

CIVIL WAR 150 • READER #3

The EXPERIENCE of BATTLE

Introduction by Brooks D. Simpson



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CIVIL WAR 150: Exploring the War and Its Meaning Through the Words of Those Who Lived It

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Introduction

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THE EXPERIENCE OF BATTLE

There was no single reason why men chose to go to war in 1861. Some joined the ranks to defend their homes and their way of life, to preserve the Union or to win Confederate independence, while others enlisted because the war seemed to promise excitement, comradeship, and the opportunity to prove their courage. The reality of army camp life quickly dampened many expectations of adventure and principled purpose. Volunteers who had enjoyed personal freedom in peacetime found themselves subject to the constant discipline and repetitive drill that made soldiers out of civilians. Recruits crowded together in tents, hastily-built huts, and improvised barracks discovered their vulnerability to poor sanitary conditions and contagious disease. (Twice as many soldiers would die during the war from illness as from wounds.) But nothing in camp life could prepare men for the fear they would face in battle.

“The truth is, when bullets are whacking against tree-trunks and solid shot are cracking skulls like egg-shells, the consuming passion in the breast of the average man is to get out of the way,” wrote Union soldier David L. Thompson about Antietam. “Between the physical fear of going forward and the moral fear of turning back, there is a predicament of exceptional awkwardness from which a hidden hole in the ground would be a wonderfully welcome outlet.” John Kennerly Farris felt “a little fear” at Fort Donelson as he came under fire for the first time, but resolved “not to disgrace” his wife and son and found reassurance in the outward steadiness of his regimental comrades. The example of others could undermine as well as sustain courage, resulting in what Thompson called “unaccountable panics” in which “each man, however brave individually, merges his individuality for the moment, and surrenders to an utterly causeless fear.”

Often the fear was far from causeless. As historian Drew

Gilpin Faust observed in *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War*, most Americans in 1861 aspired to die at home, surrounded by their family. What became increasingly clear as the war continued was that countless men would die far from home on battlefields that were close to being open-air abattoirs. Lunsford Yandell Jr., a surgeon in civilian life, was familiar with death, but nothing had prepared him for the extent of the carnage and suffering he witnessed at Belmont, Missouri. Soldiers continually sought to find words to describe what they had witnessed, and to distinguish their reality from the romantic view of war found in many popular prints, paintings, and poems. Yet they also acknowledged the awful grandeur of battle, and the exultation it could bring. “The scene was grand, but it was terrible,” observed Yandell about the “bloody enjoyment” of watching the battle of Belmont unfold. “This day’s fighting has been the grandest I ever saw,” Charles B. Haydon wrote about Malvern Hill. “We received reinforcements and charged them when they threw down their guns and scampered off like cowardly dogs,” George W. Dawson proudly recalled after Shiloh. Men varied in their response to the destruction that surrounded them and the enemies they fought. William T. Sherman wrote after Bull Run that the sight of mangled bodies “did not make a particle of impression on me.” Missouri Confederate Ephraim Anderson gazed upon Union dead at Iuka with “little akin to compassion, for war hardens men—especially when their country, their homes and firesides are invaded and laid waste.” Nevertheless, Anderson shared his water with a dying Union officer. Haydon wrote that the Confederates at Glendale displayed “a courage & determination known only to Americans,” while imploring the North to wage war “to the last desolate acre of the accursed South.”

As the war went on men reflected on why they fought and what their individual fate might be. Some believed God favored their cause and that Providence would preserve them in battle. Many found refuge in family memories, and tried to reassure their loved ones even as they set forth their final wishes. Soldiers who wrote home were aware of the gulf between those who knew war firsthand and those who did not, even as they sought to bridge it. “I will not attempt to describe you

the scene,” Sherman told his wife, and then tried to do so. Inexorably the war exacted a toll on lives and hope. Union officer Henry Livermore Abbott underwent a chaotic baptism of fire at Ball’s Bluff, but expressed pride afterwards in how his men had obeyed orders “as if on a parade ground.” A year later, after the Union debacle at Fredericksburg, Abbott wrote about the staggering casualties in his regiment and the demoralization of an entire army, whose soldiers fought without enthusiasm or trust in many of their generals, sustained only by “discipline & old associations.” Yet Abbott persisted. A commitment to cause and comrades endured for many men like him, sustaining them in camp, on the march, and in battle. They weighed the worth of their sacrifice and pondered how the war to preserve their way of life inevitably changed their lives forever.

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“OUR MEN ARE NOT GOOD SOLDIERS”: JULY 1861

*William T. Sherman to
Ellen Ewing Sherman*

After the Provisional Confederate Congress voted in late May 1861 to move the Confederate capital from Montgomery, Alabama, to Richmond, Virginia, political pressure increased in the North for the army at Washington to take offensive action. At a meeting held on June 29 General Irvin McDowell was ordered by Lincoln to move against the Confederate army of 20,000 men under General Pierre G. T. Beauregard defending the key railroad junction at Manassas in northern Virginia. McDowell began his advance with 30,000 troops on July 16 and attacked across Bull Run on the morning of July 21. By this time, General Joseph Johnston had brought most of his 11,000 men from the Shenandoah Valley by rail to reinforce Beauregard. The Union attack across Bull Run against the Confederate left flank was initially successful, but was halted by determined resistance on Henry House Hill. When the last Confederate reinforcements from the Shenandoah reached the battlefield in the afternoon, Beauregard launched a successful counterattack, forcing the Union army into a retreat that soon turned into a rout. In the battle that would be known in the North as Bull Run and in the South as Manassas, the Union forces lost about 2,800 men killed, wounded, or missing, the Confederates about 2,000. William T. Sherman led a Union brigade at Bull Run and later wrote to his wife from Arlington, Virginia, about his first experience of combat.

Fort Corcoran July 28,
Saturday—

Dearest Ellen,

I have already written to you since my return from the Unfortunate defeat at Bulls Run—I had previously conveyed to you the doubts that oppressed my mind on the Score of discipline. Four large columns of poorly disciplined militia left this place—the Long bridge and Alexandria—all concentrating at

a place called Centreville 27 miles from Washington. We were the first column to reach Centreville the Enemy abandoning all defenses en route. The first day of our arrival our Commander Genl. Tyler advanced on Bulls Run, about 2 1/2 miles distant, and against orders engaged their Batteries. He sent back to Centreville and I advanced with our Brigade, where we lay for half an hour, amidst descending shots killing a few of our men—The Batteries were full a mile distant and I confess I, nor any person in my Brigade saw an enemy.

Towards evening we returned to Centreville.

That occurred on Thursday. We lay in camp till Saturday night by which the whole army was assembled in and about Centreville. We got orders for march at 2 1/2 Sunday morning. Our column of 3 Brigades—Schenck, Sherman & Keyes—to move straight along a Road to Bulls Run—another of about 10,000 men to make a circuit by the Right (Hunters) and come upon the enemy in front of us—Heintzelmans column of about similar strength also to make a wide circuit to sustain Hunter—We took the road first and about 6 A.M. came in sight of Bull Run—we saw in the grey light of morning men moving about—but no signs of batteries: I rode well down to the Stone Bridge which crosses the Stream, saw plenty of trees cut down—some brush huts such as soldiers use on picket Guard, but none of the Evidences of Strong fortification we had been led to believe. Our business was simply to threaten, and give time for Hunter & Heintzelman to make their circuit. We arranged our troops to this end. Schenck to the left of the Road, & I to the right—Keyes behind in reserve. We had with us two six gun batteries, and a 30 pd. Gun—This was fired several times, but no answer—we shifted positions several times, firing wherever we had reason to suppose there were any troops. About 10 or 11 o.c. we saw the clouds of dust in the direction of Hunters approach. Saw one or more Regiments of the Enemy leave their cover, and move in that direction—soon the firing of musketry, and guns showing the engagement had commenced—early in the morning I saw a flag flying behind some trees. Some of the Soldiers seeing it Called out—Colonel, there’s a flag—a flag of truce—a man in the Field with his dog & gun—called out—No it is no flag of truce, but a flag of defiance—I was at the time studying the Ground and paid

no attention to him—about 9 o'clock I was well down to the River—with some skirmishes and observed two men on horse-back ride along a hill, descend, cross the stream and ride out towards us—he had a gun in his hand which he waved over his head, and called out to us, You D—d black abolitionists, come on &c.—I permitted some of the men to fire on him—but no damage was done he remained some time thus waiting the action which had begun on the other side of Bulls Run—we could see nothing, but heard the firing and could judge that Hunters column steadily advanced: about 2 P.M. they came to a stand, the firing was severe and stationary—Gen. Tyler rode up to me and remarked that he might have to send the N.Y. 69th to the relief of Hunter—a short while after he came up and ordered me with my whole Brigade, some 3400 men to cross over to Hunter. I ordered the movement, led off—found a place where the men could cross, but the Battery could not follow. We crossed the stream, and ascended the Bluff Bank, moving slowly to permit the Ranks to close up—When about half a mile back from the Stream I saw the parties in the fight, and the first danger was that we might be mistaken for Secessionists & fired on—One of my Regiments had on the grey uniform of the Virginia troops—We first fired on some retreating Secessionists, our Lt. Col. Haggerty was killed, and my bugler by my side had his horse shot dead—I moved on and joined Hunters column. They had had a pretty severe fight—Hunter was wounded, and the unexpected arrival of my brigade seemed a great relief to all. I joined them on a high field with a house—and as we effected the junction the secessionists took to the woods and were *seemingly* retreating and Gen. McDowell who had accompanied Hunter's column ordered me to join in the pursuit—I will not attempt to describe you the scene—their Batteries were on all the high hills overlooking the ground which we had to cross, and they fired with great vigor—our horse batteries pursued from point to point returning the fire, whilst we moved on, with shot shells, and cannister over and all round us. I kept to my horse and head of the Brigade, and moving slowly, came upon their heavy masses of men, behind all kinds of obstacles. They knew the ground perfectly, and at every turn we found new ground, over which they poured their fire. At last we came to a stand,

and with my Regiments in succession we crossed a Ridge and were exposed to a very heavy fire, first one Regiment & then another and another were forced back—not by the bayonet but by a musketry & rifle fire, which it seemed impossible to push our men through. After an hour of close contest our men began to fall into confusion. III had been killed some 250 wounded and the Soldiers began to fall back in disorder—My horse was shot through the foreleg—my knee was cut round by a ball, and another had hit my Coat collar and did not penetrate an aid Lt. Bagley was missing, and spite of all exertions the confusion increased, and the men would not reform—Similar confusion had already occurred among other Regiments & I saw we were gone. Had they kept their Ranks we were the gainers up to that point—only our field Batteries exposed had been severely cut up, by theirs partially covered. Then for the first time I saw the Carnage of battle—men lying in every conceivable shape, and mangled in a horrible way—but this did not make a particle of impression on me—but horses running about riderless with blood streaming from their nostrils—lying on the ground hitched to guns, gnawing their sides in death—I sat on my horse on the ground where Ricketts Battery had been shattered to fragments, and saw the havoc done. I kept my Regiments under cover as much as possible, till the last moment, when it became necessary to cross boldly a Ridge and attack the enemy by that time gathered in great strength behind all sorts of cover—The Volunteers up to that time had done well, but they were repulsed regiment by Regiment, and I do think it was impossible to stand long in that fire. I did not find fault with them but they fell into disorder—an incessant clamor of tongues, one saying that they were not properly supported, another that they could not tell friend from foe—but I observed the gradual retreat going on and did all I could to stop it. At last it became manifest we were falling back, and as soon as I perceived it, I gave it direction by the way we came, and thus we fell back to Centreville some four miles—we had with our Brigade no wagons, they had not crossed the River. At Centreville came pouring in the confused masses of men, without order or system. Here I supposed we should assemble in some order the confused masses and try to stem the tide—Indeed I saw but little evidence of being pursued, though once

or twice their cavalry interposed themselves between us and our Rear. I had read of retreats before—have seen the noise and confusion of crowds of men at fires and Shipwrecks but nothing like this. It was as disgraceful as words can portray, but I doubt if volunteers from any quarter could do better. Each private thinks for himself—If he wants to go for water, he asks leave of no one. If he thinks right he takes the oats & corn, and even burns the house of his enemy. As we could not prevent these disorders on the way out—I always feared the result—for everywhere we found the People against us—no curse could be greater than invasion by a Volunteer Army. No goths or vandals ever had less respect for the lives & property of friends and foes, and henceforth we ought never to hope for any friends in Virginia—McDowell & all the Generals tried their best to stop these disorders, but for us to say we commanded that army is no such thing—they did as they pleased. Democracy has worked out one result, and the next step is to be seen—Beauregard & Johnston were enabled to effect a Junction, by the failure of Patterson to press the latter, and they had such accurate accounts of our numbers & movements that they had all the men they wanted—We had never more than 18,000 engaged, though Some 10 or 12,000 were within a few miles. After our Retreat here, I did my best to stop the flying masses, and partially succeeded, so that we once more present a front: but Beauregard has committed a sad mistake in not pursuing us promptly. Had he done so, he could have stampeded us again, and gone into Washington. As it is I suppose their plan is to produce Riot in Baltimore, cross over above Leesburg, and come upon Washington through Maryland. Our Rulers think more of who shall get office, than who can save the Country. No body—no one man can save the country. The difficulty is with the masses—our men are not good Soldiers—They brag, but dont perform—complain sadly if they dont get everything they want—and a march of a few miles uses them up. It will take a long time to overcome these things, and what is in store for us in the future I know not. I propose trying to defend this place if Beauregard approaches Washington by this Route, but he has now deferred it Some days and I rather think he will give it up.

The newspapers will tell ten thousand things none of which

are true. I have had no time to read them, but I know no one now has the moral courage to tell the truth. Public opinion is a more terrible tyrant than Napoleon—My own hope is now in the Regulars, and if I can escape this Volunteer command I will do so, and stick by my Regular Regiment. Gen. McClellan arrived today with Van Vliet—Stoneman, Benham—Biddle—and many others of my acquaintance. Affecy. &c.

W. T. Sherman

BATTLE OF BALL'S BLUFF:
VIRGINIA, OCTOBER 1861

*Henry Livermore Abbott to
Josiah Gardner Abbott*

In the months that followed Bull Run there were no major battles in Virginia as both sides concentrated on raising, equipping, and training new troops. The lull was broken on October 21, 1861, when several Union regiments crossed the Potomac upriver from Washington in an attempt to dislodge Confederate troops from Leesburg. In the ensuing battle of Ball's Bluff, the Union lost more than 900 men killed, wounded, or missing, six times the Confederate casualties. Among the dead was Colonel Edward D. Baker, a Republican senator from Oregon, former congressman from Illinois, and friend of President Lincoln. Henry Livermore Abbott was a nineteen-year-old Harvard graduate serving as a second lieutenant in Company I, 20th Massachusetts Volunteers. He wrote to his father from an army camp near Poolesville, Maryland, and described his regiment's baptism of fire. (Abbott's sketch diagram, depicting the deployment of Union troops in a field between the river and Confederate-held ground, is not included here.) The "Lieut. Holmes" mentioned by Abbott was his friend Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.

Camp Benton
Oct 22nd

Dear Papa,

I suppose you have by this got my telegraphic dispatch & know that we are all safe. I will give you a brief description of the affair, only brief because I am rather played out by 2 days hard work.

It seems that upon Sunday the quartermaster of the 15th Mass. had got across & discovered that there were no pickets on the other side; accordingly to them was given the honor of crossing to attack a rebel camp about 2 miles off from the shore. One company of a hundred men from the 20th was

ordered to follow the 15th & take possession of the opposite height as a reserve. Co. I & 57 of Caspar's men with Caspar & George were the reserve.

Sunday night the passage was made by the 15th. We followed, getting over about 5 o'clock & taking the heights. Now look at the absurdity of the thing. To cross the river we had two little row boats that together carried over 30 men at a time. We landed on the hill almost perpendicular & very thickly wooded. When we get on the top, we are drawn up on the only open space there is, about wide enough for a front of two regiments, & about a short rifle shot in length, surrounded on every side by large, unexplored woods. It was in fact one of the most complete slaughter pens ever devised. Here we were kept, while the 15th marched off to surprise the rebel camp.

In the meantime we sent off scouts which resulted in our first sergeant, Riddle, being shot in the arm. The Fifteenth, of course, lose their way, are attacked & send word they are surrounded & we must cover their retreat. It was rather an uncomfortable thing. A hundred men in an unknown country, surrounded by the hidden enemy & cut off virtually, by the badness of transport, from reinforcement. The col. told us there was no doubt it was all up with us.

The 15th, however, held their ground nobly till now, when they fell back on us & shortly after we were reinforced by the rest of our regiment on hand (making only 300) & by Baker's brigade & a couple of howitzers, who came in by boatloads of 30. After a while, however, they got a boat which carried 60, so that the reinforcements came in faster.

Now to begin with the order of battle. I have no right to criticize it in terms. It will be enough to describe it. The uncovered space I have spoken of was the battle ground. Part of Baker's brigade was drawn up on the right flank, on the edge of the wood, with the 15th. The rest was drawn across the opening, back towards the river, 30 feet from the top of the bank. 15 feet behind them the 318 men of our regiment were drawn up in a second, parallel line, under command of Col. Lee. The whole was the command of Gen. Baker. The two howitzers in front entirely unprotected. The enemy in the woods. Here is a rough sketch:

[]

You can see from the sketch that 2 of the regts. on our side were left in open view, when they might just as well have been in the woods, while the rebels were conveniently posted in the woods, just at good rifle shot, from which they didn't venture out till the conclusion of the fight.

In the first half hour, the gunners & horses of the howitzers were all killed; the line in front of our regiment was broken & fled so that we were the only force in the open field & from 2 to 6, we kept that field under a heavy fire of rifles & musketry. It seemed as if every square inch of air within six feet of the ground was traversed by bullets as they whistled by us. Tremblet's company got the worst of it. The col. tried to save ours as a reserve. But we foolishly hung all our company's great coats on the trees just behind us. Their red lining was so conspicuous as to draw the enemy's fire at a great rate. Though we were lying down, our men were shot on every side of us. And yet Capt. Bartlett, though standing up nearly all the time, wasn't so much as scratched.

The fight was made up of charges. You would see our caps. rush out in front & cry forward & their companies would follow them at full speed under a tremendous fire till they were obliged to fall back. And this was repeated over & over during the 4 hours fight.

Our company made the last charge. The general was killed, shot by 5 balls; nobody knew who was the senior in command & Col. Lee ordered a retreat. But we were determined to have one more shot. So Frank ordered a charge & we rushed along, followed by all our men without an exception, & by Lieut. Hallowell with 20 men, making about 60 in all. So we charged across the field about half way, when we saw the enemy in full sight. They had just come out of the wood & had halted at our advance. There they were in their dirty gray clothes, their banner waving, cavalry on the flank. For a moment there was a pause. And then, simultaneously, we fired & there came a murderous discharge from the full rebel force. Of course we retreated, but not a man went faster than a walk.

When we got back to the wood, we found the whole regiment cut to pieces & broken up, all the other forces gone & Col. Lee sitting under a tree, swearing he wouldn't go another step, but had rather be taken prisoner. However, we got him

to go & we all started down the bank, every body knowing, however, that there was no chance of an escape. The col. ordered a surrender & had a white flag raised but the rebels fired on us & we were obliged to retreat to the river's edge, the rebels pouring down a murderous fire.

When we got down we had lost the col., but heard that the adjutant & major had got him into a boat & carried him across. After that, of course, we had only to look to our own safety. We rallied our men & then proposed to swim across in case they could all do it. We found there were four that couldn't swim, so we were obliged to stay with them, and we sent the rest over. It was hard work to make them leave us, but we insisted upon it, & most of them reached the opposite shore in safety, notwithstanding a heavy fire opened on the swimmers immediately.

With the rest of our men & with Capt. Tremblet & his men, we marched along the shore, picking up about 50 men of Baker's, meaning to surrender ourselves, if we could only get a chance. After we got a mile & a half we found an old nigger who got us a boat & in this we sent across by fives the 70 men with us & then went over ourselves. And so we escaped.

The col., major & adjutant are prisoners, it seems by later intelligence. Capt. Dreher is nearly dead, shot through the head. Capt. Putnam's arm is amputated close to the shoulder. Capt. Babo is killed. Capt. Schmidt has 3 bullets in the legs. Capt. Crowninshield a slight flesh wound. Lieut. Putnam will probably die, shot through the stomach. Lieut. Holmes shot through the breast, will recover, as will Lieut. Lowell, shot in the thigh. Lieut. Wessleheft is dead.

We are now at camp trying to rally enough men to form a company, so as to join it to the two companies that were not engaged & make a battalion of 3 under the command of Col. Palfrey, who was not in the fight, but has since crossed the river with the two unengaged companies.

Gen. Lander has just got back from Washington & is in a horrible rage, swearing that the thing is nothing less than murder. Gen. Banks' column crosses here tomorrow & there will probably be a retreat of the rebels. The little midnight adventure of ours has started the whole thing; now we shall have our revenge.

The good of the action is this. It shows the pluck of our men. They followed their commanders admirably, except in the last charge that we made. Cas wanted to go with us but his men, who had been pretty well cut up, refused to follow. He swore & raved awfully, but it was no go.

The men of our company couldn't possibly have behaved better. They never fired once without an order. They never advanced without an order, as all the rest did. They never retreated without an order, as some of the others did. In short, they never once lost their presence of mind, & behaved as well as if on the parade ground.

Give my love to mamma & the rest.

Your aff. son,
H. L. Abbott

A DOCTOR AT BELMONT:
MISSOURI, NOVEMBER 1861

Lunsford P. Yandell Jr. to Lunsford Yandell Sr.

Ulysses S. Grant assumed command in early September 1861 of the Union forces at Cairo, Illinois, at the junction of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. On November 7 he led 3,000 men in a raid on the Confederate camp at Belmont, Missouri, across the Mississippi from the Confederate stronghold at Columbus, Kentucky, beginning a battle that cost each side more than 600 men killed, wounded, or missing. Lunsford Yandell Jr., a surgeon from Kentucky serving with the Confederate army, wrote about the battle to his father, a prominent Louisville physician.

COLUMBUS, November 10.

MY DEAR FATHER: I know you have been impatient to hear from me since news reached you of the battle, but I have not had time till this morning. Thursday morning two gunboats, with five steamboats, landed six or eight miles above us on the Missouri shore, and were seen to disembark infantry, artillery, and cavalry in large numbers. Troops were thrown across from our side of the river about eight or nine o'clock, and about eleven o'clock the battle commenced and raged till three or four o'clock P.M. The gunboats came down within range of our camp and commenced throwing shot and shell about eight o'clock. One or two shots fell inside our line—one piece near my tent. Hamilton's artillery replied to the boats, and they soon moved out of range, when Captain Stewart, with his Parrott guns, went two miles up the bluff and opened on the boats. Most of his guns threw over the boats, and the enemy's balls did not reach us. Adjutant Hammond and I were with Captain Stewart, and helped the men to place the guns in position a number of times. They were just going to fire one of the guns, when Hammond and I retired some ten or twelve yards. The gun was fired—the explosion was terrific—and some

one yelled out "Two men killed!" I rushed up immediately and saw at once that they were killed. The gun had exploded into a thousand atoms. One of the men had his right arm torn to pieces, and the ribs on that side pulpified, though the skin was not broken. He breathed half an hour. The other poor fellow received a piece of iron under the chin, which passed up into the brain—the blood gushing from his nose and ears. He never breathed afterward. A third man received a slight wound of the arm. The fragments of the gun flew in every direction, and I can only wonder that more of us were not killed. A horse hitched near mine received a glancing wound from a piece of the gun.

Our brigade was ordered under arms about noon—or rather, it was kept under arms all the morning, but I was ordered across the river about noon. Our men were previously anxious to be led over soon in the morning; but Gen. Polk would not allow it, as he expected an attack from this side of the river—which was certainly the plan of the enemy, but it was not carried out.

We did not get on the ground till the enemy were in full retreat, and we never got near them; in fact, only one regiment of our brigade pursued them at all, and they only for a mile or two. I went with Col. Scott's regiment, belonging to Col. Neeley's brigade. When about two miles out we were ordered back, as the enemy had reached his boats. I had fifty or eighty men detailed from Scott's regiment to scour the woods with me to pick up the wounded. We found none but Federals, but they were in such numbers we could only take back a few and return for the others. In one cornfield they were lying, dead and wounded, as thick as stumps in a new field. I saw sixty or seventy, and others report as many as two hundred in this field. They were mostly of the Sixth Iowa regiment, and some of the Twenty-seventh Illinois. The Lieutenant-Colonel and three captains I know to have been killed, or wounded and taken prisoners. The Seventh Iowa was almost annihilated. The scene upon the battle-field was awful.

The wounded men groaned and moaned, yelled and shrieked with pain. I had opium, brandy, and water, with which I allevi-

ated their torture, and, poor creatures, they were exceedingly grateful. I was out until two o'clock that night with Col. Neeley and a battalion of the Fourth regiment picking up the wounded. In the woods and in the field the dead were so thick that it required careful riding to keep from tramping their bodies. The only means I had of knowing the road that night was by the corpses I had noticed in the afternoon. In one place there were eleven bodies lying side by side; further on were five; in another place were fifteen near together. These were the only groups that I noticed, but I sometimes found six or eight within a space of twenty yards. Some of the poor creatures had crawled to the foot of trees, and laid their heads upon the roots and crossed their arms; others lay upon their backs with arms and legs outstretched; some were doubled up, and, in fact, they were in every imaginable position. As to the variety of expression depicted upon the faces of the corpses, of which I heard so much, I saw nothing of it. They all looked pretty much alike—as much alike as dead men from any other cause. Some had their eyes open, some closed; some had their mouths open, and others had them closed. There is a terrible sameness in the appearance of all the dead men I have ever seen. The only faces which were disfigured were those that were burned, or shot, or blackened with powder.

There were not many wounds from cannon balls or shells, but I saw almost every variety of wounds from musket and rifle balls. I saw almost all the battle from our camp, which is on top of the high bluff. The Missouri side is low and flat, and much of the battle-ground is open. The battle swayed back and forth many times. Once our men were driven clear under the river bank, having got out of cartridges. For several hours General Pillow held the enemy in check with two thousand men, the enemy having seven thousand infantry, four hundred and fifty cavalry, and I don't recollect their artillery. Pillow acted with great bravery. So did Polk and Cheatham, but they were not in the fight for several hours after Pillow. Pillow's escape is miraculous. Every one of his staff officers had his horse shot under him. One of them, Gus. Henry, had two shot under him. One of his aids was shot through the hip, and his horse

was riddled with balls. Pillow wore a splendid uniform, very conspicuous, and rode the handsomest gray mare in the army. As we watched the fighting from the bluff, and saw our men advance and retreat, waver and fall back, and then saw the Arkansas troops' tents on fire, and the Stars and Stripes advancing toward the river, and some of our men crowding down to the very water's edge, I tell you my feelings were indescribable. The scene was grand, but it was terrible, and when I closed my eyes about four o'clock next morning, I could see regiments charging and retreating—men falling and yelling—horses and men torn and mangled—and myriads of horrid spectacles. It was a bloody enjoyment, but we do not know the loss on either side yet.

It is roughly estimated that we lost two hundred and fifty in killed, wounded, and missing, and the enemy five hundred in killed and wounded. An immense number of horses were killed. I rode over the battle-field yesterday. For several miles the trees are torn and barked by balls, and many horses lie upon the ground, some torn open by shells and others riddled by balls. You can see innumerable stains of blood upon the ground. Where poor, gallant Armstrong was killed, there were eleven dead bodies. At the time of his death, he had a cap upon his sword waving it, rallying his men. My friend Captain Billy Jackson was shot in the hip while leading a portion of Russell's brigade. I think he will recover. I am afraid Jimmy Walker (James' son) will not recover. I think he is shot through the rectum.

The day before the battle, Jackson, Major Butler, of the Eleventh Louisiana regiment, Wilson, of Watson's battery, Lieut. Ball, of same regiment, and Major Gus. Henry, and myself dined at Gen. Pillow's. Butler was shot through and died yesterday. Lieut. Ball was dangerously injured, and Henry had two horses shot under him. Jackson I have spoken of. I have given you but a poor account of what I saw, but I have not time to go more into details now, and I am out of kelter besides. You will see a full account in the papers of the fight. I wish the war would close. Such scenes as that of Thursday are sickening; and this destruction of life is so useless. I believe we

shall have some terrible fighting very soon on the coast, in Virginia and in Kentucky. Much love to mother and sister when you see them. Mr. Law gave me the letter.

I am your devoted son,

LUNSFORD P. YANDELL.

FORT DONELSON SURRENDERS:
TENNESSEE, FEBRUARY 1862

John Kennerly Farris to Mary Farris

During the winter of 1861–62 Grant and Andrew H. Foote, the commander of the Union gunboat flotilla based at Cairo, made plans to gain control of the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers. Their immediate objectives were Fort Henry and Fort Donelson, located just below the Kentucky-Tennessee border. On February 6 Fort Henry surrendered after a bombardment by Foote's gunboats. Grant then marched his troops overland and began the siege of Fort Donelson on February 12. Three days later the Confederates inside the fort launched a counterattack against the Union lines. Its repulse caused Simon B. Buckner to ask Grant for surrender terms, eliciting the soon-to-be-famous reply: "No terms except an unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted. I propose to move immediately upon your works." Buckner and 12,000 Confederates surrendered on February 16, giving the North its first great victory of the war. One of the prisoners was John Kennerly Farris, a physician serving with the 41st Tennessee Infantry. He wrote to his wife in the fall of 1862 after being freed in an exchange.

Camp Cold Water near Holly Springs, Mississippi
Friday, October 31, 1862

Well Mary,

I have several times thought I would give you a brief history of my time at Ft. Donelson and how I hapened to get there.

Thursday, Feb. 13th, 1862. I was in the City of Nashville with some 16 or 20 of our Regt. when I heard the fight had begun at Ft. Donelson and, knowing our Regt. was there, I was very anxious to be with them—so I went to Lieut. Wilhoit who was in command of the detachment of our Regt., and I believe the detachment of all the Regts. which belonged to Gen. Buckners command, and asked him for an order to rejoin the Regt. He told me he could not give me one without laying himself liable as I was the only Physician with him, or under his command.

This troubled me a good deal and I became anxious to be

with them, and studied about an hour how I would manage to get to the Regt. and the propriety of leaving without an order. Suddenly an idea struck me that I might get an order from the Commander of the Post at Nashville, who I allowed would out rank Lieut. Wilhoit and make me safe in leaving. By enquiring for his quarters, I found him without any difficulty and told him how I was situated there and, further, that I had sent all the sick under my charge to the Hospittle and was there idle and thought my services might be demanded at Ft. Donelson and I desired to go there. Without returning a word he wrote me a pass down there and told me to take the first boat. I immediately returned to my quarters, took my napsack from my trunk, with a suit of clothes, went down to the River and got aboard of a little job boat preparing to leave for Ft. Donelson.

This was 8 o'clock a.m. The boat was soon ready to start, but was found to be fast upon a pile of iron which the water had covered. They worked to get it off untill two o'clock, apparently to no effect. I grew tired, got off the boat and gave out going, for I was suffering considerably with Rheumatic pains in my shoulders and concluded that I might be more in the way than otherwise. I strolled over town untill nearly sunset when I again concluded that I would go down to the Ft. anyway if I could get off. So I went down to the River again and found the boat off the iron and about ready to start. I got aboard, and in a very short time the boat began its move but unfortunately washed down against an old boat which was under repair and lodged against it.

There we remained untill 8 o'clock p.m. when we got clear and started down the River. The little thing was so crowded with passengers that her cabin would not hold over one-fourth of us. So the remainder had to take passage on her decks where we had liked to have frozen during the night; could get neither supper or breakfast Friday morning. Friday about 1 o'clock p.m. we got down to Clarksville. There I got off the uncomfortable little job Boat and got on the *Reunion*, a nice and comfortable boat. We there learned that they were still fighting at Dover. This made all apparently anxious to get on down.

We did not stay there long but went on down the River. When we got in some ten or twelve miles of Dover, we stoped and took on wood enough to pile all round on lower deck to

protect the hands from the balls of the enemy, as we did not know but what the boat would be shot into. About dark we landed at Dover. Everything was quiet. The two contending forces were as still as though they had been friends almost. About 10 o'clock in the night I found our Regt. and found the boys nearly worn out with fasting, fatigue and cold. They had not a tent and scarcely a fire. Some were lying on the snow wrapt in their blankets asleep. Some were sitting round a few coals of fire, and some at one thing and some another.

I was very hungry, and asked them for something to eat, as I had eaten but a snack since Thursday morning. They told me they had nothing, nor had had in some time. But one of the boys had a little parched coffee in his pocket, which he gave to me and which I pounded in a tin cup the best I could with an old chunk, and borrowed a coffee pot and made it full of coffee for five of us, who had constructed a little fire barely sufficient to boil a coffee pot of water. We drank the coffee, which seemed to do us a good deal of good, though it was barely fit to drink and would not at all been used under ordinary circumstances.

We five sit around the same little fire untill 3 o'clock a.m. of Saturday talking of the previous and expected fight. All through the night we could once and a while hear the pickets shooting at each other, and some very close to us. At 3 o'clock the Officers came round and gave orders for the men to get in line, for it was thought we might be attacked in a short time. Notwithstanding the ground was covered with snow and the weather very cold, I felt pretty lively and was anxious for the coming conflict, though I knew and told the boys that day would not close without some as hard fightin as had been done dureing the war. Just at day break the Regt. was ordered forward. It was generally known that we were going round on our left wing and engage the enemy, and I never felt more contented in my life.

During the night everything had been quite still, with the exception of an occasional fire by the pickets, and so remained untill we had gone near a half a mile, and by which time the sun had just begun to show itself, peeping as it were over the hills and mountains of the east. At that time we were moving on in line, I keeping with the file closers and watching the

appearance of the boys particularly, which I was enabled to do as I had my gun to carry. We struck the foot of a large hill, marched rather across the point, but to my great surprise, just as we got barely on top of the hill, the enemy discovered us & turned loose at us with a cannon—the first that I had ever heard fire in battle. The boys all dropped to the ground, and I followed suit, but we rose in an instant and were ordered to double quick. The ball passed immediate over us.

When I got up, I felt considerably confused & must acknowledge a little fear. The first thing in my mind was that I had got myself voluntarily into a devil of a snap, but at the same moment I thought of you and Sammy & determined not to disgrace you & him if my head was shot off. So I braced myself up & marched strate forward as resolute as death itself, but not without feeling somewhat uncomfortable. I looked at every man in the Regt. to see how they looked. None looked like they were scared, & I argued to myself that it did not look reasonable that God Almighty had so constituted me as to make me more of a coward than any of the Regt.

We had not double quicked over fifty yards untill they cut loose again with a shell. The boys, being used to them, dropped to the ground again, and at the same moment I accidentally slipped down, hurting my knee on the frozen ground slightly. The shell passed immediately over me, and I think would have cut me into had I not been on the ground. It burst in about 20 yards of us but done us no harm. I rose instantly, and the first thing said to myself, "Well, I will not get hurt today, for providence has saved my life, and God is on my side." We went down the hill at a double quick then followed a hollow something like a quarter or half a mile, the enemy not molesting us. At length we struck the foot of another high hill, at which place a good many of us dropped our napsacks and left them on account of fatigue.

It was a good piece to the top, and about half way up a battery had stalled, and the enemy was pouring it to them with ball and shell rapidly. We marched up to it and stoped for it to get out of the way, some of our men assisting in pushing it. At this moment Gen. Floyd rode up and ordered us onward. Our Col. told him we were waiting for the Artillery to get out of the way. He said wait for nothing, but go ahead. We started,

the enemy giving us grape, canister and shell heavily. At that point I got used to the things and feared them no more.

We moved on to the top of the Hill, or almost, and was ordered to lie down in a little hollow to the right of the road just behind one of our batterys, which was playing upon the enemy. But was soon ordered to recross the road and lie on the breast of the hill at the termination of a large hollow in the rear of the battery and to the right—also in rear of the 14th Misp. Regt., and a short distance behind them, who were and had been for some time fighting like fury. The enemy endeavored to shell us out of the Hollow, but failed in doing so as their shells passed generally over us. They tried us with grape and canister, but with no effect. We lay there untill eleven o'clock with the exception of 3 companys, which had been ordered off to drive the sharp shooters from some of our batterys and defend them.

Gen. Floyd and our Brigade Surgeon took their position just behind us. About 11 o'clock there came a man running down to us and asked for a Physician to go up to the 14th Misp. Regt. The cries of the wounded at this time was horrible. The roar of the cannon and the noise of the musketry was deafening. The Brigade surgeon ordered me to go to them. I rose and started as fast as I could to them, having to cross a heavy cannon fire before I reached them, and immediately after crossing that I was in range of the musket balls, which fell all around me and passed over my head so thick that it looked like I could have held up my hat and caught it full.

The Mississippi boys fell fast, but fought like men. I went to work on them, as best I could, and had at length to tear up my havorsack for bandages. I found a fellow with two wounds in the breast and saw he was bleeding from an artery. I carried him down in the hollow to get assistance in dressing his wounds. The brigade surgeon assisted me and ordered me to accompany him to the hospitall and told me to report myself to the medicle director, which I did.

The boats by this time had arrived (I suppose it was 11 1/2 o'clock) to take off the wounded. I was ordered to service in a hospitall, which was in a vacated Hotel, but about the time I got warm, Dr. Clopton sent for me to assist him in the Hospital he had charge of, which was just across the road. I went

over and went to work, but did not work long untill the Yankeys turned loose at the Hospittals and struck ours with several grape loads and passed two cannon balls through.

We went to work to raise the flags higher, and I suppose brought them into notice in about an hour and a half. At about half after one J. K. Buckner was brought in. Poor fellow. I was so sorry for him. I got Dr. Clopton to dress his wound immediately and started him to the boat, telling him never to stop untill he got home. Clopton, myself and another Physician, with occasional help from others, worked on untill 8 o'clock in the night, at which time we got through with all that were sent to our hospitall and got most of them on the boats. The fighting stoped when darkness forbid farther action.

We got our instruments cleaned & sit down to rest at 9 o'clock, & I do not think I was ever tireder in my life. Several Physicians & officers came in, & we talked over some of what we had seen. I told them that we who lived would all be prisoners of war by 3 hours by sun Sunday morning. I felt very much like it. I had seen all day that the enemy had 4 or 5 to one & had us surrounded. I thought we would fight next morning, but knew we would be overpowered. At ten o'clock p.m. we lay down on the floor to take a nap for the first in a long time.

At 3 o'clock some fellow came and told us that our forces were going to retreat and ordered us to have the remainder of our wounded put upon the boat and then make our escape if we could and, if not, to surrender as prisoners of war, and we would soon be released. As the order came from the surgeon General, we went to work and after a while got most of them off. I kept asking every one that I would see comeing from our Regt. what had gone with it. At length a gentleman told me that it had cut its way through and was retreating. I ran in and told Dr. Clopton the same and told him I thought we had better go also. So we bundled up and started down to the boats to try to get aboard, but could not get nigh them for the guards.

Dr. Clopton asked me what we could do. It was near daylight. I told him we must foot it up the River bank. He did not believe it practable. I insisted on trying; so we put out only

taking one blanket. I suppose we went a half mile when we saw, as it was getting a little light, 5 men coming meeting us, and who we took to be Yankeys. "There," said he, "look yander. What shall we do?" Says I, "March strait forward, for if we run, they will shoot us." We met them. They asked us where we were going. We told them, "Into the Country a little piece". Said they, "The enemy is just before us out here, and you cannot get out." We found that they were our men, who been trying just what we were going to try. It was then proposed that we cross the River on some logs and agreed to, but before we could find any, daylight came upon us, & to our surprise no Regt. but Forest Cavalry had gone, & the white flags were visable upon our works. So we were all prisoners.

"THEY RAN IN EVERY DIRECTION":
TENNESSEE, APRIL 1862

*George W. Dawson to
Laura Amanda Dawson*

Following the surrender of Forts Henry and Donelson, Grant moved south along the Tennessee River to Pittsburg Landing, just north of the Tennessee-Mississippi border, where he waited to be joined by Union forces led by Don Carlos Buell. On the morning of April 6, 1862, Grant's 40,000 men were attacked by 40,000 Confederates led by Albert Sidney Johnston and Pierre G. T. Beauregard. After being driven back toward the Tennessee River, Grant was reinforced by Buell and counterattacked on April 7, forcing the Confederates to retreat toward Corinth, Mississippi. Shiloh (named after a country church on the battlefield) was the bloodiest encounter of the war so far, costing the Union about 13,000 men killed, wounded, or missing, and the Confederacy about 10,700. George W. Dawson, a captain in the Confederate 1st Missouri Infantry, described his first battle to his wife.

Memphis, Tenn.
April 26th

My dear sweet Wife,

I wrote you a short note by Mart Dunklin but for fear you didn't get it I send you this by Mr. Robbins. You are no doubt uneasy and anxious to hear what had become of me and others. Well I will give you a kind of history. After I left you I came to Memphis and from thence I went to Murfeestown, Tenn. where I found the Reg. & in a day or so we marched & continued to do so till we arrived ten miles this side of Huntsville, Ala. Here we took Rail for 20 miles and then footed it again to Corinth, Miss. Having marched through 1/4 of Ky. all of Tenn. part of Alabama and 30 miles into Miss. you may be assured that we were some what leg weary. We arrived at Corinth Some time before the fight at Shiloh. So you might guess that we had a hand in the fight—and I must say that it was no tea party—

but a hard fought Battle. Yet when ever we pressed the Yanks they gave way and we again charged them but that they ran in every direction. We were held in reserve till about 10 o'clock Sunday Morning. We were then ordered forward at the double quick step for 2 1/2 miles and as soon as formed into line the Feds opened on us—at the first fire 3 of my men were wounded slightly but one of them Jim Henley has since died of Lock Jaw.

We immediately charged them and put them to rout, we then changed our direction and soon found another Brigade which poured a heavy fire on us which we returned in good stile. Our Col. Rich was shot off of his horse. Lt. Carrington was badly wounded. Capt. Sprague was here killed. We received reinforcements and charged them when they threw down their guns and scampered off like cowardly dogs. We continued to press them and run them down the river bank immediately to their gun boats if which had not been there we would have captured the last one of them. They shelled us from the Gun Boats for over 1 hour. I never heard such thunder and such shower of shell and C. Yet, these did not damage except to kill one or two men—Night coming one we drew off to one of their Camps where we found every thing a solider could want to which we helped our selves. We ate their grub, and slept in their cots as quietly as if we had no enemy in 100 miles. But they Continued to throw Shell at us all night and shell all burst beyond us—passing over our camp. Monday Morning the Feds having been reinforced with 40,000 men renewed the fight—about sun up. We commenced drawing off our forces before we were Attacked. Our Brigade fought them all day Monday in covering the retreat of our army—which was done in the very best of order Lieut. Joseph T. Hargett was killed Monday. I had 43 men when I went into the fight and on coming out had 21 having lost in killed and wounded 22. Yet most of the wounded are slightly so. The other companies of our Reg. did not suffer so much. I had forgotten to tell you I had been Elected Capt. Cam Riley having been elected Lt. Col. He had Command of our Reg. during the fight and acted bravely.

We are expecting a fight at Corinth which will be the biggest fight that will be on record in the next 100 years. I am satisfied that they will out number us but when we have them out of

reach of their Gun Boats we will whip them worse that at Shiloh. The fate of our cause rests on us here. I know we have right on our side God is also with us and we must succeed will do it. War is dangerous and one cannot tell after coming out of one hard fought battle whether there is a chance to get out of the second, but I will hope for the best, knowing that if I am killed that I die fighting for My Country and my rights, also that I have your prayers constantly ascending to Heaven. Just hope you and my dear children if I am not allowed to see you again you must bear up and don't get unhappy I yet may see you again Oh what a pleasure is the thought. If you & children are only with me I could be happy but I am lonely & sad.

I have sold some of my land to Robbins so you may sign the deed. I will invest the money in Texas. Where I only wish you were.

Bob, Will Hunter, Wm. Post, Wm. Watkins and T. I. F. all were uninjured Cam Pinnell died of his wounds. Thos. Emory was slightly wounded—All are improving. Many will be able to go into the next fight.

I wish you to write me a long letter giving a detailed account of every thing that has taken place since I left, also how you are getting along and what prospect you have for something to eat this Summer and Winter. I feel very anxious to hear—and if there is any chance I want you to come down to Memphis and I will try to get you to Texas.

My love to all—but especially to you my sweet wife. Kiss our dear children a thousand times for me. Remember me to my friends if I have any. Hoping to hear from you soon I remain your devoted husband.

Geo. W. Dawson

Excuse mistakes the gas is so high up that I can't see.

THE UNION RETREAT:
VIRGINIA, JUNE–JULY 1862

Charles B. Haydon:
Journal, June 25–July 1, 1862

George B. McClellan began his cautious advance up the Virginia Peninsula between the York and James rivers on April 4, 1862. By the last week of June the 105,000 men of the Army of the Potomac were outside Richmond, facing 92,000 Confederates in the Army of Northern Virginia under its new commander, Robert E. Lee. What became known as the Seven Days' Battles began with a small Union advance at Oak Grove, south of the Chickahominy River, on June 25. Lee then seized the initiative and attacked McClellan's right wing north of the Chickahominy at Mechanicsville, June 26, and at Gaines's Mill on June 27. As Lee drove the Union forces south across the Chickahominy, McClellan abandoned his plans for a siege campaign against Richmond and ordered a retreat across the Peninsula to the James River. Lieutenant Charles B. Haydon of the 2nd Michigan Infantry had fought in earlier Peninsula battles at Williamsburg and Fair Oaks. Haydon witnessed the fighting at Oak Grove, but only heard the battles of Mechanicsville and Gaines's Mill. As his regiment joined the Union retreat, he addressed farewell messages in his journal to his father, stepmother, and younger brother. Despite his forebodings, Haydon would survive the bitter fighting at Glendale (White Oak Swamp), June 30, and at Malvern Hill, where Union artillery repelled Lee's final attacks of the Seven Days on July 1. Confederate losses in the weeks' fighting were recorded as 20,204 men killed, wounded, or missing, while reported Union casualties totaled 15,855.

JUNE 25, 1862 Was a clear cool day. Our Regt. & the 3d Mich. started for picket at 7 A.M. There was a pretty general movement of the troops in our Div. and in Hooker's. It is understood that certain parts of the line are to be advanced. Our left is stationary but a line of skirmishers is thrown forward extending toward the right across our picket front & Hooker's & perhaps farther. The skirmishers advance slowly a short distance when a fire is opened on Hooker's line. It gradually in-

creased to heavy volleys & continued till about 11 A.M. when our men having gained the desired ground ceased to advance.

Everything was quiet till abt 2 P.M. when the enemy opened with field pieces & the musketry was soon after briskly renewed. The musketry soon slackened & the field pieces were reported as taken & retaken by bayonet charges. Four pieces were brought out into the edge of the woods & fired slowly till near night. The trees & bushes rendered them of little service. Abt 5 P.M. the Rebs raised a great shout & charged the battery. Our men lying concealed cut them terribly as they advanced. They gave way unable to stand the fire. For near half an hour there was a continuous & very heavy infantry fire. Several charges were made. The clear, ringing Union cheers & the sharp wild yells of the rebels were every few minutes heard with great distinctness. All we know is that the desired ground was without very great loss gained & held. The battle extended up to the right of our line but our Regt. was not engaged.

JUNE 26 Was a very quiet day till abt 3 P.M. when far to the right was heard the heavy but indistinct roar of musketry. The cannon opened soon after. From that time till 8 P.M. there was the heaviest cannonade I have yet heard. It was continued with great regularity and at the rate of 25 to 40 shots per minute. At dark far along the line toward the right great cheering was heard. It passed rapidly along to our camp. News soon came to us of a great battle & victory at Mechanicsville. The camps were wild with enthusiasm. Our joy was not less lively but we could not give vent to it in the same manner. I got most awfully wet & muddy going up & down the line carrying orders & cautioning the men to unusual vigilance lest the enemy should on some other part of the line attempt to redeem their fortunes. Save the heavy rumble of artillery & baggage wagons along our own lines the stillness of the night was hardly disturbed by a sound.

JUNE 27 We came off picket at 10 A.M. We were called to the rifle pits at one & remained till sundown. The firing on the right was renewed at daylight. It continued till 10 A.M., a part of the time with great rapidity. Towards night there was firing far to the north & much farther to the rear than was agreeable. Troops were seen soon after moving at double quick back along the R.R. This at once suggested that something was

wrong but our men were so tired & sleepy that they paid little attention. They seemed to feel a sort of sullen, dogged determination to fight to the last where they were & not to move for anybody. A few more days & nights like the past few & they would as soon die as live. Soon after dark we were called out again & remained till after 10. The picket line is nearly broken up. The 63d Pa. ran like sheep as soon as they were fired on.

JUNE 28 We were called to the rifle pits at 2 1/2 A.M. and remained till 7 when we went in for breakfast but returned immediately after. Before daylight there was fighting far to the right. We could see the explosion of the shells but could not hear the guns. For several reasons I think it best to bring this book (a pocket memorandum) to a close. I cannot send it away & I do not wish it to fall into the hands of the rebels. It is possible it may if it remains with me.

Things just now are checkered. The right wing has fallen back & we are ready for a move of some kind. I dont know what it may be. If a retreat we are the rear guard. If this should be the last news from me good bye all at home. May God bless & prosper you. Arthur will use what money I leave to complete his education. We all realize our situation but everyone is calm, cheerful & determined. We carry 150 rounds of ammunition & intend that the enemy shall have reason to remember Kearney's Div. If I fall it will be in vain for you to attempt to recover my body. Having spoken of the dark side I may say that we by no means acknowledge that we are not to be victorious. I have still great hope of success in the coming battles. I half believe that this retreat is not forced. If it be we are still powerful to hold our own in a new position.

Arthur: my boy, if I should not see you again be of good cheer & console yourself with the thought that I died in a good cause. I would like right well to see you, Father, Eliza & all for a few minutes but it will make little difference in the end. But I have already said too much. We mean to send you news of the greatest victory of the war or at least to make like work for those who shall follow us. All the baggage has been sent away & the road is clear. The most perfect quiet prevails. The men are most of them talking in calm, subdued tones indicative of settled purpose. A few are slowly & silently walking to & fro communing with themselves. The weather is very

hot. Ever since the battle of Williamsburgh I have seen some indications of what may happen.

There are many N.Y. & Penn. troops in our army. I have little confidence in them. If they were from Michigan, God bless the state, or from any of the western or New England states there would not be a shadow of doubt as to their conduct. If they run as is quite possible, we may be overwhelmed by numbers in spite of all exertions.

What tries my heart the worst is the disaster to the country if we are beaten. It is awful. Do not however despair. They will lose at least as many men as we & ours will be easier replaced. Wage the war to the last desolate acre of the accursed South. We are sure to conquer in the end. This defeat if it be one can be repaired in 30 days. If they are victorious they cannot live if we hold our ground in other places. I hope soon to see clear day through the clouds & uncertainty which now surround us. I intend to relate the events of this war beneath the shade of the glorious maples where we have passed so many happy hours.

Father: be the result what it may I thank you for having always been to me the kindest & best of parents. Eliza: placed as you were in a peculiar and difficult position as regards me you have always been more than I could have asked. Give my good wishes to all my old acquaintances. Arthur, I advise you to make your education liberal if health will permit but by all means look to that as your help will be needed at home before the other children are old enough to assist. I wish I could see the little ones. I feel a lively interest in them although we are still unacquainted. I have written thus because we all believe that our situation is one of uncommon danger.

JUNE 29 I was kept up all night by a multitude of orders. The tents were struck at 10 P.M. There was a light rain towards morning. We have destroyed everything we cannot carry. At 6 A.M. we moved off by the left flank to our left & rear halting near a sawmill. The rest of the brigade here passed us & went on further to the rear.

Everything is very quiet. There has been no firing since yesterday noon. When everything had passed we retired beyond the second line of rifle pits. We then deployed 5 Co's. across our front abt 1/4 mile off & halted till one P.M. We then fell

back abt 3/4 of a mile. At this time Richardson's Div. was sharply engaged near the Williamsburgh road.

At 3 P.M. we retire still farther. The rest of the brigade has gone on & we are only waiting for our skirmishers. Hooker's Div. occupy the road. We have peremptory orders to join the brigade & attempt to pass them. We have to open right & left & a battery passes at full run. We continue retreating through the woods & bushes on each side & some confusion arises. The road becomes narrower & the confusion increases. Some other Regts. try to crowd through & they make matters still worse. Our Regt. & most of the others are cool & perfectly manageable. The confusion is due entirely to want of efficiency on the part of the officers. The column should at once be halted till order is restored. More artillery passes. A Regt. at double quick cuts ours in two between the 3d & 4th Co's. Three Co's. continue on & 7 Co's. are thrown off to the left on another road. We went abt 1/2 mile when finding that matters were becoming worse the 38th N.Y. and our 3 Co's. filed out of the road & halted till the others passed. When the road is clear we move on again. Gen. Kearney orders us to go slowly as our 3 Co's. are "the rear guard of all God's Creation." This was an encouraging prospect for us with a total of 100 men.

We reach the swamp at Jordan's ford, are ordered to cross, to go to the Charles City road & hold it agt all comers. We cross the first ford, then a second one abt 60 rods wide with water 2 1/2 feet deep. We proceed abt a mile when a Co. of the 3d Maine encounter the enemy. We are deployed through the woods to support them. The force of the enemy is small & soon gives way.

Finding that they were in force nearby Gen. Kearney ordered us to fall back across the fords. Our Co's. were left to cover the retreat. I had hardly any expectation of escaping. The enemy moved down rapidly but our men were soon out of the way & we retired in line with a loss of only 3 men, on the extreme left of the line, who were taken by a party who tried to cut us off from the ford. Several smart volleys & a number of shells followed us but did no harm. We crossed the fords in good time, leaving other troops to guard them & made for another ford 3 miles lower down.

It was now dark. We marched rapidly & notwithstanding their

prayers & entreaties we were compelled to leave by the roadside some wounded men of the 3d Maine who had been brought across both fords. We reached the ford abt 9 P.M. & learned that Hooker's Div. & the balance of our Regt. had crossed an hour & a half before. We considered ourselves fortunate to have got thus far though we were apprehensive that we should find the Rebs at the other end of the ford. We plunged in, crossed safely & marched till 11 P.M. The night was very dark & we did not dare to proceed farther. Nearly choking for want of water we lay down & rested or slept for 3 hours. We were disturbed once by a loose horse which came galloping over us & once by picket firing.

JUNE 30 We were up at 2 A.M. We moved forward a mile & found the rest of the Regt. We move on 1/2 mile farther & halted in a fine open field to rest. We here made coffee, the first we had had in 24 hours. It refreshed us very much. We have nothing but hard crackers to eat. At noon the enemy appeared. We marched 1 1/2 miles at double quick & then formed our line. Our brigade was formed in columns in the woods & remained there an hour.

There is heavy cannonading on our right. We move back 1/2 mile farther. Musketry opens on our left, in front & soon after on our right. We advance to the front where a low, rude breastwork of logs, rails, stones, turf, anything to stop bullets had been hastily thrown up. Two batteries are in position. We are in the edge of woods, before us is an open field 60 rods wide in the wood on the other side of which is the enemy. The 20th Ind. were already at the work & there was no room for us. We move back abt 10 rods & lie flat down waiting for our turn.

The Rebs charge three times in heavy columns determined to break the line. The batteries double shotted with canister played on them at short range, some of the time not more than 10 rods, for an hour & a half. They were at the same time enveloped by the fire of the infantry. I never before saw such slaughter. The head of the column seemed to sink into the ground. Beyond a certain point they could not come. Four Regts. from behind the work kept up an incessant fire which was replied to by the enemy with equal rapidity.

Things remain thus till sundown when the batteries run out

of ammunition. We relieve the 20th at the pits & the fire is carried on with renewed vigor. The enemy display a courage & determination known only to Americans. Darkness comes & the full moon shines forth in all its beauty but its mild, peaceful light only serves to render our aim more certain. For an hour after dark there is a steady succession of flashes which are almost blinding. The enemy cease firing. We give tremendous cheers. They send us a terrible volley which we return. Both parties then give three cheers & the day's work is done.

The Rebs were busy till 2 o'clock carrying off their wounded. The wounded of 21 different Regts. lay on the field before us, as we learned from the Rebs themselves. Their cries & groans loaded the air, some calling for comrades, some for water, some praying to be killed & others swearing because they were not carried off the field. Our men lay close & the loss in our Regt. is light. The enemy sometimes in looking after their wounded came within a few feet of our picket line but we did not trouble them.

JULY 1, 1862 Gen. Richardson by hard fighting opened the road on which we are to retreat. While we held the enemy in front the army nearly all retreated. At 2 A.M. we withdraw as quietly as possible & commence our retreat. Our dead & all the wounded who could not walk had to be left. It was sad indeed the way the poor fellows begged to be taken along. It could not be done. The most of them will die. The Rebs cannot even take care of their own wounded. Our Regt. was separated by some runaway teams & troops coming in on another road got between the parts.

At sunrise we came to a large, open, undulating field in sight of James River. It was as beautiful a country as my eyes ever beheld. The cultivated field interspersed with belts & clusters of timber & dotted with delightful residences extended several miles. The hills were quite high but the slopes gradual & free from abruptness. Wheat was in the shock, oats were ready for the harvest & corn was abt waist high. All were of most luxuriant growth. The clusters of buildings are almost like villages.

All parts of the field are favorable for Cav. & Arty. There was hard fighting on a part of it yesterday. The country was laid waste, the fences burned, the harvested grain was used by the soldiers for beds & the unharvested was trodden into the

ground. The field was covered with troops. I spent two hours in ineffectual search after our lost Co's. They rejoined us soon after I returned. Here we hoped for a little rest but it was not more than an hour before we had to fall in.

We made a circuit of about 2 miles then halted & our brigade was drawn up in a column by battalions on the back side of a gently sloping hill on the crest of which were two batteries. We had been here but a short time when the enemy appeared on the crest of another hill abt a mile off. The inclination of the ground was so slight that our brigade as well as the supports of their batteries could be seen from several points. Both parties opened with shot, shell & shrapnel. We had nothing to do but lie on the ground in the burning sun & take things just as they came.

Their shots were not wild. Almost the first shot (12 lbs. solid) struck among the N.Y. 1st as they lay on the ground killing two & wounding another. One of them was thrown more than 5 ft. into the air. A shell burst in the ground not 4 ft. from Benson's head. One struck abt 10 ft. short of me in the ground & exploded nearly burying me in sand & stubble. I caught a ball from a shrapnel shell before it stopped rolling. Two others struck within reach of me. Three men of our Co. were wounded by one shot. Most of their shell burst abt 150 feet in the air & the fragments scattered over a great space. The wounded were carried to the rear in considerable numbers. The loss of the brigade is 85.

The scene was exciting but I was so exhausted that despite the noise & the bullets I went to sleep. I know not how long I should have slept if the order "Fall in" had not aroused me. The 2d moved off to support another battery. I felt weak & quite used up. When I tried to lead off at double quick I reeled & came near falling. I certainly should have fallen if we had gone far. Presently the fire slackened in our locality. There is a long line of artillery on this range of hills. On a higher one in our rear are a line of heavier pieces which fire over us. From the river in rear of us the gunboats fire by signals over all with 200 lb. shells.

The firing towards night was very heavy, musketry brisk & frequent charges. Our loss is moderate, that of the enemy very severe. With another hour of daylight I believe we could utterly rout them. The cannonading was kept up till long after

dark. I went onto a hill in front & saw 50 pieces of artillery playing into a piece of woods where the Rebs had taken shelter. This day's fighting has been the grandest I ever saw. It reminded me of the pictures of great battles in Europe. If our army had been fresh I should have liked all to have been risked on a battle on this field.

A LANDSCAPE TURNED RED:
MARYLAND, SEPTEMBER 1862

*David L. Thompson:
With Burnside at Antietam*

As soon as Lee discovered in early August 1862 that McClellan's army would be evacuated from the Peninsula, he moved north to strike at John Pope's Army of Virginia before the Army of the Potomac could combine with it. In the Second Battle of Manassas (or Second Bull Run), August 28–30, Lee defeated Pope. Seeking to further undermine northern morale and retain the initiative, Lee sent his army across the Potomac into western Maryland on September 4, 1862. As McClellan led the Army of the Potomac west from Washington, Lee issued an order on September 9 dividing his forces for an attack on the Union garrison at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. A lost copy of Lee's order was found by a Union soldier on September 13 and sent to McClellan, who failed to fully exploit the advantage it gave him. By the evening of September 16 Lee had about 35,000 men in a defensive position behind Antietam Creek at Sharpsburg, Maryland, facing McClellan's army of 75,000. Fighting began at daybreak on September 17 as Union troops attacked the Confederate left at the northern end of the battlefield. As the day wore on, the Union assaults shifted to the center and finally to the Confederate right, where in the early afternoon Ambrose Burnside's Ninth Corps fought its way across a stone bridge and pushed on to the outskirts of Sharpsburg. The Union advance was reversed by the arrival from Harpers Ferry of A. P. Hill's division, which caught Burnside's corps in the flank and drove it back to the bridge. After standing his ground on September 18, Lee retreated across the Potomac into Virginia. The battle of Antietam cost the Union 12,401 men killed, wounded, or missing, the Confederates 10,316, and remains the bloodiest single day in American history. Private David L. Thompson of the 9th New York Infantry recalled his experiences at Antietam in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (1887).

AT ANTIETAM our corps—the Ninth, under Burnside—was on the extreme left, opposite the stone bridge. Our brigade stole into position about half-past 10 o'clock on the night of

the 16th. No lights were permitted, and all conversation was carried on in whispers. As the regiment was moving past the 103d New York to get to its place, there occurred, on a small scale and without serious results, one of those unaccountable panics often noticed in crowds, by which each man, however brave individually, merges his individuality for the moment, and surrenders to an utterly causeless fear. When everything was at its darkest and stealthiest one of the 103d stumbled over the regimental dog, and, in trying to avoid treading on it, staggered against a stack of muskets and knocked them over. The giving way of the two or three men upon whom they fell was communicated to others in a sort of wave movement of constantly increasing magnitude, reënforced by the ever-present apprehension of attack, till two regiments were in confusion. In a few seconds order was restored, and we went on to our place in the line—a field of thin corn sloping toward the creek, where we sat down on the plowed ground and watched for a while the dull glare on the sky of the Confederate campfires behind the hills. We were hungry, of course, but, as no fires were allowed, we could only mix our ground coffee and sugar in our hands and eat them dry. I think we were the more easily inclined to this crude disposal of our rations from a feeling that for many of us the need of drawing them would cease forever with the following day.

All through the evening the shifting and placing had gone on, the moving masses being dimly descried in the strange half lights of earth and sky. There was something weirdly impressive yet unreal in the gradual drawing together of those whispering armies under cover of the night—something of awe and dread, as always in the secret preparation for momentous deeds. By 11 o'clock the whole line, four miles or more in length, was sleeping, each corps apprised of its appointed task, each battery in place.

It is astonishing how soon, and by what slight causes, regularity of formation and movement are lost in actual battle. Disintegration begins with the first shot. To the book-soldier all order seems destroyed, months of drill apparently going for nothing in a few minutes. Next after the most powerful factor in this derangement—the enemy—come natural obstacles and the inequalities of the ground. One of the commonest is a

patch of trees. An advancing line lags there inevitably, the rest of the line swinging around insensibly, with the view of keeping the alignment, and so losing direction. The struggle for the possession of such a point is sure to be persistent. Wounded men crawl to a wood for shelter, broken troops re-form behind it, a battery planted in its edge will stick there after other parts of the line have given way. Often a slight rise of ground in an open field, not noticeable a thousand yards away, becomes, in the keep of a stubborn regiment, a powerful head-land against which the waves of battle roll and break, requiring new dispositions and much time to clear it. A stronger fortress than a casual railroad embankment often proves, it would be difficult to find; and as for a sunken road, what possibilities of victory or disaster lie in that obstruction, let Waterloo and Fredericksburg bear witness.

At Antietam it was a low, rocky ledge, prefaced by a corn-field. There were woods, too, and knolls, and there were other corn-fields; but the student of that battle knows one corn-field only—the corn-field, now historic, lying a quarter of a mile north of Dunker Church, and east of and bordering the Hagerstown road. About it and across it, to and fro, the waves of battle swung almost from the first, till by 10 o'clock in the morning, when the struggle was over, hundreds of men lay dead among its peaceful blades.

While these things were happening on the right, the left was not without its excitement. A Confederate battery discovered our position in our corn-field, as soon as it was light enough to see, and began to shell us. As the range became better we were moved back and ordered to boil coffee in the protection of a hollow. The general plan of battle appears to have been to break through the Confederate left, following up the advantage with a constantly increasing force, sweep him away from the fords, and so crowd his whole army down into the narrow peninsula formed by the Potomac and Antietam Creek. Even the non-military eye, however, can see that the tendency of such a plan would be to bring the two armies upon concentric arcs, the inner and shorter of which must be held by the enemy, affording him the opportunity for reënforcement by interior lines—an immense advantage only to be counteracted by the utmost activity on our part, who must attack vigorously where

attacking at all, and where not, imminently threaten. Certainly there was no imminence in the threat of our center or left—none whatever of the left, only a vague consciousness of whose existence even seems to have been in the enemy's mind, for he flouted us all the morning with hardly more than a meager skirmish line, while his coming troops, as fast as they arrived upon the ground, were sent off to the Dunker Church.

So the morning wore away, and the fighting on the right ceased entirely. That was fresh anxiety—the scales were turning perhaps, but which way? About noon the battle began afresh. This must have been Franklin's men of the Sixth Corps, for the firing was nearer, and they came up behind the center. Suddenly a stir beginning far up on the right, and running like a wave along the line, brought the regiment to its feet. A silence fell on every one at once, for each felt that the momentous "now" had come. Just as we started I saw, with a little shock, a line-officer take out his watch to note the hour, as though the affair beyond the creek were a business appointment which he was going to keep.

When we reached the brow of the hill the fringe of trees along the creek screened the fighting entirely, and we were deployed as skirmishers under their cover. We sat there two hours. All that time the rest of the corps had been moving over the stone bridge and going into position on the other side of the creek. Then we were ordered over at a ford which had been found below the bridge, where the water was waist-deep. One man was shot in mid-stream. At the foot of the slope on the opposite side the line was formed and we moved up through the thin woods. Reaching the level we lay down behind a battery which seemed to have been disabled. There, if anywhere, I should have remembered that I was soaking wet from my waist down. So great was the excitement, however, that I have never been able to recall it. Here some of the men, going to the rear for water, discovered in the ashes of some hay-ricks which had been fired by our shells the charred remains of several Confederates. After long waiting it became noised along the line that we were to take a battery that was at work several hundred yards ahead on the top of a hill. This narrowed the field and brought us to consider the work before us more attentively.

Right across our front, two hundred feet or so away, ran a country road bordered on each side by a snake fence. Beyond this road stretched a plowed field several hundred feet in length, sloping up to the battery, which was hidden in a cornfield. A stone fence, breast-high, inclosed the field on the left, and behind it lay a regiment of Confederates, who would be directly on our flank if we should attempt the slope. The prospect was far from encouraging, but the order came to get ready for the attempt.

Our knapsacks were left on the ground behind us. At the word a rush was made for the fences. The line was so disordered by the time the second fence was passed that we hurried forward to a shallow undulation a few feet ahead, and lay down among the furrows to re-form, doing so by crawling up into line. A hundred feet or so ahead was a similar undulation to which we ran for a second shelter. The battery, which at first had not seemed to notice us, now, apprised of its danger, opened fire upon us. We were getting ready now for the charge proper, but were still lying on our faces. Lieutenant-Colonel Kimball was ramping up and down the line. The discreet regiment behind the fence was silent. Now and then a bullet from them cut the air over our heads, but generally they were reserving their fire for that better shot which they knew they would get in a few minutes. The battery, however, whose shots at first went over our heads, had depressed its guns so as to shave the surface of the ground. Its fire was beginning to tell. I remember looking behind and seeing an officer riding diagonally across the field—a most inviting target—instinctively bending his head down over his horse's neck, as though he were riding through driving rain. While my eye was on him I saw, between me and him, a rolled overcoat with its straps on bound into the air and fall among the furrows. One of the enemy's grape-shot had plowed a groove in the skull of a young fellow and had cut his overcoat from his shoulders. He never stirred from his position, but lay there face downward—a dreadful spectacle. A moment after, I heard a man cursing a comrade for lying on him heavily. He was cursing a dying man. As the range grew better, the firing became more rapid, the situation desperate and exasperating to the last degree. Human nature was on the rack, and there burst forth from it the most

vehement, terrible swearing I have ever heard. Certainly the joy of conflict was not ours that day. The suspense was only for a moment, however, for the order to charge came just after. Whether the regiment was thrown into disorder or not, I never knew. I only remember that as we rose and started all the fire that had been held back so long was loosed. In a second the air was full of the hiss of bullets and the hurtle of grape-shot. The mental strain was so great that I saw at that moment the singular effect mentioned, I think, in the life of Goethe on a similar occasion—the whole landscape for an instant turned slightly red. I see again, as I saw it then in a flash, a man just in front of me drop his musket and throw up his hands, stung into vigorous swearing by a bullet behind the ear. Many men fell going up the hill, but it seemed to be all over in a moment, and I found myself passing a hollow where a dozen wounded men lay—among them our sergeant-major, who was calling me to come down. He had caught sight of the blanket rolled across my back, and called me to unroll it and help to carry from the field one of our wounded lieutenants.

When I returned from obeying this summons the regiment (?) was not to be seen. It had gone in on the run, what there was left of it, and had disappeared in the corn-field about the battery. There was nothing to do but lie there and await developments. Nearly all the men in the hollow were wounded, one man—a recruit named Devlin, I think—frightfully so, his arm being cut short off. He lived a few minutes only. All were calling for water, of course, but none was to be had. We lay there till dusk,—perhaps an hour, when the fighting ceased. During that hour, while the bullets snipped the leaves from a young locust-tree growing at the edge of the hollow and powdered us with the fragments, we had time to speculate on many things—among others, on the impatience with which men clamor, in dull times, to be led into a fight. We heard all through the war that the army “was eager to be led against the enemy.” It must have been so, for truthful correspondents said so, and editors confirmed it. But when you came to hunt for this particular itch, it was always the next regiment that had it. The truth is, when bullets are whacking against tree-trunks and solid shot are cracking skulls like egg-shells, the consuming passion in the breast of the average man is to get out of the way. Between

the physical fear of going forward and the moral fear of turning back, there is a predicament of exceptional awkwardness from which a hidden hole in the ground would be a wonderfully welcome outlet.

Night fell, preventing further struggle. Of 600 men of the regiment who crossed the creek at 3 o'clock that afternoon, 45 were killed and 176 wounded. The Confederates held possession of that part of the field over which we had moved, and just after dusk they sent out detachments to collect arms and bring in prisoners. When they came to our hollow all the unwounded and slightly wounded there were marched to the rear—prisoners of the 15th Georgia. We slept on the ground that night without protection of any kind; for, with a recklessness quite common throughout the war, we had thrown away every incumbrance on going into the fight. The weather, however, was warm and pleasant, and there was little discomfort.

The next morning we were marched—about six hundred of us, fragments of a dozen different commands—to the Potomac, passing through Sharpsburg. We crossed the Potomac by the Shepherdstown ford, and bivouacked in the yard of a house near the river, remaining there all day. The next morning (the 19th) shells began to come from over the river, and we were started on the road to Richmond with a mixed guard of cavalry and infantry. When we reached Winchester we were quartered for a night in the court-house yard, where we were beset by a motley crew who were eager to exchange the produce of the region for greenbacks.

On the road between Shepherdstown and Winchester we fell in with the Maryland Battalion—a meeting I have always remembered with pleasure. They were marching to the front by companies, spaced apart about 300 or 400 feet. We were an ungainly, draggled lot, about as far removed as well could be from any claim to ceremonious courtesy; yet each company, as it passed, gave us the military salute of shouldered arms. They were noticeable, at that early stage of the war, as the only organization we saw that wore the regulation Confederate gray, all other troops having assumed a sort of revised regulation uniform of homespun butternut—a significant witness, we thought, to the efficacy of the blockade.

From Winchester we were marched to Staunton, where we

were put on board cattle-cars and forwarded at night, by way of Gordonsville, to Richmond, where we entered Libby Prison. We were not treated with special severity, for Libby was not at that time the hissing it afterward became. Our time there, also, was not long. Only nine days after we entered it we were sent away, going by steamer to Camp Parole, at Annapolis. From that place I went home without ceremony, reporting my address to my company officers. Three weeks afterward they advised me that I was exchanged—which meant that I was again, legally and technically, food for powder.

BATTLE OF IUKA: MISSISSIPPI, SEPTEMBER 1862

Ephraim Anderson: from
Memoirs: Historical and Personal

After a cautious monthlong advance from the Shiloh battlefield, Union forces occupied Corinth, Mississippi, on May 30, 1862, gaining control of a major rail junction. In the hot, dry summer that followed, the Union armies commanded by Ulysses S. Grant and William S. Rosecrans occupied northern Mississippi and western Tennessee, repairing and guarding railroads against guerrillas and cavalry raids. Don Carlos Buell, meanwhile, began slowly advancing eastwards with his Army of the Ohio toward Confederate-held Chattanooga. In September Braxton Bragg began his invasion of Kentucky and ordered Sterling Price, the Confederate commander in northern Mississippi, to prevent Rosecrans from reinforcing Buell. On September 19 Price and 14,000 Confederates fought 9,000 men under Rosecrans south of Iuka, Mississippi, while another Union force under Edward O. C. Ord approached the town from the west. The battle ended on September 20 when Price retreated after losing 1,516 men killed, wounded, or missing; Union losses totaled 782. Corporal Ephraim Anderson of the Confederate 2nd Missouri Infantry recalled the fighting in his 1868 memoir.

OUR BRIGADE was soon drawn up about two hundred yards in the rear of the line engaged; our regiment had several men wounded while forming, when we laid down, expecting every moment that our line in front, which had been engaged for some time, and was now fighting almost muzzle to muzzle, would in all probability be overwhelmed by superior numbers, and we would then confront the enemy's lines.

The sun, like a molten ball of fire, hung just above the horizon, and was falling slowly behind a faint streak of crimson clouds low in the west. The fighting on our part was up a gentle slope of thickly timbered land, and extended on into an old field in front, upon the most of which a dense growth of blackjack had sprung up, from seven to fifteen feet high. In the cleared ground upon this field a battery had been charged and

taken by our troops at the very muzzles of the pieces; but the infantry gave back step by step, stubbornly clinging to the cover of the bushes, and only leaving their pieces behind after the most desperate struggle to save them.

There was no intermission in the fierceness of the combat until after dark: the Third Louisiana and Third Texas, dismounted cavalry, armed with double-barreled shot-guns, and using buck-shot at close range, assisted by the Seventeenth Arkansas and another regiment, also, I believe, from Arkansas, pressed steadily on and drove the enemy slowly before them. When the fighting ceased for the night, our lines were over two hundred yards in advance of the position occupied by the captured battery, and all the ground that had been fought over was in our possession.

A little after dark our brigade was ordered to the front, to relieve the command that had been fighting: as we advanced up the road we met several detachments rolling down the Federal artillery; among those engaged in this service were some of our acquaintances of the Texas company that had assisted us on provost duty; their regiment had charged in front of the battery and was badly cut to pieces.

The artillery captured was of the best, as fine as is ever found upon the field; the pieces were entirely new and had never been in action before: it was the Tenth Ohio battery from Cincinnati, containing ten guns, and was supported by a division of Ohio troops.

Proceeding to the front, upon the ground where the hardest fighting had been done, the brigade formed, and our company was thrown out at a short distance as pickets and skirmishers, covering the line of the regiment. One of our detachment stepped accidentally upon a wounded soldier, who was lying upon the ground and spoke out—"Don't tread on me." He was asked, "What regiment do you belong to?"

"The Thirty-ninth Ohio."

"How many men has Rosecrans here?"

"Near forty-five thousand."

A little Irishman of our party curtly observed, "Our sixty-five thousand are enough for them."

The moon was nearly full, and threw a strong light upon the pale and ghastly faces of the thickly strewn corpses, while it

glanced and sparkled upon the polished gun-barrels and bright sword bayonets of the enemy's guns, which lay scattered around. Everything bore evidence of the bloody character of the action. The dead were so thick, that one could very readily have stepped about upon them, and the bushes were so lapped and twisted together—so tangled up and broken down in every conceivable manner, that the desperate nature of the struggle was unmistakable.

The carnage around the battery was terrible. I do not think a single horse escaped, and most of the men must have shared the same fate. One of the caissons was turned upside down, having fallen back upon a couple of the horses, one of which lay wounded and struggling under it; and immediately behind was a pile of not less than fifteen men, who had been killed and wounded while sheltering themselves there. They were all Federals, and most of them artillery-men. Some of the limbers were standing with one wheel in the air, and strewn thickly around all were the bloody corpses of the dead, while the badly wounded lay weltering in gore. I have been on many battle-fields, but never witnessed so small a space comprise as many dead as were lying immediately around this battery.

That night is well remembered as one marked by many conflicting emotions. Though already much hardened to the rough usages of war and the fearful events which inevitably accompany it—though somewhat accustomed to look upon the faces of the dead and fields of carnage as certain and natural results, yet the groans and cries of the wounded for help and water, the floundering of crippled horses in harness, and the calls of the infirmary corps, as it passed to and fro with litters in search of and bearing off the wounded, rendered the scene very gloomy, sad and impressive. As the night wind rose and fell, swelling with louder, wilder note, or sinking into a gentle, wailing breath, it seemed an invocation from the ghosts of the dead, and a requiem to the departing spirits of the dying.

There were few grey-coats among the dead around, and I gazed upon the blue ones with the feeling that they had come from afar and taken much pains to meet such a fate. It was but little akin to compassion, for war hardens men—especially when their country, their homes and firesides are invaded and laid waste.

Only a few feet from me a groan escaped the lips of a dying man, and I stepped to his side to offer the slight relief that my situation could afford. He was lying almost upon his face, with a thick covering of the bruised bushes twisted over him. Putting them aside, I spoke to him, and turned him in a more comfortable position. He was unable to speak, but looked as though he wanted something, and I placed my canteen to his lips, from which he eagerly drank. After this an effort to speak was made: he could only murmur something inarticulate and unintelligible, and at the same time a look of intense gratitude spread over his countenance. He was a Federal officer, as was easily perceived from his sword, dress and shoulder-straps. Some of the infirmary corps soon passed, and I asked them if they had any brandy or could do anything for him. Their answer was that he was too far gone to lose time with, and their brandy had given out. A few minutes after, he died.

A wounded soldier some distance off, hallooed at intervals until after midnight, repeatedly calling, "Caldwell guards!"—the name of his company, which belonged to the Third Louisiana. The regiment had gone to the rear. I could not leave my post to go to his assistance, and his cries ceased after midnight. Whether he received attention in time or died unnoticed where he had fallen, I never knew.

From our picket lines to those of the Federals it was not more than seventy yards, and at some points even nearer. One of our company unguardedly struck a match to light his pipe, when several shots were immediately fired at him without effect. This was the only firing through the night, and the blaze from the enemy's guns was but a little distance in the brush beyond us.

It seemed certain that a general engagement would take place on the morrow, and our brigade would occupy the post of honor—the front of the line. Though the enemy had a decided advantage in point of numbers, yet our troops were in admirable condition and their spirit was buoyant, fearless, and in every way promising. We were not, however, destined to fight the next morning, and, as the shades of night began to break into faint streaks of approaching day, we were withdrawn slowly from the field.

"AN AWFUL DAY": MISSISSIPPI, OCTOBER 1862

*Charles B. Labruzan:
Journal, October 4, 1862*

Sterling Price was reinforced after the battle of Iuka by Confederate troops from central Mississippi under the command of Earl Van Dorn. On October 3, 1862, Van Dorn and Price led 22,000 men in an attack on the 23,000 Union troops at Corinth commanded by William S. Rosecrans. Although the Confederates were able to push Rosecrans back to his inner defensive line by the evening of October 3, they were unable to break through the next morning and retreated when Union forces counterattacked at midday on October 4. The Confederates lost about 4,200 men killed, wounded, or missing, while Union losses were about 2,500. Lieutenant Charles B. Labruzan, a company commander in the 42nd Alabama Infantry, described the fierce fighting around Battery Robinett on the second day of the battle.

Saturday, Oct. 4th.—An awful day. At 4 o'clock, before day, our Brigade was ordered to the left about one-fourth of a mile, and halted, throwing out lines of skirmishers, which kept up a constant fire. A Battery in front of the right of our Regiment opened briskly, and the enemy replied the same. The cannonading was heavy for an hour and a half. Our Regiment lay down close, and stood it nobly. The shell flew thick and fast, cutting off large limbs and filling the air with fragments. Many burst within 20 feet, and the pieces popped within 2 or 3 feet. It was extremely unpleasant, and I prayed for forgiveness of my sins, and made up my mind to go through. Col. Sawier called for volunteers to assist the 2d Texas skirmishers. I volunteered, and took my company. Captain Perkins and Lieutenant Wumson being taken sick directly after the severe bombardment, I had the Co. all the time. I went skirmishing at 7 1/2, and returned at 9 1/2 o'clock. We got behind trees and logs, and the way the bullets did fly, was unpleasant to see. I think 20 must have passed within a few feet of me, humming prettily. Shells tore off large limbs and splinters. Struck my tree several times.

We could only move from tree to tree, and bending low to the ground, while moving. Oh, how anxiously I watched for the bursting of the shells when the heavy roar of the cannon proclaimed their coming. At 9 1/2 o'clock I had my skirmishers relieved, by Captain Rouse's Company. Sent my men to their places, and went behind a log with Major Furges. At 10 o'clock, suddenly the fight fairly opened, with heavy volleys of musketry and the double thundering cannon. This was on the right. In a few minutes the left went into action in splendid style. At 10 1/4 o'clock, Col. Rogers came up by us, only saying "Alabama forces." Our Regiment, with the Brigade rose, unmindful of the shell or shot, and moved forward, marching about 250 yards and rising the crest of a hill. The whole of Corinth, with its enormous fortifications, burst upon our view. The U. S. flag was floating over the forts and in town. We were now met by a perfect storm of grape, cannister, cannon balls and Minnie balls. Oh, God! I have never seen the like! The men fell like grass, even here. Giving one tremendous cheer, we dashed to the bottom of the hill on which the fortifications are situated. Here we found every foot of ground covered with large trees and brush, cut down to impede our progress. Looking to the right and left, I saw several Brigades charging at the same time. What a sight was there. I saw men running at full speed, stop suddenly and fall upon their faces, with their brains scattered all around. Others, with legs and arms cut off, shrieking with agony. They fell behind, beside, and within a few feet of me. I gave myself to God, and got ahead of my company. The ground was literally strewn with mangled corpses. One ball passed through my pants, and they cut twigs right by me. It seemed, by holding out my hand I could have caught a dozen. They buzzed and hissed by me in all directions, but I still pushed forward. I seemed to be moving right in the mouth of cannon, for the air was filled with hurling grape and cannister. Ahead was one continuous blaze. I rushed to the ditch of the fort, right between some large cannon. I grappled into it, and half way up the sloping wall. The enemy were only three or four feet from me on the other side, but could not shoot us for fear of having their heads blown off. Our men were in the same predicament. Only 5 or 6 were on the wall, and 30 or 40 in and around the ditch. Catesby on the wall by

my side. A man within two feet of me, put his head cautiously up, to shoot into the fort. But he suddenly dropped his musket, and his brains were dashed in a stream over my fine coat, which I had in my arms, and on my shirt sleeves. Several were killed here, on top one another, and rolled down the embankment in ghastly heaps. This was done by a Regiment of Yankees coming about 40 yards on our left, after finding us entirely cut off, and firing into us. Several of our men cried "put down the flag," and it was lowered, or shot into the ditch. Oh, we were butchered like dogs, as we were not supported. Some one placed a white handkerchief on Sergeant Buck's musket, and he took it to a port hole. But the Yankees snatched it off and took him prisoner. The men fell 10 at a time. The ditch being full, and finding we had no chance, the survivors tried to save themselves as best they could. I was so far up, I could not get off quickly. I do not recollect of seeing Catesby after this, but think he got off before. I trust in God he has. I and Capt. Foster started together, and the air was literally filled with hissing balls. I got about 20 steps, as quick as I could, about a dozen being killed in that distance. I fell down and scrambled behind a large stump. Just then, I saw poor Foster throw up his hands, and saying "Oh, my God!" jumped about two feet from the ground, falling on his face. The top of his head seemed to cave in, and the blood spouted straight up several feet. I could see men fall as they attempted to run, some with their heads to pieces, and others with the blood streaming from their backs. It was horrible. One poor fellow being almost on me, told me his name, and asked me to take his pocket-book if I escaped and give it to his mother, and tell her that he died a brave man. I asked him if he was a Christian, and told him to pray, which he did, with the cannon thundering a deadly accompaniment. Poor fellow. I forgot his request in the excitement. His legs were literally cut to pieces. As our men returned, the enemy poured in their fire, and I was hardly 30 feet from the mouth of the cannon. Minnie balls filled the stump I was behind, and the shells bursted within three feet of me. One was so near it stunned me, and burned my face with powder. The grape-shot hewed large pieces off my stump, gradually wearing it away. I endured the horrors of death here for half an hour, and endeavored to resign myself and prayed. Our troops formed in

line in the woods, and advanced a second time to the charge with cheers. They began firing when about half way, and I had to endure it all. I was feigning death. I was right between our own and the enemies fire. In the first charge our men did not fire a gun, but charged across the ditch, and to the very mouth of the cannon, with the bayonet. So also the second charge, but they fired. Thank God, I am unhurt, and I think it was a merciful Providence. Our troops charged by, when I seized a rifle and endeavored to fire it several times, but could not, for the cap was bad. Our boys were shot down like hogs, and could not stand it, and fell back each man for himself. Then the same scene was enacted as before. This time the Yankees charged after them, and as I had no chance at all, and all around we were surrendering, I was compelled to do so, as a rascal threatened to shoot me. I had to give up my sword to him. He demanded my watch also. Took it; but I appealed to an officer, and got it back. I had no means of defending myself for the first time in many years. I cried to see our brave men slaughtered so, and thought where Catesby might be. I have never felt so in all my life. It is now said that our Brigade was never ordered to charge such a place, and that it was a mistake. If so, it was a sad one. Being brought behind the works we found three Regiments drawn up in line, and all of them were fighting our 42d Alabama alone. I helped to carry a wounded man to the Depot, with Lieutenants Marshall, Contra and Preston, they being the only unhurt officers who were prisoners from our Regiment. We and the privates were soon marched to a large house, having a partition for the officers. The men, about 400, in next room. I heard firing again, but I fear we can do nothing. We are treated very politely—more so than I had expected.

“THOROUGHLY LICKED”:
VIRGINIA, DECEMBER 1862

*Henry Livermore Abbott
to Josiah Gardner Abbott and
to George B. Perry*

Frustrated by McClellan's unwillingness to take the offensive after Antietam, Lincoln dismissed him as commander of the Army of the Potomac on November 5, 1862, and named Ambrose Burnside as his replacement. Burnside succeeded in outmaneuvering Lee and reached the Rappahannock River opposite the undefended town of Fredericksburg, Virginia, on November 17, but then waited more than a week for the arrival of several pontoon bridges. By the time they arrived, Lee had reached Fredericksburg with one of his infantry corps. After considering crossing points above and below the town, Burnside decided to make a frontal assault. The Army of the Potomac succeeded in crossing the Rappahannock under fire on December 11, but was repulsed when it attacked the heights behind Fredericksburg on December 13. Union losses in the battle totaled more than 12,600 men killed, wounded, or missing, while Confederate casualties were about 5,300. A veteran of Ball's Bluff, Fair Oaks, and the Seven Days, Captain Henry Livermore Abbott commanded Company I of the 20th Massachusetts Infantry, part of the brigade led by Norman J. Hall in the division commanded by Oliver O. Howard. In his letters to his father and to George B. Perry, a former officer in the 20th Massachusetts who had been medically discharged in the fall, Abbott mentions his brother Fletcher, who was home from the army on sick leave, and alludes to the death of their brother Edward, who was killed at Cedar Mountain in August 1862.

Fredericksburg Va
Dec 14 / 62

My dear Papa,

We are still in Fredericksburg (Sunday). The very moment I finished my last letter to mama we were ordered again to the front. Howard, a most conscientious man, but a very poor general, had heard of batteries stormed & rifle pits taken &c,

& without stopping to think whether the rifle pits in question were an analogous case, he took the weakest brigade in the army, one which besides was considerably demoralized by the fight of the previous day & the shelling they had suffered, to say nothing of the recollection of their awful loss & defeat at Antietam, he took this brigade & ordered it to advance not altogether, but regt. after regt. The result was that the 19th which first got into position, no sooner reached the brow of the hill than they tumbled right back head over heels into us. Then came our turn. We had about 200 men. We advanced 2 or 3 rods over the brow of the hill under a murderous fire, without the slightest notion of what was intended to be accomplished. Our men however, though they couldn't be got to advance in double-quick against the rifle pits which we soon perceived, didn't on the other hand like the 19th, break & run. They held their position firmly until Col. Hall seeing that the pits could only be carried at the run, & that if carried they were completely enfiladed by a rebel battery on the hill, ordered us to retire, which we did in good order, below the brow of the hill where the whole brigade lay till 2 next morning. Crowds of troops were ordered up, but none found courage even to undertake what the poor little brigade of 1000 men had been unable to accomplish. At 2 o'clock, we were relieved by the regulars who were ordered up as a last resort since Hall's brigade had failed to take the pits, which they were to storm this morning. However the generals have changed their minds since & consider the assault impracticable, so nothing has been done to day, except a little shelling—(3 o'clock). Hall stoutly condemned the whole attempt by such a weak exhausted brigade, as simply ridiculous. But Howard is so pious that he thought differently. & hinc illae &c. Hooker suffered terribly yesterday & accomplished nothing. The enthusiasm of the soldiers has been all gone for a long time. They only fight from discipline & old associations. McClellan is the only man who can revive it. Macy commanded our regiment as well as it could possibly be commanded. This morning, Gen Howard called him to the front of the regt. & at the same time that he praised the regiment, complimented Macy publicly in the handsomest manner. The regiment during the few minutes they were engaged lost about 60 men & 3 officers. We have

now a hundred odd men & 5 company officers with the regiment. I lost only 4 men as all but 10 I had sent out under cover to watch our flanks, which were otherwise entirely unprotected. Alley was killed instantaneously by a bullet through the eye. You will know how I feel about this loss, when I tell you that for a moment I felt the same pang as when I first heard of our great loss. I don't want to say any thing more about him now, for thinking on such a subject makes a man bluer than he ought to be in the presence of the enemy. I have sent his body home by Sergt. Summerhayes with orders to call on you for funds, as I have no money. I will settle it from Alley's account. For God's sake, don't let Fletcher get on till after Richmond is taken. I couldn't stand the loss of a third brother, for I regard Alley almost as a brother.

I am in excellent health. My scabbard was smashed by a bullet, but I myself was uninjured. Don't you or mama worry yourself about our fighting any more. Howard told us we were so used up that we shouldn't fight again except in direst necessity.

Love to all
Your aff. son
H. L. Abbott

Near Falmouth Va
AM Wednesday

Dear George,

I suppose the letters I have written home, describing the battles have got there. So I will only say as a summing up of them, that we took over 320 men & lost 165 men & 8 officers. However we are getting back the men in the hospitals, the detailed men & that sort of thing, so that we shall soon have a respectable number again. Holmes & Willard will soon return to duty, too. As it is, we have only 5 officers. Macy & our regiment covered itself with glory & have received no end of compliments. The army generally didn't fight well. The new regiments behaved shamefully, as well as many of the old ones. The whole army is demoralized. The 15 Mass was seized with a panic at nothing at all & broke & ran like sheep. They have

always been considered one of the most trustworthy regiments in the army. Hooker's troops broke & ran. He is played out. Our loss was 10000. The rebels may have lost 3000. Burnside, who is a noble man, but not a general is going to leave the army entirely. He rode through the town, the last day without a single cheer. That conscientious donkey, Howard, after keeping our brigade shivering & freezing for an hour yesterday afternoon listening to a sermon & benediction from him, proposed (N. B. he may be summed up in the words, devilish *green*) three cheers for Burnside. Several men in a new regiment, the 127th Penn. gave a mockery of 3 cheers. Not a man in the other regiments opened their mouths, except to mutter three cheers for McClellan. We can never win another victory till he comes back, & even then, not till, after 3 months of winter quarters, he has had time to reorganize the army. Financial troubles & foreign intervention may stop the thing before that time expires, but any other course is *certain* destruction. The only two generals left that this brigade believes in are Couch & Hall. We dont know much about the former, except that he protested in the strongest manner against the whole thing. The army went over with the conviction, almost the determination, of getting licked & they have got thoroughly licked. If you people at home, are going to allow us to be butchered any longer by Halleck & Stanton, you will find the enemy at your own doors.

Your aff. friend,
H. L. Abbott

Tell the governor that I have sent an order for \$75 on him to pay for embalming the body of Alley. I will pay it from Alley's money, as soon as the funds come.

I was devilish sorry to hear that Fletch met with an accident. Don't let him come back before something new turns up. Old heads like Johnny Sedgwick know too much to come before McClellan.

I forgot to say, that we are in our old quarters, with every prospect of remaining.

December 17, 1862

Biographical Notes

Henry Livermore Abbott (January 21, 1842–May 6, 1864) Born in Lowell, Massachusetts, the son of a lawyer active in Democratic politics. Graduated from Harvard College in 1860 and began studying law in his father's office. Commissioned second lieutenant, 20th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment, July 10, 1861. Formed close friendship with his fellow officer Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. Fought at Ball's Bluff. Promoted to first lieutenant, November 1861. Fought at Fair Oaks and in the Seven Days' Battles, where he was wounded in the arm at Glendale. Older brother Edward killed at Cedar Mountain. Fought at Fredericksburg (December 1862 and May 1863) and Gettysburg; promoted to captain, December 1862, and major, October 1863. Became acting commander of the 20th Massachusetts after all of the regimental officers senior to him were killed or wounded at Gettysburg. Led the regiment at Briscoe Station and at the battle of the Wilderness, where he was fatally wounded on May 6, 1864.

Ephraim McDowell Anderson (June 29, 1843–January 10, 1916) Born in Knoxville, Tennessee, the son of a farmer. Family moved in his youth to Monroe County, Missouri. In 1861, became a member of the secessionist Missouri State Guard under General Sterling Price, and participated in the battles of Carthage, Springfield, and Lexington. Joined Company G, 2nd Regiment, 1st Missouri Confederate Brigade, in 1862. Fought at Elkhorn Tavern, Iuka, and Corinth. Surrendered at Vicksburg in July 1863 and was exchanged in September 1863. Served as commissary clerk at Demopolis, Alabama, after illness ended his field service. Invalided out of the Confederate army in late 1864. Returned to farming in Missouri after the war. Published *Memoirs: Historical and Personal; including the campaigns of the First Missouri Confederate Brigade* (1868). Moved in late 1915 to the Confederate Soldiers Home at Higginsville, Missouri, where he died.

George W. Dawson (July 19, 1831–June 13, 1862) Born in New Madrid, Missouri, the son of a doctor. Became a farmer and married Laura Amanda Lavelle in 1852. Enlisted in June 1861, and was elected second lieutenant in Company I, 1st Missouri Infantry, the state's first Confederate regiment. Elected captain in April 1862 shortly before the battle of Shiloh. Contracted typhoid fever at Corinth, Mississippi, in May 1862 and died in New Madrid.

John Kennerly Farris (April 18, 1836–August 7, 1910) Born in Franklin County, Tennessee. Studied medicine under a physician in Pleasant Hill, Tennessee. Married Mary Elisabeth Austell in 1857. Practiced in Arkansas before returning to Tennessee in 1860. Enlisted in the 41st Tennessee Infantry on November 26, 1861, and became a hospital steward in January 1862. Captured at Fort Donelson in February 1862, he was exchanged in September 1862. Served with the 41st Tennessee at Port Hudson, Louisiana, and in the Vicksburg campaign. Injured in railroad accident in Georgia in early September 1863. Rejoined regiment in early November and fought in the battle of Chattanooga. Served in Atlanta campaign and in Hood's invasion of Tennessee. Captured at Franklin on December 17, 1864. Escaped and returned to his medical practice in Coffee County, Tennessee. Died in Prairie Plains, Tennessee.

Charles B. Haydon (1834–March 14, 1864) Born in Vermont. Raised in Decatur, Michigan. Graduated from the University of Michigan in 1857, then read law in Kalamazoo. Joined the Kalamazoo Home Guard on April 22, 1861, then enlisted on May 25 for three years' service in the 2nd Michigan Infantry. Fought at Blackburn's Ford during the First Bull Run campaign. Commissioned second lieutenant in September 1861 and promoted to first lieutenant in February 1862. Fought at Williamsburg, Fair Oaks, the Seven Days' Battles, Second Bull Run, and Fredericksburg; promoted to captain in September 1862. Regiment was sent to Kentucky in April 1863 and to Vicksburg in June as part of the Ninth Corps. Wounded in the shoulder while leading his company at Jackson, Mississippi, on July 11, 1863. Returned to active duty in December 1863 and was made lieutenant colonel of the 2nd Michigan. Died of pneumonia in Cincinnati while returning to Michigan on a thirty-day furlough after reenlisting.

Charles B. Labruzan (February 29, 1840–June 17, 1930) A merchant from Mobile, Alabama, Labruzan became a lieutenant in the 42nd Alabama Infantry. Served as the acting commander of Company F during the battle of Corinth, where he was captured on October 4, 1862. Paroled and exchanged, he became a prisoner again at the surrender of Vicksburg in July 1863. Died in Little River, Alabama.

William T. Sherman (February 8, 1820–February 14, 1891) Born in Lancaster, Ohio, the son of an attorney. Graduated from West Point in 1840. Served in Florida and California, but did not see action in the U.S.-Mexican War. Married Ellen Ewing in 1850. Promoted to captain; resigned his commission in 1853. Managed bank branch in San Francisco, 1853–57. Moved in 1858 to Leavenworth, Kansas, where

he worked in real estate and was admitted to the bar. Named first superintendent of the Louisiana State Seminary of Learning and Military Academy at Alexandria (now Louisiana State University) in 1859. Resigned position when Louisiana seceded in January 1861. Commissioned colonel, 13th U.S. Infantry, May 1861. Commanded brigade at First Bull Run, July 1861. Appointed brigadier general of volunteers, August 1861, and ordered to Kentucky. Assumed command of the Department of the Cumberland, October 1861, but was relieved in November at his own request. Returned to field in March 1862 and commanded division under Ulysses S. Grant at Shiloh. Promoted major general of volunteers, May 1862. Commanded corps under Grant during Vicksburg campaign, and succeeded him as commander of the Army of the Tennessee, October 1863, and as commander of the Military Division of the Mississippi, March 1864. Captured Atlanta, September 1864, and led march through Georgia, November–December 1864. Marched army through the Carolinas and accepted the surrender of Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston at Durham Station, North Carolina, April 26, 1865. Promoted to lieutenant general, 1866, and general, 1869, when he became commander of the army. Published controversial memoirs (1875, revised 1886). Retired from army in 1884 and moved to New York City. Rejected possible Republican presidential nomination, 1884. Died in New York City.

David L. Thompson (August 28, 1837–March 13, 1926) Born in Windham, Ohio. Taught school before enlisting from Flushing, New York, as private in Company G, 9th New York Infantry, on August 13, 1862. Captured at battle of Antietam, September 17, 1862. Held at Richmond; paroled to Annapolis, Maryland, October 6, 1862, and released from parole, December 1862. After the 9th New York mustered out in May 1863, Thompson joined Company B, 3rd New York Infantry. Served in South Carolina in 1863, in the Bermuda Hundred and Petersburg campaigns in 1864, and in North Carolina, where he was discharged on June 17, 1865, as a lieutenant. Married Mary Ann Wray in 1868. Lived in North Plainfield, New Jersey. Worked as a cashier, then as treasurer of a hardware company. Died in Newark, New Jersey.

Lunsford P. Yandell (June 6, 1837–March 12, 1884) Born in Rutherford County, Tennessee, the son of a physician. Graduated from the University of Louisville medical school in 1857. Began practicing medicine in Memphis, 1858, and taught at the Memphis Medical College. Served as a surgeon with the Confederate army in the western theater, 1861–65. Married Louise Elliston in 1867. Taught medicine at the University of Louisville from 1869 until his death. Died in Louisville from an overdose of chloral hydrate.

Chronology, 1860–1865

- 1860 Republican candidate Abraham Lincoln wins presidential election, November 6, defeating Stephen Douglas (Northern Democratic), John C. Breckinridge (Southern Democratic), and John Bell (Constitutional Union). Lincoln receives 180 out of 303 electoral votes, all of them from free states. South Carolina convention votes to secede from the Union, December 20.
- 1861 Conventions in Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas vote to secede, January 9–February 1. Delegates meet in Montgomery, Alabama, and elect Jefferson Davis provisional president of the Confederate States of America, February 8. Lincoln is inaugurated, March 4. Confederates open fire on Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina, April 12. Lincoln calls forth 75,000 militia, April 15. Virginia votes to secede, April 17. Lincoln proclaims blockade of southern ports, April 19. Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina join the Confederacy, May 6–20. Confederates win battle of Manassas (Bull Run) in Virginia, July 21. Davis is elected without opposition to six-year term, November 6.
- 1862 Ulysses S. Grant captures Fort Donelson, Tennessee, February 16. Confederate defeat at Pea Ridge in northwestern Arkansas, March 7–8, secures Union control of Missouri. Grant wins battle of Shiloh in southeastern Tennessee, April 6–7. Union navy captures New Orleans, April 25. Robert E. Lee defeats Union army outside of Richmond, Virginia, June 25–July 1, and wins second battle of Manassas, August 28–30. Battle of Antietam, September 17, ends Lee’s invasion of Maryland. Lincoln issues preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, September 22, to take effect in all territory still in rebellion on January 1, 1863. Battle of Perryville, October 8, ends Confederate invasion of Kentucky. Lee defeats Union army at Fredericksburg, Virginia, December 13. Battle of Stones River (Murfreesboro) begins in central Tennessee, December 31.

- 1863 Lincoln issues Emancipation Proclamation, January 1, freeing all slaves in Confederate-held territory and authorizing enlistment of blacks in the Union army. Battle of Stones River ends, January 2, with Confederate retreat. Grant crosses Mississippi River, April 30, beginning campaign to take Vicksburg. Lee defeats Union army in Virginia in battle of Chancellorsville, May 1–4. Grant begins siege of Vicksburg, May 22. Lee is defeated at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, July 1–3. Confederate army at Vicksburg surrenders to Grant, July 4. Victory at Port Hudson, Louisiana, July 9, gives Union control of entire Mississippi River. Confederates win battle of Chickamauga in northern Georgia, September 19–20, and besiege Union army in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Lincoln gives address at Gettysburg, November 19. Grant defeats Confederates at Chattanooga, November 23–25.
- 1864 Grant is named commander of the Union armies, March 10, and begins spring campaign in Virginia, May 4. Lee and Grant fight battle of the Wilderness, May 5–6. William T. Sherman begins Union campaign in northern Georgia, May 7. Grant and Lee fight at Spotsylvania, May 8–20, and Cold Harbor, May 31–June 12, as Union army moves closer to Richmond. After crossing James River, Grant attacks Petersburg, Virginia, June 15–18, then begins prolonged siege. Sherman captures Atlanta, September 2. Lincoln defeats Democratic candidate General George B. McClellan, November 8, winning 212 of 233 electoral votes. Sherman leaves Atlanta, November 16, and begins march through Georgia. Union victory at Nashville, December 15–16, ends Confederate invasion of Tennessee. Sherman occupies Savannah, December 21.
- 1865 Congress proposes Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution abolishing slavery, January 31. Sherman begins march through the Carolinas, February 1. Lincoln delivers his Second Inaugural Address, March 4. Sherman reaches Goldsboro, North Carolina, March 23. Grant assaults Confederate lines at Petersburg, April 2, forcing evacuation of Richmond. Lee surrenders to Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, April 9. Lincoln is shot, April 14, and dies, April 15; Vice President Andrew Johnson becomes president. Remaining Confederate armies surrender, April 26–May 26. Ratification of the Thir-

teenth Amendment is declared, December 18. At least 360,000 Union soldiers, 260,000 Confederate soldiers, and 50,000 civilians were killed or died from disease, hunger, and exposure during the war.

Questions for Discussion

1. What did you find most surprising or unexpected about these writings?
2. Describing his first experience of combat to his wife Ellen, William T. Sherman writes of “confused masses of men, without order or system.” Judging from the other readings, how characteristic was Sherman’s experience? To what extent did soldiers’ experience of combat meet or confound their expectations? How did Sherman attempt to impose order on the confusion of battle? How successful was he at First Bull Run? Why does he blame democracy for the Union defeat?
3. Henry Livermore Abbott first experienced combat in the Union debacle at Ball’s Bluff. How do his experiences, and his perspective, compare with Sherman’s?
4. Lunsford P. Yandell Jr.’s letter describing Belmont was published in the *Louisville Journal* not long after the battle and reprinted in New York in 1862. How might the publication of graphic battle accounts have affected either side’s ability to carry on the war (maintain political support, recruit new soldiers, raise revenues, etc.)?
5. How did John Kennerly Farris control his fear at Fort Donelson?
6. How does George W. Dawson view his experiences at Shiloh? How did the Confederate retreat at the end of the battle affect his view of it?
7. In his journal, Charles B. Haydon urges his younger brother Arthur, “console yourself with the thought that I died in a good cause.” How do these soldier accounts speak of the underlying cause for the fighting? What motivated these men to face death as they did?
8. David L. Thompson published his recollections of Antietam more than twenty years after the battle. How does it compare with the contemporaneous accounts in this reader? Do you

- trust his memory of events? Did the passage of time give Thompson insight he may not have had in 1862?
9. How does Ephraim Anderson view the Union soldiers he fought against at Iuka? How does he act toward them? How did the way soldiers viewed their opponents affect their willingness to fight?
 10. Charles B. Labruzan and Henry Livermore Abbott remark on the futility of the costly battles they fought in. To whom or to what do they look for meaning and solace? What sustained Labruzan during the battle of Corinth?
 11. How do Henry Livermore Abbott's letters after the battle of Fredericksburg compare with what he wrote after Ball's Bluff? Have his experiences changed his view of the war and of the Army?
 12. How does reading these firsthand accounts affect your sense of the purpose and meaning of the war? Does it change how you understand the role of individuals—their words and actions—in historical events? What are the differences between exploring the war through participant accounts and reading a historical narrative of the same events?
 13. Choosing one of the pieces, what do you think was the author's purpose for writing it? Do you think it achieves its purpose? How might the act of writing it have helped the author to make sense of his or her experience of the Civil War?
 14. How are the experiences of the Civil War reflected in the language, tone, attitude, and style of the writing?