

**Lorenzo D. Miles (1838-?)**  
**Civil War Letters, 1862-1863**  
**MSA 736:10**

**Transcription:**

[1st Letter]

Smiths Divis  
Va.

Apr 14<sup>th</sup> 1862

Dear Brother,

Seeing I have a few spare moments I will spend them in writing a few lines to the direction of which my mind seems so much inclined. It is just such a spring like day as it was last Spring the day that I came from Johnson up over Lowell Mountain home & I can immagin myself standing on Lowell Mountain just as I did that day about this time in the afternoon with my face turned to the Westward gazing at the beautiful scenry that then presented its self to me. The Green rang[e] of mountains that lay stretched out as far as my eye could desern the summit of the mountains from the blue skie. Then the little pond that lay so quietly at the foot of the mountain whose silver watters was not ruffled by the slights breeze & as I turned around the place of my destination could plainly be see[n] at a distance. The place of all others on earth. The most Dear to my heart such a scenry I never before or since witnessed. This part of (Dixie) cannot be called famous for its beauty. If it is so you might call Long Meadow or that swamp up back of Old Cobes & just about as well inhabited. Whare there was an inhabitant in this part of the Country before the War broke out they have either left their homes on the account of either having to join the Southern Army or flee from them for thar lives. Many of the buildings have been burned and we find but very few famileys living along on our road & most of them are Negroes. Occasionally there is some white woman to be seen but very seldom any men able to preform the duty of a Soldier. The land is very level and muddy around here ispecialy in rainy weather and Infantry is having a very hard time in pa[tr]oling the roads and covering them with brush and deart [dirt] so they so they will be passable for heavy teams. I suppose that is the reason of our not pressing onward faster for there would be no way for conveying rations to us if the roads were not made passable. Here we are lying with probibly 150,000 troops within 2 miles & some places not so far of the enimeys fortification that is suported by a force prehaps equal to that of our own but the time has not yet come for the Grand Army of the Potomac to show what kind of stiff they are composed of when that time does come you will be sure to hear of it. For it is the general opinion that it will be the greatest battle that has yet been fought. We have just returned today from the York River where we have been after forage for our horses. The place where we went is about 8 miles from our Camp off to our right & some 5 miles below York Town. There is troops coming in there every day by [last page missing]

[2nd Letter]

Camp Griffin Oct 15<sup>th</sup> [1862]

Dear Brother Will

Your letter of the 6th came to hand the 12th and I was very glad to hear that you all are as well as you are but I should have felt a great deal better if I had heard that Mothers health was good. I begin to fear that she is woring about me which I hop[e] is not the case for if she could see how fleshy I am. I think that it would dispel all the fear she has for my usage or safety. My health is very good and I dont think there is but one thing that hinders me from being perfectly contented and that is of being deprived of the happy society of Friends that nearer and dearer to me than life, but I trust the time is not far distant when we shall again meet to enjoy not only our own society but to rest asured that our glorious Constitution is again safe which must and shall be preserved. Our rations is far better than one could expect. We have aplenty of good Beef Pork Flour Tees Beens & Rice Coffee and Sugar. Our Sargent that we appointed Treasurer has sold some \$12.00 or \$14.00 worth of rations and has 2 Barrels of Flour and one of Pork that he is agoin to sell and take the money to buy us a cooking Stove so you can judg[e] whither we suffer for the want of a nough to eat or not. Our Deuties are comparatively light to what might be expected. We do not have any great ferteag [fatigue] deuties to do and our Picket business we have got so use to that we can take our Blankets and lie down on the ground and sleep as coffortable as you could ask for, one third of the time through the day but we have to keep our eyes open through the night and be on the alert for the enemy. We have all the next day after we come off from guard to sleep or do what we choose to pass away the day. Last sunday there was a scouting party sent out from our Regiment which numbered 150 of the best men and I hapened to be one of the number chosen. We started as soon as ligh[t] Sunday morning and as the day promised to be fair we could almost see Rebel prisoners coming in with us as we returned to camp by the Score. After we had gon[e] about 2 Miles from Camp we were orde[r]ed not to speak a loud word and move with all the causion possible so if there were any Rebels prowling round we could take them by suprise. We passed on some 2 Miles further through a sort of ravine that apeared to have been cleared some day and has sprung up to second groth Pine that are so thick that it is almost impossible for any one to get along unless there has been a road bushed out or some place whare the bushes have not yet grown up. About 3 o'clock P.M. we had about come to the conclusion that we should have to return without getting as much as a sight at them when we emerged from the woods and came up on to more elivated ground. We came upon their picket that were stationed along the Leesburgh turnpike that leads to Viana and the way they scuded was a sin to Snakes. We then scouted round in the vicinity for some hour and a half

without seeing anything more of them. We then returned to Camp feeling pretty well tired after so long and tiresome a days march and a pretty keen appetite for our Supper. [Last page missing]

[3rd Letter]

Camp Near Warrington  
Va., July 28th 1863

My Dear Father

Your kind & very welcome letter of the 18th came to hand this morning also Mothers of the 17th and I will not try and describe my joy on hearing the good news that you were all well which blessing I hope God will bestow upon us until we have spent many a happy day together after the close of this unfortunate war. I have been of the opinion that this War would be settled before the first of next Jan but just as soon as there is anything turns up in our favor there is sure to be something turn up in (what should be) Our Loyal States to strengthen and encourage the Rebel cause. If there had been no riot in N.Y. and the People of the North had peacefully complied with the Draft it is my candid opinion that the Rebels would have been entirely disheartened after so many defeats they have met with of late and would be glad to come to a Settlement upon a most any terms. They cannot hold out much longer unless there is something very important turns up in their favor for our men is threatening destruction upon them at every corner. They attempt to turn and like the drowning man that catches at every straw they are anxiously waiting every turn which by chance may be of help to their almost despairing condition. We have just heard that the Guerilla [Gerriller] Morgan has at last got caught in his Viliny which was undoubtedly intended for Ohio. I hope this is a true report for if it is so it may be a caution to others of this Stamp. I suppose you are perfectly familiar with the movements of the Army of the Potomac which is not of much note since the Battle of Gettysburg only to those who have had their life about marched out of them in being raced around where the Rebs are reported to be. On Friday last we had another such a battle as was fought at Hagerstown M.D. only we did not go as far as to entrench ourselves. The way that I hear the story is that General Mead heard that Lee was making preparations to cross the Mountain West of Warrington at Chester Gap so He formed his plans to meet Lee at the Gap and give him battle. Our line of battle was formed along the East side of the Mountain while it was supposed that the Enemy was upon the opposite side but about noon on Friday General Mead found that instead of being engaged with Lees front Guard it was his rearguard as was the case at Wmport M.D. and Johny Reb was making good His Ground for Richmond. As soon as the mistake was found out we were ordered to about face and toil back over the hard Mountains that we had struggled to get over in the forenoon through the broiling heat of the sun.

[4th Letter]

[First page missing]

I will now try and comply with your wishes in giving you a discription in my rude way of our new home you know very well that the Vermonters can never find another place that will compare with Vt and I am about of that opinion for I have not seen that neatness and pride taken in any place to keep everything in perfect orde[r] that one ever sees in Vermont. The most of the people in this vercinity are foreigner and as much nauster [nastier] looking than any paddy family you ever see, as they are; the neatest persons in Vermont you can see the women goin round with old horses that Royal Mileses old pomp would be a pictures besid[e] them. For a wagon they have just such a cart as is used for dumping durt on the railroad. Their harnesses are a diferent patern from any that I ever see the tuges are trais [trace] chains & the pad that goes over the horses back is maid of wood that would not make much less than half a cord of wood and to complete the harness the leading lines are small cords. The latter reminded me of the ride father took with the school mistress. The buildings of the inhabitants are very poor compared with those in Vt. Their houses look very well on the outside but when you come to get on the inside you dont see much paper or plastering on the walls. For barns they have none that we should call barns for they have no flors & for thrashing their grain they make the ground serve for one. The grain is all stacked outdoors & I think what little of Maryland and Virginia I have seen there is but one thing they can boast of & that is for raising Hound pups & negro babies. I like the looks of the country firstrate. The country is some broken by ravines but there is no large hills nor mountains to be seen as far as you can see but there is more woods than I expected to see in a country lying so near a City that has the honor of being called the Capitol of the United States. I must stop this scrabbling soon for we have got to go on deuty soon. I will write again the first of nex week & prehaps send home some money for it is reported that we are a going to be paid this week.

Write often as you can get time for it will help you to write your thoughts as easy as you can express them any other way. Besides you will confer a kind favor upon your affectionate Brother.

L D Miles

Give my love to all the children & tell them I should be glad to see them all. Tell Mother not to feel any concerned for my safetey for I am coming home & live to a good old age.

L. D. M

*Transcribed by David Braun,  
November 2017*