

Chattanooga Tenn ²⁷ ~~28~~ May 1862

Dear Biggie

As you see I am still in the
land of the living. No doubt you have heard
by this time that the Yankees had either killed
or taken me Prisoner. It gives me great pleasure
to inform you that neither report is true
I know you and all my friends will be
very uneasy about me until you hear that I
am safe, and of course you will have
some curiosity to know how I got
through amongst so many Yankees.
I will commence by giving you my
history from last Sunday evening (The date
of my letter I sent by Lieut. ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~turning~~
~~to~~ Monday morning after we received orders
to go to Bridgeport. we arrived there about
one or 2 o'clock P.M. in about an hour we
were drawn out in lines of Battle. The
report was that 1800 Yankees were marching
on us, it turned out to be a false alarm
(it being) only their advanced pickets 5 miles
from us - we either were on picket all
night or lying on our arms - the next
morning (Tuesday) Col. McAnnells Regt
advanced on to meet them, they returned
about 8 o'clock in the morning over

2) Genl. Leadbetter then sent me with
our company (87) thirty seven men down
our widow's creek. Bridge 5 miles from Bridge
Post, our Picquet, when we got there we
found the Bridge Burning, the Yankees
had been there the night before and
fired it - we went over the creek and
found some cooking utensils that they
had abandoned and tore down some
Breast works that they had put up -
I made some 4 or 5 Posts with 2 or 3 men
at each Post up and down the creek
and placed the main body about 100
yards from the Bridge in a clump of
Bushes - about 2 or 3 o'clock P.M. we
discovered the Yankees advancing down
the R.R. emb. in strong force, as well
as I could judge about 300. Infantry &
100 Cavalry, we had a long 1/2 mile
in plain view to fall back before
we could get in the woods and what
made it worse we were forced to go
on the Embankment thrown up for
the R.R. Road - all this time they were
throwing their Minnie Balls around us
like Hail and the Bombs were bursting
all around us - ~~we~~ consider that we
must have been under the protection of
higher Powers or at least one half
of us would have been killed - only
one was killed, R. J. Hardy and I am
not certain that he was killed

2) The last we saw of him he was getting
over a fence and a shell burst
under him tearing the fence all to pieces
around him, all of our company are now
safe except Thomas Henderson W. L. Smith
and this man we think is killed - as
soon as we arrived at the woods I
saw it was no use for us to fight
them, so we went on for Bridge Port
I gave out soon and told the Boys to
make their way to our army and report,
the 2 Coker Boys also gave out at the
same time - we lay down in a hollow
and in a few minutes Calvin Espy &
M. J. White (the one that went to School in
Jefferson) come to us, while we were
lying there a Bomb come whizzing over
our heads and bursted a little before
us - Simeon Carr had a canteen full of water
which he threw away. I picked it up
I was perfectly exhausted and think if
I had not come across that canteen full
of water I would have been dead now
we five then made our way on towards
Bridge Port, we Broke down again and
while we were there the Yankees passed
within 30 yards of us - we then made
another push and the first thing we
knew ~~the~~ we were on them again

4) we were close enough to hear distinctly
their commands. They were pushing
their Artillery rapidly Tow - we then
changed our direction and got
within about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile from our
Army - but the enemy had opened fire
and we heard our men retreating
over the Bridge and knew it would
be perfect folly to attempt to cross. So
we took down the River it was then
Sundown - we dragged our way down
The River 3 miles to a ferry, the Boat
was on the other Side and no chance
to get it over to us, we met up
here with about 40 Cavalry who were
also cut off at day light Wednesday
Morning. The most of the men went to
the Chin Breaks to conceal themselves,
we thought there was too many
together and concluded we would
Strike for the Mountains - in going
through the River Bottom a man caught
up with us - I asked him where he
was going. He told me he was going
with us. I then asked him where he
belonged. He said he belonged to the
10th Ky. Regt - I then knew he thought we
were Yankees. I took advantage of his
mistake and asked where our Boys
were. He told me they were just
up the River and were coming on -

I then presented a Gun and told him he was in the wrong crowd and that he was my Prisoner. When I told him this he looked as bad as I felt and I can assure you that was pretty tolerable Bad - I thought we had enough to do to take care of ourselves so I told him to go one way and attend to his own Business and we would do the same, we lay all that Day about 120 yards from where we let him loose - It rained on us nearly half the Day but notwithstanding I don't seem to sound sleeping and ever done in my life - The Yankees played in 100 yards of us at least 30 times that Day they took a good many Prisoners and I think that night me and White made our way to a house and got something to eat and gave the man five Dollars (only) to show us the way to a Mr Williams who lived $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from him - we knew Williams to be a true Southern man - we told him our Condition, he told us he would put us over the River next morning - me and White slept in his rear house until next morning. I went back after the balance of the Boje and we were all put over

6) Safe and Sound Thursday morning but
worn out and Blistered feet - we then
made our way across the mountain to
Trenton Ga. Co. Ga where we Staid last night
we waited there to day until 2 o'clock P.M.
and came up to Chattanooga on the
train where I first learned the Boys were
all Safe (Except those mentioned) about 15
of our men went down to Bridge Port to day
it was thought that a fight would come
off to day there - our army fell back to
Chattanooga but went back to day - just
as I got in on the train there was a train
leaving for Bridge Port and who should I
see but my Father with Muskitt on his
Shoulder going on to avenge my brother -
you know it is a hard matter for me to cry
but in spite of myself I could not keep
the tears from coming. I only had time
to shake hands and the good off Cousin
Vicars (Cousin) also was on the train -
I stated above that only 15 went down
to day - The most of our company are
perfectly worn out and they gave up
their Guns to fresh troops who had no
arms, which accounts for them being
here - the Citizens are coming to
our army in from every Quarter armed

71
with that Sure Rifle determined to die
rather than be whipped - Cap Mullins
Company from Cherokee was on Picket
8 miles above me with 40 men himself
and only I have made their escape that
we have heard of - when I came in to
night He come to see me poor fellow I
am sorry for him than any man I ever saw
I attribute his slip to an effort on his part to
reinforce me, by doing so he lost too much
time and was cut off - The Soldiers and
Citizens are perfectly outraged (and I think
they have good cause) with Genl Beadette
he made us Infantry the advance Pickets
and placed the Cavalry between us and
our main forces and instead of trying
to protect us as soon as he found the
Enemy advancing he retreated on this
Side of the River and set the Bridge
on fire - all the Boys are asleep and
I am very much worried, so I will stop
writing for to night and write more in
the morning - I forget to say that I
never for a moment gave up. I had
hope all the time that I would
come through safe and live to
see my friends again without going
such a round about way as
Washington City

8th) 3rd May Saturday morning - after a
good nights rest which has revived
me very much. I will write you a few
more lines - Mr Webb is going Home
and will hand you this Letter -
I am still pretty badly worn out -
Maj Kellogg came up on the train
this morning with the news that our
forces had retreated within 4 miles of
this place, He is now trying to get arms
to fill the places of those we gave
up yesterday - I called our Boys in
lines a few minutes ago and called
for volunteers to go our Capt - 9 men
to live or die with them, 12 of them
stepped out and said they would
cost their fortunes with me -
we will leave in a few hours and
before this reaches you I expect to
be contending with the enemies of
my country - I feel like I will not
fall but if I do I know you will
hear of me fighting at my post -
with my face to the foe, I know
this letter will distress you very much
but I know you will be compelled
to hear the truth and I know it
will be a great satisfaction for
you to have me to write exactly
the state of affairs -

97
This morning while I was eating breakfast
- my Cousin Cicero came in our camp.
He told me that our boys fairly shouted
when he told them I was safe they have
sent us reinforcements from Knoxville and
I learn this morning that Genl Floyd is coming
on to help us - the enemies forces are variously
- reported from 1300 to 5,000 I think if our
Generals will manage right we will
be certain to whip them - The dark clouds
are resting over us and our repeated
reverse is killing the spirit of a great many
of our men - but I am in stronger hope
now than I have been in 6 weeks - every
man I can hear of is willing to shed
his blood in his countries defence - the
People are arousing themselves and seem
to know our danger and appreciate
the blessings of Liberty - the Yankees as they
advance disfranchise every man
who belongs or did belong to our army
they are placed on a level with the
free negroes, So I was told by a Kentuckian
yesterday - if this will not make
men fight they deserve a Surgeon
The Balance of Their Days

10th I have written off as long a
- as a Letter, and have left out a great
many things that would probably interest
you - But to say the most interesting
part of my Letter is the the three
short words (I am safe) I received
your letter by Mr Mrs Well also Henry
I and very very glad to know our
little Babe is well. I have been very
uneasy all the time about it. I
want you, if I never return to raise
it up to be a good and true woman
till Henry I will reply to his letter as
soon as I find the Sentiment of the
two feet in company - Give my love
to all my Relations, till then I think
of them often but do not want to see
them now - you must keep up a
cheerful Heart and not be discouraged
I am in the Hands of an allwise God
and perfectly reconciled to his will
my love to you Dear Lizzie and Kipper
for you and the Baby - I will write
in a few days, if permitted

Your affectionate Husband
J. H. Stone