

EDMUND RICE (1638) ASSOCIATION, INC.

NEWSLETTER

SPRING, 1979

NUMBER 38

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FRONT COVER: Seaver Rice, Mr. Southbridge, past president and beloved member of the Edmund Rice Association, Inc. Our five page feature article on Seaver, written by Arthur J. Kavanagh for the magazine SUNDAY begins on page eight.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Hasn't this winter just flown by? Here we are 'rounding the bend toward another Rice reunion and I'm still not done reminiscing the last one!

It is pretty certain that the Rice Reunion for Fall 1979 will be the last Sunday in September (the 30th), so please save that day on your social calendar for "family festivities." The place for our reunion has not been definately set yet, so be looking out for your reunion notification by summer's end.

It has been an active year and we have lost and gained several members to our organization this year.

Ruth Rasey has published a new book of interest to us all, because she is one of our cousins and because of her interest in Early American life, which she writes about.

We have an article on a sad, if not dazzling end to an old Rice homestead. And, in keeping with our effort to highlight both an ancestor and a living Rice family member we have articles this issue on Victor Moreau Rice and our dear friend, Seaver M. Rice.

The second installment of our continuing feature: Civil War Letters of Edwin Rice, edited by Ted Perry is reaching novel proportions in our Newsletter. And, the plot is thickening...

All in all a good way to start our summer and keep in touch with each other until we can "reunite" in the fall.

Have a great summer. I look forward to seeing all of you this fall.

Janet Farrar Royce
Newsletter Editor

RICE RECIPES

What's better than a delicious muffin, warm from the oven and smothered with butter? A delicious muffin, warm from the oven and smothered with butter that's good for you! It isn't often, however, that you can find a bran muffin that is moist and flavorful enough to be both good for you and tasty.

But with a little experimentation I think I have a recipe here that fits the bill. One of these large sized muffins each day is the best thing you can include in your diet. They also cook up real easy.

DELICIOUS AND HEALTHFUL BRAN MUFFINS

2 cups coarse bran
2 cups Biscuit mix
1 1/2 cups milk

1 cup+ chopped dried fruit
1 cup+ chopped nuts
1/2 cup honey
1/2 cup corn oil

Beat eggs, milk, honey and oil together. Pour into center of bran and biscuit mix and fold together. Fold in fruit and nuts. Bake in greased muffin tins at only 350° for 25 - 35 minutes. Yields 12 large sized muffins.

VICTOR MOREAU RICE
(VII, #904.10.2 in Rice Register)

Born April 5, 1818 - died October 18, 1869, Victor Moreau Rice was an educator. He was born at Mayville, in Chautauqua County, New York, the son of William and Rachel (Waldo) Rice. His early education was obtained in the schools of his native town, and in 1841 he graduated from Allegheny College, Meadville, Pennsylvania. Moving from Mayville to Buffalo in 1843, he secured employment as a teacher of Latin, language, penmanship and bookkeeping in a private school, which subsequently became the Buffalo high school. After graduating from college he had begun the study of law privately and in 1845 was admitted to the bar. That same year he opened an evening commercial school for young people with daily occupations. From 1846 to 1848 he was the editor of the Cataract, afterward the Western Temperance Standard. He was elected city superintendent of schools in Buffalo in 1852 and in 1853 was chosen president of the New York State Teachers' Association, with which he had been prominently identified for several years.

On April 4, 1854, a legislative act established a new department of the state government to administer the common-school system, known as the State Department of Public Instruction, with a state superintendent of public instruction to be chosen by the legislature, at its head. To this office Rice was elected. He at once organized the new department, vigorously enforced the provisions of the common-school law, secured the establishment of the office of local school commissioner, and effected a revision of the state tax laws, thereby largely increasing the subsidy for public schools. He recommended the establishment of more normal schools, a more liberal appropriation for teachers' institutes, and a uniform day for the holding of annual district school meetings. Returning to Buffalo after the completion of his term, he was elected a Republican member of the state assembly and served as chairman of the committee on colleges, academies, and common schools. On February 1, 1862, he was returned to the office of superintendent of public instruction, was reelected in 1865, and served until April 7, 1868. During his second incumbency many progressive steps were taken. A training school for primary teachers was established at Oswego, which later became a state

normal school. Provision was also made for other normal schools at Cortland, Fredonia, Potsdam, Geneseo, Brockport, and Buffalo. Teachers' institutes were strengthened and attendance upon them greatly increased. The most conspicuous accomplishment of Rice's superintendency, however, was the abolition of the odious rate bill and the final establishment of free schools throughout the state. The principle that the property of the state should educate the children of the state was one that many public-spirited citizens had fought vigorously to establish, but it remained for Rice to incorporate it into the basic education law, and thereby to erect a memorable milestone in the state's history of education.

Upon his retirement from the superintendency in 1868, he became president of the American Popular Life Insurance Company. He was afterward president of the Metropolitan Bank of New York City. On November 26, 1846, he married Maria L. Winter.

[Annual reports of the superintendent of public instruction, New York, 1854 - 1857, 1862 - 1868, and 1903; A. W. Young, History of Chautauqua County (1875); New York Times, October 20, 1869.]

H. H. H.

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BOOK REVIEW

HAND-HEWN IN OLD VERMONT

The Green Mountain county of Bennington, basically representative of rural life throughout the Northeastern United States, contributed to the hewing of America out of a wilderness. Hand-Hewn in Old Vermont depicts some of the remarkable details in the daily lives of the ones who shared in the hewing.

Ruth Rasey Simpson has drawn upon the living recollections of three generations of VermonTERS, upon various town records, and upon old family diaries, journals, newspapers, and scrapbooks to construct an authentic and nostalgic story of some grassroots building of our nation during the past 200 years. Her Hand-Hewn In Old Vermont is a fascinating companion to her earlier book, Out of the Saltbox: The Savour of Old Vermont.

One chapter tells of the clearing of a mountain woodland, the subsequent abandonment of these acres, and their use today as a recreational and educational area known as the George W. Merck Forest Foundation.

Other chapters tell about making cider, soap, botanical remedies, buttermilk paint, pioneer foods, and other crafts.

A flax-breaking bee, a house-raising, and a Union Day ball are among the long ago recreational activities that Ruth Simpson has here described with humorous and dramatic details.

Dorset Mountain marble and the Bennington Stagecoach Line represent some of the most far-reaching benefits of the Vermont hewing. Dorset stone has constructed the United States Supreme Court Building, the New York Public Library, the Oregon State Capital, and innumerable other structures throughout America.

Bennington native, Hiram Bingham, rode the local stage on the first lap of his journey to the Sandwich Islands. There, as head of the first missionaries, he transcribed the oral Hawaiian language into its first written form, thus incidentally laying the cornerstone for our 50th state.

People everywhere, with or without Vermont roots, can recognize their own legacy and identity in this gripping story, Hand-Hewn In Old Vermont.

Burton Turner, free-lance artist of North Bennington, Vermont is the illustrator of this book.

Ruth M. Rasey Simpson

Ruth, a proven descendant of Edmund Rice and a member of the Edmund Rice Association, Inc. is a sixth generation native of Bennington County, Vermont. She grew up on the Rupert Mountain farm, Windy Summit, and still feels a close identification with her New England roots. Her earlier book of non-fiction, Out of The Salt-box: The Savour of Old Vermont; her volume of poetry, Mountain Fortitude; and her presently published Hand-Hewn in Old Vermont reflect her native scene and interest.

A former teacher in a North Tonawanda junior high school, she worked with natural history as a side line. Her work has appeared in many magazines and has won a dozen awards in nationwide contests sponsored by The National League of American Pen Women.

Mrs. Simpson makes her home with her husband, a retired industrial chemist, in North Tonawanda, New York.

**** Done in hardcover by Poly-Two Press of North Bennington, Vermont, Hand-Hewn in Old Vermont contains 235 pages plus an index. Each of the 12 chapters is headed by an appropriate pen-and-ink drawing. It retails for \$9.00 plus \$.27 tax and \$.73 mailing charges (an even \$10.00). Autographed copies are available from the author if prepaid:

Mrs. E. Wilbur Simpson
286 Goundry Street
North Tonawanda, New York 14120

PASSED ON TO A BETTER LIFE.....

Mr. Harry C. Rice of Sudbury, MA, died September 23, 1978;
Mr. David Spivey Clark of Fort Stocton, Texas; Mrs. Ben Harrington of Barre, MA; Grace Rice of Moroga, CA, died September 21, 1978;
Mr. Frank D. Smith of Northbridge, MA, died November 23, 1978;
Mrs. Willard W. Rice of Sarasota, FA; and Patricia Jones sends us word that the following Rices are no longer with us: Victoria Rice Mercer, Ronald E. Jones, Robert V. Jones, Victor E. Jones, John V. Wherry, James Everhart and William Everhart.

RICE FAMILY FARMHOUSE IS EXPLOSIVE STAR OF MOVIE

[Article by Barbara Balfour for Telegram Westboro Bureau]

WESTBORO - No one will say exactly when the big blow will happen, but it might be Thursday, Friday or Saturday.

That's when movie makers are planning to blow up an old farmhouse on state property off Rice Lane. The film, "A Small Circle of Friends," is about campus unrest in the 1960's.

The explosion will be the climax. Weathermen-style radicals accidentally blow up their headquarters, reminiscent of the town-house explosion on West 11th Street in New York in the early '60's which killed three activists.

Don't think you'll be able to stroll up Rice Lane and get a front seat for the action, though. The film company has been working there for several weeks, and security is tight. Besides Westboro policemen, Assistant Superintendent of State Buildings, Harold Vanesse, has a crew of security guards on duty.

The farmhouse was scheduled to go up March 26, but delays in filming other sequences slowed things. There were problems with the financing. A reorganization of the movie makers has put A Small Circle of Friends, Inc. at the helm.

Friday, filming was going on at Harvard University, the Boston Public Library and the Copley Plaza Hotel.

Meanwhile, back at the farmhouse, three members of Special Effects Unlimited of Hollywood have been working. They have been on the property about two weeks.

"Interior shots have already been finished here," says Joe Lombardi, a company employee. "The radicals taking over the house, making bombs in the cellar, et cetera, have all been done. Also, some outside winter scenes where we had to use artificial snow."

In the derelict shell of the house are two signs of the recent filming: a mammoth Che Guevara poster tacked on the living room wall that reads "The Spirit of Che Lives in the New Evergreen!" and another saying "White Power!"

As far as the special-effects workers have heard, no local extras will be required or allowed on the property.

Brad Davis of "Midnight Express" fame stars in the film.

He is expected to return for a brief shot in front of the house the day of the blowup. Otherwise, the explosion, not people, is the focus.

The old farmhouse once was a thriving, busy complex. Originally the Rice family farm, the buildings and acreage have been owned by the state for nearly 70 years.

Town records show that in 1912 or 1914, a 192-acre tract including the farmhouse was deeded to the state by Allyn D. Phelps.

FEATURE ARTICLE: MR. SOUTHBRIDGE - SEAVER RICE

If you have ever been involved with our New England routed Rice family nucleus you would have had to meet or at least hear of Seaver Rice. Outstanding at a good six feet plus Seaver holds the attention of everyone with his winning smile, warm personality and the captivating way he can tell a good story with that low, gentle voice of his. He is the kind of man children smile at instinctively, animals gather around and everyone just naturally feels relaxed and happy with.

Seaver was President of the Edmund Rice Association, Inc. a few years ago (1975-1976, to be specific). He is also a writer, who is published quite regularly in his town paper, SUNDAY. He has also appeared in our Newsletters and has written and published a book of some of his stories: "Along the Quinebaug."

On May 7, 1977 Seaver was honored by his place of many years of employment, the Optical Products Division of American Optical corporation, with a lavish banquet at which the President of the company, Edwin F. Lau, personally gave a speech.

The following fourth of July Seaver was honored by his whole town as a part of the holiday celebrations, and was named Mr. Southbridge. The following article was printed in Sunday on July third of the same year and was yet another tribute to Seaver by his old friend, Arthur J. Kavanagh.

Seaver is, to tell you the truth, also one of my favorite Rices, and I have been just dying to be able to find time and room in our Newsletter to do him a tribute of justice. I just know he will become one of your favorite relatives, too.

"Seaver Miller Rice, who has so endeared himself to his fellow townspeople that he is sometimes known as "Mr. Southbridge", was born in the town of Saranac Lake, New York, October 13, 1892. He was one of five brothers. Some of his ancestors were New Englanders. Jonas Rice, the first settler of Worcester, was an uncle five generations or so back. Seaver's grandfather Rice was born in Milton, Vermont, in 1813.

"Glimpses of his boyhood life in upstate New York have been given in his articles in the SUNDAY magazine of the Evening News, and have been reprinted in his "Along the Quinebaug."

In 1910, he came to Franklin, Massachusetts, to enter Dean Academy (now Dean Junior College) from which his brother Walter had graduated the year before. While there he was active in athletics, particularly basketball, under an energetic and highly-competitive coach. Seaver says, "I remember the time in Geneva, New York, where we played a semi-professional outfit, one of the members of the opposing team shoved me against the brick wall, and I suffered a cracked shoulder blade, not discovered until five years later when I enlisted in the army for war service. The point I wish to make is that although unable to use but one arm, Sullivan (the coach) did not take me out of the game. He couldn't we had only five men."

He graduated from Dean in 1912 and entered Hobart College in Geneva. Because of family financial reverses he was unable to continue there, but left college and went into the jewelry manufacturing business for a short time.

A younger brother, Irving, graduated from Dean in 1914 and came to American Optical Company to work. In that same year, the jewelry business being a little slow, the brother urged Seaver to apply for a job here. He decided to look into the possibility.

He recalls, "I'll never forget Irving's directions to Southbridge: 'When you arrive in Worcester go immediately to the front of City Hall. There you'll find electric trolley cars leaving for Springfield every two hours. Get on one and ask the conductor to let you off in Southbridge.'"

"As we passed through the Flat section of town, all I could see were three decker apartment houses. I thought to myself, Oh my God! I don't think I'm going to like this place; it's not much of a community.

"What did three deckers signify to me, you ask? Well, at that time not anything symbolic of wealth. The buildings gave the impression of a people earning a rather poor livelihood, and I wanted more from life than what tenement buildings represented. It's not that I had ambition for great wealth: but I was young at the time, and coming from a well-to-do community to an industrial setting was a transition for me."

This was on a Friday in January, 1915. He was hired at once, and reported for work on the following Monday, January 15. He stayed until he retired in 1958. He started as a clerk in the Lensdale engineering department, and after that in a number of other places about the plant.

In 1941 he was asked if he would like to join the Personnel Department. He said, "Yes, I think I would. I like people and like to meet people." He stayed in personnel for the remaining 17 years of his employment at the AO.

In talking with old-timers, one can sense the respect with which he was regarded for his consideration and fair dealing.

The following example is typical:

Louise Casavant, who gained fame as the editor of the A0 News said, "Seaver was the first person I met at A0. I remember thinking, 'If just a percentage of the people here have this man's graciousness, warmth, and sense of humanity, then this is going to be a wonderful place to work.' Many other people have expressed the same thing. I'm morethan happy to sing his praises to the sky.

Lillian Tansey, who worked with Seaver for many years at the A0 personnel department, and knew him well, recalled that Seaver was a real favorit with children. She told us that "everyday we would have kids stopping in on their way to or from school to say "hello" to Seaver or climb on his lap orask his advice. One boy particular, Charlie, was in every day like clockwork, declaring Seaver to be his best friend. When his family moved to Worcester, Charlie was heartbroken. Thereafter, for the next four or five years, Charlie would have his parents bring him to Southbridge, at least once a month, to see his 'best friend,' Seaver Rice."

His work at American Optical was interrupted by his army service in World War I. He enlisted on May 15, 1917 with about 20 other youn men from Southbridge, and chose service in the Engineer Corps. He recalls, "By the way, most of that group consisted of young men of French Canadian, Irish and Yankee descent - the Europeans having not been here very long. We were all eager to get overseas as soon as possible. 'Join the engineers,' were were told, 'and you'll get there quick enough!' And that we did.

Seaver was assigned to the First Division of the regular army which accompanied General Pershing to France in July 1917. In October of that year, he was in the trenches in the sector from which the first United States shot in the war was fired, about two miles from where he was stationed.

Later he was sent back to this country to serve as an instructor, and was stationed at Camp Humphreys in Virginia when hostilities ended. He was discharged about two months later, and thus was one of the first servicemen to return to Southbridge.

He was active in organizing the American Legion post here, and was its first commander. He is also a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

A very special group of veterans of World War I is "The Thirteen Club." This was formed several years after the return to civil life. Seaver says, "As veterans in the area got to know one another, 13 of us decided to form a club. Our first meeting was in the home of Dr. Theodore Story of Southbridge in 1938. "The Thirteen Club" wrote up a charter and bought a bottle of champagne for the last surviving member to drink a toast to the departed.

"On November 11, we hold our annual meeting when we sing songs and recall stories about our war years. Over the years we have met at various places, either at each other's homes, or at clubs in the area. Our intentions in forming the club were to keep in touch and to reminisce our war experiences, that's all."

There are four surviving members. Besides Seaver they are J. Edgar Hefner, of Webster, J. Edwin Johnson of Worcester and Howard M. Boal of Southbridge.

Prior to entering the service he had had no special woman friends in town. When he returned there were various social affairs, dances and so forth, and he began dating a girl from Monson whom he had known before he left, and who lived in the dormitory on Mechanic Street which the AO maintained for women employees. Her name was Gertrude McCarthy. They were married November 23, 1921.

They never had children, though they would have liked them. However, Seaver's memories are brightened by recalling the nephews and nieces they did have in their house over the years.

The Rices were together nearly 50 years, until Mrs. Rice's death May 10, 1971.

Shortly after his return from the service in 1919, the Wells-worth Athletic Association was organized at American Optical Company. As he was active in athletics, particularly baseball and basketball, he became its first president.

His athletic activities were varied. For one thing, he played on an American Optical Company. As he was active in athletics, particularly baseball and basketball, he became its first president.

His athletic activities were varied. For one thing, he played on an American Optical soccer team. Soccer is an English game, and the team was started because there were a number of Englishmen here who wanted to play. They asked him to join. He said, "I don't know anything about the game." They replied, "You'll be the goalkeeper. All you have to do is to keep the ball from going into the goal." He said, "Well, I'll try it." In talking about it recently, he said, "So, I told them I'd go down. I'll never forget; we were playing a team from Worcester and this fellow shot a bullet. I didn't see it. It hit me on the knee and the crowd cheered; they thought it was a wonderful stop. I didn't even see the ball!"

For several years there was an annual series of soccer games between teams in the Worcester area and teams near Worcester, England. Seaver was on the team selected to go to England one year. They spent about a month on the trip, and had an enjoyable time. They didn't win any games, but had some close scores. Although they enjoyed playing, most members of the team were in their 30s (one was in his 40s), and they were a bit old for keen competition.

He also played on an American Legion championship basketball team.

Seaver's good friend, Einar Hansen, recalls that back in 1947 Seaver was the star forward on the personnel department's basketball team. During a game against the drafting department, Seaver played the entire game without substitution, and helped win the game. He was then 54 years old.

Over the years he has served on a number of town boards and committees, always picking up the unglamorous jobs which have to be done by somebody and which are a real service.

His first elective position was as a cemetery commissioner shortly after he returned from service. This election pleased him because it showed that, though he was a registered Republican in a strongly Democratic town, his reputation was good enough for him to win over a democratic candidate.

He was a trustee of the Jacob Edwards Memorial Library for three years in the 1930's. He was on the Board of Registrars of Voters for about six years. He was chairman of the committee that introduced precinct voting in the town. He thinks back on this with special pride.

He served on the Council for Aging for about six years. Now he is on the Committee for Elderly Home Care.

He was baptized in the Episcopal Church in Saranac Lake, and immediately upon coming to Southbridge he joined the Episcopal Church here. He is now the oldest member, ushering at the service each Sunday.

Recently, when complimented on his articles in SUNDAY and on the enthusiasm with which readers have received them, he said, "That's something I don't understand. I knew I could write, but taking it up at 82 years old and having so many people like it - that builds up my ego quite a lot!"

****In the upcoming Fall Newsletter we will print another of Seaver's stories printed in the WEEKEND: "The Mysterious Ghost of Oak Ridge Cemetery."****

CIVIL WAR LETTERS OF EDWIN RICE

Edited by Ted Perry

CHAPTER II MARYLAND MY MARYLAND

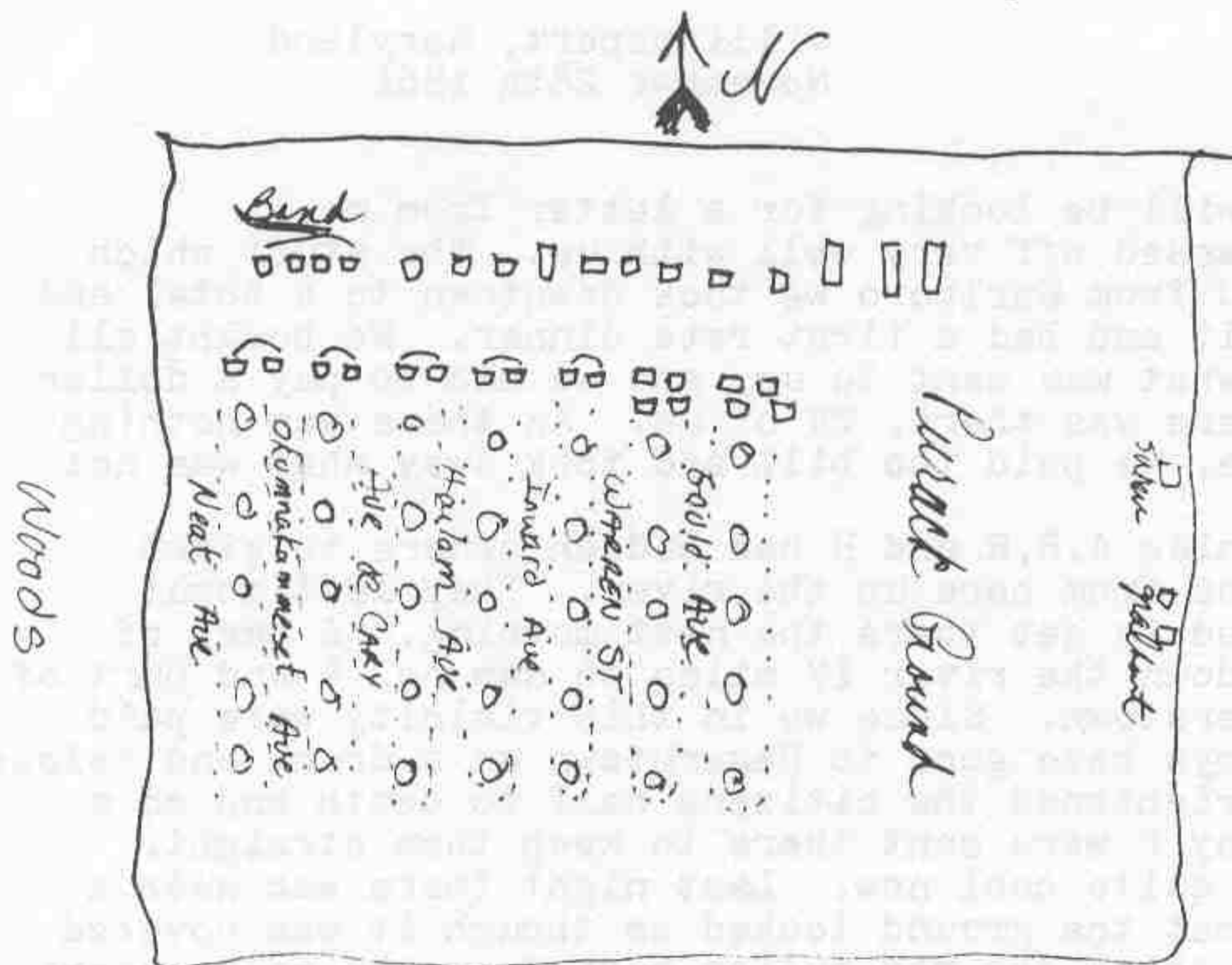
Darnestown, Maryland
September 18th 1861

Uncle Edwin,

I received a paper and map from you last evening. Am very much obliged for both. We are awaiting orders to move on for some other place. We have been here about two weeks. There are but seven companies here now. Companies C, I, and K have not yet been relieved. We heard yesterday that Company I had had a skirmish at Harpers Ferry and had one of its officers killed and some of the men wounded but as no one knows anything more about it, it is not believed. 30 men were detailed yesterday to go and practice artillery at a battery attached to this Regiment. There is a Rhode Island battery a short distance from here that was in the Bull Run fight. They lost five guns, a number of horses, two men killed, and four taken prisoners.

September 19, Thursday

The band serenaded the Brigadier General last night and also the officers of the Rhode Island battery. I heard this morning that one of the I's men was shot dead while on picket duty a few days since at Harpers Ferry. His name was Spencer.



The above is a rough plan of our camp. The round marks are the companies' tents, the square ones are the officers tents, the small dots are the evergreen trees which the men have set into the ground. This makes the camp look as though it was pitched in a grove of evergreen. The spaces between each companies' tents are named streets and avenues. We have had our spring fixed so that we can get water now. The Col. had the spring dug out and set a barrel into it and then fixed a trough into the barrel so the water would run out. Then he covered the barrel over with a flat stone and covered with gravel and leaves. The place where the water runs out is 15 feet from the spring. The water is the best we have had in any place yet.

The name of our camp is "Camp Hamilton" after the General of the Brigade which we belong to. It is expected that General McClellan will visit the Brigade today. I don't suppose we shall know him when he comes as I have heard that he does his visiting "incog."

When I left Massachusetts, I weighed about 145 lbs. I weighed myself this morning and found I had gained 11 lbs. since I left Mass. which is better than some have done.

The Band have had to work pretty hard for a week past. The first thing we have to do is to play at guard mounting at 8 o'clock which takes about an hour. Then rehearse two hours before dinner and two hours after, and then play at regimental drill at 4 o'clock which takes an hour, and play for half an hour sometimes during the evening before the Colonel's tent. Some days we do not rehearse only part of the day, and some days not any.

There is but a very little sickness in the Regiment now. Our mail to and from Washington is not very regular. As it leaves in about an hour, I shall close this in order to have it go.

Williamsport, Maryland
November 28th 1861

Viola,

I suppose you will be looking for a letter from me.

Thanksgiving passed off very well with us. The stuff which was sent to the Band from Marlboro we took downtown to a hotel and put some more with it and had a first rate dinner. We bought all the extras besides what was sent to us, and we had to pay a dollar a plate for what there was there, 24 of us. As there was nothing said about the price, we paid the bill and took away what was not eaten.

Tuesday, Companies A, B, E and H had sudden orders to start for Hancock, 27 miles from here up the river. They left about 6 p.m. They expected to get there the next morning. A part of Company D has gone down the river 17 miles to dam no. 4 and part of Company F is at Hagerstown. Since we in this vicinity were paid off, the Illinois boys have gone to Hagerstown on a drunk and raised the Old Harry and frightened the citizens half to death and so a detachment of Company F were sent there to keep them straight.

The nights are quite cool now. Last night there was such a heavy white frost that the ground looked as though it was covered with snow. I don't think the men suffer much from the cold except those who are on guard as they have fires in their tents nearly all the time. The horses, I should think, would suffer a good deal from the cold. As wheat straw is plenty around here they have lots of that to sleep on, but they have no blankets.

Yesterday it was cold and rained nearly all day. In the morning it hailed nearly an hour. It has got to be so chill around here that I hope we shall move soon for some other place. The traveling now is quite bad except on the turnpikes as the ground freezes a little every night and then thaws during the day and makes it very muddy traveling. Today is Thanksgiving in this state and tonight there is going to be a Thanksgiving Ball downtown. I should like to go to it and see what kind of a thing it is but don't suppose I can.

I received a letter from Henry, Tuesday morning. My ear does not trouble me any now. I received a paper and some pills from Mother yesterday. The blanket which Mother sent is a first rate one. I think it is better than a bed blanket would be for me to use. I saw some horse blankets the other day that they asked \$1.75 a piece for. I had rather have mine than three of them. They were coarse and were not more than $\frac{2}{3}$ as large.

Yours,

Edwin Rice

P.S. The companies have had orders to pack up and cook two day's rations, and to have 25 rounds of cartridges dealt out. The Band has not had any orders yet. We may all leave tonight or may stay 2 or 3 weeks. If we go anywhere it will be to Hancock.

December 2nd 1861

Viola,

I received your letter which was mailed the 28th, Saturday night. I should have written to you yesterday but I wrote to Mother and that took about all the spare time I had.

When I wrote you last, I thought we might leave here, and hoped we might. But we are still here and if the different reports are true we shall stay here during the winter. I heard yesterday that the Q.M. was going to look up some lumber to build barracks to live in this winter. Another report is that four companies are going to Sharpsburg and the other two were going to Hagerstown where the headquarters will be. The Band will stay where the headquarters are.

Blanchard who was accidentally shot is much better. The doctor knows where the ball is, but it is so far in that he cannot get it out the way it went in. John Burnap of Co K is very badly breached and the doctor says that he cannot live but a short time longer. He has been so about a week. Gassett has got a very bad cold, and has been spitting blood this morning. He is feeling pretty blue.

The Illinois 39th buried another of their men last Friday afternoon. This is the third one that has died since they have been here.

It is so cold here today that my feet have got cold whilst sitting in the tent with a fire in it all the time.

It will not take much colder weather to put a stop to our playing [music] outdoors. There is always a little water in the valves of our horns and one of these days they will be freezing up. One morning last week, 2 or 3 horns did freeze up.

Good bye,

Edwin Rice

December 8th 1861

Viola,

I have been looking for a letter from you for two or three days past but have not received any yet. I received one from Henry this morning from Washington. Suppose you have had one from him by this time.

Yesterday afternoon about 4 o'clock we heard heavy firing which we thought was near Martinsburg but did not sound as far off as that. The Lieut. of the battery said it was not more than 5 or 6 miles off and that the guns were smooth bore, 6 pounds.

In about an hour we learned that it was the rebels with two guns (cannons) firing at and trying to destroy dam No. 5 which is about six miles up the river. The firing stopped at dark. We could hear volleys of the muskets from one of our companies which is stationed there, E or H, during the night. Company C was ordered up there. The firing commenced again this morning about sunrise. The air was clear and still and we could hear the firing quite plain. They have not fired the cannon much since 9 o'clock this morning, but have kept up a pretty good fire of the muskets. Once in a while we hear a cannon but it sounds farther off. Capt. Jackson has not sent after any reinforcements.

Early this morning, Lieut. Pope and 39 men of Co F left here for Schaffer's mills at dam No. 4 where a part of Co D have been stationed and they are going further down the river. Dam No. 4 is about 7 miles from here.

Since Wednesday the weather has been quite warm and pleasant. Much different I suppose from what it is in Massachusetts now. It does not seem much like December here. It did a little though last Monday and Tuesday. It was pretty cold then.

The Illinois regiment buried another of their men Thursday afternoon. This is the fourth one that has died since they have been here.

The doctor thinks that Burnap of Co K will not get well. He has got typhoid fever. His father arrived here Friday night and has had him taken out of the hospital and taken to a private house where he will have good care. Don't hear anything about Blanchard who was shot so I suppose he is getting better. As yet this regiment has now lost only two men by death that I have heard of; Spencer who was shot at Harpers Ferry and a member of Co B or D who deserted at Darnestown and committed suicide in Montreal.

We buy our milk from a free black woman. I should think that she was about 50 years old and is as good a woman as I have ever seen. She does the washing for nearly all of the Band which amounts to nearly \$4 a week. She does it well too. Her husband is a Methodist minister for the colored inhabitants around here. She says that when General Patterson crossed the river here, she had a table set in her yard all day long with coffee, bread, cold meat, pies, etc. on it, which she furnished herself and did not charge the soldiers anything for it. She said that she never worked so hard in her life as she did that day.

John Brown and Austin Lawrence do not like to sleep in the tents now for some cause or other, and have engaged lodgings there for the time we stay here. They speak very highly of her and her family.

Good Bye,

Edwin Rice

December 15th 1861

Viola,

I received your letter Monday night and should have answered sooner if I had anything in particular to write about. The general complaint here seems to be "nothing to write about", though I suppose that those who belong to the companies find more to write about than we who belong to the Band.

It is thought in camp now that there is a larger force of the rebels from dam No. 4 to dam No. 5 than there has been since we have been here. Wednesday, Co's I and R were ordered down to dam No. 4 but before they had got down there they were ordered back. A capt. and 9 men of an Indiana company who are stationed there crossed the river and were taken by some rebel cavalry who were concealed in the woods. An attack was expected and they sent up for reinforcements. About 2 o'clock yesterday morning Co's D and R were ordered up to dam No. 5. They came back last night without seeing anything or anybody on the other side of the river. We expect to hear soon of battle between Gen. Kelly and the rebels near Martinsburg. The 39th Illinois have at last got their arms and equipment and I have heard that they were going to join Gen. Kelly's forces.

Burnap of Co K died last Tuesday morning. The Chaplain preached a funeral sermon Tuesday afternoon down town. Co K with the band attended it. The Chaplain made a few very good remarks. We played the Vesper Hymn, Russian Hymn, Dead March, a dirge Come ye Disconsolate and Peace Troubled Soul. His father was here and took the body to Massachusetts on Wednesday.

Wednesday the band went to Hagerstown to have a photograph taken. The artist could not take a photograph outdoors, and so we cuddled up into a heap in his room and he took us the best he could which is not saying a great deal for him. We got them last night. I have one which I am going to send home and am going to get another one and send to you.

Kennedy who was shot a week ago today at dam No. 5 is getting along pretty well considering his wounds. He was wounded in his thigh, hip and calf. I heard the doctor say that Blanchard was getting along very well, and would get well.

The boy that Tom had did not like it very well so he left. He is with Seargent Paff, the boss teamster. Paff has a brother here who is going home in a few days. The boy (Jim Brown) told me this morning that he was going with him. He says he will have to go to Greencastle in Pennsylvania before he can get onto the cars, as he will not be allowed to take the cars in Hagerstown. He is, I should judge, about 12 or 14 years old. His masters' name is or was Bill Poole and lives in Pooleville. He says Mr. Paff is going to send him to school after he gets to Boston where Mr. Paff belongs. If he only had some education he would make a pretty smart boy.

We had a very good time at Hagerstown. We were there nearly all day. We took our horns with us and played a number of pieces which seemed to take very well. The best piece we have got, we got of the Illinois band. It is "Then You'll Remember Me" from the opera of the Bohemian Girl. It is not very hard but is the

best tune I ever heard a band play. It is a serenade.
The Illinois band is not a very good one.

Yours & c

Edwin Rice

Eve of December 18th 1861

Viola,

Before you receive this you will probably hear of what the rebels are trying to do in this vicinity. Yesterday evening about 8 o'clock a messenger came into camp full tilt and said that 10,000 to 15,000 rebels were at Falling Waters, 5 miles below here and that a considerable number of them had crossed. It caused a considerable excitement here, and also in town. There were but 4 companies here, C, D, G, and K. Co I left in the morning for dam No. 5. The companies here were soon under arms and on their way down there and the other two were used as flanking companies and deployed as skirmishers so that they would not get around camp without our knowing it. The companies that kept on down there did not have any trouble or find any rebels this side of the river, though they could see this camp and fires. A word was sent back to camp that the rebels had crossed but did not know but they might try.

All who could, left the camp and went with companies. I should have gone, but the surgeon said if there was any fighting he should want us in the hospital department, and so we had to stay in the camp. The Band, Guard, and teamsters were all that were left. We were ordered to pack all the things we should want to take with us in case we should have to leave in a hurry. All that I packed up was my blankets. Those with my horn are all that I should want to take if we had to leave with short notice. We set up until 11 o'clock and then went to bed and slept as sound as though I was at home.

The two brass pieces went down to Falling Waters and the rifle pieces went out into the road to await further orders. They stayed there till morning and then came back. The brass pieces have been firing occasionally at the rebels during the day. Some hand fighting is expected tomorrow.

The rebels are at work tearing away dam No. 5. One of the rifle guns went up there about 3 o'clock this afternoon.

Thursday morning

I received your letter of the 15th last night. Up to the present time there has not anything serious happened. We occasionally hear firing. The 5th Conn. Regt. and two brass cannon arrived in town last night, and the second Mass., Colonel Gordon, and the 12th Mass. Colonel Webster came in this morning, and just now a regiment of infantry and cavalry came in on the Hagerstown pike. I don't know who they are or where they came from. There are now probably here in the vicinity besides the cavalry and cannon 5000 men on our side.

Rebel deserters come across the river everyday and they state that a large number of troops have left Winchester and joined the forces at Martinsburg, and as Gen. Kelly is working towards Martinsburg I think that there will be some fighting in the neighborhood in the course of a week or two if not sooner.

The citizens in town are somewhat scared. The town is but a short distance from the river. There is to be an Odd Fellows funeral down town this afternoon and we are going to play at it. The cemetery is on a bluff not but a few rods from the river.

I have not got my box yet. I expect to get it this afternoon as the teams have gone to Hagerstown. We have not built any huts yet, and we shall not need them as long as this warm weather continues. Those who are sick have a tent to themselves. The tent is made to accommodate 12 but will hold a few more besides the surgeons.

Honorable Tom Rice of Shrewsbury arrived here this morning. It was the first time that I ever saw him.

I wish the band would be allowed to go with the companies when they go out on a skirmish. Its awfully dull to hang around camp when anything of the kind is going on.

Good bye,

Edwin Rice

December 24th 1861

Viola,

I received my box and a letter from Mother last night. The box was nearly two weeks in coming. She did not write much.

The weather since Saturday has been pretty cool. Yesterday it rained, hailed, and snowed, and froze. It was a disagreeable day outside but was comfortable in the tents. Yesterday morning the trees were all iced over and the limbs of the trees would keep breaking off and the ice would rattle down on the tents. Last night it cleared up a little and the wind blew very strong during the night. We expected it would blow the tents down but it did not. It is bad weather for the horses.

There is not much doubt now but what we shall quarter in this vicinity during the winter. The Quartermaster has received orders to get the lumber to build barracks with. It is reported that this regiment has done more picket guard duty than any other regiment in Bank's division.

There has another death occurred in Co K. George Harrison died in the hospital yesterday morning of the dropsy. He had been sick about two weeks and it was thought that he was getting better as he sat up nearly all day on Sunday. He died quite suddenly. Funeral services are to be held this afternoon. His body is to be sent to Westboro.

The rebels are pretty quiet around here now, though they are still at Falling Water and dam 4. Co F is at dam 5 and Falling Water and Co G is at dam 4. We got our winter regulation blankets. They are between 5 to 6 feet wide and 8 to 9 feet long. They are first rate blankets. Mother sent me some sausages, butter, a small loaf of bread, a sponge cake, a mince pie and a lot of apples, some shirts and drawers.

I received a letter from Henry last Saturday. He did not write much but from what he did write I should think that soldiering with him was not what it was before he left the fort. I suppose he feels about the same as we did when we first got to Sharpsburg.

He will feel better after he gets settled down the same as we have. If we can't get what we want, we take what we can get, and thank our Stars that it is not worse.

The troops that are around Washington, I don't think have the luxuries that we do, such as milk, eggs, chickens etc. I don't mean to say that I have all those things for I don't.

Yesterday I did a little tailoring. I put two pockets in my overcoat. Had better luck than I expected and flatter myself that they are done pretty well.

As tomorrow is Christmas and to be in season, I shall wish you a Merry Christmas.

Yours,
Edwin Rice

Eve of December 31st 1861

Viola,

If we stay here much longer I shall be homesick.

I received today from Mother, a letter and a pair of wristers which Alice made, and a pair of gloves that Aunt Cordelia knit.

Saturday night the Band and 6 or 8 of the officers went serenading to a house about two miles from camp. The man's name is Williams. He is one of those old rich southern gentlemen such as you "read of" that have a large nice house, nice grounds with a conservatory, bowling alley etc. After we had played some 5 or 6 pieces, the old gentleman invited us in and gave us some refreshments. I rather guess that we were expected.

After we had got through eating and drinking, the officers were invited into another room where were some ladies. The Band was left standing in the dining room with the black servants. We had to stand because there were no chairs or anything else to sit in. After we had stood there about 10 minutes, the Lieutenant Colonel came and asked us to go in where the rest of them were, and we did so. I guess from what we heard and saw that we were expected by the folks in the house to stay outdoors until the officers were ready to go back to camp. But they concluded to do the best they could so long as we were in the house.

The house was furnished in good style for this part of the country. There was the old gentleman's wife and daughter, a young gentleman and wife and another lady. None of these ladies had anything to boast of in the way of good looks. They played bagatelles and trivials. We were there about two hours and had a very pleasant time.

Since then I have heard something about the gentleman. I was talking with a man on Sunday about him who said that when the war broke out the gentleman was a rank secessionist but did not. What he is now he is said to be worth over \$200,000. About the time that General Patterson was in the neighborhood, his coachman ran away and he offered \$500 for him but he has not found him yet and probably will not. It was thought that the black went off with one of the regiments. This Mr. Williams is said to be the richest man in this part of the country. I should think that he was about 60 years old.

Companies A, B, E, and H are expected back to join the rest of the regiment tomorrow. I hear it reported that the barracks for us are to be built near the pike about halfway between here and Hagerstown.

Since I have commenced this we have heard cannon firing, and volleys of muskets. The sound comes from the direction of dam No. 5. We have got so used to hearing firing that I don't mind any more about it than I should if it was so many firecrackers. It is getting to be most bedtime and I must stop for tonight.

Yours,
Edwin Rice

January 1st 1862

Wish you a Happy New Year. This is the pleasantest morning that we have had for a long time. It seems more like April than January; it is so warm and pleasant. If it was not for this everlasting, sticking mude, a person might enjoy himself a great deal more.

George L. Crarly started for Massachusetts on Monday morning with a 12 days' furlough. I sent my photograph of the Band by him. The Band was received an invitation to supper downtown this evening. I don't know who it is from.

I see by the papers that Mason and Slidell have been given up to the British Government. I think it was the best thing our government could do.

One Sunday evening about two weeks ago, I went to a meeting at the Lutheran church downtown. The church is rather shabby looking on the outside but in the inside it looks very well. There is some very good fresco painting in it. There was no organ or instrument in the church to accompany the singing which was the poorest that I ever heard.

The wind is rising now quite fast and I should judge that it is going to be colder. There has been a telegraph line put up from here to Hagerstown which was finished on Monday. The telegraph line has been extended from Hagerstown to Hancock and it is going from there to Romney so that General Banks can have telegraphic communication with General Kelly.

Have not heard what the firing was for last night. I don't think of anything more to write about.

Good Bye
Edwin Rice

[The conclusion of "Chapter II: Maryland My Maryland in the Fall edition of the Newsletter.]

Newsletter



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