

ON THIS DAY IN WEST VIRGINIA HISTORY NOVEMBER 6



On November 6, 1863, Union troops under General William Averell defeated a Confederate force led by General John Echols at the Battle of Droop Mountain.

CSO: SS.8.22, ELA.8.1

Investigate the Document: (Letter, "James McChesney to Mother," *McChesney Papers Ms78-1.1:11*)

1. Who were the "Yankees?"
2. Where had the Confederate forces fallen back to after the Union troops had stopped their pursuit at Lewisburg?
3. Where did McChesney finally find the 14th Virginia Cavalry? How many men did the Union forces capture at Droop Mountain? What would have happened if the 14th Virginia Cavalry had decided to attempt to hold the field for the night?

Think Critically: General William Averell's victory at Droop Mountain virtually ensured Union control of southern West Virginia for the remainder of the Civil War. How did this help the pro-Union administration of West Virginia's first governor Arthur Boreman?

Camp near Lewisburg

Nov. 16, 1863.

My Dear Mother:

When I wrote you last I was cut off by the Yankees and was trying to find out where my Regt. was. I heard that the Yankees were still in pursuit of Echols and that he wouldn't make a stand before he got to Salt Pond Mt. in Giles Co. so I kept on after him and went through Monroe by way of the Sweet Springs and Allegheny Co. Craig and Giles to Newport about 7 miles from Salt Pond where I found Genl. Echols with the Infantry. I then learned that the enemy didnt pursue our forces further than Lewisburg and that the 14th Regiment was at Union, Monroe Co on picket, so on the next day I started for Union and arrived there about 10 o'clock on the following morning and when I got to Union I found out that the Yankees had left Greenbrier Co and that my Regt had gone back there. I staid in Union about an hour and went to see Mrs. Echols, she didnt know me until I told her who I was She hasnt heard from Mr. Echols and the children for some time when she heard last Mr. Echols was in wretched health and all the children had been sick. Francis and Lizzie both can write very well I think some of you all ought to write to Frances. Direct your letter to Charlotte N.C. in care of Major Echols. Mrs. Echols sent her love to you. Little Fannie Echols cant walk any better yet, she has grown very much and looks ~~like~~ a good deal like John Echols. She will be a cripple

all her life. I found the 14th. Regt at Frankford it had just returned from a scout to the battle field of Droop Mountain. We lost 33 killed and the Yankees some 60 ~~or~~ and 100 wounded. They said that we fought well so ^{obv} the citizens say. The Yankees left all of our men that were badly wounded and some 30 of theirs at Hillsboro, Pocahontas. They say that our Artillery did the best firing that they ever saw, that the first shot dismounted one of their pieces, and that our artillery shot at a single man on horseback and killed him. The Yankees captured about 70 of our men altogether. The Yankees shot one of the 14th, (named Myers) and he took out his pencil and memorandum book to write something, but died before he had time, and a Yankee got his book and pencil also a letter in his pocket from his Sister and he carried them back to Frankford and he happened to strike up a conversation with a girl and told her about his men killing a rebel and about him getting the book and pencil also the letter, and the lady told him to let her see the book, and as soon as she looked at it she screamed out (It was her brother's book and the letter was one she had written him.) I was away from my Regt about a week and all on account of false reports about the Yankees being at Union. They have all left this part of the county, and compelled the negroes to go with them. After the Battle of Droop Mt the infantry got on some of the 14th horses and run over their own men, thats the reason so many of our Regt had to foot it out and lost their

3

horses. Col. Gobson, Frank, Will, and Howard Willson(sic) have gone to Rockbridge.

If you could see Frank Wilson he could give you the particulars Col. Jackson said if we hadnt fallen back as soon as we did we would have been surrounded in 20 minutes and that if we had held the field that night, that we would have been cut off entirely by the 4 Regts that come into Lewisburg from Kanawha Co and would have been all captured. Echols command~~ant~~ hadnt passed through Lewisburg over an hour before the Yankees come in from Kanawha so you see it was better that we didnt hold Droop Mt. I met John Lewis on Peters Mt. the other day about 17 miles the other side of Union he was well and was on the way to his Regt. All of Echols Infantry had to burn their Knap sacks and nearly every thing they had on their retreat. While the Yankees were in Greenbrier the 16th Regt charged their picket Post at Sewell Mt and captured 2 of them, one of them proved to be a deserter from Derrick's Bat Echols Brig, who had left our own army and Joined the Yankees some months before. He was tried and shot last Thursday near Giles C.H. Give my love to all and except a large share for yourself. Write soon I have heard from home for two months. Give a kiss to Pru your Aff Son

James Z. McChesney,

Co. C. 14th R-giment Jenkins

Brig. Lewisburg, Va.

I brought out everything I went into the fight with.