

No 61

Zions Ford, Rock Castle River, Ky

March 2nd 1864

Dear Mother & friends

Whilst I have an opportunity I will write a few lines with a pencil, the only means at hand, and I don't know when I may have another opportunity neither do I know when I shall be able to send this, as there are no P.O. here, and it is several miles to any communication.

I wrote H, S & Mary a few days before we left Point Burnside and the last or last two I mentioned of our expectation of moving from there. We had orders one day to start immediately for Kenoxville and then we were countermanded and we received another to start immediately for Cumberland Gap which we

did on the morning of the 27 Feb
And since that date the 9th N.H.
has seen the roughest time ~~since~~
that it ever has since it has been
in the service which is saying
a good deal and I have recruits
in my Co who have been in the
rebel service two years who have
seen tough times, but they say this
~~this~~ beats anything they have ever
experienced yet, And as I know it
will be interesting to you all I will
give you as clear a history as I am
able to in my publ way.

After receiving the order we were ordered
by the Colo to make out our pay Rolls
that night as much of them as we
could as we should have to stop some-
where and be mustered on the 29th

This was a pain for me as my Co Sgt was
sick but I fetched in and by writing
until sun up the next morning (with-
out a wink of sleep,) I had them all
done and right - Two other Cos besides
being all that did get them done

down because they could not and
others because they thought they
would have a better time and that
he broke up their rest - but experience
has taught me that the only time to do
anything ^{was} ~~was~~ when there was an oppor-
tunity, be it either night or day, then
I did not feel much like marching
the next day, but has since proved
the most profitable night's work
for me that I could have done
The assembly but at 7 and we
started at 8 o'clock the morning 27th
it was very pleasant and good going
so that we reached Somerset early in
the P.M. where we stopped over night
starting early the next morning 28th
we marched all day making about
18 miles over hills and mountains, on
what they call here in Ky a Road but
you would hardly call it a cow path
Halting at night at a place called
Dallas but there was but 2 log houses
and a log church where we officers
staid through the night as the Train
did not get up with us and we

had with tents or blankets, but this
Church was just the thing for
the occasion And we dedicated
it in good earnest It was built
wholly of logs and without any finish
At one end there was a fire place
occupying two thirds of its width
so you may bet we did not sleep
cold or wet as it commenced raining
just before we halted which was in
the woods about 20 rods from the Church
I was officer of the day that day and
about 10 o'clock just as I had dropped
to sleep the cold water ran up telling
me ~~to~~ to post a pregnant guard
 $\frac{1}{3}$ of a mile out and around camp
It was raining in perfect torrents and as
dark as it ever was since the World began
with heavy timber and underbrush to pass
through without the slightest
knowledge of the Country, I assure you
it was not a very pleasant undertaking
but I could not complain as I could return
to my quarters after posting the men,
the men ~~for~~ ^{had} been from my company who
had been on rear guard all day and
had gone to bed without supper (the
3 days rations being out and the train
had not got within 3 miles) it was
hard to order them out to stand on
thin post all night without fire
or shelter but they knew their duty and
they were on hand without a murmur
(except from some of the new men) but
not without some jocular remarks
of Uncle Abe and hard tack

The next morning 29th it rained as hard
as ever and the wind had changed
to the N.E. growing colder all day so
that by night the rain froze as fast as
it fell we remained the all day waiting
for the train to come so that we could
get more rations, and our papers to
muster by The Co. men all mustered before
dark and those Constables had not got
their Rolls finished went to work and
finished them before morning, 21-
rained all night as it did in the
morning, but we started at 7 o'clock
1st March, as it was 22 miles to the
nearest Post and we had but 5 days
rations on board the Trains and the
road what there was ~~was~~ had got to be
swimming with mud Truly we were
suing the winter of our discontent,
made glorious by, a summer one
(S) Our course lay through a dense forest
and in 5 miles I saw but one log Cabin
with a small open space cleared around
it - The trees were thickly heavily loaded
with ice and it was really dangerous
to pass as limbs and trees were

continually breaking and falling
and keeping the Pioneer Corps ahead
busy with their axes clearing the
way away. Every little stream was
swollen to high water mark and we
had not proceeded more than half
a mile before we waded a stream
waist-deep. This was perfectly
awful for the winter as well as
water was almost-freezing I was
provided with a good pair of boots
and rubber coat-but these were
of no avail except the latter to
keep the shoulders dry. Shoes were
just as good as boots and even better
in this case as you had to carry more
water ~~to~~ to get them off and
on was next to an impossibility.
Thus we marched on crossing
half a dozen streams which
were almost deep enough to carry
us down stream. It commenced
snowing about 10 A.M. and snowed
as hard as ever I saw it so that by
night it was 4 inches deep.

We arrived at this place at one
o'clock P.M. There is but one
House very near here this is a small
log one and occupied by the ferry
man, his wife, wife's mother
and sister and half a dozen little
one with but one room in the
House This is 6 miles from where
we started in the morning we
remained here until 4 o'clock P.M.
waiting for the ferry man to come
who was away during which time
we were standing in the wet and
cold and when he did come he
was unable to ferry but 3 Cows across
before dark on account of the River
being badly swollen and with rapid
current, so the Colo took those 3
that had crossed and went on
to Flat-Lick which is 16 miles
further with but 2 Hours between
here and there Lie-Colo Babbitt was
kept in charge of us, the remainder
of the Regt with orders to wait
here until tomorrow 2^o or until

the Tiara - Came up, so we
went into Camp and what
few fence rails that were there
were soon converted into firewood
and a stack of hay was converted
into beds to sleep on in life time
than I can write it - But we suffered
over the worst of this time for
our blankets were all on board
the tugs but with my wadded
and rubber ~~over~~ over coat with a
pile of rails I managed to get
warm and partly dry with some
cold sleep before morning
But this the sun was clear and
at this time 4 P.M. it is quite warm
and pleasant and finds me
sitting on a log before a huge fire
writing to you and don't I think
of you and your comfortable home
The tugs have come and I have sent
the boys after my tent and blankets
so I shall sleep warm to night -
I shall probably get a chance to
write more before I shall be able
to send this. The woods here are full
of deer and wild turkeys although
I have not seen any as yet -