

1862 Yorktown March 14th

Dear Ma,

I have not written to any of you at home for nearly two weeks, because about the time I would have written, our regiment was ordered to take a "tramp" down towards Newportnews. We just got back to Yorktown a day or two ago. This was the hardest march that we have ever taken. We started from here last Sunday morning and marched to Bethel (a distance of 14 miles), and there rested about an hour, and then heard that the Yankees had attacked the 8th Ala. Regt. which was 4 miles below Bethel, on the strength of which we marched down there, and found it all false, and then had to turn round and march back to Bethel, and there staid several days, after which, we marched back to Yorktown. That marched like to have killed us. We marched over twenty miles the first day, carrying two blankets apiece besides our haversacks, muskets, cartridge boxes with forty rounds of cartridges in them, and our overcoats, which in all amounted to about fifty pounds. We were so stiff and sore the next morning that we could scarcely walk. They marched us entirely too hard. No doubt you have heard of the victory the Merrimac gained on the James river near Old point. One of our company (Srgt. Tharpe) who was at Pig's point on furlough, saw it all, he was standing on the beach and looking on the whole time. We saw the M. sink the Cumberland (a very large ship). The Merrimac sunk one ship, burned another, and disabled a third. She was herself injured very slightly.

General Raines sent 3 of the prisoners from the jaol in Yorktown to Norfolk to be taken on board the Merrimac as sailors, and detailed Sergeant Brown of our company and two more men from our reg't to carry them safely to the captain of the Merrimac. But while on the cars going to Norfolk, one of theirs, who was a very powerful man and a perfect desperado, got mad and I suppose "tight" and tried to whip Brown and the guards who were over him, and Brown had to shoot him down and killed him dead. He was one of the men who used to cut such shines in the jaol sometimes.

We are all well. Kitt is still staying in Genl Raines's headquarters. I am still marker of the regiment and have no duty to do. Judson and Martin got back a day or two ago. I am sorry Pa has not an overseer. He will have his hands free now. I wish the war was ended and I was there to aid him in whatever I could. But I have no desire to get out of the army till the enemy are driven from our soil. How is Alick Asbury and John Davis? I hope they will both recover.

Grand Ma sent me some coke by Jud. We have any quantity of negroes working on the breastworks around Yorktown now, and we have immense batteries. I wish you could see them, they are beautiful.

I received a letter from Pa while I was at Bethel. We had a hard time there, had to sleep on the cold ground and they didn't give us any thing to eat but hard crackers and pickled pork. It is the opinion that our regiment won't stay in Yorktown much longer. I don't care to leave unless we go back to Georgia or Tennessee. I suppose there has been another big battle in Arkansas. I saw it in yesterdays paper but don't know the results. I will close. Give my love to Pa, children and negroes. Amanda's brother John says tell her "howdy" for him.

Write often. Your son

Henry Bunn

Yorktown