
Voices of the Past

The Letters of Abial Edwards

Civil War

1862

Maryland Heights MD
Co K 10th Maine
Sept 25th 1862

My Dear Friend Anna

I will write you a few lines while I have an opportunity hoping that they may prove acceptable to you. Since I wrote to you last we have been in the severest Battle of the war and thank God I escaped uninjured: we left Rockville and by long and rapid marches got to Frederick the 15th and followed the Rebels up got up with them on the morning of the 16th the was some fighting the 16th but we did not participate in it we layed down that night and they us up about 10 and marched us about three miles and halted us on a ploughed feild close to where our Pickets were fighting all night long we had the privilage of sleeping the remainder of the night on the ploughed ground and got up about 5 in the morning of the 17th by that time the fighting had become pretty severe we was marched up a short distance General Mansfield leading our Reg- we was marched up to a wood the Rebels being in it then we commenced. It was terrible beyond description if it had not been for the trees serving as a protection for us our Reg- must have been almost entirely annihilated as it was we suffered badly. The noble General Mansfield that led us in was mortally wounded and died shortly after. Our Colonel G L Beal was wounded badly also our Lieut Colonel and Major was wounded slightly out of my Company the was three killed and several wounded. I have not yet found out our loss in killed & wounded but it will be between 30 & 40 killed and many wounded. The Battle raged all day the bursting of the shells the groans of the wounded & Dying made a scene that was awful beyond description. I hope I never shall see such another as it is the Rebels are drove from Maryland we remained on the Battle feild two days after the Battle and had to bury the Rebel dead as the Rebels buried none the them the sight was awful. I stood on a small knoll and counted 560 dead Rebels on a very small peice of ground. and in another small peice I counted 36 Rebels and 6 of our men lying to gather. Ah Anna no one can imagine the horrors of a Battle feild until they see it. to see thousands of Dead beings to see Thousands carried of the feild wounded then one can see the horrors of war the Rebel's loss is estimated at 18 to 20,000 killed & wounded our loss was not near so heavy. Banks Old Corps was sent here to Maryland Heights and I do not know how long we shall remain here. This place guard Harpers Ferry and I think we shall remain here a number of days. I hope we shall for I am almost sick caused by such long marches and being tired out of such sights as we have had to see is enough to make any one feel unwell. I am in hopes to hear from you soon Anna for I have not heard from you for a long time. Please write soon. I will now close this poor scrawl please excuse all mistakes. When I look and see the many of my friends layed away in their last sleep upon the Battle feild and oh so many suffering in the crowded Hospitals I can but feel thankful that life and health is still left to me. Have I not reason to be thankful. Anna. Be sure & write Direct the same before

This is from your Friend
Abial H Edwards
Co K 10th Maine