

Civil War

**Aftermath of the Battle of Antietam (Sharpsburg), Maryland--
Caring for wounded in Winchester, Virginia.
Letter from the Clayton G. Coleman papers.
VMI Archives Manuscript #0021**

Winchester (Virginia), Sept 19th/62

My dear Lucy

Your very kind and interesting letter to Anna, bearing date 9th inst., has just come to hand today through the hand of Mr. Howard, who came up from Orange, and although Louise had recd one of a later date from Fannie, yet I do assure you it was read with the greatest interest.

I have been here now since the 16th, at which time I came from Maryland. We or rather I was in Md ten days, during which time I was in Frederick City and Hagerstown. In the former county we were recd with a good deal of kind feeling, but with not so much in the latter (Washington Co.), as that county had already furnished 14 companies to the Federal Army, 11 of which surrendered at Harpers Ferry. I suppose you have heard of the surrender of 13000 to Gen. Jackson with any quantity of arms, stores &c.

But the hottest battle of the war was fought near Sharpsburg Md on the 17th inst. The battle lasted all day and the loss was terrific on both sides, the enemy fighting with more desperation than ever before. We call it a victory and the Yankees did so at first too; we held the ground and both sides were too much worsted to renew the fight next day. We fell back across the Potomac and the enemy then commenced shelling us and boasted that they had driven us across. They acknowledge the loss of sixteen generals. We had two generals killed and ten wounded.

Winchester has been perfectly crowded with the wounded---there having been more than 3000 here at one time and continually passing through. The N. Y. Tribune says if we had followed them, their army wd have been annihilated, and Gen. Lee says he could have done so with 5000 more fresh troops. But men had been marched so much and were so broken down, that we had 60,000 stragglers.

Our Army is now between Martinsburg and Williamsport and along the river. Our brigade lost eight out of ten in the last fight, and my company lost 22 out of 23 men. I don't suppose you have heard of any of the killed in the different fights; well they are so many that I could not begin. Cols. Botts, Neff and Baylor of the 1st Brigade were killed in the battles at Manassas. Every one of your acquaintances in the 4th Alabama and 11th Mississippi were either killed or

wounded and indeed I reckon it is almost the case in every Regiment. Joe Sherrard is a 1st Lieut in a cavalry company.

I am going into the Medical Department and expect to go to Richmond next week for that purpose. We are staying at your Aunt Ann's and the house is crowded with wounded.

Sunday 20th. Anna having stopped me from writing last night, I will finish my epistle this morning. We have just returned from church, where we heard service from Mr. Meredith and a most elaborate sermon from a Mr. Scott. Our army is at Bunker Hill, and it is thought we will have another fight there or about this place. Although I have been sick, yet I have had my hands full attending to the wounded; on the first day I dressed 43 wounds and since that time I have had 27 under my charge. Even the sidewalks of the streets are full of wounded and there is a great scarcity of surgeons, and no place for their accomodation. There are now 6000 wounded here.

Anna and I leave here for Louisa on Tuesday, whence I shall go to Richmond to stand examination before the board. Your Uncle Joe speaks of taking a house at Capon Springs and sending his family up there. Louise says if the enemy occupt V. again she will stay a short time to get some articles of clothing, which cannot be procured now, and them come out into our lines.

Civil War

A Confederate doctor cares for the wounded in Winchester, Virginia.

Letter from the Clayton G. Coleman papers.

VMI Archives Manuscript #0021

Winchester. Nov 4th 1862

Dear Lucy

Your very kind and truly interesting letter bearing date October came duly to hand before I left home and I do assure you it was read with the greatest pleasure and should have been answered before now, but I was just on the eve of leaving for Winchester and then upon arriving here, I had to write to Fannie, as I had not written to her since she left Va. Anna returned to W with me and has been here ever since.

I have had my hands full ever since, for upon arriving here I was assigned to the charge of two Hospitals--the N. S. P. Church and Lovett House Hospitals, containing more than one hundred sick and wounded, and a great many very bad cases. But although I have been until the last few days so busily engaged, I have only lost five patients out of one hundred and eighty treated, while other hospitals have lost a much greater proportion. Dr. McGuire told me that he lost fourteen patients on night before last at the Union Hospital! There are not more than one thousand sick here now.

Gen. Longstreet's Corps moved over the Blue Ridge some days since and it is reported that two of his Divisions met Sigel's Corps at Piedmont Station M.G.R.R. and completely routed him; and it is also reported that Jackson's Corps, which for several days has been encamped about Berryville, was on the move yesterday to cut off his retreat. We have no forces now in front of Winchester except cavalry, and I should not be surprised if the Yankee cavalry made or attempted a raid on this place at any time; although we have six companies of the 1st Maryland Regiment here doing nothing as usual, except disturbing the quietude of the town and committing deprecations upon its citizens. Gen. George Steuart, who is nothing more in my opinion than a Baltimore rowdy, is commandant of this post, assuming enough dignity but with far less politeness than an Eastern monarch. Gen. Stuart (JEB) had a fight with the Yanks yesterday at Aldie, Loudoun Co., and took eight hundred cavalry prisoners.

I do not think Winchester will be evacuated at present, nor do I think that the enemy would occupy it even if it should be evacuated; for they could gain nothing by so doing, and then they cannot spare the requisite force as they need them in front of our army. I heard the other day by a gentleman just from Frederick City that the enemy had fifteen thousand sick and wounded there. I suppose you have seen that it is currently reported and believed at the North that Lord Lyons and Count Mercier, Ministers from England and France, are about to arrive with instructions from their governments to propose an armistice of six months for the adjudication of a settlement of difficulties; and in case of a refusal by the North, the recognition of the Southern Confederacy follows.

Your uncle Joe went to Farmville about ten days ago, and intends returning as soon as he makes out the quarterly return of the Bank, provided the Yankees do not take possession before he can do so. He took Servt Amelia with him at her request, as she was decidedly averse to being with yankees again.

We are sending off the sick very fast from here, and I do not know at what time I may be ordered off to another point. Anna and Louise start this week to Orange where they will pay a visit to sister Mary's, from thence they will go to Louisa where they will spend some time, and then Louise will go to Richmond where you know she has a situation in the Treasury Dept. I am making an endeavor to be ordered to Staunton and Dr. Hay is very anxious to have me there. If I am successful, I shall keep house there, and will have Anna with me all the time. Louise has been quite sick, but is well again now. How do you like your situation and how do you like teaching? Write to us often and let us hear how you are getting on. You can't imagine how much pleasure it affords us to hear from you. I do not know where to direct this letter, so I shall direct it to Fannie to be forwarded. The girls and Aunt Ann all unite with me in sending best love. Excuse haste and believe me as ever,
Your most affectionate brother
C. G. Coleman, Jr.

Direct to Bumpass, Louisa Co.