

Camp Hamiltons Cross
May 8th /63

Dear Mrs at Home
I suppose you think it is time
I was writing, if in the land of living, but
after I give you an account of my wanderings
for the last ten or twelve days I think
you will give acquit me of any intentional
delay.

We left our old Camp on
Tuesday the 28th of April, marched to Hamiltons
Crossing staid all night & the next day I might
under the shelling of the enemys cannon sta-
tioned on the Stafford Heights, soon in the
morning of the 30th we left Hamiltons in
a dense fog (which concealed our movements)
moved up the river (Whopaduck) ten or twelve
miles driving the enemy slowly before us,
camped that night in an open field, al-
feeling that on the morrow we would have
to engage the enemies of our country I march
aid, in the morning of the 1st of May, we
marched slowly up the road, shelling occassion-
ly to find out the position of the enemy, & at
12 o'clock we had driven in all their pickets
& found the main body of the enemy sta-
tioned behind formidable breastworks, their
front defended by an abattis of felled
trees, which I suppose our Generals thought

too strong to attack, so Gen Packron taking
a column commenced a flank movement
to their right, through a dense pine
forest, Gen Stuart clearing the road as we
advanced, after three or four hours we
found our division a mile in the rear
of the enemy's line which extended across
the Orange & Richicksburg plank road,
forming in line of battle Gen A.P. Hill
of the left, our division (commanded by
Gen Colston) on the right we advanced
down the plank road, our line being
about three or four miles in length, pressed
by the sharp rattle of the musket told
plainly that the pickets had commenced
an engagement (which was to be the greater
defeat the Federal army ever had & which
was to cost us so many valuable lives)
we came out of the woods which had been
concealing our movements into an open
field expecting every moment to engage
the enemy, but they were so much taken
by surprise that our pickets had driven
their whole line, capturing one battery
& about 500 prisoners, also killing one Brigade
(Gen Briney), we continued, during their rear
untill nine o'clock at night, having crossed
one line of breast works, which the

every body hastily thrown up, after we
got in their rear, lying down behind their
breastworks we intended waiting until mor-
ning to renew the fight, but the enemy think-
ing to retrieve himself made a night attack
in which they partially succeeded cap-
turing one of our batteries, but soon we
were in line again, & recaptured our
battery together with quite a number of
prisoners, 'twas in this fight that Gen
Jackson lost his arm, but no one
knew it until after words, as the old
Genr calmly sat upon his horse all the
time though his arm was almost gone
off, the next morning (Sunday) every one knew
that the most terrible battle of the war must
begin, we marched slowly down the road
all the time under fire of several batteries
of the enemy, we at first were on the
left of the plank road thinking that the
main body of the enemy were posted there
but soon we found out from the pressure
on our right that it was the enemies strong
left point so we had to cross the road
covered by the enemies cannon, here
many a noble Southern fell to rise no
more among them Gen Payton who was
shot in the heart, from which he died

Shortly afterwards, a piece of shell struck
my knapsack but was too far spent to hurt
me, ~~and~~ ^{we} went about a quarter of a mile to the
left & took position behind the front line of
the enemies breast works, from which they
had just before been driven, as soon as
we were in line, our guns pined & bayonet
fixed, Gen. Smart, he being in command
of the corps (Gen Jackson & Hill both wounded)
called out for the Old Stone wall, to follow
we went over the breast works with a yell
which was answered by a shower of
lead & hail, feeling that perhaps at
that time prayers were being made
for our protection, I became almost
unconscious of danger, though men were
pulling thick & fast all around me, we
halted & commenced firing at the enemy
about 100 yds distant, we stood a while
until almost every man was killed
or wounded, the force of the enemy being
so much greater than ours, Maj. Henry
commanding our regiment gave the
order to fall back, but I was totally
unconscious of what was going on, I tried
to rally the men, when Maj. Henry came
up to me & ordered me to fall back
as ^{nearly} all his regiment were killed or wounded