SOLDIER BOY'S LETTERS TO HIS FATHER AND MOTHER 1861-5
FOREWORD

Fifty years ago the 15th of last August a boy living over the ridge in the town of Gilmanton, now the town of Dover, Buffalo County, enlisted in the 25th Wisconsin Regiment to go south and fight for the Union of the States and for the freedom of the slaves. He was below the age of consent by two years, being but 16 years of age, but he was strong and something told him he wanted to be a soldier.

He had talked with returning soldiers who were home for brief visits and in his dreams he saw himself dressed in a beautiful blue suit bespangled with bright brass buttons, gold braid on the seams of his trousers and in his hat band, a streaming ostrich plume with sundry gilt decoration of guns and bugles. His father was an Abolitionist and his earnest talks at the table and the fire side, of his hope that the war would never cease till the slaves were free, had set the boy to thinking. There came daily into his musing a pity for the hopeless slave.

G. Y. Freeman of Galesville an enlisting officer for the government, came to the home of the boy on the date above named, the 15th of August, and he was enlisted for three years, or for the war.

The boy's mother when asked for her consent burst into tears and walked out of the room. The father merely bowed his consent.

At a farewell dinner given in Fuller's Grove, Gilmanton on the eve of his departure in company with others to join his regiment, his father bid the boy good by with this injunction: "Remember your grandfather was a soldier of the war of 1812 and never turned his back on the enemy. And don't forget there are four million slaves whose hope of liberty is at stake in this war. There is a wicked law on the statue books which makes it the duty of the soldier to return runaway slaves to their masters. Don't mind that law. If you see a slave flying from his master with the master in pursuit, take good aim and shoot the master and help the slave to freedom.

During the two years and nine months service this boy wrote many letters to his mother, father and brother and sister. They were written in health and in sickness, from camp, from battle field from hospital. They were written by a boy who could shoot with deadly accuracy, but who could not spell good and who knew nothing of grammar. These letters were all preserved by an over fond mother. This Soldier Boy, now an old gentleman has consented to let us print the entire collection of letters for the reading of the News patrons. We hope they may please our readers. The first letter is printed in this week's issue.
A SOLDIER BOY'S LETTERS

To a boy away in the hills, whose companionship was his dog and the Indians who had not yet vanished into narrow reservations, came the call of his country. He was only 16, but the desire of service was in him. Leaving his home, he volunteered. But being a dutiful son he wrote letters to his parents. These letters are full of human interest. He had no educational advantages, but these letters have the literary instinct in them and will repay persual. They are human documents. This is the first:

Camp Soloman, La Crosse, Wis.,
Sept. 15th 1862.

Dear parents: I am sitting on the straw in my tent with my paper on a trunk for a desk, this is Monday, before breakfast that I am writing you. This has been a very busy week for the soldiers.

We did not get through mustering until last evening which as you know was Sunday. The mustering officer was here all day, and he was a fierce looking fellow. Any how that's the way he looked to us younger boys that couldn't swear we was 18. We had to muster in all the same, if it was Sunday. Some of the boys thought it was a bad omen, and meant bad luck. We were not exactly mustered in because we did not get our pay, but the companies were drawn up in line, one at a time, and the officer with his hands behind his back, walked along ten feet or so in front of the line looking every man in the face.

Every one he suspicioned of being under 18, he would ask his age. He turned out a lot of them that were not quite 18. Some of them that might have been old enough, were getting home sick and was glad to get out of it by fibbing a little. Seeing how it was working with the rest, I did not know what to do. I went to see our captain but he said he could not help me. He said his interceding would do no good. I saw our Chaplain and he told me to tell the truth, that I was a little past 16, and he thought that when the mustering officer saw my whiskers he would not ask my age. That is what the boys all told me but I was afraid. I had about made up my mind to tell him I was going on 19 years, but thank heaven I did not have a chance to lie. He did not ask my age. I am all right and the boys were right. Say do you know the sweat was running down my legs into my boots, when that fellow came down the line, and I was looking hard at the ground fifteen paces in front.

I suppose I am a full fledged soldier now. I have got my uniform and that awful mustering officer has gone. While I am writing, the fife and drums are playing again; how I wish you could come down and see the soldiers. To see a thousand soldiers on regimental drill or parade is what visitors call a splendid sight. Hundreds of people in La Crosse come out to see us every evening. There was about five hundred visitors here last night to see us on dress parade. Gen. Pope got off here last Saturday evening and we expected to see him.
in camp but he did not come. I was
in town the evening he came but my
pass did not last long enough to see
the General. But I saw some of his
aids. Chester Ide's wife came from
Mondovi yesterday. There is hun-
dreds of other things I could speak
of but I don't have paper or time to
mention them. But there is one more
thing I have to tell you, we are to
start for Cincinnatti next Thursday,
so if you can come down before that
time you will find me here.

We are to get our money tomorrow
and if we do I will get my picture
taken. We got our guns yesterday.
If you write at once, direct to La
Crosse Wisconsin.

Your loving son,
CHAUNCEY.

P. S. The boys that were rejected
lit out last night and took their uni-
forms with them.

Headquarters, 25th Wisc.
La Crosse, Wis, Sept. 20, 1862.

Dear parents: One more week has
gone and we are still in La Crosse.
Our daily stunt is to drill four hours
a day. Our drill master is a nice lit-
tle fellow. He has been sent to us to
drill us and will be made our 2nd
lieutenant, He is a proud bugger in
his brand new suit of blue with gold
cord on his legs and shoulder straps
and he walks so darn straight he
leans backward. But he's a good one.

There is not a man but would be
too glad if we had orders to march
for Dixie tomorrow. Its awful tire-
some staying here doing nothing It's
harder work than farming. The Gov-
ernor telegraphed to the Colonel of
the regiment yesterday that we were
liable to get orders to go up the river
to Fort Snelling by boat and sent in-
to the Sioux Indian country. There
is a boy 14 years old here in camp,
who came from above St. Paul, whose
father was murdered by the Indians
ten rods from him last week. The
boy escaped by crawling under a
bridge and waiting till a team came
along. He came to St. Paul and
worked his way down on a steamboat
to this place.

I haven't been homesick a minute.
I like drilling pretty well and our
Bob, that is the name of our lieuten-
ant, says we step up like regulars.
Please excuse these short letters.
Tell George Wooster to write and I
will answer him. Also tell sister Do
to add a line when you write.

Is she catching any fish these days?
I hope trapping will be good this fall
so father can make a little extra
change. Are the pigeons in the stub-
ble like they were last fall when I
shot 19 at one crack? My goodness,
how I would like a pigeon pot pie.
Tell father he will find a lot of shot
in the old leather knife case on that
shelf in the entry way. They are
some I bought last year when Fred
Rosman and I were going to get rich
shooting prairie chickens and selling
them to the steam boats. I wish we
could get our money so I could come
home a few days. I suppose you got
my picture. How do I look as a
soldier? I tell you it looks military
like to see the fellows in their regu-
lation blue.

Write often as you can convenient-
ly, anything from home seems good
CHAUNCEY
P.S. I have reopened this letter to say we have orders to report at once to St. Paul. I think we will start in the morning. Don’t write till I can give you my address.

Let the following letter speak for itself.

La Crosse, Wis., Sept. 21, 1862.

Dear Mother:

I wrote you yesterday we had orders to report to St. Paul to fight the Sioux Indians, in Minnesota. Sure enough we are packing things and will leave here in the morning on the big sidewheel steamer St. Paul for up river. Some of the boys are mad and some are glad. Some say they did not enlist to fight Indians but to fight rebels, but military orders must be obeyed. If I thought the young Sioux chief who has been to our place so many times with his hunting party who was so good to us, letting us have elk meat and venison for a little of nothing, I should not like to think of shooting at them. I remember father said, if a few Indian contractors were scalped, there would be no trouble. I read last night in the paper a letter from Bishop Whipple of Minnesota, who said the government had not kept its promise with the Indians, that they had no blankets and no rations of beef, and that was the reason they went on the war path. The bow and arrows the chief’s son gave me, I wish you would see that they are not lost. I don’t believe Indian John stole Mr. Cripps’s gun. He is a good Indian and if he is not killed in the war he will bring it back.

I will finish this in the morning.

Sept. 21st. I am sitting on the hurricane deck of the St. Paul Steamer where our Company has been assigned for the trip to Fort Snelling. We were an hour filing on board the boat this morning. Everybody is feeling good. Some of them are happier than they ought to be. Bill Anderson and some of the Mondovi boys are pretty well loaded. Chet Ide doesn’t drink, but he is laughing louder at the fellows who do drink Gile Bump of Mondovi, and I crawled under the ledge over the cabin to get in the shade. The boat has an awful load.

A thousand men with all the fixtures and equipment. There is not room to lie down! The band is kept pretty busy. Whenever we pass a boat or reach a town the band pounds and blows for all it’s worth. The women and girls wave their handkerchiefs, and every fellow thinks it’s meant for him. I’ll bet there never was so jolly a crew on this boat before. When the boat stopped at Winona, some of the boys took a high dive from the top of the wheel house into the river. I never thought they would come up again but they did, and swam back to the yawl and climbed into that and were pulled up by ropes onto the boiler deck. We have just passed Fountain City and I must close this letter so as to mail it at Alma. The boat stops at every town, but no soldier is allowed to step off the boat. We have just passed a raft and the way the logs teeter in the waves is a wonder. The fellows shake their fists
and yell dirty, hoodlum stuff, but the boys in blue give it back to them in plenty.

Tell Elder Morse's folks that Henry is well and spoiling for a fight.

CHAUNCEY.

Dear Mother.—I missed the Alma boat and so I'll add a few lines more. We reached St. Paul and everybody was on the shore to greet us. They are mighty glad to have soldiers come as the Indians are gathering in big forces, and there may be bloody times. After waiting for orders we steamed on to Fort Snelling six miles above, and after landing in the bushes at the mouth of the Minnesota River, we climbed the high bluff where the Fort is located. They call this fort the American Gibraltar, if you can guess the meaning, steep wall nearly round it, and some big black cannons pointing in all directions.

I tell you those cannons have a wicked look. They are the first I have ever seen. I have just discovered I have a two-dollar counterfeit bill, so I am on half rations for money. We got our knapsacks this evening, and expect to start up the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers to hunt Indians in a day or two.

Wish you would make me a pair of two fingered mittens, it would save me $1.50; make them out of thin buckskin. There is a lot of buck Indians in the stone jail of the fort, who are guarded. They are some of the ring leaders, who incited the massacre. One of them looks just like One Eye, who staid around our place so much.

CHAUNCEY, Direct to Co. G., Ft. Snelling.

The letter that follows is interesting in its reference to Minneapolis, "a pretty town at the Falls of St. Anthony", now grown into a mighty city.

St. Cloud, Minn., Oct 2, 1862.
Co. G. 25th Regt.

Dear parents:

In my last I wrote you of our arrival at Fort Snelling and that we were to march into the Indian Country in a day or two. Fort Snelling is a fine place and I hadn't got tired of it when orders came to divide our Regiment, the right wing to go up the Minnesota river and the left wing up the Mississippi. Our Co. is in the left wing so we came up the Mississippi river. The first night after quitting Ft. Snelling we camped in the edge of Minneapolis, a pretty town at the Falls of St. Anthony. St. Anthony, just across the river, has some nice big buildings and is the biggest place. It was awfully hot the day we left the fort and our extra blankets and belts full of ammunition made a load. But we felt good and after supper I scuffled with Casper Meuli and Max Brill till bed time. I know father advised me not to do any wrestling, but a fellow can't say no all the time. A lot of us rolled up in our blankets under the trees on the bank of a creek with no tents that night. A lot of women or girls from town came into camp and walked over us as if we were logs. I thot they were pretty fresh. Some of the older
soldiers talked pretty plain to them, but they didn’t seem to care. After while they were ordered away and then we went to sleep. The next night and the night after I slept in barns on the hay. The people seemed to be Germans but they were good and gave us all they had of milk and bread. The boys would gather like pigs round a milk pan, three or four drinking at the same time. We came into St. Cloud last night. We crossed the Mississippi here. It isn’t the mighty stream here that it is at Alma, I could throw a stone across and hit a dog up here. These people gave us a warm welcome. Some of our boys came down with the measles and will go into hospital quarters until they get well. I have a queer sort of feeling, perhaps its measles with me. You know I never was sick. When the surgeon examined me in La Crosse he hit me a slap and told me I had a constitution like a horse I told him my living for some years had been buck meat, beaver’s tails and bear flesh. He said, you are a tough one, that is plain to see. I am sitting on a big rock on the bank of the Mississippi. It seems strange that this clear beautiful stream is the same yellow broad river that runs so near my home. As I write I am using a fine tooth comb and I am finding bugs. I don’t know where I got them, but I’ve got them. I was ashamed to be seen combing in camp so I came down behind the big rocks by the river. The other boys must have them. No Indians yet. The old settlers tell us the buffalos were here but a few years ago. I have seen some of their horns, sharp, black wicked things. Their trails can be seen on the praries and along the river banks. I remember father saying the buffaloes and Indians would disappear about the same time. Pot hunters would slay the buffaloes for their skins, and the white man’s whiskey was as surely slaying the Indian. Tomorrow we take up our march to Richmond, twenty miles away. I will write you then.

Your son
CHAUNCEY.

P. S. Tell father not to brag so much on Webster as a speller. I know I am not in his class quite, but I have bought me a pocket dictionary and I am studying it every day. Our Chaplain came along last night and saw me with it. He stopped and looked at it; well, he said it is next thing to a testament anyhow.

Good bye.

Remember that these are the letters of a boy. How many boys there were in that terrible war who on beds of sickness yearned for the mother-care of home! This boy has opinions of his own, opinions destined to deepen with age. Later on the pen grown polished with use was destined to voice the demand for justice to the dispossessed Indian and enfranchised negro.

St. Cloud Hospital, St. Cloud, Minn.
Oct. 20th, 1862.

Dear mother, father and all the rest.

I am writing you from a sick bed propped up on the back of a chair made soft with pillows. You must think it strange that you have got no letters these three weeks but if
you knew how fearfully sick I have been you would understand. I have been a mighty sick boy with the measles all this time in a big room in the city building along with ten other of my comrades. Three others of my Co. are here. Andy Adams, one of my chums from Mondovi, is one of them and he has been very sick. I tell you mother it is a terrible thing to be sick among strangers anyway. I've tho't of home and you so many times. Maybe if I had ever been sick before it would not have seemed so bad, but I want to tell you my dear mother, I never want to be sick away from you. The women of the town came in every day to give nice things to eat and make lemonade for us but they were all strange and new ones came nearly every day. They were kind, of course but O, I don't know. I felt if they were thinking more of their nice clothes and how fine they looked than of us. They wouldn't give me all the water I wanted, and I was always so thirsty. I just dreamed all the time. I don't want to talk like a baby mother, and the boys say, "Don't write any bad news to your father and mother," but you have always told me I should tell the truth and I believe its all right. God knows I never felt before what it meant to have a good home and a kind father and dear mother. And for these nearly three weeks on my back, I have thought of you all more than a hundred times. What a nice thing is a good home. Don't think I am home sick mother, you know I can say all these things and still not be homesick. When a fellow is sick and all broke up he can't help saying soft things. But I know if you had been here or I had been there I should not be where I am. Some of the fellows here are awful rough in their talk. They wasn't very sick and they are joking me and a young fellow in Co. E, because we are talking so much about our home and our mothers. I don't deny that I long to see my dear mother, and when the tears come into his eyes I know the poor boy that lays next to me is thinking of home too.

Don't think for a minute mother, that I am dying. I am getting better and in a few days will rejoin my Co., which is now at Richmond, about 20 miles from here. It will seem like going home almost, to get back to my dear old Company. The nights are getting freezing cold and they tell me the lakes are covered with ice, and lately I dreamed of laying on my stomach and drinking cold icewater through the air holes. I suppose it's because I am always so dry.

They say that a few days ago three hundred soldiers came down from Ft. Abercrombie, 130 miles from here. They left everything quite, in fact the Indian war seems at an end unless the upper Sioux turn on us.

Colonel Sibley has recovered all the white prisoners and nearly 2,000 Indian prisoners. The question seems to be whether to let the Sioux remain or drive them from the homes of their ancestors into some western reservation. It seems like-
ly that they will be driven away. Mother this whole Indian question is wrong. Laying on my sick bed here, I can't help thinking of the wrong doing of the government toward the Indians. I am losing heart in this war against the Indians. When you come to think that all this beautiful country along the Minnesota river was bought for 2 cents an acre and that the government still owes them this pitiful sum for it, I am sorry for them. The boys tell me I am no better than an Indian when I talk about it, but I can't help it. God made this country and gave it to the Indians. After a while along comes Columbus with his three coele shell boats, takes possession of all the continent in the name of the Almighty, Queen Isabelle of Spain and the Indians are treated as wild beasts. I often think as I have heard father say, "if this is the spirit of the present Christianity, God will dam it.

I don't expect we will have a brush with the Indians unless we go farther west. The boys at Richmond are having good times, hunting deer and bear and catching fish. The lakes are clear and cool and full of fish.

We don't know where we are to winter, likely as not just where we are. My dear mother I am out of money. I haven't got the three dollars yet I wrote for the last time. I got to borrow a stamp to send this letter, but its alright. Mother, how does the new house come on? Have you got in it yet? Have you dug the potatoes yet? Does brother W. kill many prairie chickens this fall, or hasn't he got any ammunition? Has father got the stable plastered up warm? The bale clay in the bottom of the creek is all right for that.

Mother, don't you hate to leave the dear old cabin this winter for the new house? I love to think of that best of beds under those long oak shingles warped and twisted, that let in the rain and snow in my face. I would give all this world if I owned it, if I could sleep there tonight. Did the corn get ripe? Has father broke the colts? Has brother W. broke the steers so they can haul things? How is father Cartwright? Has father killed any game this fall, what is it? Mother, as to the money I sent home, I want you or father to use it for anything you want. All I want is the first payment on that land so that is clear I don't care for the rest. You must get some apple trees if you have not already, and get a stand of bees. You ought to raise your own honey. I would like very much to hear from you mother. I haven't heard from home since I left La Crosse, I do not complain. There may be letters some where for me. Remember mother, a letter in your own hand writing. Love to all, to yourself, father, brothers and sister.

Your soldier boy.

CHAUNCEY

New Richmond, Minn.,

Dear folks at home: Since my last you see I have made a change. I am now with the company at New
Richardmond. Andy Adams of Mondovi and one of the Mann brothers and my self came up in one of the Weil's Fargo stages. The captain ordered us to the hotel as he tho't we was not strong enough for camp yet. I got your last letter the day before we left St. Cloud and what you told me about exposing myself after having the measles scared me just a bit. I had been walking about for three days and when I crossed the streets the wind was cold and so strong it would nearly throw me down and I had nothing but my summer drawers. Our women nurses didn't warn us a bit, but told me I should go out and get strength. I was glad enough to get out doors once more, I think! am getting all right. I was pretty sick the doctor told me, just as if I didn't know my own feelings. The Ladies Aid Society was real kind. One old lady who did not belong to the society would come nearly every day with some sour candy and give it to all of us because our mouths tasted bad of the fever. She said she had a dear boy somewhere in the South and she hoped some one would be good to her boy if he got sick.

I tell you it seemed awful good to see the faces of my old chums. I had been away from them nearly four weeks and it seemed that many months.

They are busy building log houses to winter in. They are building 18 houses for store buildings and quarters. It is getting cold and the weather makes them hustle. The boys are still in tents tho' it is freezing every night. The rest of the left wing have gone up to Paynsville to winter, four companies. I woke up this morning with a pain in my stomach. I told Elder Harwood of it and he told me to not eat any more biscuit before going to bed. We have a nice hotel and lots to eat and I am hungry all the time. They give us wild rice, bo't of the Indians, twice a day, and it is good. The Landlord said it was nearly gone and the Indians were gone and he didn't know when he could get any more. I like to hear him talk about the Indians. He said they had been cheated and lied to by the government contractors, and that bo't on all the trouble. He said he lived amongst them all his life and they were good people unless they were drunk.

I have lost fifteen and a half pounds in weight the three weeks past. I forgot to tell you I found a letter from you dated the 10th here in the Captain's hands. He forgot to send it to me. I am glad father has such good luck killing deer and bear this fall. Thank goodness old dog Prince was close by when the bear made that rush for father. He no doubt saved father's life. I hope the poor dog's jaw is not broken. The bear's jaw of course was too strong for him. Don't skim the milk for dear old Prince, give it to him with the cream on until he can eat meat. We have bear and deer close to this place but you will believe me. I would dearly like to be with father in his hunts, long enough at least to help him kill two or three fat bears.

Don't fear but I will be careful dear mother of my health, you scar-
ed me when you explained about cousin Ben’s death a month after he got up from the measles. I have had the measles, and “theys done gone” as Topsey said, in Uncle Tom’s Cabin.

Rumors of Indians coming back on the war path is the talk among the boys in the hotel tonight. The sky is all lighted up some ten miles away by prairie fires tonight. The boys say it means Indians. My room is about 8 by 10 feet and the light from the prairie fire makes a shadow on the wall. Some of the boys talk like they wanted dreadfully to get into a scrimmage with the Sioux. It must be I ain’t a good soldier, I don’t think it is fear, but I am all the time thinking of One Eye and his son and wife that came to our house so many times to get flour and coffee, and the times I played with their boys and sat on their buffalo robes and ate elk steak and venison steak by their wigwam fires. You know we wondered that they never came back any more, and father said they were afraid of their lives because the Dacotias and Minnesota Sioux had declared war and to save their lives they had gone west.

I don’t deny that I sometimes think of Owena, the Chief’s daughter that father plagued me about, and wonder where she is.

Bishop Whipple says the government has never kept its word of payment for the land and the rations promised the Indians. That man Whipple must be another William Penn. He has always been the Indian’s friend in Minnesota. I read in the Sentinel yesterday that he had visited the White House in Washington and plead with President Lincoln with tears in his eyes that the government should pay these Sioux their promised annuity and that would stop the war. Why don’t they do it? I am a white man’s son and I like my own people but can never forget what Chief One Eye told me in his wigwam on the Three mile creek that the white chief at Washington was a liar because they never got their annuity and their beef was tough and unfit to eat.

I hope father will not sell my 40 even at a hundred dollars profit. I like Wisconsin best of all yet.

They are all in bed but me, so good night.

Your boy,

CHAUNCEY.

New Richmond, Minn.,
Nov. 4th. 1862.

Dear sister Doe: Your favor of Oct. 25th rec’d yesterday. It seemed so good to me that I read it over twice before stopping. I am just like other soldiers I suppose, crazy to get letters from dear ones at home. I wrote mother only a day or two ago but that makes no difference, I am glad for an excuse to write home. I told mother that I did not expect to leave St. Cloud for some days but we left the next day in one of those big Well’s Fargo coaches you told me so much about. We had four horses on the coach and they trotted nearly all the way 20 miles.
to this place. I found the boys fat as pigs except them that were sick with measles. Some ten or a dozen were sick.

You said you received $10 in one of my letters? I sent $30 dollars altogether in the two letters. I also sent my clothes. Did you get them?

It is now quite certain we will winter here as they have commenced building cabins. It is about 225 miles from home, just a nice sleigh ride.

I could get home for about $7 but that would buy a good many things you need this coming winter, and may be I could not get away. Be good enough to send me the Tribune, or the Milwaukee Sentinel. We don't have anything here to read but dutch papers. I want to get some papers or books this winter and maybe you better send me a few dollars. I was too good when I sent the last money to father and I shall be short before my next pay day which is in December. I am real glad you are making such headway in your books. You are father's girl alright. Do you know sister, I used to think father was a curious kind of person because he differed with so many people, and I didn't know what to think about it, but I know now our father is a sensible man. He opened my eyes about this Indian question which I am finding every day to be true, and I believe his opinion about the slave holders to be just as true. I cannot forget his words in the grove at Rufus Fuller's when we started for Alma after that big dinner. He said, "be true to your country my boy, and be true to the flag, but before your country or the flag be true to the slave." I never saw tears in father's eyes before.

I am still in the tavern. I bought some packs the other day and paid $3.00 for them, a big price but I had to have them. Tell father to pick up a chopper if he can find one and set him to work at my expense in the big timber over northeast. We need a lot more rails. We need to keep dark about timber until we get some logs out of it. Cut the logs and mark them together and I will split them my self if I ever get back. Nobody knows of the timber but Mr. Amidon and nobody will ever touch it. Mr. Amidon got a dozen or so logs there last winter, for the mill. I counted the stumps last spring when I speared those beaver there last spring.

Poor old dog Prince and I had a lot of fun on that creek. How is Prince getting on from that fight with that bear? I wish father would be more careful in shooting at bears. Prince may not always be near by to lock jaws with the black devils. I often think of the night I slept with Prince in my arms in Traverse Valley. The fire had gone out and it was dark as tar. When a fox would bark he would tremble and raise his head and growl. When that deer snorted in the brush and run he nearly scared me to death as he jumped out from the blanket and run after him. Give the old dog a hug for me. There is lots of game here and I wish I had old Prince with me.
Obed Hilliard and I have bot't a lot of traps and soon as I get strong I am going to set them. The boys have shot a lot of rats and minks with their muskets.

The news came just now that McClellan had captured 30,000 rebs and had cornered the rest of Lee's army, and the war was at an end. We hear things like this nearly every day. Nobody believes it.

Your brother,

CHAUNCEY.

This letter mentions names that will be locally familiar. It is but a week or so ago that Obed Hilliard died.

Ft. Wildcat, Richmond, Minn.
Nov. 10th, 1862.

Dear mother: I believe my last was written to Doe, any way I will write this time to you. I like letters from father and Sister Doe, too, awful well, but if you could hear what I hear every day about things and persons at home, you would hear the fathers talked about and you would hear that the sisters and brothers were nice people, but the mothers in the daily talk of the soldiers are the best persons in the world. Well now this may sound like I am homesick but I ain't. I was going to say, we are to have inspection of arms in a little while and I tho't I would put in the time until then writing. The snow fell to the depth 5 inches last night and the woods this forenoon was full of soldiers hunting deer. A bear was seen by one of the boys but nothing but some partridges and rabbits was killed. Until day before yesterday the lakes were full of ducks and geese. I never saw so many ducks. The boys have killed lots of them. I purchased a pair of moccasins, paid $3.50 for them, a big price but had to have them. I want to do some shooting pretty soon. The orderly has informed us that there will be no inspection of arms. I noticed in the Sentinel that Gilmanton was exempt from draft. That is all the Gilmanton folks wanted, so they said. Now we will see how much those moneyed ones will give now that they are in no danger of draft. I was out on drill day before yesterday, the first time in six weeks.

The cabins are nearly done and I shall be glad to get out of the hotel with the boys altho I like things here. The commissary building is full of beef, pork and flour and good things to eat. The company will be divided into squads with a cook for each squad. Obed Hilliard is the cook for our squad, Obe and I are in partnership in trapping. The lakes and the Sioux river that runs by our camp are full of mink and rats. I found a big black mink in a trap of one of the other boys last night just below camp. His hide was worth $8. I was half tempted to take him out. The boys are playing just these tricks every day on each other. I nearly forgot to tell you I had bowel trouble the other day and Sergeant McKay gave me a dose of burnt whiskey. It was the first whiskey I ever drank. It helped my bowel trouble and I suppose from what the boys tell me it made me do some
strange things. Men Bump and Chet Hide of Mondovi have been laughing at me and telling me that I was a shame to old toppers that I talked stuff and got out Bill Hill’s drum and pounded it. Anyway I am alright now. I have no more news to write this time. Mr. Ball sends his respects to Mr. Cartwright, and Mr. McKay sends his regards to father.

I was just closing this letter when one of the boys came into my room and told me the Indians were burning Paynesville, where the other four companies of the left wing are posted. I went to the window and sure enough there was a big light on the sky in the direction of Paynesville. I have been waiting a half hour for later news. If it meant Indians I knew we would be notified by courier. As we have heard nothing it means just a prairie fire, so good night mother.

Your loving boy,
CHAUNCEY.

Richmond, Minn.,
Nov. 20, 1862.

Dear Parents:—

I had no letters the past week but look for one this afternoon. Things go on rather quiet most of the time. Our log shanties are all finished and I am now with the boys. I’ll tell you, I am keeping a diary and I will give you a copy of it for a week in this letter:—Nov. 10—Took a shave to-day. One of the boys said my beard made me look like a goat. Had my first dinner at the shanty. Oke is a good cook. Supply train loaded with provisions went by for Sauk Center and Paynesville. Some men, trappers I guess, from the Red River country went toward St. Cloud, they stopped for dinner. Said all quiet in the up country. They wore leggins like Indians and their stories if true, made them out more savage. According to their talk all Indians are red devils.

Nov. 11—A nice Indian summer day, a smoky, hazy, dreamy day. Took my gun and went rat hunting. Shot five but got only four. Came back to camp hungry as a dog. Had a glorious supper of beef, bread, potatoes, cranberry sauce and pie.

A big supply train bound for Fort Abercrombia pulled in for the night. Gen. Pope has ordered all infantry south. We may get to see Dixie yet. Hurrah! Snow all gone and big prairie fires to the east to night.

Nov. 12—No letter from home today, plague on it. Wrote one to Geo. Wooster. Beautiful weather. Men Bump just from St. Cloud reports another one of the boys dead from measles. I believe I am all right except my wind ain’t quite so good on a long double quick. Nothing to do, went out and shot a rat. Some of the lakes are covered with rat houses thick as hay cock and as big. Sold my hides for 10 cents a piece. Boys trying their guns at a mark, found a great deal of fault with them. I found some papers at the hotel called “The Dakota Friend,” that I have been reading. They were left by a woman who had been stopping. This paper was a missionary paper for the Indians and had letters in it from Bishop Whipple. He is certainly a good man. I read some of his letters about the honesty of the Indians when the white man was honest with them. It made me think of good old One Eye and his band that came so many times to our place. I spoke of Bishop Whipple to the trappers and what he said of their honesty, but they said Whipple was an old woman in breeches.

Nov. 13—I dreamed last night of One Eye’s band, of the boys that I
played with, and when we got hungry how we went to Chief Charley's tepee and found his mother cleaning the entrails of a beaver which she intended for soup. The boy talked to her in Sioux and she unfolded some buckskins and a robe or two and gave us a big hunk of elk steak. We put it on the fire and she went back to her job of dressing the beaver guts. In my dreams I saw the beautiful buffalo robes we lay upon while our steak was roasting. I could even smell them just as they smelt four years ago.

In this miserable Indian war I often wonder what has become of Tightfoot (father gave him that name because he could beat me in a race) and of his brothers and of Owena. They promised to come back in the fall of 1860 who they broke camp the spring before two miles below us but they never came. I haven't lived long, but long enough to think this is a strange world. When I think of the Indians and remember how good they were to me and my father and mother, and reading in this "Dacota Friend" paper how the traders have made them drunk in order to cheat them, and how the government bought 35 million acres of them and has been owing them for it against their promise for 20 years, and because they were starving and broke into a warehouse for food, and this brought on a war, I am for the Indians as much as the whites.

Nov. 14—Cold and freezing this morning. A cannon from Fort Abercrombia came by this morning. They fired it a few times just for fun. Obed Hilliard and I went hunting, shot five rats, one partridge and one rabbit. On return to camp found a supply train in corral near us and 300 cavalry as guard. The fife and drum were out to-night, in honor of our guests I suppose. The visitors have some big fires going to-night and the crowds around them are very happy. The cavalry men who have been on the frontier are full of Indian yarns. I don't like their talk. If half they tell about their own rascally tricks is true, there is plenty of reason for the Indians to fight and fight to the death.

Nov. 15—There was quite a wild time last night. Some beer was stolen from the saloon and farmers came in this morning claiming soldiers stole their chickens. The cavalry did it. Our boys denied it and I am sure they told the truth. The cavalry made quite a show as they dashed off after the wagon train. I went to church to-day, the first time in a long while. Cold and freezing to-night. I nearly froze my fingers on dress parade.

Nov. 16—Everything froze tight this morning. This has been a lonesome day. Molasses was rationed out, the first since we came. It run awful slow. Drilled this afternoon. Snow began falling while we were drilling. The Colonel arrived from Paynesville. I have been reading all the evening in Bishop Whipple's paper, "The Dacota Friend." I have made up my mind the Indians are not to blame for this war. It is the traders, the contractors, the trappers and the Indian agents. O, the injustice of the strong against the weak in this world.

Nov. 17-18—Went hunting deer, no luck at all. I shall let the deer go to grass hereafter and hunt for rabbits only. Late this afternoon had a tilt snowballing. The boys had a lively time dodging my balls. They didn't know I had kept a pile of stones at every fence corner for years for blackbirds, and that a blackbird's head at ten steps was an easy mark. The ice on the Sioux is fine. Bought a pair of skates and had a little fun on them. There is a big farmer, a Swede, three miles up river with a nice family of boys and girls. If the ice is good, will go up there in the morning.
Nov. 19—Was on the river skating all the forenoon. Ice not quite safe on the rapids. Several of the boys on a drunk. Had quite a scrap but no one much hurt. Had a spelling school to-night. Word came late to-night that we were to go south in a week, hope it is true.

Your boy,

CHAUNCEY.

**NOTES FROM SOLDIER BOYS’ DIARY CONCLUDED.**

Nov. 21.—Went out to visit my traps and found several of them frozen in. Found four rats in the traps set in the houses. Most of the traps in the run ways except in springy places were frozen in. Caught a mink near the bridge over the Sioux in a little spring.

This afternoon skated three miles up the river to the house of a Swede who is one of the first settlers in this county. He has a big family of boys and rosy-cheeked girls.

I ate a late dinner with them. He was a great talker and told me a lot about the wild times he saw when he first struck the country. He was a friend to the Indians. They always camped near his house when trapping up and down the Sioux River, in the fall and spring.

This man told me the war began by a dog biting an Indian. The Indian shot the dog and the whites shot the Indian and a band of the Siesston Sioux hearing of this and nearly starved, for government rations that never came, broke into a government warehouse and from this the war started that has cost the nation, so the papers say, round 40 million of dollars. This man told me he never lost a cent by a sober Indian. He had a room in his house called the Indian room where he always put them in the winter when they called. They preferred to sleep in tepees in the fall and spring when they came to trap for furs and to gather wild rice. They were the Santee Sioux, the band that One Eye and Chief Charley belonged to. He showed me a buffalo trail on a steep hill side leading down to the river, which he said had been worn for a hundred years.

He said the Indians never killed a friend if they knew it. The whites were more revengeful, they shot at every Indian, good and bad. He told me a lot more I can’t write down. When I left for camp to-night it was dark, I looked at a few of the traps I had set but found nothing.

I believe I am as much of an Indian as the boys say, as white man and I can’t deny it. I am awfully tired to-night.

Nov. 22.—I heard this morning that Little Crow, Chief of the Sioux had committed suicide. If it is true it is because he has lost faith in the great “white Chief at Washington and the broken promises of the government. There are some things in this war that make me feel that I am an infidel. Why does God crush all these poor Indians and give it all to the white because he has wealth. They owned this land from ocean to ocean by the best title on earth given by God himself and yet because we are stronger we drive him away from the homes of their fathers and the graves of his ancestors and claim that Christ is on our side.

I have been studying the “Dacota Friend,” the woman left here in the hotel, and I believe there is something terribly wrong in this war. I know the Indians have been wronged and mistreated. But what can a fellow like me do? I could not eat any supper to-night and I dared not tell the boys what I was thinking about. I knew they would joke me and make fun of me. I feel that Obed Hilliard is nearer to me than any of the boys and yet he says the Indians ought to be shot. I seem to think different from any of them. I may not be right but I can’t help it.
I know I think as Bishop Whipple does that all the wrong in this war is on the side of the whites. I am sleepy and it is ten o'clock.

Nov. 23.—The landlord of the hotel gave me to understand this morning that I could not use any more of his writing paper, as I had left the house for the camp. Of course it's all right but it bothers me because I can't write where the boys are bothering. We had a drill this forenoon. The captain said we would get pay to-morrow and I am glad. I have two pages in my memoranda of debt and credit accounts to be settled.

Nov. 24.—Marching orders to be in readiness to start for Fort Snelling, I guess it's a go this time. The notice came last night and all my traps are set miles away on the river and lakes. Obe said when the moon comes up tonight if you will gather in the traps I'll do the other work.

It was after midnight when I got back with all the traps and my light is the only one burning as I write this last word.

Nov. 25.—It was a lonely trip I made last night up the river and over the lakes picking up traps. I thought of so many things on that trip and I was not quite satisfied that Obe asked me to get traps alone but I made the trip just the same. In the woods between the lakes where the moon shone in spots under the pine trees I thought I saw figures of Indians but I would brace up and walk right up to them and I always found them stumps or trees. I can't say I was really afraid, but I was miles away in an Indian country and sometimes my heart would pump a little hard.

NOTES FROM SOLDIER BOY'S DIARY CONCLUDED

Final orders to begin our return march to Fort Snelling, near St. Paul, came late last night. We were up bright and early. Some of the boys said they were fixing all night to get ready. I was hard to wake, because I had gone to bed so late after my night's jaunt gathering in my traps. I had paid a dollar and a quarter a piece for the traps, and the merchant said I had had such bad luck, he would take them back at cost and charge me $2.00 for the use of them. I thanked him from the bottom of my heart as I had expected a much harder deal. Some of the fellows, one or two from Mondovi had spent a good part of the night at one of the saloons just across the Sioux river and they were singing "Dixie" and "Johnny comes marching home" long before the morning drum beat. I was scared for a moment thinking that the march had commenced when I heard them singing, but hearing my chum snoring at my side, I went to sleep again.

All the forenoon its been Dixie, Dixie. A lot of the nearby settlers came in to see the boys go away. Some of them said its all right for us to go south, they wasn't afraid any more the Indians had been scared away, others wished we would stay. I think there were four or five pretty girls from the Sioux river that felt sorry for reasons of their own to see the boys go away. It was near noon when we started out in hit or miss order for St. Cloud. We straggled into St. Cloud late in the evening. Every fellow looked out for his own sleeping quarters. It was cold. The Captain said, "Get the best quarters you can. I slept under the flap of a tent between barrels rolled up in two blankets with a freezing west wind like so much cold water pouring over my face all night. I was awakened in the morning by that song so dear to the south, Dixie. I would think more of what the song means, if the fellows had their heads.
We have been late this morning Nov. 26th, in starting. I have put in the time writing my notes.

Nov. 26—I am tired tonight marched all day with heavy overcoat, haversack, gun and two big blankets. I made but 18 miles and when it began to get dark I dropped out of the squad I was with and went to a private house where I saw a light shining among the trees. A young woman and child were the only persons there. She told me her husband had gone to the war and she was carrying on the farm alone with a little help her brother gave her who came once in a while. She told me she had but one bed in the house but I was welcome if I could sleep on the lounge in the kitchen. I asked to sleep on the floor, but she said, "No." I told her where I slept the night before and she just looked at me with out saying a word. She asked me why my mother let me go into the army when I was so young. When I told her I tried to get my mother's consent a year before, she said, "O, you must be a crazy fellow."

Nov. 27th—I was up and on the road this morning by daylight. I was anxious to catch up with the boys I knew were ahead of me. To tell the whole truth, I shed a few tears because I could not keep up with the crowd. Obad had told me and Sergeant McKay that I was not over the effects of the measles and that I should take it easy. Father wrote me too, before leaving the hotel at Richmond, "Be patient and not try to do too much, you will need to save your strength for months." Just the same I am mad that the boys are going to beat me to St. Paul.

Nov. 28th—Fort Snelling, Minn. Arrived this noon. A few of the company still here, most of them come and gone. The right wing of our Reg't came down the Minnesota some days ago bringing with them 1700 captured Sioux, wives, children and old men and women of the hospitals. They are camped on the bottoms just below the Fort at the junction of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers. They are a broken hearted ragged, dejected looking lot. They have a million dogs almost, and you can hear them barking for miles. There are 156 Teepees. A Minnesota Reg't is in charge of them and no soldier is allowed inside the Teepees. Papooses are running about in the snow barefoot and the old Indians wear thin buckskin moccasions and no stockings. Their ponies are poor and their dogs are starved. They are going to be shipped West into the Black Hills country. Like the children of Israel in the Bible story they are forced to go forever from the homes of their childhood and the graves of their fathers to dwell in mountains and on the barren plains of a strange land. I lifted up the flaps of a number of their Teepees and looked in. Every time I looked in I met the gaze of angry eyes. Nearly all of them were alike. Mothers with babies at their breasts, grandmothers and grandmothers sat about smouldering fires in the center of the Teepee, smoking their long stemmed pipes, and muttering their plaints in the soft guttural tones of the Sioux. The white man's face was their hate and their horror and they showed it by hate in their eyes and their black lowering brows. Why shouldn't they? What had they done? What was their crime? The white man had driven them from one reservation to another. They were weary and broken hearted and desperate at the broken promises of the government. And when they took up arms in desperation for their homes and the graves of their sires they are called savages and red devils. When we white people do the same things we are written down in history as heroes and patriots. Why this difference? I can't see into it.
I often think of what father said of justice in the world. That is, that it is the winning party the lions of the earth, that write its history. He said, "Cataline, had any body but his bitter enemies written his history might have been shown to be a good man." I have been fooling around the Indian camps all day and my company are all gone home. From where I sit writing these notes in a little niche on the side of the Fort overlooking the camp below I can see the sentinels pacing their rounds and hear the yelping of hungry Indian dogs. My fingers are numb. The cold west wind hits me here and I must quit. I must look for a warm place to sleep tonight and start for home in the morning by the way of Hudson and Eau Claire.

CAMP RANDALL MADISON, WIS.

Dec. 16, 1862.

Dear parents: After just one week of varying incident from the time of leaving my old dear home I am seated to write to you. We did not find our regiment at Winona as we expected, they had gone to La Crosse. There were 27 of us in the crowd so we hired three liveries and drove all night and reached La Crosse at 6 o'clock in the morning we nearly swamped in the Black river crossing McGilvery's ferry the ice was running so, but we got over all right. We stayed in La Crosse one night and came on to Madison the next night. The people of La Crosse were good to us, they gave us a fine dinner in the biggest hall in town but mother it did not taste half as good as the last one you gave me of bear meat and vension and hot biscuit and honey. It may be I did not do right when I sneaked out of the house and got Billy and rode away without saying good bye, but I couldn't help it. I knew it hurt you to say good bye and that's why I did it.

Well, we are in Madison, the Capital of the state. How long we are to stay nobody knows. They say we need drilling and must get more disciplined before we go to the front. Well I hope we won't stay here long. These barracks are awful cold, and my bunk is on the top tier, next to the shingles too hot in the evening cold in the morning, I am wearing father's moccasins yet. I didn't get time to buy me boots in La Crosse or Winona.

Tell father to use my money and buy him some more. We are to be paid soon and I will send you some money. You need not lay it up as you did before but use it, and don't think of me, I am all right. I never want to see father wear patches again. I don't believe this war is for long. I expect to be home next year to help with the work. Maybe not, but we'll see.

I forgot to tell you that we came in the cars to Madison from La Crosse. It was a new experience to me, I was wide awake the whole way I was afraid we were off the track every time we crossed a switch or came to a river. At the towns, girls swarmed on the platforms to ask the boys for their pictures and to kiss the best looking ones. A young Frenchman, we called him the pony of the regiment because he was so small and quick got the most kisses. He was so short the boys held him by the legs so he could reach down out the windows to kiss the girls. Many times some old fellow held the girls up so she could be reached. It was fun anyway.

I never think but I am all right except when I try to double quick for a half hour or so. My wind gives out. Lieutenant Parr says, "Your measles stay with you yet." "Warm weather" he says, "will fix you all right." Love to all.

Your son,
CHAUNCEY.
Madison, Wis., Dec. 25th, 1862

Dear mother: You see my paper don't have the regulation picture on it of Soldiers in file or in battle array I am tired of such flummery. The meaning of the whole thing is to make money for the inventor and not for the soldier. We are told that the life of the Nation is at stake, and every fellow that enlists offers himself as a martyr to save his country. I was thinking these things over last, about 2 P.M. in the morning when I was nearly froze and the relief guard came round and I was off duty to go to my tent and get some sleep. It seems like foolery to the common soldier that for two hours we must stand in a temperature of 30 or 40 degrees when we are a thousand miles from the enemy. I had to walk and walk to keep from freezing. The mercury was down near 40 below zero and the guard house where we sat down between reliefs or lay down was little better than out doors. The health of our Regiment is none too good. One man dies on an average every day. As I write this letter the drum is beating. The food we get is too blame for our bad health. The boys threaten a riot every day for the bad beef and spoilt bread issued to us and all this in our home state of Wisconsin. I went to meeting yesterday both morning and evening. In the morning at the Baptists in the evening at the Episcop al church. The preacher discussed the state of the Union. I tho't he talked a bit like a traitor. He was sorry the states should go to war over the question of slavery. He hoped the Union would be preserved and he tho't Uncle Tom's Cabin was much to blame for the war. Capt. Dwarwin said the preacher ought to live in South Carolina. There is talk that we will get pay to morrow. I have sent a record of our company home. Hope you got it I shall send you a lot of clothing just before we leave. Remember me to Uncle Ed ward Cartwright. It was kind of him to ask so often about me. I wonder where Ez and Ed are. They don't say a word. You remember they went in the 2nd Calvery.

I am glad father had such good luck getting deer this fall, you will have lots of venison this winter. It is too bad the Elk are all gone or killed off I know father is sorry. He blamed the Sioux Indians for scaring his game but the St. Louis hunters and the Farringtons of Mondovi have spoiled his hunting more than the Indians. I hope he will stop hunting bears alone. Its a dangerous business. Old Prince is a dear good dog but a bear is too much for him at close quarters. Is his jaw all right again? Every letter I get from home I expect to hear of Jenny's death. She is bound to rub her red blanket off in the brush and the first hunter that sees her will shoot her for a wild deer. I wonder what Claffin's people tho't when she ran in their bedroom and laid down to get away from the dogs.

Poor thing eight miles from home with no friend near, raced by dogs, until her tongue hung out, and to save her life rushed into the open door of the Claffin home. Poor Jenny Deer. With four bullet marks on her legs and body and one thru her red blanket, and the damned dogs rac ing her for life. Poor thing. Poor thing. I can't help it, but these things make me homesick.

I'm ashamed of myself. Dear Mother, Good Bye.

From Your Son
CHAUNCEY.

Madison, Wisconsin, Jan. 6th, 1863.
Hd. Quarters 25th Regt. Wis.

Dear sister: I am sure you would
smile if you could get a view of Co. G. as I can see them from where I sit. You would say, "What a writing school." I can count more than 50 of the boys writing letters to their mothers or their girls. Mostly to their girls. It's easy to tell, if a fellow is writing to his mother he don't squirm and cover his paper when some guy looks over his shoulder. There is a lot of such teasing. The only way is to get away up in the top bunks out of reach and hold their portfolios on their laps for a desk. I came off guard this morning after the coldest night of the winter. My beat was long side the railroad track on a high bank where the wind cut me all around. I set my gun down and run back and forth to keep from freezing my toes. The snow sifted in the path and kept it soft and meally. The Legislature had some extra work at the capitol last night. I could see the light at the top of the dome until after midnight.

No pay yet though they keep promising it. Went to the Episcopal church last Sunday. Say, don't they put on style though? I compared them in my mind to our little bunch in that two by four school house in Gilmanton. The preacher came out in a black dress and talked about things I couldn't understand, but the music was nice when I came away. If I was any better in heart, it was because of the music and not for any thing the preacher said. A lot of the boys celebrated Christmas and New Year to their sorrow. Some of them were put in jail up town and two of them are there yet. Nearly every other house between here and the Capitol sells beer and by the time the lovers of grog get into town they are full to running over with; "When Johnny comes marching home." There was close to a mutiny of the two regiments here the other day because so many of the boys had been arrested and jailed in the city. The 30th, regiment and several companies of the 25th came out without officers formed in ranks swearing they would go up and storm the city of Madison, if necessary and release their comrades in jail. Feeling ran so high that I took my place in the ranks without much heart in it to tell the truth. I was glad when our officers came around and explained that we were mutineers and in violation of the rules of war and that we should disband.

I had no pity in my heart for the fellows in jail and I was glad for an excuse to sneak back to head quarters. We have some good fellows in our company who are devils when they are in drink. And we have about four who are devils drunk or sober. While I am writing these, the boys are singing Dixie in a great chorus. This awful weather makes me hanker for the warmer south and, since there is no hope of home. All seems quiet on the Potomac.

I see by the papers that the church are urged to pray for the end of the war. They have had several spells at this and the battles have been harder and the slaughter greater. The churches south have been doing the same thing. It would seem that God ought to pity the slave and help our side, but will he? I know what father would say. He would quote Napoleon, who said, "put your trust in well drilled troops and keep your powder dry." I remember the last time I heard him say this, when Elder Morse was visiting us and they were talking about the wickedness of slavery about which they both agreed. Father disputed the Elder's opinion that God presided over the movements and affairs of earth. He cited slavery and the wicked wars of the earth and the crimes of the liquor traffic as being inconsistent with the character of a just God. Elder Morse agreed with father this far, that they were not in harmony with the Divine plan, but were tolerated for some reason not given to man to
know.

Have father tell Elder Morse, I thank him for his kind words. His son Henry is about and able to eat his rations every day. I hope you wont sell your land as you talk of doing. I got a letter from G—the other day and answered it. He thinks McClellon is a traitor. Lots of us think the same. Our Captain is a wise man and he says McClellon has been waiting and waiting when he should have been marching and fighting. I am awful sorry that Freemont was set down on by Lincoln. I am with Freemont as many of the boys are. I have no heart in this war if the slaves cannot go free. Freemont wanted to set them free as fast as we came to them. I am disappointed in Lincoln. I remember a talk father had with uncle Ed. Cartwright, who was blaming the war on the Abolitionists. It made father mad and he talked back pretty hot. He said I have a boy who wants to go to the war and I would give his life as cheerfully as Abraham offered his son if necessary that the slaves might be freed. Father meant all right though it seemed hard, but I love him all the more for it, although I suppose I am the boy he meant for the sacrifice. We are all anxious to go south, though none of us that I know are anxious to get shot for any cause. Direct as before to Camp Randall. Love to all, mother father and brothers.

Your brother.

CHAUNCEY.

Camp Randall, Madison, Wis.


Dear mother:

This is a fine morning and the 29th. of January, 1863. How the time flies. Your last letter came day before yesterday. I am awfully glad father had such good luck killing deer. You will have plenty of good meat for the winter. You wish I could have a taste along with you. You bet I do to, but it can't be, so we must not think of it. We came close to a row with the 30th regiment yesterday. The Colonel in command of a squad came down to put some of our boys in the guard house. The word spread like wild fire and a rush was made for the barracks where the boys were taken, and it took but a minute to get them from the 30th men and the 30th. Colonel was glad to get back to his regiment. The boys are threatening revolt against the commissary. Our meat and bread is a fright and a big share of the men in both regiments are ripe for mischiefs. I get a lunch nearly every day at a little grocery just outside the fence. I get a glass of cider, a handful of crackers and a nice piece of Swiss cheese for ten cents. They are Swiss Germans that run the grocery and the girl that clerks has the blackest hair and eyes I ever saw. She has been in this country three years and talks very good English. She has a brother in the Swiss army and when she braggs the Swiss soldiers and how much nicer they are than we Yankees, she shows the prettiest white teeth as she smiles.

There is a rumor that we are to be paid soon, anyway before we go South. Rumor is such a liar we don't know what to believe. It is quite sure we will be assigned to the Southwest somewhere. Perhaps to Vicksburg, where the rebs are making a grand stand, perhaps to post duty on some of the river points. Some of the boys pretend they would like to smell gun powder on the battle line before the war ends. I suppose they feel that way. I am learning some things. I find that men who talk the most are not always the bravest.

The news from Washington is bad. McClellon with his big army has gone into winter quarters instead of making an aggressive campaign toward Richmond. Gen. McClellard is doing
far more good work than all the rest. Some of the boys are dreaming of home and a good time pretty soon, but the Richmond papers talk like the south was just beginning to wake up. Lots of poor fellows will bite the dust before the end yet.

Friday Jan. 30th. I took a run this morning up to the Adjutants office and back, to try my wind. It is quite a distance from our barrack. I believe I am getting my legs and wind back, and I am awfully glad. Some of the poor fellows who were sick with me in St. Cloud, Minn., with measles, are losing ground. Orlando Adams of Mondovi says he has no wind any more. Nathan Mann says he has no vim any more and can't stand the drill exercises.

Lots of the boys are blue as wet stones. They say if they were only out of it, the Union might go to blazes. If they would take us where the traitors are, and give us a chance to fight, we would feel that we were doing something. But this dreadful sameness is wearing.

February 2nd. Dear mother: Your latest letter came this morning. I hope you wont delay writing because news is scarce. Anything from home is news if it is in your hand writing and only about the dog or cat. No, I don't suppose we get the war news earlier than you do. I thank you for sending the paper of tea, altho you remember I don't love it especially. But I am sure this will be good coming from the best of mothers. I will drink it in memory of you and home. I have read it somewhere that mothers are the best beings in the world and now I know it to be true. I trust I may live to come home and prove it to you. You think our officers should see that our bread and meat is good. My dear mother, they dont have a word to say about it. It's in the hands of the contractors. Don't worry, we will live thru it. and if southern bullets don't get us, we will tell you all about it when we come home. So Henry Amidon is married Well well, Henry is a good boy and I hope he has made no mistake in his choice. So the world goes. I used to think Mrs. Amidon's doughnuts and milk gravy was better than ours. You don't care mother do you if I say this. She was a nice cook and after walking down to Beef river, and taking a swim with Henry, and by the time we got back to his home for a late dinner, things tasted mighty good.

I was just a bit of a fool two years ago next March when I tried to wade across the foot bridge up to my chum in ice water near the mill dam to visit Henry when his folks were in Vermont. I had to back out and when I got back to shore I was so numb that I ran clear down to Uncle Dan Loomis' place and back to start my blood circulating. I was so cold I couldn't put all my clothes on and ran half naked.

I guess I've strung this letter plenty long, and part of it I can't read myself. I expect to catch it from father about my spelling as usual. Well thats alright. I ought to improve as I have bot me a pocket dictionary. It looks so much like a testament that our Chaplain came along the other day and asked me what chapter I was reading. Well, he said, the testament is the only book that is better anyway. He is a good man and wants every soldier to have a testament.

Direct as before to Co. G. Camp Randall, Madison.

Your son,

CHAUNCEY.

Yours of recent date just received. I am glad you are knocking the split rail endways. Now we will have a good fence and no mistake.

We must not put any hollow logs
in for a foundation like the one you
told of in Ohio, where one end came
on the outside and the other on the
inside of the field. I never think of
that story of the old sow trying to
get into the field after the farmer
had turned both ends on the outside,
without a good laugh. It seems you
have heard that small pox is prevalent here. Don't be scared. There
was but three or four cases and they
were in the 30th Regt. Deaths are
frequent enough but from other
causes. We are losing a man a day
on an average. The boys are buried
on a hill just above the camp, and
the roll of the muffled drum and the
blank discharge of a dozen muskets
is the solemn reminder that another
soldier has gone to his last bivouc.
Father, I begin to hate war and I
have seen nothing of it either. There
is so much contention among the
boys so much that we hear from the
Potamac, about treachery, of Mc-
Clellan and a never ending dispute
about the freedom of the slaves.
Just now too we are having a fear ful rumpus about the rations. The
boys are on the point of revolting
against the government, the con-
tractors or the state for the sour
bread and stinking meat rationed out
to us. The sickness of our Regt. is
laid to bad food. Stuff they call
coffee is made of various seeds.

It seems an outrage to get such
treatment in the Capitol of our State.
Curse upon curse is heaped upon the
contractors. We have appealed to
the members of the Legislature but
they can't help us. After we had
drawn our rations of sour bread the
other day some three hundred of the
boys marched down and stormed the
commissary with the sour loaves as
ammunition. The next day we got
better bread but it did not last long.
We hear that it is made out of musty
 crackers and soap. I don't know I'm
sure. I got a letter just this minute
and dear, I am so glad. I can see
you all gathered about the kitchen
stove. Mother has just filled the tea
kettle for morning, and father is fill-
ing the oven with kindling to wet
for starting the fire in the morning
and I can see myself cuddled up
under the blankets just as mother
used to leave me after saying good
night under the open shakes with
the snow drifting in upon me. I
don't believe I am homesick, but if
I could not recall in memory these
pleasant days of my boyhood I am
not quite sure but I should be. Tell
mother I am just childish enough to
recall that little trundle bed prayer
and to repeat it in a whisper every
night. I do it because it brings
me closer to her but how I cannot
tell.

We are going south pretty soon,
we hear it rumored every day.

I got a letter yesterday from Fred
Rosman. He recalled the times we
hoed corn together in 1857. Fred
and I layed great plans about killing
chickens and sending them to Foun-
tain City and selling to the steam
boats.

What funny folks boys are anyway.
We talked about a lot of things.
Most of our schemes have come to
naught. O the pity, that the world
don't pan out as they expected. Dora
The site of our camp here in Columbus K. Y. is fine. We can see for miles up and down the river. We are on a high bluff 200 feet higher than the town. The water is not good tho and we drink cold coffee to quench thirst. No enemy can approach us by water and on the land side we throw out pickets every day in a half moon circle touching the river above and below town, so we cannot be taken by surprise from the land. We have a lot of heavy cannon behind strong breast works overlooking the river so that no hostile fleet could reach us. On the land side there seems little danger of attack. Half the people in this part of Kentucky are Union and we would have plenty of warning of any rebel
advance. I have been on picket duty in the woods some two miles from town twice since coming here. My beat was supposed to keep moving constantly back and forth for two hours at a stretch.

A comrade would be on a similar beat either side of me but one was not allowed to have any conversation with comrades on guard. Say I want to tell you its a lonesome job specially if the night is cloudy and dark. Its an awful good time to think of home and soft warm bed and all that. Then I would say to myself, what's the use. When the stars are shining I always look for the dipper and the north star. They are both a little lower down here than in the north but they look just as friendly as they did in Wisconsin.

There is a sort of companionship in the stars when one is alone. I remember how I used to look up at the stars when I was out trapping alone with old Prince, over Traverse creek or in Borst Valley. The barking of foxes and the snort of passing deer would keep me awake for hours. Old Prince and I slept under the same blankets with nothing over us but the sky.

Ah, but those delightful days are no more and I am here in far away Kentucky. Confound it there goes the drum. It means put on your belts and get out for drill.

Good bye,

CHAUNCEY.

Columbus, Ky., March 5th, 1863

Dear folks at home: I sent you a letter a day or two ago and maybe I will hear from you soon. I hope I shall. I am well and we are hearing and seeing things and the days are not so heavy as at Madison. The weather is fine most of the time warm and clear.

We drill every day, do police work cleaning round the camp, and take a stroll now and then back in the country, far as the pickets will let us. We are really in the 'sunny south.' The slaves, contrabands, we call them, are flocking into Columbus by the hundred. General Thomas of the regular army is here enlisting them for war. All the old buildings in the edge of the town are more than full. You never meet one but he jerks his hat off and bows and shows the whitest teeth. I never saw a bunch of them together but I could pick out an Uncle Tom, a Quimbo, a Sambo, a Chloe, a Eliza or any other character in Uncle Tom's Cabin. The women take in a lot of dimes washing for the soldiers, and the men around picking up odd jobs. I like to talk with them. They are funny enough, and the stories they tell of slave life are stories never to be forgotten. Ask any of them how he feels and the answer nearly always will be, "Sah, I feels mighty good sah," or "God bress you massa, Ise so proud Ise a free man." Some are leaving daily on up river boats for Cairo and up the Ohio river. The Ohio has always been the river Jordan to the slave. It has been the dream of his life even to look upon the Ohio river.

The government transports returning from down river points where they had been with troops or supplies, would pick up free men on every landing and deliver them free of charge at places along the Ohio and upper Mississippi points.

The slaves are not all black as we in the north are apt to suppose. Some of them are quite light. Those used as house servants seem to have some education and don't talk so broad. A real pretty yellow girl
I am afraid you will think me given to much to frequent and long letters, but I remember fathers advice never to limit postage or letter paper expenses.

I should have mentioned that while the health of the boys is good in the main, we have some 20 in regimental hospital. Nathan Mann of our company and Orlando Adams of Mondovi are not expected to live. These poor fellows are victims of the measles and were sick with me in the hospital at St. Cloud, Minnesota. Direct as before to Columbus.

Your son,

CHAUNCEY.

Columbus K. Y. March 10th. 1863.


Dear parents: Rec'd a letter from home yesterday. It came to Columbia and was remailed to me at Cairo where our company had made a halt enroute with five other companies to Ft Donaldson. We stopped at Cairo to get our new guns. They are not here but we are going to wait for them. Cairo is not so muddied as when we came here in February. Still the water in the river is 12 feet higher than the prairie behind the town. The levee or filling is all that saves the town from drowning.

I am sorry you are so frightened when you read of the big guns and stacks of cannon balls. I thought I had a more courageous mother. You know it is said that it takes ten ton of iron and lead to kill one soldier. Just think of that and take courage. They looked kind of ugly to me at first but now I never think of their being fearsome. We may have a different feeling about them when the time comes to use them. I stood guard last night on a government transport loaded with hard tack and sow belly (salt pork). I never saw so many rats, the boat was swarming with them. Of course they had plenty to eat. I counted more than a hundred rat holes in the cracker

about 18 was delivering some washing to the boys yesterday. She left her master and mistress in December and came to Columbus. In answer to the questions of the boys she said she left home because her mistress was cross to her and all other servants since Lincoln's emancipation. She said her mother came with her. One of the boys asked her why her father did not come with her. She said," My father haint no colored man, he's a white man." When the boys began to laugh she picked up her two bushel baskets of clothes, balanced it on her head and went her way. That girl must have made fifty stops among the tents leaving her basket of clothes. I wonder if she heard the same dirty talk in each of them. The talk wasn't clean, but some of us who thet so just let it pass and kept still.

The talk now is our regiment will be divided, half sent up the Ohio to Ft. Donoldson the other half down the river. But this may be but one of many like rumors. There is always something in the air. Say but the picture before me as I write this is fine. I am sitting on the rampart of the Fort 200 feet above the river. The river, turbid and swollen from melting snows in Ohio and Indiana, boils and swirls as its mighty current strikes the bluff almost directly below where I sit. A regiment of calvary has just landed from a government boat, and are climbing the bluff in a long winding column. Their horses are fresh and they come prancing along, the swords of their riders jingling, as if they were proud of their part in the scene. They don't know where they are going but doubtless to garrison some post farther south in the state. Wrote Ben Gardner some time ago, am afraid he has fallen or taken prisoner. He has always been prompt to answer. His regiment is south of Memphis.
boxes. The day before we left Columbus a steamboat tried to pass down by the fort without landing. She was hailed and ordered to land. It was found that she was loaded from St. Louis with medical supplies, mostly quinine for the rebel forces at Vicksburg. Of course the boat and its cargo were confiscated.

I am glad you like your new team so well. I hope they will be alright. I shall want a cutter to match them when I get back so I can step round a little.

Say mother, I had a question asked me yesterday by Elder Harwood, our Chaplain, that set me to thinking and stumped me so I couldn’t answer. He asked me if I would go with him after the war. He said he wanted to get five or six good smart young boys that would go with him thru college, I answered that I could not say at once but would tell him later. Now mother, advise me what to say to him. The Elder is a minister of course, and altho he did not say, I suppose he meant to educate us for ministry. Mr. Harwood is a mighty fine man and I like to hear him talk. He preached the other Sunday in one of the churches, at Columbus, and in his prayer he thanked God for the freedom of the slaves. Some of the boys don’t like this in him, but they are mostly the tough sort. I was in his tent when a colored woman brot her washing and he spoke to her as nicely as if she was a white woman. When she curtseyed and called him massa, he said, “My poor woman I am not your massa, you have no massa any more, President Lincoln has made all the colored people free just like the white folks.” The poor woman kept saying, “bress de Lord, bress de Lord, dis am de yeah of jubilee.” When he handed her a fifty cent scrip to pay for the washing she looked at the picture of Lincoln on the corner of the bill, and putting it to her mouth, kissed it. The Elder asked her what she did that for, and she answered, “O bress you honey, Massa Abraham Lincoln is de first and onliest Savior of us poor niggers, an we des love dat face of his.”

The order to go to Ft Donaldson, has been recalled and we are to go back in a day or so to Columbus, I am glad of anything to get us out of these rat hole barracks. They run over our faces at night and we can’t sleep. When I remember the talks of Elder Morse and father about the wrongs of the slaves, I wish they might be in Columbus a few days and see and hear them as I have.

Your son,
CHAUNCEY.

Columbus, Ken., March 20th. 1863.

Dear mother: The six campanies of our Regt. ordered last week to Ft. Donaldson returned to Columbus last night after a week’s stay at Cairo. Glad to get back to the top of the big bluff once more. We got here at midnight. There is an awful flood in the Ohio pouring into the Mississippi at Cairo from the melting snow above and the seething water is black as mud. The air of our camp is fine compared to the miasma of Cairo. A short time ago I read a letter in the Alma Journal purporting to be a dream by S. S. Cooke. It shifted the boys to a dot. Some of them tho’ it was a day dream with his senses and eyes wide open. It seems you are still having winter weather. Grass here is fine picking for cattle and there is a lazy summer like quietness in the air. The trees are leafing and the spring birds are here in force. I have seen several gray thrush in my strolls in the woods and strings of ducks and wild geese are passing north daily. Well if I was a wild goose I suppose I would go north too.

March 21st. After drill went out
in the edge of the woods. Its more peaceful and homelike than the racket of the camp. I can see the picket guard beyond me slowly pacing his beat. There is no enemy about but the discipline and regulations are just as rigid as they are in Georgia. No white man can come within the picket line except he has the pass word. A negro is allowed to come in. We are afraid that the whites may be spies, we know that the blacks are our friends. The health of the regiment is good save a few cases of bowels trouble. The boys call it the Kentucky Quick Step. There is more sickness among the poor lazy blacks. They are filling all the vacant houses and even sleeping under the trees, so anxious are they to get near de "Lincoln soldiers." They live on scraps and whatever they can pick up in camp and they will shine our shoes or do any camp work for an old shirt or cast off coat. They had a revival meeting at the foot of the bluff last night and such shouting and singing and moaning. It was Massa Lincoln was a savior that came after two hundred years of tribulation in the cotton field and cane. They had long known that something was going to happen because so many times their massa had visitors and they would tell the servants to stay in their cabins and not come to the "big house" until they was called. Then some of the house servants would creep round under the window and hear the white folks talking about the war and that the slaves were going to be free. And when the one that was sent to listen would come back and tell the others, they would get down on their knees and pray in whispers and give thanks to the Lord. Everything with the darkies is Lord, Lord. Their faith that the Lord will help them was held out more than 200 years. I sometimes wonder if the Lord is not partial to the white race and rather puts it onto the black race because they are black. We sometimes get terribly confused when we try to think of the law of Providence. This black race for instance, they can't talk ten words about slavery and old Massa and old Missus, but they get in something about "de blessed Lord and de lovely Jesus" and yet in this land of Washington, God has permitted them to be bought and sold like our cattle and our hogs in the stock yards, for more than 200 years. I listened for two hours this morning to the stories of a toothless old slave with one blind eye who had come up the river from near Memphis. He told me a lot of stuff. He said his master sold his wife and children to cotton planter in Alabama to pay his gambling debts, and when he told his master he couldn't stand it, he was tied to the whipping post stripped and given 40 lashes. The next night he ran to the swamps. The bloodhounds were put on his track and caught him and pulled him down. They bit him in the face and put out his eye and crushed one of his hands so he could not use it. He stripped down his pants and showed me a gash on one of his hips where one of the hounds hung onto him until he nearly bled to death. This happened in sight of Nashville, the Capitol of Tennessee. I told this to some of the boys and they said it was all hush, that the niggers were lying to me. But this story was just like the ones in Uncle Tom's Cabin and I believe them. And father knows of things very much like this that are true.

I will write you again soon.

Your son,

CHAUNCEY.

Columbia K. Y., March 25th, 1863.

25th Regiment Wisc. Vol

Dear father:

Your latest letter rec'd. I am perfectly happy to know that all are well at home. Don't worry
about my morals or my health, I am taking pretty good care of both. The life of the soldier is not a very good reform school, but a boy can keep clean in the army, bad as it is around him, if he has the stuff in him. Our Lieutenant Colonel was talking about the loose ways of some of the soldiers the other day. He said there would be one man if he lived that would go home as clean as when he entered the army, meaning himself of course.

Dan Hadley got a letter from Geo. W. Gilkey the other day. It was a nice friendly letter. He said he hoped we would hurry up and lick the rebels so we could come home as they needed our society in Buffalo Co. He said the girls were all waiting for a soldier boy. Mr. Gilkey seems to be a fine man. I see by the northern papers there is talk of conscripting. Are you in the conscript limit? I hope not. I would hate to see you in the army. I don't think the government will need any more soldiers. They are planning a big campaign on the Potomac to try and break Lee's army. Grant has driven Gen. Pendleton into Vicksburg and is closing in around that city. The move seems to be to lay seige and starve him out. We hear a lot of such talk on the streets but the fellows keep mighty straight in their conduct.

There are some rebel officers in prison here. I was on provost guard the other day and stood on a post near a barred window of the jail. I could see four or five young looking fellows in the room walking back and forth in their grey uniforms, trimmed in fancy gold braid and shoulder straps. They would call me up to the window and try to make snakes out of me. They said I was a black Republican and that I was fighting for the niggers and didn't know it. The oldest one talked like a gentleman, asked me a lot of questions about Wisconsin and said he had a boy in the southern army about my age.

Since the hot weather we are all getting our hair shaved off. Mine is cut close to my scalp. Boats are passing daily loaded with troops for Vicksbury. It begins to look war-like in that vicinity. There will be a big battle at Pemberton will come out to his breastworks and fight. We look any day for orders to go down there. We don't know the names of the troops that go by but we always give them a good big hurrah and they send it back with a roar.

We expect the 27th Wisconsin here tomorrow. We will make them welcome as we have a lot of picket duty for the force at this place. Yes I wish you would send me the Sentinel while we stay here at least. Northern papers are peddled in camp at from ten to fifteen cents apiece.

It's nice that you have some fresh cows. Better not try to raise the calves you have so much else to do. We get pretty good milk from the nearby farmers but they don't know how to make butter. Its white and rank. The cows down here are a poor starved looking race. They have no grass for hay much to depend on, they have corn stalks for feed in winter. The Blue Grass region is away east of here. That is the home too of the Kentucky horses we have read about.

Well, the boys are putting on their belts getting ready for the call to drill so I must close for this time.

Love to all,
Your son,
CHAUNCEY.

Columbus, Ky, 25th regt.
April 10th., 1863.

Dear mother:

Your much valued letter received. I am just as glad as I can be that all are well, but there is a tone of plaint as to things I can't
understand. It must be you have
the blues. Don't think of me as be-
ing in danger for a minute, for I am
having a royal good time. Its this
way with me. If I have the blues it
is when I get a fit on of thinking of
the past when I did'nt do as I should.
I guess you would call it remorse.
Some of the younger fellows and I
have talked these things over and
I find they were kind of troubled in
the same way. They said it made
them feel awful mean when they
remembered some sly things or some
deception they played on their moth-
er and father. These things bring
on homesickness and that sends
them to the hospital, because they
can't eat and so are put down on the
sick list. I think as much of home
as any of them but I don't want to
see it until we thrash the rebels to a
finish. We have four Wisconsin reg-
iments at this place, the 25, 27, 31
and 34, a full brigade. You have
doubtless heard, that the Gov. is en-
listing negroes and forming negro
regiments. They are officered by
whites and there are a lot of candi-
dates for positions in all the white
regiments. Some 25 have applied for
positions from our regiment. There
is a lot of joking on the side about
the fellows that want to officer the
nigger regiments. Our regt. has just
drawn a new outfit of rubber blank
ets, hats and short coats. Enclosed
you will find some flowers given me
by a poor black washer woman I
met on the road up the bluff today
with a bundle of clothes on her head.
As she handed them to me she said
"Please massa will you cept dese
flowers from a poor nigger woman
who jes loves de Lincoln soldiers."
Maybe you has a sweet heart and
will send um to her." I told her I had
a sweet heart, my mother, and she
said "You's a good boy honey." The
black folks are awful good, poor mis-
erable things that they are. The
boys talk to them fearful and treat
them most any way and yet they
can't talk two minutes but tears
come to their eyes and they throw
their arms up and down and praise
de Lord for de coming of de Lincoln
soldiers.

In your last letter you spoke of my
going to school, if I ever return... I
am not bothering about things so
far in the future. I am troubled
about this awful war. Maybe I
ought to think more of Webster, as
father keeps jibing me about my
spelling. If he will give me time
I will learn to spell too as I aint but
16 years old, that is I'll be 17 on the
15th of May if there has been no
juggling with the family register.

By the way I nearly lost some val-
ables the other night. I was on
Provost guard, the other night in
town, at the depot. My relief had
lain down at 11 o'clock for a four
hours sleep. At 3 o'clock in the
morning we were routed to go on
guard, feeling in my pockets I found
my gold pen missing. My money I
had placed in my shirt pocket was
safe. The comrade next me lost $17.
In the morning my gold pen and
holder was found in the mud near the
platform. A detective force has
been looking for the thieves but they
don't find any thieves. Word has
just come that Nathan Mann of our
Co. has just died in the hospital.
Poor fellow, he has two brothers left
in our company.

A skirmish yesterday at Hickman,
26 guerillas were captured and bro't
to this place for confinement as pris-
oners of war. There is nothing very
stirring about us. The boys are get-
ting tired of mere guard duty and
are hoping for any chance that will
send us to the front. For my part
I aint dying to go to Vicksburg where
their is a better chance of getting
killed as some claim they are. May-
be they are more anxious to die for
their country than I am but from
what I know of them I am doubtful.
There is nothing farther from my
mind at this writing than a wish to
die for anybody or anything. I am hoping and praying for anything to make the rebels squeal and call it quits so I can come home and have a good time. Of course I am willing to take my chance, come what may, but I would a little rather live, come what may.

Tell Elder Morse, Henry is all right and eats, if any difference more than his rations every day.

Love to all.

Your son,

CHAUNCEY.

Head Quarters 25th Regt. Wis Vol. Inft.
Columbus, Ky.
April 15th, 1867

Dear Father:—Yours of April 9th came in due time. I am so glad all are well and that you are so cheerful and hopeful that the war will soon end.

You must be very brave to undertake so much work as you have planned, this spring. I have just received a letter from cousin Ben Gardner, whose regiment is camped just back of Memphis, Tennessee. You know he is in the cavalry. He says he is orderly and having a good time. Plenty of rations, no bullets to face and regular pay. He says, "I hope to meet you my son and talk over family matters and get a good look at you." I'll bet he is a lively fellow and loves a good time. He writes about the war as if it was a picnic. I enclose his last letter. He has no fear of rebel bullets, you can see that.

We moved our camp yesterday over near the brow of the overhanging bluff. The view is much finer especially of the Mississippi. Say father do you know I never look at the river but I think of home. I go down to the shore nearly every day to wash my feet. When I dip my hand in the water I think that it comes from Wisconsin and I wonder what part of it came from Beef River. It is terribly black and muddy, made so by the water of the Missouri that flows into it above St. Louis. From our new camp we can see the daily mail boat, 12 or 15 miles away that brings us good and bad news from home and from Washington.

Last night I lay awake for hours listening to the honk honk of the wild geese passing over our camp toward the north. Does the dam which we repaired, the beaver dam east, still hold? If it does you must have plenty of shooting at ducks and geese this spring. Don't think me homesick father, when I tell you I turned over many times in my bunk last night thinking of the stories you told me of the early French traders who broke the great beaver dams to get the beavers and so destroyed the nesting places of the wild ducks and geese that made their homes in our valley and on the neighboring creeks before the coming of the whites. That novel called "The Prairie Flower" still sticks in my craw. I never read any book that so haunted me, sleeping or awake. I remember that you told me that it was poison to read such stuff, but I don't believe it has hurt me. The people in "The Prairie Flower" were not in fear of any law but they did right in the midst of the Sioux Indians and the lonesome hills and wild animals about them. I remember you said Prairie Flower was a fictitious character, an unreal character, and that women were not as good on the average as she was painted. Well father, I thought you might be wrong then but now I have come to think that you were right. Getting back to ducks and geese and the beavers, how I wish I might be with you this spring. What lots of fun you are having. All this passed through my mind last night as I lay in my tent with the lappel thrown back so I could see the north star and the dipper. Both of them are nearer the horizon than in Wisconsin. But they brought to me in their
silence and sameness something of the nearness of home.

The deep dark forests on the Mis-

souri side reaching back for miles are
slowly turning to green. Spring is
here and no mistake. The freshness
of the grass and leaves, the golden
sunshine and carol of birds in every
tree, give no hint of this human war.
One thing I most forgot. I expressed
$20 with Capt. Darwin to Durand.
You may have to go to his home for
it. His family lives about three miles
from Durand. I have an overcoat I
wish was home. I will give it away
to the first darkey that looks like
Uncle Tom. I know there are some
grey backs in it. I would rather put
the grey backs on some darkey than
on mother, for I know she dreads
such things.

I send you today a couple of
southern papers. One, The War
Eagle, printed at this place, the other
a Vicksburg sheet full of brag and
bluster about fooling the Yankees.
They are a fair specimen of southern
newspapers. Are there any copper-
heads up there? It makes the boys
mad to read of copperheads at home.
They are more dangerous than rebels
at the front because the south is
made to believe they have lots of
friends in the north. They had better
lay low if we ever get home. They
will find its no joke to the south.

How I should like to have a bro-
therly tussel with brother K. and I
think of the boys so often. Well, we
will have a good time when the war
is over.

How does Henry Amidon prosper?
Confound him he has forgotten old
times I guess. I have written him
but he don’t answer. I asked him in
my letter if he remembered the time
his father caught us down by the
swimming pool laying in the hot sand
stark naked and covering ourselves
with the sand. I never was more
ashamed in my life than when his
father hollared and yelled to see us
and we rolled into the creek to hide.
Henry didn’t mind it as much as I
did. O, but those were happy days
and we didn’t know it.

Father good bye till next week.
Your son,

CHAUNCEY.

Columbus, K. Y. May 3rd. 1863.

Dear sister: I am pleased that
you have a good school and a good
boarding place. That strapping boy
so full in his lessons may come
handy in a fight with the others
some time. Try and get home to
see the folks often. Mother is wor-
ried for fear our regiment will be
sent to Vicksburg where Grant is
collecting a big army to storm the
city. There are no rumors of our
going of late. tho troops are pass-
ing down the river daily bound for
Vicksburg.

So Ezra C is writing home some
dreadful tales of guns and drums
and gory battles? Let me tell you a
bit of a secret. I don’t want to
dispute anybody, but he has not fired
a gun. His story of the groans of
the wounded and dying and the din
of battle, does his imagination more
credit than his sense of truth. I
know where their regiment is posted
and if they have been in any fights,
the war department don’t know of
it.

Our Colonel has granted 100 fur-
ances to the regt. which means 10
en to each company. Those that
are sick and convalescent will get
the preference. I am glad I am not
in either list of unfortunates. I am
feeling fine. I believe I have re-
covered from every ill effect of the
measles in Minnesota. Poor Orlando
Adams of Mondovi is still down and
may never get better. Orlando has
applied for a discharge, but they are
hard to get. I wish he might go
home for he is a very sick boy, and
some say there is no hope for him.
John Le Gore and one or two Mon-
dovi boys are going to get furloughs.
Some new war songs have struck camp lately. One of them is "When Johnny Comes Marching Home." The band boys tent, Chet Ide's headquarters, gets the new songs first. If there is anything funny about them, we can hear Chet laugh his peculiar hearty laugh. Another darkey sang, "Babylon is Fallen," has been going the rounds. It begins, "Don't you see de black cloud risen ober yonder, whar de ole plantation am?" I was in a saloon down town yesterday with a lot of the boys, some darkies were singing it. I could have heard it all day. The boys would chip in a penny each and the black fellows sang it over and over. Then they got the negroes to butting. Alee Harvey gave five cents, I gave five, and a lot of others. The darkies would back off like rams and come together head to head. They said it did not hurt, but I believe it did. The boys kept setting them on by giving them 5 cent scrip. The darkies were kept about half drunk to give them grit.
I was on picket duty the day I got your letter, about two miles in the country. I went to a house near my beat and found a lot of Union girls, anyway they said they were for the union. One of them asked me my age. When I told her she said that was just about her age. They gave me a lunch of corn bread and a piece of pork. When I came away I got some milk in my coffee can and a piece of Johnnie cake for 10 cents. I saw three blacks, two men and a women working around. I don't know whether they were slaves or hired help. I am going to get a pass one of these days and go back and buy some of the old ladie's butter. Of course I aint thinking about the girls. I have lately found out there are a lot of fellows getting passes to go into the country for milk and butter that are lying like troopers. It aint milk they want nor butter. They are looking for pretty girls or rich widows. Such things are common talk in the tents after the candles are lit until bedtime. Some of them have got so far in their fancies that they say they are coming back to Columbus after the war is over.
By the way, have you got that box of clothing yet? You say nothing about it. I often think of you and father singing together the plantation songs of the slaves. But do you know I would give O, so much if you could have heard what I heard last night. A steamboat from St. Louis lay here at wharf last night waiting for orders. After unloading its freight, the dock hands, all darkies, joined in singing a lot of plantation songs. I sat on some cotton bales watching them and listening to their curious speech. They gathered on the forecastle of the boat and for more than an hour sang the most pitiful songs of slave life I ever heard. The negroes may not know much, but they sing the most sorrowful songs in the sweetest voices I ever heard. It is wrong for me to have wished you here to hear them, because you would have shed tears. Just before I left one of them came up the gang plank near me. I asked him how long he had been free. He said he quit his old massa in Tennessee last December and shipped on de steamer. Natchese at Memphis. I asked him where he learned the songs he had been singing. He answered "I don't know massa, cept da jes grew up wid me. Seems like I always knewed um. Maybe I learned um from my old Mammy who used to sing um wid me for she was sold down in Alabama." As the poor black wretch shuffled along past me (he had no clothes above his waist) I noticed scars across his back as if made by a whip.
I paid 10 cents for a New York paper yesterday. It had a speech in it by Wendell Phillips on the horrors of slavery. I am just beginning
to see what made father walk the floor and say hard things about the slave holders after reading a speech by Wendell Phillips.

You will get this letter when you go home.

Death to copperheads.

Your brother,

CHAUNCEY.

Columbus K. Y. May 12th 1863,
Hd. Quarters 25th Wisc.

Dear mother:

At last we are under marching orders for the South. Hurrah. The orders came yesterday and I am just writing to tell you the glad news. I don't know why but the boys are clear gone wild about it. They say they enlisted to fight and they want to fight. We have some rebel prisoners down town and they have been talking pretty saucy to the guard. They say one butternut (that is the color of their uniform) is good for four Yanks. Poor ignorant devils. I know from their talk they don't come down and marry them. They don't know but little more than the negroes, they use the same brogue. If you shut your eyes you would think from their jargon you was talking to a lot of "t'ggers" as they call the blacks. A call for dress parade. I suspect some important order will be read. Will finish later.

May 13th.

This morning we were relieved from further marching orders and told to resume our former quarters. Last night came a rush order to strike camp and march double quick to a boat lying at the wharf. I had just gone to bed like the others and was asleep. Orderlies were rushing from one tent to another calling the boys to up and dress and fall in. In ten minutes time or less every tent along the ten company streets was struck and the match applied to everything of bedding and bunk boards that would burn. Eck Harvey and Bill Anderson the twins as they were called the two biggest men in the company had just come up from town and were feeling pretty well. They were swearing and calling it a rebel scare. After everything was in a blaze and the companies lining up for orders a cavalryman came dashing along bound for the Colonels tent. What did the messengers mean? Was it a countermanding order or was it a hurry order? The order came to return to camp, and the camp all in a blaze. Such a bowl as went up from a thousand mad men you never heard. I am sure it must have looked to the hundreds of negroes who were watching us as if the devil with all his fire works and his imps had come to Columbus. This is but one incident of that suspense peculiar to the life of the soldier. Here we had packed up our movables and burned the rest, and it was midnight and dark but for the fire. We lay down and pulled over us for the rest of the night the tent cloth and we went to sleep and dreamed of home and of father and mother just the same.

While we were eating our breakfast our good Lieut. Colonel ordered us to loose no time in falling in without armes. We were in line in a twinkling and waiting for further orders. The Colonel then told us that Gen. Hooker had won a victory and he wanted us to give three great big cheers and a lot of tigers. And they were loud and long. Before this letter reaches you, you will have heard of Hooker's victory. Old Hooker is a fox, Old Hooker is a coon, is the praise heard on every side. And he deserves it all if what we hear is true. I heartily wish he had the bloody 25th in his command. If he had I kind of think we would have a chance to work off some of our conceit and surplus patriotism. Though we never met the enemy it is our belief no thousand rebels ever
stood in line of battle that could take our colors.

The 11th Missouri came through here yesterday from Clinton 12 miles from this place. They are a hard favored set of war worn veterans. They had seen service. I never saw in my life such a sight as followed in their rear. Such human beings once slaves. Some were black as ebony with great pitiful white rolling eyes, and some nearly white and as pretty and polite as any woman I ever saw. I wonder mother if you ever thought what it is to be a slave, that is for the women, the mothers and daughters. I have thought it all out and I will tell you some time if I ever come home.

Some sardine of a scamp pulled the rope out of our flag pole the other day. Ten dollars was offered any one who would climb the pole and put it in the pole again. As I write there is a daring fellow on the tip top of the pole putting the rope in the pully. As Lieutenant Brackett has skipt our orderly has been promoted to second Lieutenant and our second to first Lieutenant. Sargeant McKay of Mondovi takes the first Sargeants place and Adam Heimbau of Mondovi comes in as 8th Corporal. I think we have the best set of officers in the regiment. We have a bully captain even if he did try to resign at one time. Captain Darwin is a real good man. I would rather go into battle with him than any other man on the job. He can't keep step to the music, but he aint to blame. It just happens there is no time or music about him. The boys make fun of him but they like him just the same.

The fellows that were promoted had to set up the beer, and the way some of the brave lads drank to their health was a bit saddening to see. Of course your son had to drink some beer, not to be out of fashion, thou to tell the whole truth he had joined the cold water society. My excuse is I was told I could drink cider, and I find I can't, so I was deceived. But I promise you, mother I have not touched a drop of whiskey nor will I while I am in the army. I have never forgotten the firm stand father took soon as he found he liked the taste of drink, and I never shall. I never took a swallow of beer but I felt as guilty as a thief. I wrote sister D. only the other day. Love to the boys and father.

Your son,

CHAUNCEY.

Columbus, K. Y. May 23rd. 1863.
Hd. Quarters, 25th, Wis. Infantry.

Dear mother:—I sent you a long letter the other day but I forgot to mention my birthday. In fact I was not reminded of it until the day after but it has come and gone. I am sure if I had been at home my good mother would have reminded me of it in the shape of something good to eat. I don't know as I am any older feeling than I was two weeks ago and the future looks just the same. When I see an old person I never think of being that way myself. Maybe the Lord will perform a miracle and keep me young like the story in the old testament, but if he doesn't I am pretty well satisfied to be in this good old world. When I go back in the country, away from the sight of these big black cannons sticking their muzzles through the port holes of the fort, and look up to the green of the trees, and hear the hum of the bees and the twitter of the birds, and see the peaceful quiet of the country. It is hard to realize that the country is being torn to pieces in a big war.

Dear mother, I should have answered your last letter more promptly. I have written so many of late. I had almost forgotten I owed you one. You know it is said everything is far in war, and I know you will excuse me.

During the last four days we have been shading our tents with brush. I
tell you we have them fixed up nice. Standing off a little ways one can hardly see the tents and it makes it so much cooler. Hot? Well I should remark. These May days in old Kentucky make everybody lawl but the darkies and nobody think of them. The heat pretty near drove us out of the tents in mid day. We take turns going over to the hospital to fan the sick boys and brush away the flies. The doctors say the younger ones are dying of homesickness much as anything.

Some of my chums and myself have been skylarking out in the country of late and we have visited a lot of pretty Kentucky homes. In a good many of them I am sure they hated to see us come in. They might be Union people but they hate to see us talking to their slaves and the soldiers were a little saucy where they thought they were not wanted. We would hunt the strawberry beds and eat them too. We would call for milk, butter, apples and other good things to eat. Most of these people we knew were our bitter enemies and some of the boys were afraid their bread was poisoned. We found some places where we were invited into the house and where the young ladies would smile and would talk to us about their homes. We knew these smiling young ladies might have been traitors and might have spies hidden away to hear what was being said. The dwellings or cabins of the slaves were mostly empty. Here and there we saw a few old negroes who chose to stay by Ol missus and masser to leaving their old Kentucky home to go out into a strange world. These old slaves were awful shy and always made some excuse to get away when we tried to talk to them. I suppose they were afraid Masser would see them. I often wonder where the poor blacks will go to find a home and something to eat. Those I have talked with say they are treated better now since they can run away without being chased by dogs.

We found a pretty country home the other day where the young lady took us out in her flower garden and gave each of us a bunch of flowers. I am sure her mother did not like to see us there. She had a cross look on her face and watched us thru the window as if she feared we might capture the girl and run away with her. When we went away one of the Durand boys told the girl he hoped to come back after the war and making the prettiest bow she said she hoped he would. When we went back to camp we told Chet Ide and Joel Harmon of Mondovi what a picnic we had and we all joined in and sang “Our Old Kentucky Home.” I found out a strange thing lately, the darkies don’t know anything about the song, of Old Kentucky Home, except as they have picked it up from hearing the whites sing it. I guess I must have thought it came out of some negroes heart. Anyway when ever I met a negro alone anywhere I always wanted to ask him to sing that song. Those I did ask would smile and grin and say “Massa I don’t know it.” Their ignorance of the song gave me a curious feeling.

This is a long letter. I hope it will find you all well as I am and happy. Love to the boys, father and sister Do.

Your boy,

CHAUNCEY.

Columbus K. Y. May 29th 1863.
Hd Quarters 25th.

My dear mother:

Your last letter came in due time, just two and a half days from the hour it was written. It must have been dated wrong. I got a letter from father the same day. It had been held up somewhere. I suppose the mail clerks get things mixed sometimes.
We are under orders to march on short notice. We don’t know if it means to go south, north, east or west. It means just one thing and nothing else “be ready.” A soldier can’t find any fault and if he does he is put in the guard house or if on a march he is tied up by the thumbs.

We have cooked up five day’s rations and are ready at the first note of command to fall in. I am in a mighty hurry and must make this letter brief. Just another word. One of my mates wants me to say a good word for him to sister D. He is a nice clean fellow and all right. His only fault is quite common he don’t think the black race is just human. I can’t beat him in argument but I know in my heart he is wrong about these poor wretched black people. You need not get excited, marching orders may not mean anything.

We may not strike tents for a month yet.

May 30th.

Was out last night where the evening gun, a black cannon booms the hour of sunset. A man pulls a string called a lanyard and a roar that shakes the great bluff follows, and all this means sunset. I learned last night what it meant in French. I was standing near the big black cannon which stands almost straight above the river some 300 feet. A negro sweep doing police work, a fine looking mulatto was idly leaning upon his shovel and staring at a passing boat. What are you thinking about I asked? Taking off his dirty cap and bowing, he answered with a smile, “I kind hates to tell you, but I was thinking of my Jewlarke.” I didn’t know what a Jewlarke was so I asked him. “Why Massa he answered just a sweetheart.” and he told me his story how he was a slave in Louisina, how he came out as cook for his master who was a Lieutenant in a Louisiana Regiment, how his master’s cavalry company was surprised by Union cavalry was fired upon by our boys, how he fell down to make believe he was dead and when our boys came up, he jumped to his feet and came back to Columbus with our boys. He had been at work in the fort at Columbus ever since. Whenever he spoke he took off his cap. I asked him what he done that for he said slaves had to do that in the south. I asked him if he was glad he was free and he said, “O yes Massa, I would be glad if I had my Kizzie wid me.” (Kizzie was his sweetheart.) The poor fellow took off his hat as he said this and slowly replaced it again. I am sure I saw tears in the fellow’s eyes. The song of Nellie Gray came to my mind. It disappoints me that the negroes have never heard these songs. They stare at you when you sing them. While we were talking the gunner came and fixing the lanyard pulled the cord with a jerk and with a mighty roar that sent a tremor thru the bluff and a black smoke that hid the river for a moment told us that the sun had set and the flagman at head quarters slowly lowered the stars and stripes. Soliquasha, said my colored friend. What do you mean by that I asked. That is French he replied meaning sunset. Here was a slave teaching me French. Mother do you know I asked myself this question, what right have I simply because I am white to be the master race, while this man knowing more than I should be a slave because he is black. He called himself a Creole; that is a negro born in Louisina. He said he was born in a Parish 50 miles from New Orleans. His master raised sugar and rice and they tooted it on two wheel carts to New Orleans where they sold it. His Massa’s plantation was long side a live oak swamp that was full of deer, bear and alligators. He said the “Gaiters” warn’t so bad as folks let on. “De niggers had a swimming hole in de bayou whar an old Gator had raised a nest of young uns ever
year. In the winter the gaitors buried themselves like frogs in the mud. When they came out in the spring you could hear them bellow all night long." I don't know and I don't care whether this fellow was stuffing me or not. I was interested. Things he said about New Orleans and things he told me about his master's plantation away back in the swamps made me think of the story of Uncle Tom's Cabin. It looks as tho this war was to change all this. The South has had a mighty soft snap with darkies to do their work for a hundred years, while their masters have grown rich and insolent to us of the north. The papers don't say much about it but the truth is these slaveholders, these three hundred and fifty thousand chivalrous southern gentlemen, who own some four million of poor ignorant fellows who pushed to the front and mowed down by Union bullet don't know what they are fighting for. Love to father, brother and sister D.

Your son,
CHAUNCEY.


Dear folks at home:
The final order came to-night after we had gone to bed, to be ready to go to Vicksburg by boat in the morning. There was a lot of skirry around all the long night. Clothes at the washerwoman's had to be looked after. Letters had to be written as I am writing this by the dull light of a tallow candle, some to wives some to mothers, fathers and many to sweethearts. I hope there were no unhappy girls because of this sudden leaving near about Columbus. But I fear there was a few. I am quite sure of two or three. Well. I am content if we must leave Columbus even if it has been a sort of "Old Kentucky Home" to us for nearly two months. It is one o'clock in the morning and the lights are yet burning in the tents. In a lot of the tents they are singing the "Old Kentucky Home." I guess the boys don't think much of its meaning but sing it because we are in Old Kentucky. A lot of colored women are running about the tents collecting washing bills. They all seem to know that we are to leave in the morning. There will be a lot of unpaid washing bills, but the darkies won't mind it much as they are used to working for nothing.

Max Brill my bunk mate has finally shut his mouth, so has Delos Allen and John LeGore my other tent mates, leaving me to blow out the light and go to sleep. Will finish letter and mail it in the morning.

May 31st. When we woke up this morning we found a great big New Orleans side wheel packet laying at the wharf waiting to take us on board. The roll call found many of us still asleep after such a night. Many of the boys fell in for roll call in nothing but shirts and drawers. I got on all but my pants and shoes. About half the company was in the same plight. The orderly was so good natured we gave him a good long cheer and ran back to our tents to finish dressing. The town was crowded with country people mostly colored folks to see us leave. The grand march to the boat began at ten o'clock and it was near three P. M. when we were all packed away on the three decks. Our company was on the hurricane deck. When the black deck hands loosened the four inch cable that tied our ship to the shore, the Regimental band began to play Dixie. The big boat floated out into the current, the big propelling wheels turned round and round in the muddy waters and looking back at the big high bluff which had been our home so long we did not know whether to be glad or sorry that we were leaving it.

There were hundreds to wave us goodbye, yes thousands. There were
loud cheers and good wishes from the regiments we left behind. The blacks were afraid to come out in the open to show their good feeling but down by the river bank and from behind houses and fences where they could not be seen by the whites, they threw up their caps and hats and danced like crazy. The women caught their skirts with both hands and bowed and courtesied and some dropped upon their knees and held their hands above their head as if they were praying. The boys didn't seem to notice it much because they were niggers, but it made me think of some things in Uncle Tom's Cabin. I take one last look at Columbus and the fort on the bluff with the big black cannon peering out over the river. We make a bend in the river and Columbus is hidden from view.

A lot of boys are gathered on the forecastle singing "My Old Kentucky Home." I suspicion the fellows have a homesick streak on, they sing with so much feeling. Hickman is in sight but four miles away. I must close this line in order to mail it there. Those lines of Charles McKay I have heard father quote so often come to mind, "Groaning, steaming, panting, down the Mississippi."

Your Son,
CHAUNCEY.

Sa Haines Bluff, June 8, 1863, 25th Wis. Vol.

Dear father and mother: I've seen some tough hours the last three days, but am feeling pretty well at this writing. Every night the last three or four we have been laying on our arms, expecting the bugle call to fall in for battle. The nights are hot and sultry and we lay with nothing but the sky for covering. You know how warm it is in Wisconsin in June but O, Lord it is nothing to Mississippi. Corn with you is about six inches high. Here it is four feet higher than a man's head. I never saw such big corn. While we lay at Satartia the boys went wild raiding and foraging the country for anything they could eat or wear or destroy, and it was all right, for every white man and woman was ready to shoot or poison us. The negroes were our only friends and they kept us posted on what the whites were doing and saying. Their masters told their slaves that the Yankees had horns that they eat nigger babies and that they lived in the north in houses built of snow and ice and that the Yankee soldiers were fighting to take the niggers back north where they would freeze to death. It is a fright what stories the whites tell their slaves. The younger ones know better and laugh when they speak of it, but some of the real black ones just from Africa look nervous and scared when the boys crowd around them to tease and play tricks on them. They seem to know what the boys want. They bring in chickens, turkeys, eggs, molasses, sugar corn pones, smoked meat and honey. The boys don't treat them right. They cheat them out of a lot and their excuse is they stole the stuff from their white masters. The poor black creatures never get mad but just smile and say nothing. The day before we left Satartia some of our boys raided a big plantation, took everything in sight and came into camp with a mule team and wagon loaded with a fancy piano. They put the piano on board a steamboat and blindfolding the mules which were wild, turned them loose in camp. It was a crazy thing to do. There was some bee hives in the wagon full of honey and bees. The mules run over some tents nearly killing a lot of soldiers and scattering bees and boxes along the way. It was fun all right for some of the boys got badly stung.

June 8th.—We have been resting on our arms all day awaiting a report from couriers who are watching
the rebel General Johnson. He has a big force and his plan seems to be to cut off our march to Haines Bluff where we would be in touch with the main union army. In the afternoon we were ordered in line as were all the regiments of the three brigades. We were told the rebel army was moving our way and to be prepared at any moment.

June 9th.—We lay upon our arms all night. It was not a good night to sleep. We expected every hour an order to fall in and retreat to Haines Bluff. It came at day break. We had scarcely time to make coffee and fry hard tack. Mounted orderlies with clanging sabers were rushing about with orders from headquarters. They would spring from their saddles leaving their horse in charge of a black servant, who always met them hat in hand at the Colonel’s tent. Since daybreak there has been a fearful booming of cannons toward the south. All sorts of rumors are flying about. One is that Johnson has jumped in on our flank at Snyder’s Bluff with his army and another report that Grant has stormed the city of Vicksburg under cover of all his big guns.

If nothing happens will write in a day or two.

Your son,

CHAUNCEY.

Haines Bluff, Mississippi,
Hd. Quar ters 25 Wis., June 11, 1863,

Dear Sister:

Am in receipt of your last letter but an hour ago. You do write a good letter. So full of news, just the stuff for a brother in the war to read, and you tell things in such a good way. It’s just like a story in a book. You are father’s girl all over just as mother has often said. How I wish I could have some of the fish you tell of catching, only I don’t like the fellow that took you home that time. He is nice looking and knows how to say pleasant things, but he is what our chaplain calls a roué. Look in the dictionary and see what roué means. I don’t want my sister to keep company with a roué, if I understand the word. Let me tell you, my dear girl, most young men ain’t as good as they ought to be. And I wish you would be more careful and mind me a little if you are older than I. But I must tell you of things here.

We had a dreadful march from Sartain to reach this place. It was a killing march. Our Division General was a coward, and the march began at sunrise and ended at ten o'clock that night. It was, a retreat, a perfect rout. The rebel Johnson was supposed to be close in our rear with a body of cavalry and the orders were to press forward with all possible speed. Through great forests and corn fields without end standing above our heads, in the hottest sun I ever felt, the army became a regular mob, every man for himself. Men threw aside their coats and blankets their testaments and their shirts. Hundreds lay down in the corn rows, under the trees and on the banks of the creeks. Many of them in the faint of a sunstroke, others fanning themselves or cursing those in command. The constant roar of besieging mortar and cannon at Vicksburg grew louder and louder as we advanced. The ambulances and the ammunition and supply wagons that followed were full of men unable to march, long before night. You know that father always said I was mother’s boy because I never was tired or never sick till I went into the army. It was about 4 o’clock in the afternoon I had lost sight of every man of Company G, and was marching with a bunch of Indiana boys. I had divided the water with them I had in my canteen. I had thrown away a woollen shirt and torn my blanket in two and left a part of that to lighten my load. My cartridge box was the heaviest thing we had, every man was loaded with all the bullets
he could carry, for we expected to need them. I was just about fainting with the heat when one of the Indiana boys said, "my boy you better lay down, your face is awful red." We were on the bank of a muddy creek. I walked away from the road up among the trees and after taking a drink from the creek I lay down in the shade of a tree with no one in sight and fell asleep. When I opened my eyes the sun was down and it was just getting dark. For a minute I didn't know where I was nor what had happened. Then the march and the mix-up of the day all came back to me. Here and there I could see through the woods the light of the camp fires. I went back to the road where I left my Indiana friends five hours before. I sat down while a battery of six guns went by, each drawn by six big horses. Then followed a rear guard of five or six hundred cavalry whose sabers and carbines changed as they rode by. I knew if Johnson was so near, these cannon and cavalry would not be passing toward Vicksburg in this peaceful way. A straggling group of infantry followed the cavalry and I joined them. I had gone but a few steps when I felt a hand upon my shoulder. Turning to see who it was, what was my delight to see the Captain of my company, Captain Darwin, smiling upon me. Like myself he too was lost from the company. The Captain had never looked so good to me. He had laid down by the road like me, overcome by heat, and he was anxious to find the company. Until I found Captain Darwin I was ashamed to think that maybe I was the only one lost from the company. The Captain is a great big strong man and nice looking. And when I found the heat had played him out just as it had me I took courage. After calling at about a hundred camp fires and half as many regiments we found our company and our regiment. If there is a just God he will punish the man that ordered that awful march. It was useless and uncalled for. We hear that the General has been arrested and will be tried by Court Marshal. Every soldier on that horrid march hopes he will be punished.

The air is sickening with the stench of decaying flesh. Mississippi is full of cattle running wild in the cane brakes, and the boys are shooting great, beautiful steers in sight as they would rabbits, leaving everything but the choicest parts on the ground to smell and stink. Ten miles from here the people in Vicksburg are starving for beef to eat and where we are camped the air is poisoned with the decaying flesh of animals more than we can eat. What a world this is. I am only giving you a brief sketch of the important things. Just think of the horror of 50,000 people with half enough to eat, with no rest nor sleep, stormed at with shot and shell, night and day in the city of Vicksburg. They have dug holes under their houses and in the bluffs and on the river side to get away from the shot and bursting shell of Union guns. They can't get anything more to eat outside the city so they eat horses and mules to keep alive. O, but the poor wretched whites that let the rich slave holders drag them into this war. The negroes tell us the rich white man in the south looks down on the poor white trash who has no slaves, as much as he does on the black man. And the common soldier in the rebel army is awful ignorant. There ain't one in ten that can read or write, and they think the Dutch boys in our army were hired in Germany and came over just to fight them. I have just been notified by the Orderly Sergeant that I am to go on picket duty to-morrow and to put my gun in order. The reports that we get every hour from the pickets that men are being shot reminds us that we are not in sleepy old Columbus, Kentucky any more, where we could go to sleep without danger, except from
the officer of the guard. I'll let you know in a few days how nice it is to do picket duty in the cane brakes of Mississippi within gun shot of the enemy's line. I haven't the least fear of danger, sister and I am feeling real good after a two days' rest of racket and roar of big guns that put me to sleep nights and waken me in the morning. There is an army of some 15,000 men around us and between here and Vicksburg. Love to all, father, mother and the boys.

P. S.—There is a rumor at this moment that we are to counter march for Satartia to-morrow. I'll bet it is a false rumor. Your brother,

CHAUNCEY.

Haines Bluff, Mississippi,
June 15, 1863.

Dear father:

I sent sister D. a letter some days ago and promised to tell her something of picket duty close to the enemy's line, next time I wrote. I made some notes in my memorandum every evening so I enclose them.

June 10th, 6 o'clock P. M. Have just come in from the picket line where I have been for four hours during the day, from ten to twelve this morning and from four to six this afternoon. Will go on again tonight at 10 o'clock for two hours and again at four o'clock in the morning until six.

It has been a blistering hot day, but I have kept in the shade of some great trees most of the time. My beat is about as far as from the house to the creek, on a ridge, something like the little hill behind the house. The soldier whose place I took this morning, belonged to the Jersey Zouaves, told me it would be nice during daylight, but to look out to-night. He said he had seen the glint of a gun barrel last night in the edge of the cane brake. He advised me to keep my eyes peeled and stay as much as possible in the shadow of the trees. I asked him how I could do that and obey orders to keep pacing his beat. He said I don't give a damn for orders when I am alone here at midnight, and the officer of the guard asleep in his tent miles from here. One thing he said, you will hear a lot of hogs grunting in the cane brakes. Maybe they are hogs and maybe they ain't. Some of the boys have been shot by those hogs, so look out. These Jersey Zouaves are supposed to be dare devils, simply afraid of nothing. They wear fancy uniforms covered with yellow braid and all sorts of yellow stripes. The rebel soldiers hate these Zouaves and try to shoot them wherever they can. They are toughs picked up from the prisons and jails of the cities. Nothing happened worth mentioning during the day. From my beat I could see the Yazoo River and miles of corn fields on the west now tramped down and ruined. On the east where the enemy line extends are deep forests and dense cane brakes. All day long hundreds of men, yes, thousands were chopping down the trees, felling them toward the enemy, and sharpening the limbs so that they would be hindered and at the mercy of our guns if they tried to charge our lines.

Columns of smoke from burning buildings fills the sky, and this afternoon a south wind brought the smell of smoke from the big cannon that keep up their awful roar about Vicksburg.

June 12th, 9 o'clock A. M. After a rather wakeful night we are back to quarters in camp and while waiting for coffee to boil will jot down a note or two. The air about the camp smells better this morning. Several hundred carcasses of cattle left to rot in the sun were buried yesterday. The smell had got to be terrible. I remembered what the Zouave told me when I went on guard last night and I kept my eyes wide open and my ears too, during the two hours of midnight. I heard some rustling in
the cane thicket on my left but the sound seemed to recede rather than come nearer so I concluded it was some animal. I don’t think I was afraid the least bit, until midnight the boom of cannon at Vicksburg and the half cirlcing fiery curves of the shells and the sudden lighting of the sky when they burst gave me something to see and to think of. From four till six this morning the firing at Vicksburg had nearly ceased.

June 14th. A letter of May 23rd from home to-day. I am glad as ever a boy could be, who is in love with his home. I had wondered why no letter came. I wish father had sent me some stamps. Money won’t buy them here. They seem to forget my request for stamps. Saw D. D. Loomis yesterday, of the second cavalry. Sam, as they call him, is in good health and spirits. He is a sort of an assistant to the Commissary looking after the horses and rations. The 8th Wis. too, is here. It still carries the Eagle. The order for our return to Satartia up the Yazoo has been recalled. I am glad. The fact is, too many of our Regiment were beat out on the march here. There are nearly 300 men under the doctor’s care as a result of that 35 mile march. If the water was good we would be happy. Blackberries are plenty and nice. Our Regiment went out last night three miles to support a battery planted on a ridge. We lay on our arms all night without being disturbed by the rebs. This place will be retaken by the rebels if possible. Every precaution is being taken to secure it against attack. Johnson and bragg are on their way here with an army to drive us out, but Old Rose, that is Rosencranze, is following them and we ain’t afraid. How many troops we have here, I don’t know, but somewhere between twenty and forty thousand. To drive us from here will cost the rebs a good lot of blood, and they know it.

This is an easy country to fortify, just about as hilly as Buffalo County and the sides of the hills ten times harder to scale, because of the timber we have fallen against the enemy and dense jungle of cane brakes. It’s nearly impossible to get through a Mississippi cane brake. Here is where our fish poles come from.

There has been a hull in the firing at Vicksburg. There is a rumor that the Confeds have made a breach and are retreating up the Black River. Another story is that Jeff Davis is inside the City and Pemberton has asked a parley with a view to surrendering. Everybody is looking toward Vicksburg and wondering why the thunder of the guns has stopped. Another rumor says General Grant has mined their forts and has given them twelve hours to surrender and if they refuse the chain of forts will be blown up.

Have just heard that poor Orlando Adams, my chum from Mondovi, is dead. He tried to get a furlough but failed. I was afraid when I bid him good bye in Columbus, Kentucky, I should never see him again. The poor fellow cried when we left him to go south. Orlando never recovered from the effect of the measles. He wanted so bad to go home to die, but the rules had been strict against furloughs. Big Bill Anderson of Durand had just peeped in my tent and asked about my health. He gave me some blackberries. He said he had been out foraging for the sick boys. Bill is a wild fellow, but he has a great big heart and I know he is sicker this minute than some of the boys he is nursing.

You may send this letter over to sister D. Your son.
CHAUNCEY.

Snyder’s Bluff, Miss.

Dear father:
Since my last letter we have moved our position to within eight miles of Vicksburg. Yesterday elev-
en regiments of Burnside's corps landed. The old fellow himself with his well known side whiskers came also. His men think he is pretty near a god. The hills and valleys for miles and miles are literally white with tents, and the music of bands from morning till night is ringing in our ears. I think it would be safe to say there are not less than twenty-five thousand tents within a circumference of eight miles. Clouds of dust from moving troops fill the air in every direction. Several batteries of artillery are just passing, six to eight big horses to each gun, and the men riding on the cassions are breathing a constant smudge. They don't have to walk, that is one thing in their favor, but I don't think I would like the battery service. Rumor is still in the air that the Rebel General Johnson is maneuvering to cut his way through to help General Pemberton in Vicksburg. That is the reason for so many batteries and infantry coming here and taking positions at this time. I am sure a hundred thousand rebels could not break our lines at this point. We have three lines of heavy fortifications with batteries every eighty rods. Several thousand spades are kept constantly busy strengthening the lines. Our regiment was out yesterday on spade duty. I suppose we did a lot of digging, but for my part I don't think I did more than an hour's work, and I am sure I worked as hard as anybody. It takes the darkies to dig. One hundred negroes will shovel as much dirt as a thousand yankee soldiers, and sing plantation songs all the time. I went out a mile yesterday on the second line to see them work and hear them sing. Most of their songs are love songs, and it's always something about the cotton and the cane fields. Rules are mighty strict and getting stricter every day. Our main work is to clean and polish up our guns, and to see that our cartridge and cap boxes are kept dry. We have inspection of arms every day at ten o'clock. Every gun is examined and woe to the soldier whose gun is not in order. We know not at what hour day or night the roll of the drum will call us into line of battle. I noticed in a copy of the Alma Journal you sent me that the people of Gilmanton, had been subscribing funds for the U. S. Sanitary commission. The object is a noble one and I am glad the Gilmanton folks have gone into their pockets to help it. By the way does Mr. G. say anything more about the hundred dollars he was to donate toward a private school in our valley when I enlisted? Don't say anything about it. If he gives it, all right. If he don't, all right. I don't care for his hundred dollars. But of course as he volunteered to give it I never can think as much of him for lying about it. This sanitary commission is a soldier's home or stopping place, wherever a soldier happens to be, in any town in the north. He is given a bed and meals free of charge and medicine and care if he is sick. They are in the border states as well too, where our troops are in possession. If they are out of money they can stay weeks or months without cost until they get money or transportation to go on.

Of course the good people of Gilmanton, expect to celebrate the 4th of July and I expected to be with them when I enlisted but I shall not be there. I am glad to hear you say that my spelling is better than it was, although you don't find my writing any better. You say I don't write any plainer than Horace Greeley. Well, there were some that managed to read Greeley and what the world found in his writings makes me rather glad that my penmanship is no better than his.

I am glad that sister D. secured a school. She don't write me so often any more. What's the matter with her? If the folks at home could know what happy fools it made of us to get letters, they would write more of them and longer ones. I
have half a mind to confess that I have had the blues for a couple of days. I have had a touch of intermittent fever. Hundreds of the boys are under the care of the doctor for chills and fever. We are drinking water a little better than poison, and the plasma of this Yazoo River is getting in its work. The cannonading about Vicksburg is fiercer than ever. Last night the doctor gave me some infernal stuff for my fever that kept me awake. It must have been midnight before I got to sleep. I lay with the flap of my tent thrown back watching the shells from a hundred mortars, making a fiery half-circle as rising like a flaming rocket they circled and fell into the city, then followed the explosion. How can those people sleep? I should think the people of that city would be perishing for sleep. There has not been an hour the three weeks past but shells have been bursting in every part of the city. There was a bunch of about fifty rebels passed our camp yesterday taken at Vicksburg in a charge upon our works. They were put upon a boat at this landing for transportation to the north. They tell awful tales of hunger and want of sleep in Vicksburg. It takes half the people all the time to put out the fires started by our shells and they have no flour and only horse and mule meat.

They hinted that Jeff Davis was inside the lines. The story isn't believed, but everybody is talking about it. It pleases me that Elder Morse likes my letters. I told Henry what his father said about his writing and he merely laughed. Henry Morse is sick at this time with chills and fever. It is a common sickness on this Yazoo River.

There is talk that the city will be stormed from the entire ten miles of line this week. A victory here and the surrender of Pemberton would open the Mississippi to the gulf, then hurrah for Virginia and a healthier climate.

Send me some stamps as money won't buy stamps down here. Tell her an aunt Dinah or a Topsy black as to show her how to bake hoe mother when I come back I'll bring cake in the fire place and roast potatoes in hot ashes.

Love to all, Your son,
CHAUNCEY.

Hld. Quarters 25th Wis. Vol.,
Snyder's Bluff, Miss., July 1, 1863.
Dear Father:

It has been some time since writing you last, but we have had a busy time coming and going and maneuvering, that is our regiment has been on the move for more than a week and no chance to write a letter nor to mail one. A week ago yesterday our regiment got orders to go to Cypress Bend, on the Arkansas side the river 200 miles up the river to capture or disperse a band of guerrillas that were firing from ambush along the shore on the passing steamers, trying to kill the pilots and cripple the boats. They have even fired into Hospital boats that were flying hospital flags. Every able bodied man in our regiment, about six hundred, were ordered into line, guns and ammunition inspected. The next morning we boarded the Dexter, Mississippi boat that reached nearly across the Yazoo River, and were soon pushing down toward the father of waters. The idea of riding on the Mississippi again and heading toward home made us happy. And we figured on having a good drink soon as our boat touched the muddy waters of the big river that we somehow loved just because it flowed by our homes.

We had just been paid off for two months and the boys had a good fill of oysters and store crackers. I only got six dollars though. I had drawn some extra clothing and my little thirteen dollars was cut to three dollars a month. It was so
long ago I got the clothes, I began to think the clothes were forgotten. Uncle Sam's Paymasters have a good memory. Just as I am writing this the Silver Moon, a Yazoo steamer, is passing up the Yazoo toward Haines Bluff. She has a Calliope and it is playing Nellie Gray. She is loaded with hard tack and bales of hay clear to the water line and her half naked deck hands lying around on the hay bales look like so many alligators.

She gave us the right of way and we pushed on down this river whose water though clear and tempting we dared not drink. The boys kept cracking away at the alligators that lay on logs and drift wood on the sand banks. The scaly things would flounder into the water and sink out of sight. Some of them looked to be seven or eight feet long, more of them were three or four feet.

We reached Young's Point in the evening and waited there all night for some cavalry and a battery that was to accompany us. We were just out of cannon range of Vicksburg. I lay on the hurricane deck of our boat and with my head bolstered up on my knapsack so I could see. I watched the fire of our gunboats in sight of us down the river as broadside after broadside was poured into the city. Every discharge would come up the river like a great roll of thunder. It may seem strange to you but all the first part of that night I was thinking more of home than of the things going on around me. It seemed as if the shells from the mortars went up into the clouds a half mile and then would drop in a circle of fire into the city of Vicksburg. They looked like meteors only their track was red and they would often burst before they reached the ground. I don't think I got to sleep before midnight and when I woke up the sun was shining.

June 26th. Our battery and Cavalry regiment came at nine o'clock and at eleven o'clock we swung into the great river with bow headed up stream. Soon as we got fairly into the current the boys made a rush for the boiler deck to get a drink of the water that came from the lakes and springs of Wisconsin and Minnesota. It was dirty and muddy and we saw dead mules and cattle floating by and knew that it was the sewer for all the filth of the northern states, but whether we were dry or not we drank, and drank, until it ran out of our nose just because it came from the glorious north.

Well, all that day as we steamed up the great river we lay round and talked, dreamed and loafed. There was scarcely a break in the deep dark forests that came right down to the river bank. Our guns were loaded and we had them in hand all day because we were warned that we might be attacked at any moment. We had in our fleet four transports loaded with troops, and three gunboats with heavy brass cannon.

June 27th. The weather is awfully hot. We are tied up at Cypress Bend where all the attacks have been made on passing vessels. Our boats are tied to the Arkansas shore. We had a rain last night that gave us on the top a good wetting, but the air this morning is cooler for the rain. The gun boats anchored amid stream and sent a lot of shells over into the woods beyond the plantation that lays along the shore. The idea was to draw the fire of the rebel forces, but nothing came of our firing. The cavalry was landed at noon and deployed as scouts across the big bend in the river. At seven o'clock we ran to the Mississippi side and tied up for the night. Ever thing was quiet for the night. There were some boats calling to our guards as they passed during the night to find out if the river was clear to Vicksburg. Next morning we went on shore, both cavalry and infantry under cover of our gun boats. They first sent a few shells
screaming through the tree tops a mile or two inland as a sort of feeler, but getting no reply the batteries, cavalry and infantry went ashore.

This letter will be finished next week.

Cypress Bend, Arkansas,
July 2nd, 1863,

Dear Father;

We were deployed a good half mile in line soon as we got ashore in a grove of timber that lay between the river bank and the mansion of the planter and the village of negro huts that flanked the big house on the right and left. This plantation worked nearly 500 slaves we were told. The mansion was built on piers like most homes of the South, ten or twelve feet above the ground; the basement surrounded by a lattice and serving as kitchen and laundry and living place for the house servants. We had orders to make a careful examination of the place as it was thought the guerrillas we were after had made this place their headquarters. I was among the first to reach the house. There were no whites in sight but I saw a few scared looking black faces who got out of sight as we came near. Some of the boys had talked with the blacks who denied that there had been any rebels quartered there. We knew the negroes were lying. We found where there had been beds and lots of ash heaps where there had been camp fires and the tracks of horses and scattering corn fodder. Five or six of us went to the stairway and opened the door leading on to the gallery. Just as we stepped in the wide hall, three women, an old grey haired lady and two young ladies came up to us and asked us not to come into the house. The oldest one pleaded pitifully, wringing and rubbing her hands first one and then the other, and then reaching out her hands toward us as far as she could urging us to stay out, all the while crying and at times screaming as if her heart was breaking. She said her mother was sick and likely to die and begged us to go away. I never felt meaner in my life. The Co. K. man who did the talking told her we had orders to search the house for rebels and we had to do it. He tried to say something by way of excuse. One of the boys pushed by the girls and opened a closet in the wall. The girl jumped into the door and with tears streaming down her face begged him to stay out. There is nothing in here she said but the wardrobe and relics of my dying mother. She took him by the arm and pushed him away and closed the door. The house was soon crowded with soldiers and the door of the closet opened and examined but we found nothing but dresses and cloaks and bonnets and blankets. I got ashamed and wished that I was out of it. I went back into the big hall and found a book case. I stuck Longfellow's Hiawatha in my pocket and Ed Coleman and Elder Harwood (now National Chaplain of the G. A. R.) took turns with me reading it on our return to Snyder's Bluff. When I went outside I found several buildings on fire. The orders had been not to set any fires, but nobody cared and nobody would tell. Suddenly a report came in that a body of rebels had been seen by our cavalry some four miles inland. We hurriedly got into line and for two hours marched back through the deepest, darkest forest I ever saw. All at once there came the ring of rifles on every side. The ranks were broken and men supposed to be brave as lions dodged right and left, while others fired their guns out of pure fright with no enemy in sight. It had turned out that we had surprised a company of rebel cavalry who were boiling coffee for an afternoon lunch and after empty-
ing their carbines at our cavalry scouts and giving us a good surprise they retreated in every direction through the woods. It was lucky for us after all. We had just pulled ourselves together for a forward march when scouts came galloping up with the news that 4,000 rebels under the command of Marmaduke was flanking us on both sides and had already planted cannon on the cross roads between us and the river. In less time than I am telling you we were counter marching at double quick. We made four cross roads to the big plantation and at every one of them we expected to be raked by rebel cannon and grape. Before we reached the last cross road, shells from our gun boats were screaming over our heads and bursting in our rear, scattering death amongst the rebs as it seemed to us letting us get back into the open of cotton field of the big plantation with not a man lost. But it was music to hear those shells ripping through the tree tops on their mission of death. We knew it meant our salvation and death to the rebels. When we got back to the big plantation we found nearly all the buildings on fire save the mansion alone. The barns, gin house, saw mill, and immense drying sheds, were all ablaze sending up columns of black smoke. The cavalry that followed us told us that we had barely crossed the last cross road when the rebels planted a battery not fifty rods from our line of retreat so as to rake us at the crossing with cannister. There is no doubt our gun boats that kept up a rapid fire over our heads was a mighty lucky thing for us. The rebels had three men to our one and knew every road and vantage point but for our brass war dogs they would have made it hot for us. We boarded our boats and with one gun boat for convoy, leaving two at the bend for protection to passing ves

sels reached our old quarters on the Yazoo yesterday.

Don't forget to send a paper now and then. You are right when you suppose it is hot down there. Dan hadley and Henry Morse are both on the sick list and about twenty-five others you don't know in the company. I am glad to hear that you have, help for harvest. I hope mother won't need to go in the hayfield this summer nor rake up grain. It is too hard work and it don't seem right. I loaned all my stamps and I must hunt one to send this letter. Love to mother and the rest.

Your boy,
CHAUNCEY.

Snyder's Bluff, Miss., July 15, 1863.
Hd. Quarters 25th Vol.

Dear Brother:

I have for many days thought of writing to you, first because I like you and second because you are not writing to me as often as you ought.

Since the surrender of Vicksburg on the fourth of this month there has been all sorts of rumors as to our future movements. The late battles won by the army of the Potomac along with the victory over Pemberton here at Vicksburg, somehow makes us boys feel that the end of the war is near. O, if you could have seen and heard what I have these ten days past. Pemberton had nearly 30 thousand all surrendered to Grant on the 4th of this month. And they were glad to be prisoners and paroled to go to their homes. They cursed the war and called it a nigger war. I heard lots of them say that had never owned a nigger, that they were fooled and wished they had stayed at home. The bombardment of Vicksburg the night of the surrender was fearful. The clouds above the city looked blood red as if they were all on fire. The Thunder of the cannon for two or three nights and the rumor of surrender kept us awake. We, that were rather on the sick list with chills
and fever, were pretty anxious at the reports that the rebel General Johnson was daily preparing to attack us. Since the surrender the troops by brigades and divisions have gradually withdrawn. All this means that the danger of attack is past.

While I am writing this letter our scouts have brought in word that the rebel General Johnson has been bagged with 65000 troops. Some of the boys are wild over the news, others simply smile and say it's nothing but a false rumor. Whether it is true or false you will know by the papers before this reaches you.

Some of the boys were down to the city of Vicksburg to-day. They said it was a pretty nice place, but it was badly shot up. Nearly half the town had been burned and the streets were torn up by our shells. It costs twenty dollars in confederate money to get a meal, and one dollar in U. S. Greenbacks. The darkies were filling in the town and grinning and showing their white teeth at every corner. Grey headed niggers and pretty wardrobes begged the soldiers for money and blessed Abraham Lincoln for sending them south to make them free. Most of the boys hate the blacks and say hard things about them. I never can forget that father told me at Mr. Fuller's place when I got in the wagon after that awful good dinner to go to Alma. You remember it, brother W. He said, if you ever get a chance, my boy, take good aim and shoot twice to free the black, while shooting once for the Union.

I don't dare say anything like this to the boys, because they would laugh at me. But I have read enough to know that Phillips was right and Garrison was right and he thought as they did. And I thought for days after going to La Crosse of the tears I saw in his eyes as he asked me always to remember the slave.

Well, brother, to change the subject, have you killed any prairie chicks this summer? It is nearly time for pigeons again. Good Lord, how I hope I can be with you to eat speckled trout and prairie chicks this fall.

I am writing this upon my back. The doctor gave me something for my fever that makes my head whirl. When he came to my tent this morning I asked him if I was very sick. When I told him I was seventeen he said, you ought to have been thrashed and kept at home two years longer. I told the doctor that he looked sick himself, and he admitted he was not feeling well. (This doctor died within ten days of the date of this letter.)

Say, how are the neighbors coming? How does Geo. Cartwright behave? Does he and uncle Ed. cock up twice as much hay as you and father? What does Edward Cass busy himself about? Has he and father got that big field fenced in yet? And Maggie C. is she as pretty and haughty as ever? How does Jim Pierce prosper this summer? Has he commenced that brick house he never tired of telling about? I sometimes wish lightning had struck that man. father then might have got a better farm. Pierce took father in just because he was too honest. Do the cows break in the fields any this summer? Does mother make lots of cheese and butter? Great heavens, what butter and cheese mother could make. When those people from St. Louis came through there and praised mother's bread and butter I thought they were fooling, but now, I know they were telling the truth. Well, I have got some soft bread to-day noon some biscuit I bought of a settler. And I have some butter I paid 50 cents for and some coffee. Don't you think I have a first rate supper? Just like the little boy in the third reader who was happy over his porridge alone when he discovered that everything else of the meal had been stolen.

Love to yourself, father, mother and sister D. Your brother,

CHAUNCEY.
Dear Sister:

I got your much valued letter containing your likeness nearly two weeks ago. I was pretty sick at that time with the fever, the Yazoo fever. Since then I have written home. Just two weeks ago I was taken with the chills the day after the fall of Vicksburg. But I ain't alone, there are thousands along this river of death, that's what the boys have named the Yazoo, that are on their backs just like me.

The doctor has knocked the chills for the time at least, though they have made me weak. Dan Hadley and Bill Anderson look in on me once in a while to see that I want for nothing. All the other boys that are well have their patients too. Every fellow has his chum to wait on him. It rained night before last and all day yesterday and there was a hot steam rising from the ground. But it settled the dust and the moving troops don't kick up any dust. We can hear the scream of boats on the Mississippi and Yazoo night and day. Troops are being shipped up and down the river points fast as boats can get here. Several batteries have passed to-day with six and eight big sleek horses to each gun. The gunners were laughing and calling to one another like a bunch of school boys. Moving infantry is constantly in sight. A regiment of cavalry is just now trotting slowly by. Their saber scabbards freshly scoured look bright in the sun and their horses after their long rest are acting pretty wild. I often wish I had got transferred to the cavalry like Ed. Cartwright did at the first. There is a little more danger but you don't have to walk and that saves a soldier a lot.

They are fitting out some Hospital boats and after the troops fit for service are transported the sick and convalescent will be taken to Northern hospitals. I hear that some three hundred in our regiment are to be put on. I don't know whether I fall within that list or not, but I fear I do.

The doctor says we can't recruit in this hot climate but must get farther north. We are looking for marching orders any day. For some point up the river as far as Memphis, Tenn., or perhaps to Kentucky. Mensus Bump has just been in to see me. He said I made myself sick by eating a whole bowl of oysters. What he meant was this. The night we went on board for Cypress Bend we had just had our pay and the boys were hungry for real eats. I bought a can of oysters took it on the boat for fear the boys would steal it from me when I was asleep. I ate it all up that night. I knew it was too much but I never thought oysters would hurt a fellow.

Sister D., your picture suits me to a dot. Your face never looked so good to me before and your letters, say dear girl, you have a wonderful knack of telling things. Mother always said you were father's girl. I shall be glad when I can do as well as you. You remember Mr. Rosman used to say I was always chirping in when you tried to tell something about catching trout or about father's shooting a deer or a bear. Well, sometimes you would forget, and I tried to help you out. Say, sister I haven't forgot how you would scold me for these things when we would be going back over the hill home the next day. Laying here on my back under a tent of thin cotton cloth, under a hot southern sun I can't help thinking, thinking, thinking.

Say, by George, how I wish I could have some of that strawberry short cake. Land of Goshen, I can taste it now. We have no strawberries. We have plenty of sugar to go with them but no cream.

Well it's getting dull here, most of the troops in sight save our Brigade have gone north or out to follow up the Rebel Johnson's scatter-
ed army. It has been so quiet and still since the surrender of Vicksburg it seems dull enough. It is only three miles to the city and the boys that are able run in often as they can get a pass.

The black freedmen are coming in from the country by the thousand and going north to enlist. Several men from our regiment have offered to go as officers in the black regiments. They are doing with the slaves just what Gen. Fremont asked Lincoln to do at the beginning of the war. This is, set the blacks free and make soldiers of them. If you had not sent me stamps, I could not send you this letter. I am glad you like your school. Only look out for the fellow who lives so near. You should go home as often as possible and help mother and take care of sister E. They say she is a dreadful nice girl. Wonder if she isn't a bit like her older brother? Sorry I offended pretty Maggie Cass when I wrote her the black people were human beings and had souls. So she says she won't write me anymore? Well unless I run against a rebel bullet or a hard dose of Yazoo fever I'll try and outlive her scorn.

Sam Loomis's company is camping about two miles from here. He comes down once in a while to visit us. He looks pretty thin but his duties as commissary are pretty light so he ought to stand it. I must forgot to tell you, Henry Morse and Daniel Hayley have been sick for the last six weeks. They have been getting better. O, how did you pass the 4th of July? I was on picket duty that day though sick enough to be in bed. It's the fashion of soldiers to run on comrades who complain of being sick. They call it playing off. I have noticed that the fellows that do that kind of jibbing are infernal cowards themselves. I have learned that the Dutch boys make the bravest soldiers. They don't do any bragging and they are ready for service no matter how dangerous. Is there any one working your 80 this summer? I am thinking what a fine farm my 40 and your 80 would make together.

If Myra Amidon ever asks you, whether or not I received that letter she and you wrote in company, tell her I did of course and answered it and directed to you. If she wants an answer tell her to write on her own hook and I'll be glad to answer. Tell her I owe her a grudge for beating me at that foot race through the cornfield to the house. My heartens how that girl can run. Myra has the nicest blue eyes I ever saw. How easy it is to write and write of friends and dear ones at home. You will be tired when you read all this, and I must quit. Kiss mother for me and save one for yourself.

Your brother, 
CHAUNCEY.

Snyder's Bluff, Miss., July 25, 1863. 

Dear Mother:

I feel just like writing you to-day. I am sitting in the shade of a big Cypress tree, on the banks of the Yazoo. Looking across the river I can see on some flood trash, two black things looking like alligators. They don't move and I am not sure. There is a pretty spring just below where I sit and a sign over it which says, "Don't drink this water, poison." It is as big as the spring at the head of our spring and as pure looking. It seems strange that we cannot drink out of the springs here that look just as they do in Wisconsin. Some of the boys don't mind the sign. Some that are burning up with fever and thirst manage to stagger down here and fill up with water and go back to their tents and die. Say mother, what would you think if I should say I have some times wished when the fever made me so hot I could hardly stand it that I could go to sleep and never wake up till the war was over. Now this may sound kind of weak for a soldier.
But I am no coward, mother. I don't come from that kind of stock. I remember how you put the gun at the head of your bed when father was gone to Fountain City, ready to use it if Indians should come or wild animals attack the cattle. And father came home and he would pat you on the back and say "you are just the girl for a pioneer's wife." I remember these things mother, and under all circumstances I shall never forget that my father and mother were brave people.

I wrote brother Warren the day before getting your letter so I have delayed answering yours. I am a great deal better from chills and a sort of intermittent fever. I have been taking quinine which seems to have broken the chills. I am thankful it is not that other kind of fever that is killing off the boys so fast. 23 men have lately died out of our regiment. There are only about 100 men out of the regiment fit to do duty.

Thank goodness we are about done with this part of the south. The report now is that our entire Brigade will go to Memphis and on up the Tennessee where a northern soldier can live. Two regiments of our brigade have already left, the 3rd Minn. and the 40th Iowa. The 27th Wis. and our regiment will leave soon and then hurrah for a healthier climate. The rebel Gen. Johnson and his Butternut hawks have skedaddled to parts unknown. Of course you have heard of the retreat of Gens. Lee and Bragg and of the riot of the mob in New York City and the burning of negro asylums and school houses. That mob uprising looked bad for the north. It was a Democratic crowd in sympathy with the south. Cost what blood, time and treasure it may, the Union will yet win out.

We were paid off the other day, and to my surprise nothing was taken out for extra clothes drawn. Maybe they will take it out later. We got full pay, $26.

This makes twice we have drawn pay at this place. You ask what general it was that ordered that killing retreat, for retreat it was, from Sartain to Haines Bluff? It was General Kemball, a Potomac General, who is now acting General for our corps. We are not in love with him, and some of the boys say he will get shot by his own men the first fight we put up. It is time for roll call and as I am not excused I must quit and go back to camp.

Love to father and the rest.

Your Son,
CHAUNCEY.

Snyder's Bluff, Miss., July 28, 1863,
11th Quarters Wis. Regt.

Dear Mother:
Your last letter at hand. There is no medicine like a letter from home. Let me tell you mother it does a fellow a lot of good. I am glad you are having such success with the bees. It makes my mouth water for biscuit and honey. I wish you would not take so many chances of getting stung. You ought to wear a veil of cheese cloth over your face. Don't think so much of me. I am all right. We have a plenty to eat. By paying a good round price we can get almost anything good to eat. I wish you would think more of yourself. When I see you in my sleep working in the hayfield helping to get up the hay it troubles me. I suppose as you say that help is hard to get and may be there is no other way. I am careful you may be sure what I eat. Our dainties we get of the sutler and it is nearly all in cans. I eat a lot of oysters and I find them good for me. That deer that father killed must have come in good play. Don't spoil your relish for it by constantly thinking of me. I told you I am all right. When I get a dish of oysters I always think how fond father is of them.

You say they are going to get rich in Bennett Valley where father
bought that forty for me. Well I am happy to know that. It may be they will have use for a part of it when the next recruiting officer comes that way. Nor will he, likely as not, waste his eloquence in trying to coax them to enlist as J. A. Brackett did when I enlisted. He will like as not tell them to furnish so many men or stand a draft.

This war ain't over yet. There may be a lot of money paid out for substitutes yet. Just think of it, they are paying as high as a thousand dollars for substitutes in many of the states. It all means that people are getting tired of the fussy way the war is being carried on. If the slaves had been declared free right at the start just as father said and put into the ranks to fight the war might have ended long ago. I see by the papers there are fifty thousand freedmen under arm and they are doing good service. The poor black devils are fighting for their wives and children, yes and for their lives, while we white cusses are fighting for as Capt. Darwin calls an idea. I tell the boys right to their face I am in the war for the freedom of the slave. When they talk about the saving of the Union I tell them that is Dutch to me. I am for helping the slaves if the Union goes to smash. Most of the boys have their laugh at me for helping the "Niggers" but Elder Harwood and Ed Coleman and Julius Parr and Joel Harmon and Chet Ide, the last two of Mondovi, tell me I am right in my argument.

I am sorry father lost that deer. He should take old Prince to help him next time. It is too bad to wound a deer for the wolves to catch and eat up in that way.

We have fresh beef all the time since the surrender. These cane brakes are full of half wild cattle, and they are fat as butter.

I thank brother W. for sending me those stamps. I will send him a book when I get to Memphis. Mother, I wish you would send me a small package of butter by Lieut. McKay, who is home on furlough for thirty days. I like John McKay. He is a good man. He is a good officer and fair to his men. His wife, I think, is in Modena, where he enlisted. You will see a notice of his arrival in the Alma Journal. For the can of butter you send I want you to reserve a ten dollar greenback for your own especial use out of the sum I send you. Good bye. Dear Mother. Your boy.

CHAUNCEY.

Helena, Ark., August 3, 1863.
25th Wis. Hd. Quarters.

Dear Parents:
The expected move came at last. After four days of steaming and tugging and puffing and groaning, we find ourselves camped near Helena, Arkansas, on the banks of the old Mississippi. For nearly four days the wheels of the brave old boat went round and round stemming the muddy water of the dear old river. We were glad to know that every hour brought us nearer to good drinking water and pure air.

All the 27th and 28th of July the ambulances were busy picking up and carrying the sick to the hospital boats. The bands on the boats kept up their playing so as to give the sick fellows courage. The evening of the 28th our regiment, reduced to 700 men, marched on to an old vessel that had been used as a blockade runner, and as you may suppose it was full of holes bored through and through. Well we had not been on board an hour before the rain and wind began to pour upon us from above and from all sides. It was a regular cloud burst. The fellows on the upper deck were soaked and so were all of us below decks. The water poured through every seam and hole.

We lay at the landing all night. We got under way down stream early in the morning and about ten o'clock our old shaky craft turned its nose up the muddy current of the
Father of Waters. Every fellow that could get a string lowered his coffee can for a drink of water. The boys would smash their lips and say the dirt in it tasted like Wisconsin dirt. Reaching Lake Providence that evening it was decided to transfer three companies to another boat, as our boat was overloaded and threatening to sink. Companies B, C and F went ashore to follow on the next boat. We pushed on with a more comfortable feeling. The next day I had a turn of fever as did a hundred others, on account of sleeping in wet clothes. I fixed that after a while with a dose of quinine and brandy, put up for me by the steward. Our vessel was old and rickety and made slow headway.

The faithful old craft panted, toiled and groaned its onward way toward the north star. We laid up alongside the shore two nights. And except to stop now and then for wood, there was no excitement. We stopped one night opposite a big peach orchard. Got peaches and chickens enough to make us nearly all sick and confiscated sixty mules. There are few towns along on either side and the forests come right down to the shore and look as wild and dark as they did when the French Jesuits visited the river two hundred years ago. Helena is not so far up as we had hoped to go. Soon as the remainder of our regiment gets here we expect to be sent to Memphis, Tenn., a hundred miles farther north.

We are camped under some big trees close to the shore, and we like it much better than on the miserable Yazoo. We can buy stuff here for less money than at Vicksburg. I should judge there were 15,000 troops at this place. They expect Gen. Price to attack this place any day. He is a foxy old war dog and may pop up any day. Let him come, he won't catch our commander Gen. Prentiss asleep. They say Prentiss always sleeps with one eye open.

While I am writing William Thomas of Mondovi, is sitting on a bench beside me. The poor fellow is dead home sick. He looks very bad. He watches the steam boats passing up the river and wishes he might get a pass to go home on one of them.

Mensur Bump came round about two days ago and treated us all to a cup of milk punch, that is milk and whisky. All the sick boys got some. It pretty near laid me out as it did a lot of others. It is a cold morning for this country and I dropped my paper and went over by the fire, and the heat made me dizzy. Dan Hadley and Obe Hilliard said it was better than quinine and they just as leave take some every day.

Well father, what do you think of the war anyway? It seems the rebels are trying to make an alliance with France, and make Napoleon Dictator, or something. Anyway to get the French to help. The South ain't licked yet, and we may be in for a lot of trouble yet. We get the daily papers from Memphis, and so keep posted. Have you got a letter advising you of the check I sent you of forty dollars? A load of Butternuts, rebel prisoners, is just passing on the steamer Hope, bound for the north. They will get into some prison, get full rations, get strong and be exchanged for our boys that have been starved and unfit for service.

Father, I often think of the three hundred thousand Catalines, as you called them, that brought on this war just because they could not rule this government in the interest of slavery. It is only slave holders that fill the offices in the southern army. It is the poor white trash that even the darkies look down upon that fill the ranks and take the brunt of the fight. Poor devils, they don't know that they are fighting for a rich aristocracy that despises them.

I don't know about your taking that Pierce darkey to work for you. Some of them are the worst liars and thieves in the world. Be care-
ful. We soldiers have lots of dealings with them. They seem nice enough to me and honest, but it is claimed they are awfully dishonest. When they are faced with the facts of their lying they put on the most pitiful look of innocence. I am trying to find excuses for them when I remember what you told me about them. I don't doubt but the whites would be liars and thieves too if they had been slaves for two hundred years. Whatever I think I won't side with the boys that are abusing them. This I do notice, the boys that I think the best and like the best say the least against the blacks.

Hereafter direct to Cairo. Mail will be forwarded from there.

Your son,
CHAUNCEY.


Dear Father:

I wrote to you but three days ago, but I am glad for an excuse to write to you again. I got your last letter with the extract from the New York Triburne enclosed. I am not surprised that old Greeley, as the boys call him, would have something to say about the New York riot. He feels terribly because of the late riots against the negroes in New York City.

I showed the extract to Dwyer, an Irishman in our company, a real good fellow, and one of my best friends. He said O'Connell himself could not make the Irish like "Niggers." He said, when O'Connell talked to the Irish in Ireland about Liberty, it was all right, but it was asking too much for O'Connell or anybody else to fight for the liberty of the nigger. He did blame the Irish though, for their part in burning the schools and asylums of the blacks in New York City. The boys had been talking this thing over a good deal since the New York riot. It must have hurt Wendell Phillips dreadfully after all the handsome things he has said about O'Connell and English oppression of the Irish nation to see them so bitterly opposed to the freedom of the slave.

I told Dwyer I didn't see how he or any other Irishman could feel kindly toward the south, that had never made them welcome nor had they treated any foreign people as kindly as we had done in the north. Their papers were always sneering at the Dutch or Hessians, the Jews and the Irish.

Dwyer said, the Irish don't hate the Nigger because he is black but because he won't fight. The Irish like a fighter. Dwyer has always cursed Lincoln because he was so slow to enlist the blacks in the army. I don't know but he was right. Lincoln seems to be a good man but he is slow. Things seem to be in a terrible jungle at Washington. There is so much jealousy among the officers and backbiting to Lincoln that the poor fellow don't know who to trust. The Vicksburg papers up to the time of the surrender, were always sneering at the Yankees and saying that if the South was beaten it would be owing to the foreign hirelings, that we were bringing in by the ship load, to fill up our ranks. Most of their spite is against the Germans, whom they call Hessians.

Well, so much for the comments in the Tribune extract you sent me. I have little to say about our doings here. Most of us are sick. We simply lay round and sleep and dream and gaw out on the big river that never stops but flows on and on toward the gulf. Just below our camp is a big flat boat loaded with ice. They came from the Ohio. They ask five cents for enough ice to cool a drink of water. There is a lot of cows in the edge of town and the boys milk them every day. Thompson Pratt and Obed Hilliard brought me some milk the day before yesterday. I bought a pound of
ice and cooled it and with hard tack for bread I had a royal good meal.  
Say, how are things at home. Of course you are having venison these days and plenty of trout. Give old Prince a good hug for me. Dear old dog. I often think of the days and nights we hunted together. I never feared anything the darkest night that ever blew when out in the hills with old Prince snugged up in the blanket beside me. He has been the dearest friend of my boyhood and if anything happens to him bury him on the big hill and I will mark his grave if I come back. Tell mother never mind sending the butter. It's too fearful hot. There is a rumor that a lot of our regiment will be sent to the hospitals at Memphis soon. I hate to think that I may be one of that number. I think I am feeling better since the weather got cooler. Love to all. 

Your son, 
CHAUNCEY

Helena, Arkansas, August 14, 1863.  
Dear Mother:  
Your favor with father's came today. It seems a long time between letters, I read them over and over. They are the second I have had since we came to this miserable town. The sallow faced natives here call it Arkansaw. I don't blame them. Any kind of a name is good enough for such a dismaly flat sickly country. I have had a touch of chills twice the last week. Our Regiment has moved again nearer the river and nights when all is still I can hear the swash of the waves along the shore. There are a lot of boats passing day and night and all up the river boats are loaded with Grant's soldiers bound for the Tennessee and Potomac campaigns. It looks as if we are to hold this place for some time. Our duty being to stand provost guard on city patrols. The most of the troops here a week ago have been ordered out to garrison Little Rock.

The war cloud that has been looming up in Arkansaw has about vanished. It looks as if the rebs cannot muster force enough to make a stand.

The darkies are bringing in lots of it and selling it to the soldiers. They buy it of their former masters and "tote" it down on their heads. I am eating sparingly of green fruit. So father's contraband (negro) has left him so soon. Well, you remember what I told you about their tricks. Making them free has rattled them. They think they have nothing to do now but play the banjo and dance juj'a. They are a funny race and no mistake. I like to hear them laugh.

I am sorry that the corn crop is likely to fail. Perhaps the frost has not spoiled it all. What in the world can you do with the pigs? If it wasn't for the wolves you could turn them on the hills to eat acorns.

It gives me the blues that you are having such poor crops. And so Indian Charley and his band don't come back this summer as he used to with bear meat and venison. Well at that means better hunting this fall for you. But what has become of poor Charley and his family? I am so afraid he was killed in Minnesota last summer or he killed somebody himself, some white man, and has gone west with the rest of the Sioux. You know Mother, I can never forget Charley. He was always good to us when during the first years no whites lived near us and his band might have scalped us all and nobody would have known it for months after.

So Mr. Cripps got his rifle back from Indian Curley. That proves to my mind that Curley never was in the Minnesota massacre. If he had been he would never have showed up. It proves another thing. It proves that Indians are honest when they are dealing with honest people. It would have been a wicked thing if Cripps had shot Curley.
on suspicion that he had used his rifle shooting whites in Minnesota. It was to save his own life that he stayed away this long. He knew the whites were wild over the Sioux war and ready to shoot any red man on sight. I see by the paper you sent me, that every Sioux has been driven from Minnesota their home for generations. What’s the matter with the white race? Why couldn’t they live with the Indians around them as we have done all these years in peace and friendship?

You see mother I have nothing around here to write about of interest. I like better to talk about home matters.

Poor William Thomas of Mondovi is very low and they say he cannot live. What seems strange, the doctor says it is homesickness that is killing him. Dan Hadley and Ob Hilliard have just dropped in with a melon just to tease me. They know I can’t eat such stuff. Dan says to remember him to the Gilman girls.

Good bye mother and father.

Your son, 

CHAUNCEY.

P. S.—I had sealed this letter, and have opened it to say that our Orderly has just notified me that I am on the list to go to Memphis day after tomorrow, to the General Hospital. I hate to think of it, but no doubt it will be the best place to recruit. Will write when I start. —C.

Gayoso General Hospital
Memphis, Tenn., Aug. 21, 1863

Dear Parents:

I had hope’d never to write you as the inmate of a hospital but I could n’t help it. Day before yesterday 549 from Helena, that is Helena, Arkansas, were landed here in Memphis from the hospital steamer. Good Hope. There were more than a hundred and forty from my regiment. A lot from my company beside myself. I was glad Bill Anderson of Durand was in our crowd, and glad that he was sent with me to the same hospital. Bill is a big, rough fellow but he was nice to us younger boys. He often came round and brought me things to eat and drink when he was sick himself. He is looking very bad just now but he says it’s a “damned lie, I’m all right.” Good hearted Bill.

Well, we got here in the night and in a heavy rain and in the mud. They had a time with their fat pine torches, getting us straightened round and separated into five bunches and sent to as many hospitals.

I carried my gun and belts from the landing, but a big negro grabbed my knapsack and four or five others and lugged them to the hospital.

The Gayoso Hospital is a big building on second street, looking out upon the river, I am all alone in my ward which is 7. That is there are no other soldiers in it that I know. There are 28 sick and wounded in the ward besides myself. I will finish this letter in the morning.

August 22nd, I had a nice bed, but somehow the gas lights or some thing kept me awake. My nurse, a great big woman with a kind face, brought me a clean pair of drawers and shirt and told me to take off everything and put them on, and sat down on the bed beside me as if she expected me to strip right before her. I didn’t know what to do. Presently she got up and said, have your clothes tied up, I’ll be back in ten minutes and carry them out to the wash room. When she went out I skimmed off every thing quite as I could and got into the clean shirt and drawers and into bed about a minute before she got back. She didn’t say a word but wrote out a check with my number, put it into my stand drawer, and pinned a duplicate on my clothes and carried them away.

August 23rd. I slept until about three this morning. A poor fellow about that time commenced calling for his mother, and between his
moanings there was little quiet in the ward. The nurse after awhile would come again, she would arrange and smooth back his hair and go back to her room. His was only six beds from mine and his moanings kept me awake.

His moanings and cries for mother came fainter and fainter and when the nurse came at daylight he was dead. They wrapped him in a sheet and carried him away and a little later another man was put on his bed.

I don't like my Doctor although he is a Wisconsin man. He don't ask many questions and he smiles at my answers as if he thought I was trying to fool him.

When I told him the cough I had for a week past began to hurt me in my left breast, he looked at me for a moment while he twisted his mustache, then he said, "you ought to have your lung scraped." His answer made me feel that I had said something that I ought not to say. That unless I was in the deepest pain I ought to keep still. In truth I was not in very great pain except when I coughed. And my coughing was recent.

Don't let this trouble you for a moment Father and Mother. I shall be all right again very soon.

Your oldest boy,

CHAUNCEY.

Gayoso Hospital Ward 1863
Memphis, Tenn.

The following notes are taken by our "Soldier Boy" from his diary kept while in the Memphis hospitals, things of his condition he would not write his parents, things that would worry father and mother, when he knew they could not help him.

August 27. Am ailing from a fierce attack of diarrhoea. Have used the stool many times today. There is no toilet room in this building. Women nurses moving about all the time makes a fellow feel strange. Sat for a time this afternoon on the gallery facing the river. Boats were coming and going up and down river. Had nothing on but my shirt and drawers. Nurse came and walked with me to my bed. When the doctor came he said, wasn't you on the balcony today? I said yes. Then he said I will put you on the list to go, to the Convalescent Fort tomorrow. You are strong enough to live in a tent.

August 28. An Illinois boy that was wounded, died in the ward last night. His father and mother sat by him all night. The nurse brought me my breakfast and putting it on the stand asked me how I felt. Told her I didn't know only I had a pain in my left breast, when I coughed. She said the doctor has listed your name for the Fort below the city, I hope he has made no mistake in your case. I will get your clothes. You leave your shirt and drawers, the ones I gave you, on the cot." I don't quite like this going to the Fort, I don't feel strong. It is four o'clock, Word has just come there will be no removals to the fort tonight.

August 29th. The nurse came round early this morning and leaving some coffee and bread on the stand told us to be ready in an hour to go to the fort. I had been up a lot during the night and felt weak. I ate a part of my breakfast. Just before starting the nurse gave me a glass of egg nog. When I went down stairs I found the street full of half sick soldiers. After marching a few blocks I told one of the guards I would have to rest. We stopped three times before reaching the fort. The guard carried my knapsack the rest of the way.

The fort is an enclosure of some 20 acres filled with a lot of dirty wall tents, enclosed by a stokade on three sides, and on the river side a steep clay bank a hundred feet high. Here I am in a tent with a dozen other half sick fellows, laying on the ground with a bit of straw and a single blanket under us. I don't like that Wisconsin Doctor that sent
me here. He has made a mistake and I am sure of it.

August 30. Have just had dinner, a dish of soup and crackers, sent us from the mess room. I ate some but was not hungry. Have been thinking about home a great deal today. This is a fearful place for man or boy sick or well. Hundreds yes, thousands crawling about, like myself trying to help themselves. When the fort doctor examined me this morning he said he would see me again tonight. He talked very kind and I like him better than the hospital doctor. I made a trip for water to the spring at the foot of the bluff and I thought I would never get back. The spring is close by the river.

August 31. The doctor came last night and put my name down to be sent to the Adams General Hospital in the city today. I am glad and yet I fear it means something serious. He said in answer to my question, "your lungs are ailing."

I had a bad night, along with five others who were as sick as myself. I went down the bluff last night to fill my canteen with water.

First I called for water. There was no answer. I knew what that meant. They were sick themselves or had none to spare. I crawled over the sleeping forms of four companions and picked my way down the steep clay bank to the spring by the river side. I filled by canteen and drank my fill and sat down with the others who came and went.

After a long time I got back to the top of the bank and went to bed. Some of the boys complained that my coughing kept them awake. I said all right you will be rid of me today.

6 P. M. Adams Hospital. I had nearly lost all heart at the Fort this afternoon when an ambulance drove up to the tent and called for me.

Here I am at last on a clean white bed in a cheerful room and the face of our nurse they call Aunt Lizzie, is so kind I feel quite content tho my cough is getting more painful.

Adamic's General Hospital.


I am writing this, this morning propped up on my knapsack for a pillow. It looks as if I was in for a siege of it. The doctor is feeding me on Cod Liver oil and whiskey. He says I have pneumonia and one of my lungs is affected. Aunt Lizzie, our nurse, an Illinois woman, as kind as a mother came to take away the dishes on my stand. She scolded me a little because I did not eat any of my breakfast. She put my knapsack under my head and gave me a book to write on. When the doctor came this morning, I told him what the Gayoso doctor said about my lungs, that they ought to be taken out and scraped. He said that doctor was a brute to say such things.

October 3rd.

I am writing this, this afternoon. I did not sleep much last night, and have been dozing all forenoon. The nurse handed me a letter from home forwarded from the regiment. Mother wants to know if I am very sick and she says father will come down if I am. They can't help me and what's the use telling them the truth. It will be an awful worry to mother and cost a lot of money. There is a big noise in the streets and all the boys that are strong are up looking out the windows. There is a lot of cavalry and several batteries passing. I can hear the clank of their sabers and feel the jar of the heavy guns on the stony streets. My cough is getting so bad I can't write, and my lung hurts me.

October 5th.

Cousin Ben Gardner of the 2nd Illinois cavalry called at the hospital today. His regiment is doing guard duty 25 miles south of Mem-
phise. He said it gave him the blues to find me in such shape. He had hoped we could walk around together. He is a sergeant in his company and a strong and husky fellow. He said we would have a good time when the war was over and all of us got home. I tried, to look brave in spite of my pain and tho' he was laughing when he bid me goodbye, I saw a tear in his eyes. can't write any more so I can read it.

October 6th.
All night the lights were burning in the ward and I had but little sleep. It was nine in the morning when Aunt Lizzie roused me from my cot. They talked a while and went away. I asked Aunt Lizzie what they wanted, and she said they were holding counsel. The weather is very warm.

(During the three weeks followin' our soldier boy made no further entries in his notebook. He was sick, quite sick, with pneumonia. The grim destroyer had been beaten off and at the end of five weeks he was able to walk about the ward. Two letters from home had reached him in the meantime, and they were read to him by Aunt Lizzie, the ward nurse. The last one she answered for him, telling his father to come and take his boy home. One quiet Sunday morning a week later as the boy lay propped up on his cot, he had just finished his breakfast of toast and boiled onions, when his attention was taken by a slow, measured step coming up the stairway at the farther end of the ward. Every inmate of that ward knew from experience that the step was that of a stranger.

Nearly every day some father had come up that stairway in quest of a sick boy or wounded. This time it was the father of our soldier boy. Slowly he walked down the center of the ward his hands clasped behind him searching each wan face on the right and on the left as he passed while the boy whom he sought at the end of the ward was frantically waving his hand at him.

There are some things graven on memory which if traced in brass are never erased. The boy of a half century ago, an old man today, recalls father's presence, his attitude, his look of inquiry, as vividly as tho' it were but yesterday. And to think of it: it lacks but a twelve months of a half century.

It is worthy of note that Aunt Lizzie, who was so good to him and who became superintendent of the Adams Hospital, was granted a special pension of $50 a month. Two years ago the Chicago Record Herald made mention of her death and commented on her noble services in hospital work during the civil war. In these later years it has been sad reflection to the Soldier Boy that he never knew the address of dear Aunt Lizzie, that he might write to her and thank her for her mother's pity and her mother's care.

The next letter will date from Alabama March 1863.

CHAUNCEY.

In our closing letter week before last, we stated that our next would date from Alabama. We have since found one written during our almost two weeks journey en route to Alabama, which we give below, besides another written from the Gayoso Hospital, Memphis. This one overlooked from the Hospital, mentions that Henry Morse, of Gilmanton one of my chums and a boy near my age came up from Helena a few days later than my arrival and went into another hospital. He was so much better in a few days that he was assigned to duty in the dining room and also acted as nurse. Dan Hadley came with Henry and was assigned
to my hospital, but to a different ward.

Nashville, Tenn., April 7th, 1864.

Dear Sister:

I believe my last was written father from Cairo Illinois. The same day our squad got transportation to Louisville Kentucky by way of Central Illinois which means taking our back track a hundred and fifty miles. Look on the map and you can see better than I can tell you. We got into Louisville Monday morning.

They call Louisville the biggest city in Kentucky and the nicest. It looks pretty, all right to a country boy. They have lots of iron works and they make Kentucky whiskey here in plenty. Some of the boys tried the whiskey and said it was better than Yankee whiskey.

Soon as we arrived we were ordered into quarters and stayed until seven in the morning when we took the train for Nashville, Tenn.

There were seven coaches all loaded with returning soldiers, going to rejoin their regiments. In Nashville the entire squad some 300 were sent to barracks in the Zollicoffer building built by the rebel General Zollicoffer. The rebels had to quit the city before it was finished. It's the biggest structure in Nashville. We have been here two days. I went up to see the state capitol and spent a few hours reading the picture of the famous men of the State. Their life sized pictures hang all around the walls. Sam Houston was the only one and Davy Crockett that I knew much about. Then I knew more from what I have heard father say of them than from books.

The Capitol stands on a knoll in the center of the town, much like Madison. The building is not so large nor so pretty.

I am feeling better every day. I have nothing like a chill since I left Chicago. Aunt Lydia gave me something that seems to knock them.

Last night the boys sang a lot of darky songs more than a hundred voices joining in, and I tell you it made the building tremble.

This is a nice country along the road much like Buffalo county, or would be if Buffalo county had peach trees on the road side. You can pick the blossoms from the windows of the cars. The farms look neglected. The darkies are free and the whites won't or can't work. It's funny how the darkies show their liking for the soldiers of Lincoln. When they meet in the main streets they hardly notice us, but round the corner or on a back street they take off their hats and say, "God bress de Linkum, soldiers." The poor creatures can't feel very free so long as they are afraid to speak to us on the main streets.

I don't exactly like the darkies, but I pity them and what father said to me when he held my hand as I got into the wagon at Reel Fullers I can never forget. You know that father that John Brown and Garrison and Wendell Phillips did more to free the slaves than all the pul pits in the land. I won't go back on the black man for father's sake.

Sister, you are a bit mistaken. I have no correspondent save you and mother and father. No, I have not written Myra, nor has she written me. You may say to her if you care to, what I told you about the last spelling match. I say yet that I would sooner she would spell me down than any one else. It tickled me to see her so fidgety and so excited that she won the prize. I think the teacher rather helped her to spell the word just the same. But I don't care.

My only bother now is some sore toes. My big toe nail is growing in to my big toe so I limp when I walk. Plague on it I must try and cut them out.

More next time when I get to the regiment. Direct Via Cairo Illinois Your brother, CHAUNCEY.
Stevenson, Ala., April 9th, 1864.

Dear Parents:

Left Nashville Thursday last for Huntsville, where we expect to find the regiments of as many states. We were piled in box cars on sacked oats and corn. When night came we pulled the doors shut and rolled up our blankets. We realized we were in the enemy’s country. We had heard that trains had been wrecked and bridges burned and it was talked in Nashville that there was a gang of bushwhackers about a hundred miles out on our road in the mountains that were derailing trains.

The worn and slivered rails jolted us fearfully. It must have been near twelve o’clock when the whole train went off the track and every car between the car I was in and the engine, including the engine, turned over down the bank. A number of the soldiers were smothered under the grain sacks and a good many had arm and legs broken. It was found that one of the rails had been pulled up. A man from a farm near by told us in the morning that he heard pounding on the track but supposed it was the section men at work. It took until next afternoon to fix the track and another train came for us. I was not hurt nor was any one in our car. The engineer said we were running 25 miles an hour. We arrived at Stevenson, Alabama the next morning. Murfreesborough and Bowling Green are on the line of this road. We passed them at night. So much of this country reminds me of Wisconsin. The hills are cultivated more than with us, and they are badly washed. The roads are lined with peach trees all in bloom.

There are several other 25th boys in the crowd on their way to join the regiment. We were ordered into quarters soon as we got here, to wait so we were told, for a train.

Sunday the 10th.

Soon as we finished dinner we boarded the train for Huntsville. Arrived just at sunset. Here we found our regiment was in camp 25 miles further at Moresville. We stayed in Huntsville two days.

Say, but this is a pretty town. Only like all towns in the South, there is no life nor business. The negroes wear a happy look but the whites look sullen and don’t like to talk. Many of the business houses are boarded up as if they had gone out of business. The big court houses and grounds in the center of the town are fine. A regiment of Jersey Zouaves are camped under the big trees in the court house square. The boys claim they are having a fine time. Light duty, plenty to eat and the finest water in the south. The biggest spring in all the south flows from a cliff nearly a hundred feet high, within a block of the court house. There is nearly as much water as runs in Bee river.

Tuesday, the 12th.

On our way to the depot, this noon to take the train for Moresville we saw a horrible sight. A battery of five guns was returning from drill across the railroad track when the shells of one of the cussions exploded blowing six men almost to atoms. One of them was thrown into the air above the tree tops and falling thru limbs his entrails were strung from the limbs to the ground. The gun carriages were shattered to pieces and the horses killed. I want to tell you it was a hard sight to see.

I found the boys at Moresville and was glad to be with them again.

I was surprised to find Dan Hadley and Henry Morse had got back ahead of me. Tell their folks, if you see them, that they are hale and hearty.

Henry says he never felt so strong.

Love to all.

CHAUNCEY.
Head Quarters 25th Wis., Vol camy.
Near Moresville, Alabama.

Dear Mother: It has been a week, res and more, since my last letter to you. I had hoped to hear from you and yet I am not surprised that no letter from home has reached me yet. The mails so far south are very irregular. The postoffice people are watching the movements of the rebels and won't send out mail over these southern roads unless they are sure.

I am idle most of the time and I thought it a good time to write my mother even if I don't have much to write. Moresville is a sorry, sleepy little place at the foot of some big hills or mountains, on the bank of a clear, pretty stream something bigger than Elk Creek at Gilmanton. Our duty here is light. The boys call it Soft Snap. That is the name of the camp. It has been soft enough for me. The Orderly has been kind to me. He has not put me on guard or any other duty since my return. He says I must get strong before the big march begins to Chattanooga, where Gen. Sherman is collecting a big army to march into Georgia. Eek Harvey says, "Take it easy boys while you can, for soon we will get plenty of fighting." I am messing with Dan Hadley and Obod Hillard. The boys are real good to me and I am glad to be back with them. I am able to take my regular rations of hard tack and sow belly and feel all right.

April 20th. Our regiment has not yet returned from Decatur, a few miles south of the Tennessee river, for which place they left here Saturday evening. Reports say that they had a sharp fight with the rebels and several of the boys in Co. K were wounded. We had been hearing cannon all the forenoon.

I had taken my place in the ranks and expected to march with the boys but the captain ordered me back to camp, saying that I was not fit to go. I hated to go back because I knew some of the boys would say I was "soldiering." "Soldiering," means playing off. There were 18 others of our Co. left beside me and about the same number in each of the ten companies. We were busy on police and guard duty till the regiment got back.

April 23rd. I have just come from town. 80 rods, with some milk and meal and a mess of doughnuts. An uncommon bill of fare in this south land.

The aristocracy here are getting pretty humble and are glad to exchange milk and corn meal for hard tack, pork and coffee. It has been an awful come down for Masen and Mistress. As Elder Harwood and Chaplin said, they would sow the wind and now they are reaping the whirlwind. The Freedmen fare just as well as the master and mistress. The big white mansion on the plantations of the south has no more in it to eat or wear than the Freedman's cabin. Where I got my milk and meal today, I rang several times before the door was opened. A pale
faced white girl opened the door and
when I told her I had been ringing
for some time she apologized by
saying she supposed it was some of
"Aunties" nigger friends come to call
on her. "You know" she said we
have no future control over our serv-
ants. "Auntie" as it seems was
away somewhere, calling without
fear of mistress. We are glad to
get their "Doegods" as the boys call
t heir doughnuts, in exchange for
sawd jelly and hard tack. These
whites are afraid of the "Yankees"
as they call us soldiers. The boys
are always singing John Brown's
body, and they seem to think all we
care for is to free the slaves. And
to tell the truth, that is about all I
care for. But the Union, the Union
the Union, as father says, half slave
and half free.

I don't believe in hating anybody
but the way these old slave holders
frighten us, they stub us every time we
meet them. I don't like them, not a
bit.

An important message has come
and we are ordered in line by the
 Adjutant. Love to all.

Your Son.

CHAUNCEY.

Hd. Quarters, 25, Wis., Vol.
April 25th, 1864.
Camp near Decatur, Ala.

Dear Father and Mother:

I can write you just as I can
snatch a moment here and there.
We don't have much drill, nor
much active duty at the front, but
there is some police duty or other
lying on all the while. When noth-
ing else is in sight we are ordered to
clean our guns and see that our am-
munition is in order. I have just
been dusting my clothes and polishing
the buckle on my hat and the
brass letters on my cartridge boxes.

A light seems to be in the air as
the rebels are not far from here and
their artillery keeps pegging away.
Wish they would come in musket
range but they won't.

We came into Decatur last night.
It was our first march since I re-
joined the regiment. The boys are
all busy fixing up tents and arrang-
ing things in spite of the fact we are
under marching orders to be ready
to leave Chatanooga any hour.

At nine o'clock we were ordered to
stack arms and be ready to exchange
our old Enfield guns made in Eng-
land for new Springfield guns made
in America.

April 26th. I don't like this town
as well as Moresville. It is pretty
enough too, but the whites are all
scared away and we have no one to
trade hard tack and saw belly with.

At Moresville we got corn pones and
sweet potatoes for pickled pork and
hard bread. It's getting warm. The
sun burns good and hot. I shall
have to cut the tail off my dress
coat and make a jacket of it or draw
a blouse. We would like mighty
well to get sight of the paymaster
and our credit is getting poor with
the sutler.

I don't remember if I told you
that Henry Morse is back again
with the company. He is getting
stout again and rough as ever. It's
strange Henry don't write to his
folks. If you see Elder Morse give
him my regards, and tell him Henry
is all right. Eck Harvey has never
been the same since Bill Anderson
died. They were the two tallest
men in the company and always
headed the company column. The
fact is, I can see a great change in
many of the boys since last fall.

They are not so wild as they were
and I believe they are better. As I
write one of the sergeants came
round warning us to be ready any
moment to fall in as the enemy is
getting louder, and to be ready any
moment for action. Just the same
the boys go on writing letters and
playing cards as the case happens,
paying no attention to the rattle of
the rebels cannon on our right. The
darkies are coming into our camp in
droves. They tell all sorts of stories about the rebels, but they are so ignorant and scared I don't think their stories are minded much. The women, and some of them are nearly white, are all looking for washing jobs. They borrow big coffee kettles of the boys and build fires down by the creek and do their washings. Lots of the boys hang round and tease them. They will do anything on earth for a Linkun soldier, as they call us, and still the boys treat them mean.

An orderly just galloped up to the Colonel's tent with a message. It may be an order to march. Love to all,

CHAUNCEY.

Decatur, Alabama. May 7, 1864.

Co. G., 25th Wis.

Dear parents,—The march toward Chattanooga began this morning. The order came last night after an all day's rain, to strike tents this morning and be ready at sun rise to march. This means our entire brigade. The enemy's guns that had been pounding away at us for nearly a week, were silenced by our batteries two days ago and since then there has been no excitement till the marching order came last night. Rations for three days were given each man which about filled our haversacks. Then at roll call we were told what was expected of us. That we were to join a large army that Sherman was collecting at Chattanooga and that we were to begin a hundred and fifty mile march toward Chattanooga the next day. The boys cheered and said they were glad to go anywhere for a change. We crossed the Tennessee river on pontoon and marched toward Moresville, our old camp. The mud was from three to six inches deep and fearful sticky. Marched about 12 miles and came in to camp just as the sun went below the mountains. Our camp is on the grassy bank of a pretty river. I don't know its name. It has been hot and muggy and the hard work of plodding thru the mud has tuckered me a little. I have just come from the river when I had a good wash. Lots of the boys throw away blankets and winter underwear. Dan Hadley, who is cook for our mess of four, has called to supper so I must quit for to-night.

May 2nd.—The reveille roused us this morning before sunrise and a crowd of negroes that had come into camp to look at the Yankee soldiers, began singing some plantation songs for the boys. They have a banjo and I tell you they can play it and dance too. I have washed in the river this morning and while Dan and Obe build the fire, fry the hard tack and saw belly and boil the coffee I am writing a line or two on this heavy sheet torn from a merchant's ledger in Decatur. It's hard to get paper to write on. On the other side you will see a list of things sold by the merchant to Bill Parker's nigger George back in 1858. "Nigger George" was a slave.

7 o'clock p. m. We made several halts to-day to rest but the ground was so wet we couldn't lay down without our rubbers under us. A regiment of cavalry passed us as we halted this forenoon and all seemed to be so jolly I wished for a while I was in the cavalry so I wouldn't blister my feet marching. Came into Huntsville Alabama just at sunset, having marched 18 miles. A lot of the boys are crippling around with sore feet. I am washing mine three times a day in cold water which helps them. There is a lot of troops gathered here all destined for Chattanooga. Camp fires are blazing everywhere. Fences, boxes, old buildings and every movable thing is picked up and pulled down to make fires. It looks tough to burn up nice little fences, but the boys must have fires to cook by.

May 3rd.—We are waiting for
some cause, I suppose for orders. As I have a chance to mail this letter this morning I will tear my big sheet of paper in two and send what I have written and call it a letter. The orderly is distributing some letters which arrived this morning. I hope I have one but I can't wait to tell you and send this out so goodbye father and mother.


Dear Mother:

I think I sent you my last from this place. I am taking this from some scribbles in my note book. I got a letter from home this morning while waiting for orders to march. Am truly glad to hear that you are out of debt at last. It used to trouble me when I went in the field to hoe corn to think that you was in debt. It made my hoe feel heavy. We are on the march again thru pine forests and over mountains enroute for Chattanooga. Troops are coming in and swelling our force from all directions. We are passed every little while by cavalry on good feeling horses, prancing along, and by four and six gun batteries, eight big horses to each gun, the cannoniers laughing and talking as they pound along in the cassions. The cannoniers have a snap on the road and to-day as I limped along with a blistered foot, I wished I could trade places with one of them. But I would rather be in the ranks when the bug of war begins. When it comes long range shooting the boys that man the big guns catch it first. I guess I am satisfied where I am. There is talk that the Johnny's are bound to give us a fight at Chattanooga. We have had a long tedious march to-day over mountains and thru valleys that were pretty and green and wading creeks over shoe top that didn't really help our sore feet. The streams here are clear and cool and come from springs. No danger of fever from drinking Alabama spring water.

Marched 23 miles to-day. My feet are not so sore as yesterday. Many of the boys are badly crippled and will have to take the ambulance tomorrow. I am glad I ain't one of them. Some of them are shamming and it puts every honest soldier that complains under suspicion.

Not many minutes after coming into camp every fence and movable thing in sight is pulled down to make the fires. God pity this south land when we are done with it.

May 4th. Struck camp, not tents, this morning, for we had none. The sky all spangled with stars was our only covering last night. I lay with my face to the north and for a long time looking at the only thing I knew—the north star and the big dipper. It seems lower down than in Wisconsin.

At Woodville, 8 miles distant, we took the train for Chattanooga. Our cars were cattle cars. Some of the boys said g—d—the cattle cars, and some said God be praised for even cattle cars. At 9 p.m. we got under way for Chattanooga. Rushing thru the mountains, rumbling over rivers and gorges that made ones head swim to look down. Some of the tressels were fearful high.

May 5th. Woke up this morning just as the train crossed Tennessee river. I must have been jolted round a good deal as I found myself in the corner of the car some four feet from where I lay down. I was awakened by a lot of the boys singing "When Johnny Comes Marching Home." Max Brill and a company K man who had somehow got into our car, was leading the band. Max made the noise and the Co. K man made the music.

Arrived in sight of Chattanooga at 11 a.m. The level plain far as I can see is litterly covered with troops. Nothing but tents, tents, tents, by the ten thousand. Music by hundreds
of bands is floating and humming in the air. 160 thousand rations were issued this morning to this vast army.

And this was before our division of ten thousand men came in. Got off the cars, cooked our dinner and lay round on our blanket watching the steady tramp of columns going and coming until 6 o'clock. We were suddenly ordered into ranks and marched out 5 miles and camped for the night at the base of Missionary Ridge, where our brave comrades made that heroic charge in 1863. Lookout Mountain, whose summit is swathed in a blue cloud, is about 4 miles distant from our encampment and about the same from Chattanooga.

May 6th. It was late before we slept last night. There was a constant clatter of cavalry passing, of carbines and swords jangling and of the pounding of gun carriages, over the big rocks that make these roads a terror. The boys think we are close to a fight and there ain't much loud talk. The mail carrier is coming to rather the letters, good bye. Will write again soon. Direct by way of Chattanooga.

Your boy,

CHAUNCEY.

P. S. Direct to 16th Army Corps, via Chattanooga.

Army of the Southwest.

May 10th, 1864.

Dear folks at home: I send you my diary for three days of hard marching and rather hard fare. Your letter of May 1st, was handed me just as I finished my notes last evening. Well I am glad a thousand times all is well at home. I am pleased too that father thinks my letters are better written and better spelled. Father is the hardest critic I have. But it's all right. I hope someday I may write as perfect a letter as he does, but not now. I tell you we have mighty little time for study these days. I send you my notes for three days, so you can judge.

May 6th. We had hardly time to swallow our coffee when we were ordered to fall in and march this morning before daylight. We marched out 12 miles thru the Chickamauga battle ground. For ten miles of the way the woods were scarred and limbed and many trees cut in two by solid shot. All the way little mounds showed where the boys fell and were buried. The battle ground is generally level and covered with timber. The heavy shot have mowed fearful paths on all sides thru the tree tops. Camped a little before sunset at Gordon's Mills. Am sitting with my feet in some spring water writing these notes. Several of the boys are with me bathing their blistered feet.

May 7th. Broke camp and began our march at sunrise thru a rough mountainous country, expecting the enemy to attack any minute. Cannonading is heard on our left. Met a lot of poor whites leaving the country. They are a wretched looking lot. They say we are the first Yanks they ever saw. The horses and cattle and pigs, like the people driving them, are the sorriest things I ever saw. The wagons were driven by the women, and the men, with long barreled guns and five to ten children all white haired, followed behind driving the cattle and a sheep or two and sometimes a pig. These were all mountain people, the clay eaters and best shots in the rebel army. Some of the boys asked them what they were fighting for, and they answered, "you Yanks want us to marry our daughters to the niggers." Poor ignorant devils. Marched 18 miles today. Went into camp at sunset, and such a sunset. Just such as I have often seen in my Wisconsin home, with the bluff tops all warm and yellow just fading into twilight.

May 8th. Marched but 8 miles today over stony roads and steep
mountain sides and crossed many beautiful spring streams. Farms, or plantations as they call them here, look as if they had been prosperous but they are all deserted. The negroes have mostly gone and the whites are in the army.

May 9th. It was no secret that we were close to the enemy, eighty thousand strong. Our forward march began early. We made from 8 to 10 miles. The left column of our corps met the enemy and for an hour the cannonade was fierce. The ambulance corps brought back many dead and wounded. The wagon trains several miles in extent, were halted and packed under cover of several batteries of artillery and a big reserve of infantry. Mounted orderlies were coming and going on fast horses. Nobody knew what the next hour would bring forth. We were ordered to keep our guns in prime condition and our boxes full of bullets.

A great army of infantry lay about us, all waiting like ourselves for the order to march. All of a sudden there came a roll of voices in a mighty shout from the rear. While we were wondering what it meant a troop of cavalry came galloping along headed by the famous cavalry leader Gen. Kilpatrick. It made the boys feel mighty good to see this daring cavalry leader, who was such a terror to the rebels. He is a little fellow, about 5 feet 5 with brown hair, thin beard and mild gray eyes. He kept rousing his hat brim as his mare, all foam, went galloping by.

As the yellow sun went below the Georgia mountains last night, the bands from more than twenty regiments filled the air with their music. I wondered how it would strike the ear of the rebel picket on the mountain side in front of us. I rolled in my blanket, with my clothes on, and tried to sleep. About midnight I was awakened from dreams of home by the rushing cavalry horses and the grinding of artillery wagons. We soon learned that the rebel Gen. Wheeler was making a move to capture our supply trains. The wagons were being hurried to the rear and every surrounding regiment ordered to get in motion and join in the retreat. With the rest of the army we were soon on the counter march, in the darkness, over swollen streams and stumbling over stones we could not see, plunging thru the mud and often entangled in the overhanging limbs. God, what a night and what a morning. Can I forget it? No never. The retreat thru the hills of Georgia, following the supply trains of the Union army will long be remembered. I am all right and ready for the fray.—Direct via Chattanooga.

Ever dear parents.
Yours, CHAUNCEY.

Sherman's Army. May 10th, 1864.

Dear parents:

I am writing you again today. I wrote you only day before yesterday, but all the boys have the fever, as it looks, of writing letters tonight. Cannons are booming both on the right and on the left, and as our lieutenant says, things look mighty squarely for tomorrow. I can't say that I am a bit nervous, but as the boys say, some of us may be where we can't send letters tomorrow and better send 'em now.

We were up and ready for orders to march early this morning but the order did not come until 9 o'clock. The enemies shells have been screaming and bursting over head, killing and wounding a lot of men in our division.

Marching out to the front some three miles, and we were nearly all day doing it, so conflicting were the reports of our scouts and couriers as to the location and strength of the enemy.

Finally we came to a halt for the night just as the rain was pouring
down in torrents. Everything got soaking wet but our powder. We kept our powder dry. I am afraid you can't read this, my paper is so wet and greasy. In my hurry this morning I put my writing paper in my haversack along with my plate and sow belly.

Night came on at last and with it the hardest storm I ever saw. Our little fly tents let the water thru like sieves. We didn't have any time to pick up brush for a bed and so lay on the ground. Some of the boys said they were laying in the water two inches deep, when the sentinels came rushing into camp shouting, "to arms to arms, the rebels are coming." Our camp was in a forest of great pine trees, and I had gone to sleep, as no doubt had the others, while the thunder was crashing around us and the wind and rain was pouring thru the pine tops with an awful roar.

We were already wet as drowned rats when we sprang out into the open storm, slingin' on our cartridge boxes and knapsacks and fastening our dripping blankets to our belts, and pulling down our flimsy fly tents and tying them like belts around us and falling into the retreating column fast as we could. No questions were asked, not a word was said, every fellow for the time was willing to obey orders. The brave boys who generally knew a lot more than Sherman, didn't say a word last night.

We turned our backs to the enemy and retraced our steps over terrible roads, sometimes in mud and water to our middle. It was pitch dark only as flashes of lightning lit up the struggling mass about us. Stumbling over rocks and roots, many fell full length in the muddy water of the overflowing streams and in the muddy track of the plunging column. We made about four miles and halted near a big corral of supply trains. We were ordered to build fires and dry our blankets. It's pretty hard to tell what Sherman is trying to do. The report is that the rebels are making feints at different points along our lines trying to break thru, and that Sherman is planning to bag their army.

Our retreat last night looked as if we were the party nearest bagged. But you can't tell. Sherman has an awful army. The line is three columns deep and twenty miles long. That the armies are close together, there is no doubt, as we can hear guns going all night long.

We are hearing good news from the Potomac. The sun is fearfully hot this morning and all hands are trying to dry their soaked clothes.

It is ten o'clock and no orders yet to march. The five or six hundred supply wagons along side us in a big corn field, with their four and six mule teams all plastered with mud, show no signs of moving.

Word has just come to be ready to march in fifty minutes. Couriers are galloping up and down the line and the officers are calling out orders to pick up and pack up.

Send me some stamps and direct by way of Chattanooga. In haste. Love to mother, sister and the boys. Will write again first chance.

CHAUNCEY.

Camp in the Pine Woods near Resaca, Georgia, May 17th, 1864.

Dear Parents: I have something to tell you this time. We have been in a big fight and lost near three hundred men, killed, wounded and prisoners. These figures are not correct by official returns as shown later. I am mighty glad to tell you that I am all right. I had several close calls as did all the boys for that matter. We have been under fire and losing men right along for three days. Many of our boys were killed and wounded at long range firing from the Rebel fort by shot and shell so far that we could not return it and had to take it. A good part of the time we were sup-
porting batteries that were trying to silence or dismount the big guns on the rebel fort. I want to tell you the Johnny were all fixed for us. Think of two hundred guns on our side, 12 and 11 pounders, pouring shot and shell fast as men could load and fire into the enemies fort while two, and in some places three, lines of infantry were compelled to stand or lay in front of these batteries, exposed to shot and bursting shell and no chance to shoot back. I don't know where to begin to tell you, nor how to tell you, of the last four days, besides we are under marching orders to be ready to go at a moment's notice. just as we have been night and day for several days. As I write this, cannons are roaring on our left toward Buzzard Roost and no soldier knows what the next hour may bring. I can scarcely keep my eyes open to write, altho it is but ten o'clock in the morning. We have had so little sleep for a week, night or day. On the 12th, word was passed that the rebels had made a stand at Resaca and that the place was fortified and mounted with big cannons and mortars. During the night of the 12th, Sherman planted his batteries on every hill and ridge overlooking the town, and in the morning of the 13th, at day break, both the rebel fort and our brass batteries opened a terrific fire. Our regiment was ordered to take a position on advance of a string of batteries, while another column of infantry filed in front of us.

It was a sight never to be forgotten, to see, as we could from the ridge, column after column of troops, two and three lines deep, forming in battle line away on our left for a mile and a half. Here and there a bursting shell from the fort would throw the lines into confusion killing and wounding scores of men. By the time the smoke cleared up the lines would reform, the dead and wounded would be carried back by the ambulance corps. All that day until night, the big guns on the fort thundered at our batteries on every hill and ridge, on the north and west side. I don't know what our loss was. A shell burst just over us, killing and wounding a number in Co. K., next our Co. A shell burst directly over me, cutting a hole in my blanket and the piece making a hole in the ground within a few inches of my body. The battery, just in our rear, was put out of business for a time by a bursting shell from the fort, dismounting three guns, killing and wounding the gunners, and smashing the gun carriages to spinters. It was a horrible sight to see the poor fellows wounded and mangled. Long before night the valley of the Coosa was thick with smoke so that we could no longer see the belching clouds of smoke sent out from the fort. I see a courier galloping to head quarters. I suppose it means an order to fall in. Will finish my story of the battle Resaca if I live, first chance.

The mail carrier is calling for letters so good bye. Am feeling fine.

Your boy, CHAUNCEY.

Camp in the Pines, Georgia
16th Army Corps, May 18th, 1864.

Dear parents: After we finished breakfast and had strapped on our cartridge belt, our haversack and our knapsack and cleaned and primed muskets and fallen in, an order came to be at ease for an hour or so until a long column of cavalry and artillery, which wanted all the road, could get by. Our foxy old General Sherman was coming another flank move to the right, and the cavalry and artillery were ordered ahead.

There is heavy firing five or six miles on our left and word has just been passing down the line that the rebels at Dalton have made a fierce sortie on our lines at that point. It looks strange to see our troops marching quietly to the right with all this rumpus on the left. But our
bully old General knows his business and we feel easy.

I have something more to tell you about Resaca, while we are resting. The evening of the 14th, under cover of the smoke that filled the valley just before sundown, the lines of infantry were advanced nearly a mile toward the town. Our regiment was put on the extreme front. We crossed the Coosa creek or river, about as big as the Elk at Gilmanton, and took up a position in the edge of the woods with a big open plantation or clearing between us and the rebel infantry, lined up in a strip of woods at the edge of this clearing a quarter of a mile from us. The rebels discovered us first and began a terrific fire on us from their cover of brush and logs. Then the order came for us to open fire. There is no use to try to tell you of the excitement, of the cries of the officers, of the whistling of bullets and shells and above all the roar of guns. Every fellow loaded and fired fast as he could. We were ordered to rest on our knees instead of standing where we could, as at short range firing most of the bullets went high. We had not emptied our boxes before it got dark and we had to aim at the line of fire from the guns of the enemy. After it got quite dark the firing stopped and we went back to the flank of the Coosa and made our coffee, and spreading our ponchos or rubbers on the wet earth, lay down on our stomachs with all our belts and belongings fastened to us, and tried to sleep. It was poor sleeping. We shot of the poor fellows who were taking their last sleep and of the many who were suffering from wounds and broken limbs. Long before daylight we were ordered to dig trenches and pile up log barricades on the edge of the open clearing still nearer to the rebel line of defense. There was no warm coffee the morning of the 15th. We lunched on hard tack and some smoked bacon and ham that our cavalry boys had captured the night before and rationed out during the night.

10 o'clock a.m. We have just had a bugle call to fall in, but after standing in the ranks a half hour, we were ordered again to "grab a root," meaning to rest standing or lying down. I take my pencil and here goes for the rest of my story.

All night long some of the wakeful boys heard officers on the fort swearing and giving orders. Some that it meant they were moving their big guns or they were planting more big guns. Anyway when the first streak of daylight came, both sides opened a hot musketry fire. Both sides were protected behind barricades. We shot it strange that there were so few big guns being used at the fort.

Our batteries, a half mile at our rear, opened up their thunder upon the town with very little reply. By midday the smoke in the valley of the Coosa became so thick we had to shoot by guess. I emptied my cartridge box many times during the day as did the others. I saw men often drop after shooting, but don't know that it was my bullet that did the work and really hope it was not. But you know that I am a good shot.

During the day we took turns sleeping behind our log barricades. I could sleep, but many could not with ten thousand guns roaring in their cars.

Say, do you know it was my 15th birthday? Shortly after noon one of our cannon shot away the rebel flag on the fort. There must have been twenty thousand Union soldiers see it fall, from the shout that was sent up along our lines. Such a day and such a night. When night set in not a gun replied from the fort. The firing ceased on our side. The night of the 15th we lay upon the bare earth, eating cold scraps such as we had, and listening to sounds at the
fort we could not understand. In the morning our pickets reported that the high bridge across the Coosa had been burned and the rebel army had retreated. Not a gun was fired in the morning. The fort was silent as the grave. There was a hasty gathering of regiments and forming into column. But I have no more time for details.

There is a roar of big guns on our right and the cavalry and batteries that have been stringing leisurely along, are whipping their horses into a trot. They have orders to hurry up.

Good bye. Your son,

CHAUNCEY.

Near Lost Mountain, Georgia. 2nd Brigade, 4th Division, 16th Army Corps. May 20th, 1864.

Dear Parents: I have been too busy to think of writing for some days, and if not busy have been sleeping or trying to sleep. We have had ten days and nights of fearful campaigning. The doctors are sending back thousands of men who are sick and dying for want of sleep. There hasn't been a minute of time, night or day, that guns are not heard or that our regiment has not been losing men, and yesterday it all wound up with a most terrible fight at Dallas or Lost Mountain.

I am writing this by the light of a rail fire laying on my stomach about 1 o'clock in the morning. Have been on special duty digging trenches and piling up log breast works in expectation of an attack. This sort of thing has been going on for eight days. One day we would march to the right and the next day to the left. Last week we dug trenches during the day and marched by night, this week we are marching by day and digging nights. The rebel generals keep Sherman guessing most of the time. If we did not have a much bigger army, we would stand a poor show in these mountains. For a week we have been winding round mountains, wading mountain streams and twisting about in great pine woods, falling asleep as we marched and stumbling over roots and stones. Then we would come to a halt to let some cavalry troops get by or some batteries that were badly wanted at the front. Then we would drop down on our faces where we stood and snatch a few minutes sleep, only to be routed by that awful bugle call to route up and march. The fact is, the bugle terrifies us more than rebel bullets. In many places the valleys or gorges in these mountains are so narrow that we have to wade for a long way in the streams that run down them. Of course our feet are always wet, but this water is good to drink and we thank God that we don't suffer from thirst as we did.

Lieutenant McKay has just come round, as he is on duty to-night, and warns me that I better quit my writing and go to bed, so I must leave off telling you of the battle of Lost Mountain until next letter. I took two or three naps while scribbling this and maybe you can't read it. I am feeling fine. Have had no letter from home lately. Tell Dora to see Miss A. and ask her to write. Direct to Chattanooga, 16th Army Corps.

Goodbye mother and father. Your loving

CHAUNCEY.

40 miles from Dallas, Georgia.

In the great pine woods.

June 1st, 1864.

Dear Parents: For three days we have been on special detail duty guarding a supply train of several hundred wagons of hard tack and ammunition. We came into camp late last night, and while the wagon train has pulled out this morning we are told to be at ease until future orders. I am in the shade of some great pines this morning and I am glad, for the heat of the sun is fearful. With my back against a great yellow pine I am seated to tell you of the fight at Dallas or Lost Moun-
tain. Dallas is a little, sorrowful, humble village of some 600 souls about two miles from a great black forest covered mounds called Lost Mountain.

If I live a hundred years I shall never forget the fearful night of the 29th of May, 1864, when all the earth and sky seemed on fire and in a struggle for life or death. In the space of thirty minutes 2,000 men were killed and three times as many wounded, many of them to die.

Before we reached Dallas on the 27th, we had been told by the natives along the way that a big army of 40,000 men was waiting for us Yanks on Lost Mountain. On account of the heavy timber we were within six or seven miles of the mountain before we saw it. It looked to us like a great mound two or three miles long covered with a dense forest. We thought of Resaca and of course kept our eyes on the mountain at every opening. We didn't make more than five or six miles that day. A halt would be called every few minutes to let a cavalry regiment cross, going to the right or the left, or a battery, sometimes two or three, would come tearing by, when we would take to the side of the road and drop down on our bellies for a nap till they got by. We camped on the outskirts of Dallas on the night of the 27th between the town and the mountain. There were only a few people left in town and they were packing up and hurrying away in expectation that the town would be burned.

On the morning of the 28th, John W. Christian and I were detailed to go on picket duty. Our beat lay within 80 rods of the rebel breast works on the side of Lost Mountain. Sharpshooters in the tops of the trees kept pegging away at us for four hours. We changed our position several times but they kept their eyes on us. We were in a corn field full of rotten stumps. We got behind one of these stumps put up a rubber blanket for a shade and lay down close together as we could. They got our range and presently the bullets began to whistle past us, striking the ground but a few feet from us. I said to John, "Let's get out of this." "Wait" he said, "until they come closer." The next moment two shots ripped thru the rubber above us, one of them grazing John's breast and tearing a hole in the ground between us. We rolled out of that in a hurry grabbed our blankets and took a position lower down the hill. John Christian is a dandy boy. He isn't afraid of anything. In the afternoon about 4 o'clock, we were relieved to take a sleep.

As soon as it got dark we were ordered to build breast works of logs not more than fifty rods of the rebel lines just across a deep gulch from the foot of the mountain. About ten at night we were ordered back to camp for a few hours sleep, and the next morning at three o'clock before daylight, we were in these trenches facing the rebel lines, which were protected like ours. All day long we shot wherever we saw a hand, a head or puff of smoke, and the rebels did the same. Some times our side would call out to the rebs, asking them to hold up and talk things over. "All right," they would say, and for some time both sides would talk over things about the war, and about their girls, and about exchanging hard tack for ham and whiskey for tobacco. Then some voice would call out look out for your life, and the shooting would begin. Several times during the day both sides would agree to a truce for ten minutes or twenty minutes, and some of the more daring on both sides would meet half way and exchange tobacco for whiskey and sometimes newspapers, sometimes to shake hands merely. Soon as the first fellow got back to his barricade he would call out, "Say pards are you ready?" If the answer came back all ready. at
once a dozen guns, perhaps a hundred would answer back the challenge.

About the middle of the afternoon the canteen of my squad, some 50 men were empty. The orderly in command called for volunteers to take the canteens and carry them back to the branch some 50 rods and refill them.

I was the first man to step out and Jake Bolunger of Alma followed me. (I dared a certain comrade whose name I will not give here to go with me. It was a dangerous duty and just as I expected he refused.)

Jake and I made the trip all right both coming and going over a ridge in plain view and range of sharp shooters who greeted us with a shower of bullets both ways. Jake fell down on his way out not twenty rods from the trenches. I had got to a stump and made a halt to get my second wind. I called to him. He answered back I am all right. The rebel sharp shooters, thinking they had killed him stopped shooting at him when he jumped up and ran over the ridge out of sight. We got back with our canteens of water all safe.

(This letter being too long for a single publication we will complete it in the next week's issue. Editor.)

Continued from last week's issue.)

Early in the evening of May 29th after a day of incessant musket firing we were ordered back to camp along with the rest of our division. There had been a rumor that the Johnnyes (rebels) were evacuating and still another story that they were concentrating all their cannon along the line of our front and were planning an assault. There was a mystery about it that kept our officers guessing. The thing that looked suspicious to us, if we were to make a flank move, was the increased number of batteries that were lined up along the crest of the ridge just above and behind us. Word was passed along the line that old Leather Breeches with his eight big brass bull dogs (cannon) had taken a position just in our rear. Leather Breeches had the best battery in the army and every soldier knew that when the old Dutch captain's war dogs barked it meant business. Before the smoke had cleared away, that sent a shell into the rebel ranks, the boys would run up and hug the guns and call them dear girlie.

We were in the edge of a corn field littered with stumps and stubs. In the three lines laying just in advance of some fifty big guns on the ridge we could see all of our division and part of another. We ate our hard tack and drank cold water for supper and we lay down for a little rest with all our belts and blankets strapped on. Everything had grown quiet along our front save a few shots from the sharp shooters. On our left there was an occasional boom of cannon some miles off. Yes, and now and then a burst of spiteful musketry close on both our right and left. We were finally lulled into a broken sleep by the music of many regimental bands, which our General had ordered to keep playing. We lay down on the bare earth with everything strapped to us but our guns and the air of "Home Sweet Home" in our ears. It was near 1 o'clock at night. There was no threatening sound save the steady tramp of the 16th army Corps with its infantry and cavalry and batteries moving steadily to the left without any voice of command. Our cat maps were given away to sound sleep when, from the forest height of Lost Mountain, there came a chorus of bugle notes that caused 50,000 Union soldiers tired and weary, to spring to their feet. We knew too well that it meant an onslaught of the rebel army. In an instant we were on our feet. The next moment came the command: 'Lie down until the enemy shows itself above the crest of the hill.' I have no pen to tell you of the awful
scenes and sounds of the next three quarters of an hour. How near the re'el infantry came to our lines that night we do not know. The heavens above seemed to boil with fiery red smoke from ours and the rebel cannons. It must be we were too well prepared. Not a half mile from our right a thousand men were killed in 30 minutes and three thousand were wounded, perhaps most of them mortally. O God, what a night was the night of May the 29th for Sherman's army. It was a night of dazzling, glaring, shrieking sounds. The earth seems crashing into ten thousand atoms. The sky but an hour ago so pitchy black, seems boiling with smoke and flame. And the horrid shrieking shot, and bursting shells, then the shouting of commanders and cheering of men, mingled with the sputter of muskets and the roar of batteries, made the world about us seem like a very hell. Just behind our division alone was a solid line of cannon for near a half mile, vomiting fiery streams of shot and shell that came screaming close above our heads. Many of them were so badly timed that they burst above our lines, killing and wounding our own men. And for every broad side from our big guns there came an answering roar from the rebel lines. The real death struggle at short range musket firing was a quarter of a mile on the right of our division. The forest there was dense and unbroken. There most of the 4,000 men, who were killed and wounded, fell, and all in less than an hour. We talked it all over with the fellows who were in the thick of it next morning. How they were under marching orders to move to the left, how they had quit the trenches under the belief that the rebel army was retreating. Then came those bugle notes which meant a rebel charge and a fight to the finish. They may tell of hell and its awful fires, but the boys who went thru the fight of Dallas, with all its scenes, are pretty well prepared for any event this side eternity. Pull of whiskey and gunpowder the rebel ranks charged again and again the Union lines, only to be repulsed again and again with fearful slaughter. They charged with their hats pulled down over their eyes like men who cared only to throw away their lives. With every repulse of the rebels, a cheer of victory came up the Union lines and was borne away in a mighty roar by fifty thousand eager voices on our left. For the rest of the night we slept upon our arms within ear shot of the cries of the wounded and dying, every house in Dallas being pressed into service as a hospital. The cries of the wounded and dying murdered all sleep for me that night and I shot many many times of father's saying: "That every life taken by Union or Rebel bullets was a sacrifice to the crime of slavery."

You may have to pay some extra postage on this heavy paper. I am writing on paper torn from some merchant's ledger, picked up in the streets of Dallas. The boys have run out of letter paper and are using any sort of paper.

Orders have been passed along the line to be prepared for a night's march.

I have not had a letter for some days. The report is the railroad in our rear has been cut by a raiding party. If this is so you may not get this letter very soon.

There is a rumor that the rebel army is making another stand at a place called Big Shanty.

Am feeling all right. Love to all.

CHAUNCEY.

Head Quarters First Battalion 2nd Brigade 16th Army Corps, Camp in the Georgia Pine Woods.

June 2nd, 1864.

Dear Mother: I awakened this morning with my face and feet both outside my rubber blanket, washed
by the falling rain. I was on duty until 1 o'clock digging trenches and building breastworks. Our division of six regiments is on special duty guarding supply trains of wagons loaded with ammunition and provisions for a hundred thousand men. Since I wrote you last our brigade has moved twice, but not more than two miles each time. The fact is, we move as the rebel army moves. We are on the extreme right of Gen. Sherman's big army, and we have to be wide awake and on the alert for the flanks. Most of us have been wet to the skin night and day for several days. Our worry is to keep our powder dry, for our lives we are ordered to do this. We like the wet better than breathing the thick dust that fills the air from the tramp of so many thousand feet. We don't fear any sudden attack from the rebel's general Hood or Polk en masse, but the bodies of rebel cavalry are hovering round ready to pounce on our provision trains and on their guards any hour of the day or night. This compels us to be always on the move, changing our position. Yesterday a reconnoitering force of the enemy, supported by a battery of artillery, came out on a hill a mile and a quarter distant and opened fire upon our lines just in our front. For some moments the sputtering musketry and bursting shells sounded like a general engagement. But soon, to our delight, Leather Breeches, with his war dogs and their casions drawn by 128 big horses, galloped into position just behind us and with eight big guns opened fire with their ear splitting roar on the rebel battery. It seemed nip and tuck to us fellows, who were waiting with our muskets, as to which would quit first in this duel of big guns. The rebels had fewer cannon, but they were fighting, as their smart leaders told them, for their wives and children. A heavy rain began falling about this time and the rebel cannon ceased firing altogether. As some of the boys say when they run against "Leather Breeches," they are "sure up against it." The next morning early a body of our cavalry, sent out to reconnoitre, surprised a company of them playing cards in a log house and captured 40 of them. The boys sent up a wild hurrah when they heard of this. We cannot forget the boast of the south that it would take four "Yanks" to match one southerner. And do you know mother, I somehow had the feeling that the south was more than our match man for man, they did so much bragging. But that's their way, besides if they were not fighting to keep us away from their homes we could tell better. The prisoners we talk with, and we see them every day, say we "Yankees" are fighting to free the niggers so they can marry white women. What miserable stories they tell.

It is raining to-day a slow, drizzling rain. Have just come in from a two hours stunt on the trenches. The boys who have taken our places are working in a pouring rain and are wet to the hide. They are deepening trenches and piling up musket proof breast works, which as Col. Montgomery says: "We may leave the next hour or possibly not for a week." The boys make a joke of their digging by saying there is silver in Georgia and they are mining for it. And then it is taken as a good sign that we are soon to leave entrenchments which it takes a day and a night to build.

I sent you a letter day before yesterday giving an account of our late movements, so I am keeping you well posted.

George Ide, of Mondovi, died yesterday. He had been sick but two days. Poor fellow, what will his parents think? Chet Ide, his uncle, felt very bad. He had been with the company but a short time but the
boys will miss him because he was such good company.
A good many of the boys are breaking down for want of sleep. The doctors are sending them back by the hundred to rest and recruit.
Am feeling all right. Hope to get a letter tonight from home.
Your son,
CHAUNCEY.

In the Pine Woods, Georgia,
16th Army Corps, June 6th, 1864.
Dear Parents: I am off duty and have had six hours of refreshing nap. Henry Morse has just been to see me and asked me to say nothing that will get to his folks about his health. He is bad off with bowel trouble, but he doesn't want his people to know of it. They have cut our rations in half and every fellow is hungry. Every few days our cavalry raiders capture a lot of smoked meat and corn pones, and lots of the boys over eat because it's good, and they are down sick. Henry is one of them. The trouble is, we can't eat here like we can in Wisconsin. If we eat a good fill we are off our feed for a day or two. When our rations are short the boys go to the Quartermaster's and, if they have a dime, fill up on pie and cake, and its regular poison to them. I dreamed last night about the cheese which you wrote about in the letter I got three days ago. Sure I would like a taste of it, but mother, I wish you would stop making cheese with all your other work, its too much. Mother, I don't remember that I helped you very much in such work. But it seems to me if I was home again I could help you in so many ways that I never thought of before, and I will be home again someday. I am sure we soldiers will have good times again to pay for this. This war will not last always. Gen. Grant is flaxing them in Virginia, and I saw the other day in an Atlanta paper that Gen. Sherman could "outflank Hell," so there is a show that we will outflank Hood and get into Atlanta before long. Let not the people of the north find fault and wonder why we don't press on faster. Great Heavens, think what we have to do. I used to wonder why the Potomac army did not move faster. Then I knew nothing of marching in armies of one or two hundred thousand men. Let people stop and think about these things; then they will be more patient. Let me tell you something about it. Sherman has five army corps of from 15 to 25 thousand men in each corps. Each corps is following in the same direction on parallel roads from 3 to 5 miles apart. Each corps means a string of men, four abreast, of from eight to ten miles long. There is an army of rebels posted on every one of these roads with cannon at every cross road, cavalry dashes in upon our flanks and sharp shooters picking our men off at every opening where the pine forests come within a half or quarter of a mile of the road. You can see the time we are having. If one of the corps is stopped by trees fallen across the road so the cannon or the cavalry cannot pass, couriers are sent to stop all the other corps until the way is cleared. All the bridges are burned by the retreating rebels and have to be rebuilt, which causes a delay. Sometimes we use pontoons, boats made of canvas anchored in the rivers with planks stretched from one to the other. Where the roads are obstructed they fall timber on both sides for miles and sharpen the limbs so we can't get thru. A dozen times every day we come to a halt, for what we don't know. It's a safe guess that its a broken wagon axle, a crippled cannon or a played out passion truck. No questions are asked. We are only too glad to fall down on our faces and snatch a few minutes sleep. There are more delays from ammunition and "sow belly" wagons breaking down than from any other one cause. Then
the gorillas are forever attacking our rear guard, and sometimes bodies of men and batteries have to be sent back to help them out. All this means a delay.

Sister Dora wrote that father expected to buy a couple of cows of Mr. Harvey. I think it a good deal as I shall want a lot of milk, butter and cheese when I come home, if I do this winter. Every body thinks the rebellion on its last legs, and that means the end of it when we get into its strongest and last defense Atlanta.

An Orderly has just ridden up to Brigade Headquarters and, as it may mean something serious, will close for this time. Please send stamps in your next. Your son

CHAUNCEY.

In the Pine Woods of Georgia,
16th Corps, 25th Wis. Regt
June 9th, 1864

Dear Folks at Home: It is only two or three days ago that I wrote you, but I have the time and it seems like being with you to be writing to you. Your last letter of June 2nd came last night. I am surprised that Mrs. G. W. Gilkey has gone back to teaching school, and I don’t know why I am surprised either. Both she and Gilkey are natural born teachers and then teaching is just as much needed as soldiering. I would like to be at home where the roar of cannon and the sputter of musketry night and day would not disturb me, but half sick and tired as I sometimes feel, I want to see this war ended right before I give up. A good many of the boys are swearing about it every day and wishing they were out of it. It keeps my courage up when I think of what father said to me in Ruf Fuller’s grove just as I got into the wagon for Alma. He said: “This is a war for human rights and human liberty, my boy, don’t get discouraged.” I suppose he was thinking of the slaves in the south. As I never saw tears in his eyes before, it gave me a strange feeling at the time that I can’t forget. As much as I long to get home I would rather serve out another year than to quit before the South is whipped to a finish. I have just been down to the creek, or the branch, as they say here, and had a good wash. The rain which has kept us wet for nearly a week, has passed and the wind is cool, something like Wisconsin.

We are bivouced on the bank of a lazy stream. There is something about the drooping branches that recalls that old melody of the south, “Dearest May.” Sitting on the bank in the dense shade all about, which makes the day almost like twilight, I could sleep were it not for the constant roar of cannon both on the right and the left. A lot of boys like myself just off picket duty have lopped down on the bank, some writing, some sleeping, some with clothes off hunting grey backs (bodylice,) others trying to write, as I am, to their homes. It is being talked that we are soon to move. This talk of march to the right or the left is fearful trying. We hear it talked about all day long and dream about it of nights.

June 8th—Came off guard duty last night at 9 a.m., marched until eleven o’clock at night with scarcely a rest and fell down several times, as did my comrades, over stones and ruts and roots. We had marched some 10 miles and halted at the railroad. Went into camp and lay down with little or no rations. The boys are hungry and there is a lot of loud cursing. Many of them are singing the hard tack song. I tell you it is pretty hard to tramp night and day on half rations. Have been digging trenches four hours to-day. It is getting dusk and must close. The rebel General Hood is fixing things for us away on the right and Sherman has ordered the bulk of his army
that way to thrash him. Remember
and write often.

Your son,
CHAUNCEY.

P. S. Have unsealed this letter to
have you tell Henry Morse's folks
that he is all right, but he ain't, only
he doesn't want his folks to know it
he is to be sent back to Field hospi-
tal, near Dallas, in the morning.
He is looking bad.

25th Wis. Vol. Inft., 16th Army
Corps, 4th Division, June 11th to 14th.

Dear Mother: I am no baby but
your letters bring tears to my eyes
some times. You tell me of so many
things about home and what you are
doing, what Elder Morse and the
neighbors at Gilmanston are saying,
and about the cows, the pigs and the
chickens, that I can see them almost
as well as tho I was there. It is the
same old story here. All of the past
four days have found us on the line
of battle with skirmishers close in
front popping away at each other night
and day, never stopping for the awful
rain that has been falling day and
night for two weeks. For days, es-
specially, it has been a steady down
pour of cold rain. We have no tents
that will turn anything but the dew,
and everything we have, but our
powder, is soaking wet. We are in a
great flat field and all about us is
flooded with water. We have to lay
on rails and brush and logs to keep
off the wet ground. The rebels are
posted on a hill or mountain four
miles in front of us. Their signal
flags, with which they talk from one
army head quarters to another, are
plainly seen by us thru the day tho
we don't read their signals. By night
on the distant mountain tops they
build fires by which they talk to each
other.

Our corps, that is the 16th corps,
is about the center of the advancing
column, which means a strip of coun-
try about 30 miles wide. We are on
a railroad running direct to Marrietta
some 8 miles out. Gen Hooker is on
the right flank and Thomas on the
left, and both are closing in toward
the center. Kennasaw Mountain
fortified with a hundred cannon and
looming down upon us, stands be-
tween us and Marrietta. We are so
close to Kennasaw on our front that
they cannot depress their cannon so
as to drop their shells into our ranks.
They are trying it with all their
might. I am sure there are thousands
of boys like myself, half asleep and
half awake, who are taking their
chance of being blown to pieces. The
fellows who are well are passing the
time away playing cards in the
ditches behind trenches. Now and
then a bursting shell spoils the game,
mixes the count and starts a row.
By and by peace is declared and the
game goes on.

It's a strange life we are leading.
While it rains most of the time, there
comes a day of sunshine so fearfully
hot we keep moving our blankets to
keep in the shade of the trees. With
the naked eye we are so close to the
rebel lines on the top of the mountain
that we can see them moving about.
We are too far to use our muskets
and they are too high to use their
cannon on us. Once in awhile a shell
drops amongst us and then every
fellow playing cards or taking a nap
gets a move on himself. We don't
mind the musket shots ripping thru
the tree tops and killing a man now
and then, but those shells, when they
strike, dig a hole big enough for a
cellar and they make the dirt fly.
When they fly over your head they
make a scream that is terrible to
hear.

There was a bunch of us called for
drink the other day at a house
where an old lady met us. She look-
ed cross enough when some of the
boys sat down in her easy chairs.
She said we would get a good licking
if we ever met the rebel Gen. John-
son. One of the boys asked her why he did not whale us at Dalton, or Tunnel Hill or Resaca. "He would," she said, "if Gen. Sherman and an other regiment hadn’t outflanked him." There is a fearful roar of cannon on our left at this minute. It must come from our side. I don't understand it because we are at the extreme left of the line of fortifications on Kennasaw. Thank heaven the rebels are not in it with us when it comes to cannon. We have the big guns and can hammer down their lines of defense, and we need them because it's one line of defense after another.

But enough for this time. No letter for some days. Dan Hadley is calling for coffee, but I don't care for any. Have been a bit off my feed for some days. The war will be over some day. Goodbye,

Your Son,
CHAUNCEY.

Camp near Acquorth, Georgia.
June 19th, 1864, 16th Army Corps.

Dear father: I am writing some of you nearly every day. I don't exactly know why either. One thing that set me to thinking of home was when Henry Morse came and bid me good bye. He had been ordered to report to the field hospital. Henry was feeling bad and he looked bad. Say as little about it as you can to his folks. Henry was never tough, he had no endurance. I was sorry to see him go because I don't believe I shall ever see him again. (Henry never returned to the regiment. He died in a field hospital and was buried in a plain board box under the solemn pine trees in whose branches every south wind chants a sad requiem above his grave.)

I have something else to tell you. Yesterday was a mighty eventful day to our Brigade. In the morning orders came for three companies of each regiment to get in position and be prepared to charge the rebel lines on the farther side of the plantation, bounded on that side as on ours by a heavy forest. In a short time fifteen companies of our brigade were in line and under cover of a bit of rising ground, we advanced to within sixty rods of the rebel earth works and took a parallel position to them along a washout or gully with a big peach orchard between us and the rebel lines. Here we waited for nearly an hour while sharpshooters in the tree tops beyond the peach orchard kept picking off our men. Our orders were to save our ammunition and not to fire a shot. Then came the command to fix bayonets and charge the rebel lines. Then we climbed out of our ditch and made a wild rush for the rebel lines. The air was alive with whizzing bullets and the wild shooting of the enemy tore up the sand and filled our eyes with dirt. We reached the rebel lines without firing a shot, and strange enough we lost but a few men killed and wounded on our side. The retreat of the rebels was complete. Soon after our occupation of the rebel lines, some darkies, who had deserted the rebel army, came to us and told us how the rebel General Polk had been killed in a log house near our lines. They pointed out the holes made by the twelve pound shot of our cannon and showed us the blood stains on the logs of the hut.

We can see Kennesaw Mountain in the distance and the rumor is that the rebel army will make a big fight at that point. There is a railroad passing near us that runs into Marietta just beyond Kennesaw Mountain and for some reason Gen. Sherman keeps an engine armored with steel plate, running back and forth as near the mountain as he dare. I wouldn't like to be the engineer.

As I write I can hear cannons eight or ten miles on our right and the They know him by the rattle of his
The boys say it's "Leather Breeches." cannon. We had not been an hour in our new camp before we were under marching orders for Kennesaw Mountain.

Almost forgot to tell you I got your letter of June 10th with stamps and a dollar enclosed. We have full rations now and I don't need the dollar but I may later. Tell mother not to worry. It takes tons of lead to kill a man. If I can escape disease, I am not afraid of bullets, and Sherman is far more careful of his men than Grant.

I will write again soon.

Your son,  
CHAUNCEY.

11th Quarters, 25th Wis. Vol.  
Camp near Kennesaw Mountain, Ga.  
June 24th, 1864.

Dear Parents: Had just nicely finished my notes for yesterday in my diary when we were ordered to fall in for picket duty on the skirmish line. There was no hesitation on the part of any of the boys. They knew well enough what it meant. It was just as if the southern army was invading Buffalo county, not a man of them knowing a foot of the country, yet they were expected by their officers to hold their own against the native inhabitants, who knew every road and bye path and hill and valley. The rebels had their lines already made. Under cover of the night our lines were pushed close to theirs. We made a bargain with them that we would not fire on them if they would not fire on us, and they were as good as their word. It seems too bad that we have to fight men that we like. Now these southern soldiers seem just like our own boys, only they are on the other side. They talk about their people at home, their mothers and fathers and their sweethearts just as we do among ourselves. Both sides done a lot of talking back and forth, but there was no shooting until I came off duty in the morning. The next relief that went on kept up a constant fire all day long. It rained so hard all the forenoon the boys were in the water over their shoe tops in the trenches. This is just about the 99th time it has rained since this campaign commenced, and it's no drizzel drozzel like we have in Wisconsin, but a regular downpour.

June 25th.

When the pickets came in off the line this morning they had quite a pretty story to tell of how they chummed it with some Louisiana debs. A company of our Indiana boys met a company of Louisiana rebels half way between the two lines. They stacked arms, shook hands, exchanged papers, swapped tobacco, told each other a lot of things about their feelings and how they wished the war would end so they might go back to their homes and be good friends again, shook hands once more with tears in their eyes as they bid each other goodbye forever, and after calling to each other to be sure that both sides were ready, commenced a furious fire on each other.

Again the reports of Gen. Polk's death is confirmed. He was cut in two by a cannon shot not 50 rods from where we charged the rebel lines at Big Shanty. The death of Gen. Polk means that the rebel army is now in command of Gen. Hardee. This means more fighting. Hardee is a hot head and will force the fighting.

The valley between us and Kennesaw Mountain is full of smoke from cannon that have been vomiting their awful fire all day long. We are so close under the mountain they do us very little damage. Our batteries, just in our rear, have been paying them back with interest.

An order has just come that some twenty of our company is to go on picket duty tonight, and I am in that
list. I had just put aside my note book when the captain called to me and said I would be excused. I hate to own it, but I am very close to the sick list. I am not scared a bit, I am sure I shall be all right soon. It is the diarrhoea that has been going for me some days. but I am careful and I am getting better. Will write in a day or two again.

Your boy,

P. S. Dora's explanation is satisfactory. Dora is a wise sister I must own.

CHAUNCEY.


My Dear Ones at home: I got your last letter, written the 19th of this month, yesterday. It was the best medicine for what ailed me I have taken for some time, and if I must tell tales out of school, I have had several doctor's prescriptions of late, which I am supposed to take as a dutiful soldier, but I haven't done it. I think every day of the jibes father used to make about the doctors and their pills and I just put the powders the doc gives me in my pocket and the first time I go out back I throw them away. They give a sight of astrigent stuff for bowel trouble, which is the most common. It is just horrible to take and I throw nearly all of mine away. If I am doing wrong tell me so.

Your letter came thru in six days. I am glad for the $1.25 it brought me. tho we are on full rations again of hard tack and sow belly. I can use the money to buy eggs of the sutler, tho most of them are spoiled.

Mother, why do you worry so much about me? I am all right and your letters hurt me worse than anything else. To think that you don't enjoy your meals thinking of me hurts terribly, and the worst of all to think you can't eat strawberry short cake. Why mother, you ought to have eaten your share and about four more shares for me. Now that you are out of debt, for goodness sake enjoy life while you can. I wonder now, when I think of it, when we husked corn together and you talked about our debts and was so troubled about it, that I didn't think more of it than I did. I am glad, yes I am happy, away off here in Georgia, that Garwood has got the last dollar due him. I knew that he has been the cause of many tears to you and father that I never saw and he was good and would have saved you the tears too if he could. Mother please don't worry any more about me. We are on full rations now and have plenty to eat and good enough.

Our Brigade still holds the same position as when I wrote you last. The rebels are holding the mountain in front of us in easy range of their heavy guns. This morning when the sun came up we could see the black shaggy cannon up against the blue sky just before our guns opened on them and great clouds of smoke from their black mouth came pouring down the mountain side. They would keep still if we would let them alone. but our side begins the assault and we most always fire the last round. Day after day it is a duel of cannon, and some times the roar of big guns is deafening and the smoke hides the mountain from us. Last evening both sides stopped firing about the same time and heavy firing was heard away beyond Marietta some miles on our left front. This Kennesaw mountain is a bad one, for Sherman, and he is trying to come a flank movement both on the right and the left to cut them off from communication with Atlanta, twenty miles away.

My company went on picket line duty this morning. A lot of the boys got off because they were sick, or claimed to be. Your son was among
the number. Without my asking, the
doctor had checked me as unfit for
picket duty. I was glad of it and
in a way I hated it. Every coward
in the army tries to get off picket
duty because it is dangerous. Every
soldier that gets accused has to stand
a lot of saying about being a coward.
The boys have let me alone since the
Resaca fight and the Dallas fight.
The diarrhoea has got a bit of a
grin on me again tho it is getting
better. I got it in this way: I went
down to Division headquarters some
two weeks ago to get some hard tack
and pork. While waiting for my
turn I noticed an open barrel of white
sugar. Watching my chance, while
the guard's back was to me, I dipped
my hands twice full in my blouse
pocket. I ate the sugar soon as I
came away and ever since I have
been paying the price. I am sure
that I shall soon be all right again.
This staying so quiet in camp for
days without marching or any kind
of exercise is bad for our health.
The orderly has just been around
warning us to have our guns in per-
fact order and be ready to march at
a moments notice.
Tell sister D—her explanation is
satisfactory. Love to all.
Your son.
CHAUNCEY.

Head Quarters, 2nd Brigade, 16th
Army Corps, Near Kennesaw Moun-
tain, Georgia, July 4th, 1864.

Dear Folks at home: Many things
have happened in this war cursed
land since my last letter to you. On
ly the next day after my last letter
of June 23th, the rebel army under
Gen. Hardee made a fierce attack on
our lines on the right. It was unex-
pected by us. The day had been fear-
fully hot when just before sunset,
when the big guns had stopped their
terrible booming, all at once there
came up from the right wing a spite-
ful burst of musketry. It started not
a mile from our front and kept get-
ting heavier as it sounded farther
away. We had just finished supper,
and many of the boys had commence-
d their card games. Then the boys
began to yell, that's Hardee, the
fighting rebel general." The card
games stopped and every man was
listening. The musketry grew loud-
er until it was one continuous roar.
While we were wondering and listen-
ing, suddenly couriers from division
and corps head quarters mounted on
foaming horses, came galloping by,
carrying orders to Brigade and Regi-
mental commanders. Then from the
left to the right came the rush of
cavalry regiments all in. Many of the
boys without their hats or caps
were going to keep up. Then came
the word that the fighting Gen. Hardee,
with a picked army was assaulting
our lines on the right. While we
were rapidly forming in rank leaving
everything but guns and ammu-
nition, battery after battery came
pounding by, the drivers on the lead
nearly horse of every pair whipping
with all his might. For nearly an
hour we waited and listened to the
swelling and receding roar of Muske-
try. There was little or no report of
cannon. Both sides were afraid that
they might kill their own men. In
the course of an hour, as twilight
came on, the roar of musketry grew
gradually less and finally ceased.
The next morning we learned that
the rebel general Hardee had been
fairly whipped and beside losing
nearly two thousand men in killed
and wounded, our side captured near-
ly a thousand prisoners.

We are under marching orders to
start at any minute. Like myself
many boys around me are writing
perhaps the last message to father or
mother or sweetheart. It's a fearful
strain to live such a life and yet the
fear of bullets don't bother me half
as much as the fear of disease. But
strange to think, soldiers never think
of dying of disease. Just the same not ten minutes passes during our long encampments, but we hear the muffled funeral drum and the blank musket discharges, above some soldier's grave, who died a victim of southern fever. I must close. Hardee has been thrashed and the order's are that we are to move to the right. The big black cannon on Kennesaw in front of us are strangely silent. It looks as if the rebel army had retreated. Gen. Sherman has outflanked them again. Good bye,

Your son,
CHAUNCEY.

Dear father: I have just finished a breakfast of sowbelly, hard tack and black coffee, yes, and blackberries, all the time waiting and expecting to hear the bugle call to fall in and march to the support of our boys on the extreme right, which the incessant boom of cannon tells us there is a fight on to the death.

We have been hearing for days that the rebs are concentrating their forces at Nick a Jack, a creek on our extreme right, where they are planning to make a big fight against Sherman's forces.

I don't know what to say about the way we passed the 4th of July in Georgia. I put in a part of the time reading your old letters, and dreaming in a way of home. Rumors a plenty for two or three days had been talked that Sherman had outflanked Hardee and would soon move the entire army upon Atlanta 20 miles to the south.

On the evening of the 2nd of July there came an order to be in readiness to march at a moment's notice. We packed up all our belongings, tents and all else, and sat around or lay upon the ground expecting every moment to be ordered into ranks. For the rest of the night we lay upon our faces and slept. Many times the rattling of the sabers of passing cavalry or the rumbling of artillery with their heavy guns would awaken me. We knew from this that there was a general movement of Sherman's army to the right. Early on the morning of the 3rd of July we became aware from the unusual silence of the rebel guns on Kennesaw, that something new was in the wind. Very soon word was passed along the line that the rebel army had fallen back and was retreating toward Atlanta. Our Gen. Logan with his 15th corps, who had been on the alert for just this move, made a sudden dash upon the rebels retreating lines and captured 3,000 prisoners.

On the evening of the third our Brigade, after advancing some miles on the right in the direction of heavy cannonading, went into camp for the night not far in the rear of the battle line, the smoke filling the valley like a fog.

On the morning of the 4th of July, after drawing our allotment of rations of hard tack, sowbelly and coffee our regiment marched out to the front to the support of a battery of four pieces that were tossing shell into the woods just in front of us. Very soon the order came to erect temporary breastworks of rails and logs along the edge of the woods, where we stood to shield us from the bullets that kept us dodging behind the trees. Here we were ordered to lie down, if need be, to keep out of the way of the bullets aimed at the boys on the front line some 40 rods in our front. It was terrible to be sitting and lying down out of the way of the bullets with no chance to shoot back, and we knew that the boys in front of us were being mowed down like grass. We could see the wounded being carried back on stretchers and we knew that the dead were left where they fell. While the
The Colonel has just called the captains to his tent and of course it means a move. An orderly from brigade or division commander has just handed a bit of paper to the colonel.

July 10th—12 o'clock noon. We have marched 7 miles this forenoon toward the left wing. Fearful hot and in a cloud of dust that near strangles one. Just as I am writing, far as I can see up and down the road, thousands of men are lying flat on their faces in fence corners under the shade of trees, around buildings and in orchards; some sleeping, all resting or trying to rest. The road is cleared for passing batteries or cavalry.

Just as the bugle blew for the noon halt I went to a near plantation for water or milk. There were a lot of women and children, but no men save one very old man. The women all seemed to have babies. I suppose their men were in the rebel army. The manner of the boys were a little rough and some of the women looked scared. They threw themselves down on the big broad porch and talked as if they meant to camp for the night. When some of the fellows came to the door as if to go in a youngish black eyed girl took a stand square in the door way. Her black eyes looked so hard that Ed Coleman said he dodged every time she looked at him. One of the boys asked about the road to Marietta. She said it was 9 miles. She had
“hearn tell ’twas a good road but she had never been there.” tho she was born in that neighborhood. Just to be saying something the boys asked a lot of questions about the rebel army. She said we would find out all about it 'fore we got across the Chatahooche river.

July 11th—Yesterday afternoon our march to Marietta was a fearful hot one. Many of the boys were sun struck and were picked up by the ambulances. Soon as we got in town all made a rush that could to the bakeries, and bought everything in sight. This morning a lot of the fellows have got the Kentucky quick step to pay for it. Marietta has been a nice town, but is all torn to pieces by the rebel army quartered here during the siege of Kennesaw mountain, only three miles away. Nobody in sight but women and children and they keep in hiding most of the time. The boys are packing for another hot day’s march. Love to all,

Your son,

CHAUNCEY.

Marietta Georgia July, 20, 1864. Division Hospitals 16 Army Corps.

Dear Parents:

You must not be scared at the heading of this letter. I am in a field Hospital to be sure, but am feeling all right only a little weak. I was sent back down here last Friday with three hundred others from Roswell. 14 miles from here on our right wing. There is round a thousand young fellows mostly like myself sent here to mend up. Sherman is massing the army around Atlanta and he don’t want any soldiers in the ranks that are under the doctor’s care.

The day after I wrote you the last letter we had a killing march in dust and heat that was terrible. We made 15 miles and then forded the Chatahooche river on a deep rapid. The current was so swift and the water so deep and rocky that lots of the boys fell flat on their bellies and almost drowned before their comrades could help them out. The bridges on the right for 50 miles had been burned by the retreating rebels and the right wing of our army was using all our pontoon bridges, so we had to wade.

I had no thot that I was to be sent back until the doctor told me Friday morning to report to Ambulance Head Quarters. There was about 40 Ambulance and army wagons detailed to carry us back to this place.

The night before we came there was a frightful storm and the lightening struck a big oak tree about a hundred feet from where I lay killing 10 boys of a Missouri regiment and shocking 8 others so badly that they were sent back along with the other sick to hospital tents with the rest of us at this place.

Mother don’t worry, I am not real sick, but more tired than anything else. My bowel trouble is the ailment again but in a few days as Menzes Bump says who is here, we will be better of that. I had got where my stomach turned against Hard Tack and pickled pork, the only stuff we had to eat, so the doctor sent me back, as he told me with a smile, to get a rest.

I ain’t taking but mighty little medicine. The doctors come round every morning, feel of our pulse look at the tongue, and go on their way. After awhile the Steward happens along, asks our name, hands us a lot of powders which I throw away when I go out lack, and this thing goes on every day.

If I was real sick and helpless I would have to take those powders just as the Doc directed, but being able to get about and wait on myself, like others in my class, I am supposed to take them without the help of the nurse. I think every day of what father says about doctors and their pills doing as much harm as good and so I throw most of mine away.

The doctor says I will be able to return to my regiment in a few days.
Now, mother I have told you all just as it is without any coloring. I have no cough from lungs as you feared. They are all right. Ain’t anxious about anything but a letter from home. Our Chaplin Elder Harwood promised to see that my letters were forwarded to me. But I hear that our regiment and the corps have moved some 15 miles, so I can’t expect very prompt returns from the regiment.

The sun is dreadfully hot but we are in the shade and don’t mind it. There are a lot of refuges coming into camp. They all tell the same story. They all are trying to get north as fast as the government can give them transportation.

Well, father and mother, I sincerely hope all is well with you. I suppose Dora is with you. I imagine if I could be there in the flesh as I am in the spirit, and look down from one of the west hills, the bear mountain for instance, I should see father and Kit in the wheat field, mother perhaps in the garden digging potatoes for supper, Eva would be playing in the dirt close by or calling for a piece of pie, gazing by turns down the valley and while Dora would be seen in the north room thru the glass door reading and sighing that it was so lonesome.

Only 12 months more in the service of Uncle Sam. Hurrah, I am glad. Reports are in camp that Atlanta is taken, nobody believes it.

An old lady of the town visiting the hospital has just invited me out to dinner tomorrow. Will tell you about it next letter.

Love to all. Your son,

CHAUNCEY.

Mensus Bump and his brother John of Mondovi are here from my company with me and we get together and talk things over when time drags. There is mighty little in this hospital lie to speak of. It’s the same dreary thing day after day. The doctor comes round every morning to see those too sick to walk, looks at their tongue, leaves some blue mass pills or a lot of powders. Those like myself able to wait on ourselves go to his tent, he looks us over and gives us a lot of dope, then we go to our tents and lay round and sleep or talk about the folks at home or read over for the fifth or sixth time the last letters.

The wounded and sick are coming in daily and there must be five or six thousand here. Our commander has taken all the public halls and a lot of the finest dwellings for hospitals.

So many people from the country white and black are coming into town and they are all women, to sell fruits and melons and pies and cakes, that the commander in charge has thrown a picket line round the town to keep them out. They won’t take Confederate money for their stuff. They seem to think the Yankee shin plasters (government change) is safer than their own paper.

One of my tent mates had an over feed of melon yesterday and had the cramps so bad they took him by the arms and legs and rolled him back and forth on a barrel to cure him.

My new chum, an Iowa boy near my age, and I took dinner with a widow woman the other day. Her husband and son and daughter went away to Atlanta when the rebel army retreated two weeks ago from Kennesaw mountain thru here. She seemed to feel sorry for us and I am sure we felt sorry for her. She told us her daughter was engaged to marry a lieutenant in the rebel army, and so she went with him.

Marrietta Georgia 9th Div. Hospital July 29th, 1864.

Dear folks at Home:

I have been waiting hoping to hear from home before writing you again. Not a line have I had since coming here which kind of puts a fellow a long way from home and a bit off his feed, in the dumps.
We had a nice chicken dinner, and when we went away she told us if the soldiers did not steal them she had three others under the house she intended to kill, and she would have us come and help her eat them.

The cook was a very black mamma as she called her, who also waited on the table. There was no stove in the house and the cooking was done in a big fire place in black kettles and skillets.

The black mamma's baby girl three years old wearing nothing but a short skirt scarcely reaching to its middle, played with some kittens in the next room. Two or three times she came to the half open door to gaze at the strangers and would reach out her little hand toward her mother without saying a word, as if begging for something. My friend declared he never saw a white baby with half the good manners of that "nigger" baby.

Yesterday when passing a rather pretty place a woman who was sitting on the porch along with two others, invited me to come up and sit down. They asked me a lot of questions about home and about northern people. Her little girl who was eating an orange went to her mother and whispered something to her. "yes" said the mother, "you may give the sick soldier some of your orange if you want to." The little girl came to me with half an orange of course I took a part of it.

It seems strange that you see none but women here. And it don't do a fellow any good if he is in a home-sick mood to talk with them

Most of them not all of them have got hearts. They have, all of them, lovers and fathers in the southern army and unless they have been made bitter, by loss of slaves or destruction of property they feel a sort of sympathy for us boys in blue.

The steward is coming with our milk punch, I'll finish this to-morrow.

July 30th.—Last night came the particulars of the battle of Decatur. It was something fierce. Our army was surprised. It came near being a complete route. Cannot write more this time, particulars next letter.

Love to all,

CHAUNCEY.

Field Hospital 16th., corps, Marietta, Ga., Aug. 4th, 1864.

Dear father: Your awful good wise letter at hand, and one from Dora received to-day. I am writing this to you and Dora both. I am so glad things are all right in my dear old Wisconsin home. Oh, if you could but see the world as it is going on about us here, how thankful you would be.

This pretty little village and all the country round about has been overrun by both the rebel and the Union armies. Only the old men and children and the women are left of the people who live here. All the public buildings have been turned into Hospitals for our sick and wounded and some of the fields nearby are covered with tents which are fast filling up.

I am glad you are done with your harvest. Talk about soldiers being heroes. If all mothers of soldiers have done as much work in the harvest field as you say mother has done then the mothers are deserving of more praise than the sons. I wish she would not work so hard. She worries so much about me and never thinks of herself. If mother wants to save me from shedding tears she must save herself more.

I am glad you saved the puppy from poison of the rattle snake. It is a wonder as you say that little Eva has not been bitten. You can't be too careful. Yes tell Dora I would like well enough if I could be there to help eat sweet corn and speckled trout, and seems I can almost taste them away down here. It is pretty
tough, but if our patience holds out we shall see better days when this campaign ends. If we can take Atlanta, which is 20 miles from here, now the strongest fortified city in the South, we can march to the sea, and then good bye to the rebellion.

Shall I tell you what is going on at the front, and in hearing distance of six or seven thousand poor devils like myself mostly on their backs, and listening to the boom up on boom of cannon and wondering if it may mean a victory or a defeat for Sherman.

Last night I heard such news that I could not sleep, and with the flap of my tent thrown back so my three companions who lay near me could see we watched the flashes of light from our besieging cannon around Atlanta that lit up the darkened sky until after midnight before we went to sleep.

The news that came to me last night made me shed bitter tears. My chum and my next roll companion, and always my next beat comrade, both on picket and guard duty was killed in the fight at Decatur. He was shot and killed instantly by a volley of rebel shots from the far side of the street during the surprise and retreat of our forces, near where McPherson our best General was killed.

John was one of the best and bravest boys that ever lived. I thought that I had inherited your courage father, all that any man should have not to be fool hardy, but John Christen went beyond me. I wrote to you of his daring at Kennesaw Mountain. Poor fellow he did not need to die there, he might have retreated, but he would not and a minne ball went crashing thru his brain.

(John W. Christen Post, Mondovi, named in Memory of him.)

The fighting around Atlanta if we can believe unofficial reports is of the fiercest kind. And it seems my regiment is in the midst of it rough and tumble. To-day we are getting reports of heavy losses. Our Colonel was badly wounded and Lieutenant Colonel taken prisoner. We hear that Colonel Rusk killed two of his captors before surrendering. Several other officers of the 25th were killed and made prisoners, so the report is, but there is nothing as yet official. It seems our brigade repulsed every rebel charge. Our batteries were taken and again retaken. The rebel soldiers it seems were cazed with gunpowder and whiskey given them to make them brave. They drew their caps down over their eyes and rushed upon our batteries to be mowed down with grape and cannonister. The rebels were simply cazed. The rebel General Hardee was wounded and taken prisoner and died in our hospital.

Our splendid Gen. McPherson was killed by a scouting party of rebels his body taken and later taken by our boys. I hope what is left of our corps after this fight may be sent back to the Mississippi River, and join the main body. as only two divisions of our corps are here, and they are getting whittled down to brigades.

Father, I suppose you are still in the having business, and your hands are full. Did you cut the blue joint yet round the bear thicket? The grass there must be fine. Say I have just been telling that same old bear story to the boys, how I was treed by the biggest bear in Wisconsin how I fell from the tree and would have been torn to pieces but for dear old Perick who jumped into the bear’s haunches and turned him away from eating me into fighting her. Father take good care of the dear old slut, for I remember you said she saved my life.

I suppose Kit and Sam make one whole hand in having and maybe two at the table. How does grand father prosper this hot weather? Does he still think Kit would be a better boy if he had more hickory
oil put on his back. Grandfather is severe but he is pretty wise.

Won’t we have a picnic when I come home? My God how happy we boys are when we get to talking of home. Tell mother to shut her chickens up tight when she hears of our coming. O, how hungry we are for mother’s cooking. It makes my mouth water when I remember that Dora caught fifty three trout in two hours fishing.

I must quit writing. My nurse brot my dinner some time ago and it is already cold.

Word has just come that our boys are being driven back from their lines round Atlanta. Nobody believes it.

No more this time. Kiss my dear mother for her boy CHAUNCEY.

Marrietta, Georgia, 4th, Div. Hos. 10th Army Corps, July 31st 1864

Dear Father: It was only day before yesterday I sent my last letter. You see we don’t have anything to do but to listen to the roar of cannon about Atlanta, and write letters to friends at home.

The railroad bridge across the Chatahoochee has been rebuilt and trains are passing thru here every hour with troops for the front and going back with wounded and sick. All the side tracks in this place have been loaded with cars of pork ammunition and hard tack, waiting for them to rebuild this bridge so as to reach the main army.

Our regiment lost 25 men killed, wounded and missing. Our company lost the fewest of any. The entire regiment was on picket duty and were taken by surprise. The rebs came suddenly upon them in big force and our boys fell back in disorder, thru a piece of timber which served as a cover for their retreat.

I can’t forget that poor John Christian had to die. I know better than any other man in the company how brave he was. Tho he enlisted from Gilmanton I don’t think you knew him. He was a careless sort of a fellow in camp but as brave a boy as ever drew a head on a butternut. We touched off shots in the fights at Resaca and Lost Mountain and I know it took all the nerve I had to stand by his side.

It is reported that the rebels lost seventeen thousand men and our side seven thousand. Our boys claim they themselves buried three thousand. (The official report later showed these figures to overstate the real loss of men by about half.) A hard fight is on at the moment of this writing, we can hear the guns, and crowds are gathered round all the head quarter tents to get the latest wire reports.

You bet I was glad yesterday to find on my bunk, two letters from home. One had $2.00 in it for which I am mighty glad. One of the letters was dated June 30th the other July 7th.

I must give Warren and Kit the praise of writing first rate letters. I am sure they do better than I did at their age.

Sorry that father is discouraged about the crop. But never mind. If you could but see this war cursed land, torn and raved by fire and sword you would thank God with tears in your eyes that you lived in Wisconsin.

When I think that my home is in a land of peace and plenty, I can shut my eyes and go to sleep with a feeling of comfort. But maybe it is not right with so much of suffering and horror going on about us.

Father, you are perhaps acquainted with Gus Hensel of Trempealeau County. He is a recruit and a member of Co. F. of our regiment. He was wounded in the arm and is going home. I have asked him to see you.

The carrier has just thrown me a letter from Foma. It has just a few lines but O, how good they read. Every word she wrote is just like a
picture. The way she can tell things makes me recall what I used to hear you say that Dora was your girl.

So you have been berrying after huckleberries over at Cripps'. I never can forget the last time mother and I went over there after berries. Mother slept with Mrs. Cripps and I slept with Mr. Cripps and Shube. Breed on the floor of their log house. It was in harvest and the mosquitoes were bad. Both Shube and Mr. Cripps were in their shirt tails without any cover and they had a fearful time smacking mosquitoes on each other. Then they would jump up and chase each other round the house like two great boys. Shube tried to climb a bur oak tree several times and Cripps would catch him by the leg and pull him down. It makes me laugh to this day to think of their monkey shines. Ah but weren't those days happy ones?

The government owes me $200.00 and if pay day ever comes I will send you quite a sum. I don't need it here. Don't think for a minute we are in Atlanta yet. Every train from the north brings more big guns to use in battering the forts round Atlanta. Our hospital tents are to move nearer the mountain in the morning. Love to all and Wooster and Henry Amidon if you see them and to tell them to write.

CHAUNCEY.

Marietta, Georgia, 4th Div. hos.
August 20th, 1864.

Dear ones at Home: I have been waiting all this time for something to write about. That is something new to write about. I could tell you of the red sky over Atlanta every night which we boys look at until we fall asleep. It is the light from burning buildings, set on fire by our cannon.

And the rainbow streams of fire that follow the shells from forty or fifty big morters, night after night, it's the same thing. They say that most of the city is burned and the people are living in holes in the ground.

We hear every day that the City is about to surrender. The City is still publishing its newspapers and making brags about how they are going to trap the Yankees. We don't know how they do it but we find papers from Atlanta laying around every morning.

I went out on the picket line yesterday to get some berries of the Freedmen who come as far as the guards and sell their garden stuffs to the Union soldiers. They are stopped from coming within the lines. The negroes are grinning and happy, but the whites who are all women are a sorry looking lot. They have lost all they had and they never had any slaves.

in their heart they hate the Yankee soldier and they don't know why either. The most they can say when you ask them why their men are fighting the north is that Lincoln wants them to marry the niggers when they are set free.

Most of the whites are just as ignorant as the slaves. You shut your eyes and you cannot tell by their talk which are the blacks.

I have not seen a school house outside the towns in all the south. The women we have seen in the towns seem to know more. The good widow who has been giving the Iowa boy and myself dinners twice a week is a wise woman and a good one. Of course her heart is with the south but she is so good to us I never think of her being a rebel. My Iowa chum, Geo. Benning, won't go with me any more for dinner, because he says he is so sorry for the woman when she cries as she does when she speaks of her daughter going away with the rebel Lieutenant. (Forty years after the civil war the "Soldier Boy" visited Marietta on purpose to look up the kind hearted southern woman who had so touched his heart by her
motherly pity, but no trace of her could he find. The house remained but its occupant Dr. Tennant, a most intelligent man too, could give the "Soldier Boy" no information of the hopeless widow woman of civil war times.

My health is still on the gain tho I am doing no duty as yet. If when I get my pay I get my furlough, would you like to see me come home? I sometimes think I would not take a furlough if it was offered. Those shirts came in good play. They don't scratch a bit, and they are soft and nice. Glad was I to hear the crops are all secure. The horrible wrecks of homes I see about here makes me happy that all is well in Wisconsin.

Tell me how does Theodore Lockwood and his pretty sisters prosper? I am sorry mother has to work so hard. Well I hope it is the last time she has to work like a man in harvest. It is not right.

I am writing this by lamp light. Most of my chums are asleep and snoring. The sky is very red over Atlanta 20 miles away, with burning buildings and the big mortars, when a lot of them go off together, make the ground tremble.

Give my regards to Uncle Ed. Cartwright, and love to all at home. 
Your boy, CHAUNCEY.


Dear sister: Your thrice welcome letter, so long looked for came last night, and the promised $2 came in it. I was really needing the money for little wants. When you offer these Georgians their money they smile sadly and shake their head. Now that Atlanta has fallen into our hands they feel that the South will be whippd and their money will be worthless.

Your letter had a lot of good news and I went over to read it to my foster mother, that is the woman who has given me so many good meals. She sat in a big arm chair on the broad porch knitting some stockings. I sat down on the steps. When I looked up after reading the letter she was crying. She said "you must have a good sister and how good it is that you boys from the north can get letters from home while our poor boys cannot write letters to their people at home nor receive any." She said, "I have not heard a word from my daughter who went to Atlanta with her sweetheart, nor from my husband for two months. I don't know if they are living or dead." I suppose there are a thousand women in this town who feel just as she does. There seems to be three or more in nearly every house.

I wrote father last week about the surrender of Atlanta. Since then we have had further particulars. The night before our shells blew up two of their magazines and set fire to the big depot and burned a lot of their cars. For several days before the surrender and even now we can see clouds of smoke hanging over the city. Nearly the entire place is a burning ruin.

It is just two years to-day since our regiment was mustered into the service. One more year will let us out and less if the talk we hear of the confederacy having its back broke proves true.

Day after tomorrow will be two months I am in this darned hospital. Expect to go to my regiment in a few days. A lot of the time here I have had the blues and still I am among the lucky ones to get away at all. On the hill the other side the rail road hundreds of poor fellows lay under little mounds newly made. They will never answer to bugal call anymore and to them all troubles in this world are over.

Don't send any more money as we are soon to draw pay and I shall have a sum to send home. Everybody that can is going to Atlanta to see the ruins.
The natives are in hopes of finding out something about their men who were in the rebel army. Some of the women are nearly crazy. Everybody rides in box cars or cattle cars. When the cars are full they climb on top.

My stomach is off to-day on account of eating some sour milk. I bot it last night of a colored aunty on the picket line. This morning it was sour. I scaled it but it upset me.

A colored woman just came to the tent with my clothes she has been washing. She had a two bushel basket full of clothes and carried it on her head. She was a yellow woman and the mother of six children. The three oldest were girls and one boy had been sold to a coton planter in Alabama.

One of the boys asked her if she cared and she replied "shua honey I loves my chilen just likes you mammy loves you." I am sure the poor woman's heart was full, for her eyes filled with tears. I thank God along with father and Elder Morse that Lincoln has made them free. She said her children were nearly as white as we, and that three of them had a white father. To think that these slave holders buy and sell each other's bastard children is horrible.

She took us by the hand and bade each of us good bye and asked God to bless us and our mothers. I see and hear things every day that make me think of Uncle Tom's Cabin.\n
Word has come that we are to be ready to go to Atlanta tomorrow or next day. The boys are making a great hurrah about it.

Direct to 20th regiment Wis. Vol., Atlanta Go., Good bye dear sister and as the wretched slave mother said to me, I say to you, God bless you and all the rest.

Your brother, CHAUNCEY.


Dear Folks at Home:

Here I am at last, with the dear old boys once more, after two months away. I came yesterday along with lot's others on top of a stock car of mules. I put in the afternoon shaking hands with the boys and reading some of their letters and letting them read mine.

Our regiment did not lose so many men after all the reports we heard of killed and wounded at Peach Tree creek. The most of a change I see is in their dirty uniforms or no uniforms. Many of them are wearing rebel jackets and rebel hats some with no rims, some bareheaded, lots of them with bandaged legs or arms, and all feeling good. They say we have got the confederacy on the run now sure and next spring will see the war over. But you can't tell.

The reports came to-day that a big force had cut the railroad at Buzzard Roost and stopped our supply trains, but it may be a fake, we hear so much.

The railroad from Marietta to this place is lined with wrecks of cars and broken boxes and barrels and carcasses of cattle and horses. The road beds are worn out and trains run slow. The south is badly wrecked. Atlanta was a fine city of some thirty thousand people, a great rail center. I don't think I saw fifty buildings standing when we came thru to this place yesterday. The Kimbal Hotel, said to be one of the best in the state, stood by itself, no building near it. Strange that it was not burned like all the rest. It is being used for general headquarters, and was swarming with shoulder straps. The big depot and great cotton warehouses covering acres of ground, are still burning and smoldering.

Thousands of Freed men are coming into our lines to go Chatano-
...where they are being enlisted for the army. Lots of the boys that naturally dislike the blacks, treat them better now since they are to help us fight.

I feel sorry for the poor humble creatures that bow and scrape and take off their hats every time you pass them. They are thankful to have even a kind look. They say "since Lincoln Manifestation, ol' massa and mistus is dreadful unkin." They are literally in rags for clothing. Many of them wear cast off uniforms from the rebels. I asked them where they got their clothes, and they said, "master and mistus done give um to us, but day done got so hard up da haint nofun fo dem selves no mon."

We are camped on a little branch, a creek, six miles from Atlanta. In a pine grove. We are on a pretty high bank and can look over quit a scope of country. The spring water is good and the air is fine to recruit in. It is a healthy place for the big army to clean up and straighten up in for the big campaign that is ahead. Sherman says the next stop will be Savannah or Charleston on the sea. The army is being increased by recruits from the north, and every day we have maneuvers to give the new fellows some practice.

The doc says the boys many of them have a touch of scurvy and so we get rations of sour kraut and boiled onions every day. I tell you sour kraut is good. And I like onions. I am taking no more drugs, in fact I have never taken a quart that was given me, and I sleep fine. We see no more fires along the horizon at night, no more blazing shells making rainbows against the sky, and the cannon which for three months has not been still, night or day, are taking a rest.

I am getting less anxious to go home as I get better. Hundreds, yes, thousands are being furloughed home who are wounded or sick, and it may be I shall go too. I kind of like to think of it, and yet I hate to leave the boys until the campaign is over.

There has not been a minute since getting here except at night that the air is not full of the music of fifes, drums or bugles. As I write the sun is just setting and I can hear a dozen bands from as many brigade headquarters.

I hope to get a letter in the morning. By the way we are to have another payment in a day or two, a small one and will send you some of it if I don't come home with it.

Best regards to all enquiring friends.

Your boy

CHAUNCEBY.

East Point, Georgia, Hd. Quar. 16th, Army Corps Sept. 16, 1864

Dear Sister: Yours of Sept. 8th at hand. Bress de Lord for such good tidings from home. If father don't quit taking such chances with old mother bears with cubs, he will not come out so good, I am afraid. My Lord how I would like to have seen old Prince in his battle with the cubs. Give the dear old dog a good hug for me and whisper something in his ear about the coons and beavers we used to catch. I hope the bear did not crush his jaw so bad after all, but it must be very bad if you have to feed him on mush and gruel. Father must have felt that he was in close quarters or he would not have urged old Prince on so hard. Well father will have another good story to write that man who came all the way from Innisble to see father's bear dog.

I am glad you enjoyed eating the cub, altho the weather soon spoiled it. I would like mightily to have helped mother eat some of her new potatoes and squash. Just tell her to eat my share and maybe it will do me as much good.

No, I have not heard from cousin Ben and don't know where his regiment is located. He is in the cavalry.
and don’t stay long in a place. They are always on the scout. Don’t be too sure that I can come home as there seems to be a let up to furloughs for the time. At times I feel so strong when my plaugy guts don’t bother me for some days I feel like staying to the end. Then I have a pull back and I get to looking at the north star of evenings and the thought of home away off there seems kind of good.

Give my love to Mrs. Hubert and tell her I thank her with all my heart for good advice about caring for myself. She is right I sometimes eat things the good colored aunts bring to me every day I ought not to eat. The doctors tell us sick boys we are nothing but suicides, because we eat melons and fruits so much.

I had a letter from Aunt Caroline Barber the other day. Uncle Joe is with Gen. Smith as aide near Memphis, Tenn.

He is sound as a bullet, she says. Nashville is being threatened by the rebels and Gen. Thomas is collecting an army to stand them off. There is some talk that Sherman will send him a force, before we go farther south.

I had to stop writing this letter to pull off my under clothes to give to a colored woman who called for them to wash. She went outside while my chum and I stripped off. I have a lot of gray backs on me, (body lice) since I left Marietta, and I told the old lady to scald them good. When I told her this she said, “Dar now you hush honey, done you spooze y’l ole mammy noze what fer du.” Its the fashion for the whites down here to call the old Negroes, mammy. This woman told us she was nurse for all her missus and massers chilen.

The boys are making a great hurrah a mile away. There must be some good news. Will write again soon as something turns up.

Love to all except that young fellow ever the ridge.

Your brother,

CHAUNCEY.

Fast Point Georgia Sept. 23, 1861
16th Army Corps.

Dear mother:
I have delayed writing you expecting every day to get a furlough. The boys have been going in squads of from ten to fifty every day. There is a great hurrah sending messages to fathers and mothers and sweethearts. Those that are able have to walk to Atlanta, six miles; most of them catch a ride in army wagons, that are coming and going with supplies. Fast as the trains are unloaded of their provisions and mules from the north, the boys that are going home pile into the empties until there is no more room and lots of them have to ride on top far as Nashville, Tennessee, where the government furnishes coaches.

I believe I am feeling tip top this morning. If I could be sure of myself I should rather hate to go home, than otherwise. And with the Confederacy just ready to give up. They are not putting up much fight just now, only talking big in their papers. There are a lot of rebel deserters and stragglers coming into our lines, giving themselves up as prisoners just to get paroled so they can go home. They tell sorry tales of their hardships and of being starved, and they look it. Most of them came in at the last call nearly all of them old men and young boys.

I believe that Sherman is fearful that the rebels are going to attack our rear near Nashville. It is their only hope of stopping his march to the sea. Several brigades are under order to march on short notice and the wise ones think it a good guess that it will be a counter march toward Nashville. Every mail brings
news that scattering forces from Alabama, Mississippi and Georgia are centering toward Nashville. Let them do their best we ain’t much scared. It would please the boys all right to get orders to go back north as far as Nashville, tho the summer heat is over and we have less fear of sickness. I must lay aside this letter and go down to the creek below our camp and take a bath. The negro women some forty or fifty who are doing the washing for our brigade on the creek are gone and its the only time, that is in the evening, that we get a chance to bathe. The creek for miles is lined with tubs and kettles and pounding blocks. The women begin early in the morning so the clothes can be washed and dried the same day.

Sept. 24th.

My papers came this morning and you can just guess that I am glad. Word has come also that rebel cavalry has torn up the track and a force of our troops are on their way to clean the rebels out and replace the rails. As I may not be able to get thru for a few days I will mail this letter anyway, nd it will reach you perhaps before I do.

I shall come from La Crosse by boat to Alma, and I wish I could tell the time so you could meet me there I may write you again. Have no fear but I’ll manage.

Your son in haste.

CHAUNCEY.

P. S. When I reach Chicago, if I feel like it, I may stop a day or two with Uncle George.

As noted in the last letter our passport or furlough had been given us and three days after we were ordered by the captain to pack our knapsack and in company with several hundred others, some wounded, most of them like myself convalescent, we boarded a train of box cars and with many messages for friends at home and with some friends we started on our three hundred mile journey to Nashville Tennessee.

With some hundred others it fell to my lot to ride on the roof. As I recall that trip thru the Cumberland mountains all that long night cutten a the foot board, when I found myself falling asleep to save slipping off and losing my blanket, visions of those deep canyons whose sheer sides of jagged rock came to the... I am glad for the hundredth time that I did not fall off with my blanket.

Many of the boys who had tied their arms to the foot boards no doubt saving their lives thereby. The next morning several of the boys were reported missing, and that is all we ever heard of them. Coming from a hundred regiments we were strangers to each other, and their names we did not know.

After 30 hours ride we reached Nashville and climbing down from the top of our box car, we were glad to exchange its discomforts for a clean couch in the Zolicofer building, a building historic in its uses by the national government. Here we rested under the ministering kindness of women nurses for 24 hours.

Making another stop of a day in Chicago with an uncle, we reached Alma by train from La Crosse, thence to Galaxton to the home of Grandfather, a man who insisted on keeping us for two days, with the promise to father that he would deliver us without notice to our home six miles above at the end of two days.

Our stay at home was prolonged to three months, when we reported at Madison Wis., for duty. In the mean time the final battle in the Southwest had been fought and won near Nashville by General Pap Thomas as he was affectionately called, and Sherman had reached the
sea with little or no resistance. The war was rapidly hastening to a close. Disorganized and fugitive, the rebel forces in North and South Carolina fled before Sherman's host like quails before the storm. Then came the master stroke of Gen. Grant against Gen. Lee on the banks of Appomattox at Madison May 15, our nineteenth birthday, having served two years and nine months.

CHAUNCEY H. COOKE.