

Children • Soldiers' Aid • Music • THE CIVIL WAR • Camp Life • Prisons • Copperheads
Spring 2014 • \$7

Iowa Heritage

ILLUSTRATED



Front Porch

Dear Readers:

"The real war will never get in the books," declared writer Walt Whitman about the American Civil War. "The actual soldier . . . North and South, with all his ways, his incredible dauntlessness, habits, practices, tastes, language, his fierce friendship, his appetite, rankness, his superb strength and animality, lawless gait, and a hundred unnamed lights and shades of camp, I say, will never be written."

Still, the war figured in Whitman's writing for years, long after he tended wounded and sick soldiers in Washington, D.C., hospitals. And the war has figured in State Historical of Iowa publications since 1863, when the *Annals of Iowa* was first published.

We devote this issue to the Civil War, in commemoration of its 150th anniversary. New research informs the issue: the threat of "nostalgia"; the war's impact on children; the relocation of African Americans to the Midwest; profiles of Iowans who opposed the war; how women coped. We explore the emotional terrain more than the battlefield terrain.

One cannot learn about war without sorrow and dismay, and this issue reflects

that. Stories of survival and resilience outnumber those of heroism and victory; those stories have been told before.

And for every view of the war, there is another. The symbolism of battleflags was powerful and remains so for many Americans. Still, Walt Whitman questioned their price: "I have a little flag (it belonged to one of our cavalry reg'ts) presented to me by one of the wounded—it was taken by the [rebels] in a cavalry fight, & rescued by our men in a bloody little skirmish, it cost three men's lives, just to get one little flag, four by three."

"The contest touches everything and leaves nothing as it found it," the *New York Times* said of the war in 1867. "It leaves us a different people in everything." I believe that a war of this magnitude reverberates through a society long after it is over—as if it has altered our cultural DNA.

My hope is that the compelling stories and images in this issue bring us closer to understanding what Americans experienced 150 years ago.

—Ginalie Swaim, editor

PLEASE NOTE: Sharp-eyed readers—and certainly all librarians—will note that this issue of *Iowa Heritage Illustrated* is dated Spring 2014 and numbered 93:1. For a variety of reasons, the magazine fell behind schedule. To end confusion over the date, we are designating this issue "Spring 2014," the season and year in which you are receiving it.

SUBSCRIBERS: The date change will not affect the number of issues you receive. You will receive all the issues you paid for through your subscription.

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LIBRARIANS: We are not changing the volume and number. They remain consecutive. The previous (double) issue was 92: 3 & 4. This issue is 93:1. There is no publishing hiatus.

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I sincerely apologize for the schedule problems. Thank you for your continuing support and enthusiasm for the magazine.
—Ginalie Swaim, editor, *Iowa Heritage Illustrated*

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Spring 2014, 93:1

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On the Cover

Sometime in the last two years of the Civil War, Private Hiram M. Kersey, 44th Iowa Infantry, posed with his bayonet, knife, revolver, and cartridge box for this hand-colored tintype. Kersey's war fills this special issue.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



Federal cavalry at Sudley Ford, Bull Run, Virginia, 1862

Civil War Children

TWO CHILDREN STARE across a stream at mounted soldiers, while two others sit with their hands in their laps, seemingly oblivious.

But how could they be oblivious—to war?

Like youngsters everywhere, children during the Civil War absorbed what they saw and heard and sensed—at home and school, in town and church. As historian James Marten tells us, “Children missed little of what the war had to offer, from the pageantry and the excitement to the hardships and the tragedy.”

And as children do, Civil War girls and boys mimicked the adult world. They made believe they were wounded soldiers and charging cavalry. They play-acted the war as small generals commanding troops, as little nurses bandaging soldiers, as spies, prisoners, and deserters. They cheered news of a victory and marched around the parlor with toy drums. Iowa farm woman Marjorie Ann Rogers recalled that before her husband enlisted, he “often took the boys with him if the [local] war meeting was near enough to return home that night, as they were both good singers. . . . He and the boys sometimes did all the singing. The boys caught the spirit of the times and would go through the program of the meeting at home, singing ‘The Star Spangled Banner’ and ‘America.’”

But growing up during the war was not child’s play. The war pulled away older brothers and fathers, leaving households filled with stress, uncertainty, and fear. “Do you wonder that the children of that time grew prematurely old, [fearing] the blanched face of their mother?” asked an Ohioan years after the war. “How often I [had] seen mother snatch a paper, and, without drawing a breath, scan the list of dead and wounded, and whenever we boys went for mail, how, when a letter was handed out with the well known [hand]writing . . . we would run like deer for home, to be met at the gate.”

After his father had left for the war, young Frank Rogers carried a loaded pistol in his pocket. As he explained to his mother, “Father told us all to take care of you and I will.”

Community tensions over loyalty crept into children’s classrooms. Historian Hubert Wubben tells us that teachers were fired for perceived “disloyal and traitorous sentiments.” In Jasper County, “teachers resolved that they would try to infuse their pupils with a spirit of patriotism [and] asserted that teachers who failed to properly appreciate soldier efforts to preserve the Union were unworthy members of the profession.” Although teachers taught patriotic songs and poems, they were warned not to “allow the children to sing inflammatory songs” like “John Brown’s Body.”

And, of course, there were teenagers as young as 15 who entered the war as drummer boys and then died of dysentery, or who picked up fallen flags and then took their share of bullets and cannon fire.

The war created as many as 20,000 to 30,000 soldiers’ orphans nationwide. At the Iowa Soldiers Orphans Home in Davenport, records up through 1866 list child after child whose father had died because of the war. Many of the 510 children were probably “half-orphans,” whose widowed mothers were unable, often financially, to care for them.

Surely war was the cruelest to children in the South. Food shortages weakened them, particularly slave children. James Marten writes that “their most coherent memories of northerners were . . . of bullies and bandits who left pillaged plantations and hungry slaves in their wakes.” The war’s legacy to Southern children was devastation.

In 1860, children made up a third of the U.S. population. In hundreds of ways, the great conflict of the next four years affected them. “Their innocence was challenged,” Marten states, “and their naiveté blasted [as the war] shoved them into the world of their parents.”

So that is why this special issue on the American Civil War begins with those who had little voice and no authority—the children.

by Ginalie Swaim, editor



BOTH PHOTOS: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



Cards, dominoes, and other games filled spare hours. So did letter writing, reading, playing music, singing, and general horseplay.

Camp Life

by Ginalie Swaim

Life in a Civil War camp was "monotonous, stupid," according to a Union soldier, and made "one long to go somewhere, even at the risk of being shot." Neither camaraderie nor adventure could make up for inclement weather, inadequate equipment, and, always, boring rations. As Franc Wilkie, a newspaper correspondent from Iowa, wrote, "Oh ye gods, how I do loathe the cursed pork. Its scrofulous, greasy, foul-looking slices cover every platter—it reposes in superlative nastiness in every barrel!"

Fortunately, tons of fresh and preserved fruits and vegetables from Northern relief groups supplemented rations, and camp sutlers sold canned goods, like meat, Borden's condensed milk, and Van Camp beans. Under orders or on their own, soldiers routinely foraged for fresh meat, milk, fruits, vegetables, and anything else they could find in the increasingly devastated South. They took great joy and pride in their efforts. "I must close [this letter] in a hurry," Iowa soldier W. H. Platt scribbled, "for I see a wagin lode of peaches cumming and I want to capture one."

Killing long hours in camp was another challenge; carving, whittling, playing games and music could only while away so many hours. Letters and diaries reveal that in the absence of women's better influences, many soldiers veered towards liquor and tobacco, swearing and gambling, and other activities considered social vices. Prostitutes were seldom far from army camps.

Josiah Conzett, a soldier from Dubuque, wrote of a "so called Hotel" near the Kentucky border where soldiers could "get most anything they had" for a bag of coffee, including the attentions of a "quite good looking Young girl" who worked there. A Davenport newspaper reported that "several women of easy virtue, who were trifling with the soldiers about Camp McClellan Hospital, were treated to a cold bath in the Mississippi by order of the officer in charge." Historian Geoffrey Ward writes that "one in ten Union soldiers was treated for venereal disease during the war, and thousands more cases were never reported." Back home in Iowa, families warned their young soldiers to avoid temptation. Many soldiers worried about it, too, decrying immoral behavior around them in camp. Iowa soldier Charles B. Senior wrote to his father, "I have got with a good mess of boys, 8 of us, they are not a swearing, black guarding set . . . they are quite the reverse, more inclined to study and improve their mental faculties. We have had several debating schools in our shanty since we came here and we study grammar some and arithmetic. One of our mess sent to Fowler and Wells and got a couple of phrenologic books, and we are just beginning to see a dawn of sense in that branch. Altogether we have received the name of the literary squad, which sounds better to me than [the] card-playing, blackguarding shanty just below us which is known by the name of Gambling Saloon."

Some well-intentioned soldiers signed temperance pledges, formed temperance or religious groups, attended Sunday services, and read Bibles and religious tracts distributed by missionary organizations.

Camps sometimes had a portable library (essentially a wooden box) with books on history, science, philosophy, poetry, and religion. Dime novels were popular, as were novels by Charles Dickens and James Fenimore Cooper, and, especially, newspapers.

Writing and reading letters was a major distraction from the tedium of camp life. One historian estimates that 180,000 letters to and from soldiers went through St. Louis and Washington, D.C., every day. "If you went into any camp at any time, you would see dozens and sometimes hundreds of soldiers writing letters," wrote soldiers' relief worker Mary Livermore. "Some would be stretched at full length on the ground, with a book or a knapsack for a table—some sitting upright against the trunks of trees, with the paper resting on their drawn-up knees—others would stand and write."

In a long, detailed letter to his parents, Iowan George Bradway scribbled, "Will tell you about our equipments . . . we received a cap [and a] pair of first rate sewed shoes. 2 pair of wolen stockings to pair of

Because repairing uniforms was part of a soldier's life, women fashioned small sewing kits called housewives (below) for them. "Never came anything so handy, Iowan Cyrus Boyd wrote in his diary. "It contains needles, pins, buttons, thread and just what every soldier needs. In it the needles do not rust and are always in good shape." Another soldier wrote, "The admirable little housewives sent by our Dubuque ladies elicited three hearty cheers for their senders, and one containing a lock of golden hair is a bone of contention. . . . Whose sheeny tress is it? The lady who put it there had better write to the one she wishes to have it, or else a dozen duels may result."

drawers 2 shirts 1 blous one pair pants. they are all first rate clothes except the shirts they are rough and corse . . . I brough both of my shirts along I have 4 now I wished I had sent them home fore I have so much to carry. . . . we have 1 knapsack any amount of straps and buckles on it which we carry our woolen blanket a oill cloth blanket . . . we have a haver sack which will hold about half a peck the haver sack and knapsack are made of oil cloth and all the rest is stout heavy Leather the cartridge box has a steut belt which goes over the left shoulder then we have a belt around our waist which holds our cap box bayon stabbard and holds the cartridge box to its place and there is too straps that hooks into it from the knap sack. we have a heavy brass plate on our belt with U.S. on it and another on the strap that holds the cartridge box with an eagle on it . . . our guns are the enfield rifle they are small and easy to handle they weigh 10 lbs they are strong and well made . . . they allso have a strap on them to swing them over our backs. so you see we are pretty well riged and I think we will have to use them, they say there is hard fighting down the river."

Letters between soldiers and home folk sustained relationships, conveyed news and affection, and attempted to assuage loneliness and fear. John Ensign Mitchell wrote to Lizzie Arrowsmith, "My dear friend Lizzie: Your real-good-old-fashioned letter arrived in safety yesterday. I have read and reread it and every time it does me more good. . . . While all is clamor in camp preparing for some battle or move, a letter just received from Lizzie so kind and good brings me a contented mind. The rose came unimpaired in your letter. I will never stop thanking you for it. Just from Iowa and away out here in the wilderness. It seems so

SEWING KIT: SHSI (DES MOINES). PHOTOGRAPH: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

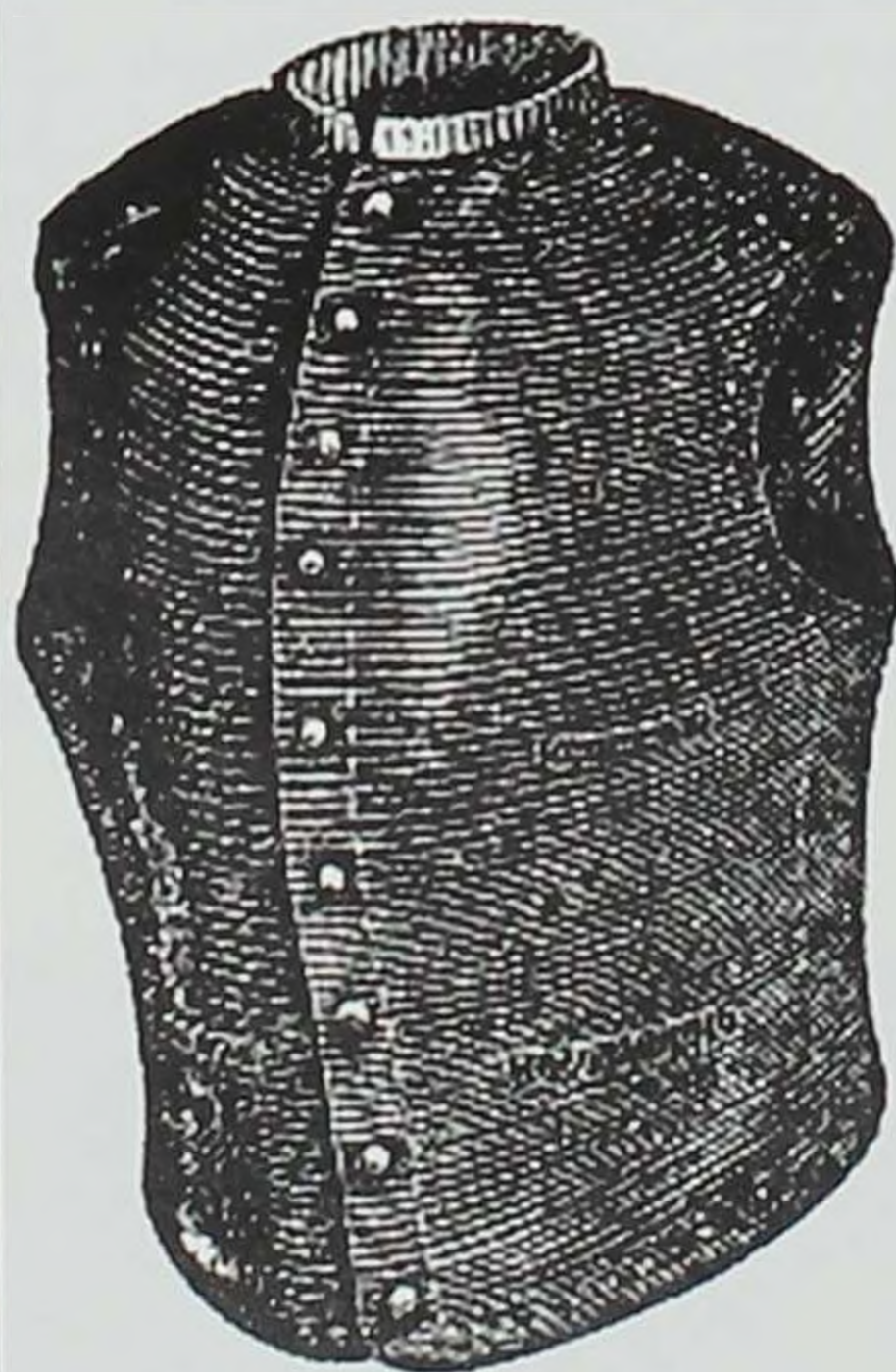


WANTED TO EXCHANGE.—The Seventh have some 900 mosquito bars they wish to exchange for Government blankets. None of the U. S. contractors need apply, as we wish to deal with honorable men.

WANTED IMMEDIATELY. — One hundred and fifty fly wall tents, nine hundred uniforms, wood daily, and straw sufficient to sleep the whole bloody 7th. Contractors will send in their bids before another rain. For further particulars inquire at this office.

Ads above imply dissatisfaction with equipment and supplies.

The Soldiers' Bullet Proof Vest



Has been repeatedly and thoroughly tested with Pistol Bullets at 10 paces, Rifle Bullets at 40 rods, by many Army Officers, and is approved and worn by them.

It is simple, light, and is a true economy of life — it will save thousands. It will also double the value and power of the soldier; and every man in an army is entitled to its protection. Nos. 1, 2, and 3 express the sizes of men, and No. 2 fits nearly all.

Price for Privates' Vest, \$5. Officers' Vest, \$7. They will be sent to any address, wholesale or retail.

Sold by MESSRS. ELLIOTT, No. 231 Broadway, New York, and by all Military Stores. Agents wanted.

An ad for a bullet-proof vest. Iowa soldier Cyrus Boyd wrote in his diary: "Man selling 'bullet proof' vests [was] in camp to-day. The boys say our Capt purchased one. They submitted some for trial about one half of them were bored through by musket balls. They sold for \$8.00 to \$16.00. If the bullet did not go through it would knock a man into the middle of next week so that he might as well be killed first as last."

strange that the letters could come so direct without being disturbed by the enemy."

Like Lizzie's rose, locks of hair and pressed flowers were sometimes tucked inside letters. Alonzo Abernethy, intrigued by Southern plants, sent samples of cotton and cotton seeds back home. Another sent the scab from his smallpox inoculation in camp, hoping that it could be used again to inoculate his family. Soldiers often asked for photographs from home or enclosed photographs of themselves in military attire. Iowan James Adams Shedd explained to his sister the pose he had taken: "I wanted to have my knapsack and blankets on but they make one look round shouldered, and as though he has a hump on his back, so I took them off, and took the position we usually take when on 'Dress Parade.' The posture is called 'Parade rest' and is the one taken when listening to the details on orders which are read by the Adjutant. The overcoat is much darker than the picture shows. . . . The beard is darker. . . . On the whole it is a very good likeness."

Not all Civil War correspondence was between soldiers and people back home. Historian Patricia Richard uncovered a variety of correspondence advertisements placed in newspapers by Union soldiers eagerly seeking women with whom they could exchange letters. Iowa soldiers Charles Clayton and William Cozen stated in their ad that they had "lately had the misfortune to lose their sweethearts and to supply their places wish to open correspondence."

Although some of these exchanges veered toward marriage, soldiers like Clayton and Cozen were skirting 19th-century courtship customs; their ad implied neither commitment nor obligation. Instead, Richard states, such men "hoped to relive some of the playful moments they enjoyed with women before they enlisted." And surely this kind of correspondence was yet another way for soldiers to kill time in "monotonous, stupid" army camps. ❖

NOTE ON SOURCES

Quoted materials related to Alonzo Abernethy, Cyrus Boyd, John Ensign Mitchell, W. H. Platt, Charles B. Senior, and James Adams Shedd are in Special Collections, State Historical Society of Iowa. Secondary sources include Marilyn Mayer Culpepper, *Trials and Triumphs: Women of the American Civil War*; Russell L. Johnson, "'Volunteer While You May': Manpower Mobilization in Dubuque, Iowa," *Union Soldiers and the Northern Home Front*, ed. Paul A. Cimbala and Randall M. Miller; Susan J. Matt, *Homesickness*; Scott Reynolds Nelson and Carol Sheriff, *A People at War: Civilians and Soldiers in America's Civil War*; Patricia L. Richard, "'Listen Ladies One and All': Union Soldiers Yearn for the Society of Their 'Fair Cousins of the North,'" *Union Soldiers and the Northern Home Front*, ed. Cimbala and Miller; Dorothy Volo and James Volo, *Daily Life in Civil War America*; and Geoffrey C. Ward, *The Civil War*.

All is told to us by drum and fife

The Importance of Music in the Civil War

by Timothy Walch

We all know these familiar words: "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord." That first line from the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" is almost as familiar today as it was when it was written more than 150 years ago. For most Americans, the song is forever linked with Union patriotism during the Civil War, just as the song "Dixie" is an equally powerful anthem of Confederate resolve to protect the Southern way of life. Indeed, both of these songs continue to be signature sounds of the crusade that divided this nation.

Music was integral to every aspect of the war, from recruitment to battle and later to bereavement and homecoming. It stirred patriotic spirits and it directed troops in

A bugle, fife, and handwritten book of bugle calls. These, as well as drums, set the pulse of army life.

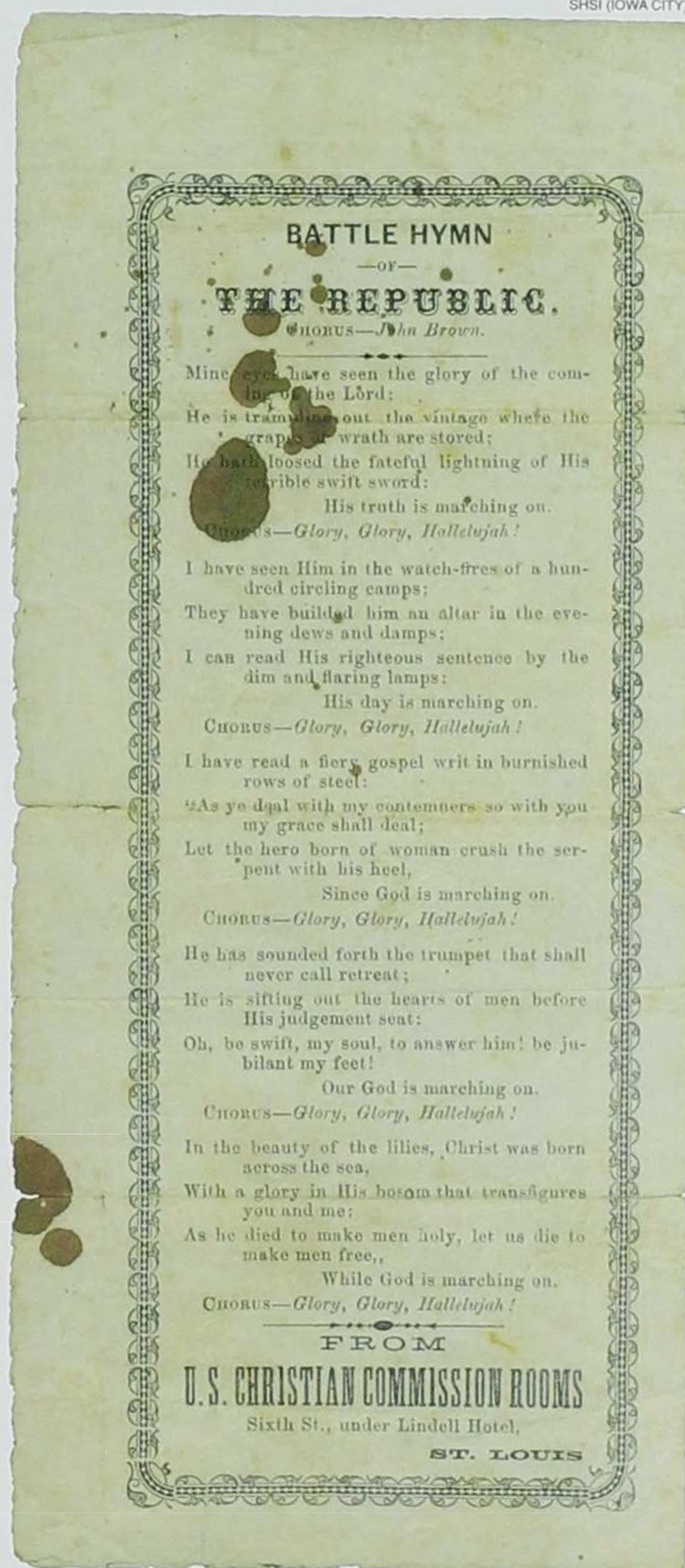


Below: The 2nd Iowa regimental band.

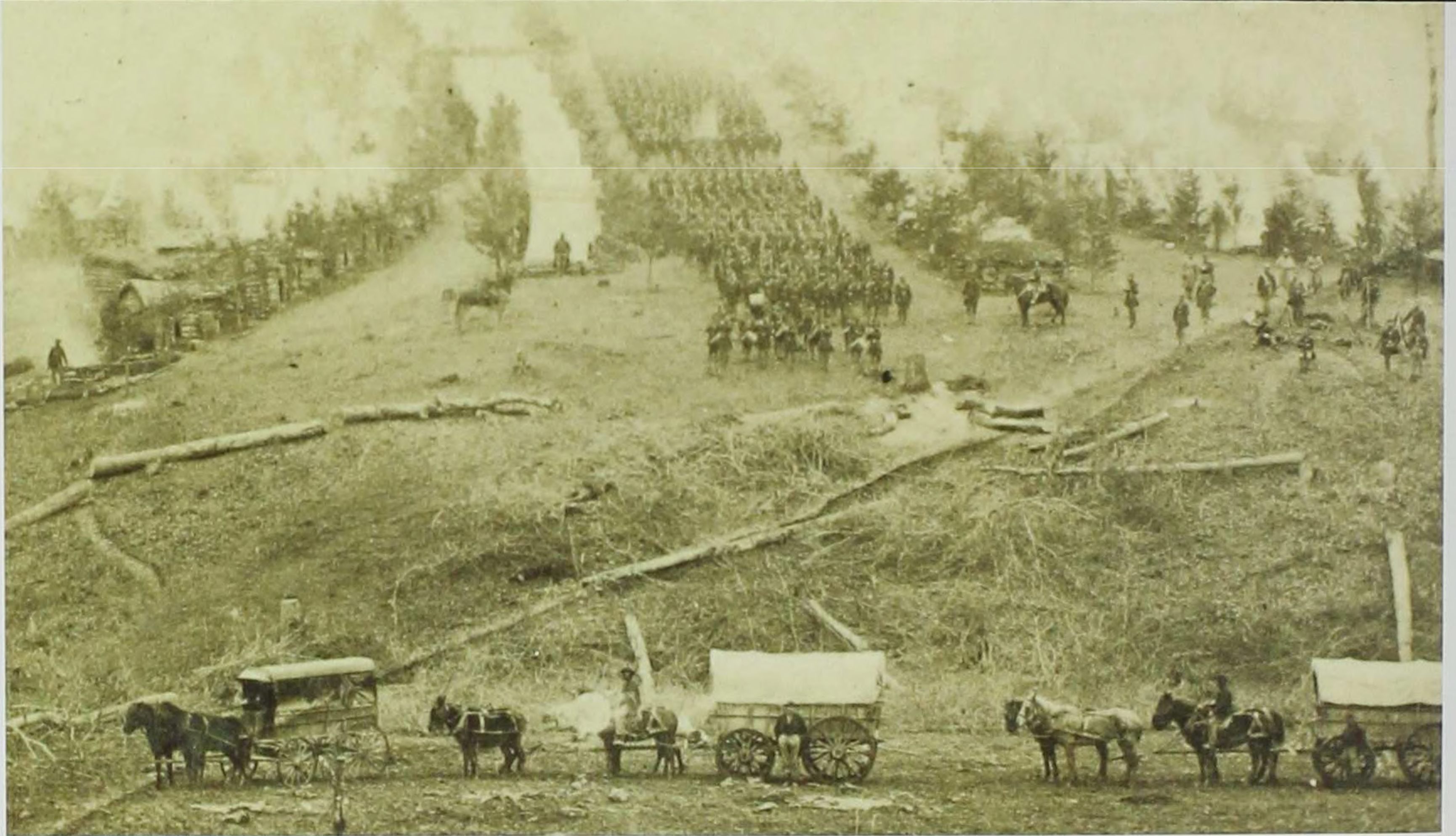


ARTIFACTS AND PHOTO OF MUSICIANS: SHSI (DES MOINES)

SHSI (IOWA CITY)



The stirring lyrics of "Battle Hymn of the Republic" first appeared in *Atlantic Monthly* in February 1862. They then began to appear in newspapers and on broadsides (above). The words were sung to the tune of "John Brown's Body."



ABOVE: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS. BELOW: AMERICAN AGRICULTURIST, JANUARY 1865

Songs for Soldiers and Their Friends.

The Trumpet of Freedom. Containing, Soldier's Chorus; Viva la America; Mother when the war is over; Mount, Boys, Mount; Picket Guard; Not a Star from our Flag; Volunteer's Wife; Red, White and Blue; To Canaan; Do they pray for me at Home; How do you like it, Jefferson D; Battle Hymn of the Republic; Glory Hallelujah; Garibaldi Hymn, and other popular Songs, Duets, &c., will be sent, post-paid, for 40 cents. OLIVER DITSON & CO., Publishers, Boston.

Above: A rare photograph of troops on the march. Music helped direct soldiers through the daily camp routines, on marches, and in battle.

Left: Dozens of war-related songs found eager consumers in army camps and in parlors. Much of the music reflected themes of patriotism, sacrifice, and sentiment for home and family. "Home, Sweet Home" was one such song.

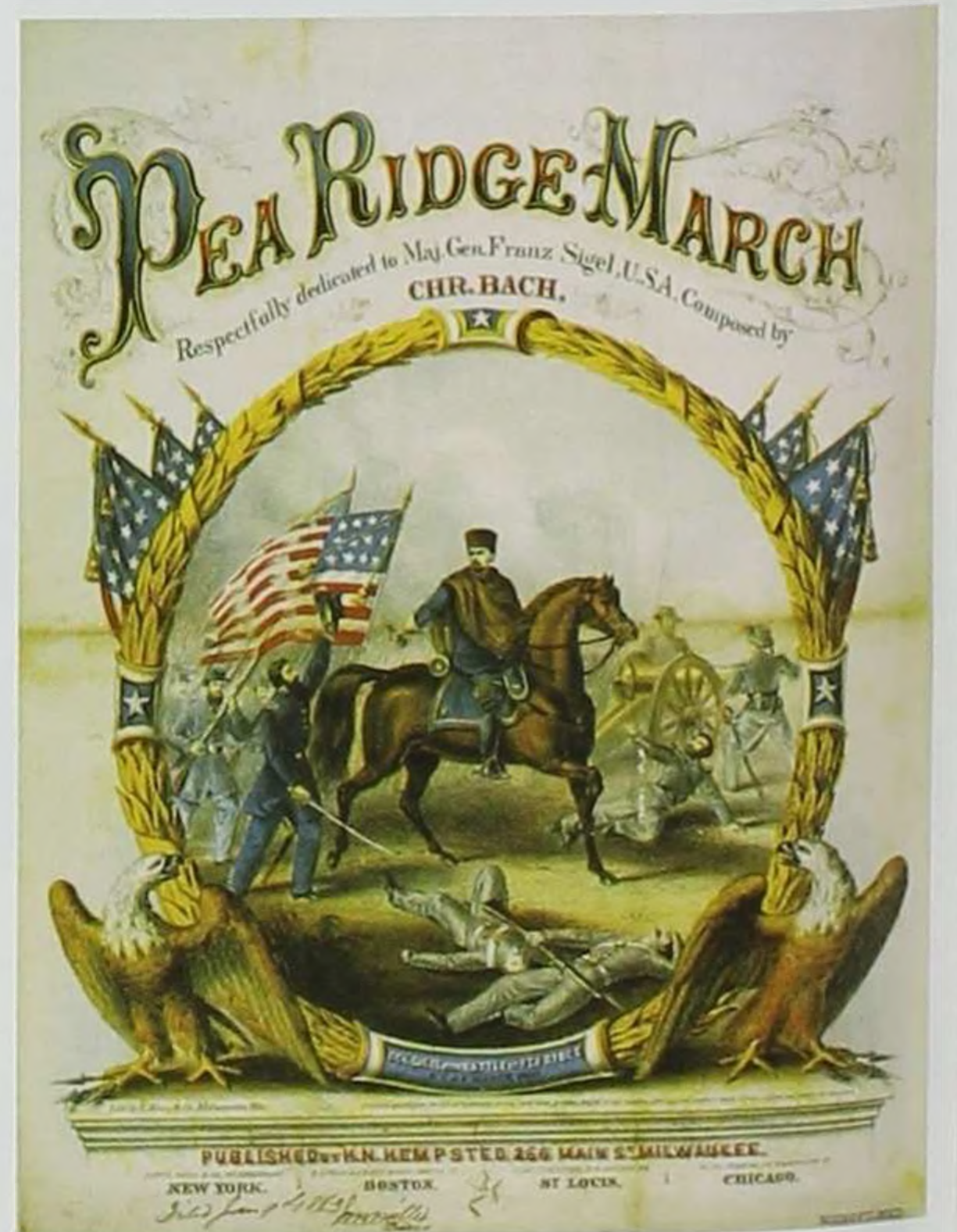
AMERICAN AGRICULTURIST



OUR ABSENT SONS AND BROTHERS—"HOME, SWEET HOME."—Sketched and engraved for the American Agriculturist.

Above: "The sick and wounded," wrote an Iowa soldier, "will probably all be sent home on furloughs, and I expect to start as soon as I can . . . for with a sick or wounded man, 'there is no place like Home.'"

Below: Music like "Pea Ridge March" had a valiant, martial quality.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

battle. It solemnized burial of the dead and celebrated victories.

It's hard to overestimate the importance of military music. "We have music for everything," wrote one New York officer to his father, "music telling us when to get up, music telling us when to go to bed, when to get breakfast, when to eat dinner, when to clean streets, when to drill, when to stop drilling, when to go to church on Sabbath, and when to come back. All is told to us by drum and fife."

The most elemental Civil War music was on the field of battle. Cutting through the din, smoke, and confusion, musicians' drumbeats and bugle calls instructed the troops to advance, retreat, or take other actions. The sounds carried farther than an officer's voice and faster than a man on horseback. They provided direction and focus and motivated men in the midst of battle. At the Battle of Gettysburg, for example, Major General George Pickett and his men made their historic charge to "Bonnie Blue Flag." Waiting for them on Seminary Ridge were Union troops listening to "The Star-Spangled Banner."

These sounds were enhanced by unit flags that gave visual direction to the troops. To bear the flag through a battle was a great honor, and to capture an enemy battle flag was a consummate, iconic achievement of victory. Such flags were highly prized and later were displayed in public places as evidence of the bravery of state regiments.

Beyond military operations, music figured in camp life and back home. The musicians within a regiment or brigade, for example, performed in parades, at concerts, and for other patriotic events. It is believed that there were more than

400 musical bands in the Union army and another 125 bands among the Confederate forces. Iowa soldier Henry Clay McArthur wrote, "The sound of Brass Bands can be heard through camp playing beautiful pieces making us forget almost that we are here for the purpose of battling with our fellow countryman."

It is not surprising, therefore, that composers wrote numerous songs to inspire patriotic and sentimental feelings and remind soldiers and their families of the reasons for their sacrifice. Northerners were regaled with "The Battle Cry of Freedom" and "John Brown's Body," and Southerners favored "Bonnie Blue Flag" and "Lorena," among other songs.

Iowan George Bradway described how music was part of an impromptu celebration on July 4, 1864: "Nothing new was going on till night when the Lieu Col said we would have a candle light procesion so every fellow got a piece of candle put it in his bayonet and fell into ranks we marched about half way to Memphis shouting yelling and singing patriotic songs such as the stars spangled banner rally round the flag and John Brown they fairly made things shake when they was singing the latter." A few days later he added: "We hurrahed and sang so much the eavening of the 4th that our throats was so sore we could hardly eat hardtack."

Even in prison, music played a role. One captive wrote, "Our men sing all the national songs again, and again, with spirit and fervor, and as there are many excellent and trained voices, the effect is fine. The Star Spangled Banner is a prime favorite, and among others, Homeward Bound is heard."

In the early years of the war, patriotic music was a robust form of home entertainment and many

evenings were spent gathered around the piano in the parlor. But as the war dragged on, patriotic music was replaced with sentimental songs that focused on themes of separation and loss. "'Just Before the Battle Mother,'" notes historian Christian McWhirter, "exemplified this trend by portraying soldiers coping with the hardships and brutality of war by thinking of their mothers."

As the war's outcome seemed assured, there were more songs about the impending Union victory. "Sherman's March to the Sea," for example, was written as a poem by Samuel H. M. Byers of the 5th Iowa Infantry. Byers had been a prisoner in Confederate camps for 16 months when he wrote the poem. The words were put to music by another prisoner, and the song was smuggled north, where it became a huge hit with both families and the troops. It remained popular long after the war and was played repeatedly for General Sherman, who, it is said, came to dread hearing it over and over again.

"The war catapulted music to a new level of importance," McWhirter stresses. "More than mere entertainment, it provided a valuable way for Americans to express their thoughts and feelings about the conflict. Conversely, songs influenced thoughts and feelings of civilians, soldiers, and slaves—shaping how they viewed the war." ♦

Timothy Walch writes frequently for this magazine.

NOTE ON SOURCES

For a fine overview, see Christian McWhirter, *Battle Hymns: The Power and Popularity of Music in the Civil War*. Quotations related to Henry Clay McArthur and George Bradway are from materials in Special Collections, State Historical Society of Iowa.

Civil War Weapons and Tactics

by Michael Vogt

Many of our recruits never saw a gun before, and are about as competent to be trusted with a loaded firearm, as would be a mule or a half-witted jackass," wrote Iowa war correspondent Franc Wilkie. He described one "raw recruit [who] carried his gun very much as one would carry a fence-rail or a crow bar."

Although a few early regiments were consolidated with re-enlisting volunteers, Iowa primarily organized new regiments, which therefore lacked sizable cadres of battle-hardened veterans who could pass on important lessons. Therefore many units left without adequate training—or even weapons. When William Oake of the 26th Iowa reached St. Louis, he found that eight companies had "miserable old second-handed muskets [that] were worse than none, for the men had no confidence in them."

Some Iowa regiments initially received smooth-bore muskets, devastatingly lethal at 100 yards. Recent studies, in fact, indicate that the distance between opposing battle lines at the first exchange of fire between averaged 100 yards.

However, the single-shot muzzle-loading rifled musket, specifically the .57-caliber M1861 Springfield, was the standard infantry weapon. A trained soldier could reload and fire a rifled musket three times a minute. His first step was to tear open a paper cartridge with his teeth. The cartridge was filled with loose black powder and a conical bullet called a minié ball. Then he poured the powder down the muzzle and pushed the ball down to the base of the muzzle with a ramrod. He returned the ramrod to its place, pulled the hammer to half-cocked, placed a percussion cap over the nipple at the breech, moved the hammer to full-cocked, aimed, and squeezed the trigger.

The force of the gasses expanded the base of the soft-lead minié ball so that it engaged the spiraling "rifling" grooves cut inside the muzzle. These grooves im-

parted a stabilizing spin to the minié ball, giving greater effective range (more than 200 yards) and accuracy over that of the outmoded smoothbore musket. Accuracy, of course, depended on estimating the distance of the target and adjusting the site.

In terms of battle tactics, close-order drill and linear deployment tactics dominated soldiers' training. They learned to form into units, march in time, charge, defend, and retreat. In tight-formation columns, they marched shoulder to shoulder to the battlefield. Regiments were deployed for combat by company; each formed two straight, staggered ranks. This arrangement allowed a commander to form a skirmish line and concentrate his company's fire at

effective ranges up to 300 yards. On each side, a neighboring company took its place, and a few additional companies were positioned behind as a reserve.

Developed in Europe, these linear combat tactics were largely unchanged since the advent of the smoothbore muzzle-loading muskets

in the 18th century. The tactics were employed a majority of the time in the Civil War when topography and field conditions allowed.

Each company's movements during a battle were in response to orders of the commander (usually a captain) and synchronized with the other three companies in the battalion. The direction, position, and movement of the battalion (commanded by a major), in concert with two other battalions that formed a regiment, fell under the orders of the regimental commander (usually a colonel). The number of dead and wounded testifies to the brutal effectiveness of musket and cannon as masses of troops faced each other in close linear combat. ❖

Michael Vogt is curator of the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum in Johnston and has written often for this magazine.

LAUMAN'S OWN, SHSI (IOWA CITY)

Two hundred rifled muskets are made in the Springfield Armory every twenty four hours. Our whole army will soon be supplied with splendid rifles.

This optimistic newspaper report on Northern rifle production appeared in August 1861. To meet the high demand early in the war, rifled muskets were imported from Europe; the best was the British Enfield.



BOTH PHOTOS: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



An unidentified private in the U.S. Colored Troops poses against a painted backdrop of a flag and armament. He holds a Remington-Beals percussion revolver (seldom issued to enlisted men) and an imported French musket. Top right: With shells and shot ranging from 6 to 300 pounds, field artillery created noise and smoke that could injure hearing and vision.

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Bayoneted rifled muskets are stacked in a Union supply depot in Columbia, Kentucky, in 1864.

Four kinds of 12-pound cannon ammunition (clockwise from top left): Grapeshot comprised nine iron balls inside an open canister. Canister shot, packed with 27 iron or lead balls, was especially deadly against infantry. Cast-iron cannon balls with iron straps were used against massed troops, artillery emplacements, and fortifications. Spherical shells had five-second Bormann fuses; this one is from Vicksburg.



SHS (DES MOINES)

Awakening to battle ...

"THERE CAME, borne to us on the raw morning air, the long weird note of a bugle. It was directly before us. It rose with a low clear, deliberate warble, and seemed to float in the gray sky like the note of a lark. . . . It was the 'assembly'! As it died away I observed that the atmosphere had suffered a change; despite the equilibrium established by the storm, it was electric. Wings were growing on blistered feet. Bruised muscles and jolted bones, shoulders pounded by the cruel knapsack, eyelids leaden from lack of sleep—all were pervaded by the subtle fluid, all were unconscious of their clay. The men thrust forward their heads, expanded their eyes and clenched their teeth. They breathed hard, as if throttled by tugging at the leash. If you had laid your hand in the beard or hair of one of these men it would have crackled and shot sparks."

—Ambrose Bierce, *Civil War soldier and American writer*



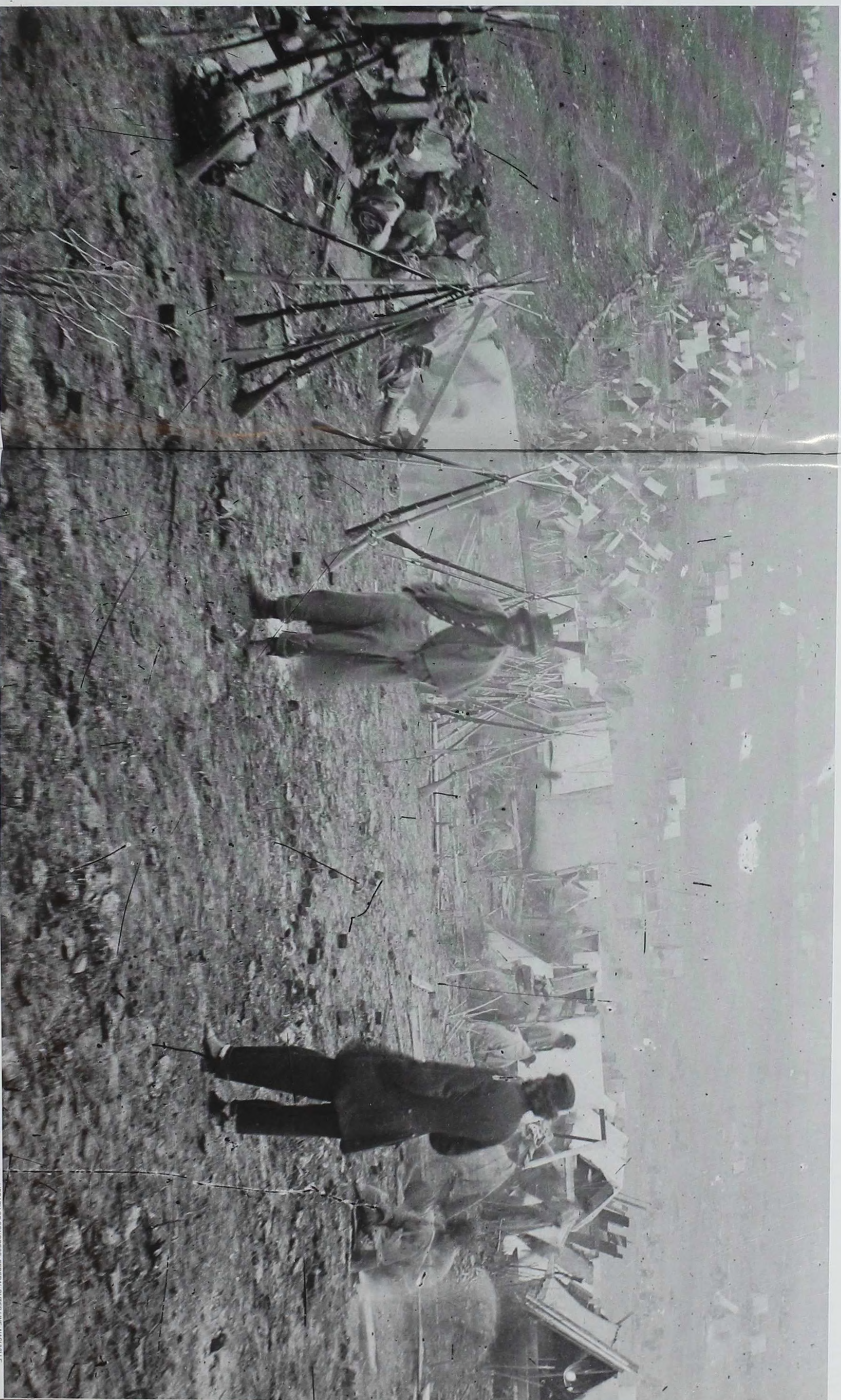


LIBRARY OF CONGRESS: FEDERAL OUTER LINE, NASHVILLE

Awakening to battle...

"THERE CAME, borne to us on the raw morning air, the long weird note of a bugle. It was directly before us. It rose with a low clear, deliberate warble, and seemed to float in the gray sky like the note of a lark. . . . It was the 'assembly'! As it died away I observed that the atmosphere had suffered a change; despite the equilibrium established by the storm, it was electric. Wings were growing on blistered feet. Bruised muscles and jolted bones, shoulders pounded by the cruel knapsack, eyelids leaden from lack of sleep—all were pervaded by the subtle fluid, all were unconscious of their clay. The men thrust forward their heads, expanded their eyes and clenched their teeth. They breathed hard, as if throttled by tugging at the leash. If you had laid your hand in the beard or hair of one of these men it would have cracked and shot sparks."

—Ambrose Bierce, *Civil War soldier and American writer*



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, FEDERAL CENTER, INDEPEN



. . . and into a storm of lead . . .

The horror of battle seared the minds of Iowa soldiers. Here are a few of their accounts.

—The Editor

"Soon the enemy appeared and opened fire on us. The Fifth replied with a will and effect that was admirable. Nobly the boys stood up to the work—loading and firing amid a storm of lead, as if they were drilling—only showing much more enthusiasm and earnestness once we made a charge and the rebels gave way before us."

—John Quincy Adams Campbell

"The Rebs . . . made some Desperate Charges to take our Battery . . . Our Cannon poured into their ranks the Grape & Cannister and every time they advanced

it swept them down . . . for two hours [there was] nothing to be heard but the Roar of Cannon."

—Edward Rolfe

"The [first] volley passes over our heads, cutting twigs and limbs off the trees. We give a hearty cheer and rush forward, and then the shots of the enemy begin to tell . . . [I] turn to find that George Howell is crowding forward into the front rank. For an instant I see him, a round, red spot on his forehead, and he falls dead, as a bullet crashes through his brain . . . We have but two hundred yards to go after receiving

the first fire of the enemy before we reach their works and capture them at the point of a bayonet . . . yet in doing it our company of not over seventy men incurs a loss of twenty-six killed and wounded. . . . When the earth-works are gained and the enemy is in full retreat to second line of entrenchments, our balls fall thick and fast and do great execution."

—John T. Bell

"My duty [as lieutenant was] to cheer and encourage the men. . . . I was utterly unconscious of danger, and although the dead and dying were dropping at my feet, I felt no emotion nor sorrow—there was a strange, unaccountable lack of feeling with me that followed me through the entire action."

—John Quincy Adams Campbell

"You had no time to anticipate or think—you were killed or you were safe, and it was over."

—Unidentified soldier

"We were now within fifteen miles of Lexington, and were enabled to hear with startling distinctness the incessant war of the conflict, and during every instant from the morning of Wednesday till 2 o'clock of the morning of Thursday, there seemed to be a tremendous thunder-storm playing on the verge of the horizon. At a house where I stopped for a glass of water, the next day, a lady informed me that her daughter, on Wednesday, had counted before dark some three hundred and eighty distinct explosions."

—Franc Wilkie, Iowa war correspondent

"The Site of the battle was grand but Awful . . . a person looking on would think that ardy a Man could Escape in such a storm of shot and shell there was over 100 cannon just booming all the time."

—Edward Rolfe

"My musket became so dirty with the cartridge powder, that in loading it the ramrod stuck fast and I could neither get it up nor down, so I put a cap on, elevated the gun and fired it off. But now I had no ramrod, and throwing down my musket, I picked up a Belgian rifle lying at the side of a dead rebel, unstrapped the cartridge box from his body, and advanced to our company, taking my place with the

boys. While in this position I witnessed a wonderful sight—thickly-flying musket balls. I have never seen hail falling thicker than the minie balls were flying in the air above us, though too high to do any harm. Our ammunition soon ran out and the entire regiment was ordered to the rear to replenish our cartridge boxes."

—Alexander G. Downing

"Three columns . . . advanced on the forts . . . bending their heads against the awful storm of grape and canister from all our cannon. A perfect blaze of close range musketry, too, mowed them down like grass. Even a foe could feel pity to see brave men so cruelly slaughtered."

—Samuel H. M. Byers

"The 'zip' of the rifle balls have a particular stinging sound, and the shriek of bursting shells causes one to dodge instinctively . . . each soldier is impressed with the belief that he will not be struck. . . . A feeling of intense hatred of the enemy possesses him as the charge is made and he sees his comrades falling about him, and he is carried away with a wild desire to kill and slay in turn. For the moment those opposing him are not human beings, but devils and demons whom it is his duty to slaughter without mercy."

—John T. Bell

"[I] have heard the booming cannon, bursting shell, whistling ball, the incessant deep sounding roll of musketry, each separately, and again all combined in one indescribably commingling, deafening sound, the falling branches, crashing trees. Around me the dead, the dying, the wounded, the cowards leaving the ranks, flying past me, seeking safety, officers and men cheering each other on. The dead on the field after the battle, digging of graves, the pursuit of a fleeing army, road filled with wagons broken and burning, tents, blankets, baggage of every description."

—Seneca Thrall

"Death had come in all imaginable shapes, in one case six of our men having been killed by a cannon ball which passed through the center of a solid oak tree eighteen inches in diameter, behind which they had taken shelter in a line."

—John T. Bell

... then finding the fallen ...

"Some of the wounds were horrible; some had the lower jaw shot away, others had arms torn off, others came in with legs dangling over the sides of the wagon, all thirsty, and calling almost incessantly for water. A flag of truce went out soon after to bring in the wounded and bury the dead, and up to a late hour the work still went on."

—Franc Wilkie, Iowa war correspondent

"I got behind our second battle line, found some of the Co. & we was set to gathering up wounded rebs. . . . I picked up a gun but it wasnt the same kind as what I left up in front but I traded with the first wounded reb I come to. He was a middle age man wounded bad through the hips & would need two men & a stretcher. His gun, an Enfield rifle, lay near by. I told him would like to trade guns with him. He said 'take them both. I donnot think I will have use for a gun anny more.' I have often wondered what became of that man."

—Van Whipple Sargent

"At one point I met a tall confederate coming up the road with one leg hanging helpless and using two old muskets for crutches. The thigh of his left leg had been shattered by an exploded shell, and after receiving directions as to where he could find a surgeon he moved off, the noise of the broken ends of the bones distinctly heard as they were thrown past each other by the swinging limb, refusing all aid from the stretcher-bearers."

—John Quincy Adams Campbell

"We sent in a flag of truce to bring off dead this afternoon. Found 97 on the field, mostly stripped of their shoes & pants. Also 3 men who had lain out 2 days and night still alive & stripped to the skin."

—Alonzo Abernethy

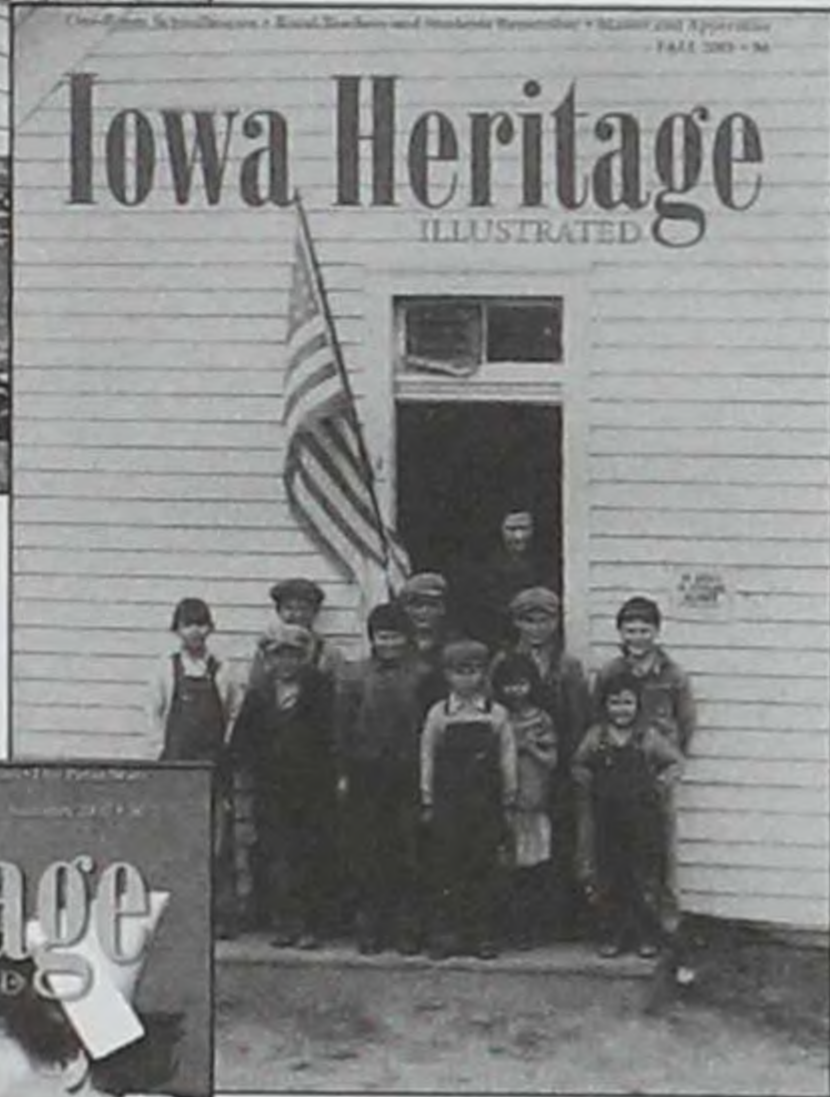
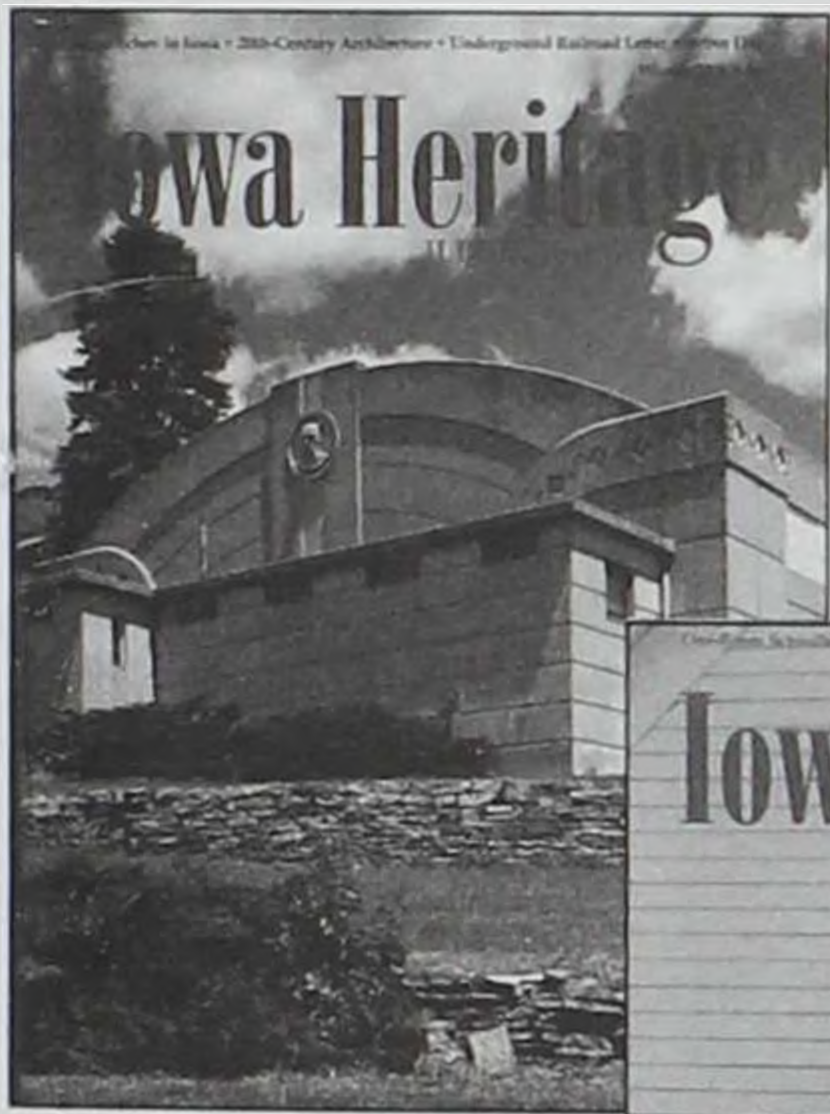
"Several wounded were found, who had lain there for four days and nights, one, wounded in the arm and shoulder, had waited upon the others who could not move; had got a little water and food from the canteens and haversacks of dead men laying near."

—Seneca B. Thrall



"After dark, our regt was sent out to the right front. Should think near whare our first line was. We was cautioned to keep quiet & in our places but could lay down. I was awakned some time in the night & we silently went back the way we come. Every thing was quiet except ocasionaly a groan & cryes from wounded men left on the field."

—Van Whipple Sargent



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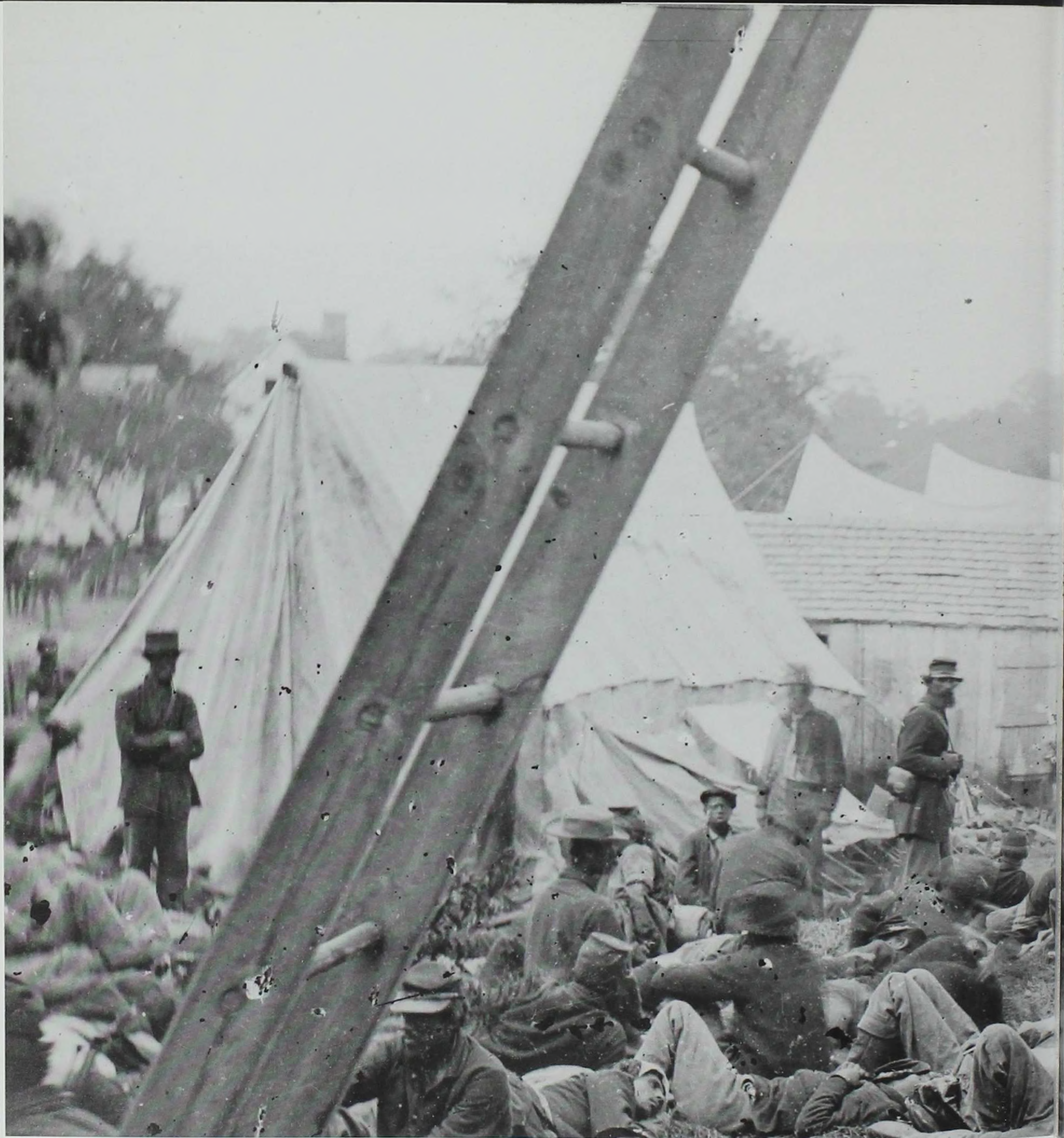
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ambulance crew practices a drill. For much of the war, civilian teams drove ambulances, and common soldiers and young musicians were ordered to move the wounded to field and regimental hospitals. Inventors struggled to develop vehicles that did not jostle and jolt the wounded. The combination of trained ambulance corps with non-combatant medics was one of the most important results of the war.



An ambulance crew practices a drill. For much of the war, civilian teamsters drove ambulances, and common soldiers and young musicians were assigned to move the wounded to field and regimental hospitals. Inventors were urged to develop vehicles that did not jostle and jolt the wounded. The innovation of trained ambulance corps with non-combatant medics was one beneficial result of the war.



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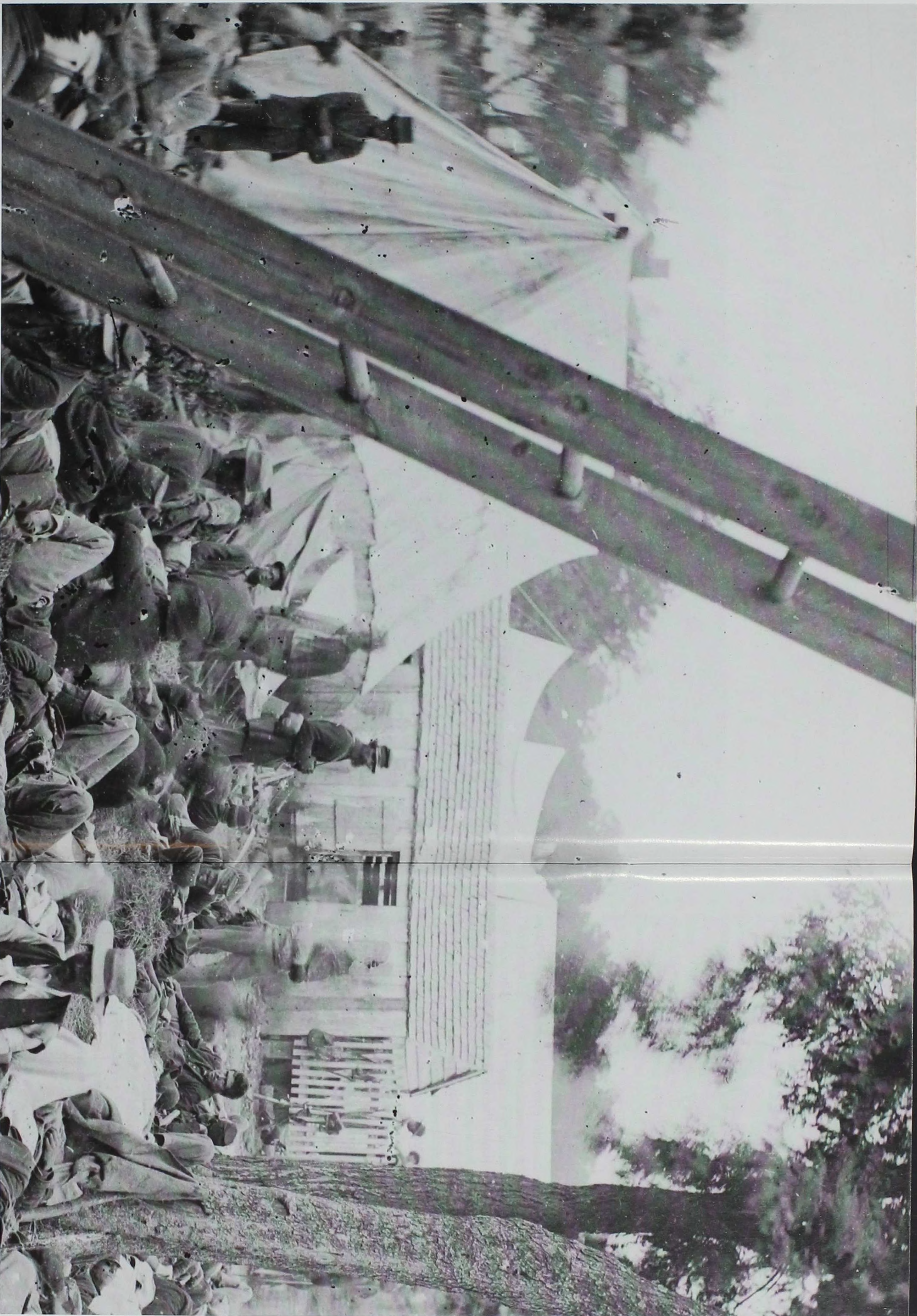
... and witnessing the wounded.



A field hospital in Virginia.

"I WAS DOWN TO THE DEPOT and seen them bring in the wounded; it was an awful sight to look at they were wounded in all kinds of ways. Some had lost an arm others a leg Some toes and fingers, I Saw one poor fellow that was shot through the face, the ball went in close to his left cheek bone and came out through the right side of his under jaw his mouth and nose was so stopd up with blood he could hardly breathe they said it got to bleeding while they were coming here and he came very near bleeding to death he was covered with blood from head to foot several others were shot through the mouth and face. one had a ball shot into his mouth and out the back of his neck, they were all naked or nearly so, they had rode about 150 miles in wagons through the dust and hot Sun. there wounds had only been dressed twice and poorly done at that, the flies had blowed some of their wounds and the worms were working in their flesh. others looked as if they had commenced to mortify not withstanding all these misfortunes they were cheerful and sociable I did not hear a single word of complaint nor a groan with one exception, they all felt glad that Old Forest had got such a thrashing."

—George C. Bradway



A field hospital in Virginia.

"I WAS DOWN TO THE DEPOT and seen them bring in the wounded; it was an awful sight to look at they were wounded in all kinds of ways. Some had lost an arm others a leg Some toes and fingers. I Saw one poor fellow that was shot through the face, the ball went in close to his left cheek bone and came out through the right side of his under jaw his mouth and nose was so stopp up with blood he could hardly breathe they said it got to bleeding while they were coming here and he came very near bleeding to death he was covered with blood from head to foot several others were shot through the mouth and face: one had a ball shot into his mouth and out the back of his neck, they were all naked or nearly so, they had rode about 150 miles in wagons through the dust and hot Sun, there wounds had only been dressed twice and poorly done at that, the flies had blowed some of their wounds and the worms were working in their flesh. others looked as if they had commenced to mortify not withstanding all these misfortunes they were cheerful and sociable I did not hear a single word of complaint nor a groan with one exception, they all felt glad that Old Forest had got such a thrashing."

—George C. Bratton

... and witnessing the wounded.



Henry Clay Dean

An Iowa Copperhead Lashes Out

by David Holmgren

He was called Dirty Shirt Dean, the Great Unwashed, a raving maniac, a "nasty, dirty, greasy, pettifogging, locofoco Methodist preacher," and a depraved wretch. He was characterized as a demagogue, Southern sympathizer, scamp, scalawag, blackguard, slanderer, and, the ultimate, a traitor.

Henry Clay Dean knew how to respond in kind. He repeatedly denounced the beliefs and activities of anti-slavery men such as Benjamin Wade, Salmon P. Chase, John Brown, and William Lloyd Garrison as wicked. He compared Secretary of War Edwin Stanton to a monster, Thaddeus Stevens and Horace Greeley to Robespierre. He called Secretary of State William Seward a "prince of liars and cunning demagogues."

Dean saved his greatest invectives for Abraham Lincoln, whom he maligned as a usurper, traitor, and tyrant. Four years after the Civil War, he declared that Lincoln's assassination was God's retribution for a "horrible reign of crime and terror," while his administration was a "resort of debauchees," the Treasury Department "a harem," and the president's public officers "stimulated by strong drink and inflamed by the indulgence of every other vice."

In a strongly pro-Union state such as Iowa, Henry Clay Dean and other critics of the Lincoln administration and the war effort stood out in stark contrast to prevailing public opinion. These Copperheads, as they were called by their Unionist detractors, were a small but very visible and noisy group. Their leaders included former Iowa Supreme Court Chief Justice Charles Mason; Dennis Mahony, the fiery editor of the *Dubuque Herald*; and Laurel Summers and Gideon Bailey, both of whom had been leaders in the state legislature and had served as U.S. marshals. Dean knew all these men well and corresponded with them routinely during the war. None of them, however, matched Dean, whose harsh rhetoric stood out like flashes of lightning in the middle of the night.

Born in Pennsylvania in 1822 and educated at Madison College, Dean developed intellectual and political interests early in life, and he studied in great depth the leading Enlightenment thinkers such as Hume, Gibbon,

and Voltaire. Named for Henry Clay, the Whig political leader, Dean was also a Whig in his early years.

Alongside these developing interests and viewpoints, he experienced a profound religious awakening, which generated intense Christian convictions. After moving to Virginia, he joined the Methodist Episcopal Church of Virginia and soon thereafter became a minister in the state conference. Early in his career, he expressed some mildly antislavery views in Methodist publications such as the *Pittsburgh Christian Advocate*, in which he wrote that slavery retarded the onward march of new states such as Missouri. If indeed this was an antislavery view, it was modified by his comments that slavery would end only when it became unprofitable and that abolitionists had no power or influence to end it, nor should they try.

Just when his viewpoints on politics and slavery began to change is uncertain, but change they did. While still living in Virginia, he became acquainted with Henry Wise, a thoroughgoing Jacksonian Democrat and former congressman, and later actively helped Wise win the governorship in Virginia, even though Dean was then living in Iowa.

In 1850, 28-year-old Dean moved to Iowa with his young wife, Christiana, and his growing family. During his first five years in Iowa, he pastored churches in Keosauqua, Muscatine, Middleton, Bloomfield, and Wapello Mission. He developed friendships with Iowa's two U.S. senators, Whig-Free-Soiler (later Republican) James Harlan and Democrat George Wallace Jones. Jones helped Dean win selection as chaplain of the U.S. Senate for the first session of the 34th Congress in 1854/1855. A Catholic, Jones had been particularly impressed with Dean's denunciations of the nativist Know Nothing movement and the newly emerging Republican Party. Dean naturally began to tilt to the Democrats. Withdrawing from the active ministry in favor of practicing law and giving public lectures, he settled in Mount Pleasant, where he would live for the next 15 stormy years.

Many people found Dean's appearance uncouth or comic when they first saw him. His hair and beard were frequently uncut, uncombed, and unclean. His clothes were usually dirty, fit poorly, and worn haphazardly. But

as with his nemesis Lincoln, people recovered quickly from the initial shock of his physical appearance when he began to speak. His flowing words and passionate delivery easily swayed audiences. For those who already agreed with him, his oratory could be utterly exhilarating. His listeners were spellbound. According to one story, while Dean delivered a prayer in great, hallowed earnestness, and with the entire congregation reverently affirming his every word with heads bowed and eyes closed, one communicant opened his eyes for just a moment and noticed Dean tying one of his shoes while still in fervent supplication to the Almighty.

His oratorical powers were so impressive that years later no less a celebrity than Mark Twain recounted a story from a friend who had watched Dean working an audience in Keokuk shortly after the outbreak of the Civil War. Dean's appearance at first caused ripples of laughter from the audience, but his oratory gained such intensity that the crowd began to change its mood, listened more and more closely, and then began erupting in applause. Twain wrote that Dean "stood there, like another Vesuvius, spouting smoke and flames, lava and ashes, raining pumice-stone and cinders, shaking the moral earth with intellectual crash upon crash, explosion upon explosion, while the mad multitude stood upon their feet in a solid body, answering back with a ceaseless hurricane of cheers, through a thrashing snow-storm of waving handkerchiefs."

Jeffersonian and Jacksonian viewpoints came to dominate Dean's political thinking. His views were dogmatic and extreme but not always consistent. He had the mind of a logician, and when he reasoned his way to a conclusion, no matter how fantastic or bizarre it may have appeared to conventional opinion, or however much it may have clashed with his own professed views, he stuck to it with a ferocity that excited both admiration and disgust.

Perhaps the best way to understand Dean is to understand the premises of his world-view. More than anything else, Dean insisted on the absolute rights of the individual, particularly free expression. He was hostile to the power of the federal government and believed the U.S. Constitution was primarily a guarantor of states' rights. He championed the rural culture of an older America over that of the emerging urban industrial society. As a Jacksonian, he opposed currency, tariffs, and all banks.

Dean's inconsistencies over the years would perplex both friends and opponents. Here was a man of profound Christian convictions who often resorted to ruthless name calling; who claimed Andrew Jackson as a hero yet denounced militant nationalism; who advocated peace and reason when the Civil War was approaching but was known for the violence of his rhetoric; who preached incessantly on the sanctity of individual rights and human dignity but increasingly excused slavery before and



This illustration of Henry Clay Dean speaking in Keokuk appeared in Mark Twain's *Life on the Mississippi*. Twain called Dean an "erratic genius" who dressed worse than a "wharf-rat."

during the war. He never condoned physical cruelty to non-whites and was appalled when confronted with it directly, but nevertheless he insisted that constitutional rights applied only to white males. Once he tore into his Republican opponents in a speech in Des Moines with unbridled vehemence, but the next day he cheerily told the editors of the Republican *Iowa State Register* that he had meant nothing personally but had only intended to satisfy the audience's partisan passions.

There seems to be no consensus on the essence of Dean's character. His supporters were convinced of his sterling qualities; his detractors beheld only a ruthless cynic. Perhaps the fairest assessment is that he consciously saw himself as consistent in his attitudes and behavior, a view that could be sustained by the prevailing conservative cultural views of the day, but that in an era when traditional views were being challenged, others saw great inconsistency between his professed values and his comments on contemporary events.

Alarmed by a changing America, Dean grew more radical. He began speaking out on the growing slavery controversy. His ambiguous antislavery views began to change more in defense of the institution; in a speech at Fairfield in August 1860, he proclaimed that "since the crucifixion of Christ there has not been so benevolent an institution known among men as African slavery." Another time he said he approved of the tar and feathering of an antislavery clergyman in Missouri.

Guided by his belief in states' rights, Dean supported Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois for president. After Lincoln's election in November and the ensuing seces-

sion crisis, Dean insisted that reason, mutual goodwill, and calm debate could settle sectional differences. When moderation failed and the war began at Fort Sumter, Dean pledged loyalty to the Union but quickly began criticizing the Lincoln administration. Yet he did not criticize any of the Confederate leaders, even though the war had started with a Confederate attack.

As the war lengthened, Dean's attacks intensified. He argued with some justification, as did many antiwar Democrats, that Lincoln exceeded his constitutional authority in suppressing the rebellion. During the first two years of the war, with the upper Mississippi valley in an economic slump due to Confederate control of the lower Mississippi, Dean drew large audiences of those opposed to the war or disaffected by it. He insulted most Union supporters when he said later, "The Yankees, for a people who read as much, are the most ignorant class upon God's earth." After he addressed a Ladies Aid Society in Mount Pleasant in 1862, a group of soldiers from the 4th Iowa Cavalry tried to force him to take a loyalty oath.

In May 1863, as the story goes, Dean was surrounded by a mob in Keokuk that was determined to drown him in the Mississippi. He was given a chance to pray but was told not to make a speech. Instead he started to tell a long story about how he had promised to make his son a kite the following day and how the boy would be so distraught if he did not return home. He told the story at such great length that the mob wearied of it and lost interest in drowning him. Though the mob dispersed, his troubles in Keokuk were just beginning. At the end of the month, he was thrown into the local jail and kept there for 14 days, though no charges were brought against him.

In August 1864, he attended the Democratic National Convention, where General George McClellan was nominated to oppose Lincoln. Firing up a crowd out on the street, Dean shouted that Lincoln and the Union armies had "failed! Failed!! FAILED!!! FAILED!!!!" The loss of life in the past three years "has never been seen since the destruction of Sennacherib by the breath of the Almighty and still the monster usurper wants more men for his slaughter pens," he charged. "Blood had flown down in torrents, and yet the thirst of the old monster was not quenched. His cry was for more blood."

A week later, the rug was pulled out from under Dean and other antiwar Democrats when Atlanta fell, triggering a series of events that transformed the presidential campaign and led to Lincoln's triumphant re-election.

The defeat of the Confederacy and the end of the rebellion did not seem to faze Dean or temper his rhetoric. In many Iowa communities, including Keosauqua, Bloomfield, and Pella, he harped on the evils of military power and black suffrage. Although he drew

large audiences, it is likely that some came just for the perverse pleasure of watching him perform.

In 1869 Dean published his magnum opus, *Crimes of the Civil War, and Curse of the Funding System*, a 500-page diatribe against everything and everybody he held responsible for destroying the nation that he had known and cherished. Even old friends such as Edward H. Stiles, who had stumped with him in Iowa for Douglas, concluded in 1916, "That Dean's tirades against Mr. Lincoln and the war were indefensible, is beyond question. All that can be said is, that in this respect he was false to his real nature." Stiles conjectured that the action of the mob and his imprisonment in Keokuk in 1863 was probably what had embittered Dean.

Indeed, his massive book began with an extended description of his days in the Keokuk jail and then launched into a long list of crimes by Lincoln and his administration. Dean saw no valid differences of opinion or ambiguities in interpreting the actions of the administration, Free Soilers, abolitionists, or Union military leaders. Congress was a total captive of the administration, and yet congressmen "premeditatedly provoked, perpetuated and would yet continue civil war, as a source of profit, power and position." For Dean, the Civil War had not been a rebellion, insurrection, or revolution, but a War Between the States. He repeatedly invoked the Constitution yet supported his theories based on the acts of the British Parliament and the Articles of Confederation, both null and void under the U.S. Constitution.

As to issues regarding freedmen he said, "Different and unequal races cannot live happily or safely under the same government" and "it is then the duty of the superior race in the spirit of justice, to assume guardianship over the inferior race." The Freedmen's Bureau was causing "loss of time, vagrancy, crime, degradation and anarchy, which are unsettling the foundations of Southern society." He opposed extending suffrage to freedmen, concluding that "the claptrap of negro-voting is only to reduce the poor white people down to the level of the negroes." Those who supported it were the "mongrel party."

Two years after publishing *Crimes of the Civil War*, Dean left Mount Pleasant and moved just across the Missouri state line, where he established a farm and community that he appropriately named "Rebels' Cove." He continued to fight for his old principles, still guided by his old hostility to banks and federal power. Uninvited and unwanted, he showed up at outlaw Frank James's trial in 1883 in Gallatin, Missouri, to aid in his defense. Perhaps Dean was partial to former Confederate guerrillas Frank and Jesse James; some saw their robberies of banks and railroads as symbols of resistance to the Union.

Dean lived in Rebels' Cove until his death in 1887. Then and in the years that followed, both his friends and enemies commented on Dean's genius, oratorical

abilities, and gift of persuasion. Many had mixed assessments, ranging from repulsion to admiration. Yet when he died in 1887, Iowa newspapers that had denounced him during the war remarked mostly on his qualities as a leader of men, an intellectual, and a man of great personal warmth and a charitable nature. Numerous Union leaders in Iowa who had known him well published essentially positive reviews of his life's work while noting his many quirks. It was also reported that late in his life Dean privately regretted his harshest rhetoric.

The storms of controversy that Dean had created and survived defined him. One day shortly before his death, as he sat on his front porch with a friend, he commented, "Do you see that large elm down there in the grove, doctor? I've watched it grow from a tiny sprout. It has stood the assault of hailstorms, hurricanes and of lightning, and now it reaches up above all the rest, strong, sturdy, unafraid, like my life has been. That tree, doctor, is to be my headstone." ❖

NOTE ON SOURCES

Special Collections, State Historical Society of Iowa (Des Moines) holds the papers of Henry Clay Dean, Charles Mason, Laurel Summers, and Gideon Bailey. Pertinent articles appeared in the *Burlington Hawk-Eye*, *Iowa State Register*, *Davenport Democrat*, *Fairfield Ledger*, *Keokuk Daily Constitution*, *Keokuk Daily Gate City*, [Mount Pleasant] *Home Journal*, and *Tipton Advertiser*. Useful secondary sources include several articles in the *Annals of Iowa*, *Iowa Journal of History*, and the *Palimpsest* (all published by the State Historical Society of Iowa), as well as books on Dean and Iowa Copperheads, particularly Hubert W. Wubben, *Civil War Iowa and the Copperhead Movement*. See also Boyd B. Stutler, "Henry Clay Dean—Inconsistent Rebel," *West Virginia Review* 9 (Jan. 1932); and Edgar White, "Henry Clay Dean, 'The Orator of Rebel Cove,'" *Missouri Historical Review* 22 (July 1928).

Complete annotations are in the *Iowa Heritage Illustrated* production files at the State Historical Society of Iowa (Iowa City).

David Holmgren volunteers at the State Historical Society of Iowa and writes often for this magazine. His article on Pammel Court received an honorable mention for the Mills/Noun Award from the Board of Trustees of the State Historical Society of Iowa.

James H. Williams

Iowa Legislator, Virginia Confederate

by David Connon

On May 12, 1861, 25-year-old James Harrison Williams wrote in his diary: "Started for Des Moines this morning . . . I go most reluctantly to the legislature. Want to be home, to get ready to go to Va. & espouse her cause."

The son of a well-connected state legislator and slave-owner, James H. Williams grew up in the Shenandoah Valley. A talkative ladies' man, he loved studying, smoking cigars, playing board games, and hunting. In 1857 he graduated near the top of the class at the University of Virginia Law School.

Later that year, James headed to Dubuque, Iowa, where he joined the law firm of native Virginian John T. Lovell, his future brother-in-law. Living in a state quite unlike Virginia, he cherished his "sacred memories of home," as his diary reveals, and on a visit in the spring of 1859 he "saw old Va in all its glory."

As Williams entered Dubuque's political life, he met leading Democrats in and out of the courtroom. He also became acquainted with 11 Dubuque men who later served the Confederacy. This group included a merchant and several men practicing and studying law.

Twice elected state representative as an independent Democrat, James also served as a correspondent for the *Democratic Dubuque Herald*. Under the pen name "Lex," he reportedly wrote in December 1860: "The abolition of slavery [should depend] upon more than the wish of the slave. The best interest of society, of both races, enter[s] into the right to be free. *Their superior condition in slavery [as compared] to freedom in the North must enter into it.*"

As war clouds loomed in March 1861, Williams's father in the Virginia legislature called for his state to secede. The next month, South Carolina troops fired upon Fort Sumter, President Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers, and Virginia passed a secession ordinance. In Iowa, Governor Samuel Kirkwood also called for Iowa volunteers and then a special legislative session to legitimize and fund Iowa's war effort. Ap-



LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

proval appeared to be a foregone conclusion. After all, the Republicans controlled both chambers of the Iowa General Assembly.

But then, young James H. Williams arose to play David against the Republican Goliaths. After a bill came up in the House to "prevent rendering aid to rebels," he took center stage, proposing an amendment in stark contrast. His amendment was Iowa-specific and went further than the 1850 federal Fugitive Slave Act, making it illegal to even "countenance" the escape of fugitive slaves, thus criminalizing a citizen's moral stance.

Williams's amendment caused an uproar and brought all work to a standstill. Voicing "many objections," Republican legislators assailed Williams's proposed amendment. The House leadership finally used parliamentary tactics to table the issue.

Although a Muscatine paper labeled Williams "a secessionist," and some legislators called him a "rank disunionist," he returned to Dubuque to "many congratulations from friends & those hitherto not friends," as he noted in his diary.

Williams re-entered the fray in the editorial pages of the *Dubuque Herald*. He criticized Lincoln's suspension of habeas corpus—a move that resulted in mass arrests and imprisonments without formal charges or trial by a civilian court. (Among those later imprisoned were two Dubuque men: former U.S. senator George Wallace Jones, and prominent Democrat and *Dubuque Herald* editorialist Dennis Mahony.)

Former Dubuque County representative Lincoln Clark argued that Lincoln did indeed have the power to suspend habeas corpus without congressional approval.

Williams countered: "If it be disloyal to cry out against usurpation, wicked to complain of breaches of the Constitution, let us burn that sacred instrument . . . and serenely recline our heads on the footstools of tyranny."

Clark retorted, "It is understood that you sympathize with Virginia . . . [and] have often stated that if Virginia seceded, you would go back and fight for her."

Williams shot back, "I am a citizen of Iowa; I have not gone to Virginia. . . . I have written nothing to favor violations of the Constitution in any quarter. . . . I thought I had the right to call attention to unconstitutional acts at home. . . . It may be that no one has a right to question the acts of this government."

Soon afterwards, on July 12, a crowd threatened to destroy the *Dubuque Herald* offices. Williams reportedly carried horse pistols to defend the Democratic newspaper.

Ten days later he wrote in his diary, "Went to the Dentist early & whilst there heard of the great battle of Manassas. The news quite discouraging. . . . About 3 o'clock, the News [of] the glorious victory was received. Took the biggest drink of brandy."

Although elected to the State Democratic Conven-

tion, he left Iowa for Virginia on July 24, the day of the convention.

Williams began his military service by recruiting troops for Chew's Battery of horse artillery, 7th Virginia Cavalry. He combined recruiting trips with visits to his future wife, Cora DeMovell Pritchard, and Dubuque friend Junius L. Hempstead, 5th Virginia Infantry, whose father had been Iowa's second governor. Williams became a lieutenant in the battery and then sought appointments as judge advocate, writing to Confederate Major General J. E. B. Stuart that "at the breaking out of the war, I was practicing my profession in Iowa with prospects as bright and success as marked as I had a right to expect. . . . I was impelled to sacrifice all that I had acquired. I preferred to take an active part in sustaining our cause and entered the ranks." In recommending him, a Virginia politician noted that in Iowa, Williams had "boldly denounced the proposed coercion of the Southern States, resisting manfully the raising of men or money to prosecute a war against the Confederate States."

Williams received the appointment, yet he sometimes found court-martial proceedings "a very boring business" that would "serve to kill time." Late in the war, a superior officer noted that Williams, as judge advocate and acting assistant quartermaster, "has done very little service with his company [and] displayed a distaste for field service."

After the war ended, Williams lived the rest of his life in Virginia, marrying Cora, practicing law, and serving in the state legislature. He died in 1903. ♦

David Connon is an independent researcher and writer. He is a historical interpreter at Living History Farms and a Humanities Iowa Speakers Bureau lecturer. To date and by his criteria, he has documented 67 Iowa residents who left the state and served the Confederacy.

NOTE ON SOURCES

Valuable sources included James Harrison Williams Diary, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library; Williams Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society; James H. Williams Compiled Confederate Service Record, National Archives, College Park, MD; *Journal of the Iowa House of Representatives*, Special Session, Spring 1861 (Des Moines); and Hubert H. Wubben, *Civil War Iowa and the Copperhead Movement* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1980).

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Complete annotations are in the *Iowa Heritage Illustrated* production files, State Historical Society of Iowa (Iowa City).

All Butternuts are forbid
Writing in this Book
The Sol Flag

BOTH ITEMS: SHSI

Evidence of Opposition

A warning to Iowa Traitors.

A man by the name of Wade, was killed by the shot of a revolver, on last Saturday morning in the streets of Bellefontain, Mahaska County. He has been a resident of this county for several years, but went South after the war commenced and joined the rebel army. He came back a short time since and made no reserve in his boasts of how he had been butchering Union men, and that he had delighted to see the blood running freely from the throats of the Union soldiers whom he assisted in murdering. He cheered for Jeff. Davis and the Southern Confederacy. The citizens of Bellefontain determined to arrest him. Accordingly on the day above named, he and his wife were passing through the town in a wagon at which time they stopped him and demanded his weapons and the surrender of himself. At this he drew out his revolver and cocked it. They caught the arm that held it and in the struggle he threw his arm behind his body when the weapon was discharged, the ball passing through his body killing him instantly. This is the substance as reported to us by a citizen of that vicinity, who was present a few minutes after he was killed. Our informant thinks he accidentally shot himself in the struggle to resist being taken.—*Knoxville Republican*.

BOTH FROM EDDYVILLE STAR, ABOVE: AUGUST 9, 1862; RIGHT: APRIL 3, 1863

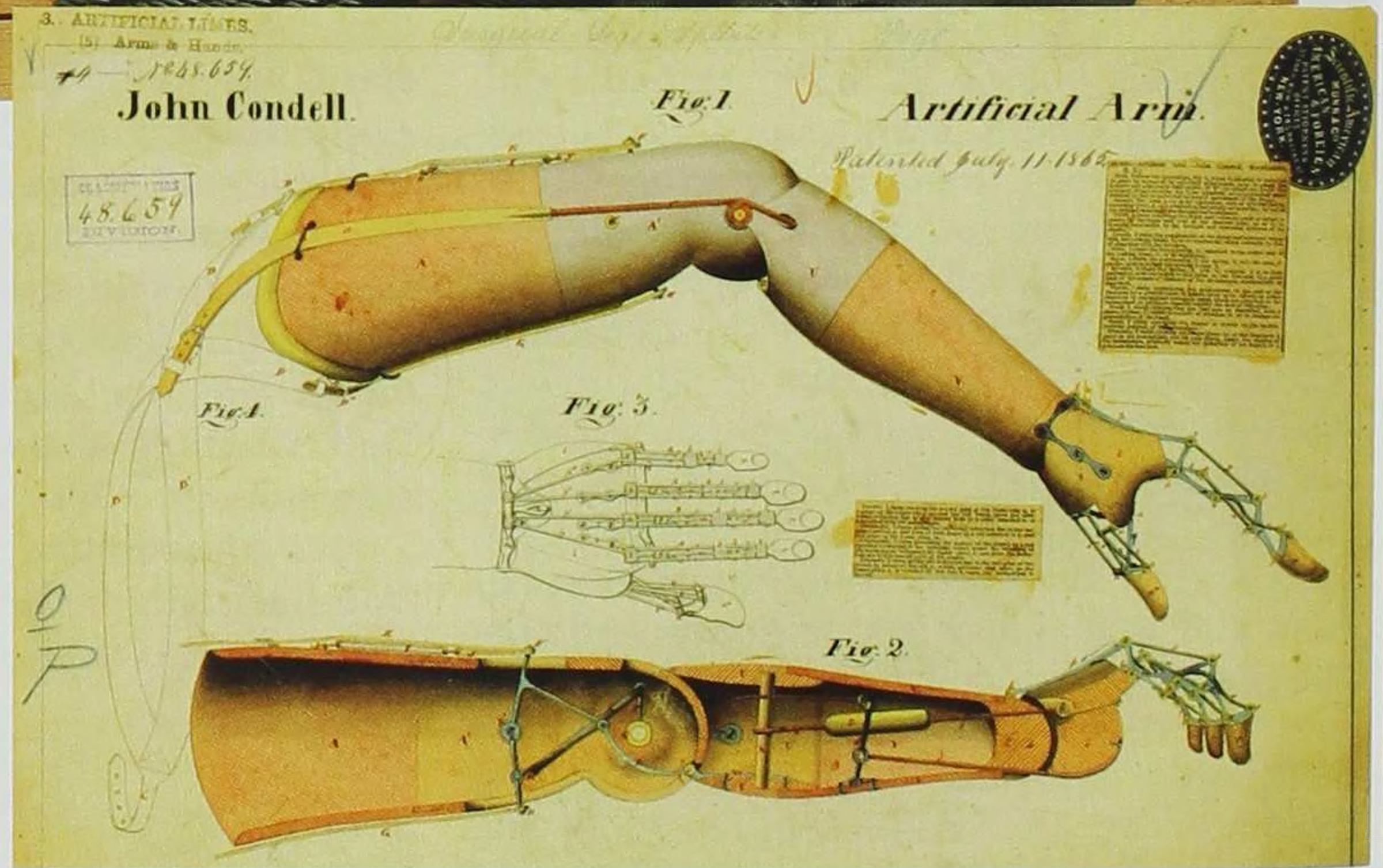
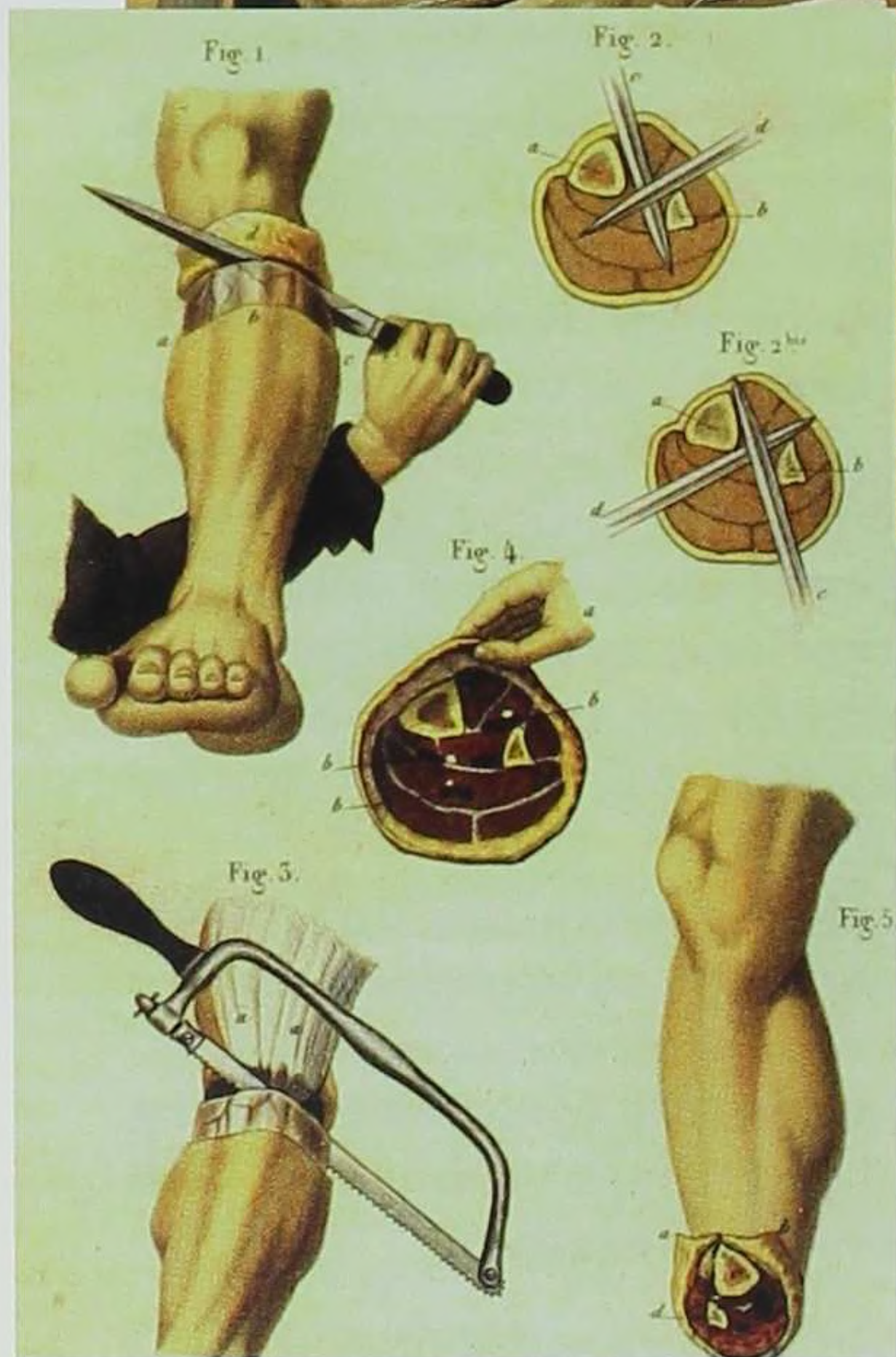
A butternut pen worn by Southern sympathizers during Civil War period.
Presented to the State Historical Society
by
J. W. Anderson
Iowa City
Oct. 20 - 1937

A SCRIBBLED WARNING in an autograph book, a pin made of a sliced butternut, and two newspaper articles remind us that not all Iowans supported the Civil War. In an overwhelmingly Republican state like Iowa, those who opposed Lincoln's administration, who wanted a negotiated peace, or whose war spirit seemed insufficient were judged to be rebel sympathizers or Copperheads (named after the "traitorous" snake). Other names for opponents to the war were Peace Democrats, secesh (for Secessionists) and Butternuts (for the source of dye for Confederate uniforms).

As the war escalated, the sides became polarized. Outrage spilled over into newspapers, dissension split churches, and mob violence erupted.

It's a fascinating, complex, and eye-opening story, one best told by historian Hubert Wubben in *Civil War Iowa and the Copperhead Movement*.

PRACTICAL COPPERHEADISM.—The Copperheads of Jefferson county are carrying things at a high rate. They have illustrated their spite against union men by systematic depredations on their property. They burned a hay stack and other property belonging to Judge Black A lot of villains while returning from a peace meeting on the night of the 6th of December, destroyed a considerable amount of Union property along the road The same style of Copperhead scamps burned the hay-stacks belonging to J. T.



Top: Saws for amputations were basic to army surgeons' kits. *Scientific American* published illustrated articles on amputation techniques. Between 1861 and 1873, the number of patents filed for artificial limbs, crutches, wheel chairs, and similar assistive devices quadrupled from the number filed in the previous 15 years. Many of the new patents were filed by women. The war advanced the study of neurological injuries, among them phantom-limb pain from amputations.

SHSI (IOWA CITY): AMERICAN AGRICULTURIST, OCTOBER 1865, PAGE 321

SOLDIERS and others who have lost their Limbs will find wagons to propel themselves at
LEWIS TIBBALS, 510 Broadway, New York,
 directly opposite St. Nicholas Hotel. Also Children's Carriages, Baby Tenders, Spring and Canterng Horses, Swings, and Toys.
L. TIBBALS.

Saving the Sick and Wounded

Disease and battle laid waste to Civil War troops. Iowa soldier Cyrus Boyd reported that “the mumps are raging in the Army and every other disease known to human beings. I have the jaundice and am as yellow as a Yankee pumpkin.” Historian James McPherson writes, “Disease reduced the size of most regiments from their initial complement of a thousand men to about half that number before the regiment ever went into battle.”

Historian Russell Johnson notes, “The men most vulnerable to disease were those who came to the army from mostly rural backgrounds.” If they had grown up in urban areas, they would have been exposed to measles, mumps, smallpox, and other communicable diseases. In large, crowded camps with poor sanitation, malaria, typhoid fever, diarrhea, and dysentery also took their share. “In one year, 995 of every thousand men in the Union army contracted diarrhea and dysentery,” according to historian Geoffrey Ward. While serving in Arkansas, six Iowa companies of the U.S. Colored Troops lost a quarter of their men to disease.

Most soldiers used rifled muskets, which fired “soft-lead minie balls [that] lost their shape on impact, shattered two to three inches of bone, and carried pieces of skin and clothing into the wound,” according to historians Laurann Figg and Jane Farrell-Beck. Soldiers wounded in the stomach, chest, or head were unlikely to survive; they were given morphine to keep them comfortable.

Doctors did not hesitate to amputate, especially before 48 hours, when infection set in. As one Civil War surgeon said, “Life is better than limb.” In division hospitals, often miles from battle, ether was used for surgery. But because ether was explosive, chloroform was used in field hospitals, which were much closer to battlefields—and to stray bullets and cannon shot.

As early as July 1862, Congress passed legislation to pay for artificial limbs, \$50 for an arm or foot, and \$75 for a leg. Historians Figg and Farrell-Beck contend that only a minority of soldiers with amputations actually used prosthetics. Many were probably unaware of the legislation or didn’t qualify. More fundamentally, artificial limbs were heavy and painful and often fit poorly. There was honor in pinning up the sleeve or pant leg, or using crutches, because it reminded the public of one’s sacrifice on the battlefield. Iowan George C. Bradway wrote: “A Soldier from an [Illinois regiment] was run over by the cars and has his legs ground up, so he will have to have them taken off Above his knees. . . . He said he would not have cared if it had been done in battle but he did not

like to think he had been through 40 battles and then be wounded in that manner.”

Honor also accrued to those with other kinds of battle wounds. Louisa May Alcott, a Civil War nurse and later author of the classic *Little Women*, assured a wounded patient that his sweetheart “would admire [his] honorable scar as a lasting proof that he had faced the enemy, for all women thought a wound the best decoration a brave soldier could wear.”

Alcott was one of more than 21,000 women who worked in war-related medical settings. About 9,000 of that number provided bedside medical care. The rest cooked, cleaned, comforted soldiers, and tended to other tasks. Women nurses did not easily win acceptance or authority from doctors (or society), who believed that females lacked the necessary temperament, stamina, and intellect. They feared that women would get in the way, be shocked by gruesome injuries, and mortified by the sight of naked men. At first nurses had to be over 35 in age, plain in appearance, and maternal in attitude, to avoid providing temptation and risking social improprieties (although a *Chicago Times* writer contended that pretty nurses had a positive effect on hospitalized soldiers).

As the war progressed and the number of casualties mounted, hospitals jobs were opened up to more women. Stories and illustrations in magazines began to portray these women as heroic and capable. Historian Nina Silber writes that women in hospital work “crossed a formidable divide, from a relatively safe and secure world [at home] to one of unknown horrors and difficulties.” Looking back, Alcott wrote, “I was there to work, not to wonder or weep.”

War also tested male doctors from civilian settings. One challenge was working within a complex military hierarchy. More important, few doctors had experience in treating the kinds of injuries received in battle, much less the massive numbers of wounded soldiers that poured into hospitals at one time.

—by Ginalie Swaim

NOTE ON SOURCES

Essential sources include Laurann Figg and Jane Farrell-Beck, “Amputation in the Civil War,” *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 48 (1993); Harry Herr, “‘The Privates Were Shot’: Urological Wounds...,” and James M. Schmidt, “‘A Multiplicity of Ingenious Articles,’” both in *Years of Change and Suffering*, ed. James M. Schmidt and Guy R. Hasegawa; Russell L. Johnson, *Warriors into Workers: The Civil War and the Formation of Urban Industrial Society in a Northern City*; James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*; Scott Reynolds Nelson and Carol Sheriff, *A People at War*; Geoffrey C. Ward, *The Civil War: An Illustrated History*; and Nina Silber, *Daughters of the Union: Northern Women Fight the Civil War*.

Death

DEATH SWIRLED through American society during the Civil War. The word haunted letters and diaries. Names of the dead clogged newspaper columns. Corpses littered battlefields.

"Saw many of the enemies dead lying around not more than half covered. The ground in many places was white as snow with creeping worms," wrote Iowa soldier Cyrus Boyd. On another day he wrote, "This evening I went over North to see the Rebel grave yard where lie buried 2500 Confederate soldiers. . . . They have been buried in trenches and laid one above another and some places are seven deep."

Though death was familiar terrain to 19th-century Americans, the Civil War was a cataclysm, marking "the first time in American history in which large numbers of young men died (mangled and torn) far from their homes," writes historian Mark Schantz.

The country, writes historian Drew Gilpin Faust, was a "republic of suffering." The enormity of death forced Americans to "embark on a new relationship

with death," she says. "It violated prevailing assumptions about life's proper end—about who should die, when and where, and under what circumstances."

"Dying well" and the "good death" had long been ideals of American culture, Faust explains, in which one died at home, surrounded by family. Dying well implied a worthy life, an acceptance of death, and a final reconciliation with God. The last words of the dying were precious insights and lessons for the living. Preparing and burying the body were rituals of respect and dignity, as were adhering to mourning customs and prescribed periods of grief.

Contrast this ideal with a soldier's death far from



Top: "Here's a health to the next one that dies," by field artist Alfred Waud. Above: Union soldiers prepare to bury comrades.

home, surrounded by carnage and agony rather than family. Fellow soldiers, doctors, chaplains, and nurses wrote letters to the bereaved family describing how “a calm repose” had come over the dying soldier, how his final moments revealed a worthy, patriotic man of courage and honor who had willingly sacrificed his life for the cause. Enclosing something tangible—a lock of hair, a diary, even a bullet—memorialized his sacrifice and gave the family a cherished keepsake. Perhaps this was as close to the ideal of the good death as Americans could now hope for.

Hasty, haphazard burials denied the soldier a decent burial, and the family, closure. “Burial was, of necessity, performed by fatigue parties from the line and little or no provision could be made for any systematic interment of remains during a campaign or rapid movement,” remarks Therese Sammartino, an expert on national cemeteries. Iowan Marvin Varner wrote, “It Seems to be very trobelsom to get the Dead Deacently Intered as fast as they die. Several are dieing Every day.”

Iowan Philip Goode described how “the Secesh buried at the corner of our tent is beginning to emit a very disagreeable odor. We had some more dirt thrown on him today. I suppose he was not put more than a foot under ground. That is the way the boys buried them. Our own men they put a little deeper and stick up a board to mark the spot.”

Henry Clay McArthur wrote: “Saw where 33 rebs were burried in and . . . where 24 of our men were burried the secesh feet were sticking out another place the men dug up two sculls of rebs ones brain was not dried up yet.”

Families who wanted the remains shipped home could sometimes purchase air-tight coffins and India-rubber body bags, which were advertised in newspapers, and hire itinerant embalmers, who traveled from one battlefield or field hospital to another. Iowa soldier Martin Varner noted in his diary, “After considerabel trobel we succeeded in obtaining a metallick line coffin in which we placed the Body of William Warrick and Exprest it to Albia in care of Mrs. Wm. Warrick his companion.”

Hundreds of thousands of war dead were never shipped home but were buried near troop concentrations, hospitals, and sites of conflict. Proper identification of bodies and record keeping, especially after a battle, were monumental tasks, and often impossible. Soldiers were not issued identification tags, although

they could buy their own. In any case, as Faust reminds us, cannon fire mostly “obliterated” men.

The national cemetery system began in 1862. Commanding generals were assigned to designate land for burials, with “headboards to the graves bearing numbers, and when practicable, the names of the persons buried in them.” Part of the city cemetery in Keokuk, Iowa, was allotted for soldiers’ graves. The town was a staging area for troops and the site of army hospitals.

According to Sammartino, in Keokuk and dozens of other sites, “burial grounds that first presented an unsightly appearance of bare mounded graves” with wooden grave markers were transformed into na-



The national cemetery at the site of Andersonville prison in Georgia.

tional cemeteries similar to “stately parks, adorned with shrubs, trees, graveled paths, and driveways and vistas of shaded greensward carpeting the mounded graves.”

These national cemeteries, “where men of varied backgrounds and means were memorialized side by side, with uniform markers,” says one historian, “set these areas very much apart from secular cemeteries of the day.” Creation of these new sacred spaces was a “striking act of democracy.”

—by Ginalie Swaim

NOTE ON SOURCES

Sources include Drew Gilpin Faust, “The Civil War Soldier and the Art of Dying,” *Journal of Southern History* 67 (Feb. 2001), and *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War*; “A Pretty Hard Business’: The Civil War Diary of Philip H. Goode,” transcribed by Edward W. Vollertsen, *Palimpsest* (Summer 1991); Therese T. Sammartino, “Civil War Era National Cemeteries,” National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, National Park Service, 1994; James M. Schmidt, “A Multiplicity of Ingenious Articles’: Civil War Medicine and *Scientific American Magazine*,” in *Years of Change and Suffering*; and Dorothy Denneen Volo and James M. Volo, *Daily Life in Civil War America*.

Right: Ambrotype of an unidentified Union soldier and his family.

Opposite: Through the war, Colonel H. J. B. Cummings of Winterset, Iowa, carried this tintype of wife Annie and daughter Laura Justina. Locks of hair and a ribbon are attached.



Thrown Upon Their

Women on the Civil War Home Front

The Civil War disrupted the conventional dynamics of the 19th-century household as women expanded their roles well beyond family and home. "At no time in our country's history have so many women been thrown upon their own exertions," wrote Virginia Penny in her 500-page book titled *The Employments of Women: A Cyclopedic of Woman's Work*, published in 1863. "Thousands of women, formerly dependent . . . have lost or may lose their only support. Some of the mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters of soldiers, may take the vacancies created in business by their absence—others must seek new channels of labor."

One of these women was Mrs. M. J. M. Clark. Her husband was "a soldier without means," according to the job recommendation written by her Iowa congressman John Kasson. "The wife," Kasson wrote, is "intelligent and competent."

Mrs. Clark was applying for a job in the U.S. Treasury Department. During the war many Northern women earned wages as office clerks, or "government girls," filling positions traditionally held by men. Women also worked in the federal post office and war

department, in munitions plants and arsenals, and in garment workshops and private businesses.

"In countless ways, the Civil War complicated the lives of Northern women," according to Nina Silber. "Wartime circumstances compelled women to compete for jobs, negotiate wages, manage household accounts, and file pension claims," as well as to "settle debts [and] pay mortgages." They also had to steer clear of unscrupulous profiteers, price gougers, and others poised to take advantage of them.

Farm women were especially challenged by the war. Midwestern farmers anticipated high demand from the army for their crops, mules, horses, cattle, and hogs. The military needed massive amounts of meat for soldiers' rations—salt pork in particular because it was high in calories and easier to preserve than beef. The problem was that the war drew heavily upon the agricultural labor force—owners and tenants of farms, as well as hired men and itinerant workers. As the war dragged on, the labor shortage increased dramatically. "Our hired man left to enlist just as corn planting commenced, so I shouldered my hoe and have worked out ever since. I guess my services are just as acceptable as



Own Exertions

by Ginalie Swaim

his," pronounced one Iowa woman. As Helen Maria Sharp summed it up, "To get a man to do anything is out of the question."

Farm women had to be "managers and diplomats who negotiated relationships with kin and neighbors to provision and shelter their families and to preserve their farms," according to historian J. L. Anderson. Some wives called upon relatives or neighbors for advice or help. Others relied on their own wits and made their own decisions. Marjorie Ann Rogers wrote to her husband: "I did not think I was getting enough for the potatoes and corn, so did not decide to sell to the German without knowing how much more I could get in town if delivered and if it would pay me to hire the team and do the driving myself." So she did. Jasper Rice wrote to his wife, Mary: "I must give you credit for your good management. I think when I get home I will let you do the financiering."

Women and children took on the heavy physical work typically handled by males in the family. After Emeline Ritner butchered a hog, she wrote to her husband, "There was not a man on the hill that we could get. We done it up just right. We just had to do it."

Women also took on more fieldwork—plowing, planting, and harvesting. As relief worker Mary Livermore rode through Wisconsin and eastern Iowa, she observed women driving "the horses round and round the wheat-field, . . . the glittering blades of the reaper cutting wide swaths with a rapid, clicking sound."

The war sent shockwaves through African American families. Historian Leslie Schwalm estimates that "roughly 320,000 enslaved people—more than half of them women—became displaced during the war." Thousands of former slaves fled to already overcrowded army camps. They were labeled as "contraband," Schwalm says, and were grouped "with the wagons, horses, and miscellaneous enemy property seized by the U.S. Army. The technical military term [of contraband] bore little resemblance to the courage and desperation that prompted enslaved women and men to risk flight to Union lines."

In 1862, the federal government began relocating thousands of African Americans to the North. In

September, for example, 700 fugitive slaves, "mostly women and children, who had recently arrived at Cairo, [Illinois,] were directed (under the authority of the secretary of war, at government expense, and with the assistance of secular and denominational charities) to potential employers in Chicago, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota," Schwalm writes.

In Mississippi river towns, potential employers waiting at the docks sometimes outnumbered the refugees disembarking. Thousands of applications for workers poured in, many of them from white women. Schwalm notes that "some women took an active role in encouraging and arranging for the transportation of former slaves north. White women who were sympathetic toward the plight of slaves, or were simply desperate for domestic and farm help, responded enthusiastically when authorities invited Northerners to apply for contraband labor. Several women made inquiries through Annie Wittenmyer, the Midwest's preeminent wartime relief organizer, hoping that her extensive contacts in the South could help them obtain black workers."

In addition to the organized federal relocation efforts, individual officers and soldiers worked on their own to bring refugee slaves to their home state. "Are there any contrabands wanted in Iowa City, or its vicinity for help this spring?" asked Lyman Allen. "If so, please let me hear from you. I could send a large number to Iowa, if they were wanted, as there are many brought up the river at this time."

Wounded in the leg, Thomas Ball wrote to his wife, "Now Serrilda I want you to give me your opinion about haveing about three of four darkies brought to your house when I come home to work for us." He suggested "three boys about twelve years old, one to help you about the house and garden and cook for the other two that plows and so on as I never expect to be able to follow the plow on account of my leg."

After Marjorie Ann Rogers's husband announced that he was thinking of bringing a fugitive slave boy home to Tama, she "wondered what I would do with another boy and he a black one. There was not a colored person in our town or ever had been that I knew of."

Northern communities were split on the issue of welcoming, much less hiring, African American refugees from the South. In one community white women offered them food and clothing; as Rogers insisted, they "must be made to feel they were among friends." But in some Iowa counties, the idea of hiring black refugees was met with violent rhetoric, protests, and mobs. Moses Mosely, who had come

to Mount Pleasant during this period, remembered townspeople complaining about "contrabands swarming into towns and other public places, taking the work from the free people and often making unbecoming remarks."

Letters and diaries reveal the emotional impact as families were torn apart. Raising four children on her own, Helen Maria Sharp wrote her husband in obvious despair, "i shall have to brake up housekeeping before long. if i was only out of the way folks would take care of my childen but to scatter them while im alive is more trouble than I can bare to think about."

In his fifties, John Cozad from Indianola pretended he was younger so he could enlist with his son, according to fellow soldier Cyrus Boyd. Cozad "had his hair colored black—held his head up and looked like a boy under age—and ran the gauntlet of Inspection and was sworn in Company 'G' as a private soldier. He wants to go principally because his *son* John has enlisted in our Company at the age of 17 and he is an only child and the poor old man cannot bear to have him alone so he goes along to look after him."

Through letters, couples expressed their yearning for physical affection. One soldier wrote, "I certainly would not object to having a nice quiet snooze with you this January night." Mary Vermilion confided to her spouse, "Longing to see you, to hear your voice, to feel your kisses on my lips." Harriet Jane Thompson wrote, "Do you not think of our bed at home when you lay down on your cot?" and, another time, "Oh, how I wish I could sleep with you tonight."

"War severely tested the marital stability of many Northern couples," according to Nina Silber. "During and immediately after the war, the divorce rate, although still miniscule with respect to rates today, increased significantly."

Far more than marital stability was at stake for relocated African Americans. "Many African Americans who agreed to make the trip north left spouses, families, and friends behind; were dependent on the trustworthiness of their benefactor and the soundness of his or her plans, and faced long, complicated, and dangerous journeys to unknown locations to live with white strangers for an indefinite length of time," Schwalm writes. They risked being "stranded" in the North, left to their own devices amidst hostility and suspicion, even kidnapped and resold in the South. For them, nothing was guaranteed.

Supporting the war, in both word and deed, became another expectation of women, despite the suffering and sacrifices already thrust upon them. A woman's job of caring for her family now extended beyond her home to the soldiers in distant army camps and hospitals—for were not these soldiers some other women's sons, brothers, and husbands?

Women were expected to participate in soldiers' aid projects, the enormous volunteer undertakings to provision soldiers beyond what the military provided. Local groups funneled food, medical supplies, cash, clothing, and other materials to larger state and regional clearinghouses for shipment and distribution in military camps and hospitals. In early March 1863, for example, Northern relief groups received an official dispatch stating that "General Grant's army in danger of scurvy." Soldiers' aid groups responded, and soon "a line of vegetables connected Chicago and Vicksburg," according to an official report. That month, midwestern states shipped a thousand barrels of food a week to Grant's army.

In dozens of ways, Northern women pitched in to help soldiers. They made small pillows to support wounded limbs, fashioned quilts (25,000 by one report) to fit cots and soldiers' packs. They knit socks and "scraped" lint. In one town in only ten days, a hundred women finished uniforms for 200 men. Women

in Keokuk made 25 straw-filled mattresses overnight when the river town's army hospitals ran short.

"I never before fully realized the immense good done by 'Aid Societies,'" admitted Iowa army surgeon Seneca Thrall. "Anyone being in our field hospitals after a battle, seeing the wounded brought in bloody and dirty, their clothing frequently necessarily cut from them. Then see them lay for two or three days almost naked, covered only with coarse and dirty blankets. Then see them, a few hours after sanitary supplies, sent by the ladies through 'aid societies.' The clean shirts, drawers, sheets etc. then only can you realize the good done."

In addition to "the private, needle-driven work of the aid societies," as Silber calls it, women staged large fundraisers called sanitary fairs. These fairs—with entertainment, bazaars, and raffles—were popular social events as well as effective fundraisers for the war effort. While some women crafted small items to sell, others prodded townspeople and farmers into donating food, supplies, and cash. A sanitary fair in Burlington, Iowa, netted donations worth \$25,000. Dubuque's weeklong Northern Iowa Sanitary Fair in 1864 raised \$86,000 in goods and cash (almost as much as a Chicago fair a year before). Sanitary fairs, writes Silber, "put women's patriotic work on public display in dramatic, large-scale venues."

Certainly thousands of women already had their hands full caring for family and farm. They had no extra time or resources for soldiers' aid organizations or chose other ways to help. Iowan Harriet Jane Thompson agreed to "work for the soldiers cheerfully but I will do it at home for I do not believe in these societies for they always end in a fuss." The women most involved were generally urban, middle-class women, with the financial and personal independence to devote themselves to volunteer work. Those who became leaders drew upon their skills to delegate, recruit, organize, persuade, and, no doubt, badger others to join the cause of aiding soldiers.

Not to be overlooked are the unsung contributions that African American women made to the war effort. They worked as cooks, nurses, and laundresses in army camps and hospitals. Schwalm estimates that "10 percent of over 21,000 paid [female] hospital attendants" were African American women.

In the North, they helped food production by working as farmhands. So did many white women—but Schwalm makes a critical distinction. White female farm workers were hailed as "heroines of the farm," making "patriotic sacrifices" for the war. Black female farmhands, on the other hand, were considered

DAVENPORT DAILY GAZETTE, SEPT. 3, 1862

LINT SOCIETIES.—By reference to the GAZETTE of yesterday morning, the little girls of our city will find a direct appeal made to them from the Surgeon General of the United States, that they revive their lint societies and go to work to pick lint for the poor wounded soldiers. Just to think, hundreds and thousands of soldiers, the brothers and fathers of little girls like yourselves, now suffering anguish from their bleeding wounds, when a little lint might stop the flow of blood and help to relieve their pain. Go to work little girls and pick lint—it will all be needed, more than your industrious fingers can supply.

An 1862 *Davenport Gazette* article urges children to "scrape lint." Scraping a knife across clean linen produced a soft substance for dressing wounds. Thousands of pounds were shipped to army hospitals. In Washington, Iowa, a prize banner for lint scraping was awarded to School District No. 5.

"rough" and "able-bodied." Doing heavy fieldwork was seen as no sacrifice; it was expected of them.

Schwalm makes another important point about black women's contributions. "Although it is the story of black enlistment and black soldiering that dominates most accounts of black agency during the Civil War, the flight of noncombatant women and children to Union lines also played a significant role in accelerating slavery's downfall, in creating a northern diaspora, and in making emancipation a national event."

Although public efforts to aid soldiers were extremely successful, efforts to help their families were less so. Facing wartime inflation without male wage-earners in the household, many soldiers' families couldn't even afford food or firewood. Soldiers generally sent all or most of their pay home, but their pay was often weeks behind schedule, and mail delivery was unreliable.

Various ways to organize family relief efforts were tried in Iowa communities, with varying degrees of success. As one Iowa woman complained to her husband, "We can't get any thing from the vollenteers aid society." Newspaper editors in many towns reminded readers to help destitute families. In Dubuque, a group of businessmen early on in the war volunteered to help local families, but the group soon disbanded. Historian Russell Johnson offers possible reasons why: the men saw benevolence as women's work; they tended to argue about how to organize the work rather than to simply do it; and because they expected a brief war, their commitment was short-lived.

In the first few years, there was a push for Iowa towns and counties to use public funds to help soldiers' families facing destitution, but this was not mandated by the legislature until 1864. The state law, according to Johnson, "failed to define all soldiers' families as worthy of relief. Local poor relief officers could still give or deny relief based on their perceptions of worthiness."

This notion of being worthy of help was not new. Americans had long believed that those who were impoverished had brought it on themselves by laziness or moral laxity. Because it was their own fault, the reasoning went, they were "unworthy" of charity or help. Soldiers, who were making patriotic sacrifices on the battlefield, were "worthy" of aid—but not necessarily their families. Furthermore, a wife should stay dependent on her husband, it was believed, even if his paycheck was delayed for months.

Historians disagree as to whether women's new roles during the war significantly broadened their opportunities in the years after. Certainly female medical and relief workers in the war years had demonstrated skills and self-confidence as they expanded their realm from the domestic to the public. After the war, some engaged their energies in the gradual professionalization of nursing and the public health sanitation movement. Some women, such as Amelia Bloomer of Council Bluffs, transferred their energies from soldiers' relief to suffrage work; others, to the temperance movement. Annie Wittenmyer, in fact, was chaplain and president of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union in its early years. She was also a leader in the Women's Relief Corp, the female auxiliary of the Grand Army of the Republic. Iowan Marjorie Ann Rogers, who had organized relief efforts in Iowa, continued to push for orphanages and other forms of assistance to children, widows, and the elderly.

But these postwar gains were the exceptions. Women wage-earners generally lost their jobs to returning soldiers. And even though women during the war had written 30,000 letters to the federal government (many of them to the president), this did not ensure them a voice in postwar politics or the public arena.

In fact, "most women who had experienced the upheavals and transformations of the Civil War era . . . returned to tending to their own households and domestic lives," Silber writes. Many headed west, "perhaps compelled to emigrate by male family members who, feeling restless in the postwar period, sought to recapture something of the adventure that they had known as soldiers." And, she concludes, "Tens of thousands of widows had to make do without their husbands, who had died as a result of Civil War injuries or illnesses." ❖

NOTE ON SOURCES

Essential sources include Leslie A. Schwalm, *Emancipation's Diaspora: Race and Reconstruction in the Upper Midwest*; J. L. Anderson, "The Vacant Chair on the Farm: Soldier Husbands, Farm Wives, and the Iowa Home Front, 1861–1865," *Annals of Iowa* 66 (Summer/Fall 2007); Ginette Aley, "Inescapable Realities: Rural Midwestern Women and Families During the Civil War," in *Union Heartland: The Midwestern Home Front During the Civil War*, ed. Ginette Aley and J. L. Anderson; Scott Reynolds Nelson and Carol Sheriff, *A People at War: Civilians and Soldiers in America's Civil War*; J. S. Newberry, *The U. S. Sanitary Commission in the Valley of the Mississippi . . . 1861–1866, Final Report . . .* (Cleveland: 1871); Mrs. M. A. Rogers, "An Iowa Woman in Wartime," *Annals of Iowa* (Winter, Spring, Summer 1961); and Nina Silber, *Daughters of the Union*. Useful work by Russell L. Johnson includes his *Warriors into Workers: The Civil War and the Formation of Urban-Industrial Society in a Northern City*; "'A Debt Justly Due': The Relief of Civil War Soldiers and Their Families in Dubuque," *Annals of Iowa* 55 (Summer 1996); and "'Volunteer While You May': Manpower Mobilization in Dubuque, Iowa," *Union Soldiers and the Northern Home Front*, ed. Paul A. Cimballa and Randall M. Miller.

Selling War

War-related products like these, advertised in 1862, appealed to both soldiers and civilians.

Heavy Artillery.

Manual for Heavy Artillery, for the use of Volunteers. Service of Piece—of Gun on Siege Carriage, 8-inch Siege Howitzer—10-inch Siege Mortar—8-inch Siege Mortar—Cochon Mortar—10-inch Sea-Coast Mortar—13-inch Sea-Coast Mortar—Stone Mortar—Barbette Guns—Casemate Guns—3-inch Columbiads—24 pdr. Howitzer, &c. 1 vol. 12mo, plates, red cloth, 75 cents.
Sent free, by mail, on receipt of price.
D. VAN NOSTRAND, Publisher, 192 Broadway.

VALENTINES FOR 1862.

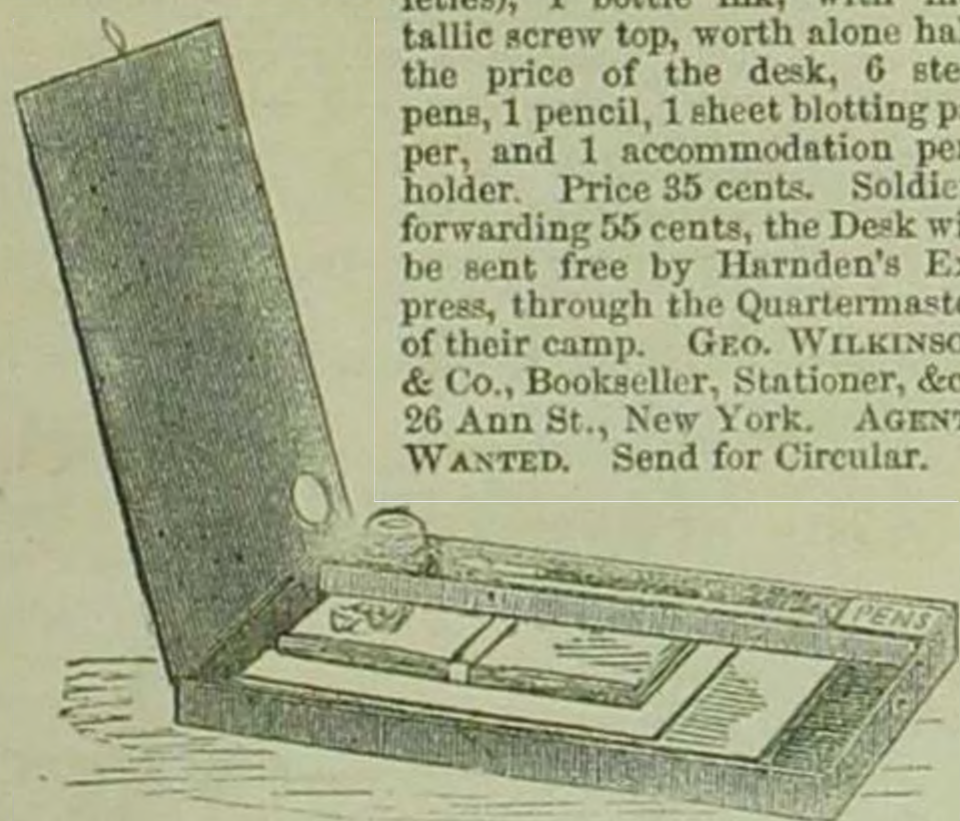
Cupid and the Union. The largest stock of Valentines is now ready for dealers by M. T. COZANS, No. 122 Nassau Street, New York.
My popular \$5, \$10, \$15 Lots, now ready.
Union Comics, 24 kinds—5 cents each.
Orders attended to, Wholesale and Retail.
1000 kinds from 3 cents to \$10 each.

Marching Along,

The famous Army Song and Chorus, sung in all of the Camps on the Potomac. Price 25 cts. Also, Anthem of Liberty, words and music by R. Storrs Willis, 30 cts., and 20 other New Patriotic Songs.
DRUMS and TRUMPETS, descriptive of a Military Parade (with beautiful picture), 35 cts., and Camp Life, price 50 cts., introducing all of the U. S. Army Camp Signals. Sent by mail on receipt of the price.
FIRTH, POND & CO., 547 Broadway, New York.

The Stanton Writing Desk.

To Soldiers, Sailors, Travelers, and the general Public. This is the best Portable Writing Case yet invented; contains 18 sheets paper (3 varieties), 18 envelopes (3 varieties), 1 bottle ink, with metallic screw top, worth alone half the price of the desk, 6 steel pens, 1 pencil, 1 sheet blotting paper, and 1 accommodation penholder. Price 35 cents. Soldiers forwarding 55 cents, the Desk will be sent free by Harnden's Express, through the Quartermaster of their camp. GEO. WILKINSON & Co., Bookseller, Stationer, &c., 26 Ann St., New York. AGENTS WANTED. Send for Circular.



Also, Emery and Crocus Muslin for cleaning Arms and Equipments—approved by the Government. Price 25 c. per package of 9 pieces. Sent free by Harnden's Express on receipt of 40 cents. Clubs for 5 packages for \$1 50.

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516 BROADWAY, N. Y. SEND FOR A CIRCULAR.

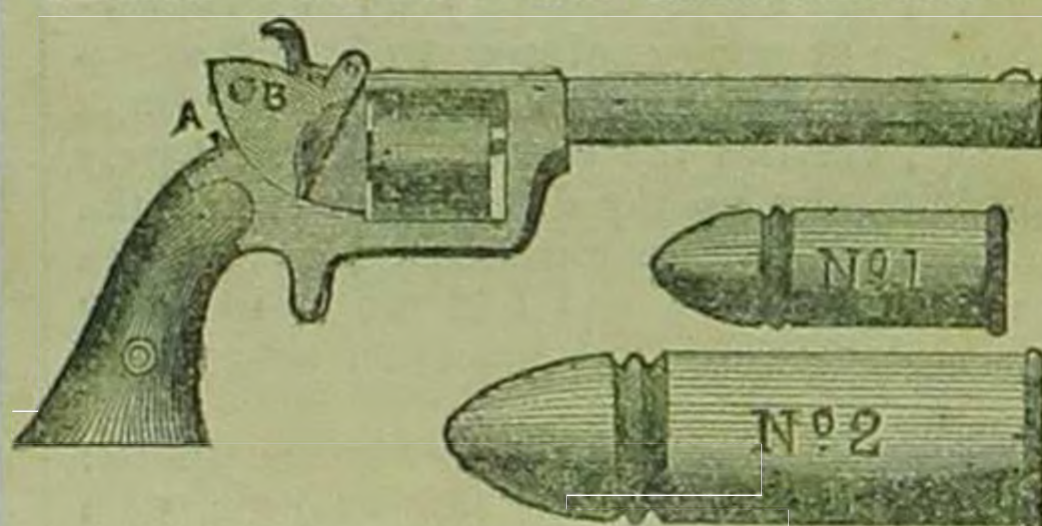
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THE GREATEST NOVELTY OF THE DAY.—Peirce's Army Game Casket, for the use of Soldiers and everybody. You have, in a neat small box for the pocket, Chess, Checkers, Backgammon, Cards, Dominoes, and all the popular Games of the day—all for 62½ cents retail. Large discount to Sutlers and Dealers. Send stamp for Circular. JOHN H. TINGLEY, Publisher, No. 152½ Fulton St., New York.

ARMY CARTRIDGE REVOLVER.



ADVANTAGES OF THESE REVOLVERS.

Are light and simple in construction, durable, and safe to carry, are easily and quickly loaded and cleaned.

Shoot 7 Water-proof Cartridges, which can be procured from any gunsmith in the country.

The Cylinder is firmly locked by a spring underneath at the instant of discharge, preventing accidents which frequently occur with other Revolvers.

Never misses, and can be fired 100 times with precision, without cleaning.

The Cylinder is not removed to load, and no accident can happen from improperly closing the same after loading.

DIRECTIONS.

Place the hammer at half cock. Press back spring A, and side-plate B, at same time.

Insert cartridges and push them home. Push out discharged shells with small rod.

Carry, when loaded, with the hammer on the cylinder between the Cartridges, and they can not be exploded by accident.

PENETRATION.

At 15 feet, penetrates 7 inches pine wood.
At 30 feet, penetrates 6 inches pine wood.
At 60 feet, penetrates 5 inches pine wood.

PRICE.

No. 1—Small pocket size.....\$9 50 each.
No. 2—Four, five and six inch barrel. 16 50 each.
No. 1—Cartridges, per 100..... 50
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Enamelled black leather Holster, Belt, and Cartridge-case..... 2 00

Address WM. IRVING,
No. 20 Cliff street, New York.

Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, &c.,

Wounded, or WIDOWS and CHILDREN of those killed in the present war, or died from wounds or sickness incurred from service therein, can have their

Pensions, Bounties, Back Pay,

&c., by calling upon or addressing
SOMES & BROWN,
Solicitors for Pensioners, &c., Office No. 2 Park Place, under Broadway Bank, New York City, and corner 7th and F Streets, Washington, D. C.

AGENTS WANTED

To sell Yale's Flag of our Union and Military Gift and Stationery Packages. Agents who are now selling imitations, put up by other parties, are respectfully requested to send us their address and we will forward them a sample with circular, which will at once satisfy them that they can make more money and give better satisfaction by selling our packages than any others in market. Address J. W. YALE, Proprietor, Metropolitan Gift Book Store, Syracuse, New York.

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Books, Magazines, or Papers will be sent to any address within the Federal lines, postage paid, upon receipt of the money.

Catalogues and information supplied, with pleasure, without charge, stamps being enclosed for return postage.
WALTER LOW, Publishers' Circular Office,
39 Walker Street, New York.

A New Edition of Harper's War Map Now Ready.

Price Six Cents.

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HARPER & BROTHERS, New York.

Evans' Portable Army Stoves are indispensable for Soldiers in the field. *Cooking Stove* with every convenience for mess of four officers, with seven feet of pipe, packs in mess chest twenty by twenty-four inches, and twelve inches deep, price complete, \$15. *Tent Heater*, will heat any tent in the service, packs with six feet of pipe in box ten by ten inches, and eight inches deep, price \$5. Send for circular. J. W. EVANS, 21 John St.

THIS DAY PUBLISHED. — INFANTRY TACTICS For the INSTRUCTION, EXERCISE, AND MANOEUVRES OF THE SOLDIER. A Company, Line of Skirmishers, Battalion, Brigade, or Corps d'Armee. By Brig.-Gen. SILAS CASEY, U. S. Army. In 3 vols. \$2 50. Sent free by mail on receipt of price.
D. VAN NOSTRAND, Publisher,
No. 192 Broadway.

A Useful Present to the OFFICERS OF OUR ARMY!

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The most compact and complete arrangement for a mess of four persons ever offered to the army. Weight fifteen pounds. Occupies two-thirds the space of a cubic foot. Sold by all dealers in Military goods. Price \$12. Liberal discount to the trade. Wholesale depot 4 Platt St., N. Y. Send for circular.
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Free to Soldiers.

WAR.—We want the address of every soldier in the Union army. We wish to send to every soldier something that will increase his comfort. Also the address of every sutler and dealer in goods for the soldier.
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SEMMONS, Optician,
669½ Broadway, under Lafarge House, N. Y.

For Wounds either occasioned by the the Bayonet, Sabre, or Bullet, Sores or Bruises,

To which every Soldier and Sailor are liable, there are no medicines so safe, sure, and convenient, as Holloway's Pills and Ointment. The poor wounded and almost dying sufferer might have his wounds dressed immediately if he would only provide himself with this matchless Ointment, which should be thrust into the wound and smeared all round it, then covered with a piece of linen from his knapsack and compressed with a handkerchief. Taking, night and morning, 6 or 8 Pills, to cool the system and prevent inflammation.

Every Soldier's Knapsack and Seaman's Chest should be provided With these valuable Remedies.

Wilkie's Letter

Full particulars of the Battle of Springfield. Complete list of the honored dead, and a correct list of the wounded.

ARMY CORRESPONDENCE.

SPRINGFIELD, Mo.,
Aug. 10, 1861.

Ere this you have probably received by telegraph the outlines of the battle of Springfield or Wilson's creek—a battle the bloodiest in proportion to the forces engaged, ever fought upon American soil. Its details will give birth to both pride and deadly sorrow in our State—pride at the gallantry displayed by her sons, sorrow at the numbers who sealed their devotion to their country by their blood. Iowa will weep as she learns how many of her children were swept down by the terrible missiles of the field, yet she can reflect with a thrill on the charge, but upon retreating one fellow drove a bayonet into his thigh, while another knocked him from his horse with the butt of his musket. The next morning however we found him, and he is now in a fair way to be able to repay his injuries with interest, at some future time.

That night there was no more fighting or alarm, owing both to the retreat of the enemy and the extraordinary care taken by Gen. Lyon to secure the camp against surprise.

Early the next day we resumed the march, proceeding slowly to give the cavalry time to examine the country. About a mile from the battle field we came to a house in which were thirteen of the wounded Secessionists, and a little farther at another house we found five more wounded and one dead man. This house was singularly horrible to one unaccustomed to scenes of blood. The whole house resembled a slaughter-house—bed, pillows, sheets, floor, walls, ceiling, stairway, chairs, everything was stained or clotted with blood or bore it in dark hideous pools. There was a living spring near the house, and the rivulet that bubbled away to hide itself in the green undergrowth and whisper its soft music to the wild flowers on its bank, bore on its bosom the same hideous stain. It was perfectly a stream of blood, and following it up to ascertain the cause, I found a poor horse standing weakly in the pond lapping up feebly its own life-blood that trickled from a ghastly wound upon one side of its head. A grape shot had torn away nearly half the head. I turned away in pity, regretting that I had not a revolver with which to mercifully end its miseries.

From the wounded we learned that the force of the enemy amounted to about ten thousand men—the main body being encamped on Cane Creek, a few miles below. Not a thing in the house was disturbed—an example which I hope will be of use to the Secessionists. One of the wounded men had received a ball in the hip, another was shot through the shoulder, and both were fine looking intelligent men. The Surgeon had run off and left them to obtain such care as they could get from each other.

Some two or three miles from here we came upon the brow of a wide, deep ravine. The road crossed the ravine by winding around some promontory-like eminences, and ascended straight up the hill opposite. The other side was densely timbered, and we could only judge where the road was.



Newspaper vendors did considerable business in army camps. The sign on this cart advertises Philadelphia, New York, and Baltimore papers.

Franc Wilkie, Embedded Reporter

Iowan Franc B. Wilkie was one of more than 200 correspondents who covered the Civil War. Wilkie wrote for the Dubuque Herald and the New York Times. These excerpts begin in April 1861 as Wilkie and the 1st Iowa head south down the Mississippi. His opening scene of soldierly camaraderie on the steamboat is followed by his equally evocative and realistic descriptions of what entertained and what exhausted the troops, as experienced by one who traveled with them.

—The Editor

"Profound silence soon covered the whole boat, till suddenly some 'rough' on the floor gave a tremendous 'Baa!' Another at the other end responded, then the chorus was taken up in all parts, and in three seconds the whole crowd was Baa-ing with the force of a thousand calf-power. So it went till day-light. There were cat voices, sheep voices, and coon voices. There were goslings and crowings. There were fellows there who could bet any jackass on a bray, and give him fifty. In short there were more noises than ever were made or ever will be again,

unless all the jackasses, mules, gobblers, roosters, cats, coons, and cattle in creation are assembled for a grand concert. Nobody slept; some laughed a little, others swore a great deal, and thus wore away the night."

"Sunday morning, 2,000 muskets arrived here from St. Louis. . . . I think it would be a master stroke of policy to allow the secessionists to steal them. They are the 'old-fashioned . . .' kind that are infinitely more dangerous to friend than enemy—will kick further than they will shoot."

CLIPPINGS FROM DUBUQUE EXPRESS; PHOTO FROM LIBRARY OF CONGRESS; VIRGINIA, NOVEMBER 1863

"Last night, our first in camp, was somewhat a melancholy one to those of us to whom the experiment was wholly new. Notwithstanding the thousand men in the camp, it seemed lonely, with nothing but thin cotton between one and the great sky. It produced a sense of isolation and loneliness that was not lightened by the mellow strains of a violin that stole tenderly through the night air from a distant part of the camp."

"The men lay 'heads and points' [in their tents] and are packed in like a good many hogs in a very small pen."

"In one tent . . . they have adopted a rule that whoever swears shall read aloud a chapter in the Bible. . . . Truth compels me to say that one can scarcely pass the tent day or night without hearing some one reading a selection of Scriptures."

"Incessant drilling, guard mounting, either beneath a broiling sun or in a drenching rain storm, sleeping seven in a tent, washing greasy dishes, scouring rusty knives and forks . . . all these and a hundred other circumstances incident to camp life, will very speedily take the romance out of the whole matter. . . . [Yet] at a distance, white tents are beautiful, nestling like a flock of huge swans upon the green prairie."

"[The men are] marching ahead amid clouds of dust and beneath a sun that would broil a mackerel . . . limping wearily along at the rate of three miles an hour. . . . None of your play soldiers in clean shirts; but a vast concourse of solemn men armed for deadly war, swarthy, sunburnt, with real guns on their shoulders loaded with leaden bullets."

"It is now the 'holy Sabbath eve.' I sit writing on a board in the midst of grass higher than my head; at a little distance an amphitheatre of ragged timber; the air full of bugs of ten

thousand nameless sorts; everywhere soldiers, wagons, tents, mules, horses, noise, smoke, mosquitoes, wood-ticks, dirty shirts, unclean, unshaven countenances, and Heaven only knows what else besides. Just imagine anything you please, which is most exactly unlike the quiet evening that you are all now enjoying at home (like good Christians as you are)."

"Among the prominent attractions in camp is that of music. . . . We have any quantity of singers. Singers who sing in good English and bad English, in French, German, Low Dutch and other dialects too numerous to mention."

"The individual, whose tearful emotions while writing to his wife I mentioned in my last [letter] is now sprawled out at full length in front of the tent, and along with half a dozen other loungers, is engaged in the pleasant occupation of looking out for and making artistic comments upon each neatly turned ankle that passes along."

"Some of the boys write every day, and one bereft young gentleman has even sent as many as two messages per diem to a lorn damsel. . . . Two letters a day! Whew! There's affection for you."

"All of the men are squalid, ragged, and filthy. . . . Two hundred and fifty of them are utterly unfitted for travel from the want of shoes; some are entirely barefooted."

"[There is a] wide-spread, universal determination to steal. Men, with the Commissary's Department full to bursting, run down pigs and chickens under the very noses of their officers, without reprimand or scarcely a notice. . . . They steal everything, from a peach to a piano, and carry articles of plunder to their tents without a word of reproof. The desire for stealing has become so intense that, for the sake of

stealing, men will take things not the slightest possible use to themselves or anybody else."

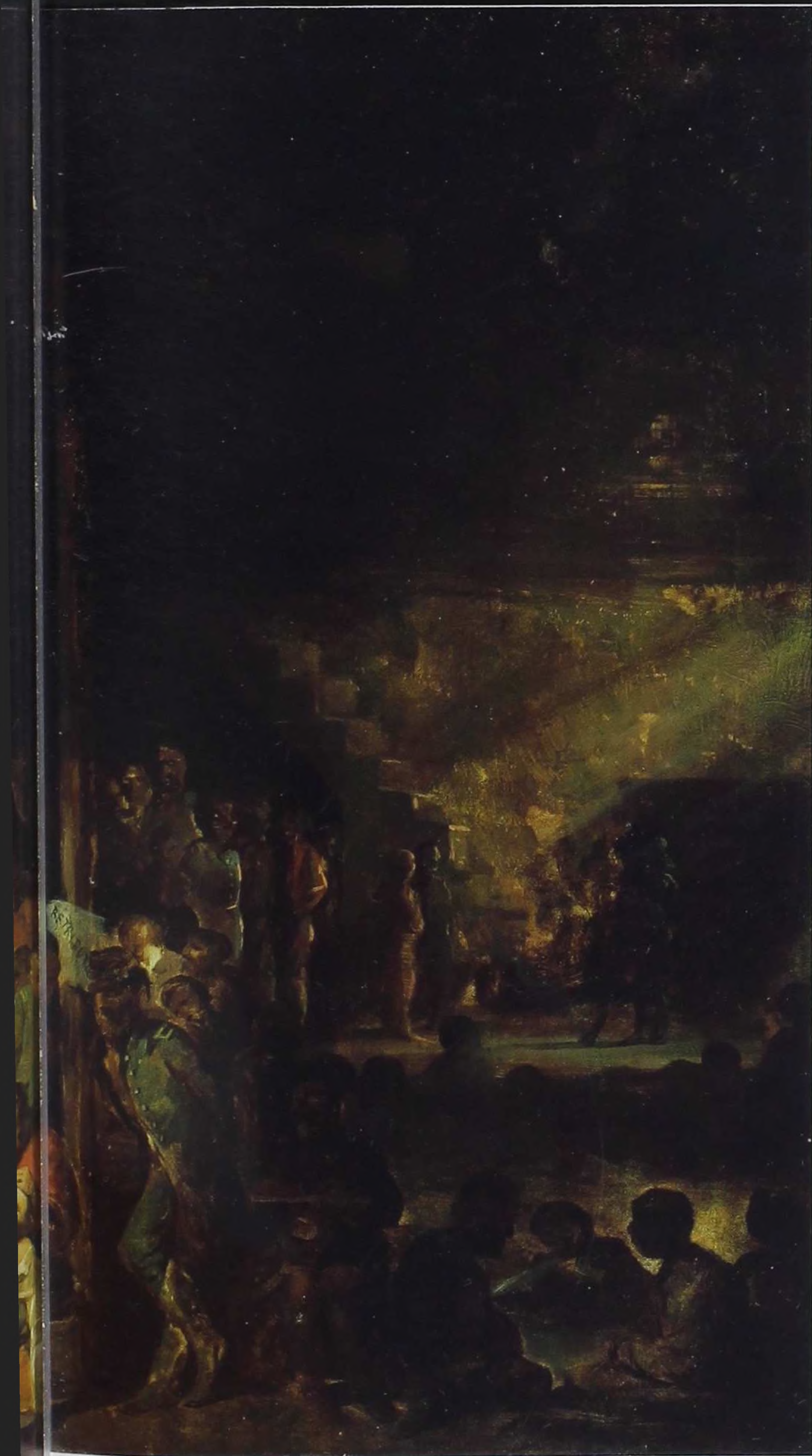
"Stealing is a disease too deeply rooted, in both armies, to be eradicated by any such simple process as an agreement between Frémont and Price. . . . The need of such a remedy can be seen everywhere here, to the barren fields and empty granaries of the country, and the ragged bodies, shoeless feet and broken-spirited expression of the people. Not merely is the evil present, but it reaches far into the future. Their grain is taken, they have none for the winter; their horses, mules and wagons are taken, they cannot prepare a crop for the coming year; and thus nothing is left them but starvation."

"With only two hours of sleep the night previous, the men were in the worst possible condition. . . . For the first few hours [of the march] a number of cheery choruses rang out through the wood and enlivened the march, but these finally grew fainter and less frequent, till midnight, when we plodded on in a silence unbroken save by here and there a savage oath as some man tumbled over a rock or into a hole, and the grinding of the artillery wheels as they passed over the rocky ledges, or the splashing of the horses as they forded some rapid stream. Minutes became hours, the weaker of the soldiers dropped in their places and refused to move an inch farther. . . . When the column halted, that the heavy cannon might be extricated from the muddy grasp of some slough, regiments of men fell to the ground as instantly as if felled by lightning, and were sound asleep before they reached the ground. . . . I saw men who would suddenly stop and stand perfectly still, and who, as we approached, were found to be fast asleep. A ton of lead seemed resting on each eyelid."

For the complete set of letters, see *Missouri in 1861: The Civil War Letters of Franc B. Wilkie Newspaper Correspondent*, edited by Michael E. Banaski (Iowa City: Camp Pope Bookshop, 2001).



Libby Prison, 1863 (oil on canvas), by David Gilmour Blythe.
Iowa troops were held captive in this Confederate prison.



MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, USA / BEQUEST OF MARTHA C. KAROLIK FOR THE M. AND M. KAROLIK COLLECTION OF AMERICAN PAINTINGS, 1815-1865 / THE BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY

It was a story as old as Cain and Abel—the cruelty of one brother to another in Civil War prison camps. The names of the camps—Macon, Cahaba, Charleston, Belle Isle, Libby, Rock Island, and worst of all, Andersonville—left indelible marks on prisoners’ souls and generated anger and bitterness for generations after the war.

Thy Brother’s Keeper

Civil War Prisons

by Timothy Walch



Libby Prison, 1863 (oil on canvas), by David Gilmour Blythe. Iowa troops were held captive in this Confederate prison.

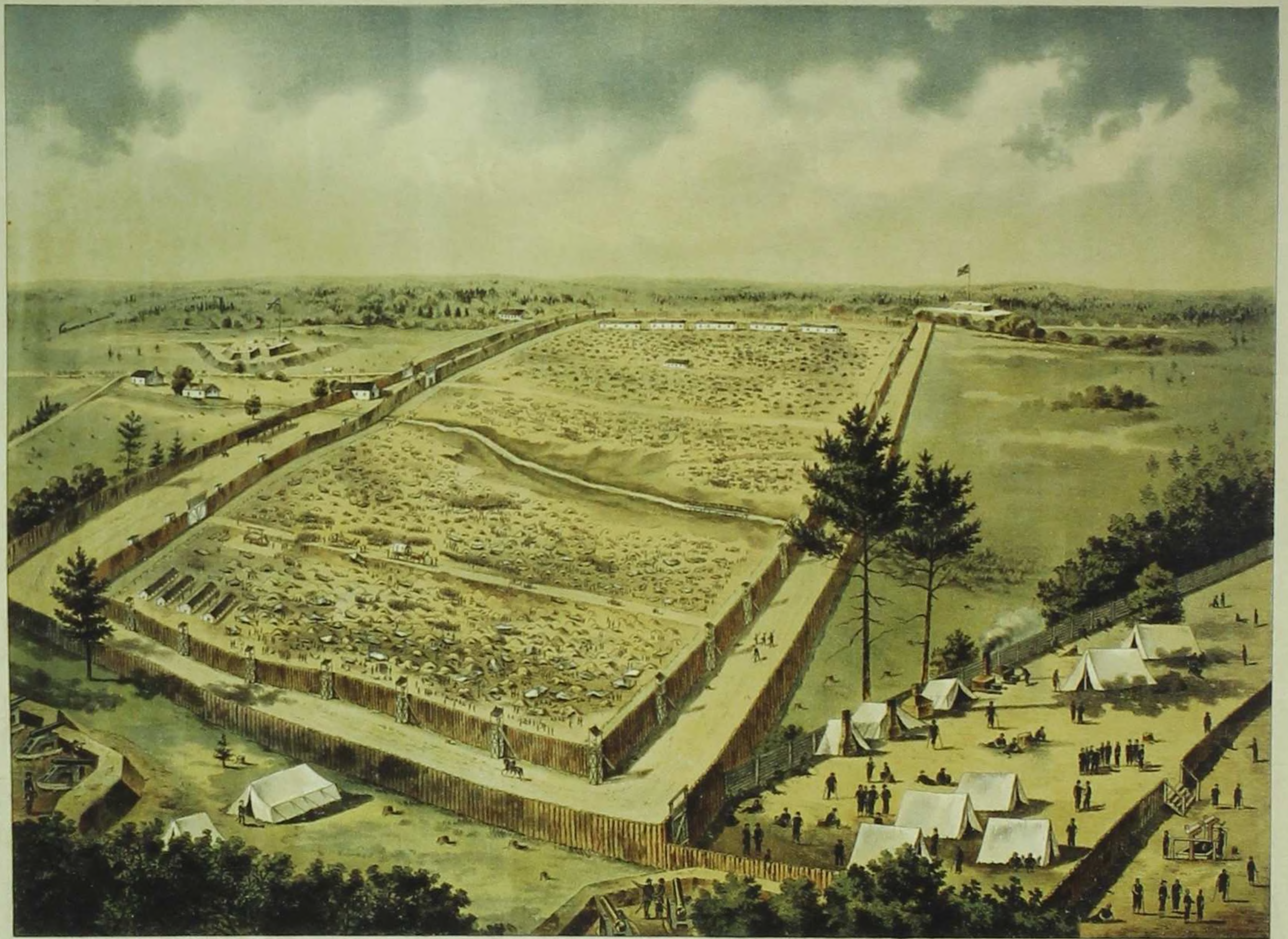
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Thy Brother's Keeper

Civil War Prisons

by Timothy Walch



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF ANDERSONVILLE PRISON FROM THE SOUTH-EAST.

1882 LITHOGRAPH, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

— Part 1 —

MacKinlay Kantor's Prison-Camp Novel Still Resonates Today

Andersonville. More than 150 years after the end of the Civil War, this word still evokes acts of brutality and inhumanity.

A camp for captured Union prisoners, Andersonville was situated about a hundred miles south of Atlanta, Georgia. Although it was in operation for little more than a year, the squalid conditions in the camp came to define the very horror of wartime captivity. It opened in February 1864 and by June, it held 26,000 Union soldiers—more than twice its intended capacity. By the time it closed in May 1865, the camp had detained over 45,000 Union prisoners, of whom 13,000 died as a result of their incarceration.

Not surprisingly, as time passed, memories of Andersonville did not abate but remained in the American consciousness for generations. Numerous memoirs of the camp were written by veterans, and these accounts of cruelty were among the many war stories told and retold at Grand Army of the Republic reunions and other gatherings.

As a young boy growing up in Webster City, Iowa, Benjamin MacKinlay Kantor heard many Civil War stories, and he later acknowledged them as inspiration for several of his novels. He wrote a number of books about war and battle, but it is *Andersonville*, published in 1955, which is generally considered his finest work.

That this Iowa native believed that *Andersonville* would be an important book is evident in how he approached the subject. He may have been inspired by the stories of old veterans, but he was unwilling to be guided by these sources alone. *Andersonville* was a work of fiction but also a manifestation of 40 years of general reading on the war and 25 years of research on the prison camp itself. Kantor was not shy about claiming that he had written “an accurate history of the Andersonville prison.”

In the manner of a scholar, Kantor had immersed himself in research on the prison camp and read dozens of memoirs, diaries, letters, and accounts of the war. His novel concludes with a bibliography of 85 sources,

most of them first-hand accounts of captivity at Andersonville. He acknowledged the assistance of dozens of librarians and historians, including William Petersen and Mildred Throne at the State Historical Society of Iowa. It was this level of diligence that gave Kantor's work greater veracity than the typical historical novel.

But there was more to the book than research—it also was something of a quest. In an essay in the *New York Times Book Review*, Kantor emphasized that writing *Andersonville* was profoundly spiritual. In particular, he vividly described a ghostly experience as he walked the prison grounds one February morning in 1953: "They had come to tell me that there must be no compromise," Kantor wrote of the soldiers who had lived and died at the camp. "I had invoked their name and thought for nearly 25 years; they were thronging at last to force me to the task." This vision of men marching towards him across the prison yard had prodded and sustained him in his years of work.

Kantor finished the book 90 years to the day after the prison was closed. "I am grateful to those many boys I heard walking toward me in the rain in that dark February 5-o'clock-in-the-morning," he wrote in the final sentence of his essay. "I hope that I have kept the pledge they seemed [to be] extracting; and that they and others will approve."

Given this hope, Kantor must have been gratified by the early reviews. The first appeared in the *New York Times* on October 27, 1955. "This is a tremendous novel on a tremendous theme," wrote Charles Poore, a regular reviewer in the *New York Times*, "for this is a story that is part of the national heritage, leading us toward the Lincoln ideal of malice toward none and charity for all." Poore was quick to note that *Andersonville* did not quite rank with Stephen Crane's *Red Badge of Courage*, but it certainly was "a magnificent companion piece for Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*."

The review in *Time* magazine on October 31 was equally enthusiastic. The anonymous reviewer noted that this was Kantor's third Civil War novel, but this one, "massively researched," was different. The book would "give Civil War fiction buffs their greatest hour since *Gone with the Wind*."

It is not clear from Kantor's papers or memoirs what he thought of having his magnum opus compared to *Gone with the Wind*. Published in 1936, Margaret Mitchell's novel was not generally considered a measure of greatness; it certainly wasn't a work of scholarship. In fact, many readers considered *Gone with the Wind* nothing more than frothy melodrama. And yet Mitchell's novel had been a best seller and the winner of the Pulitzer Prize—accolades Kantor would gladly accept for *Andersonville*.

In fact, the Book-of-the-Month Club chose Kantor's book as its main selection for November 1955. The following year it received the Pulitzer Prize for fiction.

Certainly Kantor also must have taken great satisfaction in the review by Henry Steele Commager, professor of history at Columbia University. There, on the front page of the *New York Times Book Review* on October 30, Commager wrote, "Out of the warp of history

Mr. Kantor has woven with the stuff of imagination an immense and terrible pattern, a pattern which finally emerges as a gigantic panorama of the war itself." High praise, and the next sentence must have brought a smile to Kantor's lips. "Out of fragmentary and incoherent records, Mr. Kantor has wrought the greatest of our Civil War novels."

Other reviews followed, each one just as laudatory. The *Saturday Review* considered *Andersonville* "Kantor's finest [book]. . . . Its compelling and crucial moods of tragedy, suffering and heroism . . . make it one of the most moving novels of our time." The *Atlantic Monthly* called it a novel "written with truth and power." "No one who reads it will ever forget it," said the

Christian Science Monitor. Bruce Catton, the preeminent popular historian of the Civil War, who had just won the Pulitzer for *A Stillness at Appomattox*, reviewed *Andersonville* for the *Chicago Tribune*. He referred to Kantor's book as "without question" the best Civil War novel he had ever read.

But would *Andersonville* be accepted into the canon of Civil War scholarship? Kantor had made a point of highlighting his research at the back of the book; surely he hoped that his bibliography would win him a certain measure of respect from the academic community.

Unfortunately, the two major scholarly journals of American history, the *Mississippi Valley Historical Re-*



Iowa author MacKinlay Kantor



A rare photograph of Andersonville, August 17, 1864. On a morning decades later, Kantor walked the site before dawn.

view and *American Historical Review*, did not review his book. To be fair, it is not clear if review copies were sent to these journals. It is quite possible that World Publishing never gave much thought to reviews by academic journals.

Civil War History, however, did review Kantor's book. Published at the University of Iowa, *Civil War History* commenced publication in January 1955, just as the nation was gearing up for the centennial of the Civil War. It was a different type of publication, one intended to bring together scholars, enthusiasts, and collectors in a common study of this great conflict. The journal published a wide range of articles, even an occasional poem. Most important, the new journal made a point of reviewing Civil War fiction. As a novel based on historical research, *Andersonville* was a logical candidate to receive significant attention.

And that it did in the December 1955 issue. In the opening sentence, reviewer Carl Haverlin made it emphatically clear that "*Andersonville* is a great novel," and then inferred that the book might well become the American *War and Peace*. "It is a work of real magnificence," he concluded, "and we are grateful to [Mr. Kantor] not only for a first rate achievement in fiction, but also for a cleansing of pride and prejudice long overdue."

No small praise indeed coming from an academic journal. And yet it should be noted that Haverlin was not a scholar; he was, in fact, a Civil War collector and enthusiast. Although he was a man of great achievement in the broadcast industry, he had not finished

high school and had no pretensions of scholarship. He knew what he liked and he was mightily pleased by Kantor's new book.

Andersonville sold over 220,000 copies in bookstores in its first year, plus tens of thousands through the Book-of-the-Month Club. Historians must have realized that this book, with plaudits from Commager and Catton, would dominate the public's knowledge of the Civil War for the foreseeable future. Certainly as the nation approached the centennial celebrations of the Civil War in 1961, *Andersonville* would loom large on library reading lists.

One historian—indeed a very prominent historian—could not let the book stand without his own assessment. William B. Hesseltine was a widely respected professor of history at the University of Wisconsin–Madison and the author of a scholarly history of Andersonville. He reviewed Kantor's novel in the spring 1956 issue of *Georgia Review*. Even though the quarterly had only a small circulation, Hesseltine's commentary must have reverberated within the historical community. His assessment of Kantor's work would carry weight in academia and, no doubt, influence decisions on assigning the book for college courses on the Civil War.

For Hesseltine, Kantor's research was unfortunately inadequate and *Andersonville* was little more than a rehash of the "propaganda" that had appeared after the war. Kantor's "excessive cast of conventional char-

acters," he wrote, was little more than stereotypes that might "fulfill the apparent formula for a best-selling historical novel," but it made for poor history.

What bothered Hesseltine the most was that the tragedy was not set into the larger panorama of the war itself. Kantor's "failure," he wrote, "is not alone a failure to evaluate his evidence critically, not alone his willingness to perpetuate the official propaganda and the Southern stereotypes. His failure is the failure to see the greater tragedy of which Andersonville was a lesser part." The book was too large and the canvas was too small as far as the professor was concerned.

Hesseltine acknowledged that *Andersonville* was fiction intended for a popular audience. "The novel is nothing more than a literary form," he wrote, "differing only in form from drama, the epic, or the monograph. The results of historical research may be cast in [any] of these forms, but the selection of one of them does not exempt the writer from the canons of scholarship."

Hesseltine saved the coup de grâce for the end: "Had *Andersonville* been written as a [scholarly] monograph its perversity would have been immediately apparent. Its errors and its inadequacies should not be allowed to hide behind the literary form in which it appears." He concluded with the hope that a new-found interest in the Civil War might bring forth new scholarship so that books like *Andersonville* could be forgotten.

But *Andersonville* was not forgotten. It has sold tens of thousands of copies over the past half-century. The book was most recently redesigned in 1993 in both a paperback edition and a library binding by Penguin Books in New York.

The contemporary appeal of *Andersonville* is impressive and is evident in the reviews by readers on Amazon.com and other Web sites. Of the 42 reviews recently available on Amazon, for example, 32 customers gave the book five stars—the highest possible score.

"This is one of the most remarkable books that you will ever experience," writes one customer. "I agree with most readers that *Gone with the Wind*, *The Killer Angels*, and *Cold Mountain* are five-star novels, but *Andersonville* is on another level. Thirty stars, perhaps." Other reviews are just as effusive and compare Kantor to prize-winning writers such as Cormac McCarthy. What makes these and other reviews so impressive is that they come from passionate readers today, nearly six decades after the book first appeared. It seems that

Andersonville will continue to have an impact on our popular understanding of the Civil War in general and prisoners-of-war in particular.

The appeal of *Andersonville* and other historical novels has given some historians reason to consider the impact of fiction on our understanding of the past. In a thought-provoking book published in 2001 and titled *Novel History: Historians and Novelists Confront America's Past (and Each Other)*, historian Mark C. Carnes compiled contributions by historians and by novelists such as Gore Vidal, Jane Smiley, Larry McMurtry, and William Styron.

"Historians and historical novelists do many of the same things and in much the same way," notes Carnes in his introduction. "They aspire to represent the past truthfully and yet know that their representations cannot be 'truthful,' 'objective,' or 'accurate' because logical clarity is incomparable with human affairs.

"But the differences . . . are profound," Carnes adds quickly. Although both historians and historical novelists conduct research, they look for different things and aspire to different goals. "Historians are unalterably enslaved by facts, the essence of their discipline." Novelists use facts as a starting point and seek to capture "the feel, the sensation, the aesthetics of a historical moment." Both have noble goals for their understanding of the past, but these goals are not mutually inclusive.

Granted, there is a measure of interdependence between the historian and the historical novelist. "Historians need the novelist's guidance on the workings of the emotions and imagination," Carnes remarks. "Novelists need the historian's discipline to anchor the imagination to fact. The joining of these perspectives is not accomplished in the oxymoronic historical novel, in which fiction has been infused with historical detail. In novel history, however, the fragmentary and fossilized facts of the historical record are reanimated with imaginative meaning and aesthetic truth."

And that may be the genius that is *Andersonville*. Readers continue to relate to the multitude of characters, to the humanity of the conflict, and to the tragedy of incarceration in a time of war as reflected in Kantor's work. "If you have ever lost a friend or family member in a war," wrote one customer on Amazon, "this story will be painful. It is emotionally charged (forgive the cliché) to the highest possible point." It seems clear from readers' perspective today that Iowa author MacKinlay Kantor did justice to the pledge he had made to those ghostly soldiers on that February morning so long ago. ❖



ROCK ISLAND ARSENAL MUSEUM

Guards and prisoners line up for roll call in the Northern prison camp at Rock Island. The United States Colored Troops guarded the camp along with white soldiers.

— Part 2 —

Was Rock Island the Andersonville of the North?

Not much remains of the Rock Island Barracks, one of the largest Civil War prisons in the North. Located on an island in the Mississippi River, between the Iowa town of Davenport and the Illinois town of Rock Island City, the camp once held thousands of Confederate prisoners-of-war. Today there are a few historical markers and a cemetery of some 2,000 graves.

What lives on, however, is a persistent myth of cruel and unusual treatment at Rock Island. As late as 1999, *Civil War News* published an article that castigated Rock Island as “the Andersonville of the North,” unfairly linking the two prisons as hellholes of inhumanity. Statistics bear out the fact that the mortality at Rock Island was 16 percent, far lower than at all but one Union prison—and nowhere close to the horrendous death rate at Andersonville of more than 33 percent and at any of the other Confederate prisons.

So what accounts for the myth? It all goes back to the personalities of the Union officers who administered the prison system as a whole and Rock Island in particular; a slow government response to a smallpox epidemic; the passion and bias of a local newspaper

editor with Southern sympathies; and the words of a best-selling 20th-century author.

Early in the Civil War, prisoners were exchanged by both sides on a regular basis; there was little need for long-term prison camps. But the system broke down in the spring of 1863, and both sides scrambled to establish more facilities to hold thousands of prisoners of war.

The island prison was established in July 1863 by orders of Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs. Much of Rock Island was still owned by the federal government (the rest by the Illinois town of the same name). Supplies of coal and timber were nearby, and the town was on a rail head.

Meigs ordered that “barracks for the prisoners on Rock Island be put up in the roughest and cheapest manner, mere shanties, with no fine work about them.” The result was a 12-acre complex that comprised 84 barracks surrounded by a 12-foot wooden fence with a catwalk for guard patrols. The prison was still not finished when Confederate prisoners began arriving in early December. By the end of the month there were nearly 6,000.

Conditions were primitive at best. Many of the prisoners arrived at Rock Island malnourished and threadbare, but the commissary general of prisons, Colonel William Hoffman, was not inclined to provide anything more than the minimum in provisions. By the end of February, pneumonia, diarrhea, and smallpox had claimed nearly 700 lives, those of guards as well as prisoners. Yet in spite of the crisis, there was no effort to stanch the influx of new inmates.

But the Union was not indifferent to the fate of the prisoners. In February 1864, Assistant Surgeon General A. M. Clark investigated camp conditions, quarantined those infected, and vaccinated those still healthy. A hospital was constructed in April to care for those with chronic and infectious diseases. By July the crisis had passed and a measure of normality emerged. Still, the number of prisoners increased to 8,600, close to the capacity of 10,000.

In the crowded camp, prisoners found various ways to fill their long days. There was a library with books and tracts, and religious services were held regularly. Some prisoners made trinkets from river mussel shells to trade for soap, tobacco, and other necessities. A select number worked for ten cents a day on camp improvements. Still others plotted and schemed to escape, though only 41 prisoners succeeded.

Another way for prisoners to "escape" was to forsake their allegiance to the Confederacy, pledge allegiance to the United States, and enlist in the Union army. Of an estimated 150,000 prisoners in all Union prisons, fewer than 10,000 chose this option. It is interesting to note that about 3,000 of the men who did enlist had been incarcerated at Rock Island.

Rock Island Barracks was controversial almost from the arrival of the first prisoners. Although the barracks were on federal land and isolated, that did not mean that people were not curious about what was going on behind those 12-foot walls. The situation was rife with rumors, particularly during the horrible winter of 1863/1864 as hundreds of prisoners took ill and died. Adding to the problem was the reclusive prison superintendent, Colonel Adolphus J. Johnson. Johnson was not one to communicate with the civilian population, and that made matters worse.

Into this information void stepped J. B. Danforth Jr., the editor of the *Rock Island Argus*, a Democratic newspaper. Danforth was no friend of the military in general or Colonel Johnson in particular. As news of the high mortality rate reached the general population in January, Danforth called for improvements in the

prison medical facilities. When the epidemic passed, he turned to the general treatment of prisoners. By June, after prisoner rations had been reduced across the nation, he was publishing outrageous and undocumented stories of the "deliberate" murder of prisoners at Rock Island. And yet through all of this, Colonel Johnson held his tongue; he had nothing to say to this unpatriotic newspaper editor.

On November 21, 1864, Danforth published an extensive account of life on Rock Island largely based on the testimony of former prisoners who had forsaken their allegiance to the Confederacy and pledged to serve in the Union army—but were still in the Rock Island barracks months later. No longer prisoners, they were still being held. It is no surprise that many of them lashed out at Johnson and their former captors.

Danforth had a field day with this new material. He wrote that these former prisoners were being systematically starved to death, given little more than a piece of bread and a sliver of meat each day. He further speculated that disease was rampant on the island, so much so that scurvy patients had to be isolated. "It is a shame that in this enlightened age of the world," he lamented, "our own countrymen should be confined in a pen, fed on such scanty and improper food and reduced down almost to starvation point until disease and death ensue."

It was a horrible indictment, but Danforth had more to say. He held the Lincoln administration in general and Johnson in particular accountable. "If done by order of the administration," he wrote, "it is a shame and a disgrace to the party in power. If done by the officers in charge of the prison, it is a shame and a disgrace to them. There is no excuse for this deliberate torture of human beings and the hand that does it or the heart that prompts it is hardened against the common instincts of humanity." With the sweep of a pen, J. B. Danforth condemned all who had anything to do with the Rock Island prison as little more than war criminals.

That was it for Adolphus Johnson. He had suffered through rumors and indignities in the *Argus* for months withholding comment, but this story was outrageous and Johnson was furious. Against his better judgment, he responded in defense of his president and his own tenure as the sole superintendent at the prison. He lashed out that "it would be difficult to imagine it possible to put together a greater amount of error [or] misrepresentation."

Superintendent Johnson then went on to defend

the policies of the Lincoln administration and the commissary general of prisons, as well as himself, by noting the equity in the distribution of rations to the prisoners and the guards on Rock Island. He articulated the funds spent on numerous sundries for the prisoners and the liberal policy of allowing friends and relatives to send clothing and other personal items to those in prison. "You seem to be in doubt as to who belongs the treatment of prisoners at this depot," he wrote sarcastically. "I will enlighten you. The treatment of them here and all issues [related] to them, are made in strict accordance with orders from the War Department."

This was more than an adequate defense, but Johnson seemed to be caught up in a moment of both patriotism and pique. Before ending his letter, he slipped into a diatribe against Danforth and his ilk. "If discretionary power rested with me," wrote Johnson, "I would arrest and confine the known sympathizers with the rebellion, residing in Rock Island and Davenport, and quite a large number would be quickly added to our list of prisoners, and those communities would be relieved from a more dangerous element than open rebels in arms."

In turn, Danforth portrayed himself as something of a crusader for a free press. "We think we know our duty as a public journalist," he wrote, "and we propose to do it without intimidation from anybody. The acts of Mr. Lincoln and of all public officers, Col. Johnson included, are proper subjects for fair and impartial criticism and we propose to allude to them whenever the public good requires it." After slinging mud at those responsible for the prison, Danforth wrapped himself in the Constitution and moved on to other issues.

After the war ended in April, the prison closed in July and the army bought the property for an ordnance arsenal. The barracks were torn down and all that remained of the legacy of incarceration were the graves of 1,960 prisoners and 171 guards, all victims of disease. His reputation in tatters, Adolphus Johnson retired from the military in 1866, worked in Chicago, and eventually returned to his home state of New Jersey, where he became a county jail warden. He died a bitter man in 1893.

J. B. Danforth continued as editor of the *Argus* for three more years; as late as 1867, a year after Johnson had retired and left the area, the irascible editor published a fresh attack on the prison's legacy. But Danforth seemed to be losing interest in his paper and sold it in 1869. He returned as a part owner in 1872, but found that the editorial philosophy had changed. He

revived an opposition paper and served as its editor until 1891, when he left Rock Island for good. He died in 1896 in San Jose, California.

The contretemps over the conditions at the Rock Island prison might have faded away after the passing of Johnson and Danforth. Certainly the charges were all based on innuendo and rumor. So what accounted for the continuing myth that Rock Island was the "Andersonville of the North"? It most likely comes from an Atlanta housewife named Margaret Mitchell, who skyrocketed to fame as the author of the blockbuster *Gone with the Wind*. A third of the way through the novel, Rhett Butler learns that Ashley Wilkes had not been killed in battle but was imprisoned on Rock Island.

"In their first joy," novelist Mitchell wrote of Melanie Wilkes and Scarlett O'Hara, "they could think of nothing except that he was alive. But, when calmness began to return, they looked at one another and said 'Rock Island!' in the same voice they would have said 'In Hell!' For even as Andersonville was a name that stank in the North, so was Rock Island one to bring terror to the heart of any Southerner who had relatives there."

Mitchell repeated many of the rumors that had swirled around Rock Island during the war. "At no place were the conditions worse than at Rock Island," she wrote. "Food was scanty, one blanket did for three men, and the ravages of small pox, pneumonia and typhoid gave the place the name of a pesthouse. Three-fourths of all the men sent there never came out alive."

It was powerful prose but poor history.

Although Mitchell's material on Rock Island filled about two pages in a novel of over a thousand, her attack became conventional wisdom as the public consumed *Gone with the Wind*, first as a novel and then as a film.

"In truth, [Rock Island] was not a pleasant place," writes Benton McAdams, an expert on the prison camp. But it was not Andersonville: "Most of the suffering was not the result of policy and inhumanity but rather of accident, incompetence, and the inability to cope with a war larger than any the nation had ever before endured. . . . The parallel between Andersonville and Rock Island"—what both J. B. Danforth and Adolphus Johnson would have to agree on—"is that men died."

Beyond that, Margaret Mitchell was wrong. ❖



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Libby Prison, in Richmond, Virginia, August 1863. The huge structure had served as a warehouse until the Confederacy used it to hold Union troops, including Iowans.

— Part 3 —

Iowans Imprisoned

Thousands of Iowans suffered in Southern prison camps, and few of them forgave their captors or forgot their experiences. Their written records run the gamut from unpublished diaries created surreptitiously during incarceration to published memoirs written long after the end of the war. These prisoners of war were determined that their sacrifices be remembered.

Iowans captured at the Battle of Shiloh, on April 6 and 7, 1862, wrote some of the earliest prison accounts. For example, Joseph B. Dorr, quartermaster of the 12th Iowa, was asked by his superiors for a report of his incarceration shortly after his parole and return at the end of May. Dorr had kept a daily diary in prison that he used for his report and for a brief account in the *Missouri Republican* on June 18, 1862.

There is little in Dorr's diary that is dramatic. Nearly two weeks after Shiloh, Dorr and his fellow prisoners were, frankly, bored. "Nothing of interest to enliven our confinement," Dorr recorded, "so we make our own amusement. We play ball, pitch quoits, read, sing and walk." Another day he noted, "I have varied

my amusements for a few days by making a couple of flower vases for little four year old Jennie at home." The most passionate commentary focused on the paucity of rations and rumors of parole.

John W. Gift was captured on April 6 and then carted from one prison camp to another over the next several weeks—from Memphis to Jackson to Mobile to Macon to Libby Prison in Richmond. Released after several months in prison, he returned home to Delphi, Iowa, where a banquet was held in his honor. Like Dorr, Gift found captivity to be more frustrating than dangerous. The putrid food, the frequent transfers, the boredom are all evident in his remarks. Not surprisingly, he documented the regular efforts by Union soldiers to escape. He also mentioned an incident that would become more common as the war progressed and incarcerations lasted longer. "Some of our officers had overheard the [Confederate] Corporal telling the guard that he would give him five dollars for the first Yankee he shot," said Gift. "I don't know whether the guard got his money or not."

Edward M. Van Duzee reported a collective act



Men of the 19th Iowa Infantry in New Orleans on July 24, 1864, shortly after their release from the stockade at Camp Ford near Tyler, Texas. The prison stockade covered 16 acres. The largest Confederate prison camp west of the Mississippi, it had one of the lowest mortality rates of any Civil War prison.

of resistance in an Alabama prison. On July 4, prisoners celebrated Independence Day, complete with speeches critical of the Confederacy. When ordered to end the insubordination, the prisoners rushed up to the front and and shouted three cheers for the Red, White and Blue. "Thus ended our Fourth of July celebration," wrote Van Duzee, "in a rebel prison, in the heart of the Confederacy, in 1862."

On May 18 Second Lieutenant Luther W. Jackson wrote in his diary, "Six weeks ago to-day I was taken prisoner. . . . I hoped to have been exchanged before this, but we are still here . . . Our Government don't do right to leave us here to linger out a miserable existence when they have so many prisoners to exchange us for . . . I am mad to-day . . . I want to get out!" Jackson's last entry is on June 1. He died of unspecified causes at Macon nine days later.

F. F. Kiner was also captured at Shiloh. In 1863 he published *One Year's Soldiering* documenting the treatment of more than 200 officers and soldiers of the 14th Iowa during 18 months of confinement. In the first few weeks the food was "reasonably good," and the numerous opportunities for recreation were "very beneficial to our health, and gave relief to our minds by drawing them away from our condition as prisoners, and from the anxious hearts at home."

As the number of captives increased, "things became worse and worse with us," Kiner wrote. "The nights were always cold, and having no covering, the poor soldiers began to get sicker, and diseases got more fatal." "We furnished nurses of our own men to wait upon the sick."

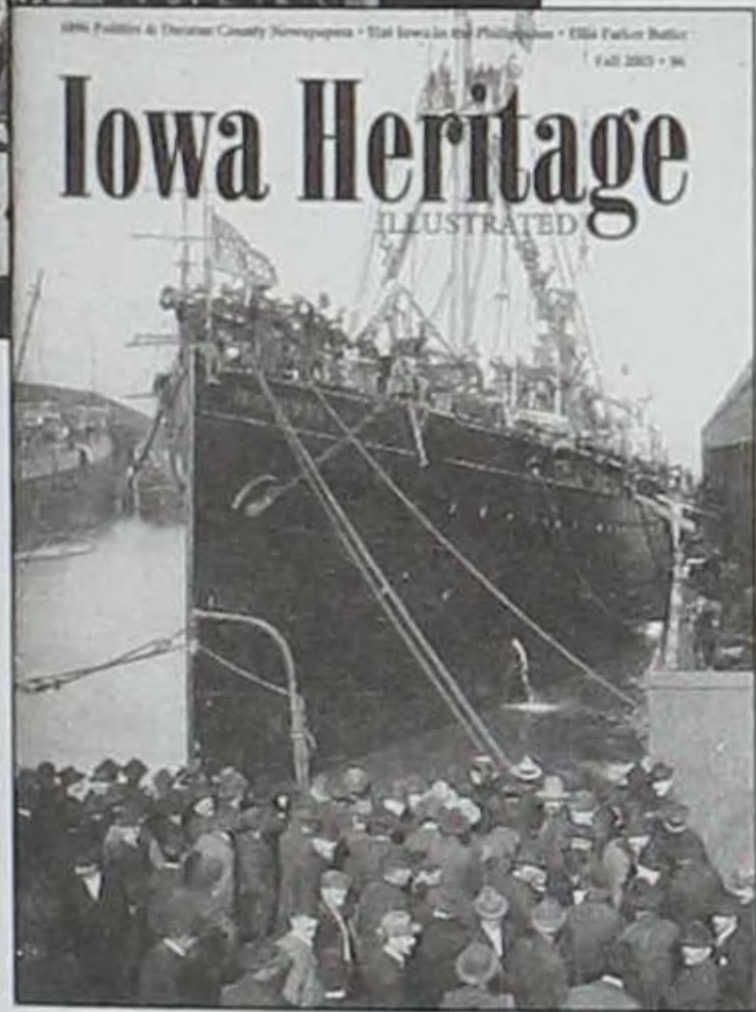
The food was abysmal. "The meat was thrown out upon the ground and literally crawled with maggots. . . . [They] were of the largest kind; perhaps I should call them skippers, for they could skip about and jump several feet at one leap; from their size I judged the climate agreed with them." Weevils and maggots floated

in the soup "like clever sized grains of rice." He added, "Thus have we spent our time in prison, living upon what any decent man or woman in the North would feel ashamed to offer to a dog."

Of his captors, Kiner gave them both credit and criticism. "Some of the men who guarded us were kind hearted and showed much sympathy, often pleased with having an opportunity to talk with us." He was surprised by the guards' general lack of education and the widespread illiteracy, and he had great contempt for the inhumane treatment for even the smallest offense. After documenting brutal torture and punishment, Kiner wrote: "When I have stood and seen them thus abuse our men day after day, and hour after hour, . . . it has made my blood boil for revenge."

In the years after the war, as Civil War veterans petitioned Congress for pensions, men who had been captive wrote and published memoirs in an effort to win compensation for their extraordinary service. The impetus to compile and record Southern atrocities continued well into the 20th century. As former prisoners reached the ends of their lives, they acquired a renewed interest and determination to record their experiences for future generations. Periodic regimental reunions also encouraged veterans to put pen to paper.

Erastus B. Soper was a veteran of the 12th Iowa Infantry. Beginning in 1885, he devoted nearly 20 years to gathering the testimonials of his comrades for a history of Company D. One such testimonial was by Allen M. Blanchard, who recounted for Soper, "The wounded dreaded to be sent to a rebel hospital where it was said that amputation followed the slightest pretext, so as to decimate the Union ranks. My wound had not bled much and was now well stanchd, but my shattered coat sleeve gave me away most hopelessly. I found a fellow prisoner about my size who had



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not received a scratch; I confided my fears to him and asked him to trade dress coats with me, so that perhaps I might escape the scrutiny of the rebel surgeon." Blanchard survived prison without losing a limb.

Byron Zuver, a private in Company D who was captured at Shiloh, wrote, "We were constantly reviled and taunted with all manner of vile epithets from these so called chivalrous sons of the South; but, owing to our peculiar situation, we had little to say." Zuver also described what might well be considered a war crime—the unjustified shooting of prisoners of war. "Within fifteen minutes from the time the prisoners [arrived]," he wrote, "two men, of whom one was deaf, were shot for putting their heads out of the windows, and that too before the rules governing the conduct of prisoners had been communicated to them. The prison rules were, however, posted in the building and on the [principle] that ignorance of the law excuses no one, the poor devils were shot."

There is little to distinguish these later memoirs from the ones written in the 1860s. All of these stories reinforce each other by revisiting the same themes and topics: hunger, boredom, deprivation, sickness, uncertainty, and death, among others.

On May 30, 1910, John H. Stibbs stood before a sizable crowd in Iowa City. A brevet brigadier general of the 12th Iowa Infantry, he had traveled from Chicago to be a featured speaker at the city's Decoration Day activities. And there was no better choice to speak on the matter of patriotism and sacrifice. A former prisoner of war himself, Stibbs was the sole surviving member of the court that had prosecuted Henry Wirz, the notorious commandant of the Confederate prison at Andersonville. Who better than Stibbs to summarize what had been learned at Andersonville about the meaning of sacrifice?

Stibbs was introduced by Joseph W. Rich, the foremost authority on Iowa's service in the Civil War. Rich's presence on the dais added an air of formality and gravity to the general's remarks. Given the venue, Stibbs would provide the first draft of history on Civil War imprisonment in general and Andersonville in particular. Indeed, he provided a full and complete accounting of the history and inhumane treatment of that camp.

But it was the end of the long speech that was most important, indeed, most powerful. Stibbs closed his litany of atrocities with a salute to the average soldier, both North and South, and distinguished the service of these fighting men from the "bushwhackers

and home guards that presumed to offer insult and abuse to our captivity." Stibbs wanted to be sure that the bitterness that had existed between Johnny Reb and Billy Yank was a thing of the past, not the future. "I would be sorry to know that in this address," he concluded, "that I have uttered a word that will serve to mar in the least the spirit of harmony existing between these old veterans."

There would be other Civil War memoirs published over the next half century, of course, and many of them offered additional testimony of the harsh conditions in those prisoner-of-war camps. And as the veterans aged, they continued to tell stories of their time in battle and their time in prison. Such stories reinforced the message that came from John Stibbs on Decoration Day in 1910: Remember those Iowans who gave their last full measure for this nation, whether on the field at Shiloh or in the stockade at Andersonville. Never forget the meaning of sacrifice. ❖

Timothy Walch, the author of this three-part article on prisons, was director of the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum for 18 years. He now volunteers at the State Historical Society of Iowa and serves on the Iowa State Historical Records Advisory Board.

NOTE ON SOURCES FOR THREE-PART ARTICLE

Part 1: MacKinlay Kantor, "Remarks on the Writing of Andersonville," in *Papers of MacKinlay Kantor*, University of Iowa Libraries, Special Collections, Iowa City; Mark C. Carnes, ed., *Novel History: Historians and Novelists Confront America's Past (and Each Other)*; and MacKinlay Kantor, "The Author Tells How He Relived the Tragedy," *New York Times Book Review* (Oct. 30, 1955). Reviews quoted are from the following: "Books: The Stockade," *Time* (Oct. 31, 1955); Henry Steele Commager, "A Novel of an Infamous Prison in the Civil War," *New York Times Book Review* (Oct. 30, 1955); Carl Haverlin, "Review of Andersonville," *Civil War History* 1 (Dec. 1955); William B. Hesseltine, "Andersonville Revisited," *Georgia Review* 10 (Spring 1956); and Charles Poore, "Books of the Times," *New York Times* (Oct. 27, 1955).

Part 2: Otis Bryan England, *A Short History of the Rock Island Prison Barracks* (rev. ed., Rock Island: Historical Office of the US Army Armament, Munitions, and Chemical Command, 1985); Benton McAdams, *Rebels at Rock Island: The Story of a Civil War Prison*; and James M. Gillespie, *Andersonvilles of the North: The Myths and Realities of Northern Treatment of Civil War Confederate Prisoners*.

Part 3: Quotations from Allen Blanchard, Edward M. Van Duzee, Joseph B. Dorr, John W. Gift, Luther W. Jackson, and Byron Zuver appear in *A Perfect Picture of Hell: Eyewitness Accounts by Civil War Prisoners from the 12th Iowa*, edited by Ted Genoways and Hugh H. Genoways. F. F. Kiner quotations are from his *One Year's Soldiering*, published in 1863. See also Neil Dahlstrom, "Rock Island Prison, 1863–1865," 4 (Winter 2001). State Historical Society of Iowa journals have published numerous transcripts and articles by and about prisoners (especially *Iowa Journal of History and Annals of Iowa*). Even more accounts (diaries, letters, memoirs, newspapers) reside in our Libraries and Special Collections.

Who Survived? Who Deserted?

by Bill Silag

Why did some Union prisoners-of-war die, and others survive? In their book *Heroes & Cowards: The Social Face of War*, Dora L. Costa and Matthew E. Kahn tackle this question.

According to Costa and Kahn, the most important factor in a POW's chances for survival was the size of the Confederate prison in which he was held; the bigger the prison, the dimmer his chances for getting out alive. But survival rates were also strongly influenced by the presence or absence of fellow soldiers from the same company. "Having friends helped men survive," Costa and Kahn conclude. "Men's ability to obtain food and shelter and to avoid disease also depended on their social networks, both the number of men in the network and the strength of their ties to each other." Prisoners formed "families" with men of their own company or regiment. "A group member could benefit from the extra food or clothing that his friends could provide, from the care his friends provided when he was sick, from moral support, and from protection against other prisoners." POWs imprisoned without comrades in the larger camps fared worst of all.

Costa and Kahn come to these conclusions based on their use of the massive Union Army life cycle data set of more than 40,000 Union soldiers. The data for these soldiers includes basic personal information such as date and place of birth, ethnicity, and occupation, as well as information regarding the 303 companies in which they served. (Fifteen of the 303 companies were from Iowa.)

Union Army companies were recruited locally, and thus each company had a geographical identity. The authors view each company (roughly 100 men) as an individual social order with specific characteristics, such as age distributions, ethnic concentrations, length of time in combat, and the political notions of a company's place of origin. In all, the source details 67 individual- and community-level variables.

The statistics presented in *Heroes & Cowards* show that the strongest predictors of group loyalty within a company were common demographic characteristics (such as age and ethnicity and shared political notions back home). Ideology, morale, and leadership were

certainly among the factors determining which soldiers ran and which stood their ground, but Costa and Kahn found that no characteristic proved as important a determinant of loyalty than a tightly knit company of men from a particular locale with a shared ethnic or occupational identity.

Logically enough, the companies with the highest mortality rates were also those more homogeneous demographically. In the authors' view, companies in which the men were more alike one another were more likely to fight to the finish for each other. Loyalty and courage were thus two sides of the same coin.

The remarkable Union Army data set includes information from U.S. population censuses (1850 to 1910) and federal health and pension records, permitting Costa and Kahn to follow the life trajectories of the individual soldiers in their sample. They know if and when a soldier deserted or went absent without leave; when and where he mustered out; where he settled after the war and what he did for a living; and when and where he died. The authors found that deserters originating from smaller communities—and particularly those more homogeneous—were more likely to head west for a new a start in life rather than return home. Deserters from larger cities would have found it easier to slip back into civilian life undetected.

Although Costa and Kahn, both professors of economics, take a less conventional approach to Civil War history, their book delves into "tests of adversity on the battlefield, on long marches and in the POW camps where so many soldiers died." The "common thread," they explain, is "how men interacted with their comrades, and how these interactions affected their decisions and their outcomes." ❖

Bill Silag, a former editor of The Palimpsest, is writing a biography of Iowa novelist Ruth Suckow.

Heroes & Cowards: The Social Face of War was published by Princeton University Press in 2008. The Union Army life cycle data now includes socioeconomic and biomedical data on 6,000 African American men in the Union Army. The Union Army data Web site tells more about this rich source of information. Visit www.uadata.org.

Grenville Dodge

Railroad Man and Spymaster

by Timothy Walch

Those who came to know Grenville Mellen Dodge saw him as a man with a “good deal of executive force, a man that, when he went into anything, went in with his whole soul.” It was this quality that came to the attention of Ulysses S. Grant. The two men established a partnership that lasted through the Civil War and for many years thereafter.

Dodge first came to public attention as a railroad man. Following his graduation from Norwich University in Vermont in 1850 with an engineering degree, he worked on a number of railroad projects, starting with the Illinois Central Railroad. Intelligent and ambitious, Dodge soon partnered with Peter Dey in planning the Mississippi and Missouri Rail Road from Davenport to Council Bluffs.

During the Civil War Dodge drew upon his railroad know-how. One of his primary assignments was to build and maintain the rails needed to supply the Union Army in the western theater of operations. Marshalling his considerable managerial and engineering skills, Dodge reopened numerous railroad lines, repaired bridges, added hundreds of miles of new track, and protected the lines from Confederate guerillas.

With only limited troops, Dodge built a defense on information and intelligence gathering. Military intelligence had been a staple of warfare since the times of the ancient Greeks, but he took these operations to new levels. Foremost, he recruited Southerners loyal to the Union to infiltrate Confederate lines. In fact,

he organized the 1st Tennessee Cavalry, the 1st Alabama Colored Infantry, and the 1st Alabama Cavalry as Unionist units to act as scouts and raiders. The intelligence gathered by these spies was vital in protecting Grant’s troops from rear-guard action.

The size and sophistication of Dodge’s network were unprecedented. For the Vicksburg campaign alone, Dodge had over a hundred agents who operated across the Confederacy as far east as Virginia and deep into Georgia and Alabama. Dodge gave his men code names and communicated with them by messengers using ciphers. He trained them to closely observe Confederate operations and carefully estimate troop levels and resources.

Dodge ran his operation from a war room where the walls were lined with maps. As the maps were updated, the incoming reports were destroyed. He quickly became known for his determination to control all intelligence information. Once, when ordered by a superior general to reveal the names of the agents, Dodge went directly to Grant, who countered the order.

In December 1864, Grant appointed Dodge to command the Department of Missouri with the assignment of quelling a restless Indian population on the Great Plains. Here again, Dodge’s ability to gather intelligence about his enemy gave him the upper hand. The Indians attributed supernatural powers to the general for his ability to anticipate their actions. To these Native Americans, Dodge was known as “Long Eyes.”

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



In 1866 Dodge ran successfully for Congress, but he served only a single term. For the rest of his working life, he devoted himself to railroad ventures in the United States. He returned briefly to public service after the Spanish-American War when President William McKinley asked him to chair a commission on the performance of the War Department. Not surprisingly, the commission recommended a permanent intelligence division to support the army general staff. It can be said, therefore, that Grenville Mellen Dodge remained a spymaster, as well as a railroad man, to the end of his career.

—by Timothy Walch

NOTE ON SOURCES

Archival materials on Grenville Mellen Dodge can be found in several repositories, including the State Historical Society of Iowa in Iowa City and Des Moines as well as the Western History Collection of the Denver Public Library. The best biography of Dodge remains Stanley P. Hirshson, *Grenville M. Dodge: Soldier, Politician, Railroad Pioneer* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967).

This vampyre, Nostalgia

It was a "monster," wrote a reporter, "that wanders listlessly up and down our camps," causing men to "droop and die. . . . It is languor, debility, low fever, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, death, and yet, through all, it is only that sad thing they call Nostalgia."

As early as the 1750s, nostalgia was a medical diagnosis in Europe and a subject of discourse among doctors. In the United States, the terms nostalgia and homesickness filtered into medical parlance by the Mexican War and became increasingly familiar as the Civil War wrenched men from the familiarity of family and home.

Unlike today, when nostalgia is defined as a sentimental, wistful, and too rosy remembrance of one's own past, nostalgia was "a physical illness that could suck the life out of a soldier," a notion that "had been slowly emerging in American culture during the antebellum period," according to historian Susan Matt. "It became far more widespread during the Civil War as doctors and laypeople north and south came to see acute homesickness not just as an emotional condition, but as a physiological one as well."

The Manual of Instructions for Military Surgeons on the Examination of Recruits and Discharge of Soldiers, published in 1864, listed the symptoms: "appetite fails . . . excretions are impaired . . . sleep is disturbed . . . emaciation comes on . . . stupor and delirium."

After the war, the government's official *Medical and Surgical His-*

tory of the War of the Rebellion tallied 5,000 cases and nearly 60 deaths attributed to nostalgia. Iowa soldier Cyrus Boyd wrote, "More men die of homesickness than all other diseases—and when a man gives up and lies down he is a goner." Boyd exaggerated. There were far more lethal diseases, but the idea that soldiers died of homesickness was commonplace.

"The poor fellow died of Nostalgia (homesickness), raving to the last breath about wife and children," one army doctor reported. "Deaths from this cause are very frequent in the army."

Historian Judith Andersen says, "This condition was thought to set in when soldiers were thrown into the tumult of war: viewing combat and experiencing the shockingly different environment of war (marching, illness, poor living conditions). It was noted that nostalgia, in severe cases, could lead to death because of the recruit's absolute hopelessness and that this was more likely to happen with young recruits."

How, then, should nostalgia and homesickness be treated? Some said to fill the day and night with structure and activity. Play rousing music to lift the spirits. Boyd advised his comrades to "keep the mind occupied with something new and keep going all the time except when asleep." But advice differed on whether connections with home comforted the morose soldier or actually worsened his condition. Did foods "that tasted like home," letters from family, local newspapers, even church services in camp

soothe the soldier, or exacerbate his longing? It was said that, "Union bands sometimes were forbidden to play 'Home, Sweet Home' or other songs that might render soldiers melancholic." Union Major General Benjamin Butler wrote to his wife: "Don't write me to come home any more. You have made me so homesick now I am almost unfit to duty."

Many army doctors and officers considered symptoms of homesickness a sham, signs of indolence, cowardice, and weak character. "Homesick" men should not be mollicoddled, but shamed and ridiculed.

But women who worked in army hospitals thought differently. They did not deny the feelings of their patients suffering from "soldier's heart." Nor did a Chicago news correspondent who wrote: "Who shall dare to say that the boy who 'lays down and dies,' a-hungered and starving for home, does not fall as well and truly for his country's sake as if a rebel bullet had found his heart out? Against it the Surgeon combats in vain, for 'who can minister to a mind diseased?'"

—by Ginalie Swaim

NOTE ON SOURCES

Major sources are Judith Andersen, "'Haunted Minds': The Impact of Combat Exposure on the Mental and Physical Health of Civil War Veterans," in *Years of Change and Suffering*, ed. James M. Schmidt and Guy R. Hasegawa; and Susan J. Matt, *Homesickness: An American History*.



F. B. GOODRICH, THE TRIBUTE BOOK, 1865

i seen some hard times as well as you

When Jesse Wilkerson joined the 13th Iowa Infantry, Company C, he left behind his wife, Sarahett, to run their farm near Hamburg, in southwest Iowa. The couple had two children, Maryett and Hatty, and another on the way. The letters between wife and husband reveal a gradual shift in decision making regarding the farm, a change in dynamics experienced by many farm couples during the war. As Sarahett waits for Jesse's letters, which are often lost or delayed, she wonders if he even knows that a new baby has arrived.

november 24th 1864 Iowa

Dear Sarahett

I wonce more take my pen in my hand to write you a few lines to you and I hope that they my find you all well . . . you must manige the thing the [best] that you can you had better hire hands and git the corn gethered out before it wasted and the wheat threasht the oats you had better sell rite away before they git wasted you had better not sell any of the wheat for you my need it before I git back fore war is very uncetin . . . I think that you had better sell yur horse fore he is not safte for you to handle and two horses is enouf fore you to bother with you must be carful and not make your self sick. I wish that freeman would stay their this winter . . . you had better not sell any more corn then you can help for

it will bring a good deal more in the spring if you need money sel some of the cattle I much rathe staid at home with my famley then wet to war but it was my lot to go & I will trust in providence that I may git back . . .

Jesse S Wilkerson

November 29th 1864

Dear Sarahett..I will send you my likenss to day for it may be along time before you see me again for ware is uncertin you know if the year pases off as slow as the few weeks has bin to me since I left home you may look to see me gray hedid do not think but I often think of the Dear ones at home Maryett & hatty . . . their vishon is before me all of the time at night when I lay down to sleap I think of them in the morning . . . you must take good care of them & tell them to bee good girles untill I come back you must take good care of your self and not make your self sick . . .

Jan 8th 1865

Dear Jesse . . . I hant got much news to write only that you have got a yong air to our house it is a girl and the prittist one that you ever seen for a yong babe i wish you could see it the other two is well and thinks the

world of the baby . . . I would give all the money I ever seen or ever xpect to see if you could come home a gain . . . write and tell me whether you want your oxen sold or not freeman thinks that I had better sell them in the spring their is some one here most ever day to by cattle but i wont sell them till you want them sold . . . Freemon is going a way and i dont no how i can git along with the things i dont no [who] i can git to haul my wood for me the boys asks big wagis and i cant aford to pay so much for so little . . . I want you to send me a name for the baby. i want to name her after you if you will let me i think that Jessie is a girls name . . . Sarahett Wilkerson

Jan 15th 1865

Dear Jesse . . . I wrote to you last week and told you that you had a nother girl at home she is two weeks old yesturday I wish that you could see her she is a pritty baby the pritiest one that you I ever had Maryett & Hattie wants their paw to come home they look for you ever day and cry because you dont come . . . I read all the news that I can git So I can find out where Sherman army is the news is now that peace is a going to be maid now I hope it is so that you will come home a gain but I never expect to see you a gain you dont now how me and the childern miss you . . . I hant got the wheat thrashed yet the machene wont come to trash it wont come I dont no what to do with it . . .

January 21th 1865

. . . [The baby] is for weeks old yesturday I went to mothers yesturday it is bin first time i was out sence she was born the folks was all well I have got the wheat and oats thrashed at last their is a bout 42 bushel of wheat . . . I got one of holands little girls to live with me I dont want to leav the childern with the baby a lone while i am out a milken the cows and doing the chores I fraid something might happen to the childern . . .

January the 31 1865

Dear Jesse . . . I wrote you a letter yesturday and I got yourn to day and you said you had not heard from home yet . . . you have got a babe here it is a girl i expect you would rather it bin a boy but they cant draft a girl and take her a way from me . . . I want send you the babys likeness so you can see how she looks when she was little you may never see her . . . feel bad you was took a way from home so quick from your family and home you dont no how i feel a bout it I am sory to hear that you dont git enought to eat down there . . . I paid Ben what you owed him and paid freemond what you owed him . . . it is a bed time it is a bout twelve oclock I have the sore eyes and cant see to write much I dont expect you can read it so i will come to a close . . .

March the 5th 1865

Dear husband . . . well I rented the place . . . to John Daily and his brother . . . I paid your taxes it was eighty nine dollars . . . they say that the taxes was not bin paid sence 1862 I fond the receipts that was paid 1863 . . . you have got a big girl at home I wish you could see it I want you to send it a name it is two months old it was born the 31 of december . . . it is lonesom to stay a lone I hired zack litle to work two monts for me and git my wood . . .

March 13th 1865

. . . Dear Sarahett . . . you may cook me a forth of july diner for I think that I will be home by that time . . . you must enjoy yourself the best you can an not worry yourself abot me for if I do have to leave my bones down hear it will be in a good cose take good care of the little ones at home i wish that you would send maryett too schoole as much as you can I can not tell you what to do with any of the things their fore I do not know how you are agiting along . . .

march 26/65

well Dear Sarahett . . . I recieved 4 letters from you to day and it gave me grate pleasur to hear from you . . . I am glad to hear that you are all well and especiley that we have got another heir and it is prety to in the bargin I was afrid that you would make yourself sick atring to do too mutch I would rather that you would hire some one to help you do the work you can . . . as for seling the steers you had better wait untill you . . . hear from me again . . . I am glad to hear that you have rented the place out you must have them take good car of the horses . . . I got to my regiment on the 25 an now I think that I will git you letters reglar their is a good prospect that we will stay here 3 or 4 weeks and I think that by that time peace will be mad now in regard to my voting for father Abreham I thought that he was the man to vote for and I still think so . . . tell maryett and hatty to be good girls and mind their maw and I will bring them something home that is prety . . .

April the 2 1865

Dear husband . . . I am sorry to think that you haft to go in battles for I am a fraid you will git kiled or wounded some way I am a fraid i will never see you a gain on this earth if I dont I hope that wee will meet in heaven whare their will be no more sins to be forgiven . . . the baby was boren a newyears eve and mother staid with me four days I was sick four dayes before it was born . . . I tell you i seen some hard times as well as you do . . . Hatty says her paw is in the army a shooting rebels. She can talk evrything now Mary she looks for you on evry steamboat . . .

Aprile 11th 1865

Well Dear husband . . . you told me you was in a big ol battle I am sorry that you haft to go to sich places . . . I wish I could be with you to take care of you when your are sick. their is no one that you now their to do any thing for you I expect you often thinks of home and dream a bout it [too]. . . I will never for git the day you left here I cant content my self one minit at a time sence you left home i am a worring a bout you all the time i am a fraid the Childern wont see you any more they are a talking a bout it all the time little hattie says her paw is coming home on a steam boat some day but Maryett sais she douts it very much whether you come or not she tells hatty that you dont want to see her then haty cries a bout it . . . i sold two hunderd buchel to day at eighty five cnts a buchel I thaut i had better sell it before it got down to low . . . the childern calls [the baby] Jinnie they want you to send her a name they say that they will call her that till you come home . . . somt thinks ther will be peace but i dont i think that you will haft to kill all of the rebels first i wish it was down there to help so to git through with it quick for i am tired of it . . . we send our love to you and all of the poor soldiers from your wife until death . . .

Aprile [16th?] 1865

. . . Dear Husband . . . we heard that Abraham Lincon was kiled I hope that it hant so but I gess it is so . . . I wish you would come home for i am lonesom without you here i never see any satisfaction while your gone you dont now how me and the childern miss you here . . . I have my garden maid most i hope you will be here to eat it i will plant some water melons for you and save them till you come . . . I will send you five dolars in this letter . . . it will help you a little to git your tobaco and diner I shant sell any of your cattle we have nine calvs now I have a brand made to brand them it cost me three dolars to make it i am going to have them all marked before they run off i expect the most of them will be drove off on the planes thier is a good many herds here . . .

May 21th 1865

Dear wife . . . it is the genarl supostion that shermans army will be mustard out as fast as they can . . . it will not be many weeks before I will bee home with you and the childern . . . if we are dicharged hear and paid off I could make a good thing out of it if I had five or six hunderd dolars by buying goverment mules for their is a grate many hear and will be sold cheap if I new wether you have sold the steers or not I would know more how to make my carkelations . . .

June 14th 1865

Dear Husband . . . I am sory to hear that you didnt git

your discharge for I now that you was out of hart to think you didnt git one I got out of hart when i read the letter . . . I want you to write and tell me how much hay you want put up and how you want it put up it will cost you a bout two hunderd dolars to put up . . . the bugs is very bad here they have took most of the garden here an potatoes I plant-ed two buchel and a half of potatoes i have plenty of peas now to eat I wish you was here to eat some peas I have got eleven nice pigs and twelve calvs and plenty of chickens . . . [Maryett] dont go to chool their hant any here She is got big enough to wash dishes and she thinks she is a woman Hattie is got to be quite a big girl . . .

July 5th 1865

Dear Husband . . . I have bin sick for the last too weeks but I am a giting better now. I had the neuralgy in my face and head . . . the chintz bugs has comence on the wheat now it hant ripe yet . . . [Freeman] is here part of the time and part of the time i am a lone he has a good deal of his time a runing a round with the girls I can git hay cut for one dolar an acre and hands two dolars a day and two and a half I wish you could be home to tend to it . . . cattle is low now hunter sold his four year old steers for one hunderd and thirty dolars a yoak . . . [the baby] has two teth and can set a lone I expect she will walk the first time you git to See her Hatty she cryes to see her paw she sais he stais to long Mary sais she thinks you mite come home to her . . .

July 18th 1865

Dear wife . . . by the time that I git back their I will have traveled five thousand miles or upwards and some of it the hardes kind of traveling . . . our offer-cies is very slow . . . we mite of been home by this time if they had tryde since the order came to muster us out but they are agiting big pay and are not in any hury about giting out if half of the curses has had any efect they will go to hell sure . . . tell little Hatty not to cry and worry about her paw for he will be home before long and he will not leave her any mor for the rebles is all whiped now . . . the cuntry has gon throug heavy triles and came out all right with flying Colers and the nation has caus for grate rejoysing . . . I think that I will be with you in a few days give my respects to all inquiring friends Yours as ever . . .

This letter concludes Jesse and Sarahett's Civil War correspondence. Jesse was murdered in a barroom in 1869. The complete set of 43 letters between Jesse and Sarahett Wilkerson is housed in Special Collections, University of Iowa Libraries, University of Iowa, Iowa City. For online facsimiles and transcriptions, go to: digital.library.uiowa.edu and then search for "Wilkerson letters."



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The tented portion of this wagon was used as a traveling darkroom for preparing and developing large glass photographic plates. The men seated may have worked for Mathew Brady, whose name appears on the box in the front of the wagon.

Photographers & Artists Capture the War

MATHEW BRADY, whose name is associated with thousands of Civil War images, hired more than 20 photographers to capture the war up close. They photographed soldiers playing cards, officers writing at camp desks, surgeons preparing to amputate limbs, the Signal Corps stringing telegraph wire, black teamsters handling mules.

And they photographed young men lying dead on the battlefield. "If [Mathew Brady] has not brought bodies and laid them in our dooryards and along streets, he has done something very like it," the *New York Times* commented early in the war.

Brady's field photographers used portable darkrooms in which to prepare and develop the images. Historian Barry Pritzer explains the steps. "Inside the wagon were cameras of different sizes, chemical tanks, tripods, and several hundred fragile glass plates, upon which the success of the entire operation depended. When ready for use, the plates, usually 8" x 10", were carefully coated with collodion (a delicate operation even in a normal studio) lowered into a solution of nitrate of silver for three to five minutes and then placed in a holder, ready for insertion into the camera. After

exposure, the plates were returned for developing to a darkroom that was stuffy at best and rank from post-battle aromas at worst. The time between coating the plates and developing them did not normally exceed eight or ten minutes. . . . A breath of wind, a bit of light or a sudden jolt could ruin the whole process."

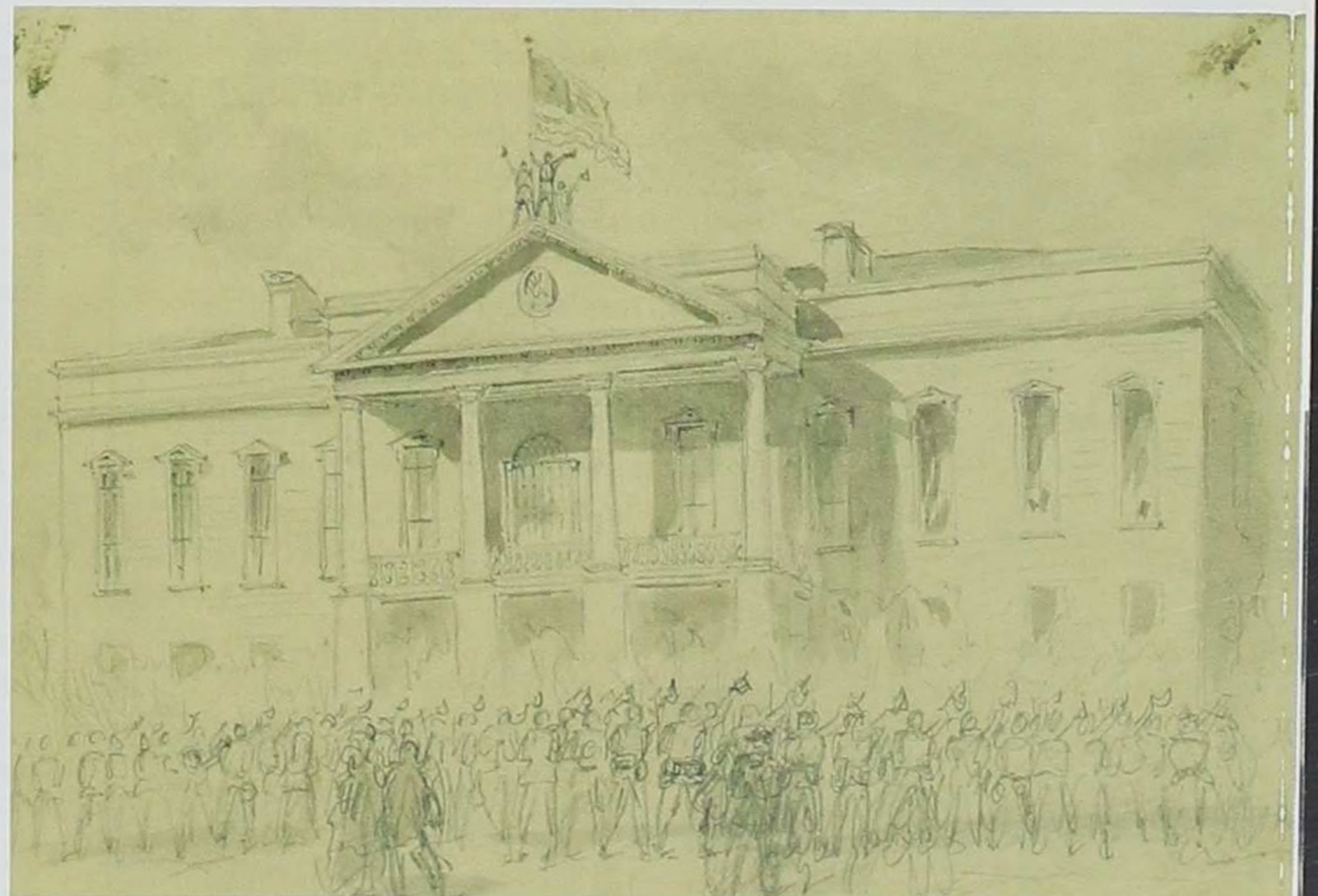
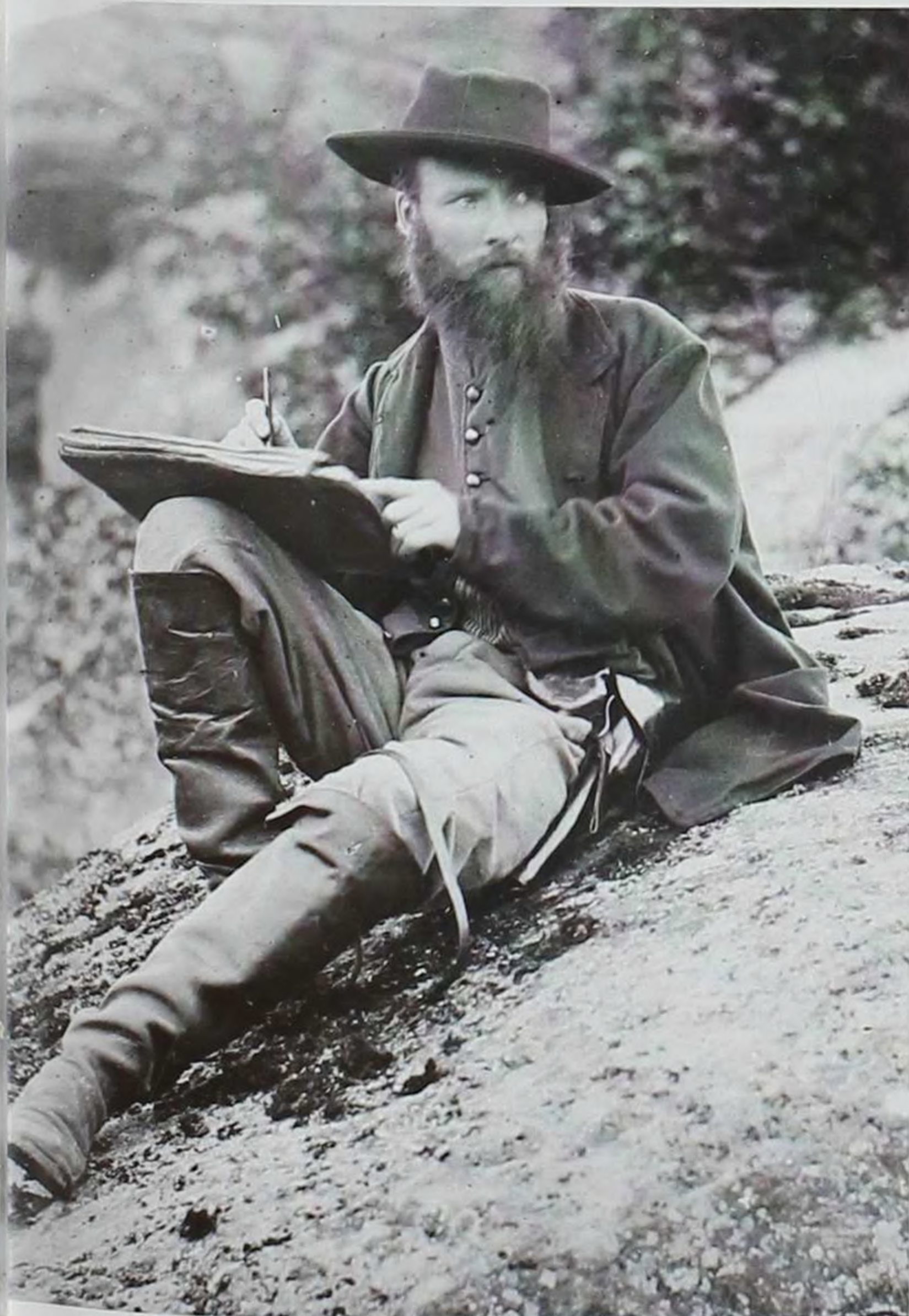
Photographers could not capture action because long exposure times were needed. But field artists did this quite well, effectively conveying the chaos of cannons firing, trees crashing, and soldiers charging. Eyewitness field artists, including Winslow Homer, Thomas Nast, and Iowa's Alexander Simplot, sketched scenes and then sent them to *Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, which published full- and double-page engravings based on the sketches. Field artists also sketched ordinary scenes in camp and sentimental scenes of soldiers' families back home. *Harper's Weekly*, it was said, "has been read in city parlors, in the log hut of the pioneer, by every camp-fire of our armies, in the wards of our hospitals, in the trenches before Petersburg, and in the ruins of Charleston."

—by Ginalie Swaim

Below: Alfred Waud was one of several "special artists" hired by illustrated magazines to sketch war scenes. Artists back in New York created detailed drawings from the sketches and prepared them for engraving and publication.



Above: A soldier reaches for a cartridge pouch from another who has fallen, in this sketch titled "Spare Cartridges" by field artist Alfred Waud. In the background, soldiers continue to fire.



Above: Lt. Col. J. C. Kennedy of the 13th Iowa raises a flag over the South Carolina State House, February 1865. The engraving based on this sketch by William Waud appeared in Harper's Weekly on April 8, 1865.

ALL THREE IMAGES ON THIS PAGE FROM LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS: GROUP OF CONTRABANDS, CUMBERLAND LANDING, VIRGINIA, 1862

Former slaves found refuge in overcrowded "contraband" camps that grew up around Union encampments and forts. Classes were sometimes taught in the camps. Many of the men worked as army laborers, or, starting in 1863, enlisted in the U.S. Colored Troops. Women washed, cooked, and helped in army hospitals. A hundred such camps existed in the war years.

A glorious work to teach them

Lucinda Humphrey in Memphis



IOWA HISTORICAL RECORD (APRIL 1894)

Lucinda Humphrey (left) was 28 when she arrived at an army hospital in Memphis, Tennessee, her second assignment from the Chicago Sanitary Commission. In later months she found her real passion, establishing schools and hospitals for black refugees and freedmen, under the auspices of the American Missionary Association, which recruited teachers for contraband schools. These excerpts are from her manuscript, reports, and letters to her family in Iowa.

—The Editor

[October 1862, Memphis] Be not surprised. This is a world of change. Little did I dream of ever coming south again when I bid you good bye at home; but I was sent for by Mrs. Porter who is here in Memphis, and who has had more to do than any other woman in the west towards getting nurses for the hospitals. . . . I want you to know that this is no romantic move of my own which is "just like me," but that I am walking in the path which seems marked out for me. . . .

In the Overton Hospital, to which I expect soon to be removed, there are 700 sick, some I understand are here from the Iowa 3rd.

[November 19, 1862] How I wish I could this morning paint the scenery around me. . . . Our building is situated on the banks of the Mississippi. . . . A green slope with here and there a cedar and honey locust marks our

path to the steep bank where we stand enraptured gazing on the graceful bend of the river embracing islands in its course. Not far away there is something rising above the water which you might mistake for a whale—but it is the rebel boat Beauregard, the grave of 150 rebels. . . . Below, the scenery becomes more romantic, the deep ravines, the precipice, the magazines in the side of the bank, the numerous piles of cannon balls scattered along the winding pathway under the bluffs, leading around to the contraband village. . . . Now turn away entirely from this communing with nature and our eyes fall upon the various paraphernalia of war. . . . Here we are with tents, ambulances, wagons, horses, mules, and men, protected on one side by the little black gun-boats in the river. . . .

. . . There seemed to be no call for me in the hospitals, so I turned to teaching. I have a select school about a mile from here of 300 pupils. . . . There are nearly two thousand slaves who have escaped the yoke of bondage, and who now live in their own little houses built of new slabs. Very few of them know how to read but I find it a glorious work to teach them. . . . The Captain of the Engineer Department calls almost every day to see if our wants are all supplied. He has charge of the contrabands employed by the Government and looks upon the school as a very important thing.

[Date?] 12,000 soldiers are here sick and wounded in the hospitals and probably as many more in camp. About six thousand contrabands are here. . . . [For two days it

snowed] and there was no place for the poor creatures but the old cotton shed under which they all gathered. They were barefoot, many of them almost starving; but the Chaplains and some of the Sanitary commission of Chicago turned out their stores of codfish, dried fruit, etc., which saved their lives until other arrangements were made for them. Mr. Eaton has since brought in 2000 more and for the present we have them stowed away in rebel houses which are to be torn down because [they are in] the way of the cannon in the forts. Hundreds of them are sheltered only by tents. I am now one of the prominent workers.

[Undated report] I opened a school Nov. 1st, 1862, at [Camp] Shiloh, a contraband village of two thousand inhabitants. . . . I had one hundred regular pupils whose ages varied from seven to sixty-five years. Of this number fifty learned to read quite intelligibly in two months. I adopted the "word method" of teaching, relied much on oral instruction and used every means in my power to awaken thought, while my sole object was to educate humanity and not simply the *intellect* of human beings. They were very anxious to learn, desired to support their school and in fact made a beginning to this end. I find them tractable, intuitive and imitative but not usually reflective.

[July 4, 1863] I am now moved into camp Fisk where I am at the head of a school of three hundred pupils. . . . How I wish you could see me in my little room ten feet square. It is papered with the Independent, and is fitted up so as to look decidedly nice and literary. I have . . . quite a library, pictures, maps, book case, globe, clock, carpet, the *chair of state*, and a cot with clean white pillow cases and sheets. . . . Vines have crept in and hang around the logs over-head, helping to beautify my little home.

[July 1863] I have never fully recovered from my sickness, and weakness now compels me to lie on my cot most of my time. But I have contrived a plan so that I can write as well as if I could sit up. . . . I am at work on my book "The Freedmen." . . . Everybody is kind, everybody helps me to carry out any plan I undertake. I have reason to feel thankful—we are looking for a great victory at Vicksburg.

[From Humphrey's unpublished manuscript, "The Freedmen"] In the fall of 1862 a rich widow was ordered to give up this building for the sick of the oppressed race. . . . A few weeks afterward I visited it and found the sick and dying lying around—some on the floor and some on bunks with nothing under them but the hard boards. . . . With thousands coming in it became necessary to establish another hospital. . . . [One morning] . . . one of our detailed soldiers [was] riding around trying to get women to go and clean up the new hospital. . . . Feeling it to be [their] duty to help take care of the sick of their own color, we did not hesitate to compel them to go. . . .

My workers began to be more reconciled to their task, but they begged me not to take them where they would be exposed to small-pox. I told them that we were going to an empty house [but] we found the house full. . . . Three rods from the building were two or three tents filled with cases of small-pox. There were over one hundred sick attended by a Hospital Steward who only got one hour's time to devote to them through the day.

[Late 1863] I shall return to Memphis in about two weeks [to marry] Captain H. S. Hay. . . . I never before found a will as strong as my own. . . . If I am unhappy it will be my own fault. He would give up his life for me. ❖

In late December 1864, Lucinda Humphrey Hay died at the home of a sister in Tipton, Iowa, from complications of childbirth weeks earlier. Although the school she established at Camp Shiloh in Memphis was destroyed in race riots in 1866 when federal troops were withdrawn, it was rebuilt the next year. LeMoyne-Owen College in Memphis traces its roots to her school.

These excerpts are from "Lucinda Humphrey Hay," by her sister Emma Humphrey Haddock and published in *Iowa Historical Record* (April 1894).

Elizabeth Fairfax, Army Nurse

Elizabeth Fairfax (right) wears an honorary badge from Nathaniel Baker Grand Army of the Republic Post 88 (Clinton, Iowa), circa 1885. She worked for the 26th Iowa Infantry from its early years until it was mustered out. On the reverse side of this photo are these words: "As an army nurse [she] took care of sick and wounded soldiers in camps where stationed. Since the war an old resident of Clinton, Iowa, and is well known. For 24 years she kept a laundry, and wove rag carpets for a living. By industry and economy she purchased and is now the owner of a little homestead. She has raised two children. Now advanced in years and feeble in health, she is no longer able to maintain herself by her former occupation. To secure a living she now peddles for grocery store, and sells her pictures. She served her country faithfully and is deserving of support."



SHSI (DES MOINES); EMERSON HOUGH COLLECTION



METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

After the War

by Ginalie Swaim

The soldier returning from war "was like a man lost in a dream," wrote midwestern author Hamlin Garland in a short story titled "The Return of a Private." "His wide, hungry eyes devoured the scene. The rough lawn, the little unpainted house, the field of clear yellow wheat behind it, down across which streamed the sun." Garland continued, "His farm was weedy and encumbered . . . his children needed clothing, the years were coming upon him, he was sick and emaciated."

Garland was nearly five when his father returned from the war. "All was not the same as before," Hamlin wrote decades later. "My father brought back from his two years' campaigning . . . the temper and habit of a soldier."

Readjusting to home was not simple for Civil War

veterans. A few lines from a popular poem spoke of their bewilderment:

*As soon as they mustered us out
I lost the old vigor, and wandered about;
Somehow I'm a failure and scarcely know why.
Unable to labor, too weary to roam.*

"The chasm created by the Civil War was uncrossable. It was not just the distance from the battlefield," writes historian Susan Matt. "It was the experience, the knowledge of death, suffering, misery, and reality, that might forever keep them from going back to what they had been and believed before the war."

As much as the returning soldier was a symbol of victory for the North, and of valor for the South, he was

also a problem to society. "Prisons of the late 1860s swelled with demobilized veterans," writes Todd DePastino. "Memories of the terrors and thrill of combat, as well as the camaraderie of camp life, caused more than a few veterans to chafe against what one soldier called the 'monotonous quiet of home' and turn to a life of unfocused wandering." Some became itinerant laborers on the margins of society. Although they were needed for seasonal work like harvesting wheat, they were perceived as thieving tramps and told to move on when the harvest was over.

Veterans with war-related disabilities struggled to find jobs, even though a federal law in 1865 gave them preference for government jobs. In step with the U.S. economy's transition from rural to urban, some veterans who had been manual workers before the war shifted to clerical jobs. Historian Russell Johnson wonders whether a soldier's life prepared him for a postwar industrial job. Both were "dangerous, semi- or unskilled, physically exhausting, and accompanied by oppressive smoke and noise, [with] poor housing, overcrowding, poor sanitation, and epidemic disease."

While Americans were grateful for what soldiers had sacrificed in the war, too much assistance, they feared, would make veterans dependent. The ethos of the Gilded Age promised that those who seized opportunities in those changing times would be rewarded. But could every ordinary soldier make as successful a transition as Iowan Jacob Gantz apparently did? Gantz had lost an arm in the war, so he could no longer farm. He rented out his land and opened a livery and board-

inghouse, became a community leader, and served as sheriff and tax assessor. The postwar transition of Iowa soldier Jacob Gantz seemed to be the model.

For decades after the war, chronic health problems—heart disease, rheumatism, dysentery, and tuberculosis—plagued thousands of soldiers. "One of the most common sights in postbellum America was that of severely wounded amputees moving painfully along the street," writes historian Mark Schantz. Pelvic wounds were also common. "Imagine a young man," writes historian Harry Herr, "facing life soiled in urine and in constant pain, lame from destroyed pelvic bones and nerves, and sexually impotent or mentally scarred by disfigured genitals. Many men survived their pelvic wounds, but sometimes at a terrible cost."

Physicians during and after the war pondered puzzling symptoms exhibited by some veterans: restlessness, anger, agitation, nausea, fear, irritability, paranoia, despair, nightmares, and illusions. In later wars, these nervous disorders would be called shell shock, combat fatigue, post-traumatic stress disorder. As Judith Anderson comments, "What is clear from ancient and modern wars is that the combination of exhaustion, hunger, marching and fighting, all done at the mercy of the elements, is a recipe for psychiatric casualties." Younger men were especially susceptible.

Thousands of homeless veterans resided in state and national institutions. In Marshalltown, the Iowa Soldiers' Home opened in 1887. It provided

ABOUT THE PAINTING

The Veteran in a New Field, oil painting by Winslow Homer (1865). Homer, 25 when the war began, was an artist for *Harper's Weekly* during the war. He painted this in the months after the Confederates' surrender. The Union veteran has cast aside his life as a soldier; his army canteen and jacket, barely discernible, are in the right foreground.

"The optimistic spirit of Homer's painting only makes its darker undertones more moving," according to a National Endowment for the Humanities scholar. "The 'new field' of the title can't mean this field of grain, which is obviously mature and ready to harvest. It must refer instead to the change in the veteran's occupation—which necessarily calls to mind his previous activity on the battlefield. Because some of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War had been fought in wheat fields, fields of grain, in popular consciousness, were associated with fields of fallen soldiers. One particularly disturbing photograph of soldiers

who had died in battle at Gettysburg was published with the title 'A Harvest of Death.'

"In keeping with those undertones, Homer's veteran handles a single-bladed scythe. By 1865, that simple farming implement was already out of date; a farmer would have used the more efficient cradle to mow a field that size. . . . [Homer depicted] a more archaic tool, and gave a picture of a farmer in his field an unsettling reference to the work of the grim reaper, the age-old personification of death.

"*The Veteran in a New Field* refers both to the desolation caused by the war and the country's hope for the future. It summons up the conflicting emotions that took hold of America—relief that the war was over, and grief for the many lives that had been lost."

—from *Picturing America*, National Endowment for the Humanities
picturingamerica.neh.gov. Lesson 9a in "Gallery"

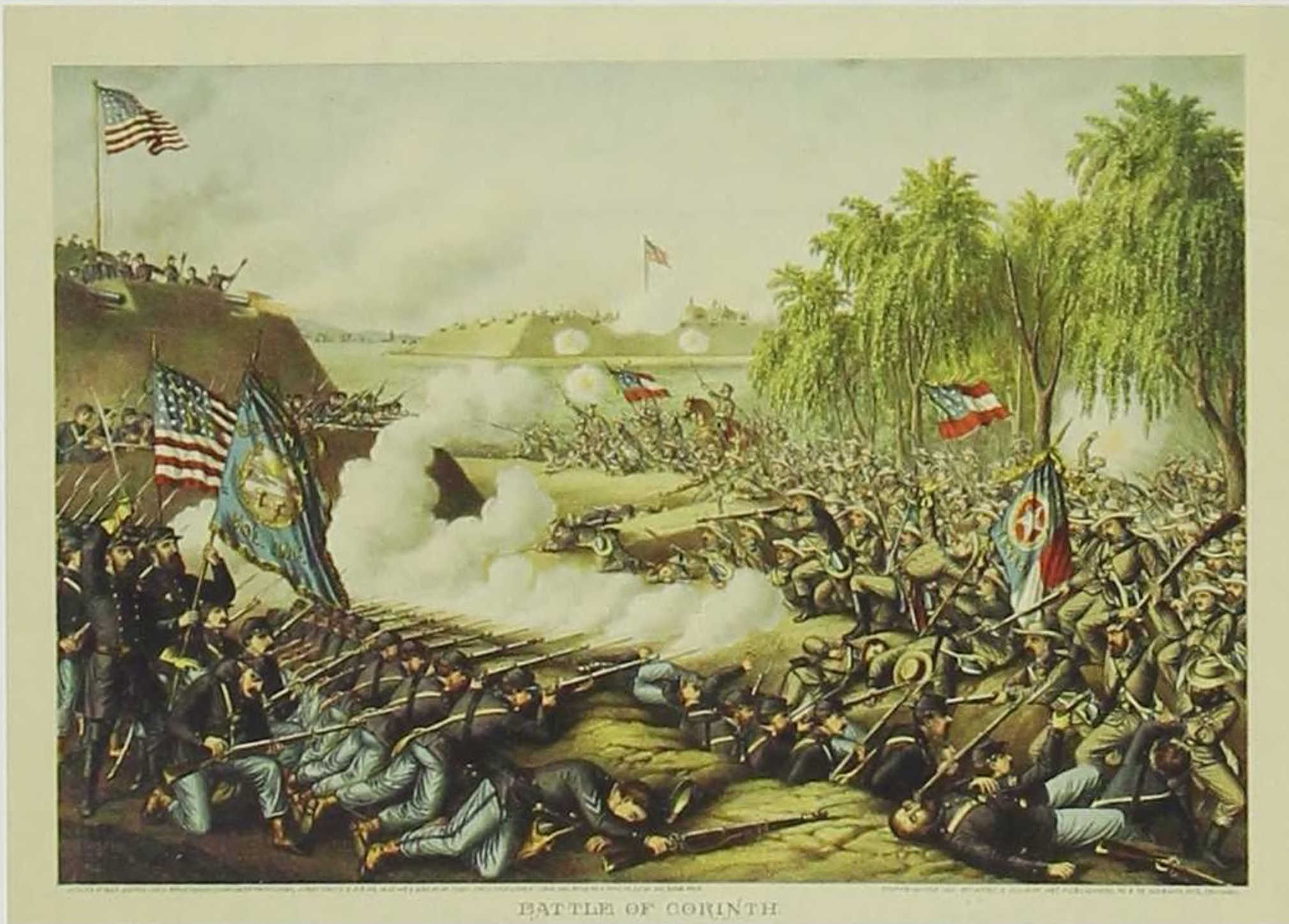
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS. PUCK MAGAZINE



THE RIVAL SANDWICH-MEN.

D. B. HILL.—“Here, Jones!—be a veteran, can't you? You sail out there, too, and do some hero business for Me and yourself!”

Ambitious veterans capitalized on their war experiences to win political influence. Likewise, entrepreneurs appealed to patriotic consumers by tying their products to the war. The old soldier in the background displays a blood-stained shirt on his signboard. “Waving the bloody shirt” was meant to remind the nation of the sacrifices soldiers made, and what was now due them.



BATTLE OF CORINTH

Above: In the decades after the war, lithographs of heroic battle scenes were marketed to veterans, as were regimental histories and soldier's accounts. Right: Americans traveled to battlefields, raised money for monuments, placed cannons in town squares, and marched to cemeteries on Decoration Day.

Bone ring carved by Galen A. Grout while held a prisoner of war in Libby Prison. 1862



Above: Items created or used by soldiers, especially those held prisoner, became venerated relics that manifested memory and meaning. Iowa prisoner F. F. Kiner recalled, “We sawed beef bones into whatever shape we desired . . . for rings, breastpins, slides, watch seals. . . . The Confederates were very much astonished at our ingenuity, and gave us credit for being a go-ahead kind of people, and for turning everything into some use.”

Copyright 1885, by JOS. M. BROWN.

SHSI (IOWA CITY)

SHSI (IOWA CITY)

medical care and housing for veterans "unable to earn a living at manual labor." Like other soldiers' homes, Marshalltown "was fundamentally a temporary refuge for transient veterans and a warehouse for the chronically ill," according to historian Brian Donovan. Residents could earn a little money and self-respect by working in the institution's bakery, sewing room, carpenter shop, laundry, and farm. They might also leave the home to seek seasonal work on their own.

But for aging residents, weakened by war-related infirmities and poverty, opportunities for meaningful work, or even activity to occupy the mind, were limited. For far too many residents, depression, chronic pain, and boredom led to "drinking sprees," Donovan says, especially since residents could frequent nearby saloons. A congressional investigation recommended that residents' pensions be reduced to stop them from spending money on drink. Alcohol, of course, worsened existing health problems and led to slovenliness, anger, and violence. Many in the public complained, too, that these homes were filled with veterans who faked disabilities or had done little "soldiering" during the war. To maintain a sense of "soldierly discipline," Donovan writes, residents were awakened at reveille, inspected before breakfast, and sent to their room at the bugler's tattoo.

Not all residents of veterans homes, of course, lived such troubled lives. But Iowa Civil War veteran and writer Clint Parkhurst had nothing good to say about these institutions, even though he stayed at several and suffered from alcoholism. "It is not likely that soldier-homes will ever improve," he wrote bitterly. "They will continue to be patriotic dens of graft, havens for crafty and undeserving paupers, and home for the drunken filth and scum of the land."

Some veterans leveraged their military service into political clout. Across the nation thousands entered local, state, and national politics, reminding voters of their service and sacrifice. According to Laurann Figg and Jane Farrell-Beck, "When two veterans were running against each other, preference was given to the one who had front line service, who had volunteered, who had been wounded, and—better yet—who had been badly crippled."

Veterans' organizations, like the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), repeatedly lobbied Congress for pensions and eventually succeeded. By 1893, over 40 percent of the federal government's annual income was expended on Civil War pensions. Beginning in 1892, Civil War nurses began receiving pensions, thanks in part to the crusading of Iowan Annie Wittenmyer.

And what about those who were children during the war? "Northern children, at least those not burdened with grief over dead fathers or brothers, could look forward with a sense of triumph and confidence and even good-natured humor," according to historian James Marten. "Southern children, like their parents, faced disgrace, degradation, and a spiritual, if not physical, exile. . . . [partly because] the political, economic, and social issues that had led to the crisis did not simply go away after the shooting stopped."

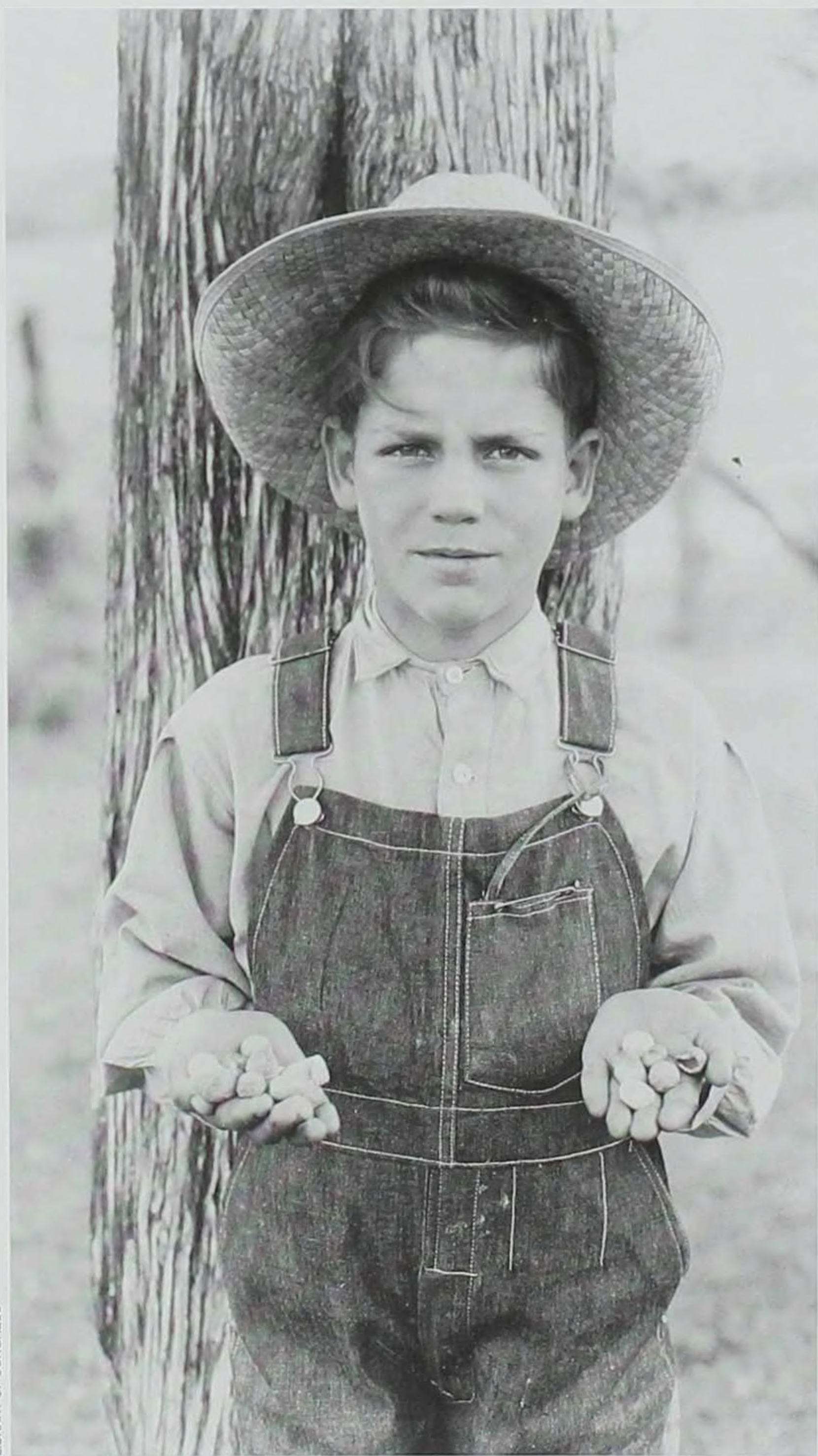
What about the next generations? What hold did the war have on those children? Ten-year-old Edith Harwood watched her grandfather and other veterans marching into the Grand Army of the Republic Hall, above the Wapello, Iowa, post office. "They were marching in: the flag bearers, the fife and drum corps, then two by two in perfect step, the soldiers," Harwood wrote years later. "They wore no uniforms, no insignia other than the small bronze buttons in the lapels of their good black suits, but there was no mistake about it—they were soldiers. Tomorrow knees might be throbbing with rheumatism, backs stooped, but not tonight. Chins up, arms swinging rhythmically, treads even, they came down the center aisle, climbed the steps, and took their places on the platform. The invisible bond of their shared experience was in that hour apparent, setting them unmistakably apart from the rest of us."

As a child, Josie S. Thurston watched 50 veterans awaiting the start of the 1899 Decoration Day program in Forest City. "Sweating in their tight, blue, woolen uniforms," she recalled decades later, the men "were crowded together on the green iron benches set before a bunting-draped platform from which rousing oratory and patriotic music [were heard]. . . . Oblivious to those who waited near them, they sat on their benches swapping war stories. There were a few empty coat sleeves pinned to pocket flaps. There were peg legs, crutches and canes. There were eye patches and dark glasses hiding eye injuries and frequently a 'prison' cough was heard."

Then the parade master assembled the parade "for the mile-long march to the cemetery. At the first note from the drum, fife and bugle corps the Boys in Blue formed ranks behind the town band waiting at the corner. Then came the widows and orphans, county and town officials, patriotic auxiliaries, church organizations, lodges, any organized group and finally the school children. Each child, from those in first grade through the highest, wore a long red, white and blue

bunting sash draped over the right shoulder. . . . Each carried a small flag and many had wilted flowers."

They marched "down the center of the dusty street, under a scorching sun, across the rattling wooden bridge by the old stone mill, along a stretch of rutted country road and up to the top of a long, steep cemetery hill where a cool breeze through the big pines dried dripping brows. Throughout the march the band's big drum had boomed the pace, with frequent relief of band music and the snare, fife and bugle corps. Perhaps the example of the veterans' steady progress spurred others in the parade to complete the journey.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

1927: A boy holds Confederate and Union bullets found at the site of a Kentucky battlefield.

"The cemetery service was solemn and brief. The [marchers] wound by graves of the honored veterans, placed flags and flowers on each mound, bowed heads for brief, silent prayers and stood at attention as gun salutes were fired," Thurston continued.

"It was a relief to be back on Main St., and the courthouse square. The Boys in Blue who had shed their heavy coats and hats were shaking hands and saying goodbyes. 'See you next year, God willing,' they said. 'Wonder how many of us will be back.'"

In every family, it seems, there was always one child who really listened and asked questions as a grandfather recounted war stories or lifted his shirt to reveal a faint scar. Perhaps when that grandfather died, the child would be given a canteen stamped "C.S.A." or an Enfield rifled musket. "Your grandfather carried this in the war. We all think you should have it."

Perhaps, instead, the child was entrusted with a diary or letters. He reads them and sets them aside reverently. At the end of his life, he passes them to a child in the next generation. And after that child grows up and retires, she finally sits down to transcribe the faded words.

She goes to her historical society, maybe for the first time, and pores over books and articles that help her make sense of what she is transcribing. There she happens upon a few facts that clarify a family legend that has wafted down through the years. There she finds carefully organized records for her great-grandfather's regiment, or 1860s newspapers with casualty lists, or photographs of drummer boys, or minutes of a soldiers' aid group. She stops in the museum to gaze at a softly lit battleflag, or a cavalry saddle, or a pearlware plate that an Iowa soldier picked up in Georgia and brought back home in his knapsack.

We Americans are all children of the Civil War, steeped in a culture that keeps the war alive through books, films, television shows, Web sites, school projects, reenactments, academic conferences, tourism, questions on U.S. citizenship tests. We conserve flags, protect battlefields, clean up grave sites, take pistols and canteens to antiques appraisers, search out ancestors who served in the war.

We still witness war dividing family and nation. We still seek to balance states' rights and federal powers. We still confront racism and pursue equality. For these causes, the Civil War is not over. ❖

Orders have just been received from the War Department to raise a Company of Cavalry, of Ninety-five men, for the defence of the North-west frontier of Iowa, against the Indians.

Volunteers composing this Company will be enlisted to serve three years, unless sooner discharged. They will receive the same pay as volunteers in the regular service, and be CLOTHED, FED, ARMED and EQUIPPED by the Government.

Horses will be furnished unless Volunteers prefer to furnish them, when they will receive 40 cts. per day for the use and risk of the horse. All wishing to engage in this service will report themselves to me immediately, as the company will be full in a few days. The Officers will be elected by the Company.

A. W. HUBBARD.

Sioux City, Iowa, September 2d, 1861.

One in a Million

Among the millions of items at the State Historical Society of Iowa are these reminders that during the Civil War, Iowa troops fought in the West, as well as the South.

In the late 1850s and early 1860s, hostilities escalated between Native Americans and white settlers in southwest Minnesota, Dakota Territory, and northwest Iowa. As the Indians faced delayed annuity payments, food shortages, and encroachment on their traditional lands, the U.S. built forts and amassed troops. The photo shows the 6th Iowa Cavalry in Dakota Territory in 1862.

Attacks and retaliations culminated in the Battle of Whitestone Hill in 1863. Federal troops attacked a large Lakota encampment in present-day North Dakota. Sergeant Drips of the 6th Iowa said, "It took a party of 100 men two days to gather up the stuff and burn it. It was our policy to burn everything we could."

THE INDIAN WAR.—From official reports of the battle of White Stone river, just received at the Adjutant General's office we learn that the battle was fought Sept. 3d; that the 2d and 3d battallion of Nebraska Cavalry composed the left wing and the 1st and 3d battallion Iowa 6th cavalry, the right wing. 1200 Indian braves were engaged. Between 100 and 200 were killed; 100 wounded, 158 prisoners taken; 500 lodges burned large quantities of dried meats and provisions taken together with other plunder. Col. Wilsons celebrated horse "Henan" presented to him by the citizens of Dubuque was shot under him. The 6th is now back on the Missouri river where they ar building a fort to be called Fort Sully, 5 miles below Fort Pierre near Farm Island. Twelve privates and one Lieutenant of the Iowa 6th were killed.—*Davenport News.*

THREE ITEMS: SHSI. NEWS STORY FROM EDDYVILLE STAR, OCTOBER 23, 1863

