others.

We have a report here that Grant is dead- hope it may be so- but I fear it isn't. I am very anxious to see some papers & the news.

Did you get my letter to you from Harrisonburg? I wrote to you from there and asked an old Gentleman

standing on the street to mail it for me which he promised to do. This is a gloomy evening- just suits my feelings. Write me at once a long letter about everything. Give me the news. Tell me about everything and everybody. I hope we will soon get back up the Valley when I will try & come see you. We may more any way though. There is no telling. Give my very best to all. Tell Effie that I understand "Uncle Davy Jamison" is along with this army & I am on the look out for him. Write me very soon. May God ever Bless you and the kind friends of Mt. Solon will ever be the prayer of Your devoted Brother, James-

Direct to 23 Va. Battalion, Echols' Brigade, Breckinridge's Div., Army of the Valley (I have no stamps& it is impossible to get any here)

[letter continues on the top of Page 1] If we fight the enemy here or anywhere be assured they will get licked. We had a fight with them at Snickers Ferry on the 18th & whipped them badly. Our loss as heavy as theirs- Rode's Div. done the principal fighting.

Letter to sister

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4186

Unit Date 1864 July 27

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from "near" Martinsburg, Virginia. Letter regards current troop movements, engagement with the enemy, and personal matters.

Keywords

Confederate States of America. Army—Virginia Infantry Battalion, 23rd

Transcription

Near Martinsburg Va. July 27, 1864

My Dear Sister, God has again made us victorious. The day after the fight I wrote you from Strasburg we moved down and attacked the enemy about 7 miles above Winchester and completely routed him. We from them with infantry and Artillery some two or three miles this side of Winchester when night came on & we (the Infantry) halted & the Cavalry pursued them much farther. The next day we remained in camp (waiting for rations) until about 4 o'clock, when we moved down & camped near Bunkers Hill & yesterday moved to this place. The enemy largely outnumbered us but we whipped them with the greatest ease routing him. They burned a large number of their wagons- say 75- & blew up some caissons threw away a large number of arms, knapsacks & haversacks & everything that would impede this progress. Gen. Mulligan was mortally wounded & fell into our hands. Our loss was very slight- also that of the enemy. They came here & retreated towards Williamsport.

I am beginning to think that there certainly must be some Providential interference in regard to myself or perhaps it may be the prayers of my friends. I feel that there is certainly something- I cannot (lead?) a charmed life? I have felt this more strongly the other day than ever before. Perhaps it was because I realized my situation more fully than before.

Where we will go from here I cannot tell. There are several conjectures- among them are 1st that we will go on a trip to the North West by the way of Cumberland, Md. to Wheeling. 2nd that we will make the trip without crossing the river. 3rd that we will go back up the valley. I am in favor of some place where rest can be found- but if we can do anything by taking the trip to N.W. Va. I am in as long as I am able to put one foot before the other. I feel bully today. I am full up to the guzzle for once. We have had hard times in the eating line in the last ten days. I have drank so much coffee today that I am so nervous I can scarcely write. Being full of coffee & bread & meat I now long for some good smoking tobacco which is as scarce as hens teeth down here and scarcer too. I have some Yankee letters for your perusal. If we do will send them to you if I have an opportunity. Will send you a sample in this. She is a good writer but I think is flirting with him. I also send a picture which I think is hers- am not sure for there were several pictures captured together- but she speaks in one of the letters of a recent date of sending a picture to him & as this was the newest looking one of the lot, I take it for hers. Isn't she loving-? Derrick got a letter in which I got a message from Mrs. Lewis that Jimmy Sprout, Ginny's oldest boy died a week ago. All this you have heard. I am anxious for a letter from you. Write often twice a week. I may get them. Give my best love to all. Pray for me and be a good Christian May that God will ever bless you and the dear friends in Solon is the heartfelt devoted desire of my heart. Ever my precious sister Your devoted Bro, James

[end of letter continues on tops of other pages] I want a Junebug or Dulcinea. The wounded of the last has healed. The bullet is still there. My heart is lonely. I have "no one to love me- none to caress". Col. [Barton?] speaks of going to Mt. Solon shortly. If he does will write by him. Remember me very kindly to "Bro. Sam".

[On back of envelope] I have no stamps. Saw Mr. Brown & Geo. G. the day before yesterday. They were

well. M. is with his Co.

Letter to sister

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4187

Unit Date 1864 August 18

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from "near" Winchester, Virginia. Letter regards recent engagement with the enemy, desire to send money home, and personal matters.

Keywords

Soldiers -- Confederate States of America -- Correspondence

Transcription

Near Winchester, Va. Aug 18th 1864

My Dear Sister; Again we are on the move forward down the Valley. We marched from Strasburg here yesterday & attacked the enemy here & drove him beyond the town. They fell back from our front at Strasburg night before last- caused by a flank movement of Gen. Anderson with two Divs. of Longstreet's Corps & Fitz-Lee's Cav. Div. We fought here only a Brig. of Infantry & a large force of Cav. , their main force having gone towards Berryville. They certainly have a very large force- say 35 or 40 thousand. Our loss here heavy in comparison to that of the enemy. I lost my Sergt. Major badly wounded leg amputated. The fifth one I have had since I have been with this Battl. I again have great cause to thank God that I am again spared. Pray for me still. I suppose we will move on towards Martinsburg again & may cross the river "if we can".

I would like to send you some money to "splurge on" if I have an opportunity. If you can get it then do so & when I come I will give or send it to you by the first opportunity. I don't want you to sit down in Mt. Solon & nurse your hands. I want you fly around & enjoy yourself with your associates. While they are taking pleasure excursions, I don't want you to remain behind. For funds as long as I have any I have plenty for you to enjoy yourself with. I want you to see something of the world. Be very choise[sic] of your associates, both ladies and gents- especially the latter- avoid forward nor too intimate on short acquaintance, rather be hard to cultivate- don't show your likes or dislikes too much, cover them as much as possible- altogether if you [can]. I have not time to answer your last letter. I wrote Mr. Paul to get me a n-----. I hope he will. I am greatly in need of one. I have no further news to write you now. Go to see Maj. Yancey if you can and enjoy yourself. Visit all you can so it ain't too much. I don't know the name of the girl that wrote the letters more than "Recca" or "Pet". The feller's name is Cassius L. Mather 23rd O.R. I don't think he was killed. Give my best love to all, write me very often. Write long letters. The reason I want the small pistol sent to Uncle J. is that he asked me to leave one of them with him. He has the large one now & will keep it until I can get a belt. Good bye my dear sister. May God Bless you. Pray for me. Your devoted Bro. James

Letter to sister

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4197

Unit Date 1864 September 14

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from camp "6 miles below Winchester," Virginia. Letter regards loss of a cook and James A. Harden's poor health.

Keywords

Soldiers -- Confederate States of America -- Correspondence

Transcription

Camp 6 miles below W.Chester [Winchester] Sept. 14th, 1864

My Dear Sister, I have been looking for more than a week for a letter from both you & Mr. Paul but have not re'ced either. What has he done about getting me a boy. I am here with no one to do anything for me- living worse than a negro. The man that I had to cook a little for me was discharged today & I am in a sweet fix. Ask Uncle Paul to get me anyone he can for any price for a short time. I must have some body or I'll leave here. I am not well- haven't been for more than a week, suffering dreadfully with rheumatism & headache. Ask Uncle Paul for God sake to get me someone and start him right off. I am dirty filthy lousy & sick. Got no clothes, no nothing. Write me at once. Your affect. Bro James

Letter to sister**Unit ID** /repositories/3/archival_objects/4198**Unit Date** 1864 September 30**Language** English**Scope and Contents**

Written from "Officer's Prison Fort Delaware," Delaware. Letter regards capture and transfer to Fort Delaware.

Keywords

Fort Delaware (Del.)

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Prisoners and prisons

Soldiers -- Confederate States of America -- Correspondence

Transcription

Officer's Prison Fort Delaware Sept. 30th, 1864

My Darling Sister, I can imagine what your anxiety for me has been and hasten to avail myself of the only opportunity (and I fear an uncertain one). I have to inform you of my whereabouts and safety. I hope though that you have gotten one at least of the four or five letters I wrote and left in Va. to be sent to you. I was brought here on 27th inst. in company with the 184 other officers from our army- 125 of which were captured the same time I was and belonging mostly to our Div. Our Brigade being left back to support the Cav. was entirely cut off and surrounded and nothing was left us but to surrender. It might have been worse and I thank God it is not. Write me about my horse. Tell Mr. Paul that I would like to have the name of some of his friends here (in the North) to whom I can apply for pecuniary assistance. I write to him today. I would like for any of our friends to do me a like favor. I am well. Give my best love to all my friends & relatives. Write me very soon and be sure to give me the name of some one to whom I can look for assistance. I will give more instructions in Mr. P's letter. Your devoted Brother James

Direct to: Adj. J. A. H. Prisoner of War, 23rd Batt. Va. Inftry. Div. No. 33 Fort Delaware, Del. Via Flag of truce

Letter to sister**Unit ID** /repositories/3/archival_objects/4199**Unit Date** 1864 November 1**Language** English**Scope and Contents**

Written from "Officer's Prison Fort Delaware," Delaware. Letter regards life in prison and health.

Keywords

Fort Delaware (Del.)

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Prisoners and prisons

Soldiers -- Confederate States of America -- Correspondence

Transcription

Officers Prison, Fort Delaware November 1st, 1864

My darling Sister: Another week has gone and still no tidings from you. O Heavens the anxiety of suspense! I cannot estimate what a letter from you would be worth to me now. You certainly have rece'd one or more of the letters I have written you from here and I cannot see why it is I have not rece'd at least one from you if you followed my directions. As I told you in my last I will try to make it convenient to write once a week. You write at least that. Adj. [Sydenstricker] who left here shortly after we got here for exchange promised to write you all about me from Richmond. Also Col. Edgar & Capt. Marshall who left only a few days ago. Answer all of my questions in my former letters in two or three successive letters so that I may be more likely to see them. Don't forget my horse and the references. I am still enjoying good health and doing as well generally as could be expected under the circumstances. I have found several persons in the month who have befriended me. Write me often. Give my best love to all in Mt. Solon, also to Miss N - at Churchville- also Uncle J. & family. Jim Burn is here as well- so is John Hanna. Good bye. I sent you some stamps in my last. May God Bless you my dear darling sister. Ever your devoted Bro

Letter to sister**Unit ID** /repositories/3/archival_objects/4200**Unit Date** 1864 November 9

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from "Officer's Prison Fort Delaware," Delaware. Letter regards disappointment in not receiving letters from family and family matters.

Keywords

Fort Delaware (Del.)

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Prisoners and prisons

Soldiers -- Confederate States of America -- Correspondence

Transcription

Officer's Prison, Fort Delaware November 9th 1864

My precious Sister: I certainly expected to get a reply to some of my former letters by the last flag of truce boat - but was again disappointed. Why is this? Certainly you have written? I have written you some four or five letters from here - three in as many weeks- but not one word have I heard to quiet my anxiety- which is very great. I do not know why it is- others receive letters from the South- why wouldn't I? Write me every few days until I hear from you & as I told you in some of my former letters, if you cannot get U.S. postage stamps enclose to Col. Ould & I can pay it here- but get them if you can. Perhaps Mrs. Mary Lewis (was McFarland) can inform you how to obtain them. Don't fail to send me the names of those to whom I can apply for assistance. I explained all this in my former letters. Tell me about my horse, etc. Have inserted in Rich. [?], requesting New York Daily News to copy, a personal for me, giving me the information I want. Get the address I want from Uncle Jimmy & Uncle Paul or if they cannot give them, they can probably get some one to do it who can. Maj. McCue for instance. They can insert a personal as above to the parties requesting them to supply me. Make use of every expedient to let me hear from you. I am nearly crazy to do as I think Uncle Jimmy & Uncle Paul can certainly give me the information so badly needed. Be sure to write often. I shall be utterly miserable until I hear from you. Give my best love to all in Solon & at Uncle J's & all enquiring friends. Jim [Burns or Beam?] is here & well. Write to Mollie. Jim McFarland also here & well. Have you rece'd my letters from Winchester? May God Bless you ever, my darling sister. Your ever devoted Bro. James

Letter to sister

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4201

Unit Date 1865 Summer

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from Walnut Grove. Letter regards release from Fort Delaware, Delaware and the hope to travel home soon.

Keywords

Fort Delaware (Del.)

Correspondence

Transcription

Walnut Grove Tuesday morning

My darling Sister: It was my intention to start to see you today but both Uncle Jimmy & Aunt Mint think it best for me to remain and not undertake the trip too soon. As you may suppose I am very weak & could not so all the way to Mt. Solon in one day if I were to start now. My health is tolerable. Rest assured that I will come just as soon as possible. My anxiety to see you cannot be expressed. Give my best love to all. I arrived here Saturday night. I send this by Mr. Goodman who goes to Staunton after his daughter. Good Bye until we meet up- will I hope be very soon. Your fond & devoted Bro. James

Other correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4192

Unit Date 1860-1866

Language English

Extent 5 items

Letter from S. B. Brown, Jr. to Miss Harden

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4193

Unit Date 1860 October 7

Language English

Keywords

Correspondence

Letter to James A. Harden's sister

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4203

Unit Date 1864 October 19

Language English

Keywords

Correspondence

Letter to James A. Harden's sister

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4188

Unit Date 1864 November 26

Language English

Scope and Contents

Letter confirms that James A. Harden is a prisoner at Fort Delaware, Delaware.

Keywords

Correspondence

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Prisoners and prisons

Harden, James A. (James Abel), 1841-1927

Letter to James A. Harden's sister

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4189

Unit Date 1865 September 3

Language English

Keywords

Correspondence

Letter from Daniel M. Harden to daughter

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4202

Unit Date 1866 July 1

Language English

Keywords

Correspondence