

thought I could be more  
should as a soldier: *Ex-*  
*the only safe way for me.*  
e of the many exposures  
you are wet or cold the  
t. You can walk around  
e tent and wrap up the  
u wake up in the morn-  
within an inch of the  
protect you and can feel  
most as plainly as if you

many pleasant memo-  
up of merry faces that  
upper room and discuss  
important in their bear-  
e merry laugh and the  
ny of the scenes where  
, were brought before  
th whom we have met  
ngs ever meet again in  
nk now that I have left  
e is concerned. What I  
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lo not know. You know  
above all else and I find  
ut me still. The way it  
my mind. You may say  
quite well and in good  
t I have written to you

wrote to N. P. Wheeler  
Monday June 16, 1862:

Dear Friend:

I have waited long and in vain for a letter from you. If I mistake not, it has been over six weeks since I heard from you. The last time I wrote you, I filled five sheets full. The fifth Regiment is forming in line for Dress Parade, now within a few feet from our tent, so I will stop and look at them.—Well! They made a very fine appearance, the band and drum major in particular. We have dress parade every evening but they do not seem like a parade without a band. They are now playing "Let Me Kiss Him For His Mother." Oh, it is splendid! It reminds me of the sings we have had at home.

Our new band instruments will be here, I think, the last of this week. We shall then have something to do. Really, I am getting so lazy,—well I can't say how lazy. I am almost breathlessly watching McClellan's movements. I cannot for a moment doubt that he will be successful. But I fear, I tremble. May the God of Heaven help us and give us victory! Would that this difficulty might be settled without so much bloodshed and sacrifice of human life!

I have thought that we would have to run out of this valley again, but I hardly know what will happen.

During the War Between the States, N. P. Wheeler received letters from a close friend who had lived in Portville and had enlisted in the Union Army. He was serving in the Corps commanded by General Sigel. The friend's name was L. D. Warner. Warner wrote as follows:

Camp near Fairfax, Virginia  
October 21, 1862  
Friend, Nelson P.:

Well, here we are down in Dixie. Surrounded by all the panoply of war. Turn your eyes whichever way you will, the iron instruments of man's revenge upon man meet the eye, although not as conspicuously as the white tents (false

*Wheeler, W. Reginald, Pine Knots  
and Bark Peelers, The Story of Five  
Generations of American Lumbermen. (New  
York: Ganis and Harris, 1960.)*

emblems of purity and peace) of those who, like myself, have left the peaceful pursuits and associations of home, to mingle, if need be, in the deadly strife and shed the last drop of our blood in defense of our common country and its free and noble institutions. You are no doubt aware of our location and that we are attached to Sigel's Corps. We have as yet no reason to complain of the disposition that has been made of us; indeed we are all highly gratified and thank our lucky stars that, to use the Dutchman's phrase, we are to fight "mit Sigel." This reminds me of what I heard on the streets of Washington. A battle-marked soldier was wending his way down one of its avenues, when he was accosted by a citizen (a Dutchman of course), in this wise. "Say, soldier, you fight mit Sigel?" "Ya." "Well den, you takes a trink mit me." One thing certain, since we came here we have not been on short allowance for provisions, which is more than can be said at any time previous since we came South. The officers of this Department seem determined that the troops shall lack for nothing to make them comfortable and to place them on a war footing at the earliest possible moment. How long we shall remain here is, of course, known to no one except the Commander-in-Chief and he won't tell; but from certain indications, I am of the opinion that our stay is to be short. Yesterday in connection with six other regiments of infantry and three batteries of artillery, we were reviewed by General Sigel in person. It was the largest assembly of troops I have seen since I came here. Sigel is rather a small man with sandy complexion, sharp features, and such an eye! I think he can see and judge of the qualities individually or collectively of a body of men as quickly and with as much certainty as any man I ever saw. What opinion he formed of the 154th Regiment, I have not learned. After the review, Sigel's old troops who with him had stood the hardships of the last twelve months, were drawn up on each side of the road leading from Fairfax to Centerville, and we, with the rest of the new troops,

were marched past them to give us a chance to take a look at the remnants of what was once a regiment as full as ours and as fresh from the land of free institutions. The sight of those noble fellows who greeted us with cheer upon cheer, was well calculated to cause serious and sober thoughts among our troop.

Many of the regiments we saw are reduced to from two to three hundred soldiers. Their regimental colors were torn and tattered in every imaginable form, and many a scarred face greeted our inquiring eyes as we marched along. How long ere the 154th Regiment will be reduced to the same condition? Of the 950 men who left Cattaraugus will not more than one in four be on hand to answer to their names when we are mustered out of the service, and will I be among that number? These were questions which came up for solution in my mind as we marched past these war stained veterans.

The first death in our camp occurred yesterday. The deceased was a member of Company D in our Regiment and was from Machias. His name was Myers. He died of congestion of the brain and was sick for only about twelve hours. He was buried today. This would seem to me the hardest of all, to leave wife and children (he had two children and a wife) to venture my life on the battlefield and then to die before we had a chance to meet the enemy would seem hard to bear. Far better for me to die amid the clash of steel against steel. I have not received a letter from Portville since I left Jamestown and I am getting cross. Please write as soon as you receive this and if anything of interest is transpiring, let me know. If you can spell this out you can read anything in the shape of writing. Remember me to your Father, Mother, Augusta and all who may enquire.

Respectfully yours,  
L. D. Warner

Camp 15th Regt.  
Atlanta, Oct. 26th, 1864

Friend Nelson

Yours of the 13th inst. is just received. The package of Campaign Documents preceeded it some 4 to 5 days. They were, however, rather late to be of much benefit this time, as the votes of the Regt. were already cast and mailed to their respective recipients. This voting by proxy is rather interesting business. It has the advantage of not being confined to one day but may be extended through a period of 60. There was not much use for Campaign Documents here as it is nearly all one way, not more than 5 to 6 voting for Mc out of 150, and on these all labor would have been lost. They were born, raised, and educated, as Democrats, and to vote anything else was treason, more rank, than to fight against their country. Well, we can let Mc have those and still have enough left to reelect Uncle Abram and that by a triumphant majority, if the Union Men at the north will but do their duty at the polls and this I am pretty sure they will do.

Oct. 30th. Just as I have got thus far with my letter the bell (yes, we have a dinner bell) rang for dinner and as I can always write much better on a full stomach, I obeyed the summons at once, intending to resume my pen as soon as I had dispatched my allowance of corn bread and sweet potatoes.

But how uncertain are human events especially in time of war. Ere the first course had disappeared an order comes to pack up and prepare to fall in at once to go out and reinforce a detachment which had started early in the morning on a foraging expedition into the country east of Stone Mountain.

You are probably aware that our communications have been somewhat interrupted of late and as we did not chance to have a large stock of forage on hand, our animalls were soon on short allowance, and then on no allowance

at all. And the horses and the mules waxed lean like Pharaoh-kine, and a great cry went up from the mules, why should we become food for Buzzards, while there is corn but a day's march into Dixie? And our Chief saw that the mules were wise in their generation, and he immediately sent out a detachment with a train of waggons to forage for corn. These expeditions are now carried on on an extensive scale and have thus far been perfectly successfull. A train of from 400 to 700 waggons with an escort of perhaps 2000 Infantry, a battery of Artillery & a Brigade of Cavalry is sent out and is usually gone 4 days. The corn is mostly taken from the stalks and is brought in with the husks on. The waggons are driven through the fields and the corn is picked and thrown in. While corn is the principal article of forage, nothing that can be eaten either by man or beast comes amiss or is rejected. Sweet potatoes and yams are an important item. Then comes cattle, sheep, hogs, geese, chickens, honey, and in fact everything that the country produces, is taken, and turned to the use of the soldier or his animalls. So clean is the work done that I much doubt whether a forlorn hope of catterpillars can winter where our Army has foraged. Without doubt much suffering will insure among the poor people who inhabit this section, but who has not suffered from this terrible war?

Under the license that is allowed the individual soldier in these expeditions many acts of wanton vandallism are perpetrated which nothing can justify. But who is responsible for all the horrors which are depicted upon this dread camp? And was there ever a war in which the chief suffering did not fall to the lot of the poor, those who are but indirectly responsible therefor? Still I have witnessed what I would fein believe had never occured. I have seen families of helpless wommen & children completely striped of everything, which could afford food for their laddies, the last cow, pig, chicken, ear of corn, even the last pint of meal or corn cake, if perchance it was baked, the last platter,

bowl, teacup, knife, or fork, not even sparing the tea kettle, strip while the family sits in dumb apathy, surveying the ruin, or are pleading (too often in vain) that a little may be spared them for the coming winter. These, however, are extreme cases. Many of the people say that we treat them as well as do their own soldiers, they take all and one can do no more.

I have been out on two of these expeditions from here; one started two weeks ago today and occupied 4 days, the other was the one from which we returned last evening. The first time we went about 20 miles nearly due south making Flatrock Shoals on South River our base of operations. The last was about the same distance but more to the east, our base being about 3 miles N.E. from Stone Mountain. When I speak of our base, I refer to the point where the regular camp is established. From this centre the waggons are sent out under guard in all directions in quest of forage and when loaded return to camp, and remain untill all are loaded and ready for the return. These expeditions are not without changes. The enemy's cavalry is about and the greatest care and vigilance is necessary to protect the immense train of waggons which when on the road reach more miles than there are hundred waggons in the train. On the last expeditions, they were more troublesome than usual, and General Geary who commanded the expedition sent back to Gen. Slocum for additional troops which was the cause of my being out this time. The expedition lost some 30 men, mostly cavalry, the balance, men who strayed from their commands to forage on their own hook, and were picked up by Rebel Bushwhackers.

The country south of here as far as I have been is about the same in its natural features as that north of the Chattahoochie (perhaps the hills are not as high) but there is more land under cultivation, and a large area that was cultivated before the warr but which is now producing nothing but wild grass & weeds. Most of the ground under cultiva-

tion is in corn with an occasional patch of cotton, sorgunn, and sweet potatoes, but few Irish potatoes are raised. That considerable cotton was once raised here is proved by the presence on nearly every plantation of the enormous cotton crops, and Ginn driven by horse power. Stone Mountain is really a curiosity, being nothing more or less than one enormous boulder of hard dark granite, rising to the hight of about 600 feet above the plain. Its length may be a mile. Take an egg which has considerable taper and lay it on the side half buried and you have nearly the form of the mountain, its butt end towards the east, and the small end gradually tapering down untill it meets the levell of the surrounding country; on the north side not a crevice can be seen and not a shrub finds a lodgment. The only visible marks upon its smooth surface are the crevices worn by the water which has fallen upon its summit and coursed down its horny sides. The R.R. to Augusta runs along its southern base. Stone Mountain Station near the western terminus of the mountain is a village which must have once contained near 1000 inhabitants, most of whom have left for more secure retreats further south. Decater, 6 miles from Atlanta on the same R.R., is quite a village, and bears the marks of having been finished many years ago, and has not of late years been considered worth repainting.

But enough of this. I received today a letter from Mr. & Mrs. Wheeler, and also one from Mr. Ogden, for both of which I am extremely thankfull, as letters are few and far between nowadays. I shall answer them soon if we are suffered to remain here, of which there is some question. It is reported that we are to leave here in a few days for parts unknown, with how much truth I cannot say, as I am not in the confidence of the powers that be. My choice would be to remain here through the winter, provided, that by so doing, I could forward the purpose that brought me here, as much as by going elsewhere. We have today received 46 recruits, the first since the Regt. came out. Our Chaplain

Elder Norton also arrived and was mustered in yesterday and today he preached to the Regt. for the first time. I think he will be well liked and prove a valuable addition to our Regimental Staff. The R.R.'s said to be in running order through from Nashville and I am in hopes we shall get our mails once more with some approach to regularity. For several weeks we have been almost entirely cut off from communication with the outer world, and to get a Cincinnati paper within 9 days of its publication as we did today, is getting news comparatively new and fresh.

This ship may not greet you until after Election, but I hope and trust if so, that it may find you rejoicing over a victory as complete as the ballot box as was Sheridan's in the Shenandoah Valley. The effect of that victory, on the Rebellion was as nothing compared with the effect of a decisive union victory at the polls on the 8th of Nov.

Remember me to all who may enquire, your family in particular. Hoping to hear from you again and that soon,  
I remain Sincerely yours

S. D. Warner.

N. P. Wheeler, Esq.  
Portville, N. Y.

On November 11, 1862, another friend wrote from a "camp near Warrenton, Virginia."

Friend Nelson:

Your very welcome letter of October 28th 1862, came to hand last Friday, and since that time we have done some marching and I have not been very well which, taken together, must be my excuse for not answering sooner. If we stay here the rest of this day, it will be three days for us in one place. Yesterday we were placed by the side of the road to see McClelland and to be seen by him. While we were there waiting for his appearance there was read to us a paper signed by McClelland in which he said that by order

of the President the comma upon General Burnside; the the Army. It is said that wh cers, he cried like a child. among the privates; some They will never put as n man as they had in McCl things all ready to march command taken from him help ourselves and must go but if the Army could have be at the head.

When I wrote to you befo them now. Each soldier is g 6½ feet square. The pieces three of us together can p pieces of cloth together; th from 4 to 4½ feet high in t We shut the other end wit quite comfortable now eve snowing, with mud knee-d pretty hard times ahead. V the other day and that mad perly that it was hard to n here doing nothing, we ha that the next rain or snow again. The Company is nov enough or don't feel well e have had no papers here fo that Seymour was elected want to hear any such 1 soldiers had had a chance made a difference.

When we are on the ma don't get the mail very ofte come when it does come. W