

7 O'clock P.M.
Camp Curtin Dec 30th 1861

Dear Wife,

The life of a soldier is full of changes and variations and all things are uncertain. One hour we are ordered to do one thing, at the next it is countermanded and a new order given, Yesterday the 114 Regt was tototaly[sic] demolished and smashed up and all of the offices left out in the cold. Today the 114 lives and is likely to become convalescent and live to be a full grown man.

After writing to you yesterday morning we were ordered by Col. Curtis to hold our position and obey our own offices as before until further orders from him. He immediately started for Washington to see Secretary Cameron. We have received a telegraphic dispatch which is favorable to our cause. I do not know the full import of the dispatch. We have the whole Camp on our side and they condemn the thing and call it an outrage and an insult to[o] grieveious[sic] to be tolerated.

If Col. Curtis is successful in his mission I think that it will ruin Col. Murry and cause him to be cashiered... . You cannot imagine my feelings when the order was read to us yesterday. I had plans laid and in my own mind had almost seen you my dear wife here and had looked forward to that time which I anticipated would be within the next 10 or 12 days. All this wrenched from me in an instant and all my fond hopes destroyed. It seemed to me I could not give them up. But I cannot describe my feelings suffice it to say it was a grievous disappointment to me. I think I have it arranged now so that I can come home if the 114th is broken up. If it lives I am sure of my position and there is no danger there. I feel willing to face the cannon's mouth. Had no fear but I was disappointed. I do not fancy Col. Murry and I think would never serve in any capacity under him. The transfer yesterday threw Charley W. and myself as privates into the ranks and done it without giving us any time to consider upon it. We have now an unlimited furlough which we will keep in our pocket all that is wanting to fill it up is the date which is left blank and we can put that in when we want to use it, then when they want us let them hunt us up and we will be all right our time won't be out. As Soon as we get our pay we are all right.

The boys of the 114th feel well tonight. Last evening as soon as the orders was countermanded they gave three harty[sic] cheers for Col. Curtis and then three groans for Col. Murry. (The countersign was) Who stole the hog(?) answer Col. Murry. This would pass one through our guard. Write me as soon as you get this direct as before. We expected last night that Col. Murry would send a squad of men and undertake to strike our tents for us. We had no guns and we armed ourselves with pick handles and ax helves. The 54 regt. Whose tents are pitched along side of us offered to lend us their guns also offered to help us fight it through. I think if Col. Murry had attempted any thing that there would have been some blood shed but as soon as he found what was up he marched his men back into their tents and left us be.

This morning Col. Meredith who is in command of this post told us to draw 3 days rations saying jokingly the we would want a plenty to eat to fight Col. Murry he also said that he would do all he could for us and not break his orders.

I will write you again in a few days and let you know how matters are progressing. Until then believe me yours in love.

N.F. Marsh

To my dear and much loved wife Aurelia