

Camp 1st NY Dragoons
Mitchell's Station Va Jan 17th / 864.

Dear Cousin Lallie

I Received your very
welcome letter last week, which
would have been answered before had I
not been so busy. Since my last letter
I have been building me a mansion,
or rather a Soldiers home. You perhaps
are aware that we build much more rap-
idly in the Army than in Civil life, these
it takes one nearly a year, now billiages spring
up almost in a night. I will give you a
list of description of my "Hotel de Culbertson"
First it is twelve by fifteen feet. Covered with
tinting, the ends are finished up with
small Cedar poles & in rustic style, the
end pointing the street I have the door
and by the side of the latter a six light
window. Above that another nine light
window placed in diamond work of poles.

Answered
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on the right hand side and near the
centre I have a splendid fireplace, ^{in the} opposite
corner from the door I have my bunk,
now I believe I have given you a description
of my abode, In short I have the best & most
stylish Qrs in Camp, & I do not accept it.
please excuse my bairity, for soldiers will
depart from regulations some times.

One week ago to night, at 7 PM we left
our Camp with three Squadrons under Comd
of Major Scott. enroute for Sperryville, distant
from Camp twenty five miles, for the purpose
of capturing some Guerrillas, The night
was quite cold & severe and both men & horses
suffered considerable, during the whole night
I was not out of the Saddle over half an hour.

At four in the morning we halted for a short
time, sending out parties in different
directions to search houses, I took eight men
and went some two miles through fields &
woods to surround a house & capture any
soldiers who might be there. After entering
the house I discovered a sack & belt standing
in one corner, in an other were two guns
one loaded & capped, after looking around
in several rooms, in one of which, I found a
pair of Officers pants, in another room the old
man was very anxious to have not enter a

he said I would disturb his family, & declare
there were no persons in except his family,
but I felt quite sure of a bird in that room.
After entering the room and examining every
thing except the bed which contained his
family as he said, I thought it looked full enough
to contain more, on examining I found
next to the straw tick, and under the feather
ticks, clothes, & dear family, a 1st Lieut of the
Sixth Va. Cav. I could not help but laugh when
I found him, after giving him time to dress
we went to the barn where I found his horse
& equipments which were appropriated. In all
we got six, fully equipped one Lieut, one Capt
and four privates, after coming back to the
road we started for Sperryville arriving
there at day break. Sperryville is a small
town at the foot of the Blue Ridge and on the
road leading to New Market in the Shenandoah
valley. After resting our horses we started
for Camp which we reached at three P.M.
My day pretty well worn out. The citizens
were completely surprised at our arrival in
the town so quiet was it done. I rec'd a
letter from Brother Ed & Sibbie to night -
Sibbie had been quite unwell since Hollidays
with cold, but was better when he wrote
I also rec'd one from Fella to night - they

were all well at home. She gave me
a description of her bravery during the late
fire in Genesee. She assisted Mrs. Kelley in
saving her Husbands book & papers & claimed
considerable credit. I suppose you are now
having a right good visit with Uncle & Aunt
as I learned they had started for ^{your} home,
I should have been very glad to have visited
you during the Fair, & also met Uncle & Aunt
well I hope this war wont last much longer
& perhaps I may visit you, if I am spared
to return home. I wish you might visit me
& see how comfortable I am at present, but
soldiering is uncertain business & may be
obliged to leave them at any moment. You spoke
of Reenlistments, Our Regt has not been in
service long enough to allow us to reenlist
if it had I think we would. My letter is much
longer than intended writing when I began
I must close & write Sibbi, to night. My
love to all. Uncle Dick & Aunt included, with
much love I am, ever your Cousin

Sam.