

DOCUMENT

A COMMISSARY IN THE UNION ARMY: LETTERS OF C. C. CARPENTER

*Edited by Mildred Throne**

Among the papers of Cyrus Clay Carpenter, governor of Iowa from 1872 to 1876, are many letters written while he was serving as Commissary of Subsistence with the Union Army during the Civil War. Carpenter had emigrated to Iowa from Ohio in 1854 and had settled at Fort Dodge. A surveyor and land agent, he had from the first been active in politics and had served one term in the legislature as representative.¹ When the war broke out he was at Pike's Peak, vainly searching for gold. He at once wrote to Governor Samuel J. Kirkwood and offered his services in any capacity, but the governor replied that he then had more applicants than the government could use. Determined to get into the fight, but preferring some sort of commission to enlistment as a private (Carpenter was then thirty-two years of age), he next wrote to three of the members of Iowa's delegation in Washington — Senators James Harlan and James W. Grimes and Representative James Wilson — and asked them to set the appointment wheels in motion. Meanwhile, he packed up his goods and set out for Fort Dodge, arriving there in November of 1861.

In January he at last received a commission — that of "Commissary of Subsistence" with the rank of captain.² Carpenter served from April of 1862 until the close of the war. His letters to his fiancée (later his wife), Kate Burkholder, and to his brothers, Emmett in Fort Dodge and Judd in California, tell not so much the details of fighting and battles, but rather of the life of the common soldier as Carpenter saw it from his vantage point behind the lines. The letters also give some account of the problems of the

*Mildred Throne is associate editor of the State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City.

¹ See Mildred Throne, "C. C. Carpenter in the 1858 Iowa Legislature," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY*, 52:31-60 (January, 1954).

² James Wilson to Carpenter, Jan. 18, 1862, *Cyrus Clay Carpenter Papers* (State Historical Society, Iowa City, Iowa).

commissaries, whose job it was to see that the soldiers were fed. With no experience at all, and with the aid of civilian clerks equally untrained, Carpenter had to learn his job almost in the midst of battle. Entering the service shortly after the battle of Shiloh, he was assigned to the Army of the Mississippi under General John Pope, with headquarters at Hamburg, Tennessee.

Under the command of General Henry W. Halleck, three armies were moving from the Tennessee River west toward Corinth, where the Confederate forces had gathered. On the right was Major-General George H. Thomas with the Army of the Tennessee; in the center, Don Carlos Buell and his Army of the Ohio; on the left, Pope and his Army of the Mississippi. Second in command, under Halleck, was General Ulysses S. Grant.³

Such was the situation in the West when the novice, C. C. Carpenter, joined Pope to take up the task of issuing supplies to an army of some 30,000 men. Carpenter's letters cover the next three years of the war, from Corinth to Atlanta to Savannah and finally to Washington and the Grand Review. Now and then he found time to write long letters to the *Des Moines Register*, and several of these letters have been included, as they give more detail than his personal letters to his family.

[To Emmett Carpenter, from St. Louis, Apr. 24, 1862]

I arrived here night before last and should have left for Tennessee Pittsburg Landing last night, if I had not been waiting to see a man here who they advised me to hire as clerk. The two commissaries in this city and one or two other officers advised me to hire a clerk for a while who knew something about the business. As they tell me it is very complicated and there are very long monthly and quarterly reports to make out but most clerks do not like the idea of going into the field as it is such hard work.

[To Judd Carpenter, from Hamburg, Tenn., May 11, 1862]

. . . I keep the supply Depot of Provision for Gen Popes Army so you see all the Provision stores to feed 32,000 men pass thro my hands. This gives me business sufficient to keep me from dying of *Ennui*. But I tell you Judd I have seen enough of war to satisfy my curiosity. It makes me shud-

³ *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant* (2 vols., New York, 1885), 1:371-2.

der barely to think of the waste of life the loss of health and the destruction of Property in which this war must result. . . . I was authorized by the war department to employ one civilian as clerk at \$75 per month. . . . It is a very hard life I frequently have to be up issuing provision writing and figuring all night. . . .

[To Kate Burkholder, from Hamburg, May 18, 1862]

I have good health ever since I came here and think I have great reason to be thankful, so many are getting sick during this intensely hot weather. I work early and late and the hot weather does not seem to melt me down as it does very many it beats all how many are getting sick in the army. The Hospital is just about a quarter of a mile back from my camp and the boats to carry off the sick land right in front of where I stay. And it does seem as tho' there was a continual line of the sick extending from the lines at Corinth 20 miles west of here to the Hospital Landing. Poor fellows come along the road with a Snail like pace, fairly staggering from weakness and exhaustion, and halting ask "how far it is to the Hospital?" It looks to see the poor fellows crawling down the Bank towards the Boats as it must have looked in olden times to see the diseased in Jerusalem going down to the pool of Liboam. How much these poor fellows suffer. Most of the Hospital Boats that come here from St Louis Cincinnati &c are furnished with Kind and good nurses. And among them all most conspicuous laborious and praiseworthy, I notice the Catholic Sisters of Charity . . . with their dark and somber looking gowns, wide white collars, and heavy crosses, bending down from the bows of a boat to take a sick ragged and coarse soldier by the hand and help him to a clean cot. . . .

[To Emmett Carpenter, from Hamburg, May 18, 1862]

. . . I have not been out on the lines for several days. I have never been out to Gen Popes lines or seen the Gen tho I supply his army with grub. They say he is a very irritable excitable man. . . . it beats all how these Sergeants and private soldiers do have to work. There has to [be] a large detail come in from each regiment of the army every day to get the provision out 17 miles and they work in the dust & hot sun all day and frequently drive all night. . . .

[To Emmett Carpenter, from Hamburg, May 25, 1862]

It is singular how *fortune has favored me*. I already do the largest business of any commissary along the River and there must be an hundred of

them. I have had Gen Popes whole army to issue to and reinforcements have been continually added until it must amount to 40,000 men. To-day Gen Jeff C Davis with his division and Gen Asboth⁴ with his Division loaded right before my door and as they marched away the ragged dirty fellows were no mean sight. I have been running and working to unload three Steam Boats and have just got thro' with two. I have sent out on the road towards Corinth within the last two days over 100,000 Rations which makes over 300,000 pounds. To-day when I hoped I was nearly thro' 600 teams came in from Gen W T Sherman⁵ with an order from Gen Sherman for me to issue to them. I did not know what to do. I just told them I was to supply Gen Popes army but they said they had no other place to go. So I went down to see Capt. Hawkins chief com[missary] on Hallecks staff and he laughed as soon as I came in. He has the General superintendence of the Com's of the Department. I asked him if it was his order that I should feed Gen Shermans army? Well said he "Captain they had to go some where and I know I am giving you a great deal of work but you must keep up your spirits" I told him I would do it and left Pen ink and words will not describe the "confusion confounded" that surrounds me. I have just been fixing out the 21st Ill that landed without any thing to eat.

...

[To Emmett Carpenter, from Hamburg, May 30, 1862]

... News has come in this morning that Corinth has been [taken] altho it scarcely appears possible yet it may all be true.⁶ If such should prove to be the case I presume I shall be ordered away from here in a few days. There will be work! work! work! night and day. To give you a faint idea of it I will tell you what I will have to do. I shall have to Invoice and load over 400 bbls Beans 500 bbls Peas over 100 Tierces of Rice besides about a 1000 hundred pound sacks. And Pork Bacon Hams Mess Beef Coffee Sugar Potatoes &c &c in proportion. Besides this over 3000 bbls and boxes of Hard Bread weighing about an hundred pounds apiece. When I am ordered to load up and start, all I shall know about it will be this:

⁴ Brig. Gen. Jefferson C. Davis, in command of the 4th Division under Pope; Alexander Asboth, in command of the 5th Division. Frederick H. Dyer, *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion* . . . (Des Moines, 1908), 478.

⁵ At this time Sherman was in command of the fifth division of the Army of the Tennessee.

⁶ Corinth was evacuated by the Confederate troops on May 29th; Halleck moved into the city on May 30, 1862. Grant, *Memoirs*, 1:380.

Captain:

You are ordered to take the public property in your possession
and report yourself [to] Gen Pope at Memphis

Very Respectfully sir
Your obedient servant
J. P. Hawkins
Chief Comm
Army Before Corinth

Capt. C. C. Carpenter
Hamburg
Tenn

I give you this specimen of an order to show you how a fellow is moved at the beck and nod of his superiors. When this order comes if it should come you can imagine [sic] how night and day it would be work! work! until the invoices were made &c &c. . . .

[To Emmett Carpenter, from Hamburg, June 13, 1862]

. . . You cannot imagine the wear and tear of intellect it gives a man to work the way I do with so much responsibility and the few conveniences I have for doing it. The immense amount of Commissary stores I have are out on the ground liable to be stolen spoiled by rains &c &c. I cannot inform you of the difficulties I have to contend with. I have done more business than any other Commissary on the River or any other two and have fewer clerks to do it with. You will see in Harpers Weekly for May 31st the Picture of the big building I occupy in the Picture entitled Hallecks depot Commissary. . . .⁷

[To Kate Burkholder, from Hamburg, June 28, 1862]

. . . I expect to be ordered away from this post which I have so long filled in a few days. I am receiving no more goods here and trains are being organized to haul away even that I have. Where I shall be transferred is more than I know. I hope not to any worse place than this. The Hospital here is being broken up and the patients taken away on boats to a more northern clime and [I] tell you they go joyfully. Gen Rosencrans [Rosecrans] now commands the army formally [sic] under Pope. . . .⁸

⁷ This picture has been reproduced on the cover of this issue of the JOURNAL.

⁸ On June 26, 1862, Pope was transferred to the East and given command of the newly-constituted Army of Virginia. He was succeeded in the Army of the Mississippi by W. S. Rosecrans. Dyer, *Compendium*, 349, 476.

[To Judd Carpenter, from Hamburg, June 30, 1862]

. . . I have a great deal of business on my hands and have had ever since I came here. But the R R from Memphis to Corinth is now nearly complete when the navigation of the Tenn River will be abandoned for the purpose of supplying the army and stores will thereafter come thro' by Rail from Memphis. My stock is being removed from here and I expect I will shortly be removed and where I shall be sent of course I cannot say. . . .⁹

[To Kate Burkholder, from Hamburg, July 4, 1862]

. . . I do not think much of Gen Pope as a man yet I consider him a good General. . . . Gen Rosencrans now commands the "Army of the Mississippi." . . . I never saw Gen Pope and have not seen Gen Rosencrans or at least never saw either one to know them, tho' I like Gen Rosencrans style as a man better than Pope. Gen Pope used to send such overbearing letters to me and tell the soldiers if I did not do so and so in issuing provision to them and get such and such supplies he would "fix me" that I got to heartily hate him.¹⁰ Gen Rosencrans always writes to me kindly and asks me if it will be possible for me to procure such and such stores. . . . The army of Rebels in the Miss Valley is broken up and dispersed the war henceforth here will be of the Guerilla and Spanish kind and I think will not last long. I hope it may not. . . .

[To Kate Burkholder, from luka, Miss., Aug. 4, 1862]

. . . This is a town situated on the Memphis and Charleston Rail Road about midway between Corinth and Tuscumbia in Ala. There is a regiment the 27th Ill Vols Infantry Beebees Wis Battery and a Battalion [sic] of Cav[alry] stationed at this point to guard the Rail Road. I furnish these besides getting supplies forward from Eastport on the Tenn River about 8 miles from here and sending them forward to Gen Paines¹¹ Div at Tuscumbia. I do not have as much hard work to do as I had at Hamburg but

⁹ On July 24 Carpenter was ordered to "proceed to luka and relieve commissary in charge of Stores there. . . ." Special Order No. 189, signed by Rosecrans, July 24, 1862, *Carpenter Papers*.

¹⁰ "Pope . . . was pugnacious and confident and conceited. Part of the reputation he had won in the West was the result of his own boasting about his triumphs and the publicity he got from newspaper reporters attached to his headquarters." T. Harry Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals* (New York, 1952), 120.

¹¹ E. A. Paine commanded the first division of the Army of the Mississippi. Dyer, *Compendium*, 476.

still am busy. . . . I wonder how Bart [Kate's brother] gets along under the most wicked profane and overbearing old scallawag in the army [Pope]. I hope Halleck and McClellan¹² will control things or I shall expect to hear Gen Pope has led his army into some nest of traitors and had the last man of them killed. Gen Rosecrans is a perfect Gentleman and a true soldier. I went to see him two or three times to get instruction about my position up here before I came. . . . Nine tenths of the officers in the army do not care any more for the principle at stake than a savage cares about the Bible and such a laxity of all moral restraint in money matters among officials makes me sometimes doubt the existence of all good. . . .

[To Kate Burkholder, from Iuka, Aug. 29, 1862]

. . . I have been very busy, there has not been a moment in the day but what some person has stood at my elbow to ask me a question. "Captain can I buy some whiskey of you for the use of the officers of the 43d Ohio?" "Captain I am a poor woman without a mouthful of Bread in my house have'nt tasted Bread for a week Can I get a little flour from you?" "Captain I had a nigger run away last night I am [a] poor widow dont you think he is among those you have here?" "Captain can the 63d Ohio draw full rations here to-morrow?" "Captain the slaughter yard is moved; where do we get Fresh Beef?" . . .

They talk about the assistance of the Negroes up north as tho there was any courage or [illegible] in a darkie. One man with a horse whip would put ten thousand of them to flight. They dont want to be set at liberty. A Negro slave with his wife & children is attached to the plantation upon which he was born he had rather be a slave a thousand times than surrender one local attachment. About three days ago I had 21 turned over to me who were taken from plantations up in Ala and to-day after working three days they have begged me half the day to give them passes to go home some forty miles. I told them if they went they better stay and never show me their faces again. . . .

[To Emmett Carpenter, from Iuka, Aug. 31, 1862]

. . . When I left Hamburg Gen Rosecrans' Head Quarters were about 4 miles from Corinth. I was ordered here and commenced trying to arrange

¹² On July 11, 1862, Lincoln had appointed Henry W. Halleck "general-in-chief" of the Union armies, a post which George B. McClellan, now in command of the Army of the Potomac, had vacated on March 11, 1862. Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals*, 135; Dyer, *Compendium*, 254, 255.

and systematize trains to run between here and Eastport 7 miles from here on the Tennessee River and a good landing for Steamboats. . . . Iuka is on the R Road and as it is only 7 miles from the River and as I have been ordered to build a large store House which I now have nearly completed having over a hundred contrabands [Negroes] to work upon it I am inclined to believe that this point is to be the Base of future operations to the south. You know we have to depend much upon River Transportation as the R R cannot begin to supply the army. . . .

[To Kate Burkholder, from Iuka, Sept. 3, 1862]

. . . I have faith in Stanton faith in Halleck and faith in Lincoln and still greater faith in the strong patriotism in the Loyal North. But few of us have yet risen to the conception of the giant strength of this Rebellion. . . . I would resign and come home to-day if I could do so with credit. I am disgusted with the whole institution one would think that in the present perilous position of our country all a soldier would care for, would be to help save the Government. But every man from highest to lowest with few and those *very few*, exceptions, seems to think this is a great money-making institution. Stealing and the most heinous rascality is so common and so patent [sic] that I shudder for my country. I thank God that I have no desire to make a cent more than belongs to me tho' I am frequently asked why dont you do so and so others are stealing and you being a Com Sub will place you in the category of Scoundrels whether you take the benefits or not. I pity the poor privates and only wish one half the officers were hung & many of them made officers. . . .

[To Emmett Carpenter, from Iuka, Sept. 4, 1862]

. . . I was sent here to establish a Port for the purpose of forwarding supplies along the line of R R as far east as Decatur. In carrying out my instructions I have brought forward from Eastport large supplies to this place. I now have on hand over 800 Barrels of Flour over a 1000 Boxes of Pilot Bread [hardtack], 500 Barrels of Pork, 200 Bbls of Mess Beef, 100 casks each of Bacon Ham and Shoulders, 300 Barrels of Salt, 200 Bbls of Sugar, 25 Bbls each of Beans & Peas, 100 Bbls of Rice 300 Bbls of Hominy, 50 Bbls of Roasted Coffee, 200 Sacks of Green Coffee, 50 half chests of Tea, 50 Bbls of Molasses 150 Bbls of Desicated¹³ Potatoes, 100 Boxes of

¹³ The "desicated" or dried potatoes and vegetables were so unpalatable that the soldiers referred to them as "desecrated." See Mildred Throne (ed.), *The Civil War Diary of Cyrus F. Boyd, Fifteenth Iowa Infantry, 1861-1863* (Iowa City, 1953), 53.

Desicated Mixed Vegetables, and other things required for Hospitals &c &c besides several and sundry Bbls of Whiskey. For a Store House I took the largest Store in town driving out the owner — a merchant — who occupied it. It stood within about 60 feet of the R. R. It is 60 feet long 2 Stories high with a cellar under neath the whole length and including a leanto on one side (which I have full of flour) is 45 feet wide. This I filled from Cellar to Garret until the timbers cracked with the weight upon them. Then I have built beside it between it and the R R a shed 80 feet long and 40 feet wide, built by cutting forks in the woods, planting them in the ground, putting up pole rafters, and covering it with Tar-paulins. Well yesterday while I was down under my shed ordering and commanding about 25 negroes about piling up my things, under the shed, two trains passed by from Tuscumbia loaded with Commissary Stores and went right forward to Corinth. It soon flashed upon my mind, that we were about to abandon the R R between Tuscumbia and Chattanooga and not unlikely all the way from Corinth to Chattanooga; which will necessitate my picking up my few articles and falling back to Corinth. . . .

[To Capt. S. Simmons, Chief Comm. Sub., Army of the Mississippi,
from Corinth, Sept. 17, 1862]¹⁴

Captain:

In compliance with the Order to Gen Rosecrans Commanding Army of Miss I have the honor to report what came under my observation in connection with the evacuation of Iuka by the Federal Forces. On the morning of Saturday the 13th while superintending a party of contrabands engaged in rolling subsistence stores from the House occupied as a commissary Building to the R R preparatory to loading them on a train of cars there mentorially [*sic.* momentarily] expected, firing commenced in the timber a little East of South of the Town, & continued at short intervals. I should judge, for half an hour, this, with a few shots immediately after 12 M nearly East of the Town and apparently in the vicinity of the R R was all the firing heard by me on Saturday; the Subsistence Stores I then had in charge at Iuka as nearly as I can recollect will approximate to the Invoice attached. By your assistance nearly all the stores included in the statement

¹⁴ This is a rough draft of Carpenter's report on the evacuation of Iuka. Confederate forces under Van Dorn and Price moved into Iuka on Sept. 13, before Grant could gather his scattered forces to resist. Iuka was retaken by the Union forces in a sharp battle on Sept. 19. Grant, *Memoirs*, 1:404-413.

attached were delivered beside the R R Track ready for loading when the train arrived. Altho' the train did not arrive of [sic. on] Saturday it was still thought we should hold the place at least until it did arrive. About 11 or 12 o'clock at night however I heard the wagon train moving rapidly thro' the town and on the Corinth Road. I still thought this a simple move of prudence to be ready for retreat in case of a reverse. In a short time however I saw the ambulances moving out which I thought appeared like retreat. I had never had the most distant apprehension of our forces taking such a hasty step and was left without the means of transportation to get away my personal effects or my papers containing all the record of my business in the C S Dept. I at once agreed with my two clerks and Mr John A. Robison of the U S Army Bakery that we must try to impress teams to get away with. This I left entirely to them as I was anxious to make every arrangement possible to destroy the stores on hand and prevent their falling into the enemies hands; which I knew would be difficult as they were removed from the building and scattered over much ground along the R R. What efforts were made to destroy them, the agreement of the Captain commanding the Battallion [sic] of Cavalry¹⁵ to halt in columns and assist in firing them, the fact of his saying they were not to be fired until the forces had gone some time and his Battallion was called in, the fact that the Cavalry afterwards rode thro town without halting or looking back, thus rendering it impossible to destroy them is all well known to yourself as you were present and actively engaged in trying to prepare them to be fired. I saw several teams left in the rear of the command either from having tired out, or the wagon having broken down, but as I had taken no notice of the teams impressed by my friends which were to take away my effects I did not know whether my things were on them or not. Near Burnsville I came up with our main forces halting in a field when I found the wagon loaded with my papers had not come up. I went back some distance and found it behind a creek. The Bridge had been destroyed by the

¹⁵ The 8th Wisconsin Cavalry, under command of Colonel (not Captain as Carpenter says) Robert C. Murphy, had been left to guard the stores at Iuka. Murphy's failure to destroy the stores before leaving was severely criticized by Rosecrans but excused by Grant "on the ground of inexperience in military matters." However, when two months later Murphy allowed himself and the 1,500 men under him to be captured at Holly Springs (in spite of warnings of the approach of the Confederates) Grant dismissed him from the service for "cowardly and disgraceful conduct." Grant, *Memoirs*, 1:434; *The War of the Rebellion . . . Official Records* (Washington, 1886), Series I, Vol. XVII, Part I, 516.

Cavalry, rendering it impossible without help and delay to get over and as the timber on both sides [of] the road was declared to be infested with Guerrillas I was obliged to abandon the wagon and its load. . . .

[To Emmett Carpenter from Burnsville, Miss., Sept. 20, 1862]

. . . Last Sunday morning I left Iuka on a march to Corinth under what circumstances and with what success you have probably learned from other sources. On last Wednesday there was a general movement toward Iuka of all the forces under Grant Ord and Rosecrans with what success you will learn before this will reach you. . . . I came up here the day after the movement commenced in charge of 40,000 Rations and 120 head of Beef Cattle for Gen Rosecrans Army and on arrival here found he had gone several miles to the right. I had not been here more than five minutes and was making inquiries about means of communication with the "Army of the Miss" when Gen Grant sent an order to me to open out here and issue to his army and here I have been for the last two days and a half. At first I came alone expecting simply to turn over the Rations of which I was in charge in Bulk and return for more but when Gen Grant placed me in charge of the whole thing at the H'd Q's of the whole army I telegraphed for Welles [his clerk] who came up last night before that, the first day I run the thing alone turning out things to the Hungry soldiers haphazard [sic] without stopping to weigh or even guess at weights but yesterday two soldiers were detailed to assist me, and to-day Welles is here. There is so much confusion reigning on every side of me that I have not time to think or answer your letter. . . . At some future time I will try to describe as far as English language is capable the retreat from Iuka to Corinth. Negroes old and young crowded both sides of the road and hung screaming and crying upon the rear of our retreating forces. I passed about 4 miles out from Iuka two little Negro children whom their mother had dropped in her scared and hasty flight and left to the tender mercies of the forest and the Rebellion. I gave them a hard cracker from my pocket and lied to the little fellows by telling them friends would soon come and take care of them but I was then two miles in the rear of our army and could do nothing for them. Poor soldiers dropped by the wayside from exhaustion and no kind hand picked them up and cared for them. We moved in a cloud of dust which so affected my eyes that I was nearly blind for two days. . . . All my papers letters and everything else I had fell into the hands of the Rebels.

[To Emmett Carpenter, from Corinth, Sept. 28, 1862]

. . . Gen Rosecrans is a devoted Catholic himself, the day before Iuka battle he had the mass in his tent, a priest always being with him, and accompanying him upon the battle field. He is one of the best men I ever knew. And I believe (if we succeed) will be one of the great men of this war.¹⁶ He makes no show but gradually and slowly rises to his proper level. . . .

[To Emmett Carpenter, from Corinth, Oct. 10, 1862]

. . . I cannot tell you much about the battle.¹⁷ Suffice it to say our army won a great victory but it was dearly purchased. . . . I went over the battle field and you may be assured [sic] that I put up many a silent prayer that this might be the last battle; but I fear we shall have many more before this wicked rebellion will be crushed. . . . Since the battle many Iowa men have been coming in principally commissioners for taking the vote of Iowa Soldiers. . . .

[To Kate Burkholder, from Corinth, Oct. 25, 1862]

. . . People that think they have to undergo intolerable deprivations in Iowa ought to place themselves in the position of many Union people in this country and in Ky. I have seen people who have enjoyed not only the necessities of life but its luxuries who have told me that they have frequently during the past summer lived upon green corn and sweet potatoes for a week without bread. One old woman in the vicinity of Ripley the owner of a large plantation and fine house said she had not tasted Coffee for 16 months. She had two Sons in the Federal army and was so affected when the flag passed her house that [she] broke into tears. . . . Words will never be sufficiently strong to portray the misery this Rebellion has wrought upon unoffending Union loving people in the South. . . .

[To Kate Burkholder, from Corinth, Nov. 5, 1862]

. . . I am receiving a large amount of stores and am soon to be involved head over heels in business. I am working with all my might to get men

¹⁶ Carpenter was wrong in his judgment of Rosecrans. In September of 1863, following his disastrous defeat at Chickamauga, Rosecrans was removed by Grant and replaced by George H. Thomas, the famous "Rock of Chickamauga." Grant, *Memoirs*, 2:21-7.

¹⁷ On October 4 the Confederates attacked the Union forces at Corinth and were repulsed after a bitter fight. *Ibid.*, 1:416-18.

and organize the business for future operations. The army is moving south and the Depot of supply at this place is put in my charge so you see I shall be here for some time. . . . I have been at work very hard to-day. Gen Dodge¹⁸ of Iowa commands this district. . . . To give you an idea of my business the stores that are being turned over to me would fill our Court House and every store House in our town from the bottom of the cellar to the Garrett [sic].

[To Judd Carpenter, from Corinth, Feb. 24, 1863]

. . . I am now on Gen Dodge's staff who commands the "District of Corinth" he is an Iowa man with whom I had a slight acquaintance before I came into the army and appears to have implicit confidence in me. I issue to about 15,000 men and 1500 contrabands. You will at once see that I have to employ a great many men as clerks warehousemen, &c &c, most of them however are detailed soldiers. . . .

[To Kate Burkholder, from Corinth, March 12, 1863]

. . . Every thing at this point is moving on about as usual so far as I know. The Troops are very healthy and appear to make themselves quite comfortable considering the few conveniences they have with which to surround themselves with comforts. They have to lie in camp all the time with nothing to do but stand as dreary guard at certain intervals, nothing to read, and nothing to take their mind[s] from the, to them, loathsome duties of a soldier; they get greatly discontented which frequently amounts to insubordination and turbulence, and such fellows to complain and whine and find fault with everything I never saw and never expect to see after this war is over [one word illegible]. I should be awful unhappy if I was obliged to stay in a camp with them and have falling upon my ears the continual din, of their ten thousand complaints and ceaseless rounds of fault finding oaths.

. . .

[To Kate Burkholder, from Corinth, March 29, 1863]

. . . I am on Gen Dodge's staff, but it is simply a nominal position. . . . I like him however very much and think he has a good opinion of me. He is a little fellow not much larger than I am. He walks along in a shuffling

¹⁸ Grenville M. Dodge of Council Bluffs, famous as the builder of the Union Pacific Railroad. For biography, see J. R. Perkins, *Trails, Rails and War: The Life of General G. M. Dodge* (Indianapolis, 1929).

kind of gait, bent over almost as much [as] I am. He is very industrious and hard working, has scouts out all over this part of the country, and it would be pretty hard for a Rebel army to come within several miles of this place without his knowing it, and being prepared to meet them. He has his wife here and she is a very nice stylish appearing lady, and appears to know all about the war. . . . [One of my clerks] is a very nice fellow and good businessman yet he has followed his Regiment and lain in camp, until he is entirely tired out, and sick of camp life, where he has to stay and hear the President abused, the Government abused, and cursing and swearing, of all kinds and for every reason. I have heard Lieut's in the army say that they had rather work at home for \$15.00 per month, than to be officers in their companies and hear the talk, complaint, whining, cursing, fault-finding, and all the embarrassing things to which their position subjects them. . . .

[To Kate Burkholder, from Corinth, Oct. 28, 1863]

As Gen Dodge moves with his Div in a day or two I am ordered to pick up my traps and move with him. Therefore I shall start in a day or two much to my disappointment for I do not know what point or place. . . .

[To Kate Burkholder, from Pulaski, Tenn., Nov. 18, 1863]

I just returned this evening from a trip to Columbia 37 miles from here whither I have been to replenish the supplies of the command. . . . There is a great opportunity for getting enough to eat here. I think Gen Dodge and his command will remain here for some time perhaps all winter. . . . I hear and see but little that goes on on a march that would interest you from the fact that I have a train of wagons to look after cattle to drive and a thousand things to worry and vex me. . . .

[To Judd Carpenter, from Pulaski, Nov. 20, 1863]

. . . You will see that since writing you before I have changed my base. . . . Gen Dodge's command was not ordered to the scene of action. He has been so ordered and will open the R R which you will see on the map as extending from Nashville to Decatur. We will work our way down on this road as we open it until we will be an advanced position upon the right of the army, confronting Chickamauga. . . . If you take a map and trace a line from Corinth through Iuka Eastport and across to this place you will see the course we took to come here. I was the only commissary of the command consisting of about 12,000 men and you may judge that to supply

so many thousands I was up late and early and worked without ceasing.

. . . ¹⁹

[To his wife, from Athens, Ala., Apr. 3, 1864]

I have been very busy ever since I came down here, moving to this place, fixing up a place to stay, making orders for stores, and various other things. . . . I hear it rumored that Gen Sherman told Gen Dodge that he must stay here and keep this line of R R from Nashville to Decatur open during the coming summer; and when the Gen's command protested against being used so, he told them that it required as good a man to protect communications as any other place, and that successfully protecting them, when exposed as on this road, required skill and deserved as much credit as gallantry on the field of battle. . . . Gen Dodge now has under his command about 25,000 men and three Brigadier Generals Sweeney, Veatch, & Stevenson, this constitutes the "Left Wing of the 16th Army Corps." If they should move, as I have to see that all are fed, I would have work enough I tell you. I am in hopes therefore, if they will be just as effective guarding R R's as any other command would be, that they will not move, however "Not my will but Uncle Sams be done." . . .

[To Emmett Carpenter, from Chattanooga, May 8, 1864]

Gen Dodge is now forty miles south of here, and is still marching forwards;²⁰ and whithersoever he marches John Browns Soul Marches. May God grant us success for if we win this campaign it seems to me that the future will be bright but if not heaven only knows what may be the fate of our glorious country. I am glad you are not with me, for marching and tramping along a road filled with the dust, caused by the passage over it, of 2000 wagons, 30,000 mules, and 100,000 men, is enough to put out the eyes & destroy the health of the most hardy. You will be astonished when I tell you, that not a drop of water which this country now affords is clear of a curious taste. There is a stench that fills the air. In my supply train of one hundred and sixty wagons in one day we lost 42 mules. By this you can imagine something of what this march is. . . .

¹⁹ In March of 1864 Carpenter at last received his first furlough since joining the service. He returned to Fort Dodge where he and Kate Burkholder were married on March 14. Carpenter to Judd Carpenter, April 22, 1864, *Carpenter Papers*.

²⁰ Dodge's forces had been removed to Chattanooga to take part in Sherman's great offensive against Atlanta. Sherman was now in command of the Army of the Tennessee, while Grant commanded the offensive in the East against Richmond.

[To his wife, from Big Shanty, Ga., June 21, 1864]

. . . It rains every day terrible rains and 50,000 men have to lie right in the trenches if they stick their heads up 6 inches they will be shot off. Yesterday I was sent to the lines and fully one half of the men were lying in the mud and water in some instances their whole body submerged and had been so for hours. I thought it hard to ride out through the mud and rain but when I came to see them I took it all back. . . .

[To Emmett Carpenter, from Big Shanty, June 23, 1864]

I wish we could celebrate the 4th in Atlanta and Gen Grant in Richmond but I doubt whether these two places will fall so soon as that. But that we will eventually take them and that too before this campaign closes I never doubt but the people must be patient for it will be a long campaign. It is the most tedious thing I ever dreamed of. It seems as though from Snake Creek Gap, to this place we have fought over every inch of Ground. Sherman is determined not to be surprised, or to give them all the advantage by charging their stupendous works, in their chosen positions, but approaches them by lines of fortifications; creeping up at night & throwing up new lines, from night to night; while day after day the poor fellows have to lay behind their intrenchments in the hot sun all day and if they lift their heads six inches from the ground a sharp shooter sends a ball whizzing through their brains, when the sun dont beat down in red-hot rays, upon the poor fellows that have to lie in line of battle from day to day in this manner, it rains in fearful torrents, and the ditches in which they lie fill with water, until the poor fellows have to lie for hours in mud and water just as filthy as hogs wallow in, in Iowa. I heard Col Noyes of the 39th Ohio say he was covered with mud, ticks, body-lice, and every conceivable "animalcula" it is awful. But the rebels have it just as bad that is one consolation. But the men are in better spirits, there is less grumbling, less swearing, less cussing officers, less wishing old Abe and the whole government was in "hell," and every conceivable blasphemy, such as soldiers practice; than I ever heard in the army before. . . .

[To his wife, from "Near Nickajack Creek, Ga.," July 4, 1864]

All night before last all day before yesterday and all yesterday we were on the march. And when I tell you that we are now only twelve miles from Big Shanty you will recognize something of the difficulties and delays of army movements. I have no doubt I have rode over the ground between

here and Big Shanty no less than half a dozen times since starting first a wagon is broke down then a team gives out in the hot sun then one thing then another to ride back & forth to see to; night before last dark rainy and muddy I rode all night. I do not know what to do sometimes as it nearly kills me to ride so much. Gen Sherman determined to drop his communication with the R R as the Kinesaw [sic] Mountains were utterly impregnable and the R. R. run right around it for several miles so Gen Sherman determined to let the Rebels come in on the R R and go around it to the right and this going around by night and over roads which we cut through the woods so the rebels would not see us is what we are at when we [are] going nights &c. . . . we are near Sweetwater on the Sandtown River and exerting every energy to beat the Rebels to the river. To day is awful hot and the dust is flying terribly. There is a little muddy hole like a hog-wallow a short distance from where I write and as the soldiers march along and see it they run to it and crowd and scratch to dip their tin cups in and get something to drink. . . . I am just stopped here in a wheat field to graze some cattle and while they are grazing . . . am writing to you. . . .

[To Judd Carpenter, from "Near Chattahoochee River, Ga.," July 7, 1864]

. . . Since I wrote you the Rebels have abandoned their strong position at Kinesaw Mt and the 16th Corps to which I am attached, Gen Dodge having command of that portion here, has swung around so that now we are next to the extreme right, the 17th Corps (Frank Blair) being on our right and consequently nearer the River, we are about 4 miles from the River. It is said that the Rebels are getting their *materiel* over the River as fast as possible. They fall back about $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile at a time and every time when they fall back, they have Earth Works to cover them. You can imagine how those Rebels have worked, when I tell you that for the last eight miles every half mile there have been parallel lines of Earth works, fully ten miles long and in no place over a half mile apart and many places much nearer. These works are so that you could stand up behind them and be safe from bullets from the front and in front of them the trees are fallen over across with tops cut and limbs sharpened so as to deter men from charging; all this simply to cover a retreat with no apparent determination to hold them. This is war. . . .

[To the Des Moines Register, dated "Before Atlanta, Georgia," Aug. 25, 1864. The letter was published in the Register of Sept. 28, 1864.]

. . . I give the soldier's ration or supply table:

1. The ration is twelve ounces of pork or bacon, or one pound and four ounces of salt or fresh beef; eighteen ounces of soft bread or flour, or twelve ounces of hard bread, or one pound and four ounces of corn meal, and to every one hundred rations, fifteen pounds of beans and peas, or ten pounds of rice or hominy; ten pounds of green coffee, or eight pounds of roasted (or roasted and ground) coffee, or one pound and eight ounces of tea; fifteen pounds of sugar; four quarts of vinegar, one pound and four ounces of Adamantine or star candies; four pounds of soap; three pounds and twelve ounces of salt, and four ounces of pepper. The Subsistence Department as may be most convenient or least expensive to it, and according to the conditions and amount of its supplies, shall determine whether soft bread or flour, and what other component parts of the ration, as equivalents, shall be issued.
2. On a campaign, on marches, or on board of transports, the ration of hard bread is one pound.
3. Desicated compressed potatoes, or desicated compressed mixed vegetables, at the rate of one ounce and a half of the former and one ounce of the latter to the ration, may be substituted for beans, peas, rice or hominy.
4. Beans, peas, salt and potatoes (fresh), shall be purchased, issued and sold by weight, and the bushel of each shall be estimated at sixty pounds.
5. When deemed necessary, fresh vegetables, dried fruit, molasses, pickles or any other proper food may be purchased and issued in lieu of any component part of the ration of equal money value. The Commissary General of Subsistence is alone authorized to order such purchase. . . .

When starting on this campaign, we were ordered by Gen. Sherman to take half rations of salt meat, full rations of hard bread, coffee, sugar, and double rations of salt, as we were to use a good deal of fresh beef. However, since closing the movements from one flank to another, and while the army has been lying on the Georgia R. R. confronting Atlanta, we have been able again to obtain nearly the full ration. The reason Gen. Sherman issued the order for the campaign was because with our limited transportation, it was impracticable to have the full supply. . . .

[The following letter was written from August 25 to September 7, and dated East Point, Ga., Sept. 11, 1864. It was published in the *Des Moines Register*, Oct. 5, 1864.]

At noon on the 25th of August, all the trains required to transport fifteen

day's supply for the army, were ordered from their position in the rear of the forces confronting Atlanta, to Judge Wilson's house, near the crossing of Utoy Creek, in the direction of Sandtown. . . . On the night of the 26th, the 16th corps, constituting the rear guard of the "Army of the Tenn.," left the trenches in front of Atlanta and took up the line of march for Judge Wilson's and simultaneously the 20th corps withdrew from in front of Atlanta and occupied the works prepared for it in front of the Chattahoochee Bridge, and the vast park of trains left behind. . . .

At an early hour on the morning of the 28th, we marched for the Atlanta and La Grange R. R., which we intersected between Fairburn and Red Oak near Shadrock [Shadna] church, a portion of our forces occupying it by 3 o'clock P. M. when the work of destruction was immediately commenced.

The 16th and 17th corps marched upon a road upon the extreme left; the 15th corps followed by the supply train of the "Army of the Tennessee," pursued a road to the right, varying about one fourth to a mile from that of the 16th and 17th; the 4th and 14th corps were still further to the right, marching on two roads about the same distance apart, while the one nearest the "Army of the Tenn.," varied from a half to a mile in distance. All these roads were generally parallel in their course. . . .

At night the army bivouacked in the vicinity of [Shadna] Church, where it remained during the 29th, and continued the work of destruction on the R. R. utterly destroying it for miles either way. It is more work to destroy a R. R. than one would imagine. In the first place the spikes have to be knocked out on the side of the rail — no easy job — then the rails are pried up, being frequently so imbedded in the ties as to be moved with great difficulty, then the ties are pried out of the hardened earth in which they have lain imbedded for years, being piled in heaps about every three rods. But as these have been hugged by the damp earth for years, they frequently will not burn without an addition of more combustible material, usually supplied from the neighboring fence. When this is done, and the fire kindled, the iron rails are laid across the burning ties, thus heating the middle of the rail, which causes the ends to sink to the ground from their own weight. The boys then take them off, put the heated centre against a stump tree or telegraph pole, and bend the two ends together, and not infrequently drive them quite past each other. . . .

August 30th. — . . . It was a long hard march today, and that in the face of the enemy. . . . At times the skirmishing was quite heavy, the

rebels disputing our advance with great stubbornness, but against all obstacles the troops pressed forward.

I had charge of a drove of cattle, and when it became dark, I found that driving them through the thick brush was next to impossible, especially as wagons, artillery, horses, mules, and every conceivable thing was crowded in the road until there was no room for another living thing. I could not *correll* [sic] for the night, as I did not know how far the troops would move. So I went forward with a view to overtaking Gen. Ransom, and finding out. After riding by, over and around troops, wagons, artillery, &c. &c., for about two miles, being jostled against trees, and scratching face and eyes in sundry thorn bushes in attempting to pass the column by taking to the woods, I finally overtook the head of the 2d Brigade, 4th Division — General Sprague — who told me that he expected the command would reach the R. R., if possible. I then started back, determined to have those cattle brought forward, as I feared to risk their staying so far in the rear. On getting back, I found a Cavalry company guarding them, who had corralled the herd, it having become so dark they could not see them. — The train and troops were still passing the point where they were encamped. I left them with orders that so soon as the road was clear to come ahead, and determined to go to the front, and find at what point in this vast army our corps would take up its position. The road over which the 16th corps passed that P. M. was one cut for the occasion, therefore rough, stumpy and narrow. — In passing along this dark night, I saw the debris of an army which had marched all one hot day and half the night. Here would be a wagon broken down and shoved outside, with darkey, mules and load all left standing — here one with the team tired out turned into the brush, team unhitched, and feeding — here one with a mule stretched dead in harness and shoved aside, with disconsolate driver rigging harness for a spike team — here half a wagon load of rations, which some driver with failing team had dispensed with to lighten his load — here would come a soldier staggering along under his heavy pack, using a gun for a cane — here another, riding an old mule which had been abandoned during the day, but had been "turned in" by this sore-footed, tired out soldier — here would come a squad of five or six half give out soldiers, with blankets, knapsacks, &c. strapped on the back of an abandoned mule, or some old citizen's horse, which had been confiscated for this occasion — here a half dozen who had seized a yoke of steers, yoke and cart upon which they had

loaded their traps, and were making good headway to the front — here would likely be a half dozen in the brush, sound asleep, heedless of anything passing — here would be a single soldier, pressing the foot of a tree used as a pillow, wrapped in slumber — here would be half a dozen in the brush, with camp-fire, cooking the corn they had harvested for supper — here a negro plodding along with some scant cooking utensils, telling he is some officer's servant fallen behind; he inquires for "fust Brigade de 2d Division," and plods along, while his officer lies, hungrily awaiting his coming, five miles in advance. But notwithstanding all these scenes, there is something constantly occurring which will cause a man to laugh, however tired. On this night at one place we came out of the timber into a field which seemed to have been a rendezvous for stragglers; in fact there were so many lying on either side of the road, it looked somewhat as though a regiment had bivouacked there; when a wagon-master just emerging from the dark woods, at the head of his section of teams, discovered them, and drawing himself up in his saddle with a dignity only attainable by wagon-masters says: "What regiment is this?" "Ninety-third stragglers," was the response of a soldier. "You've got a d——d big regiment," says the wagon-master. "Yes," was the reply, "we used to have a bigger one, but those who straggled the worst have been promoted to wagon-masters, so they can ride." To appreciate this, you should know in what contempt a wagon-master is held by a soldier in the line, and also how disgraceful it is considered to straggle. Finally through all this panorama, I reached Flint river, but as it was after midnight, I could find no one at head-quarters awake; hearing, however, that the 17th corps which was in the rear, would camp about five miles back, bringing it in the neighborhood of my corral, I started back, so well satisfied that I could even whistle, while picking my way through the woods to avoid the moving mass occupying the road. I got back just at daylight to find everything all right. . . .

Sept. 1 — Heavy firing of artillery continues, interspersed with continuous volleys of musketry, and the loud huzzas that roll along the line of battle whenever a point is gained. . . . During the whole of this afternoon the smoke of the burning powder, and burning railroad ties, filled the whole atmosphere with a dense, suffocating smoke, while the moving of troops, trains and artillery, added to the smoky darkness, clouds of dust fairly hiding the sun. It was impossible to see anything more than a few yards. To an unpracticed eye everything would have seemed like confusion, or

rather chaos. It was like a seething cauldron, while there was a dead, heavy roar in the heavens, like an approaching storm. The 17th corps in marching to and fro, passed one given point four times, and still did not get into the heavy fighting. I am satisfied, however, Gen. Sherman understood the matter; and notwithstanding the chaotic appearance of things, and the mysterious movements, there was no time during the day, but when I felt confident of the results, and my confidence appeared to find an echo from every tongue. You could feel victory in the smoke and dust laden air.

Sept. 2 — Our skirmishers developed the fact that the enemy had fled,²¹ and a little after daylight the whole army was on the move. . . . I never saw as grand a sight as the army presented. On the left side of the railroad the 4th corps marched, while on the track was the long blue line of the 14th corps; immediately on the right of the road were the dark columns of the 15th corps, through the middle of a field lining the railroad, and occasional skirts of timber, where our pioneers cut a road, wound the serpentine columns of the 16th corps, and in a dirt road on the right of the fields the 17th corps swept along. Away in the distance, the back ground was made grand by five or six different lines of wagon trains, all coming up in the rear. The morning was bright, the dust and smoke had settled, and two or three times during the march, I gained a point in the fields, whence could be seen these five distinct blue columns of confident veterans, while the glimmer of the sun's rays on all those thousands of glistening bayonets seemed to make the world look lighter than common. It was amusing to see some of the boys, marching to the front that morning. A lawyer's office had been cleaned out in Jonesboro that morning, and now and then you would see a soldier tugging along with knapsack and gun, and Blackstone, or Kent, or the Statutes of Georgia under his arm. . . . The good spirits that pervaded our forces was [sic] remarkable. When arriving in the vicinity of Lovejoy's Station, the rear guard of the enemy was found throwing up intrenchments; the boys could hardly be restrained from charging the works, but Sherman having accomplished so well the object of the campaign, forebore making any more sacrifice of life as he knew better how to win an objective point.

September 3d, 4th and 5th, we remained below Jonesboro, near Lovejoy's Station, the headquarters of the 16th Corps being near Hebron

²¹ On September 1 the Confederate forces evacuated Atlanta, thus ending Sherman's four-month campaign against that stronghold.

Church. On the A. M. of the 4th, the trains started back for East Point, that being understood as the place of rendezvous for the "Army of the Tenn." . . .

When we were on the march, officers and men would often say to me, "Ain't this a splendid movement?" "Ain't General Sherman a trump?" and though it was hardly known what we were to do, or where to go — only surmised by the soldier; yet, all spoke of it with that enthusiasm and confidence which is a sure precursor of success. I understood then what there is in an army that has perfect confidence in the skill and judgment of its commander; I also had a slight appreciation of that power in a great mind, which by some mysterious magnetic influence, can infuse its own enthusiasm into a vast body of men, thousands of whom never saw the man upon whom they so implicitly rely. . . . Of the high order of talent which the future historian will concede to Gen. Sherman, and the niche he will occupy in the history of this restored Union, I need not speak, as the voice of the country and his army has prophesied in advance.

[The following letter, dated at East Point, Ga., Sept. 27, 1864, appeared in the *Des Moines Register* of Nov. 2, 1864, with the note: "The following communication has been on its way here nearly a month. The delay was occasioned by the cutting off of Sherman's communication."]²²

. . . Men constitute an army; and whatever adds to the health and saves the life of the soldier is one of the most important achievements of the science of war. The great improvements made in this particular are noticeable to the dullest observer. The mode of living in the camp of the soldier has constantly improved since the first doubtful campaigns of this great struggle. I cannot but notice with what scant supplies from the Quartermaster and Commissary Departments, a soldier will now make himself a degree comfortable; especially when contrasted with the blind and ignorant experiences of 1861 and '62. Then upon the march, if the Regimental and Brigade teams did not bring forward the soldier's cooking utensils at night, no meat would be cooked, or coffee boiled, but he would nibble hard tack, eat his sow-meat, swallow from his canteen some sickish warm water, and

²² Sherman's army was now on its famous "March to the Sea." The troops left Atlanta on November 14, 1864; on December 10, they reached Savannah, which fell on December 22 — Sherman's "Christmas gift" to Lincoln. Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals*, 345-6.

lie down upon the ground to curse his fate. Now the experienced campaigner carries his little coffee-boiler attached to his knapsack, and often when halting in the day-time boils a cup of coffee. If he finds an old canteen, he melts the solder, thus parting it in two equal halves at the outer edge, and running a string through the edge of one half, he has a frying pan which he can carry without feeling its weight. He has learned to march in the army shoes instead of thin-soled square-toed boots. When he bivouacks at night, with rails, pickets, or boards, he extemporizes himself a bed off the ground; but if this is not possible he always has a rubber blanket, which is a good protection against the damp earth. He has sufficient experience to cook his food until done, and to avail himself of everything that comes in his way that will protect his health and add to his comforts. In fact he has established his habitation in so many places, that he not only erects his house with great celerity, but not infrequently manifests a taste, which did not constitute an element in his character before leaving home for the war. . . .

There is one scene connected with an army which I have never seen described by a correspondent, even of as good taste as B. F. Taylor, and that is the evening bivouack, after a day's march. Mothers and sisters would laugh to see a faithful representative of their hopeful sons, and big brothers, on this occasion. The whole atmosphere of an encampment is laden with a kind of crowded hum. Every soldier will be doing something; either laughing, talking, whistling, singing, pounding something, or cutting wood. Two are extemporizing a bed as follows: take two rails and lay them flat on the ground about twelve feet apart and parallel with each other; crosswise and near the end of these lay a third rail, as if to build a rail pen; then lay two more over the first two with ends resting on the last, then lay another cross rail near the same end on which the first crosswise was laid, and about a foot inside of that. They then take rails, and passing one end over this last cross rail, and under the first, so the lower ends rest on the ground the rails forming an angle of almost forty-five degrees, while the intervening one at the bottom holds everything firm, thus making rafters, over which by spreading a gum [rubber] blanket, the house is complete. — Others will be kindling fires for the hundreds of different messes; others bringing rails for fires and bunks; others splitting wood; others pounding coffee in tin cups, with the butt end of their bayonets or muzzles of their guns; others bringing water with a dozen canteens strung over their shoulders; others

frying fat bacon; others picking chickens foraged during the day; and all at work. . . .

But while there are some things not unpleasant in the life of a soldier, there are others outside of the battle field from which the stoutest heart shrinks back appalled. . . . To illustrate one of the trials which develops the manhood of the soldier, I will give a single day's history, journalized during the late campaign. When we left Kingston, the army was supplied with twenty days rations; all to be loaded on wagons before the troops marched. The day our forces moved, the 16th corps moving in the rear, and not getting out until nearly night its train was last loaded. And when the corps was well on its way to Van Wert, it was found the A. Q. M. had failed to leave trains enough to haul the required number of rations. I had charge of this business, and after riding all night, to Head Quarters for an order for more teams, and the balance of the night in finding Quarter Masters, and getting the teams back some seven miles, I finally succeeded in getting them loaded. — But it was then nearly night and as it was reported that Wheeler's cavalry had come in between our forces and Kingston, Col. Hambright of the 79th Pennsylvania objected to my leaving, he being Post Commandant. But as every hour widened the distance betwixt my train, for which I had one company of cavalry as an escort, and the left wing of the 16th Corps, I persuaded the Colonel to allow me to move. When I got well on the road it was dark, the corps now being twenty-five hours in advance. — I resolved that, Wheeler not interfering, that train should not halt until it joined the main command. We had not gone far before it commenced raining. The terrific thunder and vivid lightning appeared to be incessant, and between the flashes of lightning the darkness could be felt. I thought I had seen heavy storms on the prairies of Iowa, but for pouring rain, and impenetrable darkness, I never saw this night excelled. I had no rubber coat with me, and was completely drenched and very cold. Nothing but constant riding back and forth, in my anxiety to get the train along, prevent wagon-masters from leaving wagons sticking in the mud, and to see that the train was kept closed up, prevented me from becoming numb and sick. At one time during the night, we crossed what appeared to be a kind of barren, for several miles without seeing a house. We were uncertain whether the command followed that road or not, as the rain swept along the road like a torrent, completely obliterating all signs of any force having passed over the road before. We were enabled to keep the road solely

by the light of a lantern, which Mr. O. E. Mason, P. M. for the 16th Corps had in his ambulance, he having fallen in with us on his route to the command with the mail. This he lighted, and keeping in advance of the train, we followed the flickering light. While riding along uncertain whether we were in the right road or not, I saw by a flash of lightning a dark object beside the road, like a man. I thought it was one of my escort, dismounted and asleep, but on getting down and taking hold of him, I found him stark and cold in death. By his uniform I discovered he was a member of the 35th New Jersey Regiment, who had undoubtedly fallen out and died the day before; thus, by this solemn sign I was notified that we were on the right road.

But on through the blinding storm and deep mud we pressed, making our way into Van Wert the next morning at daylight. — Here were soldiers sitting on each side of the road, bedraggled and muddy, waiting for the 15th and 17th Armp Corps to get out of the way as they were marching in advance. While I was telling a man I had been out all night, and had no sleep for the two preceding nights, he told me they had been ordered out the evening before, after a hard day's march, and had been sitting there all night long, waiting for those two Corps to pull out and give the road. Any person who has boiled over with impatience for having to wait an hour or so in a comfortable place, can imagine the state of mind throughout this whole Army Corps, waiting for ten hours, tired and worn out, in that stormy night, with no chance to sleep. Nothing but the noblest principles of manhood, and the sternest principles of patriotism can enable men under such circumstances to withstand the temptation to complain, and give way to unavailing regrets.

It would be impossible to enumerate in a half dozen communications the many changes which have taken place in the minds of soldiers relative to the theory of war. — One thing, however, is so patent as to deserve notice. I remember in the Spring of 1862, after the battle of Shiloh, when our forces were moving upon Corinth, how bitterly some of the soldiers complained of Gen. Halleck, protesting they did not join the army to work, but fight, and were anxious to be led against the works encircling Corinth. But now protests are on the other side; the old veteran is not anxious to be led against the enemy buried behind breastworks; where, safe himself, he is prepared, coolly and deliberately, to shoot down his assailant; but he is always ready to dig his way to the front. Now soldiers will frequently

carry a spade along with them, on all their marches, besides their other plunder, and will refuse even to allow the Quarter Master to haul it for them, alleging that they may want to use it, and that it is their spade, and they prefer to carry it themselves. — When you see a man marching under a scalding sun, bending under a gun, spade, knapsack, &c., you may be assured he is a brave man, a brave soldier, and goes prepared for emergencies, and never thinks of straggling to the rear when the emergency arrives. It is astonishing how quickly an army will now extemporize breast-works. They will spring to it in an emergency, and hurl together rails, old logs, brush, and temporary defense; then in the lulls of a battle, with bayonets, frying-pan handles, butcher knives, &c., dig up the earth in the rear of those frail log and rail works, and scooping it up with frying-pans, tin cups, their hands, &c., by magic heavy earthworks loom up, where a few moments before were rude rail piles, log-heaps, and other debris of the soil. . . .

[To his wife, from Smyrna Church, Ga., Nov. 8, 1864]

. . . I was made a Lt Col and ordered to the 16th Corps on the Miss River. I was then temporarily on duty at Dept. Hd Qrs and Gen Howard²³ ordered me to stay until the march was over. When I came here he told me that I was so good a man he did not want to lose me from the field and therefore ordered me to duty in the 15th Corps. This was disagreeable to me as this army is going on a great campaign and this is the last letter I can write you until it is over. We are to drop our communications and launch out through the Southern Confederacy whither none know but Gen Sherman and he does not tell Commissaries. . . .

[To his wife, from "Anderson Plantation near Savannah, Ga.," Dec. 16, 1864]

On Tuesday the 15th of Nov. our forces commenced leaving Atlanta as I had informed you in numerous notes and letters they would. I staid until the evening of the 16th and left with the rear guard after having seen most of the city and all the business portion destroyed. I have previously told you all I knew concerning the trip we were to make. I suppose Gen Sher-

²³ General O. O. Howard was placed in command of the Army of the Tennessee on July 27, 1864, having succeeded John A. Logan, who in turn had succeeded Sherman. On March 26, 1864, Sherman had been moved from command of the Army of the Tennessee to command over the armies of the Ohio, the Tennessee, the Cumberland, and Arkansas — known as the Military Division of the Mississippi. Dyer, *Compendium*, 256-7.

man himself did not know exactly what point on the Atlantic Seaboard he would pounce upon at the end as his movements would necessarily be controlled by the enemy in some measure. But after a long march over a barren and thinly populated pine country and vast sandy stretches, he has brought up in front of Savannah and has the city closely invested, with every prospect of its early reduction. There was but little on the trip to interest a person.²⁴ Population is reduced from its old proportions to consist of a few troubled scared cadaverous looking females surrounded by a numerous herd of half-starved looking children enough to excite the sympathy of the most stony-hearted Yankee. The country is not such as to please the eye of an individual who has seen western prairies. Take it all together the trip was monotonous one day being the tedious recapitulation of its predecessor. . . . I hope Savannah will be taken without the sacrifice of many lives and that will prove this one of the fastest and most successful expeditions of the age. This too I think will soon lead to the fall of Richmond. The Confederacy is now effectually cut in twain. I suppose there has been much interest felt in Gen Sherman's army and his safe arrival upon the Atlantic seaboard with the loss of less than 500 men after all the silly braggadocio of Rebel papers about the capture of his entire army — will be a great relief to the public mind. . . .

[To Emmett Carpenter, from Savannah, Ga., Dec. 25, 1864]

. . . You will no doubt obtain through the press the full particulars of the evacuation of Savannah and Gen Sherman's triumphant entrance into an almost depopulated city. But very little material of war was found here and the Rebels either took away large trains or were not well supplied and must soon have surrendered to avoid starvation if they had not shipped out of the "Back Door" — I do not know where we will go next but do not think we will remain here long. We are now on very short rations as the Rebels by chains strung across the channel, Torpedoes, and Rock filled cribs, sunk in the channel effectually prevent present navigation of the River. But so soon as we shall be able to replete our supplies get some clothes shoes &c &c I have no doubt Gen Sherman will order his veteran

²⁴ This statement must be surprising to readers who have come to consider Sherman's "marching through Georgia" as one of the highly dramatic stories of the Civil War. Carpenter must have become hardened to the ravages of war; nowhere in his letters does he mention the great destruction of property which made Sherman's march at once so terrible and so successful.

columns to "forward march" either to assist Gen Grant in the capture of Richmond, or to attack and take Augusta with an ultimate view to the reduction of Charleston from a rear attack. . . . I think we will have to fight these rebels another year but I know that they will find a harder row to hoe now than they have heretofore. This army of Gen Sherman's are sufficient to march any where they may please when there is any thing like an equal field of operations. . . .

[To his wife, from Raleigh, Apr. 18, 1865]

. . . But to-day confirms a rumor of yesterday, which fills all hearts with gloom. We have the sad intelligence that Abraham Lincoln is dead — died by the hand of an assassin this at any time would be a sorrowful stroke to our country but particularly so now when the complications of our foreign relations are to be unravelled, and the intricate business of reconstruction is to be effected, duties for which his calm wisdom, his dispassionate mind, his [illegible] spirit, his discreet forecast, his unparalleled [sic] sagacity, and his noble Christian character was so well fitted to perform. . . . I pity the women & children in this confederacy if Johnston does not surrender for if this army with its present feelings should march over the country they would raze every house to its foundation. . . .²⁵

[To his wife, from Manchester, Va., May 12, 1865]

I wrote you and Emmett day before yesterday then expecting it would be the last you would hear from me until I arrived in the vicinity of Alexandria whither our army is expected to march. But as the Potomac Army was occupying the roads leading out from Richmond and had to get out of our way then Sheridans Army came up and had to use the pontoons in crossing the James River and take the roads in front of us, we have just been able to get the roads this morning. The 17th Corps is now crossing and we will be able to commence crossing at 1 P. M. but will not be over until late to-morrow. . . . I am very glad we are going to get away from here first I am anxious to get along and secondly there is so much ill-feeling between these two armies I want to get away by ourselves. Fights have occurred between the armies resulting in the death of one or two men already and if we had to lay here long things would become worse. I of course do not partake of the prejudices and jealousies of most of our officers and men and try in every way to allay the foolish feeling but Gen Sherman shows the prejudice of his army I think to a large extent and that

gives the men a supposed license to abuse the Potomac Army. Gen Sherman I think is somewhat soured to think he did not himself come off with the *eclat* of being the great negotiator and Pacificator and being naturally of a morose vain temperament and extremely ambitious he will be rather hard to manage in the future. . . .

[The army left Manchester on May 12 and arrived at Alexandria on May 21. The following two entries from a brief diary which Carpenter kept during 1865 describe briefly the two-day Grand Review of the troops at Washington.]

May 23, 1865. Went to Washington again and saw the review of Gen Meades army [the Army of the Potomac]. . . . I never saw a greater Crowd than was here to-day. Every body and their Cousins were on hand and every body looked happy. The Review was over about 3 oclock and I went home. I think this has been a grand army and looks better than our army. . . .

May 24, 1865. To-day was the second day of the Review and our army [Sherman's] is on its toes. I never saw better marching than was done by that army.²⁶ Every body admits they exceeded the army of the Potomac. Every man in the army feels like a major general to-night. . . .

²⁵ General Joseph T. Johnston surrendered to Sherman on April 18, 1865, the very day that Carpenter wrote this letter. For this surrender, see Lloyd Lewis, *Sherman: Fighting Prophet* (New York, 1932), 534ff.

²⁶ For a dramatic account of the Grand Review, see *ibid.*, Chap. 56.