

July 19, 1862 - "Bless God—the Star Spangled Banner now waves over this rebellious town!" The letter of Surgeon William M. Eames to his wife in Ohio



Union Coll. Hospital

July 19, 1862

Dearest Mary,

Bless God—the Star Spangled Banner now waves over this rebellious town! and as I awoke this morning it seemed as tho, everything was bright and beautiful instead of dark & uncertain—as it has been every morning before this week.



Yesterday Gen. Nelson came into town with a Brigade & part of a battery, and I started down town on horseback—for the first time in a week) to see the old flag & our soldiers. I could hardly keep back the tears—when I first met them & felt that I was now among friends & safe. Every day before we had been annoyed and insulted more or less by soldiers & citizens who would come in with their guns & demand something or try to steal something. Was very much afraid they would get old Jim^{Note 1} - but by keeping him shut up close all the time—they did not find him but once. Then three of the scamps rode to the yard with their long rifles & rode directly to the stable & in a few minutes they had the poor horse out leading him away. Dr. French volunteered to go & talk with them (as I was nearly sick.) & he succeeded in getting him back & now I defy the whole race of such vagabonds. Many of the citizens are looking to me to protect them against the evils they see—in the coming of Gen. Nelson & I would gladly do it—but unfortunately I have but little influence with him. I am heartily glad he has come, for it *is* a nest of traitors as he said to me yesterday - & he can handle such fellows just right. If he stays here I think the citizens of Murfreesboro will wish they had Capt. Rounds & the cowards Lester back again. By the way both these worthies were obliged to foot it all the way to Woodbury & Capt. Rounds feet were very sore indeed & he was obliged to keep up at a double quick. He must have suffered severely for his efforts to please secessionists of this town. Col. Lester might have rode but did not get him a horse as they told him to do & when they came to start all the rest of the officers were mounted but he was on foot. He asked for a horse & they (the secesh told him it was too late - he might have got one when the rest die—but had to walk.) He is a most precious coward to surrender a whole Reg & Battery—with only 2 men killed and the enemy defeated as they acknowledged. They said repeatedly to our men that they should not have attacked them again. They could not get their men to face the cannon & were on the point of leaving. They had sent out all their prisoners & plunder etc. but concluded to try a little threatening & so the Rebel General write a note to Col. Lester telling him that if he did not surrender he would cut his Reg all to pieces & show him no quarter, & the infernal cowardly poltroon surrendered. We all feel the burning disgrace & humiliation.



Gen. Nelson asked Dr. Smith how many men we lost & he told him 23 & said with a big oath, "& you give up to the rebels after losing only 23."

I hope Lester will be tried by court martial for cowardice. His whole Reg will testify against him. The rebels must have burned 30,000 worth of U. S. property & carried off as much more. They begun to think that they had finished up the war & ruined Uncle Sam, so that he dare not come back to Murfreesboro at all, but they now find he is here & in a much worse fume than before Gen. N. has got hold of thousands of dollars worth of rebel citizens['] property already. Old Doct. January came up & wanted to get me to assist him in getting his nigger back & Dr. Basket wanted me to get his horse & buggy away etc. I don't pity them at all. I presume there will be another hunt for arms & they have now scores of guns they got from the Reg'ts after they surrendered. I think they will be gland of them.

I am getting some better but not very well. Can sit up most all day abut have very little appetite & no ambition. Hope my resignation will be accepted & I can get it in two weeks. . . We get new potatoes & beef & plenty of milk & eggs.

Yours as ever

Wm. M. Eames

William Mark Eames Papers

Note 1: A slave hired by Eames to undertake hospital duties.

