

A SOLDIERS LETTER

Martin D. Bushnell enlisted into the 154th N.Y.S. Vols. on August 15, 1862 at Napoli, N.Y. which is a small hamlet about eight miles northeast of Randolph. He was mustered in as corporal of Co. H on September 25, 1862. On June 23, 1864 he was wounded in action at Culp's Farm, Georgia. On August 12, 1865 Bushnell was discharged for disability at Central Park Hospital, New York City. The following letter is one of a series which he sent home to his school mate Frank Congdon of Napoli. The letters belong to Mr. William Petersen of East Randolph, New York.

Letter transcribed by Melinda Loeffke.

Kelley's Ferry Tenn.
Jan. 25th /64

Friend Frank:

You are perhaps by this time thinking me very negligent in writing you. And I can not say but that you are justified in so doing, but hope the crime is not so great but that Pardon may be rendered me. I sincerely ask it.

I rec'd your last - some time since and being rather destitute of the necessaries for writing have not until now attempted to answer it.

I am yet enjoying good health and of course the life which I am persuing is not less agreeable and good.

For the last few days the weather had bee exceedingly beautiful. Today is like a pleasant May day in Cattaraugus I(t) reminds me of days gone by when we were about to finish sugaring and enter upon the duties about the farm.

The ground is becoming quite dry and in fact everything is quite favorable for an active campaign at present but it is not at all probable that we shall enter upon such. Doubtless the weather will soon change and rain will predominate which will make Parage our best foot-holds.

You(r) Uncle Soloman is at home now I suppose, and will undoubtedly tell you more about recent Campaigns than I can on paper if I should try a long time. You of course know that we did a big thing not only for ourselves, but

our Country's glorious cause.

The date of this not(e) tells you the name of the place which we (the 154th) are occupants of. It is situated on the Tennessee River about 8 miles west of Chattanooga. Here several small boats land which transport army stores. Our duty is to handle and take care of them. I am thinking that if we get destitute in the line our fingers will get long and crooked and catch onto something occasionally. Until today there has been only two companies (H & I) here. Today the remainder of the Regt. came here from Lookout Valley and relieved another Regt. here doing said duty.

We have erected comfortable quarters. And get plenty of rations and of-course practice high and aristocratic living. We are very refined in stile (style) and manners as it is of course necessary for Soldiers to be.

I hope that my brief description of our living will not make you envy me my comfort. I mus(t) say that I almost do you yours teaching School. I am thinking that I shall be very rusty if I live to get home in regard to literary matters. but I gues(s) I will know how to Shoulder Arms to right-face. Well all right, my duty is here and let it be performed here.

You wished to know about New Warden. I think he was taken prisoner at Gettysburg and is either at Richmond Va. or at Anapolis M.D. I have heard that the Boys were paroled.

The Boys present of your acquaintance are well. I close for want of space. Please pardon imperfections and write soon.

I am as ever yours
M.D. Bushnell

Copies of the actual letter and envelope follow.

Thank you to Mr. Petersen for giving his permission to use this only recently discovered letter. ■

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ANSWERS TO THE QUIZ

1. H. Hamlin, a Republican Senator from Maine was Lincoln's first vice-president. He was dropped in 1864 in favor of Tennessee born Andrew Johnson.
2. Alexander Stevens, a Georgian congressman, did not share Davis's strong opposition to the Union, thus resulting in many confrontations between them.
3. Grant and Sherman last served together in the Battle Above the Clouds and Missionary Ridge, Chattanooga, Tenn., November 24 thru 25, 1863.
4. Beauregard and Johnston served together at Bull Run, 1st July 1861. After five hours of fighting the Confederates retreated except for Jackson. Reinforcements arrived and the Battle swung to the Southern army.
5. The last battle for Lee and Jackson as partners was Chancellorsville, May 2-3, 1863, a Confederate victory although being outnumbered 2 to 1. The Confederates paid a high price for their victory. Stonewall Jackson was shot and died, a wound inflicted accidentally by his own men.
6. Brigadier General William Terrill of Virginia died for the Union cause at Perreyville in 1862. James Terrill was the Brig. Gen. killed at Bethesda Church, MD. in 1864 for the Confederate cause.
7. Frank and Jessie James raided a train killing civilians and Union troops as well. They virtually wiped out three companies of the 39th Missouri.
8. Keith and Sam Blalock were husband and wife. Sam (Malinda) successfully hid her sex for months of army life.
9. Elizabeth Custer, who at one time refused to return to her home-town of Monroe, MI. because they did not put a Custer memorial statue in the town square.
10. David Herrald rode with Booth and aided him until their capture at Garret's Farm in Virginia.



The envelope which contained Martin Bushnell's letter.

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