

March the 11 1863
Stafford Corthouse

Dear father and mother

I thought I would write you a few lines to you to let you know that I am alive yet and am a giting well but I hav been sick I hav had a lame side but it is a gitting well I shal be fit for duty in a day or to

wal it is a very good day it is as plesent as you plesse I would like to be to home to hav sum mor shuger to eat I think you will make sum this spring for suger is hy ther this spring

the talk is that we are nine months meen but I dont belive that for that is to good to belive they will hold us as long as they plesse but that ant but a years and five month to stay it is a month a go to day since I enlisted time passes of very fast hear you would go slo but it dont

I hant seen bill in a long time I dont know whare he is now

the rods is very bad here now as soon as they git so that the army can move they will move us in to sum place we have been in this camp five weeks they wont let us stay heer five weeks longer

father I want you to ceap them stags untill I com home if you can

wal they say we will get pay next weak but I dont know how that is but if they do I shal send sum home if we git fore munts pay I shal send forty dolers home that will leve me twelve to by tobaco with if we git pade this month it will be a long time before we shal git eny more

wal I cant think of much to rite now
but rite often as you can

from Harvey Earl

rite soon

[Harvey I. Earl, private, Co. H, 154th New York, *National Archives*.]

Civil War Letters of our Great Uncle, Harvey Earl. Most were written to his brother, Alfred Earl, and his wife, Almina "Tip" Hubbard Earl.

Spelling is as written in original letters. No periods were used in these letters. But it is surprising how well the writing has been preserved. I was told by Wilson Milks (in 1972) that Harvey Earl never returned from the war, and no news of what happened to him was ever received. He, himself, while travelling in Virginia, tried to find some record of his death, but could find none. It was said that at one time during the Civil War, there was an exchange of prisoners and when they were lined up for the exchange, Harvey was one of the last in line and that he stepped back and allowed another to go in his place.

Jan. the 7 1863

Dear Brother

I got your letter this morning and was very glad to hear from you and to hear that you was well your letter found me as well as common it rather cold hear this morning our hous is rather cold you must know that it cannot be very plesent sleeping on the ground at this time of wether We got in camp in the same camp that we was when I rote to Tip it is very sikley hear now there has been 9 dide in this regment since we cum hear

I think that Marten and Lib is gitting a long very well Sur tell them that they must name him after me and I will giv him a nice present when I git home What does the folks think of this war out ther I can tell you what the privets thinks of it they are sik of it I dont think it will close very soon We dont git a nuf to eate now fore they cant git it heer for so many men You did not rite very soon after you got my letter I looked for a letter from you for to or three days I want you to write as often as you can for I dont hav a very good chance to write has father got them stags yet he hant sed a word from home in a good while You must write as soon as you git this

from Harv

Note.--This refers to the birth of my Uncle Harvey Milks--Martin and Lib were our grandparents.

Jan the 31 1863

Dear brother and sister

I got letters from you the other day I was very glad to hear from you and to hear that you was all well I got them stamps I was very glad to git them I had 2 or 3 letters and count ansure them for I could not git eny stamps

Wal I sapose you hav hurd of the move that was made last weak We had to move out of our tent We had a log hut made and it was quite a good place to sleep but we hav got back with in a mile of ther and hav got up another house but I dont know how long we shal stay heer We are gitting so that we dont car for eny thing

Wal I seen bill when he was agoing back to his old camp he was well and feels very good for his time is most out I wish my time was as near out as his I would think I mite git back agane but a man stanes a very poor chance for his life

Wal you must write as soon as you git this

from Harv

March the 3 1863

Stafford Corthouse

Dear friends

I recived your sad letter last nite I felt the worst that I hav since I hav been in Virginia when I red that leter but you must ceap up good curag he has gon to a place whare they never hav war he will see his little aunt ther I feel so bad that I cant rite if you have eny more bad nuse dont tell it to me for it is bad anuf to stay heer without heering eny bad nuse from home

I am not very well at present but I hope that I shal git better in a few dayes it is plesent wether hear now the birds sings just as sweet as they ever did in all Catternaus it makes me home sik but that will never

do I will ceap up good curag and when this war is over I will come home and see my friends once more and never go to rambel agane then I will have good old times once more thir is a olde fortion teller hear and I am agoing over and hav him tell mine in a few dayes ther has been sum of the boyes over and he ses that this regment will nevr see a fite but I dont think he knows any thing about it but the boyes that has had thern told say he will tell his part just as it is I cant rite eny more now for my hand trembels so So goodby for this time from Harvey Earl

October the 5 1862

Dear brother I thought I would rite a few lines to you to let you no that I was alive and well and I hope that these few lines will find you well We are camped in Virginia about three miles on the other side of the Potomac river it is rather warm here I did not wsee you when I cum thro Salmanca I seen Gorge he cum up whar the cars stoped bill was over hear today he is as tuft as a buck rite to me as soon as you git this

Wal tip I thought that I would rite a word ~~ex~~ to you tell Jane that I am very glad that she cum over to your house that kniht for I would hav hated to cum away without seeing her you and Alfred must rite to me and all of the folks must rite and not wate for me good by for this time Drect to Washington D. C. 154 rigment U S State Volenteers Co. H in care of Cap F J Nelson

this is badley crald up from Harv Earl to Mister Alfred Earl and Co

Farefax Oct the 19 1862 Dear brother I got your letter this morn- ing and was glad to hear that you was well your letter found me well and I hope this few lines will find you well I dont like soldering very well when we marched from Washington it was a weak ago today and we marched all day it was about 10 oclock at knight we camped and it rained like hell all knight and we slep out in the rain like hogs I was as wet as a drouded rat what kind of wether is it out ther

it is warm dayes and cold knights heer I was glad to hear that father had traded of that jugnut I sent him a letter a good while ago and hav not got eny from him ~~eg~~ atole I cant write eny more so goodby

Wal tip I will rite a few lines to you to let you know that I am alive and well and as foolish as ever I hope that those few lines will find you well that likness I sent you was rather poor Joes was better Jane sent me a letter I got it yesterday I hav a hard place to write you must excuse my poor riting and spelling I dont know whare bill is now I hav not seen him since I rote to yo u how does Olive git along now she will git mad at me if I dont write to her it is as helthey heer as it is ther with the same kind of far it is hard fare that makes the boyes sik heer insted of the climet I cant write eny more so good by rite as soon as you git this and oblige Hav Harvey Earl

Fairfax Oct the 30 1862

Dear brother

I reread your letter this morning and was very glade to hear from you and to hear that you was well your letter found me well and tuft as a buck I am giting fat I way 159 pounds now well Alfred we had a very cold rain hear last Sunday it was very cold that knight the boys went into woods to make a fire to ceape warm I think we shal stay hear all wintr.

I wrote in Charleys letter to tell you to ssend me sum stamps I wish you would for I cant git eny hear Send sum if you can I had a letter from father the other day he was well

I have seen the place whare Nate Howrd was shot (Note--he had an arm shot off--mentioned in another letter.)

I was ~~et~~ on picket gard the other knight I hurd sum houns a running afore the fox run rite clost to me I dart not shoot at him it made me think of h home I cant think of much more to rite

Give my love to all of the folks rite soon Goodby for now from Harve

Fairfax Nov 22 1862

I received a letter from you the other day and was very glad to hear from you and to hear that you was all well I am very well just now but I think I feel better this morning than I have in the two weeks before we have been on the march for 3 weeks more or less and we have got back where we started from now I don't know where we shall go next

tell Lib that I believe I had rather set up with her when she had the rheumatism than to be hear (Lib was my grandmother)

Wal tip I don't like this kind of business much but I expect it is all for the best

I can't write much more for my fingers is so cold I can't write give my love to all

So good by from Harvey Earl

Dec the 2 1862

Dear Sister I got your letter this morning and was very glad to hear from you and to hear that you was well I am well at present

I have been in the hospital at Delas Hide about that they had a big fight and the rebels give us a good flaying they killed 5 of our men to 1 of them Bill was in the fight but did not get hurt Tom Pratt got shot in the back and in the leg I have seen him and Bill since the fight We are camped on one side of the river and the rebels are on the other side I don't know whether we shall fight again or not I can't think of much more to write

write as soon as you get this
from Harvey Earl to tip

Dec the 9 1862

Fairfax Dec the 9 1862

Dear brother and sister I received your kind letter and was glad to hear from you and to hear that you was well and to write to me

I like to hear from you you wrote me the best letter that I have had since I have been hear I like to hear from all of the folks when I hear from home Alfred I got them stamps you sent me but they are all gone now I shall have to beg one to send this one I have not got any money to get any thing at all we have got marching orders now I don't know where we shall go to

it is warm and pleasant here today it has been cold for 3 or 4 days back the snow has been 3 inches deep here but it is warm today Wal I should like to be out there for a while that is so give my love to all

write as soon as you get this

from Harvey Earl

Fredricksburg Jan the 17 1863

Dear friend tip I received your letter last night and was very glad to hear from you and to hear that you was all well your letter found me all right Wal I should think that the folks was doing very well I don't think that I know that Brown of James I suppose that he and Jane thinks they have sholde (?) there don't (?) Wal tip tell them both that I wish them much joy and the first year a boy for I think there will want more soldiers here if they take the boys over the river again and I think there will be another move made before long and think we shall go any time what does the folks think about this war tell Alfred to send me a dollar worth of stamps and when I get my pay I will send him a dollar in a letter for I have not got any stamps nor any money and if I had a hundred dollars I could not get any for there is not any to be had here I should think that had and Charley would be a getting (?) Wal I can't write as soon as you get this from Harvey Earl---Note--I cannot tell what he meant by some of his sentences in this letter.

Feb the 19 1863

Staffords Corthouse

Dear brother and sister I received your letter last nite and was glad to hear from you and to hear that you was well your letter found me well

Wal we hav moved back towards Washington about ten miles they say that we hav got to go down to teenassee but I dont know how that is an I dont car a dam

you and the folks thought that the war would close up by Spring I dont see as the war is eny neer a close then it was when we cumr down hear

Wal I have just ben to grub/we had a good meal this morning we had sum potatos and we stold a ~~quarter~~ of beaf last nite but for a general thing we hav rather hard fair it is very bad wether now it snows one day and the next day it will rain that makes rather hard times for us Wal you rote me a very short letter you must do better than that

Wal what do you think of doing this sumer I hav got the starte of you I know what my bisness will be for 2 years if I should happen to live Wal what is Gorges folks doing this winter did Charley git my letter I rote him he did not rite to me since tell rachel that she mite rite a few lines and let me know how she gets along let her rite and send it with your lettee

Wal I cant rite much more rite soon
from Harvey

March the 10 1863

Stafford Corthouse

~~Dear brother and sister~~ ~~I thought I would write you a few lines~~

Dear brother and sister I thought I would write you a few lines to let you know how I am gitting along Wal I cant say that I am well for I ant by no menes I hav got a lame side and it is pretty lame to Wal it has snow sum today and it looks rather lonsum the boyes is most all out on picket and I got to thinking about you and I thought you was as lonsum as I since the joy of your livs was gon but he has gon to a beter world then this I hope those few lines will find you well I hope I shal get better soon I had a letter from rachel the other day she rote me a very good letter

Wal they say that we are nine months more but that is a camp story I think that is to good to believe Wal it is nite now it is a bad nite it rains sum and it is quite cold the boyes will have a harde time on picket but I know how to pity them for I hav had sum hard times on picket and expect ~~a~~ sum more before this thing runs down Wal the rode is very bad yet but as soon as they are better they will put us on the move agane we hav been in this camp five weeks Wal you must rite and let me know how all of the folks gits along Wal I shal send this without a stamp for I hant got eny I thought I would try it and see if it would get thru rite as soon as you git this from Harvey Earl---NOTE---The letter did arrive wi thout any stamp, as all the rest of the letters have stamps on them.

March the 15 1863 Stafford Corthouse

Dear brother I received your letter this evining and was very glad to heer from you and to hear that you was well your letter found me well as common I had a letter from home last weak they had had sum fus tom and father and father turned tom out dors I think they mite have beter bisness then to fite and quarrel all of the time but they may do as they like about that Wal it is Sunday nite and it is a very bad nite for it rains and snowes like the very devel Wal I think that nuse is scarce up ther by the looks of your letter but I am glad to git a letter if it is short Wal I cant think of much to rite myself

We hav marching orders now but we may stay heer to weeks yet but when they move agane they will take us into a fite I think but it may be that they wont

cold hear for this time of year I cant think of eny more to rite now
and I will close up write soon from Harvey Earl--Note--The father
spoken of was Lewis Earl, our Great Grandfather. Tom was Harvey's
brother. He had a large family and Wilson Milks said that he was
killed by a train.

March the 26 1863 Stafford Corthouse

Dear Brother I got your letter last nite and was glad to hear from you
and to hear that you was well I got them stamps I am well as comon if
I should live to git back I will make the thing all rite with you
I hant got any nuse to write but I will try to write a few lines to let
you know what I think of this war I think this will be a bludy sumer
and I think that will make the thing will end I hope so. We hant
moved yet and I dont know when we shal We hav had orders to hav 60
rounds of cartredgs We hant had to cary onley 40 rounds that is anuf
for a man to carey when we git our cote on it makes a muels lod (mule's
load?) Wal rite soon from Harve Earl

Camp "John Manley", 154th Reg Lt N. Y. Vol. 1st Briade, 2d Division,
11th Corp. Army Potomac

Near Stafford C. H. Va. (This heading was print-
ed on the stationery he wrote the letter on)

April 12th 1863

Dear brother I thought I would
write a few lines to you to let you know that I am alive and well and
I hope these few lines will find you all well I got a lette r from you
last friday nite I was glad to hear from you and to hear that you was well
this is a nice day it makes me home sike but that wont do any
good to be home sike the frogs sings hear and hav for fore weeks I
think we shal move before long but I dont know which way

Wal Alfred you hant told me what you was a going to do this sumer
I think we shal move before long I want you to rite all of the nuse
that is agoing what do they say about drafting now I hope they will
draft and end this thing up this sumer for I dont want to stay hear
another winter for this is a hard place to winter if you dont belive
that cum down and try it for yourself I dont want you to think that I
want you to cum down hear for I dont want you to by no meanes for 2
out of a famley is anuf I think Wal we went out and see old Abe the
other day he was hear and revewed our Corps Genrel Howrd is in Co-
mand of this Corps now in Sigel place he ant as smart a looking man
as Sigel is he hant got but one arme he got it shot off to the batel
of fair oks (Battle of Fair Oaks?) he led the old 64 into batel ther
Wal I cant think of eny more to write now so good by giv my love to all
from Harvery Earl

May the 12 1863 Stafford Corthouse

Dear brother and sister

I thought I would write a few lines to you to let you know that I
am alive and well but a little sore on my leg thi that wont amount to
much

I hav got a little time and I will try and tell you a bittle about
the fite/our brigade left this camp the 15 of April and went to keles
ford (IKelly's Ford?) we stade ther about to weeks and we had to go
on picket evry othe day and then we had to put down the pontoons
bridges the nite that the army crosed the river and then we had to wate
for the army to cros it and then we had to gard the bageg train thru
to whare we had the fite we marched 21 miles in one day we had 8
days rashens but the rebs got them and all the rest of the things that
I had in my knapsak that pare of soks you may charge to the rebs they
got them I think for I throd them everything away and the balls cum
round my head like hale stone and the men was a falling on all side of
me I hope I shant see anothe such a time it ant a very plesent place

story is hear that they burnt the ded up for they could not git them
under ground

Harmen Fisher is among the misin I dont know whether he was kild
or not Wal I cant write eny more now so good by for this time giv
my lov to all to live a spell

May the 23 1863

Stafford Corthouse

Dear brother I recived your letter last no nite and
was very glad to hear from you and to hear that you was well your letter
found me well all but my leg hant got well yet

I hant got much nuse to write this time for ther ant much going on
but I know one thing that is that this is a warm day for this time of
year

The regment has N gon out on revue I doneny duty since we have been
in this camp for I hava sore leg

Wal Alfred what do you think of this war do you think that it will
end this sumer you had not hurd that this regment was 9 month men the
boys sum of them thinks that we be but I dont think that is so but I
hope that is so for I have seen anuf of this niger war you dont know
anything about what a solder has to go thru they suffer in camp and
then they take them into a slotter yard and then they x hafta stand
ther chanc with the rebs mabe you think that I am making this out to
be a hard place for a man if you think that it ant you ask bill when he
gits home Wal you must write Write me a good long letter from Harvey
Earl

June the 10 1863

Dear brother and sister I thought I would try and write a
few lines to you to let you know that I am well and I hope these few
lines will find you all well my leg has got better and I do duty now
the wether is very warm hear now

I got that letter with them stamps in it if I should live to git
home I will make that all right with you We hav ben under marching ord-
ers for the last long weak but we hav not moved yet it is very still
times hear now ther ant but few papers cum to camp Wal Alfred what do
you think of this war do you think it will end this year I dont think
that it will end in 2 years the head men dont want it to stop for they
make money very fast and esy

Wal ther ant much to write this time why dont tip write sum I will
write a few lines to rachel write soon from Harvey

June the 10 1863

Stafford Corthouse

Dear Aunt I will try and write a few lines
to you to let you know that I hav not forgotten you yet I am well at
present and I hope those few lines will find you all well the sore on
my leg has got most well I do not know what did ale it but I know that
the rebs did not hit me eny whar but they may next time the bals struck
all round me and the men fell on all sides of me it is warm wether and
very dry they say that we shal haf to hav a fite her before long but
I think not in a weak or to

How does grandfather get along this sumer tell him that I should
like to be ther to help him do his haying this sumer

Wal I cant write much more now so good by from Harve giv my lov to
all

You must excuse my short letter for I hav got to go out on
picket and be out 2 days

note--The Grandfather referred to was William Woodworth, as in one census
record(1865) he was living with his dau. Rachel(Woodsworthy) Osgood. He
was 74 then. Rachel was a younger sister of his Mother, Sarah Ann
(Buchanan) Woodworth. Rachel was only about 10 years older than Harvey.
The brother, Bill,, probably returned f rom the war but I found no
mention of him in any census.