

VMI Archives

Manuscript # 00119

Alfred R. Gibbons Letter

Full Text Transcription

Note: Gibbons' many spelling errors have generally been left in place, unless they created confusion regarding meaning, proper name, or place.

V.M.I. Dec. the 22nd, 1863

Dear Father

We the Corps of Cadets returned to this place yesterday evening after being on the march for 7 days. We started on Tuesday about 12 o'clock and marched 11 miles and camped for the night. Started early the next morning and marched to within sight of Goshen and camped for the night and to wait for further orders. Were roused from our slumber about 12 o'clock at night by hearing rain storm and found that our fire was nearley out. We then put some rails on the fire and maid a kind of shelter out of our wet blankets and laid a parcle of rales on the ground so as to keep it out of the water. By this time we were as wet as we could bee but we had a good fire and managed to get sorter dry and then laid down on the rails to pass the night but did not get much sleep. The next day it rained all day. About 3 o'clock in the evening the news came that the Yankees were advancing upon Lexington from Salem which place they had taken. We were detailed were then formed in line and 10 men from A & D companeys to go ahead and fix the crossings as the creaks were very high. I was among the number detailed from my company. We had to waid the watter waist deap and then cut down trees across the creaks to let the others cross on and by night we had marched 2 miles to Cool Sulphur Springs where we had houses to stay in. and the next day we had the same thing over excepting the rain but it was bitter cold when we stopped at my pants were frozen stiff. We stopped at Wilson's Spring where we had the good luck to get houses to stay in again 10 miles from the place that we started from. The next day we arrived at this place and stayed all night and the next day marched 21 miles towards Covington and crossed the north mountain and on Monday returned again to the V.M.I. I stood the trip very well. I don't think that I shall go on another march without the Yankees are nearer than they have ever been yet. This is the 3rd march that I have been on since I have been here and all for nothing. If our going would do any good I am perfectly willing to go but as it is I am not. I don't intend to do it. I might as well be in the army at once as they don't often see any harder times than we had. The examinations comes of[f] on the first Monday in January and I am certain to be found deficient. I had some hopes of getting through before I went on this march but I have none now. I heard that Gen. John Morgan had made his escape and was at Col. Cocke's and that he intended raising another command. Perhaps he might have some position that he might give me. If he has, I wish you would accept of it for me. Any position is better than a private which

I will certainly have to be as if I am found deficient in July. They will ship me and then I will be 18 and will not have time to wait for a position. I did not know that the Misses Cockes were in Lexington until they had left. Therefore I did not get to see them. I saw Mr. [Creglo] about 10 miles from here as we were returning at a little place called Collarstown. [Collierstown]. He said that his family were all well. I don't think he is looking very well. He asked me to go home with him but I could not. I went to see the Misses Cameron's just before I started and found them to be very nice people. They maid a great many enquiries after Billy and sent their kindest regards to him. I hear that that the Yankees have taken Harrisonburg again. Next Friday is Christmas and a pour one it will bee with me as I have know money or any thing else. John Cocke received a large box this morning and I know that he will have a nice time. By the by I want you to send me a check for about \$50 fifty dollars as I want a cap as mine is worn entirely out and then I want some money in case I should have to go on another march because if I have some money I can buy something to eat as the Institute dose not give us enough. For instance one loaf of bakers bread for 3 days. I have not gotten the money from Mr. Logan and I owe that to my roommates now. I am sorry to hear of Jack [Bariens] illness. Hope he has gotten well by this time. Remember me to all my friends and give my love to all the family and write soon to your affectionate son,

Alfred