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Letter to David from Aaron Gatchell, 1865

Aaron Gatchell

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Camp of 13th Regt. O.V. Cav'y
Co.B.

Petersburg, Va.
April 18, 1865

Urichsville, Ohio

David, dear brother,

I am thankful and happy that I am well and able to inform you that many changes have taken place since I last wrote to you. We, the Cavalry, have had Desperate fighting during our last or present Campaign. > We started on the 29th of March from our winter quarters on left front of Petersburg, having been joined by Sherridan's Cavalry from the Valley. We went direct to Dinwiddie C.H. (Court House) where a short distance beyond our Brigade the 3rd at once dismounted and engaged the enemy, they being protected from a mounted Charge by the thick pine woods and underbrush. We drove the enemy half a mile and across a small creek. We came to a halt near the edge of the water and formed in line of Battle. After forming, we had orders to lie down, being pretty well protected by a thick growth of pines. It was now 3 o'clock p.m. that there was very little firing from either side, the two Armies, both being hid from view by the thick woods, engaged in jesting and asking each other questions, throwing out slurs and being but a short distance apart but completely hid from each other's gaze. About 4:00 p.m. the Rebs composed of Pickets Division charged us enmass. We held our position until we, the 13th, was entirely out of ammunition. At this critical juncture, the enemy was close upon us and we fell back to the C.H., the enemy being close upon our heels. When they came to the top of the hill in the open field, another Brigade being mounted charged the enemy, driving them back across the Creek. It was now dark. This was on the 31st day of March. > On the following day, we engaged the enemy with stronger force, driving them across Whiteoak Roads. Everything favored our rapid advance from thence until Lee's Surrender. The infantry joining us on the right were composed of the 5th, 2nd, and part of the 6th and 24th Corps. Petersburg was evacuated. We next heard of the fall of Richmond and the occupation of it by the Union forces under Gen. Weitzel. Now from the general appearance of things, Lee seemed to be falling back either upon Danville or Lynchburg, but Sherridan by continued marches cut off his retreat, and he was compelled to surrender. This was all glorious news for us, but in return we lost some noble men and faithful soldiers. Co.B 13th lost Captain, wounded 1st Lt., killed 2nd Sargt., wounded 3rd Sargt., killed two corporals, wounded privates, killed one, wounded five, among them Al McFadden, Wm. Mansfield. I think this is all except 2 or 3 prisoners. > To add to our sorrow is the assassination of our Noble President who had for so many months busied himself in procuring peace throughout the United States, which was just beginning to dawn on our fairland. Also the attempt to kill Secretary Seward and his son, which was narrowly escaped, both of them being seriously wounded. > We can't tell what we are to do next. Some say we are to be furloughed on half pay. Some that we are to go to Sherman, and others that we are bound for the Rocky Mountains. So it's impossible to know how it will be, but I

Camp of 13th Regt. U.S. Cavalry
Co. B.

think I will be home by fall at farthest if not finally in
some other manner. I won't stay away more than a year at a
time. I must close but I am not half done. Write soon.
Give me all the news.

I am thankful and happy that I am well and able to inform
you that your brother, Aaron Gatchel,

presently is at the Cavalry, having had a long ride down our
line of duty. He is at the Cavalry, Co. B. 13th U.S. Cavalry
at Petersburg, Virginia. We went direct to the

front of the Cavalry, where a short distance beyond our
position we were met by the Cavalry, Co. B. 13th U.S. Cavalry
at Petersburg, Virginia. We went direct to the

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Original
13th Cavalry

Camp of 13th Regt. O. V. Cav'y

Co. B.

Winchester, Petersburg, P. V.

----- April 11th ----- 1865

Dear David dear brother

I am thankful and happy
to hear ~~that~~ ^{from} you that I am well
and I hope to inform you that many
changes have taken place since
I last wrote to you. we the Cavalry
have had Desperate fighting during
our last or present Campaign.
we started on the 27th of March from
our winter quarters on left front of
Petersburg. having been joined by
Sheridans Cavalry from the Valley
we went direct to Dinwiddie C. H.
where a short distance beyond our
Brigade the 3^d. at once Dismounted
and engaged the enemy. they being
protected from a mounted charge by the
thick pine woods and underbrush
we drove the enemy half a mile and across

A small creek, we came to a halt near
the edge of the water and formed in line
of Battle. After forming we had orders
to lie down, being pretty well protected
by a thick growth of Pines. It was now
3 o'clock P.M. that there was very
little firing from either side the
two Armies both being hid from view
by the thick woods. engaged in
peering and asking each other questions
throughout the thicket and being
but a short distance apart but
completely hid from each others
gaze. about 4 P.M. the Rebs.

Composed of Pickett's Division charged
us enmas. we held our position until
we the 13th was entirely out of ammunition
at this critical juncture the enemy was
close upon us and we fell back to
the C. H. the enemy being close upon
our heels. when they came to the top of the
hill in the open field. another Brigade
being mounted charged the enemy

Driving them back across the creek it was
21st
dash this was on the 31 day of March. on the
following day we engaged the enemy with stronger
force driving them across white oak woods
everything favored our rapid advance from there
until Lees Surrender. The infantry
joining us on the right were composed of
the 5th 2^d. and part of the 6th. and 24th.
Corps. Petersburg was evacuated. we next
heard of the fall of Richmond. and
the occupation of it by the Union forces.
Under Gen. Meitzler. Now from the general
Appearance of things. Lee Seemed to be
falling back either upon Danville or Lynchburg
but Sheridan by continued marches. Cut
off his retreat, and he was compelled
to Surrender. This was all glorious news
for us, but in return we lost some noble
men and faithful Soldiers Co. B. 13th.
lost Captain wounded, 1st Lt. killed
2^d. Sargt wounded. 3^d. Sargt. killed two corporals
wounded privates killed one wounded five
among them Al. B. Fadden W^m Mansfield

I think this is all except 2 or 3 prisoners
to add to our losses the assassination
of our Noble President who had for so many
Months busied himself in procuring peace
throughout the United States which was
just beginning to dawn on our fairland.
I also the attempt to kill Secretary Seward
and his son which was narrowly escaped
both of them being seriously wounded
we cant tell what we are to do next so
say we are to be furloughed on half pay
Some that we are to go to Sherman
and others that we are bound for
the Rocky Mountains

know how it will be but I think I will
be home by fall at farthest if not
finaly in some other manner. I wont
stay away more than a year at a time
I must close but I am not half done write soon
give me all the news from your Brother Aaron.

address C. B. 15th W.C.

3rd Brigade 2^d Division C.C.
Peterburg Virginia

Sincerely hope
this may find you
A. S. S.

I think this is all except 2 or 3 prisoners. To add to our sorrow is the assassination of our Noble President who had for so many months busied himself in procuring peace throughout the United States, which was just beginning to dawn on our fairland. Also the attempt to kill Secretary Seward and his son which was narrowly escaped, both of them being seriously wounded. We can't tell what we are to do next. Some say we are to be furloughed on half pay. Some that we are to go to Sherman, and others that we are bound for the Rocky Mountains. So it is impossible to know how it will be, but I think I will be home by fall at farthest if not finally in some other manner. I won't stay away more than a year at a time. I must close but I am not half done. Write soon. Give me all the news.

from your brother, Aaron Gatchell

address Co.B. 13th O.V.C.
3rd Brigade 2nd Division C.C.
Petersburg, Virginia

I sincerely hope this may find you all well.
A.N.G.

*Whitchsville,
Ohio*

Camp of 13th Regt. O.V. Cav'y,
Co. B.

Petersburg, VA.
April 18th of 1865

David, dear brother,

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