

Letter From Hayes, John T. written Tuesday, December 8th, 1863

Generated on June 20th, 2018 1:19 PM from SoldierStudies.org

Soldier: Hayes, John T.

Allegiance: Union

Unit/Service Branch: 23rd Infantry

Date Written: Tuesday, December 8th, 1863

Location: McMinnsville, Tenn.

Correspondence Type: Letter

Subjects: Camp Life, Commanders, Comrades, Daily Life, Enemy, Family, Friends, Politics, Religion, Rumors, Western Theater, Wife

Beloved Companion,

I write you a few lines to inform you that I am well at this time and I hope this finds you well. I received your letter bearing date 25th. I was glad to hear from you, that you was all well and sweet Edy that he was well. I would like to see you and him the best kind and all the rest of the friends - some of them ain't or they would write to me. I have nothing to write to you but what you will have heard before this reaches you. The news, that is the war news, is good from the Army of the Potomac and the Army of the Cumberland if it all be true. I guess it is so the most of it at least as I have to you that we have no chance of hearing anything until it is old news. You can hear things quicker than we can and so I have nothing to write concerning the Army that will be news and as far as this place, there is nothing new. We are still at work on the fort here. We have nine forts to build here. Some of them is nearly done, the dirt part of them that is Imbarkment or brestwork and the men is at work on the rest of them.

In your letter you said that you heard that we had been fighting and had to retreat 50 miles. I don't know how you heard it but whoever wrote it home told that, that was not so for we have been in no fight yet nor I don't believe that there is much danger here unless the Rebels make a raid through here. You said that you was uneasy about me. Now I don't want you to make yourself uneasy about me at all and I will take as good care of myself at all and I will take as good care of myself as I can. I don't think you ought to make yourself uneasy. It is not your fault that I am here and so I don't ----. You ought to care for me. I am glad that you trust in God, that we may meet on earth again if not I hope on earth that we may meet in Heaven. I want to meet you there in that land of rest but I hope we will meet here on earth again. I trust that we will live to see each other. I think I will live to come home again if not I don't want you to mourn my loss and prepare to meet me in Heaven where we will meet to part no more. I will not now and when I have a chance to send it I will finish.

Friday December 11th, 1863 at camp

As I write nothing new only they have taken Wheeler and staff out about Knoxville. I seen some men right from there. They say that Burnside has Longstreet between him and the mountain, Sherman on the other side and the Tennessee River on the other side and that there is no chance for him to escape. His pontoon bridges Burnside has taken and he will have to go start up smokey mountain without a road. I hope there is a chance for him to get away and his force taken. The men said they never seen the likes of deserters coming in and giving themselves up. They come in companies. They told of a Captain come in and his company and they are coming in here giving themselves up. I was on picket duty and there was one come in. He said there was five come with him. I can't see how they will keep their Army together much longer. I reckon the Draft is a beginning to alarm the natives, well let it.

I am safe and I think that I am today lucky. I have a chance now to go in a veteran corps for hundred dollars bounty but I thought I would wait until I heard from you. If I have the luck to live until I am discharged from the service, I think I well do well than if I went to soldier for life.

The health of the company is good and of the regiment. If Westons inquires of H A Sisson, tell them he is well at least able for his rations of fat meat and bread.

The weather is warm here. It does not freeze any hardly here of a night. It is cool and frosty and the worst is it rains often here. It rains about every three white frosts and sometimes it is a cold rain. It snowed here a little one night but this was not stayed on the ground. We don't suffer here with the cold like we would in Missouri. There has been nothing like as cold weather here since we came as there was in Missouri before we left. There we have this advantage. Oh, tell William that if there was any danger of him being drafted that I would dig me a hole in the ground and hide there and if he won't do that tell him if he has to draw. Tell him to risk it. He is as libel to draw blank as any one. Tell him not to volunteer unless he goes in M.S. Militia. If I had to go in any I would go into that. Tell him to keep out of any. I would stay out in the brush and bushwack first and than would not as I have wrote enough, I will close for the present time. Take good care of my baby and see he is well cared for. Lizzie, I am ever yours until death. John T Hayes