

Camp Griffin, Va.

October 28, 1861

Dear friends,

Your favor is, or rather Ed's, was recd. last night and as I am to take charge of 210 men and go out to picket in the morning at half past three I think I can manage to write yet tonight. However, I will be brief as the tattoo has just commenced to beat in front of my Markoe. My "California" fire place is blazing at an awful rate and smoking some too, by the way, which Bill is trying to prevent - success attend his efforts, say I.

There is nothing particular going on just now. Two Companies of our Regiment were out scouting today and captured 2 prisoners. One of them was engaged in the laudable business of impressing men into the rebel service. He is in safe winter quarters at least.

I received a Gazette last night and I do not like the idea of having my private letters published. They are written to you alone and not for general information. At all events, if you desire to publish a part, leave out all matters of a personal nature. I did not want my thanks to Mrs. Snyder or Miss Young made in quite so public a manner, besides the style and language was not such as I would use in a letter for publication.

Mother, do not be alarmed about my being poisoned by Virginia girls. More danger of my being captivated by their charms than by their Rebel friends. The one I visit particularly is as loyal as anybody can be and extremely good looking. Our Adjutant has been lying sick at her father's house for over a week and "Grandmother" has been attending him. I have set up with him - not her - several nights. "Grandmother" and all the family thin there is nobody like Capt. Gobin and if you could see us seated around the big fire place in the evening toasting our shins and telling yarns, you would think I was at home or as they say, "to hum". A piece below us are a couple of Pennsylvania Girls from York County. They have lived here a number of years. A couple of New York Lieutenants have, however, "got in" there. I go to see them once in a while, however, but never alone. So you see I am well guarded. Don't be alarmed I won't get married or, if I do, will invite you all to the wedding.

Ed, tell Zettlemayer I gave that seal to George Conrad. He has it.

I have not been to Washington since Boulty's death, for the reason that I cannot get over. I want to try this week if we do not advance or there is a probability of a fight.

I have built in my Markoe a California fire place which keeps me warm and comfortable. It is a trench about a foot deep, running through the tent covered up with three stones. A hole is left open for the wood to be put in. A couple of barrels outside serve for a chimney and the whole thing does very well, only it smokes once in a while and sometimes the chimneys catch fire and then there is a time every body in the Camp hollering fire. Vandyke's burnt up yesterday but he soon had a new one up.

I think you would have laughed had you been in my position last night. Lieut. Rees is very fond of fun and finding a scarcity of the article in Camp he got Rigby, Jim Butler, Jim Wolfe and several others and among other amusements offered 25 cents to the man that could open his mouth the widest. They all sat in a row and it was the richest sight I ever saw. Rigby won the quarter. I just dropped in on them.

But it is late and I will retire and get a little sleep before we go on duty. My men are all well with the exception of a few who have colds. The weather is getting quite raw but we are getting somewhat accustomed to it.

Remember me to all friends and let me hear from you soon. Good night.

Yours truly,

J. P. Shindel Gobin