

VMI Archives

Fulkerson Family Papers

Manuscript#0363

ALS. Samuel V. Fulkerson to Kate, his sister

1862 April 3

References to the Battle of Kernstown, March 1862.

Camp Near New Market

3 Apl. 1862

Dear Kate

A few days ago I wrote you giving some account of our fight near Winchester. Since that time we have been marching up and down the valley, one day falling back before the enemy and the next advancing towards him, skirmishing with him almost daily. He is now in strong force about ten miles off. Genl. Jackson has taken a position here, but whether he will fight at this place or not I am unable to say. If he has sufficient force he would not wait to be attacked.

I have been unable to hear from Jas. Vance, though I have [missing word or words] letter to Judge Parker of Winchester about him. I cannot think that he was mortally wounded, from what the men say who put him in the ambulance. I feel very much for Uncle James and family in their repeated bereavements. I miss Jimmy greatly, and would be greatly pleased to hear that his wound is not dangerous. I have seen a list of the prisoners who were taken to Baltimore but Jimmie's name is not among them. However, I am not surprised at this, as the wounded would not for awhile be removed from Winchester. I may yet get some information from Winchester about him.

Capt. Cowan (of Russell) died of his wounds. He was a brave man and good officer. James King was as good a soldier as ever entered the line. He went off with Capt. Jones Co., was transferred to Col. Cummings Regt. and then transferred to mine. After the fight was half over, he remarked that "he was proud of being in the 37th." The poor fellow was shot through the head and did not speak afterwards. Leroy Sherman among others was taken prisoner and is in Baltimore.

The [people along the valley] claim our fight as a victory, but it is not so. We attacked a greatly superior forces and were repulsed with heavy loss. If night had not set in we would all have been captured or killed. The enemy's loss was very heavy, for our men fought with desperate courage. our loss is 469 killed and wounded. The killed wounded and missing amount to 689. This is an uncommonly heavy loss when we did not have over 3000 men in the fight. A loss of 10 per ct. is regarded as great, but ours was but little less than on fourth. My Regt. sustained

the greatest loss, the killed and wounded alone being a little less than one fourth, and including the missing is a little less than one third. The northern papers speak of the terrible slaughter on their side in front of the stone fence behind which I had my Brigade. I learn that at this point the 5th Ohio Regt. was nearly [ruined]--they were a part of the rascals who aided in chasing us from Laurel Hill.

The conduct of the late North western army (Loring's) [missing words] the fight, is spoken of by the Genl. in high terms of praise. There is a difficulty with Genl. Garnett who commanded the Stonewall Brigade, but I can't speak of particulars. Genl. Winder is now in command of that Brigade.

Our men are in fine spirits and I think will fight as well now as they did at Winchester, although they feel sad, when they think of the fall of their comrades. Our flagstaff was shot down, but the flag bearer instantly raised it again and kept it floating throughout the fight. The days work hurt my horse worse than anything which he has gone through. He was under the saddle from daylight till 11 at night and was greatly excited. The reports of the guns did not scare him, but the whistling of the balls and particularly the minnie ball excited him to the highest pitch. He has not yet recovered. You will see many exaggerated accounts of the fight in the papers. If we can't get a better and more substantial reputation than a mere newspaper one, I don't want [missing words].

I told Judge Parker [missing words] stay with you at nights during court. He is a refugee and I want to do all for him that I can. Tell Selina that here she can't write to Abe, she can write to me. Try and get the fence put up in some way. Send the enclosed to Mr. Belkin for Judge Camden. Write soon. Love to Mother & S.

Your brother, Saml. V. Fulkerson.