

# Samuel W. North Letter and Transcription

## September 5, 1862 - Camp Wade

### Introduction

The September 5, 1862 letter written by Samuel North is the first one written in pencil. It is in very good condition for being 150 years old and for having been handled with bare hands for most of that time. There are only a very few places where it has become faint; but it is still legible throughout. All such letters in the museum's collections are kept in individual, polyester folders. Polyester is an inert material which prevents the transfer of acid, dirt, and other substances from any adjoining document or body oils from bare hands. These products are easily found on the Internet if one would like to protect their family treasures.

On September 2, after the heavy loss at the Battle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bull Run, the Union army was moved back toward Washington. Sam's September 1 letter was written from Camp Staunton; this one finds Sam at Camp Wade which was about a mile from Alexandria, on top of a "high" hill and directly across from Ft. Ellsworth, also with a very good vantage point, on top of a hill. The time spent in camp near Washington City was down time except for drilling and guard duty.

In 2012, we think nothing of instant messaging via email, text messages, or Skyping. Reporters and photographers were imbedded with the troops during the Civil War and the telegraph was the fastest "instant messaging" available, but it's difficult to imagine what it was like after reading a general newspaper account of a battle and hearing about how bad the casualties were and not knowing the fate of a loved one until a letter, via US Mail, from the front arrived telling the family that the soldier was ok.

William Andrew "Andy" McCollister was also from Mercersburg. He was 22, 5'5" tall, with light hair and blue eyes. He was a carpenter by trade. On February 6, 1863, Washington Crilly, Co. H, 107<sup>th</sup> PA Volunteers, was promoted to sergeant. He was captured at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bull Run but escaped. Ten months later, he was again captured at Gettysburg on the first day of battle and was a prisoner of war for 1 ½ years, until December 1, 1864. Wash was also mentioned in Sam's September 1 letter when he commented about Wash's capture and escape during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bull Run. Bob Randall, Chambersbug, was captured on May 3, 1863 at Chancellorsville, VA but was mustered out with his company 17 days later on May 20, 1863.

Sam's next letter is dated September 8, 1862.



we have a fine view of the potomic we can see the vessels coming and going but it is too far to see them particularly. fort Ellsworth is on a hill Just opposite Camp I dont know how many guns it mounts. I think about twenty we can see the

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mouths of those on one side. there are several batteries planted near here some of them belong to our brigade ours is Gen Tylers composed of the 91.129&126 Penn regts. the 91 is an old regt but it has been on provost guard in Alexandria and has not been in the field. Andy McCollister is in our tent he is not very well but still able to be about. Wash Crilly has been here he shot a rebel Sharpshooter off a tree and got his cap, pocket Book and knife his cap was a grey kind of a hunting cap without a rim the money was in five fifteen and fifty cent notes. I saw a couple of trouts boys today. Ed & Bob Randal Miller Rhodes and some others of the Newville boys are in co A (chambersburg). We are just opposite the Alex (andria) female Seminary it is a very fine building there are some very tasty residences around here. this is a very hilly country the timber has been cut off but has sprouted out again. there are camps in every direction you write that the corn is not as good as expected I know that you farmers always complain about the crops if they could see the crops of virgina the corn is all eat up and tramped down. Tell mother that the government shirts raised hives on me and made me so itchy that I could not stand it I do'nt think they are worth sending home I will leave them behind the next time we move. The stockings and drawers are very good. I ~~would need an~~ can get along very well with my wool shirt and one cotton one I brought from home Wash Crilly Says that they lost their close two or three times so the less you have in your knap sack the less you lose or have to carry. give my love to all the friends. write soon and give me all the news you can write easier than I can.

Sam