

Campaigning with the First Minnesota

A Civil War Diary

Edited by Hazel C. Wolf

ISAAC LYMAN TAYLOR was teaching school in Fulton County, Illinois, when the news of the fall of Fort Sumter raced through the land and sent governors speeding to telegraph offices to offer President Lincoln regiments for use in suppressing the rebellion. In Washington, Minnesota's governor, Alexander Ramsey, hurried to the war department to urge Secretary Simon Cameron to accept a thousand Minnesotans; in St. Paul, Lieutenant Governor Ignatius Donnelly called for a regiment of ten companies;¹ in western Illinois young "Ike" Taylor wrestled with the question of immediate enlistment.

Born at Rowe in Franklin County, Massachusetts, on January 23, 1837, Isaac Taylor was the fourth of Alvira Johnson and Jonathan Hastings Taylor's thirteen children. The Taylors lived in Lawrence County, New York, from 1840 until the early 1850's. Then the father journeyed to Illinois, selected a farm in Fulton County, and arranged for the completion of a house before taking his family to the new location. When they arrived in May, 1853, however, their house was far from finished — so far, in fact, that Jonathan set out to find a temporary shelter for his household.² Displaying traditional pioneer hospitality, the neighbor from whom he had purchased the land invited the Taylors to share his roof.

In later years the young Taylors declared that they had never enjoyed themselves so much as they did while living with their new

¹ For a discussion of Minnesota's tender of troops for service in the Civil War, see William W. Folwell, *A History of Minnesota*, 2:76-79 (St. Paul, 1924).

² Dates and other items of information about the Taylor family are drawn from a list prepared by Mrs. Jonathan H. Taylor on October 18, 1867, now among the Taylor Papers in the possession of Miss Emma R. Taylor of Avon, Illinois, a niece of Isaac and Henry. Unless otherwise designated, the letters cited hereafter are in this collection. With the Taylor Papers also is an issue of the *Cass County Democrat* of Harrisonville, Missouri, for December 26, 1907, which contains some family data. Although the Taylor farm was in Fulton County, the family received mail through the post office at Prairie City in McDonough County. See *post*, p. 20.

neighbor in Illinois. Since both families were large, there was not nearly room enough for all to sit at table for meals. Hence the men and boys lined up around the room, while the women and girls occupied what chairs there were. At night the men piled quilts and comforters on the floor and the women occupied the family sleeping quarters in the loft. The children of both families viewed with regret the Taylors' removal to their own home.³

Isaac spent his childhood and young manhood on the Illinois prairie. He helped with the farming, joined in community outings, attended "singing school" and church gatherings, and altogether enjoyed the companionship of the large family which by 1849 numbered nine boys and three girls. Isaac's favorite from among them all was Patrick Henry, who was just one year his junior and was known to the family as "Henry" or "P. H."

Isaac and Henry Taylor enjoyed educational advantages unusual for Midwestern farm boys in the nineteenth century. Both were graduated from an academy at Prairie City in McDonough County, Illinois, and both continued their studies in Burlington University, a school established by the Baptist church in Burlington, Iowa. At eighteen, Isaac entered the advanced class of the "shorter scientific course" offered by the university's "gentlemen's department." He was among the first students admitted to the school, which opened in 1854, attending during parts of 1855, 1856, and 1858. Upon completing his work, he returned to Fulton County to teach in Lee Township. Henry attended Burlington University during parts of 1858 and 1859. When he finished his course in the latter year, he removed to Belle Prairie on the upper Mississippi in Morrison County, Minnesota, teaching there and in the near-by settlements of Bellevue and Little Falls before the outbreak of the Civil War.⁴

³ Interview with Miss Taylor, September 12, 1943.

⁴ For an account of Burlington University, which was established by the Iowa Baptist State Association, see Augustine M. Antrobus, *History of Des Moines County, Iowa*, 1:178-180 (Chicago, 1915). Isaac Taylor's name appears among those of students listed in the school's second and third *Annual Catalogs*, for the years 1855-56 and 1856-57. In addition to teaching in Minnesota, Henry made a trip to the Red River settlements in the summer of 1860. Emma ——— to Isaac Taylor, April 16, 1858; A. Judson Taylor to Sarah Taylor, September 25, 1859; *Little Falls Daily Transcript*, August 17, 1906; *Cass County Democrat*, December 26, 1907.

Henry's removal to Minnesota was only one in a long chain of events which eventually resulted in both his and Isaac's identification with the First Minnesota Volunteer Infantry. About thirty years earlier his father's sister, Elizabeth Taylor, had left the family home in the East to teach in the mission school at Mackinac. There she had married another mission teacher, Frederick Ayer. Together they taught at several missions and in 1849 established a school for the Chippewa at Belle Prairie. Hence the Taylor children had heard much of Minnesota and of "Aunt Ayer," who traveled east to procure funds and teachers and solicited both among her relatives. Taylors both east and west had responded with contributions of money and school furnishings and several removed to Belle Prairie to participate in the project. Before Henry went, Mrs. Lucy Taylor Hamilton, a widowed sister of Mrs. Ayer and Jonathan Taylor, left Vermont and, with her son Samuel, removed to Belle Prairie. Near the Ayer establishment Samuel farmed, while his mother managed a boardinghouse for mission teachers. Shortly thereafter, young Jonathan, second of the Taylor boys, left his Illinois home for Minnesota. There he and a Massachusetts cousin, Edward Taylor, engaged in farming. Hence, when Henry joined Edward's household in 1859 he found himself a member of a sizeable community of relatives.⁵ During the months that followed the brothers corresponded regularly. Henry remained in Minnesota until he enlisted in 1861.

A few days after President Lincoln's call for troops, Governor Ramsey announced that his were the first men accepted; Donnelly watched the enlistment rolls grow as war meetings in St. Paul, Minneapolis, Winona, Stillwater, Faribault, Red Wing, Mankato, and other places roused the state's young men; Isaac Taylor sought his brother Henry's advice on joining the army. Hence, while in late April the initial companies of the First Minnesota assembled at old Fort Snelling and organized for duty in the volunteer service of the United States, the two Taylors, destined for service with the regi-

⁵ "Frederick Ayer, Teacher and Missionary to the Ojibway Indians," in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 6:430-436. Members of the Ayer and Taylor families who were living at Belle Prairie in 1860 are listed in the population schedules of the manuscript census of Morrison County for that year, in the custody of the Minnesota Historical Society.

ment, discussed by mail the family and personal problems involved in their enrollment.⁶

During the early weeks of the war, the First Minnesota rapidly filled its ranks. The state supplied clothing, guns, and camping facilities. The men encamped and drilled at Fort Snelling, and in May some of them began garrison duty in the frontier forts to release the regular army detachments for service near Washington. Members of the regiment, however, made known their disappointment at the prospect of being denied service in the South. Approving their preference, Governor Ramsey set about getting the First Minnesota transferred to the national Capital.

In the meantime Isaac and Henry Taylor awaited an opportunity to join some military company. On May 4, Henry, still at Belle Prairie, wrote to Isaac, at home in Illinois, "Yours of the 23^d ult. came to hand a few minutes since. We are not sufficient in no.s here to form a military co. or I, too, should enlist to try what *I* could do for the 'Stars & Stripes' of which I hope to be ever proud. If you can do anything—go ahead. . . . Some from here have gone 20 miles to enlist & then could not from the fact that Min. has more ready now than have been called for. If I am wanted by & bye I shall go, I think, if my eye don't prevent."

In a childhood accident, Henry had lost the sight of one eye, but despite this handicap he found an opportunity to enlist. On a journey from Little Falls to St. Cloud, he met Anson Northup, who was soliciting enlistments for the First Minnesota. This was a chance for which Henry had not even hoped. Without further ado he signed up, settled what affairs he could at Belle Prairie, left others to his brother Jonathan, resigned his school at Little Falls, and reported at Fort Snelling. From there, ten days later, he notified his family in Illinois of his enlistment and whereabouts.⁷

Still Isaac had taken no action. He remained at home while Henry wrote of camping and drilling at Fort Snelling, of departing

⁶ P. H. to Isaac Taylor, May 4, 1861. On the organization of the First Minnesota Volunteer Infantry, see *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars*, 1:1-7, 79, 2:1-9, 13-16, 19 (St. Paul, 1891, 1899); *History of the First Regiment Minnesota Volunteer Infantry*, 1-31 (Stillwater, 1916); Folwell, *Minnesota*, 2:79-83.

⁷ The letter is dated May 31, 1861. See also *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars*, 1:57.

for Fort Ripley, and finally, after the regiment was assigned to service in the South, of leaving for Washington. Shortly thereafter Isaac packed his trunk and left to take his brother's teaching position in Minnesota. His aunts and cousins welcomed him as he established himself in the home of "Aunt Hamilton."⁸

But Isaac was not content. All around him was talk of the war; Henry's letters only made him more restless. Before long he was sure he could not go back to a prosaic schoolroom. On August 21, therefore, he went to Fort Snelling and enlisted in Company E of the First Minnesota, the same unit that Henry had joined three months earlier. On September 12, with thirty-one other recruits in charge of Major Alexander Wilkin of the Second Minnesota, he started on the four-day journey to Washington.⁹

Upon arriving in the Capital, Isaac did a bit of sight-seeing. "The whole country for miles around is white with tents," he wrote home. "I went up on the Capitol this afternoon & had a fine view of Arlington highths & the Federal camps on the other side of the Potomac. I also took a squint at the 'Secesh' through a telescope. I saw distinctly the Rebel pickets on Munson's Hill beyond Arlington Highths I could see horses tied to trees & the Seceshers walking about as crack as though they were not going to be awfully licked one of these days."¹⁰ From Washington the recruits went to join the regiment at Camp Stone, thirty-five miles northwest of Washington, where the First Minnesota had been posted with other regiments to check possible Confederate movements above the Capital.

During eighteen months of his Civil War service, Isaac kept the diary published herewith. He did not begin the first volume, however, until New Year's Day of 1862. Before his record opens, the First Minnesota participated in at least two major engagements—

⁸ P. H. Taylor to his family, May 31, June 21, 1861; to Sarah Taylor, August 27, 1863. All the Taylor boys wrote to Sarah, their eldest sister, even more frequently than they did to their parents. The letters addressed to her have been a valuable source of information in the editing of the diary.

⁹ Isaac to Sarah Taylor, September 16, 1861; Mrs. Elizabeth T. Ayer to Jonathan Taylor, Sr., October 28, 1861; *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars*, 1:57; *St. Paul Pioneer and Democrat*, September 12, 13, 1861; First Minnesota Volunteer Infantry, "Annual Report," 1861, Minnesota Adjutant General's Archives, in the custody of the Minnesota Historical Society.

¹⁰ Isaac to Sarah Taylor, September 16, 1861.

the disastrous defeats at Bull Run and at Ball's Bluff. Henry took part in the former and both boys participated in the latter. Although their regiment was not among the forces half slaughtered at Ball's Bluff, it stood ready to assist from Edward's Ferry, four miles below. After the campaign Isaac wrote to his brother Jonathan: "We had a pretty tough time of it. It rained considerable & my feet were wet nearly the entire three days we staid in Va. In addition to the wet & cold we had to pole boats all one night as tight as we could jump into it in order to get between 6 & 8 thousand men out of the clutches of the Secesh."¹¹

After the Edward's Ferry episode, the First Minnesota returned to its old camp between Poolesville and Edward's Ferry. Camp Stone, named for General Charles P. Stone, who commanded the division to which the Minnesota regiment was attached, was in one of the most beautiful sections of Maryland. There even Southern sympathizers were kind and friendly to Union soldiers. The federal government provided clothing, pay came regularly, and a sutler arrived. The men built comfortable living quarters for the approaching winter, erected cookshacks and bake ovens, drew rations of flour instead of hardtack, and bought corn to improve and vary their fare. There was plenty of food and very little illness.

Camp routine included daily drills and picket duty along the Potomac. Three companies at a time went out on guard, the men putting their knapsacks with two day's rations in a wagon and marching to Edward's Ferry, headquarters for all guards. There they were distributed among posts about half a mile apart, six or seven men at a place. At the Ferry, besides the guard, twenty or thirty reserves would remain. In most places the river was only about a quarter of a mile wide and trees and bushes on either side sheltered pickets from the foe. Since the Confederates performed similar service across the river, loyalists and rebels sometimes conversed across the stream and even took pot shots at one another. The regiment

¹¹ Isaac to Jonathan Taylor, Jr., October 29, 1861; P. H. to Sarah Taylor, October 26, 1861. For accounts of the First Minnesota's participation in the battles of Bull Run and Ball's Bluff, see *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars*, 1:8-16, 2:48. A first-hand description of the regiment's experiences at Bull Run is to be found in letters written by Charles E. Goddard to his mother, July 30, August 12, September 6, 1861, in the Orrin F. Smith Papers, in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society.

remained at Camp Stone from late October of 1861 until the opening of the Shenandoah Valley campaign on February 25, 1862.¹²

The diary herewith presented is contained in three closely written, leather-bound volumes, giving Isaac Taylor's detailed recital of his life in the Union Army from January 1, 1862, until his death at Gettysburg on July 2, 1863. Attempts to locate an earlier diary, which Henry believed his brother kept, have thus far proved futile. The fact that the diaries are numbered 1, 2, and 3, however, seems to indicate that Isaac did not begin his day-by-day record until several months after his enlistment. The three available volumes are in the possession of the diarist's nephew and namesake, Mr. Isaac L. Taylor of Elmwood, Illinois, who placed them at the disposal of the editor and gave the Minnesota Historical Society permission to copy and publish them. A copy of the diary, made by Mary Taylor, is owned by her daughter, Mrs. Ana King Dubach of Kansas City.¹³

Preserved with the diaries are a number of mementos, each recalling an interest or an incident in the soldier's life. Two stained and yellowed clippings, evidently from church publications, detail respectively the provisions of the 1863 Conscription Act and the naval strength of the Union in western waters. A clipping from a Philadelphia paper gives the 1861 report of the secretary of war. A tintype of an attractive girl was found by Isaac on the battlefield of Fredericksburg. He told Henry that he had the girl's name and address and that he might write to her some time to "let her know where she was." Another tintype, a picture of a small child, was also probably lost by a soldier. A third picture is a Matthew Brady photograph of Lieutenant James H. Shepley of Isaac's company. In the last diary several leaves and flowers have been pressed and on one page a flattened flower has each petal labelled with a letter to spell out "From My Maryland." The date, June 27, 1863, just five days before Isaac's death, is worked into the center. A small map of the United States, creased and worn, bears the endorsement of both Isaac and Henry.¹⁴

¹² *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars*, 1:13, 16; *History of the First Minnesota*, 59-65, 80-83.

¹³ P. H. to Sarah Taylor, August 27, 1863. A diary kept by Henry is mentioned in his correspondence with his family, but it has not been located.

¹⁴ P. H. to Sarah Taylor, August 27, September 26, 1863.

Six of the nine Taylor boys served with the Union forces in the Civil War. The family agreed that Russell, the eldest, must remain at home to work on the farm. Jonathan, the second son, served with the Second Minnesota Battery of Light Artillery from March 21, 1862, to August 27, 1863. On December 20, 1861, Judson joined Company K of the Eleventh Illinois Cavalry. He became a corporal before his death at Vicksburg on December 1, 1864. Danford became a second lieutenant in Company D of the Twelfth Illinois Cavalry, and served from January 1, 1862, until the end of the war. Samuel, father of the present owner of the diary and of Miss Emma R. Taylor, served with the 102nd Illinois Infantry from August 21, 1862, until June 6, 1865.¹⁵ The members of the present generation of the Taylor family have been gracious, kind, and helpful in assisting the editor to gather information about the Taylor Diary and the people with whose lives it deals. Miss Taylor has been particularly tireless in searching out material.

Although Isaac Taylor's Civil War diary has never before been published, it was used freely by Lieutenant William Lochren of Company E, who contributed the "Narrative of the First Regiment" to the history of *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars* published in 1890. Incidentally, Lochren served on the board of commissioners who planned the volume. In an introductory paragraph Lochren notes that he "received great aid in preparing this work . . . from the full and well-written diary kept by Isaac L. Taylor of Company E, up to the morning of the day on which he was killed in the charge of the regiment at Gettysburg, supplemented from that time by his brother, Capt. P. H. Taylor." Some passages in the printed narrative are almost direct quotations from the diary. The copy made by Mary Taylor may have been intended for Lochren's use, for in a letter of September 26, 1863, to his sister Sarah, Henry warned her to "Tell Mary if Isaac says anything disrespectful of . . . *Lieut.* Lochren to *omit* it as he will *review* it." It seems likely that Lochren obtained one set of the little books from Henry, who re-enlisted and

¹⁵ *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars*, 1:668; Adjutant-General of the State of Illinois, *Reports for the Years 1861-66*, 5:601, 8:316, 343 (Springfield, 1901); P. H. Taylor to his parents, April 4, 1865.

taught for a time after the war in the post school located at Fort Snelling.¹⁶

In the editing of the diary, the original form has been closely followed. Taylor's spelling, capitalization, and punctuation have been reproduced throughout. Whenever possible, the editor has supplied the full names of people mentioned in the diary, using brackets to indicate the portions supplied. In most of his entries, the author used ditto marks to indicate the month; in the interest of readability, the months in such cases have been supplied in brackets. Most of the entries consist of single paragraphs. The author, however, frequently included marginal notations—evidently afterthoughts added as he reread his remarks. Such notations have been copied as separate paragraphs at the ends of the entries with which they appear. Several lists appearing on the final pages of the manuscript volumes have been omitted from the published work. There Isaac enumerated articles of clothing and supplies issued to him and items purchased from the sutler, recorded some personal accounts, listed relatives and friends in various army units, and kept a record of his correspondents, usually mentioning by initials only those to whom he wrote or from whom he received letters.

¹⁶ *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars*, 1:1. After the expiration of his three-year term of enlistment, Henry spent ten months as a civilian at Belle Prairie. On March 4, 1865, he re-enlisted with the recently established Veteran Reserve Corps, an organization of volunteers who had seen at least two years of service. A former colonel of the First Minnesota, George N. Morgan, was the immediate superior who assigned Henry to the teaching post at Fort Snelling. For conducting classes six hours a day for five days a week he received, in addition to his regular pay of sixteen dollars a month, twenty cents a week for each of his forty-four pupils. He had no other duties and enjoyed considerable freedom. Shortly before the close of the war he received his commission as captain. When he was mustered out in 1866, Henry returned to Fulton County, Illinois, and in the following year he removed to the vicinity of Harrisonville, Missouri, where he engaged in farming and teaching, helped to organize an insurance company, and was elected associate judge of the county court. He died in 1907. See P. H. to Sarah Taylor, March 16, April 4, 17, December 22, 1864; to his parents, March 27, April 4, 1865; *Cass County Democrat*, December 26, 1907; undated clippings, including one from the *National Tribune* of Washington, D. C., Taylor Papers; *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, series 1, vol. 42, pt. 3, p. 728. The latter work, a set of 133 volumes published by the war department between 1880 and 1902, will be cited hereafter as *Official Records*.

THE DIARY OF ISAAC LYMAN TAYLOR,
JANUARY 1, 1862-JULY 2, 1863

Diary No. 1

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

MR. SECESH;

Please forward this diary to J. H. Taylor, Prairie City, McDonough Co., Illinois. By so doing you will exhibit your magnanimity, accommodativeness & divers other virtues, besides conferring no small favor on a defunct individual.

Yours truly,

I. L. TAYLOR

High Private of Co. E

1st. Reg. Minn. Vol.

CAMP STONE, MD. Jan. 1st. 1862

Wed. Jan. 1st. 1862. At Camp Stone, H'd Quarters of 1st. Reg. Minn. Vols., Montgomery Co., Md., two miles from Edward's Ferry. A regular Indian summer day. The New Year smiles so bewitchingly & bounds so gleefully into the arena of time, that I suspect he has not yet heard of our civil dissension nor seen the black clouds that hang over the political prospects of the country which he visits. Building log camps for winter quarters.

Went on picket at Edward's Ferry this evening.

Thur. Jan. 2d. On picket at Edward's Ferry. Cool & strong wind last night. Pleasant during the day though somewhat cool. The Secesh are throwing up a new earth-work upriver from Leesburg & farther back than their work below Leesburg. They have been as busy as bees all day throwing up their dirt piles in order to give us a warm reception when we make them a visit.

Fri. [January] 3d. Pretty cold breeze last night. Cool throughout the day. Flag of truce crossed the river twice this A.M., borne by a Lieut. of Mass. 15th., accompanied by four Min. boys of Co. E, as boatmen. The Lieut. brought back a bundle of papers & letters. The rebel officers proposed to release, unconditionally, two prisoners wounded at Ball's Bluff. A secesh Lieut. says to one of our boys, "Right smart o' cold here — a heap colder than in Mississippi." Storming this evening — half way between snow & rain Ground getting white.

Sat. Jan. 4th. Snowed a little early this morning. $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch

snow. Relieved by Co. G this A.M. The coldest day we have had this winter. The cold wind gives a perceptible tingle to a fellows unprotected ear. Sa[u]nders' Co. of Sharp-Shooters took passage on canal for Hancock, 97 miles up river.¹⁷

Sun. [January] 5th. Pretty cool though tolerably warm at midday. In camp all day reading & writing. Charles S[c]heffer, Sec'y of Treasury for Min. & allotment agent, called on business this A.M.¹⁸ Snowing this evening.

Mon. [January] 6th. About 1½ inches snow this morning. Cool weather. Went to Poole[s]ville this A.M. Brig. Gen. [Willis A.] Gorman is now in command of this division, Gen. [Charles P.] Stone having gone to Washington.¹⁹ Potomac frozen over in places to day.

Wed. Jan. 8th. Drill both in A.M. & P.M. Cool & pleasant. Thawing at M. Drizzling rain this evening. Subscribed for stencil plate.

Thur. [January] 9 Ground is icy this morning & weather more moderate than last evening. Cloudy in A.M. Clear & warm & very muddy in P.M. Several boats, among them two steam tugs, arrived at Ed's Ferry from below. No drill Raining moderately this evening.

Fri. [January] 10 Rained considerably last night. Streams swollen. Very muddy. Rather moderate. No drill but dress parade. B. B. Aldrich appointed corporal vice. O. D. Thatcher, reduced to the ranks (upon recommendation of his Co. commander) by order of Col. [Napoleon J. T.] Dana.²⁰

¹⁷ Captain John Saunders was the officer in charge of the First Company of Massachusetts Sharpshooters. See *Official Records*, series 1, vol. 19, pt. 1, p. 173. The canal was the Chesapeake and Ohio, which is located on a map in James Truslow Adams, ed., *Atlas of American History*, 107 (New York, 1943).

¹⁸ Scheffer was state treasurer of Minnesota from 1860 to 1868. His work on behalf of the "Allotment Agency" is described in his "Annual Report" for 1862. The allotment system was established under a federal law of July 22, 1861, which provided that the "family of a volunteer may draw such portions of his pay as he may request." United States, *Statutes at Large*, 12 : 271; Minnesota, *Executive Documents*, 1862, p. 608.

¹⁹ Gorman, who had served as governor of Minnesota Territory, entered the Civil War as colonel of the First Minnesota. Stone went to Washington early in 1862 to testify before the Congressional joint committee on the conduct of the war, which was investigating the causes of the Union disaster at Ball's Bluff. *Dictionary of American Biography*, 7:435, 18:72; T. Harry Williams, *Lincoln and the Radicals*, 94 (Madison, Wisconsin, 1941).

²⁰ Dana, a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, entered the volunteer service as colonel of the First Minnesota on October 2, 1861. He became a brigadier general in the following February. For a sketch of his career, see the *Dictionary of American Biography*, 5:58. Unless otherwise indicated, Taylor's statements about members of the First Minnesota are accurate; their names and service records are listed on the roster in *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars*, 1:49-66.

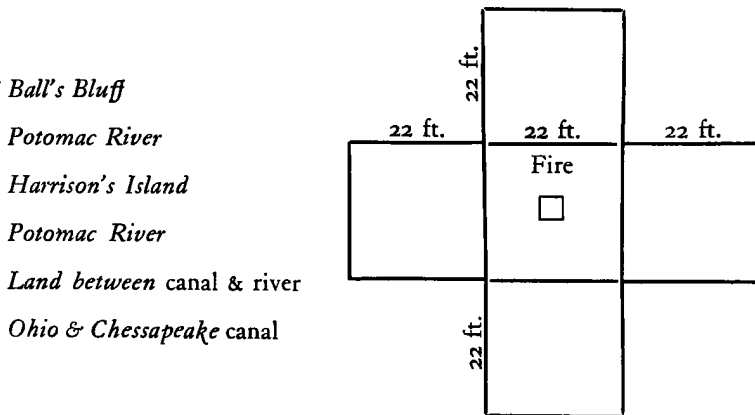
Sat [January] 11th. Cloudy & moderate weather. Co. drill in A.M. A slight drizzle & no drill in P.M. Col. [Cyrus] Aldrich, M[ember of] C[ongress] (Rep[resenta]tive) in camp.²¹ Report says Col. Dana is appointed Brig. Gen. He will make a good one.

Sun. Jan. 12th. Cloudy in A.M. Clear in P.M. Quite warm. On guard. It mists a little this evening & threatens a storm. Plenty of mud. Officers of Van Allen's cavalry & Min. 1st., having a spree to night.²² A number in the condition expressed by "*tight*." Officers are *commonly* supposed to set an *example* for the privates E. L. Nason, Co. D, on guard for eating pankakes at roll-call last night. Put on by order of W^m Harmon, Orderly Serg. of Co. D. Balloon reconnaissance at Ed's Ferry in A.M. Balloon visible from Camp Stone.²³

Mon. [January] 13 No drill in A.M. Co. E went on picket at Conrad's Ferry in P.M.²⁴ Weather quite cool. Rather muddy.

Tues. [January] 14 On picket opposite Ball's Bluff. About 2 inches snow fell last night. Cold wind & cloudy with occasional sprinkles of snow.

Wed. Jan. 15 Snowed & sleeted moderately nearly the whole night. A crust on the snow that is ruinous to shoeleather. Paid a visit to a "block-house," opposite the battle ground of Ball's Bluff, built by Mass. 15th. It is ten feet high (inside) with covering (supposed to be bomb-proof) composed of heavy logs covered with earth. The following diagram exhibits its dimensions upon the ground.



²¹ Aldrich was a representative in Congress from Minnesota from 1859 to 1863.

²² The Third New York Cavalry was known as Van Allen's. *Official Records*, series 1, vol. 5, p. 330.

One row of loop holes for musketry—72 in all. A small steam tug passed up the canal this P.M. Rather "bilious" weather, sleeting greater part of the day. Relieved by Co. D, at 8 P.M. & marched back to camp as hungry as a bear, provisions having "gone dry" so that scarcely anything remained for dinner & that was devoured before I returned from inspection of the "block house." At camp found Oscar Sears Co. E, & several other returned prisoners from Richmond, Va. They were captured at Bull Run.

Thur. Jan. 16 Drilling in guard duty in A.M. Called out in P.M. to listen to reading of Army Regulations. Thawing.

Fri. [January] 17 Quite warm & pleasant winter weather. The officer of the guard of N.Y. 34th. arrested last night by Col. Dana (Com'g brigade) for allowing his guard to go to their quarters to sleep instead of remaining at guard-house. G'd drill in A.M. Comp. & guard drill in P.M. We hear to night that Gen. Grant is in full march down the Missi[ssi]ppi & we hope soon to hear that Columbus is taken & the rebels ska-dad-dle-ing in all parts of the west.²⁵ I hope we are now prepared for *active* operations in the *West* if not on the *Potomac* May the Lord grant that Gen. Grant may grant the Secesh a sound thrashing.

Sat. Jan. 18. Very muddy. No drill. Reading, cleaning up for inspection &c.

Sun. [January] 19 Rained considerably last night & small pools of water made intrusive visit to our camp, owing to defective banking. So wet & drizzly that inspection & dress parade are omitted.

Victory at Mill Spring[s] Kentucky.

²⁵ For a study of the use of balloons in the Civil War, see F. Stansbury Hayden, *Aeronautics in the Union and Confederate Armies* (Baltimore, 1941). Thaddeus S. Lowe was chief of the Union Army's aeronautic section. While serving with the Army of the Potomac, he added his aerial observations to reconnaissance reports. *Dictionary of American Biography*, 11:452; *Official Records*, series 3, vol. 1, p. 283.

²⁴ Conrad's Ferry was on the Maryland side of the Potomac and Ball's Bluff was on the Virginia side. Both were about four miles above Edward's Ferry and were near Leesburg, the Confederate headquarters.

²⁵ The Confederate forces fortified Columbus, Kentucky, after they failed to hold the line of the Ohio River in 1861. In January, 1862, General George B. McClellan ordered Grant to make demonstrations to discourage any Confederate attempt to send reinforcements from Columbus, Fort Henry, or Fort Donelson to Bowling Green. Under Grant's direction, Union forces threatened Columbus and the Tennessee River route, thus contributing to General George H. Thomas' expulsion of the Confederates from Kentucky after the victory at Mill Springs. See James Truslow Adams, ed., *Dictionary of American History*, 3:404, 419; Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 1:233 (New York, 1895). The battles and movements of troops mentioned by Taylor can be followed on a series of Civil War maps in the *Atlas of American History*, 123-136, and on a map in the *Encyclopedia Americana*, 29:210.

Mon. [January] 20 Cloudy with occasional drizzle throughout the day. Any quantity of mud & no drill.

Tues. [January] 21 Cloudy with occasional sprinkles of snow. Mud increasing & no drill. Nothing to do but read & attend roll-call

Wed. [January] 22 Weather cloudy & moderate. The mud is "Awful to contemplate." No drill except dress parade. Glorious news from "Old Kentuck." [Felix K.] Zollicoffer killed & his whole army routed. Hurrah! for the boys who "faced the music" & won the victory. Three cheers for the Min. 2d.! Gens. [George H.] Thomas & [Albin] Sherffe [Schoepf] com'g Federal forces.²⁶ Rhode Island battery fires 34 guns in honor of the victory. Guard drill.

Thur. Jan. 23 Last night's cold stiffened the mud a little. Guard drill. It is reported that we are to move from this camp within a few days. Kentucky victory confirmed.

Fri. [January] 24 Comp. drill & plenty of mud. Weather moderate.

Sat. [January] 25 On guard. Awful muddy. Froze quite solid during the night. Cloudy most of the day.

Sun. [January] 26 A clear, pleasant day. Thawing slightly in middle of the day. Too muddy for dress parade.

Mon. [January] 27 Froze quite solid last night. Comp. drill in A.M. No drill in P.M. on account of mud. Hope to hear something definite from [Ambrose E.] Burnside's Expedition by to night's mail.²⁷ Played my first game of chess.

Tues. [January] 28 Came on picket at Ed's Ferry this morning. Rained moderately all A.M. Cloudy all day & very dark at night. Comfortably warm.

Wed. [January] 29 Stood guard 1¼ hours last night. Cloudy all day. Gen. Stone went down the canal on a steam tug at 11 P.M. last night.²⁸ B—b—a—E—F—t—c—t—P—. T—u—w—.

Thur. Jan. 30 Mich. 7th. boys visited the island just below here last

²⁶ Zollicoffer, who was second in command of the Confederate forces at Mill Springs, had been sent to Kentucky to check Union tendencies there. See *Dictionary of American Biography*, 20:659. For an account of the Second Minnesota at Mill Springs, see *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars*, 1:82-85. General Schoepf's part in the battle is described in Robert Johnson and Clarence Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 1:392 (New York, 1884-87).

²⁷ In late January Burnside, with a fleet of light-draft vessels, was approaching Roanoke Island through Hatteras Inlet. He was planning to establish lodgments along the coast of the Southern states in order to threaten interior lines of transportation in the rear of the Confederate Army concentrating in Virginia. *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 1:660-670.

²⁸ Stone was on his way to Washington for a second appearance before the committee

night in a row boat. No traces of Secesh pickets on the island. Drizzling a good portion of last night. Stood guard $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours last night Reading, playing chess &c. Cloudy day & warm. F—h—t—o—a—s—i—w—a—E—F—. Lieut Col. Stephen Miller came up from Washington on the canal.²⁹ He is yet quite fe[e]ble—has been sick a long time at Harrisburg, Pa.

Fri. [January] 31 Dark & cloudy last night though very good weather for standing guard. Tolerably clear this morning but cloudy most of the day. Relieved at M. by Co. D. Awful muddy between camp & Ferry. Co. E paid in P.M. by Maj. Bannister Recd \$26.00 or 2 months pay

Sat. Feb. 1st. Considerable beer circulating in camp Something like a dozen soldiers of N.Y. 2d. in guard house of Min. 1st., said to be deserters. Two & a half inches of snow this morning. Growing cold to night.

Sun. [February] 2 The mud this morning sufficiently frozen to bear a footman. Thawing & muddy throughout the day. In camp reading &c.

Mon [February] 3d. Snowing briskly this morning. Snowed a good part of the day. 4 inches snow—the most we have had at any time this winter. Freezing a little. “Gen. Dana” serenaded to night by band of Min. 1st. He made a brief speech in which he said it was true that he had recd. a telegram announcing his confirmation, by the Senate, as Brig. Gen. Snowing late this evening.

Tues. Feb. 4 Four or five inches snow this morning Ground frozen but weather moderate. Thawing a little in middle of the day. Sky nearly clear. Went to Poolville & made some purchases. Had a first-rate dinner at Lamb’s eating-house for which I paid a first-rate price— $37\frac{1}{2}$ cents. Had coffee “*as is coffee*” Gen. Gorman treats the enemy to a few shells.

Wed. [February] 5 Pretty cold last night Ground solid this morning. Thawed a trifle. Dress parade to day at which, findings of a court martial were read. Several of Co. F sentenced to forfeit one month’s pay & perform guard duty from 8 to thirty days. Crimes, stealing sutler stores & allowing other[s] to take stores over which they were standing sentry. Cannonading at Ed’s Ferry said to be the shelling of a Secesh observatory

on the conduct of the war, which insisted upon his arrest for disloyalty. On February 8 he was imprisoned at Fort La Fayette, where he spent more than six months. Williams, *Lincoln and the Radicals*, 47, 94–104.

²⁹ Miller, an officer of the First Minnesota, became governor of Minnesota in 1864.

Thurs. Feb. 6 On camp guard Drizzling rain in A.M. Cloudy most of P.M. Clear & moderate weather throughout the night. On 2d. relief. About a dozen deserters from N.Y. 2d. in our g'd-house Sixty or seventy of N.Y. 2d. have deserted within two weeks. It is a natural sequence to their conduct during the retreat from Va in Oct. Brave soldiers! Illustrious patriots! Their pictures (with the original) ought to be hung in some conspicuous place. Lieut. Col. Stephen Miller in command of this Reg. to day.

Fri. [February] 7 Co. E drilled this A.M. Weather moderate. Telegram recd. announcing a great Union victory near the Tennessee line; capture of one Gen. & staff, 20 cannon &c.³⁰ Good enough for *us*.

Sat. Feb. 8th. Same old story of mud & moderate weather. Com. drill in A.M. Naval expeditions, battles, & "great victories" not worth noticing to day. In co. E, all excitement centered on wood-chopping race between L. U. Dow & John Harrington. Bet, five dollars, J. Haboot $\frac{1}{4}$ cord ahead.³¹ Kentucky or Tennessee victory confirmed Ft. Henry, on Tennessee captured by gunboats under Commodore [Andrew H.] Foote

Fifty two recruits for Min. 1st. arrived. "Auspicious omens cheer us"

Sun. [February] 9 A very fine day though disagreeable under foot. Inspection at 8 A.M. Attended prayer meeting at cabin of Co. F. this evening.

Mon. [February] 10 Drilled in bayonet exercise in A.M. Mass 20th, 7th Mich. & N.Y. 34th using blank cartridges in skirmish drill. Mud & no drill in P.M. News comes to night of the arrest in Washing[ton] & sending of Gen Stone to Ft. Lafayette.

Tues. Feb. 11 Drilled in bayonet exercise in A.M. Gen. Stone was arrested day before yesterd[a]y for disloyalty &c. A light sprinkle of snow in P.M.

Wed. [February] 12. Bayonet drill in A.M. Weather moderate. Roanoke island taken by Burnside Expedition Report says 2000 rebels taken prisoner & 1000 killed. Cheering for our cause. Victories begin to illuminate our hopes. The Anaconda tightens another coil. The resolutions introduced in Senate yesterday by Sen. [Charles] Sumner of Mass, concerning relations existing between Gen. Government & the

³⁰ Fort Henry on the Tennessee River was captured on February 6. *Dictionary of American History*, 3:26.

³¹ "Haboot" probably was Harrington's middle name or a nickname.

Seceded States are worthy of especial note. & will, no doubt, become the central point of "slavery agitation."³²

Thur. [February] 13. On camp guard, 1st. relief. A fine, warm day & night. I hear canonading at Ed's Ferry.

Fri. Feb. 14. A fine day. Mud drying up fast. Bayonet exercise both in A.M. & P.M. Sen. [Garrett] Davis of Ky. yesterday introduced anti-Sumner resolutions.

Sat. [February] 15 About 2 or 3 in. of snow fell in AM. Weather moderately cool 11 P.M. News just arrived of a great victory in Tenn. 20,000 rebels captured. Too good to be true. Band of N.Y. 34th are playing in honor of the victory. It will be a joke on the band if the report proves to be a "ho-ax"

Sun. [February] 16. Dispatch from Gen. Gorman, dated 10 P.M., Feb. 15th says 15,000 prisoners taken at Ft. Donelson. A *good haul!* A fine sabbath day. Dress parade at which was read joint Resolutions of Min. Legislature, complimenting the "veteran 1st." & the "glorious 2d;" also an order from Gen. McClellan assigning Brig. Gen. [John] Sedgewick, of [Samuel P.] Heintzleman's Division, to the command of this Division, vice. Stone, arrested.³³

Mon. Feb. 17 Came on "reserve," ½ mi. back from river, oposite Ball's Bluff. Have an easy time — no guard in daytime but one sentinal at night. The pickets along the river firing at each other. W^m Smil[e]y, Samuel Leyde, Edwin L. Keen & [William E.] Fulloton [*Fullerton*] of Co. E, left camp this morning to join the Mississippi fleet. About 20 went from Min. 1st.

Sleeting a good portion of the day.

Tues. [February] 18. Picket warefare on the river continues. I had three shots at the scamps to day. They commenced the game & if they would come within good range they would soon be game themselves Sunday's dispatch from St. Louis says Ft. Donelson is ornamented with

³² The Sumner resolutions held that the seceded states had forfeited their rights as states. Since slavery was an institution peculiar to states as political units, loss of sovereignty nullified the ownership of slaves. In reply to Sumner, Senator Davis of Kentucky introduced the resolutions mentioned in the entry for February 14. He proclaimed the states fixed and immutable units unjustly punished for refusing loyalty to a government which denied them protection. *Congressional Globe*, 37 Congress, 2 session, 736, 786.

³³ Both Sedgwick and Heintzleman were West Point graduates, and both served in the Civil War as brigadier generals of volunteers. For sketches of their careers, see the *Dictionary of American Biography*, 8:505, 16:548. On the surrender of Fort Donelson, see the *Dictionary of American History*, 2:160; Grant, *Memoirs*, 1:241-259.

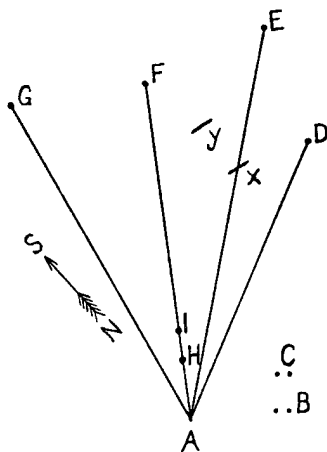
the Union Flag placed there by Union hands to cheer Union hearts. Hope 'twill prove true this time.

Sleeting in A.M.

Wed. Feb. 19 10 o'clock A.M. Our mail has just arrived from camp bringing *official* confirmation of the fall of Ft Donelson. 15000 prisoners including Gen's [Simon B.] Buckner & [Bushrod R.] Johnson. The Old Flag waves "in triumph o'er its foes." Co. E gives 3 cheers & a "tiger" within good ear range of our trans-Potomac friends. We hear cheers going up from Camp Stone. Telegram says, [Sterling] Price & 12000 men taken, also, Savannah & Ft. Pulaski.³⁴ Big grist of glorious news for *one* morning. The "Anaconda" tightens well. Secession soon will go to —. Listen & give ear unto this my prophesy: Before another week shall pass, Clarksville & Nashville are ours. We are growing fat on hard bread, victory & hope. Rain & hail the entire day. Our shanties a little too leaky for comfort, but who cares for that as long as the rebellion is drying up.

Stood guard 1 hour last night.

Thur. Feb. 20. Quite clear & pleasant. Took a rustication tour to Conrad's ford & thereabouts this A.M. Ascended a large chestnut tree, evidently of great antiquity, from which I got a view of Leesburg & the surrounding country. Leesburg is almost directly opposite Ball's Bluff



- A A chestnut tree $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$ mi. from river p't of observation
- B Block house being built by 106th. Penn.
- C Conrad's Ferry
- D Mayor Swan's summer residence
- E Rebel earth work
- F Leesburg.
- G Rebel earthwork
- H Block house by Mass. 15th.
- I. Ball's Bluff
- x & y Rebel earth works commanding approach to Leesburg from Conrad's Ferry

³⁴ The report on Savannah and Fort Pulaski was untrue. From the autumn of 1861 until April, 1862, Price led the Confederate opposition to the Union occupation of Missouri. *Dictionary of American Biography*, 15:216; Wiley Britton, *The Civil War on the Border*, 1:196-213 (New York, 1890).

There is quite an extensive nest of rebels close to Ex Mayor Swan's house. It seems to me that the encampment is within cannon range.

Fri. Feb. 21. Relieved at 11 A.M. & marched to camp. On reaching camp we learn that our 1st. Lieut., John Chase, has been appointed adjutant of the Reg. & that 1st. Lieut., Samuel Raguet, of Co. C, has been assigned to Co. E. All done during our absence. Great commotion & tall swearing in Co. E. The boys think it an *imposition* to take an officer from another Co. to fill a vacancy in this.

Co. C also in the first stages of mutiny on account of the transfer of Raguet & the promotion of their hated "orderly" to the 1st. lieutenantcy. Dissatisfaction all around. The matter does look like an insult to Co. E. However, there is no use in a soldier's getting his bristles up for he must submit to anything that comes along.

Sat. Feb. 22. Early this morning we hear the big guns booming in the direction of Point of Rocks. Suppose it to be in honor of the "Father of his Country." This A.M. Co. E taken out & the transfer matter explained by Capt. [George] Pomeroy. Some satisfied & some not. At 2 P.M., Reg. formed three sides of a square on parade ground & saddle, bridle, pistols &c. were presented to Brig. Gen. Dana by Sergt. [Charles H.] Jewet[t] of Co. E, in behalf of the non commissioned officers & soldiers of the 1st. Reg. Min. Vol. Music by the band. Gen. Dana made a brief response to the presentation speech. He is assigned to the brigade formerly commanded by Gen. [Frederick W.] Lander. Rainy this morning & plenty of mud all day. Clarksville, Tenn., is ours. Reported, Sterling Price licked in Arkansas, Nashville proposes to surrender, Savannah beleaguered & rebels falling back from Manassas. Big budget of news for our side if true

Sun. Feb. 23d. Cloudy & moderate weather. Inspection in our quarters on account of mud. Mass. 15th is assigned to this (Gorman's) brigade. Gen. Dana's brigade is composed of the 19th. & 20th. Mass, 7th. Mich. & 42d. N.Y. (Tam[m]any). In obedience to orders Co. E has knapsacks packed & surplus baggage boxed up, all ready to march at a moments notice.

Mon. [February] 24 Rainy in A.M. High wind in P.M. which dries the mud rapidly. Gorman's brigade starts for Adamstown at 8 A.M. tomorrow. Destination from thence not known.⁸⁵ Growing cold this evening.

⁸⁵ Adamstown is north and west of Poolesville. The First Minnesota was among the Union troops ordered to Harper's Ferry in a move against the Confederate forces under "Stonewall" Jackson. *History of the First Minnesota*, 84.

Tues. Feb. 25. The wind & cold put a "quietus" on the mud last night making it fine marching this morning, with the exception of a little roughness of the roads. A most delightful morning. Left Camp Stone, with 2 days rations, at 9 A.M. Whole of Gen. Gorman's Brigade en route for Adamstown, on the Baltimore & Ohio R.R., some 16 or 18 miles distant. Gorm[an's] 2d. & 34th, N.Y., 1st. Min., 15th Mass.[.] batteries A & B Rhode Island & battery I, regular artillery, (Ricket[t]s), make a gay crowd.⁸⁶ We move slowly, 2-30 P.M. reached Barnestown. This is a small, *ancient* looking village. It does not bear the marks of *yankee* enterprise Roads getting muddy this afternoon. Artillery has to double teams to get up the steep hills. At sundown, camped by a brook between two large hills near the Monocacy River, some 3 mi. beyond Sugarloaf Mountain. Splendid music by Min. band this evening I could march all night by such music without fatigue.

At Pooleville Min. gives 3 cheers for Gen. Dana.

Wed. Feb. 26. Crossed the Monoca[c]y early this morning. Reached Adamstown about 9 A.M. Left on cars for Harper's Ferry about 12 M. Came on Balt. & Ohio R.R. via Point of Rocks. Scenery at Point of Rocks, & Harper's Ferry & between those places is sublime. Refreshing to look at the "craggs & peaks" along the river. Crossed the Potomac on a pontoon bridge at 6 P.M. & are now on "sacred soil" & quartered in a partially destroyed Gov. building in the Harper's Ferry of John Brown notoriety.⁸⁷

Thur. [February] 27. Troops, infantry, artillery & cavalry coming across all day. The town is alive with troops. I took a stroll about town to day. Whatever blessing may attend rebellion elsewhere, it certainly does not pay in Harper's Ferry. The town is almost totally deserted. Churches, hotels, drug stores, groceries, dry goods establishments, public buildings & private residences abandoned. In my rambles I have seen but five citizens—two old men & three women. The sin of Secession has brought with it a curse almost equal to that which afflicted Babylon The gloominess of the cemetery that caps the summit of the hill is in perfect harmony with the desolation of the town beneath. Harper's Ferry is a striking illustration of the truth of "The way of the

⁸⁶ Ricketts' Battery was known also as Kirby's; it was a unit of the First United States Artillery. *Official Records*, series 1, vol. 5, p. 16, 333.

⁸⁷ Brown and a handful of followers barricaded themselves in the engine house of the United States Armory at Harper's Ferry and were captured by Robert E. Lee and his marines in October, 1859. Oswald Garrison Villard, *John Brown, 1800-1859: A Biography Fifty Years After*, 426-466 (New York, 1910).

transgressor is hard." If Harper's Ferry is a fair sample of what Secession has done for Va., God help her! for she is past help from any *human* source. Visited the engine house where John Brown was captured by U. S. marines. I recd. an account of the whole affair from the lips of an old man, an eye witness. Two Co's of 1st. Mich. cavalry entered Charlestown this morning & took 3 prisoners (cavalry) & mad[e] the remaining Secesh skadaddle.

A rainy day

On guard to day.

Fri. Feb. 28. After breakfast, 1st. Min. moved to better quarters on the hill. Co. E has excellent quarters in fine building said to have been erected by Government for the residence of officers having charge of Gov't works. Min. Reg. mustered for payment this P.M. Visited "Jefferson's Rock" on the bank of the Shenandoah, where he is said to have made a speech. It is supported by four red (granite) stone pillars to prevent its falling.³⁸ Rickets battery & some Rhode Island artillery came over to day.

Clear & pleasant though quite cool wind.

Sat. Mar. 1st. A very fine day—warmer than yesterday Roving about town taking observations. Union troops occupy Charles Town.

Telegraph wire stretched across Potomac this P.M.

Sun. [March] 2d. An inch or two of snow fell to day. Union troops 4 miles beyond Charlestown. The enemy's pickets fall back towards Winchester R.R. bridge across the Potomac being rebuilt. This morning Gorman's brigade moved to Bolivar Heights & encamped. The valley of the Shenandoah is a beautiful tract of country. Quite a number of contrabands came into camp & expressed their satisfaction at the approach of the Union Army.³⁹ Some of them are intelligent, smart fellows & keen observers.

Mon. [March] 3d. A stormy day—rain & sleet with cool wind. Went to Sandy Hook, Md., on a pass. Road lined with wagons containing army supplies.

Tues. Mar. 4. Last night was cold & stormy. Wind blew a perfect gale making it "bilious" for sentinels. Cold this morning. Moderate in

³⁸ The rock is described also in the diary kept by Matthew Marvin, a member of Company K of the First Minnesota. See his entry for February 28, 1862. The diary is among the Marvin Papers, in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society.

³⁹ Bolivar Heights is shown just back of the town of Harper's Ferry on a map in Villard, *John Brown*, 428. Negroes who sought refuge within the Union lines were known as contrabands. *Dictionary of American History*, 2:47.

P.M. Sixteen contrabands passed our camp this P.M. under guard. Order of Gen. Sedgwick against depredations by soldiers, read to day.

Wed. [March] 5. On "fatigue" party, loading & unloading army supplies at Sandy Hook, Md. Cloudy & rather cool. R.R. bridge across Potomac progressing. Official confirmation of the evacuation of Columbus (Ky.) by the rebels. Their Western Manassas has fallen and the Southern Confederacy will shortly be "ditto." Hurrah for Brig. Gen. "Andy" Johnson, military Governor of Tenn.!⁴⁰

Thur. [March] 6. A patrol of ten men from Min. 1st. sent out yesterday & to day to arrest stragglers without a pass. They brought in ten yesterday & five to day. They report being well recd. by the citizens & that the cider & "old rye" was freely proffered &, of course, accepted. The rovers caught belonged to Co. A, of N.Y. 34th. We have orders to march at 8 A.M. tomorrow.

Fri. Mar. 7th. Marched to Charlestown this A.M. & encamped near the town. Our advance is within ten miles of Winchester. Report says the rebels are evacuating the place.⁴¹ I saw the court house where Old Ossawatami Brown was tried & also the place where he was executed.⁴² Yesterday the 1st. Mich. cavalry captured 4 companies of Md. 1st., mistaking them for Secesh. The cavalry were returning from a scouting expedition & were fired into by Md. 1st.

Sat. [March] 8th. Warm & pleasant. Brig. drill in P.M. witnessed by Gen. [Nathaniel P.] Banks & staff.⁴³ All the Brigade present except 2d. N.Y. which is on duty at H's Ferry.

Sun. Mar. 9th. A beautiful Sabbath. Went to church in A.M. at Presbyterian house in Charlestown. Sermon by Rev. E[dward] D. Neill, chaplain of Min. 1st.⁴⁴ Audience princip[al]ly soldiers of Min. A few citizens present. The fine organ discoursed sweet music. The

⁴⁰ Immediately after the Union Army under General Don C. Buell entered Nashville on February 25, Johnson, as military governor, began the work of restoring western Tennessee to the Union. *Dictionary of American Biography*, 10:83.

⁴¹ Jackson did not withdraw from Winchester until the evening of March 11. *Official Records*, series 1, vol. 5, p. 4.

⁴² Brown was known as "Old Osawatamic" after his complicity in the murders of several proslavery farmers living along the Kansas Pottawatomie Creek on May 24, 1856. He was tried and executed at Charlestown. Villard, *John Brown*, 148-188, 467-557.

⁴³ Banks commanded the Fifth Corps of the Department of the Shenandoah. *Dictionary of American Biography*, 1:577.

⁴⁴ Neill, a pioneer Presbyterian minister of St. Paul, became chaplain of the First Minnesota when it was organized. He was made an assistant secretary to President Lincoln in 1864. For an account of his career, see the *Dictionary of American Biography*, 13:408. Marvin also describes this church service in his diary for the same date.

first sermon I have heard for three months. The church is a 'fine brick building with gallery & fixtures for lighting it with gas. The Min. 1st. run the whole institution, organ & all. The service awakens pleasant recollections. Dress parade to night.

Mon. [March] 10th. Had orders to march at 6 A.M. but did not get started till about 8. Marched through Charlestown & took the turnpike to Berryville, county seat of Clark Co., where we arrived about 2 P.M. A portion (1 battalion under Maj. [John] Mix) of Van Allens N.Y. cavalry, Rhode Island battery A & 1st. Min. led the advance. A section of battery A fired 2 shells at Secesh cavalry near Berryville. About two hundred Secesh cavalry left town as our forces entered. Co's B. E. & K were the advance infantry skirmishers. One Confederate flag captured by our cavalry. Quite a respectable village of about 1000 inhabitants. It has a large & elegant Episcopal church Dis. from Charlestown to B, 12 miles. Pretty tired lugging knapsack, canteen & three days rations. Partook of baked ham, fresh bread & milk proffered by contrabands. The aforesaid refreshments were gratefully recd by the "Interior Department." Camped in a grove N.W. of town. Rain storm in evening

Corporation scrip very plenty in this town.⁴⁵

Tues. Mar. 11th. Cold N.W. wind last night from the Alleghenies. Had to get up at midnight & run about camp to keep warm. Last night the typographical corps of First Min. took possession of the office of the "Berryville Conservator" & this morning issued there from the 1st. No. of "The First Minnesota" which is read with much interest by the soldiers of the "veteran 1st." 2d. edition of the "First Minnesota" issued this P.M. & sold for five cents per copy.⁴⁶ Strolled about town to take a view of things generally. Came very near being arrested but finally succeeded in eluding the patrol. The Seminary & the private residence of the Prof. are entirely "out of proportion," the latter being five or six times as large as the former. Maj. Mix'[s] cavalry made a reconnais-

⁴⁵ Corporation scrip, commonly known as "shin-plasters," was issued in small denominations by Southern communities. In Virginia scrip was redeemable in state bank notes when presented in sums of five dollars. A satirical design for scrip appears in the issue for March 13, 1862, of the *First Minnesota*, the newspaper published by the regiment at Berryville. Several issues of this rare Civil War paper are owned by the Minnesota Historical Society.

⁴⁶ The first page of the morning edition of the *First Minnesota* for March 11 is that of the *Berryville Conservator*, which the men found made up when they took over the office. The evening issue explains that an additional fifteen thousand copies have been printed because the first ten thousand were sold immediately. The issue for March 13 carries almost the same material as do the earlier two. Taylor's narrative of events corresponds closely with that given in the newspaper.

ance this morning to within 3 or 4 miles of Winchester. They encountered Col. [Turner] Ashby's cavalry, killed a few, took 5 or six prisoners & lost one man. Co's B & K constitute the provost guard of Berryville. Capt. [John H.] Pell, Co I, Provost Marshall. Secesh in this town are very meek & "studiously refrain" from exhibiting Secession proclivities. [William W.] Burns' Brig. passed us this P.M. & took the road leading to Winchester. Burns now being in the advance we are allowed fires to night. Our tents now arrived we rejoice in expectation of a good sleep.

Wed. Mar. 12. A fine pleasant day We hear that our troops are in possession of Winchester Long roll to night. Gen. [John] Abercrombie's brigade passes towards W. with music & cheering. 2d. & 34th. N.Y. also start out but are ordered back Ordered to hold ourselves in readiness to march at a moments notice. Slept with accoutrements all on.

Thur. [March] 13 Started for Winchester early this morning. When with in 2 miles of W., order given to return to Berryville.⁴⁷ After resting awhile, marched back to our old camp ground at B. Dis. from B. to W., 10½ miles. Our new Col., Alfred Sulley, joined us this morning.⁴⁸ He is a West Pointer & has served twenty one years in 2d. Regt. U. S. Infantry. He was Capt. at the time of his appointment to the Colonelcy of our Regt. The boys are all jubilant over the arrival of our Col. Now we are ready for a fight, having an officer in whom *we can have confidence*. Country between B. & W. not so good as between B. & Charlestown. Rather rocky—thickets of dwarf pines 3 or 4 miles from W. On guard to day. Took 3 of our prisoners with us on march. 17 miles with knapsack leaves a fellow somewhat tired at night. No guard tents pitched to night & hence have to lie around the fire & glean what comfort we can from that true friend of the soldier. It seems to be, now, beyond a doubt that the Secesh have left their famed strong hold at Centerville & Manassas. "Things is working."

Recd. official report of Gen. [Samuel R.] Curtis' victory in Arkansas.

Rebel iron-clad steamer Merrimac, it seems, has been smashing things generally at Newport News.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ The news of Jackson's evacuation of Winchester brought an order for the return of Sedgwick's command to Harper's Ferry. *History of the First Minnesota*, 91.

⁴⁸ Sully received his commission as colonel of the First Minnesota in February, 1862; he succeeded Dana, who became a brigadier general. As an officer in the regular army, Sully served in Missouri and with the defenses of Washington. He remained with the regiment until the spring of 1863, when he went to Minnesota to lead an expedition against the Sioux. *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars*, 1:17, 32, 49; *National Encyclopedia of American Biography*, 12:285.

⁴⁹ Curtis' victory at Pea Ridge occurred at the time when the "Merrimac" destroyed

Fri. Mar. 14 Started for H's Ferry at 9 A.M. Passed Gen. Dana's brigade a few miles from Berryville. Each Co. of 1st. Min. gave Gen. D. three cheers as they passed — did it *with a will*, too. Camped for the night at Charlestown. Rather foot sore.

Whole guard arrested this morning for discharging guns.

Sat [March] 15 Marched to Bolivar Heights through a rain storm and encamped Contrabands at Halltown hard at work piling hay.⁵⁰ Cars now run from Winchester to H. Telegraph in operation as far as Winchester.

Sun. [March] 16. Report, seemingly reliable, says New Madrid, Mo., is ours. Got a pass & went to Sandy Hook. R.R. bridge across the Potomac in an advanced stage. Cloudy & moderate weather. Dana's Brig. quartered in houses in H's Ferry. Gorman's & Burns' brigades in tents at Bolivar. Much speculation in our Regt. as to our next field of operations. The general impression is that we go to reinforce Burnside.⁵¹

Work on R.R. & bridge progressing to day.

Mon. Mar. 17. A company of about 20 contrabands, accompanied by one or two guards, passed our camp towards H's Ferry. A pontoon train passed towards Winchester in P.M. Mild weather & cloudy. Two days rations ordered to be cooked & ready by tomorrow morning. The following new Article of War adopted by Congress & approved by Pres. Lincoln, goes into immediate operation. "All officers or persons in the military or naval service of the U. S. are prohibited from employing any of the forces under their respective commands for the purpose of returning fugitives from service or labor who may have escaped from any person to whom such service or labor is claimed to be due, and any officer who shall be found guilty by court-martial of violating this article of war shall be dismissed from the service"⁵² This morning the band of N.Y. 2d plays "St Patricks Day in the morning" in honor of that distinguished Saint.

the blockading ships "Congress" and "Cumberland" off Newport News. *Dictionary of American History*, 3:378, 4:230.

⁵⁰ Halltown is a few miles west of Harper's Ferry.

⁵¹ New Madrid, on a bend in the Mississippi River above Island No. 10, fell on March 14, eight days after General John Pope blockaded the stream at Point Pleasant. Shortly thereafter, Burnside, commanding the Department of North Carolina, captured Roanoke Island, New Bern, and Fort Macon. *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 1:437, 440, 660-670; *Encyclopedia Americana*, 5:62; *Dictionary of American History*, 3:321, 4:497.

⁵² For the text of this article, see James D. Richardson, ed., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897*, 6:97.

Tues. Mar. 18. Didn't march to day as we expected. Drilled in bayonet exercise in A.M. This P.M. we had the first regimental drill under the direction of our new Col. Yesterday W. A. Gorman was confirmed by U. S. Senate as Brig. Gen. of Vols. Union victory at New Madrid confirmed. It is also announced that island No. 10 is in our possession.⁵³ Poor Secesh! sort o' tough isn't it?

Wed. [March] 19. Bayonet drill in A.M. & brigade drill in P.M. Part of Bank's Div. reached Manassas via of Strasburg yesterday. Order of Gen. McClellan published in to days paper assigns Sedgwick['s] Div. to 2d. Corps of the "Army of the Potomac," commanded by Brig. Gen. E[dwin] V. Sumner.⁵⁴ "Another" victory — Burnside takes Newbern, N.C., & the rebels fly, as usual Island No. 10 proves to be a "big thing" — not ours yet. Unloaded cars crossed Potomac on new R. R. bridge to day.

Thur. Mar. 20. Train of cars came into H's Ferry from Winchester. A cloudy, drizzly day.

Active Army of the Potomac.

- 1st. Corps. Divs. of [William B.] Franklin, [George A.] McCall & [Rufus] King.
Com'd by Maj. Gen. Irvine McDowell.
- 2d. " Divs. of [Israel B.] Richardson, [Louis] Blenker, Sedgwick.
Com'd by Brig. Gen. E. V. Sumner.
- 3d. " Divs. of F. T. [Fitz John] Porter, [Joseph] Hooker, [Charles S.] Hamilton.
Com'd by Brig. Gen. Heintzelman.
- 4th. " Divs. of [Darius N.] Couch, [William F.] Smith, [Silas] Casey.
Com'd by Brig. Gen. E[rasmus] D. Keyes.
- 5th. " Divs. of [Alpheus S.] Williams, [James] Shields.
Com'd by Maj. Gen. N. P. Banks.⁵⁵

Quite a number at "sick-call" this morning.

Fri. [March] 21. A rainy, foggy day. This P.M. 1st. Minn. ordered to quarters in H's Ferry. Co. E & several others located in a larg[e] 4 story brick flouring mill on an island in the Shenandoah. Staid about ½ hour & then ordered back to our camp on Bolivar Heights. A mem-

⁵³ Island No. 10 did not fall until April 8. *Dictionary of American History*, 3 : 161.

⁵⁴ For a sketch of Sumner, see the *Dictionary of American Biography*, 18 : 214.

⁵⁵ This list is verified in *Official Records*, series 1, vol. 5, p. 18.

ber of Co. H, 34th. N.Y. Regt. buried in Bolivar grave yard at sundown. Corp. of Mass. 15th. drowned in canal at Sandy Hook last night.⁵⁶

Sat. Mar. 22. Gorman's brigade struck tents this morning & marched over to Sandy Hook. 1st. Min. took cars about 2 P.M. followed closely by the rest of the brigade. Considerable enthusiasm manifested on the route, especially by the ladies. Between Pt. of Rocks & An[n]apolis Junction wheatfields exhibit a carpet of green. Rather cool riding in cars without any fire.

Sun. [March] 23d. Reached Washington about 2 A.M. & put up at the "Soldier's Rest." About 3 A.M. were marched into "Soldier's Retreat" & partook of hot coffee.⁵⁷ On guard. 1st. Min. encamped on Capatol Hill N.W. of Capitol. All of Gorman's &, at least, a portial [*portion?*] of Burns' brigade has arrived.

A pleasant day.

Mon. [March] 24. This mornings pape[r] states that Gen. Shields has fought & whipped Jackson near Winchester since we left H's Ferry.⁵⁸ Visited Smithsonian Institute & Capitol Took a peep into Senate Chamber & Hall of Representatives & listened to the legislative wisdom of the country. How changed the aspect of affairs since Mass. & South Carolina, through their illustrious sons, Webster & Hayne, in that same Hall, emulated each other in expressions of devotion to the *Union* & the *Constitution*. Listened to a part of a speech of Sen. Davis of Kentucky on a proposition to abolish slavery in Dist. of Columbia. In Senate Chamber saw Lord Lyons English Minister to Washington. He is quite bald & dignified — a regular "Johnny Bull." ⁵⁹ Min. has dress parade on

⁵⁶ Corporal Charles B. Woods of Company A, Fifteenth Massachusetts Infantry, was the man who was drowned. *Massachusetts Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines in the Civil War*, 2: 141 (Norwood, Massachusetts, 1931).

⁵⁷ The Soldiers' Rest was a receiving station where newly arrived troops and soldiers who were ill, discharged, or otherwise detained in Washington for more than a day were given assistance; the Soldiers' Retreat was a refreshment station where soldiers or their families could obtain food and lodging. Both were established in Washington by the United States Sanitary Commission. United States Sanitary Commission, *Bulletins*, 2: 590 (New York, 1866); Charles B. Todd, *The Story of Washington*, 147 (New York, 1889); Mary A. G. Holland, *Our Army Nurses*, 96, 208 (Boston, 1895); *The United States Sanitary Commission: A Sketch of Its Purposes and Its Work*, 222-229 (Boston, 1863); *The Sanitary Commission of the United States: A Succinct Narrative of Its Works*, 16, 93-95 (New York, 1864); Frederic N. Knapp, *Two Reports Concerning the Aid and Comfort Given by the Sanitary Commission*, 1-19 (Washington, 1861).

⁵⁸ The occupation of Winchester by Union forces on March 12, 1862, is fully described in William Swinton, *Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac*, 92 (New York, 1882).

⁵⁹ Davis' speech is printed in the *Congressional Globe*, 37 Congress, 2 session, 1333-1339. A sketch of the career of Richard Buckerton Pennel, Lord Lyons, who was British minister to the United States from 1858 to 1865, appears in the *Dictionary of*

Capitol grounds to night — quite a number of spectators present. Co. E is quartered in brick house but most of the Cos. are in their tents.

Tues. Mar. 25. Made a short visit to Patent Office this morning. Saw model of *iron-clad* gunboat patented March 18th, 1862. Went down to Navy Yard in P.M. but was denied admission, having no pass. Visited Hall of Represen[tative]s House in Com'te of whole considering the "tax bill." Dress parade again on Capitol grounds.

Wed. Mar. 26. Orders given this morning for Min. 1st. to "rig up" for "grand review" by the President at 1 P.M. Gen. Gorman interferes & the thing is "quashed" after keeping us waiting till most night & thus preventing me from getting a view of certain "lions" of this city. Precious time wasted in idleness to give officers a chance to quarrel about a review. Somebody Dr. To 1 Days Time, 5.00 1st. Min. ordered to march at seven P.M. After various halts we crossed the Long Bridge & took cars from Alexandria where we arrived about 2 A.M. Thursday morning.⁶⁰ Various halts and a "right about, march" is followed by "break ranks" & every fellow hunts his own sleeping ground — many "locate" on brick side walk. This individual & P.H.T. take "military possession" of a covered wagon, "make down" our bed & take passage for the land of dreams.

Thur. Mar. 27. Awake at 8-30 A.M. & find our Regt. gone. Visit Marshall House where Col. El[is]sworth was killed & the church where Washington worshiped⁶¹ & thence proceeded to camp of 1st. Min. N. of town about one mile, where we found hot coffee & hardbread awaiting our arrival. Troops visible in every direction. McClellan reviews Div's of [*blank in MS*] Ordered to be ready to embark at 1 P.M. — didn't embark.

Warm to day but quite cool last night.

National Biography, 12:358. Another account of the First Minnesota in Washington is to be found in Marvin's Diary.

⁶⁰ This movement marked the beginning of McClellan's Peninsula campaign.

⁶¹ Elmer E. Ellsworth, who had gained considerable fame as drillmaster of the Chicago National Guard Cadets, a militia unit, organized a Zouave regiment among the New York volunteer firemen after the fall of Fort Sumter. When Union troops occupied Alexandria on May 24, 1861, Ellsworth entered the Marshall House there and tore a Confederate flag from its cupola, but when he went downstairs with the flag over his arm, the proprietor of the hotel shot and killed him. Both because of his prewar fame and of his personal friendship for Lincoln, the news of his death brought the war home to many Northerners. See Charles A. Ingraham, *Elmer E. Ellsworth and the Zouaves of '61* (Chicago, 1925). Christ Episcopal Church in Alexandria, which Washington attended, still stands. Mary G. Powell, *History of Old Alexandria, Virginia*, 85-94 (Richmond, 1928); Federal Writers' Project, *Washington City and Capital*, 763 (Washington, 1937).

Fri. [March] 28. In A.M. visited Ft. Elsworth⁶² & reservoir supplying the city of Alexandria with water. From parapet of Ft. E. had a delightful view of Washington, Alexandria & "pomp & circumstance of glorious war." In P.M. went down to the river to witness embarkation of troops;⁶³ also had the much coveted privilege of viewing the interior of the church in which the Father of his Country used to worship. Warm, pleasant day. Roved about yesterday & to day without a pass — once out of camp & [a] fellow is all right here. P. H. has aguechill this morning followed by considerable fever. Many of our boys are hoarse with colds since the bivouac on brick side-walk in Alexandria.

[To be continued]

⁶² Fort Ellsworth was a temporary camp outside Alexandria where Union soldiers paroled for exchange were quartered. *Official Records*, series 2, vol. 4, p. 689; William B. Hesseltine, *Civil War Prisons*, 82 (Columbus, 1930).

⁶³ The chartering of steamers and sailing vessels in which to transport the Army of the Potomac to the Virginia Peninsula had been authorized by the secretary of war a month earlier. George B. McClellan, *McClellan's Own Story*, 237 (New York, 1887).



Copyright of **Minnesota History** is the property of the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, or email articles, however, for individual use.

To request permission for educational or commercial use, [contact us](#).