

April 10, 1864

[Letter with no envelope is on one sheet of lined stationery folded in half and one half sheet; both are written in ink on six sides. It is from Private S.M. Smith to Mrs. Upson]

Cowan Tenn.
April 10th, 1864

Mrs. Upson

Your letter reached me yesterday & having a few moments to spare I will endeavor to answer it, but first permit me to say that we (Co. B) deeply sympathize with you in the loss of your husband & especially is it so with the five that done what little they could to alleviate his sufferings.

I read your letter to my companions & they wish me to say that they simply done their duty toward your husband. Capt. U – often expressed his gratitude to us while attending him & we feel that you have lost a noble husband & we a sincere friend & efficient officer. [Pg. 2]

I will relate a few particulars of the raid for I know that they would interest you. At 3 PM. Jan 20th while in my quarters back of the stockade I recd an order from Capt U. to detail 2 men to arrest a citizen. I immediately started for the Depot to see the Capt. about it, as I thought there must be some mistake in regard to the man ordered to be arrested. I had just reached the steps of the depot as the Guerrillas commenced firing at the store. I ran into the D & told Capt. that the Guerrillas were on us – he grabbed his Revolver & seeing that we were cut off from the Stockade & Copy. we both started across the RR for the woods. The whole squad started after us firing as they came on arriving in the bushes we got separated & seeing the impossibility of escape by running. I ran into a log house & hid behind the door but had scarcely done so before the building was surrounded & I was dragged out & robbed of watch post money & & then taken back [Pg. 3] across the RR about ¼ mile. The Rebs then formed in line of battle & the Major came to me & asked me who commanded the Post – I replied “Capt. U.” he said Capt U. was dead (the first I knew of his fate) & wished to know who was next in command. About ¾ of an hour after he again came to where I sat & said Capt. U. wished to see me & that I could go over to where he lay escorted by 2 Rebs. I found him laying face downwards & apparently unconscious or insensible. I turned him over & asked him if he knew me he said he did & told me that “the villains shot him after he surrendered”. The 2 guards denied it & told me to go back with them. I begged them to let me carry him to the house where I was taken prisoner they refused at first but finally one of them said he would go & ask the Major which he did & came back with 3 of our boys that they had just taken. I succeeded in getting one to lend me a blanket & we carried him in [Pg. 4] the house & laid him on the bed. The lady of the house said we must not bring him in there & I had to almost force her from the door before we could enter. I ordered her to get some water & dress his wounds & then I had to leave him. He seemed anxious to know if the Co. was safe & when I assured him of it he appeared satisfied. About eight o'clock they paroled us & after going to the stockade & seeing the boys, three of us went to the house &

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stayed with him until he was moved up to the store building. A little before daybreak he expressed a wish to have me write for him to you & to Col. Wooster & borrowing pen ink & paper of the lady by the light of the a “fire place” I wrote the few lines to you & a report to Col W. I would say here in justice to the lady of the house that after the Rebs left she done what she could to help the Captain & sat up all night helping us. A Mrs. Carpenter – wife of the conductor on the Rail Road here – also done all she could to help him & the citizens all seemed to be very sorry & would often come to the sick bed to look at & enquire “how the poor Captain was getting along”. The Rebs did not take his pants. The hat & cover was found by a citizen & brought in they having [Pg. 5] dropped it on the road. Capt. never expressed any doubts as to his recovery but quite the reverse – was very confident of recovering soon & going home. During the night after he was wounded he fainted twice I believe from the loss of blood, but we speedily brought him to with cold water. He was not retained as a prisoner nor paroled either as they did not think he would live. His chief concern seemed to be about his family especially his wife – was fearful that it would make you sick. I used to open your letters & hold them up so that he could read them which he always did himself.

He took a great interest in the welfare of the people about here & as there was no school at Tracy City he appointed one of our boys as teacher & had one of the rooms of the [Pg. 6] Depot appropriated for a School Room & told the People to send their children to school offering to procure books for those that had none. The school was to begin the day after the raid.

The names of those that were taken prisoners & attended the Capt. were – Franklin A. Curtiss – S. B. Bailey – Nathan Davidson – David C. Dorman – Hilan M. Rogers – myself of the Derby Copy. We would like to have the Captains picture very much.

I think that I have written all that would be of interest but if you wish I will write again when I can spare the time & be free from a bad tooth ache that I now have. Mr. Frisbie sends his respects & says he will write soon. Our Co. moved from Tracy City yesterday to this place. The health of the Regt. is very good. My respects to yourself, family & brother.

S. M. Smith
B 20.Ct V.