



**Civil War Diary of Private Hawley V.  
Needham**

**134th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment  
June 10 to October 2, 1864**

On April 27, 1864, Hawley Varnum Needham left his family farm at Loda, Illinois and traveled to nearby Onarga to enlist in the Union Army. He promised his father he would return before the fall harvest. His adventures in the army would take him to the Jackson Purchase of Kentucky where he was stationed at the Federal bastion at Columbus and at military posts in Paducah and Mayfield. He captured his daily experiences throughout the turbulent spring and summer of 1864 in his diary. He expounded upon the hardships, tedium and homesickness of being an enlisted man in the army and vividly described landscapes, people and events in the region. He also recorded the brutal atrocities of guerilla warfare, bloody executions and

brazen pillaging which he witnessed. His journal offers a unique perspective on the Union Army's occupation of the Jackson Purchase in the closing months of the Civil War.<sup>1</sup>

Hawley was the second son of George William Needham and Risa Loretta Titus Needham. He was born at Oberlin, Ohio on July 12, 1842, where his father attended Oberlin Seminary and served as a clergyman at the Congregational church. His family relocated to Illinois in the late 1850s. After departing Loda, Hawley was recruited at Onarga and sent to Camp Fry near Chicago. On May 31, 1864, he mustered in with Company G of the 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment. The 134<sup>th</sup> was one of thirteen regiments and two battalions that Governor Richard Yates of Illinois furnished to the United States Army for one hundred days to garrison the forts and military posts in Kentucky, Tennessee and Missouri to replace veteran units sent to the front lines.<sup>2</sup>

What follows is the original text of Private Needham's diary along with notes on the people,

---

<sup>1</sup> Illinois Military and Naval Department, *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Illinois: Containing the Reports for the Years 1861-66* (Springfield, IL: Phillip Bros., 1900), vol. VII, 38-54.

<sup>2</sup> "Hawley Varnum NEEDHAM, 12 Jul 1842 - 19 Jul 1932," The Needham Family Genealogy Website, accessed January 20, 2016, <https://jrm.phys.ksu.edu/genealogy/needham/d0002/I10.html>; "George William NEEDHAM, 11 Nov 1805 - 20 Jan 1870," The Needham Family Genealogy Website, accessed January 20, 2016, <https://jrm.phys.ksu.edu/genealogy/needham/d0004/I41.html>; *Seventy-Fifth Anniversary General Catalog of Oberlin College, 1833-1908* (Cleveland, OH: O. S. Hubbell Printing Co., 1909), 705; Illinois Military and Naval Department, *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Illinois: Containing the Reports for the Years 1861-66* (Springfield, IL: Phillip Bros., 1900), vol. VII, 38-54.

events and places he mentions.

### **Friday, June 10th**

This day seems to be the day of all others in our affairs. This day 6 weeks ago we left Onarga, [Illinois], four weeks ago we were mustered [in], two weeks ago we left Chicago. This morning we were to prepare for inspection: to clean, brush and black, but before we were inspected an order came to march to camp between one and two miles off. For two hours all was confusion a few working and the rest in the way. Forward march! Our road wound up, round the cliff on which the fort is built. Just as we started down came the rain in torrents, but despite the rain I could not help admiring the picturesqueness of the scene. Being almost in the rear I could look up and see the men disappear behind some turn in the road and then appear way up higher. It was a realization on a small scale of some of the pictures I have seen in the illustrated papers. When we got to the camping ground we were pretty well soaked, but as soon as our ground was assigned us we went to work and before dark our ground was cleaned and tents up.

### **Saturday, June 11th**

We're obliged to move ground. Worked like a dog cleaning up. The old Col[onel] has got a grudge against us. At night we were again in order.

### **Sunday, June 12th**

This morning had our first general inspection; worked hard for 3 hours, then stood until almost

noon. After dinner we're going to have a Sunday School but was detailed to go down to Columbus on fatigue duty. We unloaded stoves; had to roll barrels up a steep hill nearly one hundred feet (confounded [by] their bawling, some of our boys are murdering all the old songs. I can scarcely write). What a contrast between Yankeedom and Dixie. Up North it would be unloaded with one tenth the work and in one tenth the time. I think the army officers are culpable for putting so much work on the men on this day, for of all others it is the dirty work day.

### **Monday, June 13th**

Awful battalion [drill] this afternoon. As I only note the main items, I will state the fact that today for the first time since I have been here I saw a good looking young lady in camp. She was on horseback and accompanied by the Col[onel]<sup>3</sup> commanding the post. This evening volunteered to go on picket in preference to camp guard.

### **Tuesday, 14th**

Drew rations for three days. Marched to Columbus then round the picket line in all about six miles and with my knapsack on too, it was awful hot and we almost melted. I write this standing on the old rebel breastwork. What wild country! High hills, deep ravines covered with dense underbrush and cut up with rifle pits and forts and breastwork by the mile. It seems as if, if it was properly garrisoned, that it would be impregnable. How picturesque the

---

<sup>3</sup> Colonel James W. M. McArthur, Post Commander at Columbus.

scene. At my feet turns a deep ravine covered with underbrush here and there is an old stub which looks as if it had been shot off. Beyond is the forest. To the North is the encampment of the 136<sup>th</sup> [Illinois Volunteer Infantry] and between is a rebel graveyard with naught to mark their unholy resting places but a mound of earth. Who knows but my fate may be the same? With what unconcern the soldier regards these things. I must struggle against this feeling for I think it is wrong, yet I begin to feel it. Sunday night when we were called out at midnight to fall in and take our arms I was eager for a fray. But to return to my description, to my back to the westward, glittering like burnished silver under the hot rays of the Southern sun flows the great Father of Waters. At present in a very low state, but from looking at its banks one can imagine what it is at times. To the right and south through a deep gorge runs a railroad, the Mobile and Columbus.<sup>4</sup> I believe it is only used by the Gov[ernment] and for thirteen miles. It must have been an immense business in peace time.

I cannot help wondering why I did not hear from Annie.<sup>5</sup> It is now over a week since I wrote. Maybe those dreadful promiscuous examples are worrying the life out of her as of old so that she has no time, or it cannot be that anything I said in

---

<sup>4</sup> The railroad Private Needham mentions is the Mobile & Ohio Railroad.

<sup>5</sup> Anna Van Duzor of Onarga, Illinois. She was a friend of Catherine Amelia (Kate) Lowe the future wife of Hawley V. Needham. All were members of the Onarga Lodge, Independent Order of Good Templars, No. 528 in December of 1864. See H. W. Beckwith, *History of Iroquois County: Together with Historic Notes on the Northwest* (Chicago: H. H. Hill and Company, 1880), 574-575.

and we went whistling.

### Saturday, June 19th

Intensely hot all day. Lay in the tent most of the time. In the afternoon George and I went out in the woods and had a long conversation on matters concerning our soul's salvation. I felt free to converse with him. Why do I feel so reluctant? The path seems plain. I sometimes think I made a great mistake in not taking my stand on the side of Christ while I was in Onarga. The last few sermons of Mr. Winter<sup>8</sup> seemed [to] make an upheaval in my entire nature, but I could not help shrinking back. I have not confidence enough to stand out as I ought. Brave Annie Von Duzor's conduct ought to put me to shame.

### Sunday June 19th

Company inspection this morning. Received a welcome letter from mother containing two dollars. George Lyman<sup>9</sup> is quite sick today. He was taken with the mumps two days ago. I sincerely pray that he may not fall, for I love George almost as a brother. We had a most ridiculous dress parade. The Lieutenant Col[onel]<sup>10</sup> took command for the first time and was so embarrassed that he gave quite a

---

<sup>8</sup> Possibly George B. Winter of Onarga, a farmer from Ford County and member of the Congregationalist Bible Society. See H. W. Beckwith, *History of Iroquois County: Together with Historic Notes on the Northwest* (Chicago: H. H. Hill and Company, 1880), 632.

<sup>9</sup> Private George P. Lyman, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company G.

<sup>10</sup> Lieutenant Colonel John C. Bigelow, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment.

number of incorrect orders. Had a good S[unday]  
S[chool] about one hundred percent. Preaching in  
the eve.

### **Monday, June 20th**

The left wing went bathing. We had a most romantic climb up and down the precipitous bank of the river, it is at least 150 feet, many say 200. It looks like it certainly. Sometimes we had to dig our hands into the bank or grasp shrubs or roots for support, but the trip was made in safety. Nice shower this afternoon. George is about the same.

### **Tuesday, June 21st**

Last night woke up pretty sick and vomiting and pain, but I would not report to the doctor so I went on drill but I was obliged to quit. I have considerable fever but I think I shall come out all right.

### **Wednesday, June 22nd**

This morning feel pretty well. On guard today as supernumerary of the third relief, but did only two and one half hours duty. I was fortunate for I was too weak to do much. George is very weak but some better otherwise.

### **Thursday, June 23rd**

Went out and shot off my gun, but I was so weak that I could not aim consequently shot high and [wide].

### **Friday, June 24th**

The boys went after some poles to fix up the tent with but gave it up, so I shouldered an axe and started. I got outside of the picket line where I got some good ones but I came near being sun-struck. Going back my load was so heavy, but we got the tent raised and fixed pretty well.

### **Saturday, June 25th**

Today on police. Confounded hard work carrying water up that steep hill. Cleaned up some for inspection. Attended the evening prayer meeting.

### **Sunday, June 26th**

Snapped around and cleaned out our tent. Finished cleaning my accoutrements. On inspection my gun was recommended. Laid in the shade until Sunday School. Tonight we lay on our arms out near the picket line. Sent a letter home asking [for] them to join with [Mrs.] Lyman, Havens<sup>11</sup> and [Decker]<sup>12</sup> in sending us a box of good things.

### **Monday, June 27th**

Went swimming this morning then had two hours [of] battalion drill. Fired off our guns. I hit the tree on which the target was put. Layed around the rest of the day. In the evening we went over to

---

<sup>11</sup> Private John Havens, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company G.

<sup>12</sup> Most likely Private Reuben Decker, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company G. Decker was from the same township as Needham and adjacent to the township of where Lyman and Havens were from.



Frank's tent and had a good sing.

### **Tuesday, June 28th**

A dozen of us started with a reason to go outside of the picket but were not allowed to pass. Fools down at headquarters told us to go out on another party's pass. In the afternoon we got the pass and went out a mile or two. The heat in the woods was intense. I went to an orchard half a mile further and got a haversack full of apples. Coming back [we] got some more then went down to a spring and bathed. In the evening I was taken with a terrible fever which lasted until most [of the] morning.

### **Wednesday, June 29th**

Went to the doctor and got excused from duty for the first time. The rest of the boys built a shade in front of the tent. I loafed and wrote a letter to Annie.

### **Thursday, June 30th**

Rose early and busied myself until nine o'clock preparing for the muster for pay. We were marched out to a nice shady place under the trees where we lay down until we were inspected. The officers gave some of the boys "Hail Columbia" for not having their arms in order therefore we were ordered out again in the afternoon. Mr. Harper<sup>13</sup> came this

---

<sup>13</sup> Most likely Samuel H. Harper, a prominent farmer from Onarga Township. See J. W. Kern, *Past and Present of Iroquois County* (Chicago: S. J. Clark Publishing Co., 1907), 438 and See H. W. Beckwith, *History of*

afternoon. The boys are all very glad to see him.

### Friday, July 1st

Bully drill this morning. Lieut[enant] Atkinson<sup>14</sup> took us out under the trees and let us lay down. Then we raised tent and fixed things up in general. Towards evening Mr. Harper left, his visit has done the boys a deal of good. He also brought some of the boys a nice [box] of good things.

### Saturday, July 2nd

On guard again and lucky again too for I am supernumerary. Wrote to Leonis.<sup>15</sup> It rained all night but I wasn't going in the guard tent, so I stayed out but kept pretty dry.

### Sunday, July 3rd

Quit raining. Did not have to stand any guard at all, fired my gun twice hit a little stub eighty yard. Wrote a short letter to H[attie] and wrote some on [the] Chronicle. The boys had a big row with the sutler and came pretty near cleaning him out, but he came down handsomely and treated Co[mpany] G to all the ale and lemonade they wanted. Also promised to take his checks in pay for everything.

---

*Iroquois County: Together with Historic Notes on the Northwest* (Chicago: H. H. Hill and Company, 1880), 450-451.

<sup>14</sup> Lieutenant Edward M. Adkinson, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company G.

<sup>15</sup> Margaret Leonice Needham, Hawley's older sister.

## Monday, July 4th

The great national anniversary of American Independence in Columbus was ushered in with a salute fired from Fort Quimby. I was busy most of the forenoon cleaning up everything. In the afternoon some of us went down to Columbus, bought a few things, went in swimming, [and] visited the old Water Battery. In the evening went down to the quarter of the CCC's. They had red, white and blue lanterns hung up all around. They had some splendid music, two violins, a piccolo and guitar. The drum major beat time on the drum wood. And waltzes, polkas, jigs and [bunting] by the little [nigs] dancing by Maverick<sup>16</sup> and some bully singing by Maverick and [Company] G. band. Altogether we had a splendid evening entertainment. I forgot to say that at noon there was a national salute fired from Fort Halleck.

## Sunday, July 5th

On battalion drill this morning the Col[onel]<sup>17</sup> was as savage as a meat axe ordered all absentees to report and then put them on fatigue. I should think he might make a little allowance for the Fourth of July. Then he tied [Bigelow]<sup>18</sup> up by the thumbs and said that the next day he would Buck and Gag him because he went to the river to wash his clothes. He did not know any better. We almost had a small

---

<sup>16</sup> Private W. K. C. Maverick, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company A.

<sup>17</sup> Colonel Waters W. McChesney, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment.

<sup>18</sup> Most likely Private Eugene L. B. Bigelow, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company G.

rebellion. We groaned and yelled at Mc[Chesney] and if he had carried out his whole threat there would have been a mess. The Capt[ain]<sup>19</sup> interceded and got him off until D[ress] P[arade] when he again tied him up. Our Co[mpany] was awful mad and I guess it was the [worst] drilling we ever done. Then the boys made an effigy of Mc[Chesney] and tied it up to the tree where it hung until the next morning when the officer of the day saw it and took it down. Remember.

### **Wednesday, July 6th**

Went to river. At Dress Parade the Capt[ain] was put under arrest for not circulating a subscription paper for the Brass Band and though he was let off, it made us mad as fire. We cheered for [the] Capt[ain] and groaned for the Col[onel]. The boys all said they would not subscribe, so Capt[ain] thought it nonsense.

### **Thursday, July 7th**

Got letters from A[nnie] and from father. He says they sent the box on the fifth. Today we drew our dress hats had lots of fun over them. The boys went to work and out of pride for Co[mpany] G we raised the target subscription in the Reg[imen]t to \$1.00 a piece for privates.

### **Friday, July 8th**

Last night we lay on arms. Received a letter from Hattie. This is the first one I have received since

---

<sup>19</sup> Most likely Captain Joshua Pike, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company G.

somewhere about last New Year's. We heard that the box was down in Columbus but we could not get out to see it.

### **Saturday, July 9th**

Went to the hospital to see Willie Gilson.<sup>20</sup> He is pretty sick. I wrote a letter for him. In the afternoon our box came. All of my things were in pretty good order. Geo[rge] had a can of raspberries spoil and John lost a pound or two of butter which mixed up with the peas and made quite a steaming mess. We are pretty well satisfied. Bully Boys. Hurrah! Won't we live for a while? I dug a hole in the tent and we buried the box up - it will make a capital cellar.

### **Sunday, July 10th**

I stayed in camp this morning while the rest went swimming and cooked a nice mess of peas. We had all of our Onarga boys to breakfast, had coffee, bread, meat, peas, cookies, cake, pie and two kinds of canned fruit; didn't we have a jolly time. After breakfast I volunteered to help sweep off the parade [ground]. It took about two hours but was credited for a day's duty. I spent nearly half the day in scalding [heat]. In the afternoon it rained hard and I wrote letters to Hattie and my parents.

### **Monday, July 11th**

Finished a letter to H[attie]. I have caught quite a cold and feel pretty dull. Did not do much except fix top to the cellar. Today the flags are at

---

<sup>20</sup> Private William Gilson, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company G.

half-mast. Last night Capt[ain] Lynn<sup>21</sup> of Co[mpany] F died. It strikes a chill through the heart of everyone for it is the first death from disease in the Regt[iment]. And now comes a messenger from the post hospital saying that Charlie Long<sup>22</sup> is dead. We called him "Double Barrel." Poor fellow he had many faults but was almost as much sinned against as sinning, but no wonder he died he did nothing but eat, eat, eat all the trash he could get.

### **Tuesday, July 12th**

My birthday. 22 years old. Pretty well today. Old routine. Band instruments came. I hear that Cook was taken to the hospital.

### **Wednesday, July 13th**

On guard at the commissary. Received a letter from Dan, he is at Vicksburg. Cultra<sup>23</sup> came and told me that Gilson has been taken to the Post Hospital. He is failing fast. I wrote to his father advising him to come after him. I have not seen him since day before yesterday, meant to see him today. Thomas was there yesterday. He was told that Willie was better. Answered Dan's letter.

### **Thursday, July 14th**

This morning was both surprised and shocked to hear of Gilson's death. He was sent there in a

---

<sup>21</sup> Captain Alphonso C. Linn, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company F.

<sup>22</sup> Private Charles Long, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company G.

<sup>23</sup> Private Robert B. Cultra, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company G.

lying condition but happily for him he was unconscious most of the time. John Thomas<sup>24</sup> wrote to his parents. Eight of us went to escort him to the grave but it was not dug.

**Friday, July 15th**

Went again today and escorted Gilson's remains to the grave. The corpse stank terribly. Poor boy and his poor mother, I pity her. My feelings expressed in a letter to A[nnie] at the time of Capt[ain] Lynn's death seem to have been prophetic.

**Saturday, July 16th**

Procured a pass and went to town bought paper and envelopes.

**Sunday, July 17th**

Swimming. Company inspection. Preaching in evening. Sleep on our arms tonight.

**Monday, July 18th**

Confounded general inspection. Scalded a can of strawberries.

**Tuesday, July 19th**

Half of our hundred days are gone and it is eighty five since I enlisted. We are now on the downhill side. Hurrah!

---

<sup>24</sup> Private John M. Thomas, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company B.

### **Wednesday, July 20th**

Went to see Will [Colvin]<sup>25</sup> he is pretty sick with fever. Received letters from Mr. [Gillingham] and Annie. Good.

### **Thursday, July 21st**

The regiment stood in line for the purpose of having its photograph taken. In the afternoon answered the letters I received yesterday.

### **Friday, July 22nd**

Am on police duty today. There is a terrible growling in camp today. Our rations have been cut down heavily. We have had full rations of bread, now we don't have more than twelve ounces. Received letters from Leonis and Cha[rle]s.<sup>26</sup>

### **Saturday, July 23rd**

Went out as one of the advance guard to a party after poles. Got into a blackberry patch, picked two quarts. Came back built bunks and answered letters.

### **Sunday, July 24th**

The artists took a negative of our Co[mpany] quarters. We had the guns stacked in the center. The boys were doing all sorts of things. They also took one of the officers in front of their quarters. Services in the evening.

---

<sup>25</sup> Possibly Corporal William C. Colvin, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company E.

<sup>26</sup> Most likely Charles F. Needham, the brother of Hawley.



## Monday, July 25th

On guard at the sutlers today. Fancy guard you know; if I had only put on a paper collar, why I would've been at the Col[onel]'s tent. About twelve, a dispatch came from Gen[eral] Prince<sup>27</sup> saying that the Rebs were in force close by. So companies A, B, C, and E commanded by the Adj[utant]<sup>28</sup> started in quest of them. Capt[ain] Pett<sup>29</sup> went with a cavalry force full lick. About three the artillery went too, but it proved to be a wild goose chase. I slept in my quarters. Fancy don't have to do duty in the night after nine.

## Tuesday, July 26th

Stood guard two hours this morning. When we went out to fire off our guns the target was placed one hundred and forty yards, not one hit. A boy in Co[mpany] E or H. was wounded in the leg by a shot fired by one of their own boys who while on picket shot at a steer. Capt[ain] Dyer<sup>30</sup> commanded on dress parade. Just as we were being dismissed the Col[onel] galloped up and ordered us out on battalion [drill]. The dust was so thick we could hardly see and because the [guides] did not cover accurately he swore like a trooper.

---

<sup>27</sup> Brigadier General Henry Prince, Commander of the District of Cairo.

<sup>28</sup> Adjutant Edward D. Luxton, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment.

<sup>29</sup> Captain Nathan B. Pett, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company B.

<sup>30</sup> Captain John Dyer, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company A.

### **Wednesday, July 27th**

Tailored most of the afternoon. Amos Peck<sup>31</sup> lays in our tent. He is pretty sick. Went out and slept on our arms. The officer of the day thinks there is danger of an attack. If the pickets fire a volley we are to reinforce them.

### **Thursday, July 28th**

Slept well last night but don't feel very well on account of having a bad cold. Went to the river and did my washing, but got my arms and legs awfully sunburnt. Fished a [barrel] out of the river and toted it on my head up the steep hill by the Fort and to camp. It made me a nice bunk. Attended a prayer meeting in the evening.

### **Friday, July 29th**

Went to the river. After guard [duty] forty of us equipped ourselves for a berry expedition. Took our arms and haversacks. Geo[rge] and I took a large can apiece to put berries in. Marched four miles to the orchard, some of the way through dust nearly ankle deep. Geo[rge], John and I got eight quarts of berries and a lot of nice apples. Rallied and thirty of us went out scouting for Rebs. Had to throw away our apples. Went three miles and found their lair. Ten of us scouted through the corn and brush but found nothing but their tracks and places where they lay. Expected to find some blankets but did not. Got a violent headache going through the hot

---

<sup>31</sup> Corporal Amos M. Peck, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company B.

cornfield. Scott<sup>32</sup> and Watson<sup>33</sup> were there before and saw five men lying around the house and when they left they heard a gun snap. Pretty near gave up when I got back. The 2nd Lieut[enant] carried my gun the last mile. Billious.

### Saturday, July 30th

Feel better but it was hard work to go through battalion drill. Had a glorious rain. In afternoon washed my shirt and fussed around. After retreat the news came that we are to go to Paducah but I don't much believe it.

### Sunday, July 31st

Early this morning orders came to pack up and by noon all were on board the steamer *G. W. Graham*. What a pity we had to leave our nice shade bunks, cellar and a lot of fruit cans, ropes, etc. Nearly everyone was loath to leave, but still the prospect of a change was some consolation. I kicked everything to Jericho. At Cairo, four Companies took another boat and went on. The steamer *G. W. Graham* draws too much water to go any farther. I stayed down on the boat unloading until nine o'clock. The main body marched to the old Hospital Barracks. When I got there nearly every place was occupied. I found a little space in which by smashing a board and putting it there I managed to twist and dovetail

---

<sup>32</sup> Corporal Walter J. Scott, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company G.

<sup>33</sup> Private Daniel Watson, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company G.

myself into a sleeping place. But was it not a gay sleep!

### Monday, August 1st

We were just eight weeks in Columbus. [After] an hour and [at] last again stepped on the soil of Illinois. Just after noon the Col[onel] brought us out for the purpose of showing the 139<sup>th</sup> how to drill then it began to rain so we took shelter in their barracks. The two Co[mpanie]s [that] were together had a very pleasant visit. After the rain was over we went out and drilled awhile with knapsacks on then took them off and drilled some more. And although we were so badly hampered, the officers of the 139<sup>th</sup> acknowledged that we were far ahead of them. We were then marched up on to the street fronting the Ohio levee. Then the drunken Col[onel] halted the column and ordered us to stack arms, right there where the mud was shoe deep, and when the order came "Unslung Knapsacks" some of the boys were so mad they threw them ten feet out in front of the regiment. Then Lieut[enant] Col[onel] Bigelow<sup>34</sup> interfered and took us to a dry place where we sat until almost dark, when three Co[mpanie]s embarked on the Convoy and three on the *J. M. Ford*. I am on the latter and I sit here while the dusty shadows of night come creeping upon us and all nature is so still and solemn and it seems as if I should like to be alone where my thoughts and fancies could have free scope. I wish if such a wish is not wrong that I could dive deep

---

<sup>34</sup> Lieutenant Colonel John C. Bigelow, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment.

into the hidden mysteries of Nature! The ever present is too impractical for such dreaming. Hard tack and S-- R-- are the subjects of discussion these times, too dark to write more.

### **Tuesday, August 2nd**

Boat stuck last night and had a hard time getting off, finally cast anchor until morning. As usual nothing but hard tack for breakfast. I am sick of the sight of one. Arrived at Paducah half past eight and had a very hot march to camp. I am very much pleased with the place, nice people, beautiful scenery, good water and a splendid bathing place. The Lieut[enant] Col[onel] has command and he is a splendid man. I wish he was Col[onel] Green. Corn, tack and coffee for supper.

### **Wednesday, August 3rd**

Stood guard three hours last night. Fixed up tent some, slept some and rambled around some. Don't feel very well.

### **Thursday, August 4th**

Worked busily all day building shade, table and fixing tent. Wrote letter home.

### **Friday, August 5th**

Too unwell to do anything only wrote a letter to A[nnie].

### **Saturday, August 6th**

John Thomas and I procured passes and did up Paducah. Along the levee the buildings show

the effects of war, they being full of shot holes. At the end of the town near the fort a number of fine buildings have been blown up. But I was so much pleased with the place some pretty nice houses and tasty grounds surrounding them. In good times it must be a thriving place. Now there are six or seven large sawmills and tanneries almost entirely idle. The Fort is small with not much of a [moat] around but has a rather ugly looking abatis and is pretty well mounted with guns. The garrisons are negroes. Borrowed fifty-five cents from John Hall<sup>35</sup> to buy a few little necessities with. Most time I got some from home. We saw some pretty good looking ladies. It does one good to see some of his own color again after eight weeks spent in the darkness.

### Sunday, August 7th

My right finger has got so sore that I was obliged to report to the surgeon. Lieut[enant] Roe<sup>36</sup> and six of us attend divine service in the Presbyterian Church. A very respectable congregation. Considerable dress and style among the ladies. The sermon was very common and the most ridiculous breakdown in the choir that I ever witnessed, complete fizzle. The minister took it up to the tune of "Old Hundred" and made the house ring. On our way back, we went to the first negro meeting I ever attended. Real Southern affair, the preacher as is usual took Paul for his text. He used

---

<sup>35</sup> Private John A. Hall, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company G.

<sup>36</sup> Second Lieutenant James H. Roe, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company G.

the real dialect. When he was done they had a regular time praying, singing, yelling, groaning, clapping of hands, all together I think there was really more devotion there than at the other church, but still jarred harshly on my nerves. Answered Mrs. Gilson's<sup>37</sup> letter which I received yesterday. In the evening, Mr. Tullis<sup>38</sup> preached a very good sermon.

### **Monday, August 8th**

D[octo]r lanced my finger. it has been very painful. He says it is a felon. Went out and witnessed dress parade. It was splendid. Gen[eral] Paine<sup>39</sup> was there and praised it very highly saying he never saw but two regiments excel it and those were the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. At tattoo the question of re-enlistment was put to vote. Nary [an] "aye"

### **Wednesday, August 10th**

About three o'clock started on the long talked of expedition to - I don't know where. About one thousand strong, darkies and all. Went in light marching order leaving wool blankets and knapsacks behind. Just after starting it began to rain and the Regt[iment] presented a comical appearance in their black gowns. Got four miles and halted to clean out an orchard and get water. Four miles more and halted for the night. We built fires with rails and made coffee in our cups, had some tack also. Gay old sleep. Thomas and I [slept]

---

<sup>37</sup> Mother of Private William Gilson.

<sup>38</sup> Chaplin Amos K. Tullis, 34<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment.

<sup>39</sup> Brigadier General Eleazer A. Paine, Commander of the District of Western Kentucky

with a rubber under and over us.

### **Thursday, August 11th**

This is soldiering in earnest, get up in the dark and prepared my sumptuous meal of coffee and tack then marched on two or three miles when we halted to fodder up. There was an orchard of prime apples and ... we stripped it and the hen [house] and cornfield. I dare not eat any corn. After marching four miles more we came to a splendid watermelon patch belonging to a Reb and it was not twenty minutes till the last melon was gone. There were a great many wagons passing loaded with tobacco. They all had a box of provisions when they reached us but when they had passed, the eatables - where were they? Echo. I don't think it was right. I could not stand it.

### **Friday, August 12th**

I am writing here in the cupola of the courthouse of Mayfield, Graves County, K[entuck]y. Said, I believe, to be the banner secession county of the State. I have come up here weak and stiff from the march and sickness to see if the fresh air and a good cigar won't revive. I know I am breaking my agreement in so doing, but the circumstances [are] nothing but quarter rations and bad bowel complaints must be my excuse. We came in late last night. I was so sore and stiff that it almost [was] impossible to stand up long enough to make some coffee. Our march was over twenty miles. Toward morning I found myself on my feet in the midst of a wild excitement [stomping] and rushing, some



crying Whoa! And some Oh! Some jumped fences, some climbed trees and some grabbed their guns. I did not do much of anything. My first supposition was that the enemy were cutting us to pieces but hearing no discharge of fire arms or orders from the officers I concluded that some of the horses were loose, and so it proved. I don't think more than a minute passed before I was again asleep.

Mayfield is quite a pretty place situated in the midst of a fine farming country and possessing a beautiful landscape. The tobacco trade seems to have been the life of the place as it contains two immense warehouses and not long since another one larger than either of the present ones was burnt down. There is now probably [\$15,000] worth in the place and a great deal all through the country. There is no trade here. Stores with the exception of the drugstore are closed and empty. We are within twenty five or thirty miles of the Tennessee line and in a county abounding with guerrillas. There are three shot holes in the walls of the C[ourt] H[ouse] made by balls after passing through the body of a noted scoundrel. He was captured by the cavalry only two weeks ago. The notorious Capt[ain] Cass<sup>40</sup> was shot in Paducah and by the [rest of entry missing]

### Friday, August 12th (cont.)

Finds me comfortably quartered in room no. 21 of the Union House in the town of Mayfield, K[entuck]y, 27 miles from Paducah. This morning

---

<sup>40</sup> James Kesterson, a renowned guerilla that terrorized the Jackson Purchase.

found me sore, weak miserable, in fact between marching and diarrhea I was used up, but before noon began to improve. Went with Walt and got a warm dinner at the house of a Union man. Found Capt[ain] Gregory<sup>41</sup> of the independent scouts there. The boys have been in the foraging business. I got soap, rice, peppers and peppermint, a lot of utensils, glassware, woodenware, razor strap, books, etc. Some got books and other articles of considerable value. I was so unwell that I could not commence in [the actions]. Towards eve we moved our quarters to the Mayfield Hotel. Quite a fine house. Made some gum bark tea [and] with a quarter of a tack made my supper. And then I didn't repose for I was taken sick again.

### **Saturday, August 13th**

Finds me still in the land of the living but sick all over. Got a little meat and tea for breakfast. About 9 the 136<sup>th</sup> [Illinois Volunteer Infantry] and the Negro regiment came in here. That darky regiment is a splendid one, head and shoulders above the Paducah one in a drill. There is now here the 134<sup>th</sup>, 136<sup>th</sup>, the Paducah and Columbus Darky reg[imen]ts, also some Illinois, Tennessee, and Gregory's cavalry. Col[onel] McChesney is commander of the post. I wonder what is to be done. Suppose we shall find out soon enough. I think if I come out of this alive it will finish my soldiering for a while although I have tried my best to take care of myself. I have hardly seen a whole week at a time of real good health

---

<sup>41</sup> Captain Thomas Jones Gregory, 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment Capital Guards, Company A, Paducah Battalion (also known as the Mayfield Home Guard).

since I left Chicago and now I am about, what I have anticipated, should be placed in such circumstances. Pretty near flat but I shall keep a good heart and do my best. The band has just been playing some inspiring strains among the rest, "Gentle Annie" and it reminds me of one of the same name. Ponder what she is doing at this moment. If there is anything in clairvoyance I should like to go into that state for a few minutes.

That the act of the King of France in "marching up a hill and then down again" is reenacted now and then [and] was on a small scale verified today. The report came in that the Rebs were close by so our Reg[imen]t marched out a mile or so, loaded there, or I should say, guns when the scouts came back and reported it all a hoax, so we came to an "About Face" "Forward March." This noon our knapsacks arrived in good order and also reinforcements for [the company], the number of 11 making now almost 60 [men].

### **Sunday, August 14th**

I have had no opportunity to write for three days and consequently have lost from my mind many things I wanted to write down. This morning 30 of us were sent to put down a Nigger smash-up but the birds had flown. Then 4 of us, myself among the number, were put on Provost Guard. We have to be on duty all day and 2 hours in the night. Pretty rough I think. Didn't we have a gay time last night, such a clear beautiful moonlight [and] soft balmy air. It was delicious. I should have loved to sit there on the balcony till morning and with a few companions

and a good cigar. For then a cigar is an enjoyment taken in our fill of joyousness. But military law must in some sort be obeyed, so a little after 10 we laid ourselves on our soldier's beds. But for my part not to sleep as I lay there many and sometimes pleasant were the fancies which my busy imagination conjured up and it was only after a long courtship that I was enabled to woo fickle Morpheus and at last resign myself to slumber quietly in his loving embrace. But to the ever-present today. Towards evening we were obliged to resign our pleasant quarters in the Mayfield Hotel for a portion of a room in the tobacco warehouse. Delightful place! What sweet odors arise to greet our Co[mpany] G appreciating nostrils. Co[mpany] B is alongside and has use of all the windows opposite us. Co[mpany] K is in the west end of the room and Co[mpany] E in another room. Four companies are quartered in the seminary which is a much finer building that one would expect to find here. The other two Co[mpanie]s are in a church.

### **Monday, August 15th**

Last night slept on the brick pavement, but sound as if in a feather bed. Cultra and I patrolled from 11 to 1. Everything quiet. The 136<sup>th</sup> and Columbus darkies left this morn[ing] don't know their destinations. Received a welcome letter from Kittie and enclosing one dollar. Today I listened to two radical Union speeches. One from Anderson<sup>42</sup>, candidate for congress and the other from

---

<sup>42</sup> United States Congressman Lucien Anderson, representative from Kentucky's 1<sup>st</sup> District and resident of Mayfield.

Bolinger<sup>43</sup> a prominent citizen. These men are tried and true and are objects of bitter hatred to the Rebs. It was expected that General Paine would be here and make a speech as he had given an invitation to all to come in today and there was a big crowd. Many prominent guerrillas were said to be here. Gen[eral] Paine failed to come but Bolinger explained his policy. The people must submit peaceably if they would, forcibly if need be. One hundred rebel families must be banished from the U[nited] S[tates] and the county must pay \$250,000. The Negroes who are able must go into the army. Bully for Paine. That is my ticket every time. But alas for poor [Richardson]<sup>44</sup> he must see hard times for such a lot of Copperhead pothook crooks and [devils] I never saw united in one body creation before. The contrast was delightful between a fine costly carriage and one of those animals with his rich harnesses of rawhide tanned-hide and straps and adorned with fanciful shreds of rope and strings. Altogether the beholder would not fail to call it an extremely [rich] affair. Tonight we take our quarters in the Mayfield Hotel. I man the Provost Guard and Cultra and I are on relief from 9-11.

### **Tuesday, August 16th**

Today Cultra and I went out to the Picket - where Thomas [was]. A delightful place. Grassy and shady, plenty of good soft water and nice Union

---

<sup>43</sup> John T. Bolinger, Graves County Clerk and prominent businessman from Mayfield.

<sup>44</sup> Possibly William A. Richardson, United State Senator from Illinois and noted Copperhead.

people who cook a great deal of their food, plenty of apples not far off - who couldn't live. While we were there a darky sergeant came with one of their slaves to get his clothes for he was going to be a soldier, a free man. Mrs. Mayes<sup>45</sup> his owner was in a heap of trouble. She appealed to the pickets but they could not interfere and appealed to us but we could do nothing but report the case which we promised to do, but it was as I expected, of no avail. In the afternoon we went accompanied by R[euben] D[ecker], G[eorge] L[yman] and J[ohn] H[avens] for the purpose, if possible of hearing some music as there are 4 young ladies and a piano there, but [another] company coming in, to our regret, we missed it. Today we provos [provost guards] again changed quarters, this time into an empty store which will be the future stopping place for provos.

### Wednesday, August 17th

Last night I was shelved. Drew cuts who should go on guard. Luckily for me I drew a blank, but that wasn't the shelving, but I slept on one of those shelves. Today about 10:00 we were all relieved and a permanent guard organized. Got our regulation hats from Paducah. Nothing but a plague. Wrote a letter to Kittie and one to Dan. How dark and dismal it grows. Are my feelings more sensitive than others for they rise and fall like a barometer. Don't like such weather. I hear that the citizens have been pressed and are fortifying the courthouse square. Am spending the day in copying my old diary. This

---

<sup>45</sup> Most likely Mary Elizabeth Mayes, the widow of Confederate Colonel Albert Perry Thompson, who was killed at the Battle of Paducah.

evening Co[mpany] B moved out and I secured a nice desk and bench near a window. We now have plenty of room, nail to hang everything on and am pretty well satisfied.

### **Thursday, August 18th**

Wrote most of the day nothing of note.

### **Friday, August 19th**

We got one month's pay today.

Still writing. Quite a number of our Onarga boys were detailed for picket. J. Havens, G. Lyman, Corporal W. Krapp<sup>46</sup>, D. Pangborn<sup>47</sup> and W. Denning<sup>48</sup>. It is pretty rough for pickets. Rained hard all night and most all day, yet on other accounts it is acceptable for we are wholly dependent on rain water for all purposes. Heretofore, we have been forbidden to use any for washing purposes. Sickness is beginning to report rather to an alarming extent. The cause is probably change of diet and want of proper cooking. We do nearly all our own cooking and the boys forage all manners of food and then some of them cook nearly everything in grease.

### **Saturday, August 20th**

The weather is still damp and disagreeable and my bones feel kind of aguish. Dow came in sick last night and this morn J. Havens is complaining. All

---

<sup>46</sup> Private William Krapp, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company G.

<sup>47</sup> Private Dow Pangborn, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company G.

<sup>48</sup> Private Walter Denning, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company G.



who have loaded guns went out with Capt[ain] Milligan<sup>49</sup> to fire them off. He ordered us to fire low so as to go into the R[ail] R[oad] bank. Some did so but others fired so high that they nearly hit the cavalry vedettes who were about a half a mile off. Capt[ain] swore like a trooper. My ball hit the fence. There is now lying around here a poor crippled Negro another victim to the divine institution of slavery. He escaped to the woods to avoid being taken South in the rebel army. There his legs became frostbitten so that both legs had to be taken off, one at the knee and one above the ankle. He was obliged to saw one off himself with a knife. The boys have given him considerable money. He is going to Paducah to try and learn the stove-maker's trade.

### **Sunday August 21st**

Is it really Sunday? I did not know it until I heard one boy ask another the question. About the only difference is that there is not so much card playing and more cleaning of guns than on other days. This morning I put my wits to work to get up some breakfast. We saved our codfish last night that I picked up fine then took some tack and pounded it up fine, mixed some water in it and making it into balls, fried them. Mighty good too! Today the camp is wild with excitement. First the story has spread that we are ordered to be in Chicago by the 29<sup>th</sup>. Maybe, maybe not, time will soon tell. Next, one of the 3rd Ill[inois] Cavalry was brought in dead. He

---

<sup>49</sup> Captain Henry J. Milligan, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company E.



went out half a mile beyond the vedette line after some buttermilk when he was surprised by guerrillas. His comrades are hunting for the assassins as yet they have not been found. They swear vengeance. There are it is supposed, 400 watching for a chance to surprise us. Thirdly, the Adjutant has just made us a little speech saying that Gov[ernor] Yates thinks there is danger to be apprehended from the Copperheads during the coming campaign and has honored the 134<sup>th</sup> by asking them to re-enlist to serve in the state only. I don't know what to do. I am pretty near run down and want to go home to recoup up a little. Then father must need my help as he never did before. I think I shall wait until I either hear definitely from home or else go home myself. If we can have Lieut[enant] Col[onel] Bigelow for Col[onel] and Capt[ain] Pike for my capt[ain] I want to stay. Sundown, I have just been out to advanced Picket Post #5 to carry him his blankets. On my way I saw the body of the cavalry man who was shot. Ten balls struck him and his companion barely escaped. There were 6 guerrillas. Of course they stripped him of everything. Brought back my pockets full of sweet potatoes.

### **Monday, August 22nd**

I feel much better this morning than I have for a number of days. Last night was cold. Nearly everyone complained. I shivered most of all night. I have just written to father to know how affairs are in Illinois and if he can get along without me this fall. I have spent most of the time this P.M. in writing out both a regimental and co[mpany] rosters. Towards

evening I went out to see J. D.<sup>50</sup> and get some sweet potatoes. Got a few apples and filled up the haversack with potatoes. I had to dig them up with my fingers and only my left hand too. Came back and found a letter awaiting me from Charlie and enclosing \$1.00 from mother. Dear kind and self-sacrificing Mother. I am afraid she robbed herself. Rumor saith that we leave here next Sunday. Hope so.

## **Tuesday, August 23rd**

On Picket today at Post #5 the easiest one on the line, though at the same time it is considered the most dangerous. There are twenty-one of us. One sergeant, three corporals, the rest privates. Three posts in the day time. Four at night. Our sergeant is a splendid fellow by name of Isbell.<sup>51</sup> He has with the exception of a few weeks been in the service since the fall of Sumpter and had part of his right shoulder shot off. Here is my delightful home in the "Sunny South" and it is a beautiful place. The house is only one story high but it is large and roomy. A wide hall runs through the main part with one large room on each side. A large wing runs along back with a wide veranda the whole length. The yard is one luxuriant mass of living green. Back of the house is a tasty well house built of lattice work with an abundance of soft water. Close by is a very large orchard of fine fruit. The plantation is I think the largest I have seen,

---

<sup>50</sup> Possibly Private John E. Dillingham, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company G.

<sup>51</sup> Sergeant George T. Isbell, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company E.

but is barren of grain and the fences are fast going to ruin. The outbuildings are characteristic. It is owned by a widow made so probably by her husband's treason. She is supposed to be of the same stripe and I hardly know why the authorities keep a guard over the property.

We live pretty well. The darkies bake biscuits and pies to sell and we get plenty of sweet potatoes and apples besides having rations sent to us from camp.

### **Wednesday, August 24th**

We called diarrhea the "Kentucky quick-step." I was fortunate enough last night to be one of the reserve therefore had no duty to do, but I had to make it up this forenoon by doing four hours duty but will not go on again until night. There was an alarm in camp last night. Co[mpany] C manned the post holes in the C[ourt] H[ouse] and 3 companies formed in line of battle. There was firing near the pickets I think for the purpose of attracting attention while some horses were being stolen from the corral. Two or three of the boys here were a little skittish. I have a great deal of amusement while on picket in reading human nature. I find it an excellent place to develop character. I should be doing pretty well if it were not for the trotting against time which I have done on the celebrated Kentucky Race Course. It has now lasted nearly three weeks. Until the half way pole was passed, time was ahead and the odds were heavy against me. From there to the 3/4 stake, the odds were in my favor when time again made a desperate effort but broke and fell back and I think I

shall pass the judges stand in triumph.

### **Thursday, August 25th**

There was but little alarm last night. I stood guard three hours and one this morning. We were relieved by Sergeant Roberts<sup>52</sup> and [Gayord]<sup>53</sup>. The boys told him some outlandish stories and I'll bet he won't sleep a wink for the next two nights. Poor old granny! What a pity it is for anyone to be a bigger coward than some other folks. Well I had to stop writing and now I forgot what I wanted to say.

### **Friday, August 26th**

Today has been one of marked interest to me and marks an important event in my history as being the first time I ever witnessed the death of any human being. I refer to the execution of the guerrilla this morning. It took place about 11:00 A.M. The grave is between the brick warehouse and the R[ail] R[oad] We were formed on three sides of a square with the "Fortification Brigade"<sup>54</sup> forming another line a few paces in front and the cavalry in our rear. The prisoner was brought on the ground by his executioners who were some of Gregory's men called the "Hell Hounds" by the Rebs. Then followed moments of terrible anxiety and suspense to us all. One of Gregory's lieutenants tied his legs and

---

<sup>52</sup> Sergeant William Roberts, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company G.

<sup>53</sup> Possibly Private Horace M. Gaylord, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company G.

<sup>54</sup> "Fortification Brigade" was the name given to the Southern sympathizers ordered to construct defenses about the County Courthouse by Union soldiers stationed at Mayfield.

blindfolded him, but did not then tie his arms. The Col[onel] then turned to the F[ortification] Brigade and told them if they were caught in the same business or harboring guerrillas or if they failed to report any that were around that this was to be their fate if caught. By this time the prisoner had become uneasy and threw up his arms which were then tied and now his agony must have become intense for he gave utterance to some horrible groans. The executioners formed themselves with a reserve behind our men. Lieut[enant]. St. Clair<sup>55</sup>

[Regimental] P[ost] M[aster] gave the fatal order and he fell with a groan pierced by all ten balls. It was a sad thought that he must appear before God at the judgment with all his hellish crimes to answer for and no hope whatever. But justice does not always sleep and Fort Pillow will not go unavenged for this man was there. How humiliating for a man to commit such crimes and then cannot face the music.<sup>56</sup> Toward night we again moved our quarters to the Mayfield Hotel 3rd story. We secured a room but 13 must pack in! Whew! Ain't it hot!

### **Saturday, August 27th**

Co. E who were in the front room moved out and our mess with Walt<sup>57</sup> and Bryden<sup>58</sup> got Rm #10 and now we can live comfortably.

---

<sup>55</sup> Lieutenant Charles E. Sinclair, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company A.

<sup>56</sup> Robert A. Walters was the man executed.

<sup>57</sup> Possibly Corporal Walter Scott, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company G.

<sup>58</sup> Private Henry Bryden, 134<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company G.

## **Sunday, August 28th**

Last evening the Chaplain held services in the brick church. I attended but was so sleepy that I guess I won't much profit. At 2:00 today we had general inspection done up quickly. The officer merely passed around twice and then it was over. In the evening I attended church again. The house was full. The sermon was good and so was the singing which was accompanied with a melodeon.

## **Monday, August 29th**

Was detailed for picket -- got on Post 3 and on beat [to] two. Right on the road there are half a dozen darky women or rather as one of them said "dark complexioned, white ladies slightly sunburnt" there washing, and I have fun listening to them talk.

## **Tuesday, August 30th**

Last night there was a great deal of firing. Once we heard a volley and then in obedience to orders we fell back to the R[ail] R[oad] This morning we heard that some of the F[ortification] Brigade had been trying to run the guard.

Gregory's men came in with a prisoner. They also killed one fellow. The prisoner was a young fellow, a mere boy, but daring and brave to the last degree. He was executed without any ceremony and put in his hole without a coffin. Unlike the one who was executed a few days before he was "game" to the last. His bearing was worthy of one who was to die in a better cause.<sup>59</sup> Got letter from

---

<sup>59</sup> Henry Bascom "Bud" Hicks was the young man executed.

father, Leonis and Thayer.

### **Wednesday, August 31st**

The 34<sup>th</sup> New Jersey [Volunteer Infantry] came in this morning. Only 250 strong they are a most miserable set of pimps. About 2,000 have enlisted in the regiment and most of them have deserted. I'll bet I was glad to be relieved for my eyes have got so sore that I am in misery.

### **Thursday, September 1st**

*(Date written but no further entry)*

### **Friday, September 2nd**

The orderly informed me of the agreeable fact that I must go on picket. Upon receiving this I told him to put my name on the sick list, as in my present condition I wasn't going to do it. He did not quite "like it" but he must "lump it." The excitement has run high today about going home. The story spread that we were to be kept 30 days more. The Col[onel] went to Paducah and came back and read a paper to each Co[mpany] requesting them to stay fifteen days longer. The Co[mpanie]s took a vote and the result was we could not see it in that light. He merely told us that he had something for us. If we remained he should have pay, thanks and a medal. To make a crooked story straight, someone is making money in the place and to stay here without water with a heavy sick list and more becoming so every day with heavy duty. We don't care for others pockets in this the Co[mpanie]s are nearly a unit.



### **Saturday, September 3rd**

Felt some better today so I concluded not to go to the D[octo]r. I was pretty generally supposed that Co[pany] E and perhaps some others would leave today but the Col[onel] went to Paducah and now something new is up. Nobody knows what. I feel worse this evening.

### **Sunday, September 4th**

The D[octo]r gave me some abominable stuff with turpentine in it. However, it did me good but has the effect of making me weak and causing lack of appetite. I saw the funeral of one of the 34<sup>th</sup>'s boys. The fifer was playing the funeral march. It was one of the most beautiful airs I ever heard, soft, plaintive but delicious. Music to me is like good food and I can appropriately term it delicious.

Another effort was made while on dress parade to get the boys to stay. This time for 5 or 7 days which means to march seven days and then turn us lose and take seven more to get back. Maybe one fifth or fourth voted to stay and half of them sick men who could not go. What will come up now I don't know. The Col[onel] has gone home sick, and not 1/2 of the regiment are able to march. When the men were told that the Col[onel] was to leave they cheered loudly and cried hang him, shoot him. Hurrah for Sherman!

### **Monday, September 5th**

The D[octo]r says my liver is out of order. This is nothing new, for my system has been out of order a good share of the time for over two months. So



much concentrated food is killing on me in warm weather. Another effort still was made to get the regiment to stay but only one hundred and fourteen would put their names down. The Lieutenant Col[onel] has gone to Paducah to report to the General. What next?

### **Tuesday, September 6th**

I feel very weak this morning from the effects of medicine but I think I have barely escaped the nasty yellow jaundice now quite prevalent.

### **Wednesday, September 7th**

I'm still confined this dirty hole and whoever is keeping us in it. Why don't they kill us at once instead of doing it on maggots victuals or else send us home. Our time is out today anyhow. Last night the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ill[inois] Cavalry brought in a prisoner said to be a very fine looking fellow. He claims to belong to the regular service but he is believed by many to be a guerrilla. At any rate he has been sentenced to be shot and his grave is now being dug. I hope for humanity's sake for our own boy's sake on whom retaliation would come if he does belong to the C.S.A. army that the proof is good. He is said to be praying. God grant that he may find peace is my fervent prayer. I went out to see the guerrilla shot. While there a heavy shower came up and then a big skedaddle but it was soon over. But never wish to see another execution similar to this. Johnson (this is the prisoner's name) came up groaning and praying and [then] he broke out into the wildest of lamentations prayers and ejaculations with his last

breath he denied being guilty, but the proof was too positive. Capt[ain] Gregory and many of the men have known him since boyhood and I think he plunged into the dark gulf with a lie on his lips.<sup>60</sup>

### **Thursday, September 8th**

Been rather a quiet kind of day as far as rumors are concerned, but have been more active than usual. I hope I shall be all right soon. The worst of it is I can't get anything to eat. I wrote a letter to father. Yesterday I sent one to Leonis. Walt is quite sick today [and] growing worse. The rest of the boys are on the gain.

### **Friday, September 9th**

I am on camp guard. I thought at first I should have to give up but "Never Give Up" helped me out and I am better. Last eve the D[octo]r told us it would be better for Walt to be in the hospital, so he is gone. I suppose it will be better for him for we have no conveniences for taking care of him.

### **Saturday, September 10th**

Nothing but the old routine here. Gregory's men shot two more guerrillas. Four less than a week ago. One here, one at Paducah and these.

### **Sunday, September 11th**

Finds us still in this miserable dirty hole. Ain't we ever going to leave? If we stay one week, more men will have died since the expiration of our time than before. Got a letter from Dan. The orderly

---

<sup>60</sup> John Johnson was the man executed.

seemed anxious that his name shall figure in my diary so I will write what he told me to say the orderly just came in and told you that there will be dress parade at five o'clock. The probability is that there will be some speeches made and we shall have to stay 15 days longer or rather we have stayed 15 days longer than we want to. Au Revoir "Mr. Squawking Goose" accept my best wishes that you may enjoy a long life of happiness and prosperity for you have always treated me with consideration. In fact, gentlemanly.

### **Monday, September 12th**

Geo[rge] and I volunteered to go with Thomas to guard the Hay train. Had a ride of about 8 miles over Kentucky roads. It was only 4 miles from town when we got there but we came all around the bush pile to get there, and if we did not have all the watermelons and apples we could eat then it was our own fault. We had to march back and what a time the boys had shooting chickens. On the whole we had a pretty good time.

### **Tuesday, September 13th**

General Meredith came today and instead of going home within 48 hours as he promised we kindly got permission to stay and make his acquaintance for, well the Lord only knows how long, for if they have a right to keep us one month I suppose they may [be] longer. And instead of carrying out Paine's policy of hunting rebels he takes them and clasps them in his loving embrace. Going to have a love feast. I suppose he is going to feed in

the same trough with the lousy Grey Backs and they will all become Union men. Oh! Won't they? Sent them all home to bushwhack as much as they please. I hope they will catch someone. But us poor devils are due to be kept a while to make soldiers of us. Go home vets, won't we? Gregory's men are so mad they threaten to disband. Everyone jaws or curses or threatens or swears. Go it boots.

### **Wednesday, September 14th**

Nothing occurred of particular interest until D[ress] P[arade] when orders were issued for the regiment to prepare for general inspection at 6 p.m.

### **Thursday, September 15th**

I'll bet last night's inspection by moonlight was not laid down in the [facts]. At any rate the old chap got sick of it so it was postponed until 9 A.M. this morning when it went off according to "gunter." Received a letter from Annie.

### **Friday, September 16th**

Orders have been received for the companies to drill three hours in Co[mpany] drill in the forenoon and two hours Bat[allion] drill in the afternoon. Wish them joy of all they get out of us.

### **Saturday, September 17th**

Diarrhea.

Hurrah! Three times three and a tiger! For at last the welcome news has come and part of the regiment goes today and the rest tomorrow or Monday, but there is one little drawback to my

enjoyment. I have been blessed with a renewal of my acquaintance with my old friend ague. Received a letter from mother. She got scared lest I should re-enlist. I am sorry that things are so badly at home. I hope we should not be delayed much longer.

This P.M. one half of the regiment took the train for Paducah and the rest of us are to go Monday. Now if they won't keep us there we shall be all right pretty soon.

### **Sunday, September 18th**

Has been pretty quiet for us, no details for anything today. It is a most beautiful day. A clear bright sun but a cool refreshing breeze renders the air delightful. Much more than usual can I realize that this should be the day of sacred rest and more than as usual on this day my thoughts have been on divine things, though for fear of the charge of hypocrisy I will say my mind is in its old state of unquiet and unrest.

Generally today is entitled among the soldier as the dirty work day and sometimes I hardly think from morn till night what day it is. Read a letter from Annie Van.

### **Sunday, October 2nd**

Well my poor neglected diary, how do you feel over my slighting you? For these long two weeks and so big with events and changes. I must humbly beseech your pardon and will try and amend and to begin will write a good long chapter on the events of past time. On Monday the left wing

left the much hated town of Mayfield. The scene of so many of our trials and disappointments and although we were awfully crowded, no one murmured. That night [we] camped out in Paducah. Next day strolled over the town, bought me a pair of boots, only \$10. Went bathing. About dark the orders came to pack up, and until ten all was life and excitement. Bonfires blazed and powder was burnt and everybody yelled themselves hoarse. I went down ahead of the regiment and secured a tolerably good place to sleep and neither knew when the boat left.

## Epilogue

When Private Needham's term of duty expired he returned to the family farm at Loda. The following year he relocated to Kansas where he purchased a plot of land near the village of Tonganoxie. Hawley's parents and his three siblings joined him and his new bride, Catherine Emilia Lowe, in 1868. Hawley went on to establish the first Dairy Association and Farmer's Institute in the state. He was the president of the Tonganoxie Creamery Association for seven years, introduced the Holstein breed of cattle to the region and some believe the inventor of the octagon silo. He served as Tonganoxie's mayor for two terms and was the superintendent of the local Congregational Sunday School for twenty-five years. He also was the town's historian, documenting many of region's early events in articles published in the local newspaper. Hawley V. Needham died on July 19, 1932 at his farm in Tonganoxie. He was the oldest surviving Civil

War soldier in the community when he died.<sup>61</sup>

The diary is in the possession of Hawley's great-great-grand-nephew who resides in Washington State.

### **About the Author:**

Dieter Ullrich is the Head of Special Collections and Archives at Morehead State University. He previously served as the director of both the special collections and archives at Murray State University and the University of Tennessee at Martin. For the past two decades he has written articles on the Civil War in the Jackson Purchase and West Tennessee. He is currently conducting research on the Rowan County War and finishing a publication on General E. A. Paine's command at Paducah during the summer of 1864.

---

<sup>61</sup> "H. V. Needham Passed Away," *Tonganoxie Mirror* (Tonganoxie, KS), July 21, 1932.