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Title: Letters from Thomas Dick (May. - Dec. 1861)

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Contact:

Archives & Special Collections
Waidner-Spahr Library
Dickinson College
P.O. Box 1773
Carlisle, PA 17013

717-245-1399

archives@dickinson.edu

Old Capitol Prison mags!

Dear sister

I sit me down to write you a few lines requesting you to write me a letter: I have not received what I would call a letter from you for sometime, I've spot notes that is all.

But to return to the all interesting subject the leave of absence; well I guess I cant make it at present; There is only 5 allowed out of the Regt at one time and there is one out of our Co now and another one to go yet before I can go: These two are Crily and ^{Driving} both of whom have been home once since we came into the service. I am on duty at the P.C.

yet: we are off duty two
days and on one: It is very
nice duty. I think there is
good prospects of remaining here
all summer and if we do
surely I can get home sometime
during the summer. The boys
are talking all around me
and it is almost impossible to
write: and you must excuse
this brief letter: But yet
I guess it is about as long as
the last one I received from
you write soon to your
loving brother

my
John W. Spick

Old Capitol Prison May 31st [1861?]

Dear sister

I sit me down to write you a few lines requesting you to write me a letter: I have not received what I would call a letter from you for sometime, Two short notes that is all. But to return to the all interesting subject the leave of absence; well I guess I cant make it at present; There is only 5 allowed out of the Regt at one time And there is one out of our Co now and another one to go yet before I can go: These two are Cribs and Irving both of whom have been home once since we came into the service. I am on duty at the OCP

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yet: we are off duty two days and on one: It is very nice duty. I think there is good prospects of remaining here all summer and if we do surely I can get home sometime during the summer. The boys are talking all around me and it is almost impossible to write: and you must excuse this brief letter: But yet I guess it is about as long as the last one I received from you write soon to your loving brother

Tom W Dick



To Mother

1861?

Camp Genley Aug 29th

Friend

Dearest

I received a letter from you two or three days ago. I was very glad indeed to hear from you. I am very well at present; and in fact have been with the exception of about a day since we came here.

The reason I did not write sooner was because the day I received your letter we went out on picket guard and I had not time.

But for the most part we have plenty of time to write. I am never so weary but what I might write a letter. The reason I did not write more was because I did not receive more letters.

Today being wet we have no

~~writing~~ drilling to Mr. Go
I am writing? As for me
having the dysentery it was a
false report. I had nothing but
a little touch of diarrhea which
did not last longer than a day.
I was very glad you ~~had~~ sent
my red shirt back. For I had
not more than got my clothes
sent off than I regretted sincerely
having sent my shirts. But
the towels and socks I scarcely
needed I had one towel which
is all that is necessary. I also
had two good pair of socks
furnished by uncle Sam.
I think it very pleasant in
camp we have plenty to eat -
we have coffee and pork and
fresh beef and good beer and
hard crackers, and sometimes we
have potatoes we have also molasses,
{ tolerable plain eating you will

say but it is good for the
health. I am hearty and we
delicate boys who every body
said would not stand as the
heartiest men in the camp.
Sam Elder stands it first-
rate some of our boys are not
very and one B. G. Angus is
in the hospital in Washington.
We have one less than when
we started from Armgagh.
I suppose it would cast
quite a damper over the
feelings of the community
and especially would it be
astounding news as I under-
stand they had no tidings
of his death until the coffin
was driven up to the door.
But he died in the best
of causes and now I must
close ^{by} Tell ^{by} Father to be
more careful of himself

of his pilgrimage here
below which is short at best
will be made shorter,
give my love to Grandmother
and to all the family
The opinion appears to be
now that the war will be
ended in the course of
six months and then if
shared I will retire to my
quiet home once more.

I have heard it from good
authority that general Scott
has said he would take our
christmas dinners at home
Well if we can have an honorable
peace I hope it may be so.

But if not I would rather
slay
Your Affectionate
son J. W. D.

To Mother

Camp Tenley August 29th [1861?]

Dearest Earthly Friend

I received a letter from you two or three days ago. I was very glad indeed to hear from you. I am very well at present; and in fact have been with the exception of about a day since we came here. The reason I did not write sooner was because the day I received your letter we went out on picket guard and I had not time. But for the most part we have plenty of time to write. I am never so weary but what I might write a letter. The reason I did not write more was because I did not receive more letters. Today being wet we have no

[Page Break]

~~writing~~ drilling to do. So I am writing. As for me having the dysentery it was a false report. I had nothing but a little touch of diarrhea which did not last longer than a day. I am very glad you ~~had~~ sent my red shirt back. For I had not more than got my clothes sent off than I regretted sincerely having sent my shirts. But the towels and socks I scarcely needed I had one towel which is all that is necessary. I also had two good pair of socks furnished by Uncle Sam. I think it very pleasant in camp we have plenty to eat we have coffee and pork and fresh beef and good bread and hard crackers and sometimes we have potatoes we have also molas tolerable plain eating you will

[Page Break]

say but it is good for the health. I am hearty and we delicate boys who every body said would not stand are the heartiest men in the camp. Sam Elder stands in first rate some of our boys are not very and one B F Angus is in the hospital in Washington. We have one less than when we started from Armagh. I suppose it would cast ~~many~~ quite a damper over the feelings of the community and especially would it be astounding news as I understand they had no tidings of his death until the corpse was driven up to the door. But he died in the best of causes and now I must close Tell Father to be more careful of himself

[Page Break]

or his pilgrimage here below which is short at best will be made shorter. Give my love to Grandmother and to all the family. The opinion appears to be here that the war will be ended in the course of six months and then if spared I will return to my quiet home once more. I have heard it from good authority that General Scott has said we would take our Christmas dinners at home Well if we can have an honorable peace I hope it may be so. But if not I would rather stay.

Your affectionate son

T W Dick

Camp Tennally September 15th 1861

Dear Father

I sit me down this lovely morning to let you all know how we are getting along in camp: well we are very well & lonely; 5 companies have gone out on picket and we are excused from all duty. I suppose while I am writing the most of you are having a pleasant time at camp meeting. How I would like to be there to day; But I think before another camp meeting comes we will all be home. And the glorious old flag hoisted in its former proper position. I am indeed I would be happy to be reinstated in the home circle but in our country's present perilous condition I feel quite contented here and if necessary could cheerfully offer up my life that rebellion might be crushed out from our midst. Our leading men seem ^{still} to anticipate an attack on Washington city. They are very strongly fortified at chain bridge and also have an extensive battery on Georgetown heights. They commenced yesterday to form a battery of three guns on the left and in view of our encampment. So I trust if the rebels make the attempt to force their way through to our seat of government they will meet with a tolerable warm reception. We were called out a few evenings since to have a little fun with secesh shot; alas they fled. There was a skirmish took place between our troops and the rebels but how it terminated I cant tell there are so many reports about I know not which to believe. The first report affirmed that the rebels opened fire on our boys and they returned it and soon put them to flight then another report came stating that our infantry which protected Stevens' battery were driven back to the battery, then the battery opened on the rebels and drove them back to their battery. The other night there was a little muss picked up in camp by the appearance of a suspicious person on the outskirts. He was first seen by the corporal of the guards and the guard seen him first

And challenged him he didnt wait but snapped his gun
twice at the guard he would have shot him but his gun
would not go off he was seen running into an adjoining
thicket there was then as soon as possible a guard put around
it but he made his escape somehow and was seen a short time
after by the guard rounds a little distance from the Camp
he is supposed to have been some one of the secessionist in the
vicinity. last Tuesday there was a flag presented to each of the pens
sylvania reserve regiments by Governor Curtin. I was glad indeed
to read in your letter that you were better than when I left home
I hope you may continue to improve but lest you may be laid
low by the ruthless hand of disease ere I return or ~~you~~ I
fall in battle and never return let us both prepare for that
awful change and if we never meet on earth we may
dwell together througout a long eternity. I was sorry to hear
that mother was ill but not surprised as she is so often sick
Tell her not to grieve herself so much about me for
I am very comfortably situated and camp life is very
~~pleasant~~ I wrote a long letter to her telling her all
about it I am anxious to know whether she received it
I believe you also said grandmother was unwell tell her I
am growing as rugged as a mountaineer and that I expect
soon to have this little difficulty down here settled and
be home. I am very thankful to Lucy and Wallace
for their letters and was very glad to hear that ~~he~~ ^{she} could read
and I hope he will also soon be able to read write me
a letter. I believe he is the only member of our family
who has not written to me. I will answer all their
letters as soon as I get our ~~ordely~~ ^{ordely} time our 1st and 2nd
Sergeants both being sick write soon that Bracken sends
his respects. as you are not very well dont work too hard but take
times easy and write me a long letter once in a while
Your affectionate son

J. W. D

Camp Tennally Sept 15th /61

Dear Father

I sit me down this lovely morning to let you know how we are getting along in camp: Well we are very ~~well~~ lovely; 5 companies have gone out on picket and we are excused from all duty. I suppose while I am writing the most of you are having a pleasant time at camp meeting. How I would like to be there to day; But I think before another camp meeting comes we will all be home. And the glorious old flag hoisted in its ~~former~~ proper position. Then indeed I would happy to be reinstated in the home circle but in our country's present perilous condition I feel quite contented here and if necessary could cheerfully offer up my life that rebellion might be crushed out from our midst. Our leading men seem still to anticipate an attack on Washington City. They are very strongly fortified at chain bridge and also have an extensive battery on Georgetown heights They commenced yesterday to form a battery of three guns on the left and in view of our encampment. So I trust if the rebels make the attempt to force their way through to our seat of government they will meet with a tolerable warm reception. We were called out a few evenings since to have a little fun with secesh but; alas they fled. There was a skirmish took place between our troops and the rebels but how it terminated I can't tell there are so many reports afloat I know not which to believe. The first report affirmed that the rebels opened fire on our boys and they returned it and soon put them to flight then another report came stating that our infantry which protected Stevens' battery were driven back to the battery then the battery opened on the rebels and drove them back to there battery. The other night there was a little muss kicked up in camp by the appearance of a suspicious person on the outskirts. He was ~~first~~ seen by the corporal of the guards ~~and~~ the guard seen him first

[Page Break]

And challenged him he didn't halt but snapped his gun twice at the guard he would have shot him but his gun would not go off he was seen running into an adjoining thicket there was then as soon as possible a guard put around it but he made his escape somehow and was seen a short time after by the grand rounds a little distance from the camp he is supposed to have been some one of the secessionist in the vicinity. Last Tuesday there was a flag presented to each of the Pennsylvania reserve regiments by Governor Curtin. I was glad indeed to read in your letter that you were better than when I left home. I hope you may continue to improve but lest you may be laid low by the ruthless hand of disease ere I return or you I fall in battle and never return let us both prepare for that awful change and if we never meet on earth we may dwell together throughout a long eternity. I was sorry to hear that mother was ill but not surprised as she is so often sick Tell her not to grieve herself so much about me for I am very comfortably situated and camp life is very pleasant I wrote a long letter to her telling her all about it I am anxious to know whether she received it. I believe you also said grandmother was unwell. Tell her I am growing as rugged as a mountaineer and that I expect soon to have this little difficulty down here settled and be home. I am very thankful to Lucy and Wallace for their letters so was very glad to hear that Sammy he could read and I hope he will also soon be able to read write me a letter. I believe he is the only member of our family who has not written to me. I will answer all their letters as soon as I get our orders time our 1stand 2ndSergeants both being sick write soon Wat Bracken

sends his respects. as you are not well don't work to hard but take times easy and write me a long letter once in a while

Your affectionate son

T W D

Camp Tennally Sept 24th

Sister Sizzie

As I am at leisure this morning I think I can employ a portion of my time profitably by writing to you. But as I give all the particulars in Father's Letter and as nothing thrilling has transpired since I have nothing particularly interesting to communicate. We are very pleasantly situated in our new encampment. The general health of our company is good; two of our men (Cunningham and Jones) who had been in the Dublin Hospital arrived here yesterday. They look well. Wat Bracken was to be sent home as a recruiting sergeant but I don't know whether he will go at all now. I had a letter ready to send with him. If there is any

one goes from the company I would
be pleased if you would send me
a shirt something like the one
I have from home and also I
would like to have two or three collars
and a couple of my best neck ties.
And if you have any extra nice things
you couldnt make a better deposit than
send it here we dont get very many
delicacies in camp except what we buy.
The time passes very rapidly in camp
so that a week seems as a day. sabbath
is not very well kept here sometimes
we are out on picket and sometimes
we get a quiet day to ourselves.
There is some excitement prevails
at present in camp on account of
a report that the enemy are fortifying
themselves on mansons hill within
shelling distance of Washington
city if this be so we will have
hot times soon as news is scarce
and I have been pretty faithful

Heretofore in detailing news
to you I will close for this
time. Birmingham and
I have got a party to visit
Jennally town and the surround-
ing encampments. we often go
out in the evenings and have
a pleasant time of it looking
at the pretty misses and soon.
your brother
J W Dick

will soon - very soon

Camp Tennally Sept 24th [1861?]

Sister Lizzie

As I am at leisure this morning I think I can employ a portion of my time profitably by writing to you. But as I give all the Particulars in Father's letter and as nothing thrilling has transpired since I have nothing particularly interesting to communicate. We are very pleasantly situated in our new encampment. The general health of our company is good; two of our men (Cunningham and Tomb) who had been in the Baltimore hospital arrived here yesterday they look well. Wat Bracken was to be sent home as a recruiting sergeant but I don't know whether he will go at all now. I had a letter ready to send with him. If there is any

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one goes from the company I would be pleased if you would send me a shirt something like the one I have from home and also I would like to have two or three collars and a couple of my best neck ties. And If you have any extra nice things you couldnt make a better deposit than send it here we dont get very many delicacys in camp except what we buy. The time passes very rapidly in camp so that a week seems as a day. sabbath is not very well kept here sometimes we are out on picket and sometimes we get a quiet day to ourselves. There is some excitement prevails at present in camp on account of a report that the enemy are fortifiing themselves on munsons hill within shelling distance of Washington City if this be so we will have hot times soon as news is scarce and I have been pretty faithful

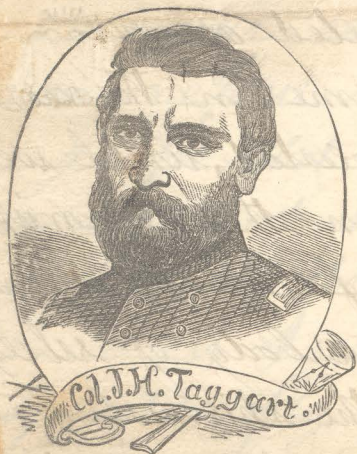
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heretofore in detailing news to you I will close for this time. Cunningham and I have got a pass to visit Tennally town and the surrounding encampments. we often go out in the evenings and have a pleasant time of it looking at the pretty misses and so on.

Your brother

T W. Dick

Write soon – very soon



HEAD-QUARTERS TWELFTH REGIMENT, P. R. C.

Gen. M'Call's Division.

1861?

Camp Pierpont Dec 22nd

My Dear sister

I received your welcome letter, yesterday evening, and hasten to answer it. I will in the first place proceed to give some news which I suppose you have heard ere this, through the medium of the press; that notorious news monger. Last Friday the monotony of camp life was somewhat disturbed by a brisk skirmish at Pranesville. Last Thursday evening we received orders to march the next morning at 6 o'clock on a foraging and reconnoitering expedition in the direction

of Dranesville. We started on our way at the appointed time in the morning, and passed unmolested, until we arrived, at Dranesville, when the skirmishers, which had been sent out, from the different regiments, discovered quite a body of rebels, secreted in the woods; the skirmishing companies, exchanged, a few shots, with them and then rallied on their respective regiments. In a few minutes we were drawn up in the line of battle, along the pike: the bucktail regiment was sent ahead; the rest were kept in rear: soon the engagement commenced when the first shower of bullets whistled over our heads. I felt rather a gill sensation creep over me; but soon regained my composure and am proud to say, stood my ground. but our commander seeing us unnecessarily exposed gave the command lie down we all threw ourselves flat on the ground and the bullets passed harmlessly

over our heads. While in that position one of our men was wounded by a grape shot a canister also ~~passed~~ ~~our~~ passed through one of the boards in the fence immediately over us I tell you it made the splinters fly. just about this time a bomb shell burst near us and threw the dirt sky high. We lay with our noses to ^{the} ground until our gallant General came in front of us amid a shower of bullets and waving his sword gave the command forward and charge on them. I think there was not a man in the regiment who was not up at the word; we jumped a fence and took up over a hill into the woods meantime the whistling bullets making music for us. when we got into the woods we had it pretty hot for awhile every one for himself firing whenever an opportunity occurred all this time I cant say I felt any fear but was I

suppose a little excited. after the
command was given to cease firing
we scoured the woods in ^{the} vicinity but
did not discover a secessionist except
the dead and wounded; of which there was
a goodly number, some dead some
~~half~~ ~~are~~ dying and some slightly wounded
I seen two men with their heads
blown entirely off. We had a few men
in our ranks who were so degraded as
to rifle the pockets and even to pull
the boots off the dead it was really
heart rending. there was only two in
our regiment wounded one of them
perhaps mortally. I write these things
to let you know something of what
war is. I think I do not need any-
thing now but my rest. as I have more
clothes now than I can care if we were
to march. we have got into winter quarters
but I have not room to tell you about them
this time. Ill leave that for next time. give
my love to all your brother
W Dick

Camp Pierpont Dec 22nd [1861?]

My Dear sister

I received your welcome letter yesterday evening and hasten, to answer it. I will in the first place proceed to give some news which I suppose you have heard ere this, through the medium of the press; that notorious news monger. Last friday the monotony of camp life was somewhat disturbed by a brisk skirmish at Dranesville. Last Thursday evening we received orders to march the next morning at 6 oclock on a foraging and reconoitering expedition in the direction

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suppose a little excited. After the command was given to cease firing we scoured the woods in the vicinity but did not discover a secessionist except the dead and wounded; of which there was a goodly number, some dead some ~~half-dea~~ dying and some slightly wounded. I seen two men with their heads blown entirely off. We had a few men in our ranks who were so degraded as to rifle the pockets and even to pull the boots off the dead it was really heart rending. There was only two in our regiment wounded one of them perhaps mortally. I write these things to let you know something of what war is. I think I do not need anything now but my vest. as I have more

clothes now than I can carry if we were to march. we have got into winter quarters but I have not room to tell you about them this time. I'll leave that for next time. Give my love to all

your brother

T W Dick

Camp Pierpont Dec 24th 1861

my dear old friend

Having just partaken of a sumptuous dinner, such as we get in war, and feeling refreshed generally; I proceed to indite, to you, a short epistle: which I, should have done, long ere this. I hope you will pardon, my neglect, in not answering, sooner. However I think I have some excuse to offer for my apparent neglect. I did not receive your letter, until, near a month, after date; soon after, I took sick; when, I, became, perfectly restored, to health, we received orders, to build winter, quarters; so ~~xxx~~ we were, busily, employed, for a time. But, ^{now} being snugly ensconced in our winter quarters I will endeavor, to give some information, in regard to our present rough abode. We have moved our camp a short distance from its former location; Have elevated our tent about 4 feet above the ground. That is, we built up a rough structure of pine logs; about that height, chinked and daubed it so effectually, as to defy the howling tempests, of winter. Then put the canvas over for a roof; some have fireplaces, and some stoves, in our tent we have a stove: there is but four in our mess; we have bunks made one over the other. Griffith and myself sleep in the lower bunk we sleep quite as comfortable as we once did in a feather bed. We have a dresser put up in one ^{corner} have frying pan stew pan and all the cooking utensils, so when we wish we can cook our own meat, or have a stew of oysters, and last but not least we have a box sunk in the ground; in one corner of the tent; ~~xxx~~ serving as a kind of cellar to keep our butter, milk &c. ⁱⁿ However we are not troubled much with the last named article; For this little matter of convenience all thanks to ~~the~~ the inventive genius of our mutual friend W B Bracken. And now though this is rather an indifferent description you can form some conception of our manner of life. The country we inhabit is remarkable for its beautiful and picturesque scenery. When we first came here the farms were in a high state of cultivation. But as the troops advanced the rebel occupants, fled precipitately; leaving the plough in the

surrow their furniture in the houses untouched. Uncle James
Boys took charge of all. I think by the time the army of the
potomac deserts its shores, the sacred soil of Virginia, ~~the~~ will present
to the eye, one continued, scene, of desolation, all the timber, within
view of our camp ~~has~~ been felled to the ground and, ^{now} use
of by the camp, and wood can only be procured at a distance
of three or four miles from camp. If these secess ever be
so fortunate as, ^{to} come in possession of their valuable farms
again they will be at a loss for timber to build up their fences,
as there is not one unbroken fence for miles around. Our
three visitors from Armagh and vicinity arrived here yesterday, and
~~met with~~ a warm reception such as every true hearted pensilvanian
deserves. I believe they intend returning on monday so you will
perhaps see them before you receive this letter. We have had rather
dull times here for awhile. However the monotony of camp
was somewhat relieved last friday by a little skirmish at
Drainesville. The evening previous we received orders to march
with one days rations in haversack, on a foraging and reconoi-
tering expedition, as we had frequently been out for the same
purpose on former occasions; we thought very little of it but took up
the line of march in the direction of Drainesville and proceeded
without modestation until the head of the ^{column} was entering the village
when our skirmishers ~~we~~ discovered quite a body of rebel troops
secreted in a dense woods. They exchanged a few shots with them
and then rallied on the main body. In a short time we had a
line of battle drawn up in the pike and were ready for
them. The bucktails ~~of~~ or Kane rifle boys went in advance
soon the engagement commenced we kept our post in the road
but I tell you when the first shower of bullets whistled over
our heads it made rather a queer sensation creep over
me I just felt as if I had been shot at and missed.
While ^{we} were in this position one of our men was shot through
the thigh; a canister passed over our heads and shattered a
board in the fence, it was afterwards found. at the same
time the bomb shells were bursting over us and

one burst in the road just before us throwing up the dirt sky high. so this was the scene presented around us.

But previous to this our commander seeing our danger and knowing we were needlessly exposed to the enemys fire, gave the command lie down we threw ourselves flat on the ground. we lay in this posture until our gallant General gave the command forward boys and take the battery. I think there was not a man but what was at his post at the word; and cheering lustily started forward on double quick; meantime the whistling bullets playing merrily over our heads. When we got in the ^{woods} ~~it~~ was every one for ~~himself~~ himself, each one loading and firing at will the command was soon given cease firing the field is ours. then we scoured the woods throughout and not an enemy was to be found except the dead and wounded. They fled precipitately leaving behind ~~two~~ ^{two} cannon and a great amount of provision besides a number of blankets and ^{small} firearms. There was some horrid looking corpses, strewn through the woods; some with their heads shot entirely off. By the time we got matters fairly adjusted it was dusk. So with all our trophies we started for camp arriving there about 10 o'clock. ~~next~~ ~~to~~ retired to our downy beds and slept as sound as though nothing unusual had happened. when we arrived there we found the camp in a perfect uproar as they had heard that the 12th regiment was entirely used up and knew no better until our return. I believe the Secesh were so badly frightened that they did not come back to bury their dead but some of our men returned to the battle field a day or two after and buried them decently. However our pickets were driven in from difficult creek the other night and we had to send out 4 companies of infantry to sustain them. Also our scouts brought in word that the rebels now hold Drainesville with a force of fourteen thousand strong; so we will likely soon have a general engagement on the same ground my only hope is that we may gain as

decisive a victory as we did in our late skirmish. According to the papers there appears to be a great excitement prevailing in both the old and new world in regard to the mason and lidell affair. Our government appears to ~~be~~ have touched johny in the ^{place} ~~sole~~ by the seizure of these two noted rebels. The tendency of the affair appears to be towards the final recognition of the southern confederacy by the british government then all europe would take sides; and this little family ~~struggle~~ quarrel; which commenced with the bombardment of fort sumter, would prove to be a world wide struggle, and terminate in the revolution of the entire world.

My opinion of this matter is, the easiest way. ~~###~~ we can get over this matter is the best. If government can honorably avoid a war with great britain it would be policy to do so. As we have our hands full at present with our rebel brothers let us first adjust our own little difficulty at home. which I imagine ~~will~~ ~~be~~ through the wise policy of our gallant leader and his subordinates to aid and abet him will speedily be brought to pass. And then with the stars and stripes waving over every peak and knoll from the icebound regions of the frigid zone, to the more congenial clime of the sunny south we will defy the world. Well Wm I had started out with the determination to fill this sheet. it is the longest letter I have ^{ever} written but as I have worn out two pens already and wearied your patience to some extent I will close with the expectation that you will write soon.

don't you think this rather a long letter for me?
from your friend

J W Dick

Camp Pierpont Dec 24th 1861

My dear old friend

Having just partaken of a sumptuous (dinner, such as we get in war,) and feeling refreshed generally; I proceed to indite, to you, a short epistle: which I, should have done, long ere this. I hope you will pardon, my neglect, in not answering sooner. However I think I have some excuse to offer for my apparent neglect. I did not receive your letter, until, near a month, after date; Soon after, I took sick; when I, became, perfectly restored, to health, we received orders, to build winter quarters; so ~~were~~ we were, busily, employed, for a time. But now being snugly ensconced in our winter quarters I will endeavor, to give some information, in regards to our present rough abodes. We have moved our camp a short distance from its former location; Have elevated our tent about 4 feet above the ground.

That is we built up a rough structure of pine logs; about that height, chinked and daubed it so effectually as to defy the howling tempests of winter. then put the canvas over for a roof; some have fireplaces and some stoves. in our tent we have a stove; there is but four in our mess; we have bunks made one over the other. Griffith and myself sleep in the lower bunk we sleep quite as comfortable as we did in a feather bed. we have a dresser put up in one corner have frying pan stew pan and all the cooking utensils so when we wish we can cook our own meat, or have a stew of oysters, and last but not least we have a box sunk in the ground; in one corner of the tent; ~~sev~~ serving as a kind of cellar to keep our butter milk &c in however we are not troubled much with the last named article. For this little matter of convenience all thanks to [~~one word illegible~~] the inventive genius of our mutual friend W R Bracken. And now though this is rather an indifferent description you can form some conception of our manner of life. The country we inhabit is remarkable for its beautiful and picturesque scenery; When we first came here the farms were in a high state of cultivation: But as the troops advanced the rebel occupants fled precipitately; leaving the plough in the

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furrow their furniture in the houses untouched. Uncle Sam's boys took charge of all. I think by the time the army of the potomac deserts its shores: the sacred soil of Virginia, it will present to the eyes, one continued, scene, of desolation, all the timber within view of our camp has been felled to the ground and made use of by the camps and wood can only be procured at a distance of three or four miles from camp. If these secesh ever be so fortunate as to come in possession of their valuable farms again they will be at a loss for timer to build up their fences as their is not one unbroken fence for miles around. Our three visitors from Armagh and vicinity arrived here yesterday and ~~received~~ met with a warm reception such as every true pensilvanian deserves. I believe they intend returning on monday so you will perhaps see them before you receive this letter. We have had rather dull times here for awhile. However the monotony of camp was somewhat relieved last friday by a little skirmish at Drainesville.

The evening previous we received orders to march with one days rations in haversack, on a foraging and reconoitering expedition, as we had frequently been out for the same purpose on

former occasions; we thought very little of it but took up the line of march in the direction of Drainesville and proceeded without molestations until the head of the column was entering the village when our skirmishers ~~xxxxxx~~ [one word illegible] discovered quite a body of rebel troops and then rallied on the main body. In a short time we had a line of battle drawn up in the pike and were ready for them. the bucktails of or Kane rifle boys went in advance but I tell you when the first shower of bullets whistled over our heads it made rather a queer sensation creep over me I just felt as if I had been shot at and missed. While we were in this position one of our men was shot through the thigh; a canister passed over our heads and shattered a board in the fence, it was afterwards found. at the same time the bomb shells were bursting over us and

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one burst in the road just before us throwing up the dirt sky high. so this was the scene presented around us. But previous to this our commander seeing our danger and knowing we were needlessly exposed to the enemy's fire, gave the command lie down we threw ourselves flat on the ground. we lay in this posture until our gallant General gave the command forward boys and take the battery. I think there was not a man but what was at his post at the word; and cheering lustily started forward on double quick: meantime the whistling bullets playing merrily over our heads. When we got in the woods it was every one forwa himself, each one loading and firing at will the command was soon given cease firing the field is ours. Then we scoured the woods throughout and not an enemy was to be found except the dead and wounded. They fled precipitately leaving behind the two cannon and a great amount of provision besides a number of blankets and small firearms.

There was some horrid looking corpses, strewn through the woods; some with their heads shot entirely off. By the time we got matters fairly adjusted it was dusk. So with all our trophy we started for camp arriving there about 10 o clock. ~~went to~~ retired to our downy beds and slept as sound as though nothing unusual had happened. when we arrived there we found the camp in a perfect uproar as they had heard that the 12th regiment was entirely used up and knew no better until our return. I believe the secesh were so badly frightened that they did not come back to bury their dead but some of our men returned to the battle field a day or two after and buried them decently. However our pickets were driven in from difficult creek the other night and we had to send out 4 companies of infantry to sustain them. Also our scouts brought in word that the rebels now hold drainesville with a force of fourteen thousand strong; so we will likely soon have a general engagement on the same ground my only hope is that we may gain as

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decisive a victory as we did in our late skirmish. According to the papers there appears to be a great excitement prevailing in both the old and the new world in regard to the mason and slidell affair Our government appears to be have touched Johny in the sore place by the seizure of these two noted rebels. The tendency of the affair appears to be toward the final recognition of the southern confederacy by the british government then all europe would take sides; and this little family struggle quarrel; which commenced with the bombardment of fort sumter, would prove to be a world wide struggle, and terminate in the revolution of the entire world.

My opinion of this matter is, the easiest way ~~I can~~ we can get over this matter is the best. If Government can honorably avoid a war with great Britain it would be policy to do so. As we have our hands full at present with our rebel brothers let us first adjust our own little difficulty at home. Which I imagine ~~will see~~ through the wise policy of our gallant leader and his subordinates to aid and abet him will speedily be brought to pass. And then with the stars and stripes waving over every peak and knoll from the icebound regions of the frigid zone, to the more congenial clime of the sunny south we will defy the world. Well Wm I had started out with the determination to fill this sheet. it is the longest letter I have ever written but as I have worn out two pens already and wearied your patience to some extent I will close with the expectation that you will write soon.

don't you think this rather a long letter for me; from your friend

T W Dick