

Murfreesboro, Tenn Jan. 8, 1863

(2)

Dear Wife -

In the notes I sent you since the recent battle I promised that I would the first opportunity send you a description of that eventful period. Now for the task. On the 26th day of December 1862 we left Nashville and arrived at ~~Nolingville~~ ^{Nalensville} at which place the advance of our army had a considerable skirmish. From this on thru the 30th of Dec. we kept advancing slowly fighting more or less everyday when we reached Stone River

2½ miles from the place

where the enemy had erected Rifle Pits and had prepared for a desperate encounter. During the 30th skirmishing sometimes very severe was going on ^{This day we had one killed & four wounded.} but it was reserved for the 31st. The last day of the old year ~~I~~ witness one of the most desperate conflicts of the war. At sunrise on the 31st the Right division of the right wing commanded by Gen'l Johnson (the same one who surrendered his forces at Gallatin without fighting) was surprised and driven in and our right completely turned. The action then became general along the whole right. The fighting was terrible - the roar of musketry was so continuous that no distinction could be made between the different volleys. Added to this was the continuous roar of about 100 cannon for hours at a time. The enemy gradually drove our right back until the right of our regiment - on the

Battle of Stones River
Dec 31, Jan 1 & 2, 1863
from W.D. Ward.

37th Regiment
Indiana Volunteers

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right of center was turned. the troops on our left also fell back and exposed our left flank. In this situation we were attacked by a Brigade of Rebels in front—a Brigade on our left - and a force on our right. But the boys stood it nobly - After a few volleys the command was given to charge which was promptly done and the Rebels driven back. They rallied and in turn drove us - we rallied and after a sharp encounter drove them again and held our position until our ammunition was exhausted and we were nearly surrounded when we retreated in order from the field, or rather fell back about one ~~mile~~^{mile} supplied ourselves with ammunition and took up a new position preparatory to a renewal of the conflict. They were checked and driven back however before they reached that position and the battle so far as we were concerned ended for that day. In this conflict we had 30 killed and 98 wounded which of itself shows the severity of the conflict which lasted but about an hour.

My brown mare was killed and my saddle, bridle and rubber blanket and pistol lost. The rebels also cut the shoes off my mares feet. On Thursday we were not under fire. On Friday, Jan. 2nd the Rebels charged Vangleves division ^{on} our left and drove it back and attempted to cross the river. At this juncture our division was ordered to charge the Rebels and at them we went driving them before us until night closed the conflict. In this conflict we lost 11 men wounded mostly by shell as we charged through a perfect storm of shot and shell. I have been over a part of the battle

field since the action and oh! the horrors of the battlefield. Men shot in every conceivable manner. torn by shot and shell until they could not be possibly be recognized - hundreds of corpses scattered over the ground for miles and horses innumerable scattered about. But I shall not attempt to describe it - language would fail me if I did. That charge spoken of above was the last we had to do with the battle. On Saturday however the enemy charged several times but were easily driven back. And Saturday night immediately after dark a part of our forces charged a force of the Rebels encamped in an open woods about 3/4 of an mile in front and in plain view

of our position. This was ^wsplendid sight. The sheets of flame from our volleys of musketry as they steadily advanced fairly lit up the woods. which was answered rapidly but not effectively by the Rebs - The roar of musketry for about an hour was incessant when it gradually died away as the enemy were driven from their strong position in the woods. This ended the battle - the enemy immediately commenced evacuating the place and carried it on as secretly and rapidly as possible and succeeded in saving most of their stores p.s. Col. Hull was wounded first day since which

I have had command. ~~How~~

~~and succeeded in saving most of their stores.~~

The loss is variously estimated at from 7,000 to 10,000. I think near the last number and the enemy's at from 15,000 to 20,000 men. The loss of our regt. is 30 killed 111 wounded and 9 missing. Tip was

in the ranks through the whole affair and stood up to the work ^{man}fully. He

is a Brother of whom I have good reason
to be proud - his manly bearing on
the battle field has ^{endeared} ~~endured~~ him to me.

Cap. Hyatt & Shook fought nobly. Lt.
Stockwell ran. Tip and I are both
unhurt. I have a bullet hole in my
overcoat. Amid the shock of battle I felt
calm and composed and prepared to
meet my fate be it what it might.

I am truly thankful that I have been ~~preserved~~
^{preserved} and can say that I ^{felt} ~~felt~~ as if I was
shielded by the All seeing eye from harm during
the terrible conflict. I hope never again to wit-
ness such another scene. May the time come
when the accursed strife shall cease. Peace and pros-
perity reign triumphant - our Union be restored, and *have not heard*
from you for some time am very anxious. hope to receive
a letter soon. Tip and I are unwell - but are about and ex-
pect to be all right in a few days. I have rec'd nothing
from Kate. Weather warm & pleasant. My trunk has
been robbed of my uniform, my pecuniary loss in the
recent battle is over 200\$ - pretty dear but cheaper than
blood. Tip send; his love. My love to all. Write
Sallie and give me Eastern news as I can get none
here. Hoping that health & happiness maybe yours

I close

From your husband, Will D. Ward