

Wolter Weener and Broer Van Dyk Letters

Wolter Weener Letters

Undated Letter Fragment

[beginning is missing] tried to write about everything more orderly. Now it is all so mixed up, though I think that they only printed a synopsis or a condensed version.

I don't know what else to write. I did not write you yet that I sent \$30.00 to Mr. Den Bleyker to send to father. Give my best respects to Miss Nellie Weeks. You did not write me that she is by you again, nor where she is rooming, or when she came, only that Harm came by you since she was there, and that she will take that letter along. How are your father's bees doing, and yours?

When you receive the [illegible], you better write back soon to tell me whether Broer is very happy to be home again. I suppose he comes to see you often for the same reason. I wrote to Jan Ten Have, when he receives his letter, he will let you read it also. Do write me once what the newspapers say about France's recognition of the Southern Confederacy. I think it is all Poppy Cock because on that (400) deserted over to our side. Now I will end, after greetings to you and the friends, I remain your loving brother-in-law and brother.

Walter Weener

Background Information

Wolter Weener was a brother of Hendreka Weener, wife of Otto C. Van Dyk. Wolter never married.

According to Wolter's (Walter) Civil War papers, he was a corporal of Captain W. G. Eaton, Company I of the 13th Regiment of Michigan Infantry Volunteers, of the State of Michigan. Age 26 years, 6 feet 4 inches high; light complexion, grey eyes, brown hair, and by occupation, a farmer, having joined the company on its original organization at Olive, Michigan on Dec 7, 1861 and enrolled in it at the muster into service of the United States at Kalamazoo, Mich. on the 17th day of January 1862 for the term of three years.

He was killed in the Battle of Stone [sic] River, Tennessee on Dec 31, 1862.

Headquarters Mieto 13th

Camp near Stevenson, Ala.,

July 21, 1862

Dear Friend J. Ten Have,

I received your letter of the [illegible], I was in good health when I received it. You didn't answer my letter very quickly. Even though you don't seem to have any trouble writing

letters, I know that there is not much news, you can show your interest with a few lines. Enough of that.

Up until now, I'm reasonably well, by God's grace. The day before yesterday, the 19th, we departed from Moresville by train to just past Stevenson, 78 miles where we are camped. When we arrived, we had to be on picket guard, 5½ miles farther, it was evening.

We departed, and we were told that the bridge which we had to guard was only four miles from camp. We were getting tired and were walking without worrying about anything, the captain in the rear, and then we were fired upon (or shot at). We immediately jumped down on the other side of the train tracks, which served as a protection. However, we soon found out that they were northern pickets (on the same side), from another division, (McCook's)

There was a company posted there, and they had their tents and camp equipment right there. We stayed there overnight and they treated us very friendly. They did not let us stand guard, so we went to sleep peacefully. The next day we went back to our camp, and on the way we confiscated a calf, because right now, we are on half rations. Why that is, I don't know, whether they can get it here easily or quickly, or whether the quartermasters sell the other half to the civilians, who otherwise perhaps have to go hungry. Though that is really the same, I think that we are really more entitled to it. Though don't think now that we are going hungry, if Uncle Sam does not give us enough food, then our neighbors, the plantation owners will have to do it, and if we should get punished for that, we will rebel, because we are not planning on perishing from hunger as long as there is something to eat, where we can get at it, - apples and blackberries we can get, as much as we can eat, if we are not too lazy to pick them.

We are not far from the rebel army, I believe 12 miles from the Tennessee River, on the other side of the river, are the rebel pickets. The pickets are not allowed to shoot at each other. Both ours and their pickets swim in the river, and then we sometimes trade coffee for whiskey.

I don't have anything more to write, except that you ought to write more often.

Wishing you God's blessing, and greeting to all the friends and brother Harm, John, Spykerman, J. Browsers, and etc.

I am your friend, Wolter Weener. Greetings to Albert and Jane Van Dyk.

P.S. – Today I am again standing guard for 24 hours. This has not happened in a whole month, but when I have to do it, it really does not bother me. The boys never notice me, but they give the other corporals a lot of trouble. Maybe it is because I make it as easy as possible for them.

Jacob Schepers is not feeling too well. You ought to write him once too, since you know him. The address is - Co. D. The rest is the same as mine.

Camp Stevenson, Ala.

July 29, 1861 [Editor's Note: should be 1862]

Dear Brother-in-law and sister,

By the Lord's goodness, I am still chipper and healthy. The month in which we commemorate the birthday of the Union, has almost come to an end, time flies, doesn't it. We still are in the same camp, there is not much going on, or disturbances. There is fear for an attack, the depot at Stevenson is partly filled with provisions and maybe they (southerners) would like to get those provisions. Yesterday morning, a detachment of cavalry was sent out, and before they knew it, they were by the enemy who shot three of our soldiers dead and wounded some. The rebels were entrenched behind logs. They (north) could not attack there, so they turned back. Immediately after, some infantry regiments and a battery were sent back with them. I have not heard any more about it, but nobody is allowed to leave the camp, and we have to have everything in readiness for battle. How it will be when I come before the firing, I do not know, I am ready to go when I am called and sometimes I look forward to it, because sitting around is so boring, and when I see how the rebels are always busy and we have to wait to attack, I cannot help but get angry at our generals. It seems to me that where the party is, that is on the defence [sic] is not entrenched, the attacking party has the advantage. I heard that a complete rebel army crossed the river, and also heard that we have 30,000 men between Huntsville and Battle Creek. I think our brigade still has 7 or 8 companies of our regiment in camp. The 64th Ohio and the 51st Indiana went out yesterday. The southerners just go to the general and get a pass, and then they can go wherever they want, and see everything that is going on here. That way, the enemy finds out everything. The passes read as follow: "Guards and pickets, pass Mr. [blank] till further orders". Under that, it reads, "General or Provost Marshall [blank]". If the U.S. government doesn't want to do anything else, I would just as soon they discharge us from the service. I do not know how they can put so much trust in such a false nation and toy with the lives of those entrusted to them. I also heard that the General McCook division is advancing toward Chattanooga. The civilians are having a hard time with shortages. You can understand that from the following piece of paper which was posted or put up by the owner of the most prominent boarding house in Stevenson. "Gentlemen: we cannot prepare meals. We are out of provisions. We have no breadstuff except hard army crackers." "Proprietor". Despite that, they do their best to break up the rail roads and to cut off our supply line, and they seem to rely on that we will take care of their families. I see in the newspapers that the pressured southern soldiers have no heart to fight, and would rather stay home.

Alabama has supplied the southern army with 60,000 men, and it is one of the smallest states in the Confederacy. What did the other states deliver in the way of men, it would not surprise me if they have between 6 and 7 hundred thousand men in service. General Smith is pursuing the guerillas in Kentucky and drives them ahead of him. The

civilians in that state are also arming themselves, and in Tennessee, the same thing. The civilians in Missouri are finding out that the rebel guerillas are not doing them any good.

It is now afternoon, everything is still quiet and peaceful here. Greetings from me to all, especially the relatives. I wrote this with a gold pen. If I could buy one here and I had so much money, I would give \$3.00 for it because I always have so much trouble with steel pens.

After wishing you God's blessings, I am your loving brother-in-law and brother, - Wolter Weener.

Camp 2½ miles south of Nashville, Tenn.

March 19, 1862

Dear Brother-in-law and Sister,

Through God's goodness, we are who we are up until this moment. Neither one of us is completely healthy. We have a very bad cold. Broer has the worst one. For over a week now, I have had dysentery and in between also, passing blood. My dysentery is not yet completely gone, but I feel almost as good as new. Broer has had very little trouble with dysentery. This is something that everyone who comes from the northern states gets. We have now been here just about a week, and so are somewhat rested up from the fatigue of a long and hasty journey. Three fourths of our regiment are more or less sick mostly with dysentery, so that if we had to fight, we would not have many men available. It seems to me there won't be much more fighting even though the enemy is not far from here. It is said, that in this area, there is an army of 150,000 men, Union Troops, which are standing ready to go forward march. Manasjas [sic] is in our hands. This is a big blow for the rebels.

Last night it thundered and rained. Well brother-in-law, what a beautiful country it is here. I would much rather live here than in North Holland, if it were not for some things.

By sunshiny weather it is here just like by you in the summer. It doesn't freeze here at all now.

Boekeloo wrote me that he sent the money, the clothes, and pictures to the colony with Jan Nabor, so that is all in order.

Well after greetings, I remain your loving brother-in-law and brother.

Wolter Weener

P.S. When I wrote to you that I wished that I could be home for a week so that I would feel better, you took that all to mean that I was homesick, but I only meant that there are doctors who know the illness more thoroughly. I have not yet been homesick and if I don't get any sicker than I am now, I will continue to be in high spirits. However, if you

would ask me what I would do if I had the choice, then I say, where the treasure is, there is the heart also.

Letters written by Broer Van Dyk

Nashville

November 29th

Esteemed and beloved father and mother

Through the Lord's unfailing goodness am I still regularly well cared for and it is my hearty wish that you might receive the same blessing. Yesterday evening there was brought here to our hospital a wounded rebel. He was a native of Tennessee. I spoke with him yesterday evening. He was happy that he was behind our lines. I asked him what they in their army thought of McClellan. He answered; "They may, among us, tolerate McClellan, but they have a bitter hatred against Abe; because, they say, if old Abe is elected again, then we will lose. (then we're sunk)." And this is no hearsy [sic], but this I have heard out of his own mouth.

Therefore I do not want anything to do with McClellan again, because I have a hate toward one who is a friend of our enemies, not out of party spirit, for the soldiers do not belong to a party, for most of the democratic soldiers have voted for the old Abe, for they all say I will not vote for a man whom the rebels like. We certainly want peace and we must gain it by fighting and not through the votes of a friend of the rebels. This is how the soldiers think about it so far as I have heard.

I must tell you more news. When I was in Atlanta, I gathered that there were three Holland families living there, so soon as I heard this, I went in search and I found one of them. They were Groningers. I asked to them, "Why do you not go to the North?" They answered and said, "We looked up against going to a strange land and it is cold there." I said, "Go to Michigan, there is a whole colony of Hollanders and also many Groningers, perhaps also acquaintances and friends from your land. They said that they did not hear any thing about a Hollandish [sic] colony in America. They had lived thirteen years in Atlanta. They were also shortly afterwards sent to the North because all the citizens who did not side with the South had to travel Northwards. Perhaps they may yet come to the colonies.

We beloved ones, I have nothing more to write.

My wish is that you may receive this letter in good circumstances and that the Lord keep you and bring you together again in health is my hearty wish and prayer.

I call myself your salvation wishing son,

Broer van Dyk

North Holland

February 11, 1865

Beloved brother,

We are through the Lord's steadfast goodness all yet in good health and our hearty wish is also that you may partake of the same good and that you also may receive these few words in a good circumstance.

We received your letter of January 8th on February 8th and from it gathered that you were well. The winter continues here as yet. It is busy with sleds here. Last Friday and Saturday it thawed and rained so that the roads became much worse, at least for the asses. Today it has become again rather soft, but that has changed again toward evening with a northwest snowstorm and extreme cold.

You must write once if you read the (Grontwet) otherwise I would certainly send you clippings from it.

Sunday Evening, the 13th

We had had wonderful sun shine again today. You asked if Michigan is also promised. There is certainly a chance that the town of Holland must deliver 49 men and volunteers are hardly not obtainable, at least not for three years. For one year men there was, I believe, still a possibility, but they rather not have them because if there is another draft, then we must still deliver people. Now I have also heard talk about casting lots, and those then who receive the lot would then still volunteer for the service and in this way obtain the bounty. Yet a fixed plan or resolution is not yet made.

Olive must, I believe, deliver five men. Well, little brother, there is not much news to write from here, except that Jan Lindens Ange was bereft of a son today, otherwise all is well. Now brother I wish you health and good courage and the unfailing blessing of the Lord in the hearty greetings from all of us.

Your brother, Otto

I did not dare to allow Jaaje to read your letter, this he would surely be angry. Write him yourself if you will. He is still a copper head, a hard one, too.

A word to my dear father, mother, and sister,

I am through the Lord's goodness, still very healthy. And wish that you may receive this letter under good circumstances. I thought it unnecessary to write the same to you, father, write more. I long for a letter, why especially I do not know. It is getting darker now. I must cut it short, [illegible] but it is not difficult for me. Now write back soon.

Your son,

Broer van Dyk

My address is:

Mr. Broer van Dyk

Co. Q 13th Reg. Michigan Inf.

Louisville, Kentucky

Tomorrow I think we must march 25 miles. It goes easy if one stays in step with the whole regiment. Undoubtedly, we must take up a position the old soldiers laid down (the responsibility for)

I have sent to father on the 12th these 5 dollars with purpose. And send again 5 preferable for father to care for and let me know if it was received.

Grand Rapids

Aug. 25, 1864

Honorable Father and Mother, sisters and brothers,

I let you know through these few words that I, through the Lord's goodness, have arrived here in health and it is my heartfelt wish that you may receive this letter in health.

I was chosen yesterday and naturally well chosen. Yet I have not signed because then I must be immediately in camp and that we do not want immediately. We want first to run around, because in camp we can still be enough. Thus we shall not sign before this evening or tomorrow morning. Here there are already volunteers available, but they come in eventually. We can sign up for the Engineers and Mechanics for a year. This we might as well do. The [illegible] goes well generally, so I hear. And there is no opposition to fear, but everything goes along peacefully. We shall move I heard Saturday, to Jackson, because we must camp there first. If that occurs, you cannot answer this letter.

I cannot obtain a furlough, well that is also for the best, because it remains always the same and then something new again.

I have sent my very old [illegible] and my portrait with Pete Van Tongeren. With this I shall end but, may God keep me and you and are together on the right way.

Your Son,

Broer van Dyk

Keokuck [sic], Iowa

Dec 2, 1864

Worthy and beloved Brother Albert van Dyk,

Again I take the pen in order to write you a letter.

I came to Keokuck [sic], Iowa yesterday evening, after a long tiring journey by steamboat and rail on the 13th of December in the afternoon.

We left Jeffersonville, Indiana by steamboat and on the 15th, we came to Cairo, Illinois where we stayed on the steamboat until the 17th. From there we travelled by rail towards evening and in the morning we came to Sandrilla where the citizens surprised us with an indescribable breakfast.

And on the same day in the afternoon we came to Decatur [sic], Illinois where the citizens brought of everything into the cars which one would find in the kitchen: cake and pie and warm bread and baked fig cakes, apples – cooked and uncooked, coffee and tea, and chicken, sweet milk, ham and brandy and wine, and fish – in a word we had all that our hearts could desire. During the night we came to Springfield, and on the 19th to Keokuck [sic].

I was in the city today and I found Various Hollanders here, also a brother of Keppel. It is getting dark and I must end for now.

To a hearty, great Dijk,

I your beloved brother,

Broer van Dyk

Kentucky

February 17, 1862

Highly esteemed brother and brother-in-law,

I had thought to write to both of you because I did not have much time. On the 12th we left Kalamazoo about eleven o'clock and traveled the whole night through and the following night we arrived in Jeffersonville. Then we slept another night in the cars and marched to New Albany. There we slept two nights in tents, which suited me fine. Then we marched again 2½ miles to the steamboat. Then we traveled 25 miles down the Ohio River and loaded on the west bank. Then we marched another mile and a half to our camp.

Here I sit now on a pile of wood writing. We are with just 20 men in each tent. We also have a stove in each tent. It is very muddy here, just as it was at your place this Spring. We are awaiting momentarily a great ordeal. We are not as yet sufficiently drilled for which we are partially to blame.

Men say a southerner lives three miles from the camp who also has the southern flag on his house. It is rumored that some one would go there tonight and would ask him if he was for the South; and then if he said "yes", then they would try to convert him, if he wanted to, I do not know.

People say there are only 10 good ministers in this county. Thus are we now by (zuash).

I have stood watch tonight [missing]

Your brother and brother-in-law

Broer, the soldier

Nashville, Tennessee

March 14, 1862

Very Dear Father and Mother,

I am through the Lord's goodness still rather healthy and hope that you also may receive this letter in well being. You besought that I write to you concerning what you must do with that money. Dear father, do with it as you think best.

We have made an approximately 170 mile trip on foot in 2 weeks [sic] time. On the 12th we went through Nashville concerning which you wrote that it was taken. When we went through the streets, the women cried, "Hoorah for Jeff Davis".

We are now in camp 4 miles south of the city. I have received your letter of the 11th and gather from it that you are well. I have nothing special to write. It is warm here as at your place in May. Some of the persimmon trees are in bloom already. It rained hard here today and that makes our camp muddy again. You wrote much about my concerns. I think at times also much about you, very dear parents. The soldiers [sic] life is a rough life. We must "stand in rank" also on Sunday. Dear father, do not forget me in your prayer, also that I pray more. Greet Duimen and his wife and his brothers and sisters. I call myself

Your beloved son,

Broer van Dyk

I loaned my money out. Now I have no more letter money. If you are able, send to me postage stamps in a letter.

Pension Application

The following is a Report of his Application for a Pension.

STATE OF MICHIGAN, COUNTY OF OTTAWA –

On this 25th day of April 1879, personally appeared before me Alfred A. Tracy, clerk of the Circuit Court, a Court of Record within and for the county and state, aforesaid Broer Van Dyke, aged 36 years, a resident of the Township of Holland, County of Ottawa and State of Michigan, who being duly sworn according to law, declares; that he is identical Broer Van Dyke who was enrolled on the 12th day of December 1861 as a private in Company I in the 13th Regiment of Michigan Infantry Volunteers commanded by Captain H. C. Stoughton, to serve three years, and was honorably discharged at Nashville, Tennessee by reason of Certificate of Disability on the 10th day of May 1862, that his personal description is as follows; Age 19 years; height 5 feet 8½ inches; complexion light; hair brown; eyes blue. That while a member of the organization, aforesaid in the service and in the line of duty at Nashville in the State of Tennessee on or about the 18th day of March 1862 he took cold which settled in his lungs which he thinks was caused by sleeping on the ground and being exposed to the rain, and not having a rubber blanket for a covering that he was treated for lung disease in a hospital on College Street in Nashville, Tennessee from about the 18th day of March 1862 until the time of his discharge on May 10th 1862. After his discharge he returned to his home in Holland, Mich., and for the first six months was unable to do any hard work, and very [missing] Office, where he remained 7 weeks, and as that did not improve his health, he tried sailing on Lake Michigan for 4 or 5 weeks, then returned home where he stayed almost one year, and his lung difficulty not growing any better, he tried sailing again for a few weeks, and then returned to his home in Holland, Michigan, and his health being somewhat improved, on the 26th day of August 1864 he reenlisted in Company B, 1st Michigan Regiment of Engineers and Mechanics Volunteers to serve one year as a private – That while a member of this last organization in the service and in the line of his duty at Atlanta in the State of Georgia, he was taken sick with diarrhea or dysentery and his former lung disease and about November 15, 1864 he was sent to a hospital in Nashville where he remained for a few days, then was sent to a hospital in Ward 11 General Hospital in Jeffersonville, Indiana and after remaining there a few days, about November 25, 1864 he was sent back to Nashville and was treated in Ward 7 Cumberland Hospital where he was treated for a short time – then went back to Jeffersonville and stayed and was treated in a hospital there about the 4th day of December to the 13th and about the middle of December 1864, he went to the Astor House in Keokuck [sic], Iowa which was used as a hospital where he did some duty as nurse and waiter, not being able for field duty and there he remained until about the time of his last discharge which occurred at Davenport, Iowa on the 10th day of July 1865, that since leaving the service, this applicant has resided in the Township of Holland, County of Ottawa and State of Michigan, and his occupation when able to work has been that of farming and carpenter work, that prior to his entering the service above named, he was a man of good sound physical health being when enrolled a farmer, that he is now partially disabled from obtaining his subsistence by manuel [sic] labor by reason of his injuries above described, received in the service of the United States, and he therefore makes this application for the purpose of being placed on the invalid

pension rolls of the United States. He hereby appoints with full power of substitution and revocation James Van Eyck of Holland, Michigan his true and lawful Attorney to prosecute his claim. That he has not received nor applied for a pension, that his Post Office address is Holland, Ottawa County, Michigan.