JOHN B. SCOTT WAS A CIVIL WAR SOLDIER FROM AZTALAN. HE WENT INTO THE TWENTY-NINTH REGIMENT WHICH WAS RECRUITED PRINCIPALLY FROM THE COUNTIES OF DODGE, JEFFERSON, DANE AND COLUMBIA AND WAS CALLED INTO CAMP RANDALL, MADISON, AND MUSTERED IN ON SEPTEMBER 27, 1862. THE REGIMENT LEFT WISCONSIN ON NOVEMBER 2, 1862. COLONEL CHARLES R. GILL WAS IN CHARGE, AND JOHN B. SCOTT WAS COMMISSIONED A 2ND LIEUTENANT.

THE LAKE MILLS-AZTALAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY HAS 23 LETTERS WRITTEN BY JOHN B. SCOTT TO FRANK WILLARD, AZTALAN STOREKEEPER AND POSTMASTER. THE FIRST WAS WRITTEN FROM CAMP RANDALL, MADISON, WISCONSIN AND THE LAST LETTER WHEN HE STILL WAS IN SERVICE WAS WRITTEN FROM HIS FATHERS HOME IN MINDORO, WISCONSIN (A SMALL COMMUNITY NORTH OF LACROSSE.) IN THE LETTER DATED JUNE 2, 1865 HE SAYS, "I SENT IN MY RESIGNATION TO WASHINGTON ON THE FIRST DAY OF MAY".....AND LATER, "THERE IS SOME FOUR OR FIVE MONTHS PAY WHICH I WOULD LIKE TO GET AS SORT OF A REMINDER THAT I DID DO A LITTLE TOWARDS THE RESTORATION OF THE GOVERNMENT AND ORDER IN THE U.S."

THE LAST LETTER FROM JOHN B. SCOTT IS WRITTEN FROM FULTON, IOWA ON JUNE 9, 1867 WHERE HE HAS MOVED INTO HIS SHANTY AND ASKED THAT HIS MAIL BE SENT TO FORT DODGE.

THE SOCIETY ALSO HAS A LETTER FROM L. H. JAYCOX WHO WAS IN THE 3rd WISCONSIN CAVALRY, CO E. 4 LETTERS FROM LEW JONES (CAPT.) OF THE 4th WIS. CAVALRY. 3 LETTERS FROM WILLIAM L. WILLARD, CO. I, 2ND BATTALION, WIS. 3rd CAVALRY, AND A NEPHEW OF POSTMASTER FRANK WILLARD. 3 LETTERS FROM A MAN WHO SIGNS HIS NAME "GEORGE T. P." AND WHO WRITES TO HIS BROTHER AND SISTER. THERE IS A LETTER FROM THOMAS S. BRADFORD OF CO. F,

LETTERS OF

JOHN B. SCOTT

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Mindoro, Wis. December 14th, 1862

Mr. Willard

Sir:

I have delayed writting for which I hope you will excuse me. Johns trunk came all right to La Crosse, I have now got it home in looking over the articles we wondered how he did not take his shirts with him. I think he would want them badly, he also said to me he would send me an overcoat I mean a Soldiers overcoat but it did not come he must have been hurried away quikly, I have got only one letter from him yet and that was wrote on the river when going down I do not see anything in the Newspapers concerning the new regiments at all, if you should happen to see or hear anything which may concern us regarding John I hope from the proof you have given of your friendship towards him and us that I may ask you to let us know something about it I mean if it is anything of importance.

We take the New York Tribune and the La Crosse Republican but still the regt. being raised around you, you may hear of things that I have no chance to hear. In the meantime I thank you kindly for the attentions you have paid for the time gone past I sencearly hope and wish that John will be spared to come back and repay you for the favours you may have bestowed.

Yours Respectfuly,

Robert Scott

Note: This is the father of John Scott and the letter is copied with the spelling of John Scott. Mindoro is a small community north of LaCrosse.

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Camp Randall
Oct. 31st, 1862

I almost started this thing with Mr. Willard etc.etc. but the thing sounds too--ah formal, so I'll open in a natural way with Frank.

We have received marching orders for tomorrow this morning, we draw five day rations have them cooked today. Tomorrow morning put two days rations in haversacks, the other three in boxes. Strike tents and off for somewhere "south in Dixie." Frank we are so mighty busy that I can't possibly write but a little. You will hear from me as soon as we bring up at any point for the purpose of being brigaded. I promised Mrs. Willard a photograph which you will find enclosed. I receipted for a soldiers overcoat which I intended wearing but have been ordered not to wear it, so I bought a Line Officers dark blue broadcloth overcoat.

I think I will send it by express to you and if you have not sent up my trunk you can toss it in to that. Frank I will, as soon as convenient send you money enough to pay express charges etc. but as we receive no pay yet and the boys have not received their bounties I am not over and above flush. Give my regards to my old acquaintances.

John

**Note: Camp Randall is at Madison, Wisconsin, approximately 28 miles from Lake Mills, Wisconsin and 30 miles from Aztalan, Wisconsin.**

Camp Salomoro, Coahorns Co.
Miss. Nov 23rd 1862

Friend Willard:

I have just returned from a seven days expedition to White River Arkansas and have found your "old" friendly letter. Receiving a letter here forms quite an important point in ones life. For the first twenty-four hours after being blest with news from home, a person is not supposed to be under any obligation to converse with one of his own rank, or if he does so, it is distinctly understood to be a case of extraordinary condecension on his part. It in fact amounts to an indefinite degree of promotion for the above specified period of time. Our expedition was nearly a bloodless one, but short, and other ways unimportant as it was, it opened my eyes more thoroughly to the manner in which this war is conducted, than all other things which I even surmised or guessed at, while at home. It would certainly not be prudent in me to write all, or even half of the damned corruption that meets ones eyes and ears on sinks of iniquity like this. God grant that the entire Federal forces might be better. Conditions (outside this department) and this may soon change. I left you a short time ago possessed of all the absurb ideas of the immense amount of honorable chivalrous feeling contained in the union army. But in this case fancy and fact never differed more widely. I have been cooped up with a few thousand of the grossest libels on humanity (for the past week) that it has ever been my lot to know. They are dirty, lousy and little discipline observed among them as there is in the crowning wind-up row at an Irish wake. The only time that I felt unusually called upon to return thanks to God, while out on the expedition was when one of them fell overboard (from our boat) and was drowned. When an army gets so damnably corrupt that a line officer will stand up in public and curse an acting Major General to his face, and when the General talks of arresting him, he is politely informed by the line officer that he dare not do it for he carries in his pocket evidence that would damn him and his friends. One need not wonder so much at the slowness of the progress of this war! As at the slowness of God's wrath in re-enacting the destruction of the cities of the plain on a larger scale. Frank you may think I am bearing down too hard on them, but I know you too well not to feel that you would assist in daming them with a will for the balance of your life were you only satisfied as I am in respect to the qualities of them. I am somewhat rough in my style, never set myself up as a moral man but when I find myself in a place where libels on soldiers and manhood can with impunity openly boast of every crime from petty theiving from their comrades to ravishing defenceless women I begin to feel that I have some few steps to take before I can reach their level yet. Frank when I commenced this I did not intend to write a letter of this kind, but it has been brewing in me for

several days and like the old man whom you told me of who was reproved by his boarding mistress for accusing her of being "not over neat" I got somewhat warmed up before I got to the "ear wigs."

I had to stop since writing the above to attend dress parade, the Col. after parade was dismissed, gave us a good old Fatherly talk on taking stringent measures to enforce discipline. He talked sensibly. We have had an addition of Gen. Osterhaus's Brigade to our camp. I have been over and seen them and I am pretty well pleased with their appearance. They are mostly Germans. Sigel's old Regiment is in it, the 3rd Missouri. They informed me that the 11th Wisconsin would be down here tomorrow, if so I will go down to their camp and see George. I believe General Steele is either here now or will be tomorrow. He outranks our Generals here and will assume command, those who know him say that he will straighten things out with a jerk if he does I'll pray for him. Frank there is a good part of this letter decidedly contraband, in fact there are sentences which could court martial me, so will you oblige me by introducing it to the stove when you have read it. I would not trust it in many mens hands, but I wanted to let you know how things had gone here and how I felt about it. I had a spell of chills but swallowed quinine enough to break them up while I was off on White River. I know feel like a race horse. "Rod" was somewhat under the weather for a short time, but is now all right. Cotton is worth eight cents per pound on this side of the river. On the opposite side it is worth 37 & 40 cents, up at Memphis it is selling, or was two weeks ago at from 56 to 60 cents, this I suppose is called No.1 cotton ground and the cotton raised on it sells high. I was out a spell ago on a foraging expedition and cleaned out one plantation of horses, mules, hogs etc. etc. We intended to go to old "Jake" Thompsons plantation which lay about 2½ miles from the one we visisted but our wagons were filled up to overflowing so we deemed it unnecessary to go farther. I presume he will get a call some other time. This Thompson is the old whelp of Indian Bond notoriety in Granny Buchanan's cabinet. I presume you remember him. You complain of cold weather, you ought to be down here where they get up winter weather to suit lean men like you and I, it is warm and pleasant as early September weather in old Wiscons. Frank I am getting lazier even than usual and writing a letter of this length draws hard on me so I will dry-up. Give Mrs. W. my best respects. & allow me to congratulate her on her success in wooing the muses.

Write soon and let it be as lengthy as possible.

Ever yours, John

P.S. I forgot in giving you a specimen of the theiving aquirements of some of our Regiments here to state that the last achievement in this line is due to the 13th Ills. who stole a grave from the 4th Iowa. Think of it. J.

Camp near Helena, Ark.
Feby 1st 1863

Friend Willard:

I have been waiting quite impatiently for an answer to my last letter, but it has not yet arrived. We have been helling over Arkansas, generally, and the White river particularly and having accomplished the object of the reconnoissance we retired in good order among the bluffs at this point, about ten days ago. After being cooped up on a Steamboat for thirteen days I enjoyed myself very well, but some of the boys grumbled considerably. I don't really know Frank what subject to choose to write about, there is little transpiring here of sufficient interest to be worthy of note. The only thing all agree upon here is damming the Paymaster for not making his appearance among us. Politics is of course out of my line and I will not discuss the subject.

The war policy (if we have any) is also threadbare, but being slightly interested in the result of the aforesaid nondescript article I believe I will inflict upon you my ideas of a correct war policy. Although it varies very materially from that of some of my friends and I am very sorry to say also from that of the commanders of this department.

This being purely a military question I will review it from a military standpoint of view, if it appears harsh the fault is not mine, war is a stern unnatural state of affairs and people who woo it must stand the consequences. After consulting the highest military authorities on this subject I find they all agree upon one policy to be pursued under such circumstances as the military leaders of this country found themselves placed, on te fourth of March 1861. Whether our starred strap Gentlemen have followed closely or not I will leave you to judge

They recommend at first a conciliatory policy, not as a matter of principle (because when men appeal to the sword they have either concluded to settle the difficulty by sheer brute force (of their own choice) or they consider themselves unable to persuade their opponents to grant them justice on the premises). War is governed but little by principle, and the only object in pursuing this course is to ascertain whether there is not enough of loyalty left in the disaffected parts to make it a matter of policy to have their cooperation. If loyalty to the government is not found in sufficient strength to make this the winning policy, then hurl war upon them in the swiftest and most terrible manner allowed by civilized nations.

This may appear cruel and inhuman to lavender-water philanthropists, but if those scented kid glove

sentimentalists could only look at our ghostly sick and dying soldiers, crowded in our temporary hospitals, they might possibly be induced to believe that war was no safe, pleasant recreation, and that it were better than thousands of traitors and abettors of treason should suffer the penalties of treachery, than that such scenes should exist as would meet theirs at every step.

There is another point in our policy I sincerely wish to see changed. Viz: the method of dealing with unarmed traitors (unarmed in daytimes and and forming parts of guerrilla bands whenever their assistance is needed, at night) the law of the United States and all other civilized nations is very explicit on the proper manner of dealing with this class, our policy is that the property of all( persons) unarmed citizens shall be respected. And I have guarded the property of men who gloried in proclaiming publicly their treachery to the Government I had the honor to represent and were ready to gloat over every reverse we sustained.

As I mentioned before the law is very explicit on this point, it states clearly what constitutes treason. Also that the punishment is death. And so help me God were the execution of the sentence of the law left to me, they would receive it to the letter. I am writing now as a soldier merely, not as a politician for to speak plainly the more I come in contact with the nigger the less I think of him. And were there nothing more at stake (or contained) in the idea of universal freedom on the American continent than that which relates to the benefit of the lazy whelps, I would hesitate long before I would sacrifice one good white man for all the niggers I have yet seen in the south. The other Boys have all gone to bed two hours ago, silence reigns in the camp. It is late and not knowing what duty I may have to perform tomorrow I believe I will bid you good night and roll up in my blanket. Please give my kind regards to Friends (if I have any) and believe me ever yours,

John

Helena, Ark. March 8, 1863

Friend Willard:

I have received yours of the 22nd and I assure you I was glad to hear from you once more. I had been telling some of the Boys that I believed my friends had all forgotten me as I had not received a letter for a long time. We got back from the Yazoo Pass just a week ago today. We enjoyed ourselves finely. I saw some of the best plantations along the pass that there is in the state, in fact the only ones I have seen which at all accorded with my preconceived ideas of a cotton plantation. Cotton growing on the fertile bottom lands has heretofore been the most profitable business in the country. What effect the war will have upon it no one can definitely calculate. I don't know whether the ideas which I was led to entertain in relation to the luxurious homes of the Cotton Lords of the south were generally held by people in the north or not, but if they were the quicker they undeceive themselves the better it will be for the cause of truth. I have not yet seen a house on a plantation which would compare favorably with the better class of farm homes in Jefferson Co. and elsewhere in Wis. So far as external appearances are concerned. It is true that you will find articles in some houses which if only systemized in their arrangement might indicate a refined taste of the owner, but they are so mixed up with everything from their own style down to that of the most unpolished, uncouth productions of barbarism that their presence only makes the entire collection appear ridiculous. One might pass a "Carnacca" in his scanty breech cloth without focusing much attention on him, but should you meet the aforesaid primitively rigged gentlemen swelling a dress coat with epaulets, in addition to his usual free and easy costume, and his heels adorned with a pair of spurs, the whole thing would appeal forcibly to ones rissibilities, there is about as much fitness and taste displayed in such collections as one would expect to find in the furnishing of a Malay pirates den. A kind of swartly Lambro.

I received one month and 7 days pay day before yesterday which was the first money I have received from Sam, was mighty glad to see it. Had been broke flat for six weeks. Green backs look well after a spell of that kind even if not quoted very high in N.York, but the most cheering news I can send you is the essential change of sentiment in the Army. But a short time ago the grumbling and dissatisfaction in the rank and file of the army was discouraging to any one with the good of the country at heart. The men had been long without pay and neglected in some other respects, their minds had

been poisoned by the dissemination of treason through "secessh" sympathizers and the perusal of such sheets as the Chicago Times, Cincinnatti Enquires and kindred papers until they had become nearly demoralized, but the northern traitors carried the joke too far, when the fire-in-the-rear men commenced open resistance to the government they added the last ounce that broke the camels back, the men began to see that the only difference between armed rebels in the south and anti-coercionists or peace men in the north was a lack of opportunity to destroy the government and today the very men who were almost ready to desert a month ago swear that they are not only ready and eager to be led on to wipe out traitors wherever found either north or south. I hope they may be gratified soon for a volunteer army is only powerful and effective when filled with enthusiasm.

From all I can learn there are good grounds to hope for the capture of Vicksburg at last. Good- go it on account of some resignations tendered in our regiment and also Thorn's position being vacant there is some tall figuring here, and I understand their friends are besieging the Gov. so as to influence his action in the appointment. Will let them howl, its not my fight. I am glad you have concluded to write often I will reciprocate. Curt Matthews called on me last Tuesday on his way up from Providence. He has resigned his commission on account of his leg troubling him (his old Shiloh wound). I have gained about 15 pounds of solid flesh since you saw me last. The health of our Regt. is improving, our company now report fifty seven privates for duty. Big Joe died two days ago, his brother was here when he died and took his body up the river.

John

(Accept my thanks for the stamps)

Helena, Ark. March 19, 1863.

Friend Frank

I have received your favor of the 8th inst. Was glad of course to hear that Aztalan on the hill was right side up. We are still here in this sink hole and I am beginning to be afraid that we will remain for some time to come. There are only 7 Regts of infantry here now, about as many Cavalry and Six Batteries. The weather is up to simmer heat nearly and the stench from the accumulated filth of 50 to 60 Regts for 10th months together with that from dead mules and horses laying around in every direction is to say the least quite preceptable. We keep busy now. Aside from all of our other duties we have Company drill in the afternoon for 1½ hours. Brigade drill in the afternoon from o'clock until 6 P.M. It makes the sweat come freely but we stand so much in need of drill that I bear it like a martyr. We have been watching for the arrival of the 11th Wis. with some others on their way down the River for 2 days but they hasn't got here yet. If I am not on some special duty when they pass I will call on George. A scout brought in intelligence to Gen. Prentis's last night that Gen. Hindman was within a day and a halfs march of us at the head of thirty thousand men. Some believe it, I don't, he may threaten this point in order to frighten our generals from sending troops down the river but I don't think that he can raise seecesh troops enough in Arkansas to scoop us, even in this the most indefensible place of which I have any knowledge. 7½ P.M. I have been off to Brigade drill. We have to go about 1½ miles from camp, past the fort in order to get in behind the levee on level land that aint overflowed. The river must be forty feet higher than when we came here. That same Fort is the damnedist piece of business I ever saw. It is on the flat but so near the bluffs that I believe 300 good sharp shooters could command it in spite of all the intimance in it. It has cost the government a large amount of money and the lives of nearly (2,000) two thousand niggers. They are buried around it so thick and so near the surface that it gives a dark shade to the soil. Scouts have just arrived who report Gen. Hinderman within 15 miles of this place, but think his forces don't much exceed 20,000. The 11th has not got down yet. Can't imagine what keeps them, but one gets accustomed to all manner of queer things around here and don't believe but a very small amount of the yarns he hears stated as facts. There are 1200 Cavalry just preparing to go out as an advance guard to feel of Prof. Hindmann. Frank this letter must appear disjointed, but I keep writing and insert the news items as they arrive. The boys look good natured about it and I

hope they won't get disappointed as I am anxious to see what kind of stuff the 29th is made of. Men change materially after a few months bushwhacking, it would either tickle or appal you to see men and boys whom you formerly knew to be quiet reserved fellows, who have been so long sick that the flesh is completely wasted off their bones and their faces look like deaths-heads with a piece of dry skin drawn over it, well just to look at such fellows and hear them when they are staggering about swearing at everybody and everything that comes in their way like--I was going to say Pirates but some respectable smooth tongued pirate might take offence as the comparison, so I shan't do it. I had a letter from W. F. Dunham since I wrote you last. I sent him a new descriptive list, pay and clothing accounts so that he could get pay or discharge, the reason I never mentioned anything about him was this. When we came down the River I mentioned in a letter to you that he had been sick but was nearly well, his mother mentioned the news in her next letter to him and he requested me to desist from doing such things in the future. I promised him I would and I believe I have been as good as my word. He will never make enough a tough or hearty soldier. A man need'nt be a rowdy to be a good soldier, but it is absolutely necessary that he should have a large amount of latent hell in him to draw on in a pinch. Jennings is dead. Mil Cory is having his discharge papers made. I think they will be approved, but they won't discharge men here until they are so far gone that it is almost impossible to move them. You had not got my last letter when you wrote, I suppose you must have got it before this time. You wanted to know if we could only raise 300 men in the 29th in answer I would say that I think we could muster 700 tomorrow or nearly that number. Frank if the Copperheads get up in arms just wipe out one for me and I'll do as much for you down this way when I get a fair swoop at their "erring Brethern in arms." Please give the Aztalanites my kind regards and oblige yours.

Respectfully,

John

20th. I have at last been able to ascertain the facts of the threatened attack, it appears that the main body of the enemy is at Cotton Plant, but they are moving on a position about 20 miles from here. Kirby Smith is in command, it was merely a detachment thrown out in advance that alarmed the scouts. The Cavalry force with left here last night has not returned, nor have we heard from it. I delayed mailing this letter today expecting to be able to tell you that I had seen George. On getting up this morning I found that Polman and the other "Tenton" had been up to camp early, but had left. I hurried down town and found the boat they were on, but learned from a Captain of one of the Co's., that the left wing of the Regt. had not got down from Memphis. I waited nearly all day around the levee but they had not got down when I left. I expect to be able to find him when he comes down.

Frank it is so cursed hot and I am lazy played out sure.

John

Helena, Ark.
March 29th, 1863

Friend Frank:

I receive yours of the 15th inst. a few days ago and was surprised to learn that you had not received either of my letters which must have been on the way when you wrote, or rather when I received your letter. The first one was written about the 8th, the next on the 20th. I expect that you must ere this time received them both. There is nothing of any importance transpiring here of late. Vicksburg is still not ours and I have set the times, or more properly I have "Miller commenced prophysying" made a prediction that unless the beginning of the end of Vicksburg is clearly discrimable by the 5th day of April I will not expect to see it carried for the next 4 months. Frank, we frequently wondered last year why in ____ the war was not conducted in a more earnest sensible maner, taking what I see here as an index to the whole I can easily account for it. The "dignitaries" of the army may be summed up briefly as follows: honest, intelligent imbeciles, a few southern sympathysers, a good many speculating, keen sharp scoundrels, legion honest intelligent men, as scarce as black swans. Mix these ingredients, make the necessary allowance for unavoidable, miscarriages of plans and you can make a very close approximation of the natural consequencies of such a "Directory." With such a head for the nation and the home Copperheads for a tail, we sometimes feel blue, but as a general thing we feel (as the doctors said it on certain occasions, "as well as could be expected." The Providence (La) Canal is prounounced by the Engineers impractical after their off repeated assurances of its practicability. When you become familiar with its history its failure to meet the expectations of the people will admit of an easy solution, if you are not well informed of the Mississippi sensation clap-trap blinds. I would suggest that whenever you get puzzled in accounting for any peculiar shapes which matters may assume in this section of the country just toss in the word Cotton. Semi-occasionally at the same time bearing in mind the important fact that the aforesaid article sells readily for sixty cents per pound, whenever the chances for shipment is good. The "Rations" you mentioned have not arrived yet but the Boys are grinning and swallowing their spit in anticipation of the good time coming. And here, permit me for myself and in behalf of the other Boys to return our sincere thanks to our "Friends in Aztalan" for their kind remembrance of the "Arkansas Travelers."

By the bye, Frank, I am sorry to inform you that one of the Boys, (Bradley Tilden) mentioned by you as having a box in the barrel, will not be in condition to enjoy it long. He is failing rapidly, in the same manner that his Brother Freeling did. In relation to the Lt. Colonel, Major Green has received the promotion and Capt. Hancock, formerly Capt. of Co. A. being senior Capt has received his commission as Major. Lieut. Bronson of Watertown has had his resignation accepted and will leave for home in a couple of days.

I have been growling for a short time with chills again, but 40 grains of quinine in a qt. of commissary rye, is good for that any time. I told you in my last how I had hung around the levee in order to see George. I had the pleasure of seeing him in camp on the 23rd inst. He looked as stout and robust as you could wish to see him, and says he has been so all the time since he came south. They left for Grants headquarters on the 24th, he requested me to send his kind regards to yourself and family. I had just got in from 24 hours picket duty when I commenced this, we had a perfect devil of a night. I think it must have been got up expressly for the benefit of some Arkansau Tam O'Shanter, the trees came crashing down in every direction. On getting into camp I found it had raised the devil with the tents, it drew the pins out and the Boys had to fasten on them tightly to keep them in the state. We have had a cold, chilly wind from the north for two days and can appreciate your experience of March winds. Got to stop now sure.

John

Helena, Arkansas. April 5, 1863

Friend Willard:

I received yours the 20th in due season, and was pleased to learn that you was all right. We received our supplies of vegetables, fruit and CPC yesterday and you and our other friends at home may rest assured that the Boys feel truly grateful for the material part of the gift, and also appreciate deeply the kind feelings which promoted it, anything from home and ones friends is invested with a certain degree of sacredness by men in the army which people at home can scarcely appreciate.

Bradly Tilden (as I predicted in my last) died a few days after I wrote, if I find any Boys in our Co. who have not been supplied from home with fruit, butter, etc. I will give them those articles sent to him. Frank you will have to excuse me for a short letter this time. I feel billious, my bones ache and my head feels as big as a tub and twice as thick. There have been a great many reports circulated in Jefferson County about individuals having been sick almost every day. Some of the men are swearing about their friends being needlessly alarmed by such accounts. Yesterday Jack Jones told me some discharged soldier had been worrying the family by reporting him sick and used up generally. Jack wanted me to state when I wrote you that you need tell that he was tough and hearty, fit for duty, and had felt so all the time since coming here, except at times when he had caught a slight cold or something of that nature. A thing that happens in Wisconsin as well as Arkansas. All of which I can certify to as being strictly correct. A boat that came up this morning brought the news that fighting was going on in Vicksburg but we hear many sensational reports that one almost begins to doubt his own co-existance.

I was detailed last week as Officer of the Guard at the Contraband Camp and saw and heard Cuff in all his styles and phases. I listened to a funeral sermon which knocked everything of the kind I ever read. I took notes on the ground and although it is necessarily abreviated the sum and substance is all correct as near as I can reproduce it. I will send the only copy I have of it, you can't appreciate the beauties of it, for that could only be done by seeing and hearing the "Ole Bassador" as he styled himself.

Milo Cory of Milford is discharged. Adjutant Sweeney is up home on a sick leave of absence, he is very badly used up. Val, as we used to calll him was the best Military man in the Regt. and the best Adjutant I have seen in the service. Frank I must dry up, I feel ungodly lazy.

John

Dawson's Plantation, Madison, Co.
April 20, 1863

Friend Willard:

I wrote you a week ago but failed to receive yours before I left Helena and the chances were slim for mail matter here. You need not expect to hear from me regularly for some time. We landed at Millikens Bend, left our tents, mess chests and cooking utensils, packed our rations and blankets on our backs and took up our line of march.

We arrived here two days ago and are waiting for the construction of flat boats to cross and navigate the Bayous ahead. We are encamped about 2½ miles from the 11th Wisconsin. I have seen George 3 times since we arrived, he is healthy, tough, and fat, is not only contented, but think that soldiering must be the legitamate business of man, as the most of them take it so good naturedly.

The weather is warm now, strawberries are just getting ripe, the blossoms on the china trees roll out in masses. Fig and lemon trees are growing in the garden here, thrifty and nice. Peaches are about half grown, in fact I perceive at every step that I have made a material change of climate since last April. I don't know how long it will be before we have a chance to visit our "Erring Bretheren" in their den, but the masses of the army believe that if we are properly handled we can and will scoop them. I understand all northern papers, and telegrams from the north have been stopped. We are a little afraid that there is some bad news which they want to withhold. If this is so the authorities are fooling themselves and only annoying us. The army of the South West are no set of children to be pleased with the promise of a sugar plum or frightened or discouraged by the defeat of any part of the National Army, however much they might regret it.

I am lying on my side writing this and not being familar with my desk I make rather odd looking marks, besides it is mighty uncomfortable so I'll dry up.

John

Camp near Vicksburg
July 4th, 1863

Friend Willard

I received yours of the 20th inst. in which you said you hoped that I would be able to date my answer from Vicksburg and I can't do it although we have scooped them. Vicksburg has surrendered today at ten o'clock, 22,000 men and 500 officers and yet God damn them I can't get in to it. Our Division having stood the brunt of the two heavy fights of the Campaign lost more men than any other division in the army of the Tennesee (26 3/4 percent)in one fight, Viz Champion Hill worked like niggers in trenches and rifle pits every since we came on to these lines. Slept on our arms when we could get a chance to sleep, marched when I have staggered with weakness, produced by hunger, haven't been relieved from the front line of pits for a month and as a renumeration for all this when we have our prize in our own hands right before our eyes the lousy commanding officers transmit orders for us to march at sundown. We are all tired drilled out, and I am having a sweet spell of that difficulty with my head and I feel just now that if we are forced out of this to give way for some division that has scarcely ever fired a gun to Garrison Vicksburg while we chase Butternuts all over the southern confederacy that Uncle Sam has got all the cheerfully rendered service that he will ever get out of me. Frank this is the first time ever bored you with personal affairs. I started merely to inform you of the fall of Vicksbug but I am so cursed angry that it wouldn't surprise me if get under arrest, for I am ready for a personal row. Haven't seen George for five weeks but Rods saw him a few days ago. Write soon.

John

Head Quarters, 29th Reg. Wis. Vol. Infantry
Vicksburg, August 3, 1863

Friend Frank:

I have just received yours of the ult. and was happy to hear from you once more. We got back to this place nine days ago after one of the hardest marches ever made in the southwest. We will leave for Natchez in the course of two days probably. You will have seen Levi Ostrander before this reaches you who will post you on some items connected with the compaign if you quiz him. Frank I can not only notice the receipt of your letter I am running the machine in the Adjutants Office and the Brigade Division Corps and Department Commanders seem to vie with each other in regard to who can issue the most orders. All of which have to be recorded and from one to ten copies made for Co. Commanders, beside the usual business of reports etc. etc. The weather is getting pretty hot but we must endure it. Stoppenbach's resignation has been accepted and he is now a citizen. He has been quite sick. We are losing officers fast now in the Regt. don't know but I'll have to "Cave" myself before long until I rally a little.

Accept my thanks for the articles sent by Lieut O. Ray. He has not arrived here yet.

I see George every few days, he is tough healthy and contented, he tells me he intends going home on Furlough in the course of 2 or 3 weeks.

Please inform "Father" Curtis I received his letter and will write him as soon as we get settled in Natchez.

I expect "Roderick" will be transfered to the Invalid Corps before we leave this place. Write soon and oblige yours ever.

John

Carrollton, La
Sept 4, 1863

Friend Willard:

I received the articles sent by Sergt. Ostrander for which accept my sincere thnaks. I had not seen George since before leaving Vicksburg untill the next day after the articles arrived. We divided and arranged the plunder to our mutual satisfaction. I come in however for the Lion's share as there were a number of the articles which he said he could at anytime get in and around the Hospital. He is fat and appears to be enjoying splendid health. I have been a little unwell but am now convalescant.

We are all feeling a little sober tonight (that is, I mean all of the 13th Army Corp). Our Old Father, U.S. Grant come down to this department last night to see his old troops before they got too far off. And tonight, or rather late in the afternoon met with an accident which we are somewhat afraid may terminate fataly. He had just extended an invitation to the Officers of the 13th Army Corps to meet at his rooms in the City proper (we are lying on the outskirts of the city in a little suburb) and was riding past the railroad depot when his horse got frightened at the cars run off with him and brought up on the fore wheels of a carriage. The Gen. was thrown off with the force of the concussion, his head striking the pavement and to make it still worse his horse rolled on to him. He is now in a very precarious condition. I am no Hero-worshiping man, neither do I consider Grant a military genuis, but if he dies where can we find a man to fill his place. The president has shown the people he posses the power to issue Generals commissions but giving a man a Generals Commission don't realy make a General of him. There is some awful material made up into Generals in the U.S. Army, why Frank I have got better men in my Company whom I have refused making Corporals of and I am not over well supplied with non commissioned timber either. Gen. Sherman is the next senior Officer in Grants department and if he gets the command then God help the cause and the troops for they will most certainly need help from some powerful source. Why the River Guirellas will run over him.

The great majority of the men in this department, from Gen. N. P. Banks clear through are from the Potomac and they are ripe specimens of the stock they spring from they have all the fuss and feather, flourish of trumpet and grand fizzle style of the McClellenites in their palmiest days. Our western Boys treat them with open comtempt. While they in return vote us as uncivilized Boors, although they

freely admit that we have a way all our own of spoiling the Butternut clothing and whatever said articles may contain whatever the cause may be, there is one thing patent to me and that is that the eastern troops have not got the grit, the pluck, exhibited by western men they can't endure grief to say nothing of that other wet nurse operation it is strange but nevertheless a fact. George won't be home for sometime.

We are under marching orders no one seems to know where we are going. Some say to Charleston some to Mobile and others say Texas. I dont suppose it makes much difference where, but I dont like the crowd we are now thrown in with. I have little confidence in either men or officers as a general thing, but then it is three years as during the war I have got back to the Co again and will take up the lines tomorrow.

Tell Mrs. W. that the sight of a female handwriting set my heart to palpiltating at a fearful rate, but upon ascertaining that it was from a married Lady it got reduced to 120 a minute as shown by the chronometer of a Colorado itenerant dealer in shell fish. Please give her my regards.

Write soon

John

Headquarters 29th Regt. Wis. Vol. Inftry
Cassion Crow Bayou, La. Nov. 2/63

Friend Willard

I have not heard from you for a long time. I am almost afraid that you have forgotten me. As it may be that there is some mail lying around somewhere for which I will yet receive. We have been fooling around this section since I last wrote you, out of the reach of mail, news and in fact everything but Guerillas, grey-backs, wormy hard-tack and thick headed, semi-seelssh* Generals. We started on what was generally believed to be an expedition to Texas, but we have been wandering among the woods, swamp, prairies and Bayous of this state in a manner rivaling the Israelitish march through the wilderness as Capt. Bob Shottus circular expedition on the race course. I can't conceive what the object of our perignations* is unless it is to demonstrate the fact that the strategists of the Potomac are nowhere, scooped, played out, decidedly done for at their own game.

We are marched out as far as eight miles beyond Opelouisas, went into camp and stayed there 3 or 4 days. We then broke up camp and commenced falling back, the enemy, (what few there were) hovering around our rear and flanks picking off stragglers and small parties. General Franklin, who is supposed to command the expedition (when he isn't too drunk) then commenced stringing us out, apparently to see how much ground we could cover and still have each group within a day or two march of each other, at least this is the mildest construction which can be put on such a course of action. If this was not his reason then there is only one other object for which he can be laboring and I must admit that he is succeeding very well at it. He ordered Gen. Burbridge's Brigade of eleven hundred and some odd men to bring up the rear. Our division was most of it, we have been in camp some three days all of which time the "deluded Bretheren" have been skirmishing with Burbridge and picking up stragglers from our camps. Day before yesterday they picked up in parties of 2 and 3, 17 of our men and shot a captain of the 24th Iowa in sight of our camps. They also drove in Burbridges pickets, he sent into us for support, but after we had got out about 2 miles we were met by a courier who stated that the Rebs had withdrawn and we were not needed. Yesterday when his men were at dinner they were charged into by an overwhelming force of cavalry and mounted Infantry who had dismounted about 2 miles from the point of attack, and swept his skeleton Brigade right before them, they turned both flanks and had them engaged in front, both flanks and rear all at once. Our Division got notice of their

* seelssh.....Blind, Archaic
* perignations.....an angle of 360 degrees
or going around in circles

intentions and hurried out to check them, but only arrived in time to save his wagon train, and what was left of his force. We engaged them and drove them back about 4 miles, out of a little over 1100 men in the Brigade there is lost or killed, wounded and prisoners 636. The 23rd Wisconsin was in this Brigade and I have just got back from their camp, they have exactly 100 men left together with a few officers. I inquired of officers of the 23rd how many men they had in their respective companies, one had 5, one 6, one 9 and the other 12. Col. Grippey is surrounded and a prisoner, an ambulance has gone out towards where our southern bretheren was last seen, under a flag of truce to try and negotiate for his exchanges. We lost a splendid Parrats gun (a 10 pounder). We only managed to take about 100 prisoners.

I am back in the Adjutants Office. Blake got promoted and a young fellow by the name of Hale has received the appointment. I will run the institution untill he arrives from the north. We held our election yesterday and got through just before the rumpus. Our entire vote stands as follows: Union (260) two hundred and sixty . Copperhead (7) seven. Not so bad for the hardshell 29th. Rothe only got 4 votes, damm him. I have not seen George for several weeks, he was all right then. Frank to give you an idea of the policy pursued in this Department now I will close by giving you a copy of an Order issued by our late Corps Commander, and on file in this office. Vermillionville is a little secesseh hole about 4 miles from where we were then camped. Taking a Rebels chickens or sweet potatoes was called marauding. Prof. Ord had all of the officers called up before him and lectured them in Gen. Banks name on the beauties of the conciliatory policy, but you may imagine how little of it was sucked by the officers of the 13th Army Corps.

COPY

Headquarters 13th Army Corps
Near Vermillionville, La. Oct 1st, 1863

Special Orders
No. 94

The citizens of Vermillionville, La. are authorized to organize themselves in a patrol, for the protection of themselves and their families and personal property against Marauders either white or black.

This order to be read on Parade at the head of each Regiment of the Command.

By order of E. O. C. Ord
Major Genl.

OFFICIAL (Signed) Walter B. Scates
Lt. Col. and A. A. Genl.

How do you like it Frank.
John

Alexandria, La. May 3rd,1864

Friend Frank:

I have been waiting patiently for a letter from you, but it don't come. Our mails, however, have been so very irregular for sometime back that one can't tell whether he is forgotten by his friends or unduly remembered by the butternut persuasion. Our boys at one time wondered how it felt to skeedaddle from the enemy, get cuffed at every point, and finally be cooped up in some corner awaiting an attack at the enemy's pleasure, well our experience on this subject has of late been quite conclusive, if not satisfactory.

I came up from New Orleans with about 350 recruits for Regts. in this Dept., and met the head of our retreating column, next morning after their scandalous defeat at Sabine Cross roads, since that time we have been sulking around this portion of the state, like fugitives from justice, and that too before an enemy, whom I firmly believe, that with anything like proper management, we could at any time scoop out of their boots in from three, to five hours active work. There is a great difference between the systems of how to do it, and "how not to do it." The circumlocution office is about the mildest institution, which we have running here, and as no judge of things comparitively, the Barnacles are getting to be highly popular. The greater portion of the army have, from a state of anger and grief subsided into a feeling bordering very closely on utter indifference. Damn the thing I am sick and tired of thinking of it. I expect the affair will be nicely smoothed over by the time you get it, you will be safe in not sucking much of it. We are now engaged in daming the River here in order to raise the water on the rapids so we can float our gunboats over. I understand we have lost two of them, but they are reported to have sunk them before they were compelled to give them up so old Reby ain't so much ahead of that.

This is a very fine country, there have been splendid Plantations here before they got swept out by the Army. There are more of the old Spanish tracks in this vicinity,, and up toward Natchitoches than in any place I have yet seen in the south.

May 6th. I have just finished the other page when I was informed that no mail would be allowed to leave for some time, so I wound up short. I have no idea when a mail will be permitted to go, but I will finish this and may find some one going down the river who will mail it. We keep on losing boats faster than ever, two days ago a boat coming up with some four hundred men was attacked, her boiler stove in. The Boys showed fight but were swept off the Bank with Cannister and compelled to break, each man for himself. 140 of them have got in, the balance have got their heads busted or captured. Among the killed was Col. Mudd 2nd Ills. Cavalry, and another Col. whose name I have forgotten.

Yesterday we lost two Mosquito Gun boats, and one transport a short distance down the river. I don't know how many we have lost today, but suppose about the usual number. The Sergeant Major has just looked in and informed me that a Lieut of the 56th Ohio Infantry has escaped from the Rebs. and bought in the intelligence that their Regiment (which was going home on Veteran re-enlistment) was attacked down the river. The boat (Warner) crippled, and what men were left, taken in by the Butternuts with the exception of about 100 who effected a landing on the east side of the river, and left with the intention of cutting their way through the Guerilla Bands until they reached the Mississippi opposite Natchez.

One would imagine ours was the happy family, enlisted men and inferior officers daming the Superior shoulder straps, and they in turn daming each other. Nero jerked out Maloney's, or some other jig while Rome was burning. We have some small specimens of would-be-great men who are about as sensibly engaged while this Department is going head long to the devil. There was a time when such a state of affairs would have fretted the life out of me, but habit is nearly everything and I have seen so much of it that I don't feel very much about anything however rough. Genl Mc Clermand has been here about a week but found that the Rebs were not the only things he had to fight. He has (I understand) some severe set-to's with a certain Maj. Genl and Ex-Gov., under ordinary circumstances he would have been put under arrest and at present a meeting would probably have been the result of that. He is at present so sick as to be unable to get out and the thing runs in its usual very mysterious way.

I can stand (on a pinch) to fight Rebs. but I protest against being made the laughing stock for them.

Frank write soon. Respects to Mrs. Willard.

John

Morganza, La.
August 11" 1864

Friend Frank

I receive yours of the----God only knows how long ago. Frank I should make an attempt at an apology only that I have been unpardonably lazy and careless. I saw George while we were lying at Thibodana. He had been sick but was fit for duty again. We have been deviling around the LaFouche and Atchafalaya for nearly three months. A greater source of amusement than fear to the Guerillas infesting this section of the Country. How long we will remain here no one knows. Our division has the promise of being the first sent off. I think when we leave we will make tracks for Mobile, as our possession of that is becoming an absolute necessity and officers and men are perfectly willing to submit to hard work, and a few hard knocks if they could only be satisfied that it was intended to result in any benefit to the country, but since of the close of the Vicksburg campaign up to the present time I have not participated in any movement which I did not feel (and subsequent disclosures have in almost every instance corroborated the impressions) that the whole thing was working for personal aggrandizement and individual gain. And from the time we first come south untill the opening of the Mississippi Campaign the matter was so notorious that the men of our Command, like many other, trying to laugh off a disagreable affair, facetiously called themselves the "Cotton Guards" in fact, with the exception of a few large hearted earnest men, and a very few times when such men had the shaping and directing of matters, the whole thing so far as has come under my observation has been a fraud, and a swindle. Were it not that it is costing the country hundreds of millions of money, and what is still more appalling hundreds of thousands of the best lives of the nation, the imbecility and Mose Benjamin greediness of a large portion of the prominent actors in this drama would reduce the whole thing to a piece of very low comedy. But people with old fashioned ideas of right and wrong, of what constitutes frauds, theft and murder, can't find it in their hearts to laugh at and enjoy a system that has made orphans of the hundred thousand, which is daily sending its stream of maned and crippedl victims back to their old homes, objects of pity and charity and turning whole districts of country into mammoth grave yards. But "what were ten thousand lives to deathless fame like mine" -- with a few hundred thousand dollars thrown in. Shoddy rules the day, were it necessary to bear all of this for the crushing of the rebellion, no one would grumble but would accept their share of roughing cheerfully but few can see the necessity.

We have spent dollars and lives enough already to have whipped the south into a sense of duty and decency, three times and yet from a lack of earnestness and honesty we are some ways from having accomplished it once. It was at the first a big job, well so much the greater necessity for throwing aside all fooling and tampering and going straight to work. Frank you will probably think that I am sick of this business, well I will frankly admit that few things would afford me greater pleasure than to know that peace was declared. Yet I intent to see the mess through if I don't get winged or sick and I have been lucky so far. Levi W. Ostrander has gone home and you will of course see him before you receive this. I hope he will obtain a place in one of the new Regts. which will straighten his affairs quicker than anything else would. Since I sat down to write four boats loaded with troops have passed and landed at Head Quarters. Probably troops iantended to relieve us, if so, then hurrah for Mobile. I ain't possessed of hard enough countenance to ask you to write soon, but if you will write as soon as a decent regard for your own self respect will permit your letter will be very welcome. Please give my regards to Mrs. Willard and tell her she must attribute my carelessness to my Fathersnot bringing me up properly. You know him--of course.

John

St. Charles, Ark.
Sept. 15" 1864

Friend Willard:

I received yours of the 28" ult, this morning before I got out of bed (that you may imagine dont occur very early, when the whole thing is left to me). Bob (our colored boy) says "dat ob all de men in de army, dat Genamann (that's your most obdt.) hates de wustestest to get up to eat his breakfast"; and I believe the boy is more than half right. I think we were at Morganiza, La. when I wrote you last, we left there on the 3rd of the month, arrived at the mouth of this creek on the 8th, left for this place after taking on rations and have been occupying the half finished works since. When I was here before in the January of 1863 this was quite a nice little village, now the "blackness of ashes marks where it stood." You will probably remember that this is the place where the gun boat Mound City while attacking a battery had her stem pipes shot away, scalding a number of the crew and compelling the remainder to jump into the river where they were mercilessly shot by the lank, lousy louts on the bluff overlooking the stream, just about the main works where our Regt. is now camped. We have not got tools yet to finish up the works, so we have turned our attention to Guerilla hunting that you know is a kind of retail business, but one mus'nt be too particular about what branch of trade he engages in when times are hard, we are doing very well, sending small Invoices of the reptiles to the other side of Jordan daily, if we stay here long we will exterminate the brew in this section, they are a good thing to lose. We are having beautiful weather here at present, it is tolerable warm in the middle of the day. Smells a little of the north in the morning, but the evenings and nights are a treat to men who have broiled all summer in the gulf states.

I suppose you are having hot times politically in your section by this time. As you anticipated in your last, the "Young Napoleon" was received that which he commenced working for on the first day he assumed Command of the United States forces, viz the nomination for the Presidency by the pro-slavery party of the north.

Well I believe that he is the most available man in the party so far as votes are concerned, he will get all of the votes of that no longer inconsiderable portion of northern electors who are interently opposed to decency and progressive civilization while his despicable course of demagoguism with the Army of the Potomac (expressly played in anticipation of this nomination, or something of a shorter cut to power) will give him a heavier vote in the army than any other man whom the Copperheads would feel at all safe in running. There are men who will vote for him and claim that they are <u>war</u> men, who have been ashamed to

support the "peace on any terms" men although they realy wanted to if it could have been possible to do so, and furnish a twentieth rate apology for their actions. So that taking all the little gleanings from the possible repairable morals of the country together with the great bulk of that which has long ago passed all possibility of ever rising about unmixed depravity he will, I believe run heavier, and get more votes than a good many of his oponants expect at present.

I wish there was a candidate in the Field whom I could cordially enrose, but as there is not I will have to vote for the least obnoxious. Once more in regard to the war being closed this year I am not at all sanguine, although no one can be more possitive that it might practically be ended, wound up, done gone, with the available resources of the United States properly used. You must remember how fidgety and excited I used to get when war matters didn't go to suit me. Well a two years view of "how not to do it" has made me much more philosophical in my manner. I intend seeing this thing played out whether it takes five months or five years (uness I get rubbed in a less time) and whenever in my one horse way I get a chance to burst a Reb head, why there will be one less live Confed. but if my superiors don't see fit to sweep a thousand of them out of existance when a good opportunity is presented I have arrived at the conclusion that it wont pay me to throw myself into a fit fretting over it. We have the power to whip the south into a sense of duty and assert and maintain a first class nationality and if there is not honesty and manhood enough to carry it out, dissolution and national death ought to be considered a blessing. When I fairly come to the conslusion that we can't keep Hotel, I will be willing to sell out to someone who can. I don't think we will stay here long from some hints I have received within an hour. Since I commenced writing a private of Co "K" has been drowned in the River just in the rear of my tent. His name is Peterson. I should suppose that the village of Milford was pretty well wed out of men now. By the bye I learn that Ab De Merit although too feeble (so his Father said) to soldier for a few years has thrown himself a way in the matrimonial line. I hope the poor fellows constitution will bear him through for a few months at least.

In a regard to my own health I am positive I will never feel strong and tough but wherever the 29th is, you will find your avuncular friend somewhere in the neighborhood, it sometimes takes considerable extra effort on my part, but I'm bound to be in at the death. I suppose you are still astonishing the natives with feats of muscular strength. Well Frank if we can't bite we can growl. Respects to Mrs. W.

John

St. Charles, Ark.
Oct. 13th 1864

Friend Willard:

I have just received yours of the 28th containing the tickets. I will endeavor to circulate the papers wherever I think they will be useful. I am afraid that our Regiment will poll a heavier Copperhead vote this election than it has at any previous one as there is a class in the Army who were really ashamed to vote and out and out unconditional surrender ticket, but who had played lick-skittle to the south so long that they were ready to damn themselves once more if they could only find the thinnest sort of an apology for so doing. This they have found in McClellan, and I believe that is about all they, as anyone else, has ever been able to find in him. By-the-bye I had a visit from "our mutual friend" Park Waterbury. A short time since, he was on his way up to Duval's Bluff. I had gone to bed about two hours before with a regular old "Arkansaw" Chill, and being nearly crazy with fever and remembering that he was worse than crazy on politics, I reckon he thought I was not more than overjoyed to see him, but we have men sporting blue clothes here equally as mean as he is. I am waiting patiently for old Ulyses to put in his stunner on old Lee's bread basket and bring him to grass. I am confident that he will do it, but if he don't we feel different about the matter in the Army, from what some of the weak kneed Bretheren no up north, who profess to believe that, unless the south is whipped in the autumn, the war will not be opened anew in the spring. We have got the idea that we can clean out the south, so deeply impressed on our minds, that the Copperheads, Confederacy and the devil can't wipe it out. The most of the men in the field now are in for from one to three years. Sam can raise the needful to buy Hardtack, blue duds and galena for them, and they are determined to see the old chap out of the woods before they leave him. I have got nearly a year yet before my term expires and if that isn't enough I'll through in another one. And I believe that there is 3/4 of the Army who will be found perfectly willing to do as much as that to say the least. The 29th has got is part of the defences completed in as good shape as the plans would admit of, and feel confident that if ever attacked, there will be a heavy squad of Arkansas travellers started for the tropics on short notice.

If you see Rod tell him I would like to hear from him, he mustn't forget Co "F" altogether. I received the newspapers, thanks. Please give Mrs. W. my respects and drop me a line occasionally.

John

Mouth of White River, Ark.
Oct. 30th 1864

Friend Willard:

I received yours of the 4th inst. while I was on my way down the White River. We broke camp at St. Charles on the 23rd, embarked on a steamboat for Duvals Bluff, with Orders to proceed with the utmost speed. Coupled with mysterious hints that we would probably form part of an expedition destined to give Daddy Price his final quietus to say the very least.

Well we hurried up the River but found that no one knew of any such skull and cross bones expedition, nor even of the alleged fact of our being wanted at all. Still it might be one of those grand strokes of Masterly Strategy bought about by some of our peerless Generals, about which no one knows anything with the exception of the Rebs. and the Master spirit. So it was deemed expedient to send on the General to consult with Genl. Steele. He returned next day with the intelligence that we were not needed and might proceed to the mouth of the River to await furthur Orders. So here we are once more on the Mississippi out of our good comfortable quarters which we built at St. Charles and shivering under Shelter tents, and no material to better our condition. I hope that we will be sent south soon, no more northern winters in mine, thank you.

We have just got the details of Phil. Sheridans last victory (I mean that of the 19th, he has got into the thing so that he may have another one before this time), he suits me. You can perceive clearly the difference between a mere passible common place man, and an officer of good sense and nerve. Sheridan turned a defeat into a victory, with a course, the very same material, quite a difficult feat as anyone knows who has had the mortification to have ever seen shattered columns, preceeded by the debris, broke loose from them, hurrying to the rear.

Before entering the Army, I thought that raising an army, imparting proper knowledge of drill and enforcing and maintaining discipline sufficient to give it force and efficiency and finally handling and fighting it with fair success, against an equally well organized force, might all be learned and practiced by a person of good sound common sense coupled with a taste for such a profession, but from the time the war broke out and I heard so much of "deep strategy," military genius etc. etc., and saw so little benefit result from it that I became quite skeptical in regard to the Soundness of Military Science and Authority, but for sometime I have been in proportion to the closeness which we have followed Military Science as our enemies have departed from it. And I believe today, that a well selected number of intelligent earnest Officers can take any material that walks on hind legs and bearing the human form, be they white, black or any shade between, and in one year have them

a very superior fighting force to anything that can be found, as far as my experience goes in the Volunteer Service of the United States.

We have a peculiar Army so far as discipline is concerned but thank God the men are fighting as not much better in that respect, and a good deal inferior in many other points, and though we are bound to win, it is at time discouraging to think of the unpardonable waste of human life and money caused by inefficiency, carelessness and ignorance. Good material has been bountifully furnished and shamefully misapplied and abused, but as Jacob Faithful's Father would have said, "No use crying for spilled milk, better luck next time."

By the time you receive this letter McC. will probably have received the quietus in the shape of a few thousand of those tokens of admiration and esteem with which his friends say he has inspired the army, he may get more votes than his opponants etsexpect, but he will get mighty few compared to the number claimed by his friends. In regard to your query of how a certain Gentlemen will vote I can't really say. When Mc. was first nominated he was fast for his election, he then heard frequent very plain expression of opinion given to the loyalty of persons who would vote that way, then came the returns from Indiana, Ohio and Pennsylvania, which had a very cooling effect. I have not heard him say anything lately on that subject, although some have inferred from some remarks he has made, that he may possibly vote the Union ticket. I hope merely on account of the position he holds at present that he may do so. I suppose George is tough and healthy, give him my regards when you write next. I have not yet received the paper containing Jack Logan's speech which you sent, it may get around yet.

The weather is very chilly here for this season of the year but we will have some fine weather even here yet. Please write soon,

John

Mouth of White River, Ark.
Nov. 8th 1864

Friend Willard

I wrote you a short time ago, but thought I would just take a few minutes to drop you the election returns of the 29th. I informed you in my last that the Regiment would go heavier Copperhead than most people supposed. Man, you know is the most incomprehensible of all animals. Mules and hogs not excepted. It does seem so damned strange that anything in human form will calmly vote itself to be a murdered, thief and scoundrel generally. And yet a thing who has been bearing arms in the United States service during this war and votes the peace at any price, Jeff Davis Democratic ticket does all this, and more if posssible. I suppose the peace disciples up your way have been busy fixing their hickory clubs with which to keep the peace. I mean those of the olive-branch persuasion whose intense appetite for Rotgut precludes the possibility of them ever accumulating money enough to subscribe to the six barrelled pistol, av Garribulali Rifle fund.

There is nothing very important transpiring around here at present. At last accounts General Price was retreating rapidly from Missouri into this State at the head of the principle part of the armed force of the "Sons of Liberty." Prices force would have been ten fold greater had it not been for the unwarrantable interference of the tyrant Lincoln and his hirelings, who had the audacity to confiscate the arms with which the "Knights of the Golden Circle" intended to blowout the aforesaid hirelings brains. Nay they even had the unblushing effrontry to abridge the personal liberties of some of these Tiradern Lambros, and that too (in some cases) by those maddening insupportable "arbitrary arrests" so terribly repugnent to bushwhackers, Copperheads and Rebs generally. How strange it is that some people won't submit to having their throats cut quietly, but then thugs have had to work against deep prejudices in all ages, why not in ours.

I don't feel well today and did not intend to write but a few lines when I sat down. And will now dry up.

Enclosed please find the Regimental vote by company for President. Also the vote for County officers in the Reg..

John

Little Rock, Ark.
Nov. 22nd 1864

Friend Willard:

I wrote you on the 8th inst. giving the returns of the 29th etc. etc. I have not heard from you for sometime but having a little spare time I concluded to bother you once more.

Immediately after election our Brigade received Orders proceed to "Duvals Bluff", which we did as soon as transportation could be obtained. We lay around there some two days when a telegram was received ordered the 47th Indiana and our Regiment out to this place. Where we have been shivering with cold ever since. It freezes every night and the wind has howled a perfect hurricane for the last forty-eight hours. We are all sighing for the Gulf of Mexico, and damming "Arkansaw" generally. The 9th, 27th Infantry and 3rd Cavalry Wisconsin Regts. are here and the 28th is expected in from Pine Bluff today. This makes the greatest amount of Badger's we have ever met since we have been in the service.

I have just been privately celebrating the re-election of "old Abe" and have the news here that 'Mike Lellan" has only received 20 Electoral Votes. I suppose we will have to be contented although that is 20 more than I wanted to see him have. The thing don't seem to suit the "Dimmy crats." They are very "touchy" at present. A person has to be careful of talking about them especially if some of them are his Superiors in rank, but thank God I neither give, nor ask quarters from any such beings. Their extreme sensitiveness in regard to the name you may choose to give them politically, reminds one of the daintiness of a newly emancipated nigger. In fact the scale of names correspond very well. Call a Traitor r A democrat and an African a colored Gentlemen, and they will both be quite well suited. If you want to banter them a little you may call one a "straight hard shell Democrat" and the other a "Darkey." Should you desire to make them sulky and snapish call the one a Copperhead and the other a Negro. But if you are bound to bring the thing to a focus just call the white one a traitor and the swarthy one a nigger, and the devil is let loose at once. There is nothing going in this Department of interest at present, but that is nothing new for it. I don't see anything special except the absurd rumor that N. P. Banks is going to be Secretary of War, only think of the Hero of Sabine Cross Roads, the Duke of Grand Ecore, directing the movements of the U. S. forces. God forbid. ..

If such a thing should happen I sincerely hope that the programme will be finished by Congress enacting a law making Secretary Wells, head of the Navy Department during life as bad behavior and authorizing him to purchase a sufficient number of Chinese junks to make the blockade non effective, together with a few such slight changes necessary to make the policy complete. I am so cursed cold that I can't make my fingers work so I'll wind up. John

Memphis, Tenn.
Dec. 18th, 1864

Friend Willard:

I have just received yours of the 20th. It was brought along in an old mail that we had passed when we came up the River. I wrote you a short time ago giving you an account of our New Organization. As a Reserve Corps. I liked the whole arrangement very well except our Brigadier General. The old fellow would never rise to the dignity of eight Corporal without the influence of outside friends.

We were notified in the Order Organizing the Corps that each Brigade was entirely seperate, not under the command of any Division Crops or Department Commandeo, but to report directly to General Canby. Our exclusive duty being to patrol the Mississippi River. Well in the face of these Arrangements comes an Order from General Dana (Department Commander) to be ready to move at an hours notice with eight days rations, 100 rounds of ammunition, 1/2 Shelter Tent per man, no baggage. (Light marching order). If it were good weather I shouldn't object much as I want to see as much Territory as possible, but it is going to be rather unpleasant, but then we can get along with that by growling a little.

I hope that we will never meet the enemy in force as long as we are under our present commander, if we ever do I have no hesitation in predicting defeat if it is any where within the range of possibilities. The man is decidedly under the average run of people as far as regards Intelect. He was formerly a one horse Boss Coal-heaver. And being an Irish Catholic he could control the votes of a certain portion of that "highly inteligent, moral, self-governing Class of Citizens." From this cause he succeeded in getting some politicans for whom he had formerly worked to secure him a position in some of the Regiments then raising Egypt. He was appointed a Colonel, the same cause has kept him in the field God knows he is no ornament either to his old or new profession. He looks like a great overgrown cross between Stebbins and an Idiot. This porcine mound is known as Brigadier General Michael K. Lawler,Com"dg 1st Brig. Reserve Corps. West Mississippi. May his tribe decrease.

The health of the Regiment is very good at present. Our new recruits stand it very good atpresent.

I was reckoning up the distance travelled by the Regiment since entering service and without counting the little trips I figured over 7500 miles. While individually I have covered over 13,200 miles, it costs Sam a trifle to pay his Orphans travelling expenses. We have just received a rumor of the capture of Savannah by Sherman, I hope the affair will turn out to be true. We have had news lately from men in Nashville, they don't seem to anticipate much danger from Prof. Hood.

I believe "Old Safety" is good for him with an ordinary chance. I understand that Curtis has formed a co-partnership with "Rods" brother-in-law and that they are driving things heavy up there. The Old One will teach him a few lessons which he will remember, while they are mutually engaged in cultivating a taste for the "Fine Arts" in the northwest.

While reading your letter where you were alluding to a strict enforcement of the Monroe doctrine I was just thinking that the action of the Canadian Authorities in the case of the St.Alban raiders, together with a number of nearly similar affairs would have a strong effect in moulding the public feeling to a proper form and state to back up any administration who felt included to attempt it. I see that there is a great stir being made over the Capture of the Pirate Florida, some denoucning the illegality, others pleading the legality of the act. Well I suppose that the Confederate and Brazilian Governments won't be able to stand the crushing effect which my opinion must necessarily have on their claims, but I can't help "the eyes of the world being centered on me " imploring my final judgement of this momenteous question. The Oracle must give utterance,the thing WAS wrong, but IS right.

Webb and I have spoken let further discussion cease. But to be serious about the matter I believe that it was an infringement of Maritine law, yet the peculiarities of the case were such that I think the action morally right, and would back it up if it led to head breaking if I should ever get a similar opportunity I would repeat the dose unless specially ordered Not to by some one whom I felt bound to obey.

I would like very much to make a dash on your apple band nibble and chat for a while, but the Army now is like Arkansas States Prison, no discharge during good behavior.

Write soon. Respects to Mrs. W.

John

Kennersville, La.
Jan. 22nd 1865

Friend Willard:

I am in receipt of yours of the 2nd inst. It must have been delayed on account of our moving.

You will perceive that we are back into one of our old camps which we occupied last summer. We left Memphis on the 1st arriving in New Orleans on the 5"and were ordered into camp here, this place is some 10 or 12 miles from town on the Jackson Rail Road, it is also close to the River. It seems strange to have you talk of enjoying sleigh rides up your way. The weather is quite mild with us and would be very pleasant were it not for the fact of its having rained almost incessantly for three or four days, which renders the camp a litle too soft for comfort. On arriving here I expected that we would not leave this vicinity for sometime as there did not seem to be any special demand for troops at any point along the River, but I see by the northern papers that Prof. Hood & Co. have fallen back on Corinth. This will render the strengthening of the force at Memphis a necessity. and believe part of our Corps will have to go back there.

I also see by the last paper that Hood has been relieved of his command by Joe Johnston. Must say that I'm sorry for that, as I always found him to be a wily sly old fox. And as he is by far the most popular Officer among the Rebs in the Southwest I am confident that if he is let alone at Corinth untill spring that he will have an army large enough to give trouble. The debris of Hoods Army will form the nucleus around which will be rallied everything lying loose in several states yet I have great confidence in old Thomas being just the man to Checkmate Old Joe at his own game. He has always shown rare skill in knowing when to evade his opponent, and then at the proper time to piter in just as if he meant business.

Hoods system will usualy work well if he was opposed to any enemy who had no resources to fall back on, but to try it with an enemy who largely outnumbers him and can always rely on making good his losses soon after an engagement is simple foolishness, he tried a desperate game and is played out.

I was sorry to hear of the failure on the part of our forces to curry Fort Fisher, we wanted that chunk of dirt to enable us to stop the blockage running at that point.

We have a rumor tonight however that it has been attempted again with success. I sincerely hope that it is true. It will be a hard thing on Butler and Weitzet, I am sorry for both, but more especially for Weitzet as the principle weight of the affair will rest on him. If it turns out that he was wrong I am certain that it was a mistake for which he can give some satisfactory reason. No one who personally knows the man will doubt for a moment his integrity, or courage, and he has uniformly heretofore

exhibited considerable more than an average amouant of military knowledge and skill, but then with most people, success, whether it require skill or not appears to them as the natural result of genius. And failure, as naturally proclaiming a lack of brains, not claiming to be infalible. I of course admit that I may be wrong, but if I am not in error on this subject General Weitzet can produce to the satisfaction of the Military men, evidence of being possessed of a sounder judgement. And a better record generally than some Generals on whom the public are almost ready to deify. "I am no worshiper of the man but like to give the Devil his due."

In relation to your question of whether the Col. will go home this winter or not, I can't say definitely one way or another. His original term of service is up. (as an officer) and I suppose that he can get out on that ground if he chooses to apply to the mustering officer.

Jan 24". Some of the troops belonging to the 3rd Brigade of our Corps who were lying about a mile below this are loading on to Ocean Steamers. I cant ascertain where they are going. We have received no marching orders yet.

Please give my respects to Mrs. W. And write the news in the city as soon as you find a little leisure.

John

Mindaro, Wisconsin
June 2nd 1865

Friend Willard:

I am in receipt of yours of the 26 ult. containing your kind invitation to pay you a visit, for which accept my thanks. I had commenced gaining in strength pretty fair, but undertook to exercise too much and set myself back again. I am now improving a little once more. And mean to be tolerable careful this time.

I sent in my resignation to Washington on the first day of May, but have not heard a word in relation to it yet. And as soon as I am able to travel I must look after that affair, lest some of those red tape, quill driving Braves at Washington get their back up and dismiss me from the Service for some informality. The Dismissal would not injure my feelings at all for I have learned to estimate those affairs at just what they are worth, but there is some four or five months pay which I would like to get as a sort of reminder that I did do a little towards the restoration of the Government and order in the U. S. If my resignation is accepted and I keep gaining I will be down your way soon and see how the Center of Creation stands.

Please give my regards to Mrs. W., Greene etc. Write occasionally.

Yours truly,

John B. Scott

Fulton, Iowa
June 9" 1867

Friend Willard:

Your favor of the 13" ult. was duly received. My replies to letters certainly don't argue an-undue haste. But this being our busy season and sometimes two weeks between times of being in town to mail letters it throws them terribly behind times.

You are also kept pretty busy I should conclude from the number of different branches of business claiming your attention. I was pleased to learn that Roderick still existed and felt musical. I would like very much to see and hear him.

Friend Green is becoming a model old patriarch, the next step is for him to become Deacon in some quiet old country church. William was formerly a very good "tippler" I don't see any reason why he shouldn't shine as a good Templer. Still I have no doubt but that his mouth strikes water at the remembrance of New Orleans Punches. So Charley Homes has got a place among the Publicans, well Charley is a fine fellow, hope he will have good luck and enjoy himself. George, of course no longer looks upon himself as a scrap among the driftwood of society, but as at least a brick in one of the _____*. I have got into my shanty, been in a month, got quite a fair family for a Bachelor. Two of the male persuasion and three females. The additional females are a couple of nieces, daughters of my brother. That other "Gal" seems just as far off as ever. I entertain a profond regard for old "Esop" and believe he was possessed of deep insight into Fox and human life both. The case stands thus, I delayed too long. I am not old enough to be smitten with a child, and you fellows have appropriated to yourselves all of the women worth having, so you perceive I'm out in the cold. Once in a while some married man kicks off, leaving a fine specimen of matured womanhood, but the words of Sam Weller's warning ring in ones ears. It may be said aural appendages are too long to permit some sounds to escape in time. Our weather this season is very remarkable. Spring didn't open untill about three weeks ago and since that rain and one-horse hurricanes seem to be the rule. It must mend soon or the devil will be to pay this season sure.

I saw Curtis about ten days ago, found him as hopeful as if "Man was made to mourn," and "Love not" had never been penned or sung. His is one of the most comfortable temperaments I ever met with, if I could only rob him of it he might keep leige and family, for a season at least.

If you happen to see any of the old "stock" please give them my regards. Remember me to Mrs. Willard and when you find a few leisure moments drop me a few notes. Address me as before at Fort Dodge.

Yours truly,
John B. Scott

*illegible word

A LETTER FROM THOMAS S. BRADFORD

Camp of the 29th Wis. Vol. Infantry
St. Charles, Arkansas, Sept 21st 1864

Friend Willard:

I have not much to do this afternoon and have a dirty sheet of paper to spare and I thought I would write you a few lines and let you know where I am. Also let you know that I am well and the Johnnie's have not got me yet and I dont think that they will if they give me a fair chance unless they are better on a foot-race than I am. Frank I will tell you that I dont feel much like writing to Milford as I have written several letters to persons there that I promised to write to and I begin to think that my letters are not worth answering as I don't get answers from them. I would like to hear from there often but I'll be d____d if I will write many letters to those that dont answer mine. I have not very much to write that will be interesting to you but I will try and find something for you to laugh over. I got to the Regt. in a very good time to take the first and most important lesson of a soldier (that was to make a good retreat) this I done my part as well as any of the Old Soldiers, but after a while I thought that Banks had got so bad scared that he would never stop. I was fooled in this he did let us rest after we got to the Mississippi River. I don't think that he (Banks) lost much time until he got to New Orleans. Since that time we have been on the move the most of the time. The longest that we have laid in Camp at any one time was at Morganzo, La. I think from the 27th of July to the 3rd of Sept our Camp was there. We were all on a boat for Baton Rouge once while we were there but after staying on the boat all night we had to go off the next morning and put our tents up in the same place that they were before. On the 23rd of August we had to go to Port Hudson (but did not move the camp) and from there to Clinton to help clean out a nest of Rebs then we marched all night from Port Hudson and in the morning found a few Rebs near Jackson, ten miles from Clinton, but before we got there the force from Baton Rouge had run the Rebs from there. The 4th Wis. Cavalry were they had a hand in running the Rebs from there. I saw Capt Jones and many others from Co. E. Lew looks tough and hearty and is fat as a hog the Boys all like him as a Captain that I have heard saying anything about him. We marched back to Port Hudson and got on the boats again and got back to Morganza the night of the 28th all right did not loose a man by the Rebs killing them, but they took three or four stragglers from our Regt prisoners some of them (if not all) have got away from them and are back to the Regt again.

There has been one man drowned since we have been here from Co. K. We left Morganza the third of this month for the Mouth of White River, Ark. got there the 8th staid there until the morning of the 10th, got on the Boats again ane came to this place I think it is 60 or 80 miles from here to the mouth of the river by the River, but not so far by land. I expected to find quite a town here from what I had heard but the town had gone there are two or three old buildings here and that is all. We have the best camp here that we have had since I have been with the Regt we are on the bank of the River and inside of the works. There is one Brigade here, viz the 120th Ohio 99th Ill. 47th Ind. 29th Wis and 21 Iowa right here and the 7th Mass Battery and a few Mounted Infantry. I like the camp very much and would like to stay here all winter. We get plenty forage and dont have to go very far after it now. Beef and sweet potatoes are very plenty here and from the noises in Camp a person would think that Chickens Geese and turkeys had deserted from the Rebs and got into our Camp. We have forage parties out most everyday and they don't come in without a plenty of what suits them best that they can find. I cant tell you how long we will stay here, may stay all winter and may leave before the week is gone. Lieut. Col. Hancock and Capt Bryant got home yesterday (No recruits yet) John B. is all right and about the same as usual. The Boys from Milford that are with the Regt are all well. Joseph Sweeny was left at New Orleans . I received a paper from you since we have been here and I am obliged to you and sorry that I cannot return the compliment. You may want to know how I like soldiering and I will tell you. There are different degrees in this as well as in other great and good works. Some I like better than others. When we are in Camp and dont have much to do we would get along first rate if we did not get too lazy to eat or to go after our victuals after they are cooked. When in Camp and have fatigue and guard duty enough to bring us on duty about every other day we get along first rate. But when they get us out on a March or a scout and put us through day and night I dont like it as well as lazing camp. We are generally short of rations on these long scouts if we don't forage, as we don't like to carry so much in our haversacks to last 4,5,6, or 7 days. I will stop for this time. I would like to hear from you if you can make it convenient to write. I will try and answer letters if paper dont run short, it it does I will make up for loss time when I get it. Give My Respects to my friends and all others and accept a liberal share yourself and excuse mistakes. Yours truly,

Thomas S. Bradford
Co F 29th Reg Wis Vol
2nd Brigade
2nd Division
19th Army Corps

O the Devil. I liked to forget to tell you that there would be two sides in the Army in the Election this fall. The one-sided game is played out. But I cant tell you who will be President until after the Election. Tom

Via Cairo

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S. H. BRIDGE

Fort Scott, Kansas, July 29th, 1864

Friend Frank: Your letter was received last night with much pleasure. I take this opportunity to write a few lines to you again, my health is tolerable good, although I do not weigh as much as I did when I was in Wisconsin into about 20 pounds. I think that hard tack and sow belly does not agree with me very well. I have often seen pork walk, but I never see bread walk until I came to Kansas, but you can see it traveling around here asking the price of butter. The weather here is very warm, except nights then it cold enough to freeze ice cream. We do not get much news from the army of the Potomac but hope that everything is going on to our advantage. The Brushwhackers are getting thick in Kansas, we hear that there is 2500 at or near Topeka (which is 60 miles from here north) We also hear that they have destroyed a portion of the Hanible and St. Joseph R.R. and burnt a bridge, this is the line which all of our mail from Wisconsin passes over. We have three women prisoners here, they were taken in Missouri a few days ago. I saw them this morning you ought to see them Frank, they are quite tall and large, just below the waist hair combed from their forehead straight back over their heads, ears about the size of a young elephant, nose like Old man Nevens and only one story higher eyes like two big holes in a blanket, their lower extremityes I can not describe, for modestys sake, but we will change the subject by saying that the negroes of Kansas are anxious to become citizens of the United States and vote like white white people, they begin to think that there is good in Old Abbe.

Sim Jaycox is well. Chant Stone is well also. Chant is going home on furlough, he starts next Monday so in two or three days after you get this letter you will see him. I suppose that you have heard that I have had the misfortune to be appointed Sergeant. I think I had as lives be a high private in the rear ram although they do not get quite as much pay as a Sergeant. I think if the war lasts that I shall try to get a furlough this winter to come home. They have got a U.S.A. here which is good progress, I have been in twice. A good many soldiers are joining. I think if you was down here you could make money in selling goods, tea is 3.00 dollars a pound, coffee .63 cts. New potatoes $4.00 dollars bushel and Whiskeya the same, everything else in proportion. To tell the truth Frank I have got about sick of soldiering. It will do for men that has got no familyes, to join the army, but a man with a family ought to be at home, but I guess everyone will have to go yet, but I am living in hopes that this summer will end this War, and we all will have the privalage of returning home in the course of one year. The Union people here are all going in for old Abbes reelection, and if old Abbe can have his way one year more I think the rebs will hear something drop. Give my best respects to your wife and family, also to all friends, please write again.

Yours &c, S. H. Bridge

Frank Willard
Direct Fort Scott Kansas
Company E. 3rd Wis. Cal

(This fell in the mud)

LEVI JAYCOX

WESTERN BRANCHES
OF THE
U. S. Christian Commission

CHICAGO: J. V. FARWELL, Chairman; B. F. JACOBS, Secretary.
PEORIA: A. G. TYNG, Chairman; WM. REYNOLDS, Secretary.
ST. LOUIS: ISAAC S. SMITH, Ch.; J. H. PARSONS, Cor. Sec'y.

THE U. S. CHRISTIAN COMMISSION
Sends this as the soldier's messenger to his home. Let it hasten to those who wait for tidings.

U. S. Christian Commission Rooms,

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Little Rock. Ark. Jan. 15th 1862

Tuesday Afternoon.

Mr. Willard Sir:

After a long delay I will try and write you a few lines to fulfill my promise. I have not been here but two days so you see I am not very well posted in regard to Millitary affairs. It was four months before I came here to my company, two in Madison and two in Helena. i was taken sick on the 7 of Nov while on my way from St. Louis to Little Rock. I was taken off of the Boat at Helena, had a very sick time of it for three weaks, but came out all write and now I am here with the Ridgment. They are about one to 2 miles from the city. This town never can be taken with any foris that Traytors can bring against as there is a large number of troops here and they are all in good quarter and in fine spirits. "Wise" is within 70 miles of here, but when he comes in to try the city he will find hot work but I do not think he dare to show himself. It is very plesant here now and I am inclined to think that corn would come up in 24 hours if you put it in the ground. It is a sad sight to see the property that has been distroyed by this war here and there everywhere is the work of destruction of Traytors property. It seemed to me while I was at home as if I could imagion some thing of what was going on in this part but I have made up my mind I new but little of it. While in St. Louis there was six men shot there you have seen it in the paper. I suppose it was hard to witness. They said if they had taken us they would treat us as prisoners of war, but they met their death as brave men die. One young man said O my God what news to go home to father and mother.

The boys here are all well and enjoying themselves as best they can. Sands is fat as a bear and makes a Bully Solyier. I suppose you are having very cold weather up there there has been no snow here yet and a good show for none. I do not no as you will find this very interesting as I can not boast of my skill in letter writing. The timber is all pine or most all of it and makes very good wood so we will not freeze. In regard to the life of a Solyier as far as my experience goes I think it is a very plesant life to lead, but still you are deprived of some of the comforts of home but that is nothing in war times like these. I think when my year is out I will try it on a Boat for three years if this war is not over by this time. The boys send their respect to you. In regard to the war what

is the general opinion of the country up that way They think down here it can not last this year out if Sherman gives them another hit or so I think they will play out. You must excuse a poor letter and mistakes and write a long long letter in answer. I am standing up writing so you no it is very hard work to write. I will close by sending my best respect to yourself and family.

Levi Jaycox

Direct to L. H. Jaycox
Little Rock Ark
3rd Wis. Cav.
Co. E.

Write soon

LEW JONES

Camp Paine, Baltimore, Md. October the 15th, 1861.

Friend Frank:

It is Sunday and the lonesomest day in the week for a soldier and I will get rid of a part of it in writing to you. I have seen something more of the Duties of a Soldiers Life since I wrote you last. Our Reg. was ordered down on the Eastern Shore of Md. as you know before this I presume. We were under the command or commanded by Brigadier Gen. Lockwood. We left our encampment at the Relay House on the 4 of Nov. and took the steam boat for White Haven some 90 miles from Baltimore where we arrived the next morning. We then landed and took our line of March for the sacred soil of Old Old Virginia. The Boys were all life and animation, they expect to soon meet the Confederates and have fighting they have waited long, but not very patiently, but they were disappointed by the General he held us back and back and gave them a good chance to get out of the way which they did. They threw down or rather hid them. We found seven Canon, six pounders they were iron guns and mounted and had not been used. We found a lot of small arms mostly old muskets with flint locks. We also took a number of horses belonging to the Rebel army and their officers. But the horses were claimed as private Property and given up without any proof by that old session. Sun of a Bitch General Lockwood. It makes me so dammed mad to think that we marched 150 miles through that Godforsaken Country without doing any good for ourselves or our Country and it was a perfect Godsend to the Rebels for the army left at least $500,00 in the Counties of Virginia which we passed through and this money all in gold, they did not have any money down there except Confederate scrip and that is worthless with them. We could not buy sweet potatoes with it, and they are not worth what it costs to dig them. Old Gen Lockwood treated the secessionitsts with more consideration than he would the President. He told some of the people of Drumonstown when they complained that their slaves were becoming refractory and disobedient that if they would send them up to camp he would have the soldiers punish them. He did not send any into our Reg. And if he had he would not have got out alive,I heard him say that in a speech at Drummondstown. He told Colonel Paine that he dare not come inside our lines after dark and he was wise in keeping out if he had he would have got shot for the Boys were all mad. And what made me the maddest was this, we arrived at Eastville Saturday night, tired and footsore and Sunday morning he sent round an order for every soldier to get ready for a general Review at 11 o'clock. He said he wanted to show to the Inhabitants of Eastville the Power of the Federal Government and marched us about for 4 hours and there was I should think 200 negroes out to see this great display of Federal Power. I cannot bear to think more of it. I must put off writing more of this expedition till another time. So Good Bye,

L. Jones

Fort Craigue, La, March 15, 1863

Friend Frank

I have been in bed two hours but cannot sleep, I got up,dressed and have been out looking round to see that our Guards were on the alert and doing their duty. I suppose the reason of my being so wide awake tonight can be accounted for easy enough. I have had two nights rest in succession. We have just got in from a ten days raid into Dixie and if it had not been for the speed and bottom of my horse I should not have been here tonight writing to you by the light of this five cent allow dip. But would have been a prisoner of War in some Confederate Prison. Our Brigade left Baton Rouge on the 1st day of March. Gen. Joseph Bailey commanding. Our Brigade consists of the 1st Texas, 6th Mo. and 4th Wis. and our Regs. and the 118th Ill. mounted Infantry and large wagon train. We had with us 1st Wis. Battery also 13th . Our march was slow as the roads were bad and the high water had carried off all the bridges and we had them all to build or to repair, but we were in no hurry to get on for our object was to make a feint and draw all the Force we could to meet us while our Troops were disembarking near Mobile and we got only twenty miles from Baton Rouge on the Clinton Road to Comite River and the bridge was gone. Our pioneers went to work on the bridge. Gene Bailey ordered me to take a small party and make a reconnoissiance in advance of our position and go until I found the Enemy in Force. I started on the night of the 5th with ten men at 11 o'clock went down the river five miles and forded the river or rather swam it for the water was ten or fifteen feet deep and took through the wood for the Amato River some fifteen miles distant where we arrived about sunrise, there we dismounted, fed our horses and eat our breakfast of salt pork (raw) and hard bread or it would have been hard if it had not been for the soaking it got in the river, but it tasted good for I was hungry as a Bear (and it is said that hunger makes any cook a good one) Our breakfast being eaten and horses fed we mounted and took another swim and as soon as we were across the River we struck for the road and soon found it by the time the sun was well up and shone out bright and warm. The People looked surprised to see us few yankies riding along so unconcerned we travailed about 5 miles when a Negro came out of some brush at the side of the road and said: are you Yankees, I answered yes. Negro. don't go dur massa capin don't go dar, right smart Reb up dar. Well how many good Friend. Don't right smart count 16 big flag and heap of little ones they had dere yesterday, hab four string of Reb, four flags in string and heaps little ones. I asked if he could show me their Camp and not have them see us.

Answered no massa, lots Picketts can't do at. One of my men says here they come Cap and sure enough there was about 50 of them coming right towards us, our arms had got wet in swimming the river and our anmmunition also so our only chance was to run and we took it but we had about 1/2 mile the start and good horses. The come a race I knew if we could reach the river 1/2 mile ahead of them we would be all right for once across the river I knew they dare not follow us, but I did not know how our horses would hold out (and I think I must have been in the same mind that Tam O Shanty was when chased by the Witches) but on we went through mud and over ditches pell mell and the Rebs after us yelling like so many demons. At first I thought they were gaining on us but I told the Boys to hold their horses steady for we were leaving them and to look a head and not turn in saddles for that worried their horses, but we held our own and gained a little, by the time we got to river and plunged in and swam across and got fairly out the Rebs were on the opposite bank banging away at us and my boys yelling go to H___ you Suns ___chs, it will be our turn to run you next and you had better have better horses than them old plugs or we will gobble, so we got off all right and rode back to camp and made my report to Gen. Bailey that same day. We loafed around four days more, let the Rebs. capture our wagon train and then went back to Baton Rouge. . Write soon and often. My regards to your family and friends.

Yours L. Jones

How is Uncle _____

Camp 4th Wis Cav"
Vicksburg, Miss, June 13th 1865

Dear Friend Frank:

it is sometime since I have heard from so I will try and tell where am and what I am doing and also what I have been doing for the last three months. We have been marching through the States of Alabama, Georgia and Miss wandering round like Japhet in search of his Father with no apparent object only to kill time and we done that but it come very near killing many of our men dragging them round through sun and dust liveing on hard bread and bacon or rather greese. We marched nine hundred miles in the once Confederate States and never fired a shot. We left Fort Blakely soon after fall, Mobile on the 18th of Apr. marching East as far as Greenville one hundred miles. We then went from there to Eaufala near the Georgia line and camped in Georgia for five days. Alabama is the poorest state I have ever been, the soil is sandy and but little of it cultivated and where it is cultivated produces but little. The inhabitans are poor and ignorant. There is once in a great while fine production piece of land but that is owned by some rich Planter. In Georgia the land is better and more of it cultivated, the inhabitants more intelligent and better educated. Some of the Ladies are well educated and would sing and play for our amusement or rather to display their accomplishments to us poor mud sills of society. Miss is a fine state and its soil is good resembling our Wisconsin prairies. They have some magnificent Cotton Farms but their buildings are poor, many of them living in old log houses, much dilapidated and look as if they required the action of an inspector and I know he would condemn them as being worthless. What does the People think of the assination of the President. Soldiers think it is as much the fault of Copperheads as it is Secessionists and they look at them as being one and the same thing in principle, but I suppose it is hard to find one of that class of men now at the North. I presume they are for vigorous prosecution of the war to successful end war. We were in hopes to get out of the army soon but the thing looks a little doubtfoul now we are going to Shrevesport Texas and how long we will be there is a dificult to imagine or even guess. Our men are much disappointed and disatisfied for they wanted to get home and I cannot blame them eather for many of them have been in the service four years and have been in active service all the time and they have not been paid for nine months many of them have families at home that need their pay and are suffering for it. They think this is hard and so do I. They think the Government is not doing the fair thing by them. I do not see how we can get along without pay much longer for I am badly broke, nary dime about my clothes and no chance to jayhawk unless sell my horse and I will not do that. Write soon and give all the gossip for now the fighting is over and all of the excitement gone I do not know how to live. My regards to your family and all who may inquire.

To Frank

Yours Capt. Lew

San Antonio August 8th 1865

Friend Frank

Well here I am in Texas where I have often wished myself and now I wish I was in someother place. We have marched 450 miles in this state I like the country better than any I have seen since I left Wisconsin. There is the finest Prairies in Texas I ever saw but are not settled to any extent but are used for pasture for the large herds of fat cattle that roam for miles without fence or ditch to stop them. The first real Union we saw were in Austin when we arrived there we found the stars and stripes floating over the Capitol and all of the Public Buildings and from many of the dwelling houses and stores shops. etc. in the afternoon they had great Flag raising they raised the same Flag that the Confederates pulled down four years ago, it had been kept by a Mr. Hamilton a staunch Union man and they raised on the same ground and on a pole set in the same hole that one did that the Confederates pulled down. And it took more people to raise it than any Flag I ever saw raised before. They had a long cord attached to the chalyard and I should judge that at least 1000 men women and children assisted in pulling it up. Most of the people seem to be pleased to know that the War is over and that U.S. Government is yet the Government. We found a large German settlement and town called New Braunfels they are staunch Union men they have a population of 2000 and have not furnished soldiers for the Confederate Army but have resisted conscription and kept out of the army, they gave us hearty welcome and washed it down with Lagger, and I should think their welcome struck longer in the Boys throats than Dr. Wilsons pills does for it took great amount of drinking to get it down. And in San Antonio we met with a good reception and it has been estimated by some of our officers that at least there 2000 flags flying in different parts of the city as we marched through it. San Antonio has a population of about 12 or 15,000 and is an old spanish town, the buildings look like they had built some time before the flood, but are good substantial buildings. There is many of the Old Spanish Castles yet standing. I visited Alamo and stood in the window where Crocket was shot. I do not know where we will go next, but I hope Uncle Sam will not require our services much longer our men are dissatisfied with being kept after the fighting is done and I do not blame them for we are not regulars and we enlisted to put down this Rebellion and now it is put down we should be sent home, if we were engaged in a War with any other Nation I would not say one word against staying 3 years longer if would last us long but we are in hopes that this is our last march and that we will soon be home. If we were engaged in War with any other Nation I would not say one word against staying 3 years longer if would last as long but we are in hopes that this is our last march and that we will soon be home. Write soon,

Yours Lewis Jones

P.S. Direct to New Orleans

GEORGE G.T.P.

Letter No. 5

Camp Barry
March 9th 162

Dear Brother and Sister

I received yours of the 3d yesterday evening and was very sorry that it was so storming when you wrote it is and has been for the last week the pleasentest weather that I ever saw. People are a planting here now. I am sure that I miss seeing so much snow and it almost makes me wish that I was back there so as to enjoy one good sleighride for we have had but one little snow this winter and that only lasted three days. You wish me to pick out a couple of good farms for you but I rather think that that is a task that I shall be quite unable to perform and as for comeing down here after the close of this war to live I for one would rather be excused the sunny south is fine but the balmy soil of Wis is finer therefore I prefer to stay in Wis. for all of any other than I have seen I am much pleased to learn that Uncle Perryoohas got that terible big pad off his hands and hope that he may long live to enjoy the beenifit thereof I am pleased to learn that you are all well but for bad colds and cross babies, cross babies you must expect in a flourishing family like yours, the Aztalan boys are all well as well as myself still there are a few that are sick with the measles in our co. but none dangerous. Cornelia you need not wenes. I make that expression again that you wish that you could write something that would interest me and make me prise your letters more now that is out of the question for never was there letters prised any more than yours are by me. tell Fanny for me that I would like very much to hear from home and David I should like to hear from him and when he gets to printing I should like very much get a paper from him now and then you wish to know what we are a building that house for if we are constructing so quick for well we are building it for the other home guards I thank you very much for yours congratulation in my office and now I will tell you what I have to do yesterday I haulled sand for the Co they are forming a bridgade at pilot knob about 30 miles south of us there has 3 regements of infantry 2 regements of Canalez and are regement of artilery passed here within the last three days we probably would have gone with that brigade had not the citezens sent a petition to general hallock for us to stay here well there is no more news here so I shall be under the painfull nesesity of closeing give my love to all and remember me as you affectinate Brother George

Camp in Vicksburge, Miss.
July 26th 163

Dear Brother & Sister:

at this time after a long silence I seat myself to pen a few lines to you to let you know that I am still alive and enjoying the blessings of health you are perhaps long since acquainted with our march out to Jackson and the effect thereof which was the start at 6 o'clock on the morning of the 5th of this month and march to Jackson driveing Johnson's men before us like sheep in fact it was a continued skirmish from blocherines there killing men and taking prisoners all of the way then when within 5 miles of the city the seige commenced and continued for 10 days when they evacuated giveing us free right to walk in and make ourselves at home. We found the town sacked of everything and a good share of it burned, they evacuated about 12 o'clock on the night of the 16th and at surise on the 17th we marched in there was several buildings burning when we marched through the streets and men serched the town through and through and finished burning it not leaveing a house but what was burnt the treachous rascals placed torpedoes in many of the buildings and a great many in the road where it was narrowed this using every means that they could to destroy our men as they marched through the town but all the damage that they done was to kill one horse in the 18th we received orders to go down below Jackson and tare up the railroad which we tore up the night of the 18th and the 19th for 10 miles then the 20h we went back to Jackson and the 21st we started for Vicksburge which took us four days we are now camped on a large flat or bottem just below town the men are once more in their tents and everything looks more and more like living. I was up to the 29th yesterday and Geott and I celebrated the 4th and fall of Vicksburg and a good time we had too I just got a letter from are folks and you also stateing that you were going to send some things to Geott and I think all that I can think of at present write some and give my love to all whom it may concern

Yours truly

George George

Brasheat City, La.
Feb. 15th 165

Dear Brother

I received yours of Feb 1st stating the loss of that money there shurely was no mistake about my puting the money for I put it in with my own hands and put it in the office myself so the mistake could not have been in the squad that I am in neither would I imagine that our regt post master could have taken it there has been considerable money lost and a good many suppersions made about the mail carrier who handles the mail over after it leaves the regt there are one from our regt and one from the 33rd Ill Well the money is gone and I do not know where to look will send some more by express in a few days will it if expressed to Waterotwn let me know in your next. There is not much a going on here at present it is rumored here that there is an expedition under General Steel going up the leach and so on to Texas the same trip that we started on last Winter just before we went to Texas. There is some stir about peace here all are very anxious to get home and snap at the first word of peace and for my part I hope that peace may be declared before this reaches you the health of the regt is pretty good at present a good many casses of small pox loss one man and there are several cases more of it in our regt. David has got his hand in pretty good stile and they play first rate he is well as also is Henry well there is no news here I wrote it all to you a day or two ago. I am well

Write soon and remember me as

George

My love to all G. T. P.

WILLIAM L. WILLARD

Camp Barstow, Janesville, Wis.
Feb. 25th, 1862

Dear Uncle Frank:

I have for a long time been waiting for you to write, but guessing that if I continued waiting no communication would ever pass between us, i commenced to write.

I belong to one of the best companys on the grounds it being the most free of engineers, there being only eight or ten. Our officers are the best kind of men besides. The company is lettered "I" in the 2nd Battalion and the Cols. body guard so you see we have the best position in the whole regiment. Our Col. has been to Washington most three weeks conferring with the Secretary of War in relation to this regiment. He is expected back tomorrow. Then we shall know our destination. Our arms are already on the way and we are well clothed and equipped and ready for a start. We drill three hours a day and even for such a short time we get completely tired out for it is hard marching in the snow.

Our horses are being bought all the while, as there is only 200 in camp. Tommy Brayton has enlisted in a company adjoining ours so I see him often.

Give my love to Aunt Cornelia and Effie and reserve a share for yourself.

If I can get a furlough I shall make you a short visit.

Your Affectionate Nephew
William

P.S. Direct your letters to Camp Barstow (care Capt. Conkey) Janesville, Wis.

Janesville, Wis. March 7th, '62

Dear Uncle Frank:

I received your letter a few days since and take this, the first opportunity of answering it. I thank you for the paper you sent me. Its contents were greedily read by the boys. Our Captain intends to take the whole company back to Appleton at once, then I shall on my return visit you. We should probably go just before we leave the state (If we ever do.)

Last night about 12m. the Ordily came around calling "Fall out with sabres on, every man." Of course we wondered as to what was the matter, but we were dressed and in line in five minutes. In marching we joined two other Companies. We then marched up to and surrounded the Oshkosh Company. We then heard what was the matter. It seems that most all of the men in said company have been dissatisfied because they were not paid off. Several of them had been taken to the guard house from insubordination and last night they went so far as to declare they would take the Lieut. Colonel's life. Col. White attempted to arrest them, but the whole company turned out declaring they would fight before any of their comrads should be taken. So Col. White concluded to wait till they were asleep. When we arrived at the quarters of the Co. they would allow no one to enter. They however delivered themselves up and were taken the guard house; numbering eight and they were all drunk. The Guards had a nice time getting them there though, as they fought like tigers. After this twelve more taken in the city and confined. The Boys were greatly excited all the time and they term it the "Battle of Camp Barstow." Some of the men go this morning from tent to tent making out a list of the killed and wounded.

It is getting so dark I can not trace the lines so I must stop. Give my love to Aunt Cornelia, Grandmother and Uncle Jeb's folks.

Yours truly,

William

Camp Little Rock, Ark.
Jany. 11th, 1865

Dear Uncle and Aunt:

Your letter of Nov. 21st was gladly received by me and although I have been backsward about answering it I think the old saying "Better late than never" will apply in this case.

My health is good if an except a slight attack of bronchitis which complaint has troubled me every winter that I have been in the service. As I am exposed more or less all of the time, I do not doctor for it much. Gen'l Reynolds, who succeeded Gen. Steele in command here, is very much liked; being as strict with the officers as with the men. Heretofore when a soldier got drunk he was shut up in the guard house two or three days, and officer in the same fix were allowed to go yelling through the streets or politely requested to go their quarters. Gen'l. Reynolds treats them all alike. There is considerable complaint about the allowance of rations and many soldiers are obliged to buy provisions to live upon. Three thousand bushels of potatoes were lately thrown into the Arkansas having rotted. They should have been given to the soldiers as a prevention of scurvy an ailment very common among the western troops. I advise you not to give a great amount of money to the U. S. Sanitary Commission. No stores of the kind have been ever been distributed in this Dept. to any soldiers outside of the hospitals. It is a burning shame to have the Surgeons, Clerks and Stewards get fat on these stores when they properly belong to the soldiers in the field. Inmates of hospitals do not need Sanitary Stores as government makes ample provisions. The 29th Wis. left here before your letter was received. I only saw Tom Brayton, being particularly busy at that time.

I think, Aunt Cornelia, that my chances in Aztalan " are growing in less." And I don't care and shall go into some backwoods the next time and try my fortune there.

Capt. Comskey formerly of this company has been dismissed. The service and 1st Lt. Cavert has resigned and gone home. 2nd Lieut Bannister is in command. There is a chance for me , which I was offered yesterday by the Major Commd. of Regt. but I politely refused and the company will have to take up with one duty sergeant and a corporal for Lieutenants. I can have an easier time and make more money in my present position than in any other.

My regards to any enquiring friends. Please excuse this hastily written letter and kiss the children,

From your Affectionate Nephew
W. L. Willard