

Letter From Scott, James written Sunday, November 30th, 1862

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Soldier: Scott, James

Allegiance: Union

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Date Written: Sunday, November 30th, 1862

Location: Camp near Memphis

Correspondence Type: Letter

Subjects: Camp Life, Commanders, Comrades, Contraband, Daily Life, Family, Friends, Home, Prisoner, Secesh, Slavery, Western

Well we are still here and no prospect of going soon. We have a very pleasant camping ground. We have found good water and plenty of it for all camp purposes. I suppose it would not be very cold in the summer but it is very good now. Memphis is a very nice place. I think it is the best looking place I have seen along the river and it is a large and closely built city mostly all brick. Negroes are mostly all run off into the interior whether it is for fear of having them confiscated or to set them to work in the army I do not know, but one thing is certain that the slaves are all moved back from the river and in Ky. all that could be spared were sent down South. We have fresh bread since we come here. I like it a good deal better than I do the crackers for my teeth is hardly fit for the task, but I believe the hard bread is the healthiest. We are now getting 1 1/4 pounds of fresh bread warm from the oven and we are going to have molasses now so that with warm bread and the molasses we will live well for a while. We have not had any fresh beef since we left Louisville. I do not know whether we will get any here or not. We have plenty of corned beef and mess pork besides plenty of bacon and we got a supply of black tea, the first that we have had since we left Camp Randall. Tea is the only thing that I have missed and shall carry some with me after this. The news is now that Holly Springs is taken by the Federals with 120 prisoners besides a lot baggage and ammunition but whether it is so or not I am not certain, but the thing is very probable for there has been a continual move of troops in that direction. There was 25,000 or 30,000 moved out in that direction from the camps about Memphis. I think the prospect of our staying here for some time is good now. We have just received orders to move about two miles down on the right of the Brigade so that fixing us up in regular order means something of that kind, so we will have to bundle up tomorrow morning, but we are getting used to that kind of work so that we don't mind it much any more.

Monday morning, Dec. 1:

We had a terrible thunder storm yesterday evening just after we came in from dress parade. It rained for about two hours as hard as I ever saw it rain in my life and thundered and lightening like all fury, then it was showery all night so that I do not [know] for certain whether we will move this morning or not. We have our traps all packed up ready. We will move some time today. At any rate it don't take much rain to make plenty of mud in this country. The health of the Reg. is generally very good with the exception of some colds that the boys got on the steam boat. I think camp life agrees with us all. Frank fatted up the most of any of us. He has gained over 20 pounds. I don't know what I have gained up to this time. I had gained 7 pounds at Camp Bates and I know I have gained since then. Bob has not gained any of any account. I think his health is good as ever it was at home. Asa has fatted up the most of any one in the Co. I never [saw] him so fat in my life. So I think camp life has agreed with all of us the best. Taylor Beer is about the same as when he left home. He has had a bad cold for some time but he is so very saucy and meddlesome that he will get along if any one can. I don't think he has a friend in the company except us that he went with and he can eat two men's rations all the time. Our Capt. is not very well now and has not been for some time. He has had the chronic diarrhea and can't get it stopped. I don't think he will stand marching very well. He is too fat and not used to this kind of living, but Duncan gains every day.

Monday evening:

We are once more fixed up after our move. We started this morning at 8 o'clock to go 2 miles as we supposed but the way they marched us it was 6 or 7. They had to take us all through the city to show us to the secesh of the city. Memphis is a nice place. We found the roads very muddy and if we had to have marched much farther we should all have given out for we started before dinner and when we got here we found little brick fire places built by the 32nd Wisconsin Vol., so we got to work and set our tents on logs about 14 inches high and then built us a nice brick fire place in one end of the tent so that we are fixed up the best we have been since we left Nicholasville. We had to work hard from the time we got in till dark but the comfort of it will pay us even if we do not stay but a day or two. I find it very comfortable sitting in front of the old fashion fire place. We passed some very strong fortifications as we came here with some fine looking barkers mounted. When you write again send me 3 or 4 stamps for it is almost impossible to get them even if we had the money. Do not send more than 3 or 4 at once for fear of the letter getting lost for I cannot get along without writing to someone and I can't write without the postage. I could have the Colonel send my letters but you would have to pay there. There is plenty of them has him sign their letters but I do not like to send my letters on tick. Direct to Memphis, Tenn. via Cairo, Ill.

Yours truly,

James Scott

To Miss M.J. Scott