

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[From Humphrey's unpublished manuscript, "The Freedmen"] In the fall of 1862 a rich widow was ordered to give up this building for the sick of the oppressed race.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."



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