

Michael F. Rinker letterMS.0381

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1864 May 17

Title Statement

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Publication Statement

Publisher: Virginia Military Institute Archives

VMI Archives
Preston Library
Lexington, VA 24450
Business Number: 540-464-7516
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URL: <http://www.vmi.edu/archives>

Profile Description

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Language Usage: Description is written in: Undetermined, Code for undetermined script script.

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MS.0381

Unit ID

/repositories/3/resources/451

Unit Date

1864 May 17

Language

English

Creator

Rinker, Michael F.

Extent

1 items

Physical Location

Manuscripts stacks

Repository

Virginia Military Institute Archives

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

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Preferred Citation

Michael F. Rinker letter, 1864. MS 0381. VMI Archives, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Virginia.

Biographical / Historical

During the Civil War Michael F. Rinker was a Private with Company K, 12th Virginia Cavalry Regiment.

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of one letter (dated May 17, 1864) from Confederate soldier Michael F. Rinker to his parents. The letter discusses the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House and mentions the Battle of New Market, Virginia.

Keywords

Spotsylvania Court House, Battle of, Va., 1864

Virginia—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Personal narratives—Confederate

New Market, Battle of, New Market, Va., 1864

Correspondence

Confederate States of America. Army—Virginia Cavalry Regiment, 12th

Online Access

This item is available online

Description of Subordinate Components

Letter to parents

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/5530

Unit Date 1864 May 17

Language English

Creator Rinker, Michael F.

Scope and Contents

Written from Spotsylvania Court House, Virginia. Letter discusses the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House and mentions the Battle of New Market, Virginia.

Keywords

Confederate States of America. Army—Virginia Cavalry Regiment, 12th

Correspondence

New Market, Battle of, New Market, Va., 1864

Spotsylvania Court House, Battle of, Va., 1864

Virginia—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Personal narratives—Confederate

Transcription

Camp Near Spotsylvania Court-House Va Tuesday May the 17th 1864

Dear Father and Mother With pleasure I write to you this morning, hoping you may get this in due time. I am well, and hope you are all well. I must ask you to excuse me for not writing sooner, indeed I am ashamed that I have not written ere this. But now I will tell you why I did not write to you sooner than I did.

We have been so busy since we came over here, that indeed this is the first chance that I have had to write. The second day after we arrived here, we commenced fighting and it is not over yet. Father indeed for 5 days we were so busy fighting that we could hardly get time enough to eat our meals. To-day it is 14

days since we commenced fighting and yesterday the cannon and small arms were still at work. But the fight was not real heavy all the time, the hardest fighting was on the 5, 6 & 7 and on the 9, 10 & 11 days of this month. During them six days it was awful. There was one continual roar of thunder all the time from the artillery and small arms.

For six days the Battle was kept up, all the time day and night, in the dead hour of midnight, the cannon & musketry was thundering all the time. Column after column the Yankees pushed their men up to our Breastworks and our men were cutting them down as fast as flies. The dead Yankees are heaped up in piles half as high as a man, in front of our Breastworks, and all around on the Battlefield the dead yanks are lying just as thick as they can be, and none of them buried, they will all rotten on top of the ground.

Now you may know how it is down here. The line of Battle is 15 miles long, and for 4 days the Battle was kept up all along the line. The Yankee loss in killed and wounded is awful. Their loss will not fall short of fifty five hundred in killed and wounded, and their loss in prisoners, will reach ten or twelve thousand. We have captured 12 or 15 fine pieces of artillery and 6 or 8 thousand small arms. The yanks lost in killed, 2 Major Generals and 3 or 4 Brigadier Generals, and their loss of Officers generally in killed wounded & prisoners is large. Their entire loss is very heavy, and I think it will be larger yet, before the fight is ended.

All the men say that this has been the hardest fight, since the war. It was awful for about 5 days, the cannon just kept one continual roar of thunder, day and night. I suppose you have heard, of the number of killed and wounded, of our company. You have also, no doubt heard that General J.E.B. Stuart died at few days ago from a wound received near Hanover Junction. General Longstreet was painfully wounded on the second day of Battle. But he is getting well fast.

General Lee got a dispatch yesterday afternoon from General Breckinridge stating that he had whipped and routed the yanks 2 miles above New Market and run them to Mt. Jackson where the yanks burnt a Bridge. We are all glad to hear, that the yanks have been whipped in the valley. Noah is well. We have plenty to eat. Noah give me the things that you sent to me and I am very much obliged to you for them. I will try and bring something when I get home. Tell mother, I would like to have one pair of socks sent to me by the first one of our men that comes over. Write soon and give me all the news. I hope you will excuse me for not writing sooner, for indeed I did not have time hardly to eat my meals, we were busy all the time. I will close. Your son. Michael F. Rinker.

Our men are still in line of Battle, day & night all the time, some times they commence fighting at midnight. There is no telling how much longer the fight will last. Our men lay in our Breastworks day and night. One night last week the yanks charged our Breastworks 9 different times, and every time our men run them back, with great slaughter. If I can get time I will write to you soon or as soon as I hear from you all. I will close. Your son, Mike.