

4-25-1862

Letter from Jonathan H. Wells (Yorktown, Va.) to family, April 25, 1862

Jonathan H. Wells

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5 m. ^{miles} from Yorktown
Friday morning Apr 25th 1862

Dear father & mother:

I will now spend a few moments with my pen to let you know that I am well & happy as a lamb, & why shouldn't I be when (I) just recd a good long letter from you. Oh how glad was I to hear from you. O that you was on the gain but sorry that you have had such a hard time. How I should like to be there to do the work this spring. I think you had better try & hire some one through springs work if you can for if you try to do it alone you will be sick. If you can't hire any one perhaps you can let out part of it to work on shares. I sent a letter to Eds folks yesterday so I have not much to write today. I wrote the letter day before yesterday & sealed it. Just at dusk we was orderd to fall in with guns & equiment & off we started our whole brigade. We went a little wase to the edge of the woods & stopped & waited till pitch dark & then started off through the woods we was orderd not to speak loud & on we truged some of the way through mud half up to our knees. Some of the boys was all excited. they thought we was going to attack the rebels but on we went about 2 mile to the bank of a crick. There we halted and stacked alms (arms) & went to throwing up entrenchments within 20 yds of rebel pickets. Our pickets was there but had to be taken there after dark. We worked there till after four oclock in the morning. Then I started for our camp. There was a Col. & major there of the 3rd. Vt. attending to there pickets & they got a little too farr off & have not been seen since. We don't know whether they were taken prisoners or deserted. They were both southern men & some think they have gone home. That is the place where the regt that Lorenzo Chase is in. They & a nother Vt regt had a scurmish with rebs the other night. There was 4 of his co killed & a number wounded. They was attacked by the rebels and they charged back and drove them through the creek & while our men were in the water the rebs opened the gate of a dam above and drowned 3 of our men. There was a lot of rebs killed. Last Wednesday our pickets took a prisoner. I believe I wrote about it in Eds letter. I expect we are going again tonight to pile tree tops on top of the entrenchments or breast works rather. Whilst we was on our way that night the rebels struck up a tune on their brass bands & I tell you it sounded beautiful It would sound first as though they were on the advance & then on the retreat. They played a number of tunes & then stoped. We are not allowed to sound a drum or any music that they may not know our situation. We getting pretty well prepared for them & there will probably be a battle before long. We are not the nearest the enemy by any means. That night we passed any quantity of artillery & infantry. We heard a story this morning but do not credit it. That is the rebels fired on a French & an English vessel & cut down the mast of the latter & that the English had given them 10 days to lay down their alms (arms) against the North. If it is so it is beacuse they know they have got to give up & want to have it said that we had to have a foreign nation to help us. It is the opinion of some that there will not bee much of a battle at Yorktown. I dont believe this regiment will be called on unlesst it is a hard one. They say an English general & gen. McClelan has gone to Washington. That means something. We heard from the boys that was left behind sick this morning & they are getting along well. Samuel Bowles has been hard sick with mumps but has got so he has gone on duty today. This is a very pleasant place. It has been warm weather for a number of days but it began to rain this morning & it is cold chilly weather. I told you I had not seen any bees but I have seen any quantity of them since.

April 25, 1862

*probably sent
 at home*
 If I could have my liberty think I could find something sweet for
 they have had a good long time to work on flowers, but I should not
 want to go far in the woods for I might get a led pill that wouldn't
 digest. About the domestic animals I think they have done well to
 double it was more than black farms share to bring forth 2 lambs
 It must she has done better than she was doing last fall or she
 would have died in the struggle. I am glad to find out that my
 letters have gone safe. It does not make any difference where I am
 about receiving your letters. Direct them to Washington. I believe I
 have sent 2 since the 2 that was mailed the 5th & 7th. I should have
 written to W.Wells today if I had not received yours to see if I could
 have got an answer. Give my best respects to them & all other good
 friends. I have written 2 letters to Haman ^{since} I left Albany but have not
 recd any. Have not written to uncle James folks yet but must. Shall
 expect to hear from you often after this. I dont think you can find
 any fault with me for not writing often. Mother I think you was quite
 thoughtful in sending medison. Hope I shall have no occasion to use
 it. It is dinner time & we have got some fresh beef & I must frizzle some
 for my dinner. We came to this camp last Tuesday & did not ^{draw} any
 rations except fresh beef till this morning. We eat all our crackers
 day before yesterday that we brought & yesterday had nothing but meet.
 Good by for this time. Direct to

J.H.Wells
 98th Regiment N.Y.Vol.
 Washington, D.C.
 Co. G

To)
 C.H.Wells
 Brandon.