

The War Years

crossed the Rapidan at Culpeper Mine Ford, and went back to our old camp. We lay there a few days, then crossed over to this side of Mountain Creek, and built new quarters. Hope we stay here until spring.

Last night's mail brought me your pictures. Father looks a great deal older than when I saw him last. Don't worry about us. We are fine, and as jolly as ever. Even on the hardest marches, there is always something to make the time pass more pleasant. We endure the hardship much better than we used to. At a halt, on the march, we will be drinking a cup of hot coffee in less than fifteen minutes. We have a good supply of reading matter in our tent. Lots of the latest papers. Sketches from *Life*, by the American Tract Society. (C. Browns, Second Book of St. Benjamin from the New Gospel of Peace) makes lots of sport.

Dec. 31st. Near Brandy Station Va. Just came in from picket. We were out three days, and altho it rained until the mud was about eighteen inches deep, I enjoyed myself as well as I would in camp. Received a letter from Cousin Andrew Jackson. His Regiment is camped on Lookout Mountain, near Chattanooga Tenn. The roads are muddy and we have to build corduroy roads everywhere we need to haul loads. There is a large detail out every day to work on the roads. I go out tomorrow at six A.M. Mud, mud, mud everywhere, enough to lose an army in, if it attempts to move.

We ended this year in the *mud*.

☆ E. H. BASSETT. 1864

Brandy Station Va. Jan. 3rd, 1864. The Army lays about as it did since the retreat from Mine Run. It has turned cold, and now we have frozen hubs to get around on instead of mud. The boys talk of going west, and taking a claim, under the new homestead law when we are discharged. I suppose there have been plenty of people headed west the last two years. When the War ends, there will be some lively times there.

The Reb cavalry made a raid around the rear of our Army, but did little damage. Did you save the sugar cane? Did the seed ripen? There has been a great many more reenlisted than I