

Bivouac Perry's Brigade, Few Miles northeast of Chambersburg, Penn., June 28th 1863

Dear Father,

We are now halted for the purpose of cooking up three days rations and as we will in all probability remain here until tomorrow morning, I will write a short letter so as to avail myself of the first opportunity that offers of sending it through. We are entirely in the dark as to General Lee's [Confederate General Robert E. Lee] object of this move, and more so (if possible) as to his future plans and operations. He has so far succeeded in deceiving Gen. Hooker [Union Major General Joseph Hooker] that we have gained about two weeks on the latter General. We are now taking our time, marching from twelve to fifteen miles a day. The capture of Winchester and the greater part of the Brute Melroy's forces by General Ewell [Confederate General Richard S. Ewell] Corps is certainly one of the most brilliant achievements of the War. It shows that the Spirit and energy of Jackson [Confederate Lieutenant General Thomas Jonathan "Stonewall" Jackson] still lives in his successors and in the old Corps. On Friday the day that the enemy crossed over the South side of Rappahannock for the third time, General Ewell's Corps left Fredericksburg. On the following Thursday he was at Front-Royal, twenty five miles south of Winchester. Friday he was idle, giving his men time to rest. Saturday he ordered General Jenkin's [Confederate Brigadier General Albert G. Jenkins] Cavalry to advance and skirmish with the enemy, and directed him not to be too bold, but if the enemy pressed him, to fall back precipitately. This deceived the enemy for he sent several dispatches to Milroy, saying that we were in a small force, but would not stand cold steel. Saturday night Ewell threw his forces around the town, and before sunrise he demanded the surrender. Milroy thinking that it was only a force of Cavalry and that we were playing a bluff game, replied that he would not surrender and if if [*sic*] the attack was made, he would burn the city. General Ewell replied that he intended to take the works by storm and if any of the Commissary or Quartermaster's stores were destroyed, or any of houses injured in any way he would retaliate by hanging every man he captured. Before night we had taken possession of the principal redoubts—the enemy taking shelter in the city. Next morning (Monday) the garrison surrendered but we lost the Brute. We captured between six and eight thousand prisoners, twenty-seven pieces of artillery; twenty thousand stands of small arms and a large supply of Quarter Master and Commissary stores. Stuart [Confederate Army General J. E. B. Stuart] fought Stoneman [Union Cavalry General George Stoneman, Jr.] for two days, but I have not heard any of the particulars. The citizens in this state were completely taken by surprise and are nearly frighten [frightened] to death. They think that we will devastate the whole country in retaliation for the injury they have done us. They sell us any thing we want, butter 12¹/₂ cts per pound, chickens 15 cts, and eggs 10 cts a dozen, other things in proportion. General Lee's orders are very strict against committing any deprecation [depredation] upon private property. Gen Ewell's Corps is in the advance and is in the vicinity of Harrisburg. General McClellan [Union Major General George Brinton McClellan] is in command of a large force of malitia [militia] at the last named place. Hooker's army is supposed to

be near Washington and Baltimore. The citizen declares themselves to be sick and tired of the war. They had no idea that we had as large an army as we have. I hope you will hear good accounts from us before long. Give love to all friends and relation and accept the same for yourself and family from

Your affectionate Son,
D.E. Maxwell

[In pencil, on back of last page of above letter:]

Bivouac near Hagerstown, Maryland, July 8th 1863

By looking at the date on this page you will see that more than a week has passed by since I wrote the first three pages. We remained near Chambersburg three days awaiting for Longstreet's corps to come up, and to allow Ewell's corps which was in the vicinity of Harrisburg to return and join us on the Turnpike from Chambersburg to Baltimore. On the fourth morning our army was in motion, enroute for Baltimore. Ewell in the advance- Hill in the centre- and Longstreet in the rear. Our advance met the enemy in force three miles in front [of] Gettysburg, and after a desperate fight of four hours drove them a half mile beyond the town. Night coming on, the opposing Generals busied themselves in getting their forces together and forming line of battle for the fight of the 2nd July. The fighting was the most desperate of the War (the enemy fighting much harder on their own soil, and having the best position imaginable) but was not decisive, at night the lines were pretty much the same as in the morning. With a few positions we gained. Three brigades of our division (Wilcox's, Wright's and Perry's) were engage [engaged]. They charged the enemies principal heights and succeeded in taking them with forty pieces of artillery, but they were not supported in time and consequently had to fall back. The next day (3rd July) the fighting was terrible and with the exception of few positions gained by us, things remained as they were the night before. On the fourth of July there was very little fighting. Gen. Lee was occupied all day in changing his front. On the fifth there was no enemy to be seen. Why Gen. Lee did not pursue them I can't tell. Reports say that we are going to Frederick City. Our Brigade was in the fight of the 2nd and 3rd and lost very heavy. We now have only 150 men in the entire brigade. Among the killed in our Regiment are Capt. McCasland [William E. McCaslan], Capt. Jerkins, Lieut. Shealy [P. Shealey], and Charly Johnson, the 5th Captain Frink, Lieut. Joel Blake, Lieut. Adams and Dick Hart. Their [there] were a great many killed but I have not room to name them. Among the wounded are Major More, Capt. Ballentine, Capt. Mosly, Lieut Hampton, Riley, John D. Perkins, Willie Bull, Jule Patton, George Footman, Capt. Gardner, Capt. Baily, Tom Hines, Lieut Peeles—these were all taken prisoner. I will now close as the mail leave [leaves] in a few moments. George Footman was wounded slightly in the foot. Give my love to all and accept the same for your self and family from

Your affectionate son,
D.E. Maxwell

Transcribed by Christopher A. Baker, University of Florida, 2008