

Letter 9

Camp 1st NY Dragoons
Manasas Junc Va Oct 25, 1863

Dear Cousin

It has been a long time since I have heard from you and not knowing whether it was my fault or not I venture to write to you. I have forgotten from what place I last wrote you, but I think it was at Warrenton Va. Since then we have been transferred to Cav and are known as 1st NY Dragoons, late 19th NY Cav. Since Oct 13th we have been on the move not stopping longer than one day at a place and hardly time to feed our horses. Oct 13th we broke Camp from here to report to Catlets Station on the Orange & Alexandria R.R. On arriving near there rec'd orders to return to Bristo Station, which we had passed en rout for Catlets. We went into Camp across Broad run Creek for the night and next morning were ordered to report back to Manasas to join the reserve Brigade which we did by noon, & then started for Bull run fields. We camped on the old field till noon next day, & started again, this time for Head Qrs which were at Centreville. Remained at Centreville till Saturday, when we rec'd orders to cross Bullrun Creek and proceed as far as Manasas junc & hold that place if possible. All went very well till the advance came on the advance of the Rebs, when they opened on us with Inft. The order was given to charge where our four Squadrons Started in full chase, & Succeeded in driving them from the field, which we held till reinforcements Came up. It was the first time our Reg't was ever under fire as a Cav Reg't. We gained much credit from the Gen'l Comdt., considering the odds we had to contend with. They had one Brigade while our force was four Squadrons. We lost three killed, three wounded & one taken prisoner. Nix morning we buried seven of their dead, among them one Capt. We would have made a good thing of it, had it not have been So dark as to hardly distinguish our men from the Enemy. On Tuesday we advanced up the R.R. as far as Catlets, & learned from the inhabitants that they lost in killed wounded & missing eighty. We arrived at Catlets about noon, fed our horses, got dinner which consisted of Salt pork & fried hardtack and hardly enough of that. After eating our very sumptuous meal our Squadron went on picket for the night. Were called in at day light & returned back as far as Bristo Station. Remained there, till Friday last when we started for Gainsville, a small Va Town on the Manasas Gap R.R. The Town is about as large as most places, that boast of a name, generally a house and two Chimneys and some times a barn. Left Gainsville yesterday noon, marching all the way through mud and rain, reached our old Camp at sunset. How long we may stay here is more than I can tell, but hope to remain long enough to rest our horses a little which are getting pretty well worn out. The country through which we have been, presents a desolate appearance. Indeed every thing is taken by the Soldiers. If I were the Y.Y.rs(?) I Should pray for the Rebellion to soon close. I have just rec'd orders to have the Squadron ready to move at a moments notice. So it goes. I rec'd a letter from Libbie last week. She was very well. Said she had writen you some time before but had rec'd no reply. Our people were well when last heard from them. (Balance of letter missing).