

Dickinson College Archives & Special Collections

<http://archives.dickinson.edu/>

Documents Online

Title: Letters from Thomas Dick (Jan. - Mar. 1862)

Date: January - March 1862

Location: MC 2001.10, B1, F3

Contact:

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

717-245-1399

archives@dickinson.edu

~~Dear~~ ~~Dear Brother~~
Camp Pierpont Jan 4th 1862.

Dear Brother

Your very welcome communication, was received and read with pleasure. By referring to the date of it I find that a fortnight has passed away; since its reception. But the time has been fraught with such memorable events, that it appears to me, but a few days. Since that time we have shifted our encampment; and built winter quarters. Since that time we have had a brilliant and successful skirmish with the rebels. Since that time we have been gladdened with the cheering presence of our ~~own~~ friends, from Urmagh. Since that time the old year has passed into eternity and been numbered with the years that are past; the new one commenced ~~and xxx~~ ~~it~~ its twelve monthly journey and soon it to shall have

completed its annual round and
furnish another illustration of the
brevity of time. I suppose by this
time you have had the details of the
Drainessville battle in full therefore
I will be mute on that point. But
it can be no harm to inform you a
little in regard to our present rough
abodes; for it is not at all likely
that you will see any account of them
in print. We have moved our camp
a short distance from its former
location built up a rough structure
of pine logs about four feet high
and stretched the canvas over the frame
for a roof. We have daubed it
so effectually as to defy the howling
tempests of winter. This will give
you some idea of the exterior now for
the interior department. I suppose to
give you a description of our own
tent will describe all our mess

have thrown together and bought
a stove we got with it a frying
pan stew pan and coffee pot so
that we can have a stew of oysters where-
ever we wish. I commenced this letter on
saturday evening but was detailed to
take charge of a guard at the division
hospital on sabbath morning so that after
I had lain out all sabbath night (a rough
night it was, for it snowed about six
inches) I did not feel very much
for writing on monday. so I procced
this cold morning to complete this letter.
Well to go on with my description of
our humble abode we have a rack
for our guns in one end of the
establishment. Also in one corner
we have a very snug dresser to keep
our dishes in; we have this nailed to
the logs a little above the floor directly
under it we have a cracker box sunk
in the ground. serving as a kind of

seller in which to keep our
butter. With this imperfect descrip-
tion you may have some idea of our
present mode of life. It is rather a
novel way of living but withal
a very pleasant way in my estima-
tion. Since we have got into winter
quarters, we cook for ourselves.

I understand that some of the folks
about home are silly enough to
assert that the Captain stayed at
home the time of the Drainesville affair
knowing there was a fight up but
it is not so for when there is anything
of the kind going on he appears to
be as willing as any one in the
regiment besides none of us ex-
pected a fight. (Maybe our General
did) besides I know he was not
able to go that time. as the paper
is full I will close please write more
frequently your brother as ever
J. H. Dick

Dear Brother

Camp Pierpont Jan 4th 1862

Dear Brother

Your very welcome communication, was received and read with pleasure. By referring to the date of it I find that a fortnight has passed away; since its reception. But the time has been fraught with such memorable events that It appears to me, but a few days. Since that time we have shifted our encampment; and built winter quarters. Since that time we have had a brilliant and successful skirmish with the rebels. Since that time we have been gladdened with the cheering presence of our [~~one word illegible~~] friends from Armagh. Since that time the old year has passed into eternity and been numbered with the years that are past; the new one commenced ~~and soon it t~~ its twelve months journey and soon it to shall have

[Page Break]

completed its annual round and furnish another illustration of the brevity of time. I suppose by this time you have had the details of the Drainesville battle in full therefore I will be mute on that point. But it can be no harm to inform you a little in regard to our present rough abodes; for it is not at all likely that you will see any account of them in print. We have moved our camp a short distance from its former location built up a rough structure of pine logs about four feet high and stretched the canvas over the frame for a roof. We have daubed it so effectually as to defy the howling tempests of winter. This will give you some idea of the exterior now for the interior department. I suppose to give you a description of our own tent will describe all our mess

[Page Break]

have thrown together and bought a stove we got with it a frying pan stew pan and coffee pot so we can have a stew of oysters whenever we wish. I commenced this letter on saturday evening but was detailed to take charge of a guard at the division hospital on sabbath morning so that after I had lain out all sabbath night (a rough night it was to for it snowed about six inches) I did not feel very much for writing on monday. so I proceed this cold morning to complete this letter. Well to go on with my description of our humble abode we have a rack for our guns in one end of the establishment. Also in one corner we have a very snug dresser to keep our dishes in; we have this nailed to the logs a little above the floor directly under it we have a cracker box sunk in the ground serving as a kind of

[Page Break]

seller in which to keep our butter. With this imperfect description you may have some idea of our present mode of life. It is rather a novel way of living but withal a very pleasant way in my estimation. Since we have got into winter quarters we cook for ourselves. I understand that some of the folks about home are silly enough to assert that the Captain stayed at home the time of the Drainesville affair knowing there was a fight up but it is not so for when there is anything of the kind going on he appears to be as willing as anyone in the regiment besides none of us expected

a fight. (Maybe our General did) besides I know he was not able to go that time. as the paper is full I will close please write more frequently

your brother as ever

T W Dick

1862

Camp Pierpont Feb 14th

Dear Brother

I received your kind
favor of the 6th and was glad indeed
to read of your welfare: Glad to know
you had arrived safe at home. We came in
off picket this morning; And having
slept none last night I am almost
unfit to do anything in the way of corres-
pondence today. But as three ~~or~~ or four
days have elapsed since the reception of
your letter I feel obligated to make
at least a brief acknowledgement of
the same. Nothing unusual happened
during our tour of picket. One of
our sentinels discovered what he thought to
be two scesk outside the picket line

advancing stealthily towards it: we sent
out nine men to bring them in they
scoured the neighboring woods and
tracked them some distance but finally
lost all trace of them it was evident
there had been men there but who
they were is a horse of another color
our scouts then went to house about
a half mile outside the line and
inquired if they had seen these two
they said they had but did not say
whether they were rebels or not.

What few Virginians still reside here
tell so many different stories it
is hard to tell what they are: but
I entertain some serious doubts as to
their loyalty. I did not find my
money and I suppose never will.
Sure enough it will teach me a
lesson in future. But I think it

letter to let Father know how
it is. I suppose you have read ere
this the joyful news of the capture
of Roanoke Island. I think we
have them pretty well hemmed in now
and a few more such decisive victories
will place the confederates ~~at~~ our
mercy. And then what is left of our
number will be restored to their respective
home circles and those of our number
who are destined to fall on the battle
field will leave to their friends the
sweet consolation that they died in
a glorious cause. I have become so sleepy
that I must necessarily move around to keep
awake so I will close hoping to hear
from you soon. Yours brother as ever

J W Dick

Camp Pierpont Feb 14th 1862

Dear Brother

I received your kind favor of the 6th and was glad indeed to read of your welfare: Glad to know that you had arrived safe at home. We came in off picket this morning; And having slept none last night I am almost unfit to do anything in the way of correspondence to day. But as three or four days have elapsed since the reception of your letter I feel obligated at least to make a brief acknowledgement of the same. Nothing unusual happened during our tour of picket. One of our sentinels discovered what he thought to be two secesh outside the picket line

[Page Break]

advancing stealthily towards it: we sent out nine men to bring them in they scoured the neighboring woods and tracked them some distance but finally lost all trace of them it was evident there had been men there but who they were is a horse of another color our scouts then went to house about a half mile outside the line and inquired if they had seen those two they said they had but did not say whether they were rebels or not. What few Virginians still reside here tell so many different stories it is hard to tell what they are! but I entertain some serious doubts as to their loyalty. I did not find my money and I suppose never will. Sure enough it will teach me a lesson in future. But I think it

[Page Break]

better to let Father know how it is. I suppose you have read ere this the joyful news of the capture of Roanoke Island. I think we have them pretty well hemmed in now and a few more such decisive victorys will place the confederates ~~in~~ at our mercy. And then what is left of our number will be restored to their respective home circles and those of our number who are destined to fall on the battle field will have to their friends the sweet consolation that they died in a glorious cause. I have become so sleepy that I must necessarily move around to keep awake. so I will close hoping to hear from you soon.

your brother as ever

T W Dick

THE PENNSYLVANIA SOLDIER.

When our country was all confusion,
PENNSYLVANIA BOYS came to the conclusion,
That down to WASHINGTON they would go,
And rout the rebels, their country's foe,
So down we came—the track was clear—
The rebels left on account of fear
That McCLELLAN he would take command,
And PENNSYLVANIA BOYS would lead the van.

Head-Quarters, Pennsylvania Regiment.

Company *H*-----

Camp *Pierpont*-----

February 20th 1862.

Dear sister

I received your kind epistle of the 14th on the 18th and perused it with pleasure. And have seated myself this beautiful day to make a brief reply. Although as you say it may be full of nonsense. Yet it is my candid opinion when one has nothing to say it is best to say nothing. Our friends Robert Rogers & Finley Matthews left camp this morning I cant say whether they were pleased with their visit or not. but I suppose you will soon hear

We had quite a violent storm here yesterday. It kept us busy holding up our tents. And yet about half the tents in the company were blown down. It was really diverting to see them out holding their tents and shouting and with all these might. There a tree blown down on a tent in third reg^t which killed one man and broke the leg of another. It commenced noon and continued to rage until 12 o'clock at night. This Hurricane was not confined alone to the encampment but extended to the city and committed various depredations there. You spoke in your last in regard to an article you had read in the newspaper which directed how to write to the soldier in camp. It certainly contained some good

advice. For although it would
be foolishness to relate every trivial
incident that takes place. Yet it is truly
refreshing to him who wanders
far from home to read of what
is going on in the domestic circle.

idea that you can see for yourself
at no distant day. And now Spizzi
having filled this sheet without
saying anything of importance I
will ^{close} write soon — very soon
your affectionate brother
J. W. Dick

Company H
Camp Pierpont
February 25th 1862

Dear sister

I received your kind epistle of the 14th on the 18th and perused it with pleasure. And have seated myself this beautiful day to make a brief reply. Although as you say it may be full of nonsense. Yet it is my candid opinion when one has nothing to say it is best to say nothing. Our friends Robert Rogers and Finley Matthews left Camp this morning I cant say whether they were pleased with their visit or not. but I suppose you will soon hear

[Page Break]

we had quite a violent storm here yesterday. It kept us busy holding up our tents. And yet about half [*one letter, expunged*] the tents in the company were blown down: It was really diverting to see them out holding there tents and shouting and [*edge of paper torn off*] with all there might. There [*torn*] a tree blown down on a tent in [*torn*] third regt which killed one man and broke the leg of another. It commenced at noon and continued to rage until 12 oclock at night. This Hurricane was not confined alone to the encampment but extended to the city and committed various depredations there. you spoke in your last in regard to an article you had read in the newspaper which directed how to write to the soldier in camp It certainly contained some good

[Page Break]

advice. For although it would be foolishness to relate every trifling incident that takes place. Yet it is truly refreshing to him who wanders far from home to read of what is going on in the domestic circle.

[*Letter in pieces. one piece, middle third of the sheet, missing*]

idea that you can see for yourself at no distant day. And now Lizzie having filled this sheet without saying anything of importance I will close Write soon – very soon

your affectionate brother

T W Dick

1852

march 17th

Camp near Alexandria

The union of lakes—the union of lands—
The union of states none can sever—
The union of hearts—the union of hands—
And the Flag of the Union forever

Dear ^{my} Father

The reserves have advanced at last. And the time intervening has been fraught with events so memorable that I scarcely know how to tell it. But to begin we left Camp Pierpont last Monday about noon; I suppose for the purpose of advancing on manassas; after a march of between fifteen and twenty miles we halted near the Loudon and Hampshire railroad and bivouacked for the night; ^{my} The next day we received the news of the evacuation of this boasted stronghold and its

occupation by our troops
remained in that place
when we marched to Cap
mill and laid there also
is on the Leesburg and
pike in the morning it was
that the rebels had burned the bridge
so we had to change our course and
marched about 12 miles through mud
almost knee deep the rain pouring
down in torrents and when we
encamped on the pike again we were
only about 4 miles from where
we started in the morning. There
was the worst night I have ever
lain out. it rained so hard some
that it drowned the fire and the
teams stalled and they did not
come up until morning so we had
to supper on few crackers and water
The next morning ~~we~~ James Leavelle

and I went to an old farmers and
got a good warm breakfast and
dried ourselves thoroughly. I tell you
it seemed like home. We then marched
to our present location in the woods.
I tell you I was pretty near played
out. a good many of the boys
gave out but I staged it through
and feel as brisk as ever this
morning. Coming through the
village of Fall's Church the ladies
were out at the doors of some of
the houses waving their kerchiefs
and saying three cheers for the
union boys. I dont know what
is our destination now but I
think we are going on a fleet.
I suppose to reinforce Burnside
having nothing further to write I
will close my love to all yours
as ever

J. W. Dick

March 17th [1862?]
Camp near Alexandria

Dear Father

The reserves have advanced at last. And the time intervening has been fraught with events so memorable that I scarcely know how to tell it. But to begin we left Camp Pierpont last monday about noon; I suppose for the purpose of advancing on manasses: After a march of between fifteen and twenty miles we halted near the loudon and hampshire railroad bivouacked for the night; The next day we received the news of the evacuation of this bosted stronghold and its

[Page Break]

occupation by our tro [*large corner of page cut out here, probably to get the picture at the heading on the opposite side of the page*] remained in that place [*cut out*] when we marched to Cap [*cut out*] mill and laid there al [*cut out*] is on the Leesburg and Alexandria pike. In the morning it was [*one word blurred --- unreadable*] that the rebels had burned the bridge so we had to change our course and marched about 12 miles through mud almost knee deep the rain pouring down in torrents and when we encamped on the pike again we were only about 4 miles from where we started in the morning. That was the worst night I have ever lain out it rained so hard sometimes that it drowned the fire. And the teams stalled and they did not come up until morning so we had to supper on few crackers and water. The next morning ~~we~~ James [Leave?]

[Page Break]

and I went to an old farmers and got a good warm breakfast and dried ourselves thoroughly. I tell you it seemed like home. We then marched to our present location in the woods. I tell you, I was pretty near played out. a good many of the boys give out but I stayed it through and feel as brisk as ever this morning. Coming through the village of fall's church the lady's were out at the doors of some of the houses waving their kerchiefs and saying three cheers for the union boys. I dont know what is our destination now but I think we are going on a fleet. I suppose to reinforce Burnside having nothing further to write I will close my love to all yours

as ever

T W Dick

Camp ~~Pier~~ near Alexandria mar 30th 1862

Dearest earthly friend

I seat myself this chilly rainy day to pen you a few lines to let you know that I have not altogether forgotten you. I received your welcome letter on Saturday the 8th and we left Camp Pierpont on Monday the 10th. I was very thankful for your kind letter and the wholesome advice it contained. I will try to profit by it. That little selection of poetry enclosed was most beautiful. Friend Griffeth and I have sung it frequently since to the tune of sweet home. This is the holy sabbath day and a gloomy day it is. It has been one continual shower during the greater part of the day. Our religious privileges here are very limited: we have no chaplain and seldom are permitted to enjoy the public administrations of the gospel. It may of a truth be said that in war is a hard place to serve the Lord. It is strange that the wicked become more daring in the very jaws of death: But, alas! it is true. Yet I believe there is none of our ^{company} ~~army~~ worse than they were. The youth is assailed by the temptations of camp life on all sides. And it is only by the utmost watchfulness that he is enabled to resist them. We surely need the prayers of those who are concerned about our welfare at home. We have been without tents for about three weeks. But we have

comparitively comfortable quarters. On Saturday ~~we~~
it appeared for snow and we concluded it would be a
pious motion to seek quarters. so we sallied forth and about
two miles from camp we came across some tents in
an old Rhodeisland encampment. We laid hands on
one large ~~the~~ circular tent, and lugged it to our place of
encampment we have in it spencer Stewart and all ~~the~~ ^{my}
old messmates the others you do not know. we have a stove
in the middle of it and it is quite comfortable. How long
we will stay here I know not. There is numerous rumors
afloat in regard to it. But I have been long enough
in war to know how much to believe in camp stories. I
never believe we are going until we are on the march and
never know what our destination is until we encamp. I have
not had a letter from home since we left our old
camp and I have answered all the letters received from
home except Wallace's & Lucies I think I shall not
write any more until I receive some. your affectionate
son

J W Dick

Camp Pie near Alexandria, March 30th /62

Dearest earthly friend

I seat myself this chilly rainy day to pen you a few lines to let you know that I have not altogether forgotten you. I received your welcome letter on saturday the 8th and we left Camp Pierpont on monday the 10th. I was very thankful for your kind letter and the wholesome advice it contained I will try to profit by it. That little selection of poetry enclosed was most beautiful. Friend Griffeth and I have sung it frequently since to the tune of sweet home. This is the holy sabbath day and a gloomy day it is. It has been one continual shower during the greater part of the day. Our religious privleges here are very limited: we have no chaplain and seldom are permitted to enjoy the public administrations of the gospel. It may of a truth be said that in war is a hard place to serve the lord It is strange that the wicked become more daring in the very jaws of death: But !alas; it is true. Yet I believe there is none of our company any worse than they were. The youth is assailed by the temptations of Camp life on all sides. And it is only by the utmost watchfulness that he is enabled to resist them. We surely need the prayers of those who are concerned about our welfare at home. We have been without tents for about three weeks. But we have

[Page Break]

comparitively comfortable quarters. On saturday ~~we~~ it appeared for snow and we concluded it would be a pious notion to seek quarters: so we sallied forth and about two miles from camp we came across some tents in an old Rhodeisland encampment. We laid hands on one large ~~tent~~ circular tent and lugged it to our place of encampment we have in it spencer Stewart and all ~~our~~ my old messmates the others you do not know. we have a stove in the middle of it and it is quite comfortable. How long we will stay here I know not. There is numerous rumors afloat in regard to it. But I have been long enough in war to know how much to believe in camp stories. I never believe we are going until we are on the march and never know what our destination is until we encamp. I have not had a letter from home since we left our old camp and I have answered all the letters received from home except Wallace's & Lucies I think I shall not write any more until I receive some.

your affectionate Son

T W Dick