

# Antietam Battlefield

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Antietam National Battlefield  
Mumma Farm Education Center  
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## Letters and Diaries of Soldiers and Civilians



**Please note: These primary sources retain the wording, spelling, punctuation and lack of punctuation as written by the eyewitnesses of the Battle of Antietam and those who experienced its aftermath.**

September 22, 1862 (Battlefield Hospital near Sharpsburg)

My Dear Wife;

Day before yesterday I dressed the wounds of 64 different men - some having two or three each. Yesterday I was at work from daylight till dark - today I am completely exhausted - but shall soon be able to go at it again.

The days after the battle are a thousand times worse than the day of the battle - and the physical pain is not the greatest pain suffered. How awful it is - you have not can have until you see it any idea of affairs after a battle. The dead appear sickening but they suffer no pain. But the poor wounded mutilated soldiers that yet have life and sensation make a most horrid picture. I pray God may stop such infernal work - through perhaps he has sent it upon us for our sins. Great indeed must have been our sins if such is our punishment.

Our Reg. Started this morning for Harpers Ferry - 14 miles. I am detailed with others to remain here until the wounded are removed - then join the Reg. With my nurses. I expect there will be another great fight at Harpers Ferry.

Carrie I dreamed of home night before last. I love to dream of home it seems so much like really being there. I dreamed that I was passing Hibbards house and saw you and Lud. in the window. After then I saw you in some place I cannot really know where - you kissed me - and told me you loved me - though you did not the first time you saw me. Was not that quite a soldier dream? That night had been away to a hospital to see some wounded men - returned late. I fastened my horse to a peach tree - fed him with wheat and hay from a barn near by - then I slept and dreamed of my loved ones away in N.H.

Write soon as you can. Tell me all you can about my business affairs and prospects for the future in Bath. Will Dr. Boynton be likely to get a strong hold there. One thing sure Cad, I shall return to Bath - if I live - and spend my days there. I feel so in that way now. Give me all news you can. Tell Parker and John and the girls to write although I can not answer them all. Tell Parker I will answer his as soon as I can.

In this letter I send you a bit of gold lace such as the rebel officers have. This I cut from a rebel officers coat on the battlefield. He was a Lieut.

I have made the acquaintance of two rebel officers - prisoners in our hands. One is a physician - both are masons - both very intelligent, gentlemanly men. Each is wounded in the leg. They are great favorites with our officers. One of them was brought off the field in hottest of the fight by our 5<sup>th</sup> N.H. officers - he giving them evidence of his being a mason.

Now do write soon. Kisses to you Clint & Kate. Love to all.

Yours as ever,

W.C.

*(Dr. William Child- Major and Surgeon with the 5th Regiment N.H. Volunteers)*

September 25, 1862 (Battlefield hospital near Sharpsburg)

My Dear Wife,

I am better then when I wrote you last. Shall soon be well as ever. I hope we shall get our wounded men away today so that I can go to the regiment which is not at Harpers Ferry - 14 miles away. The battle is called Antietam (pronounced by the people here - Ante'tam.) It is awful about here now. The odor from the battlefield and hospitals is almost insupportable. The whole country on and about the field is as thickly settled with wealthy, industrious farmers. See the produce of their last years labor is destroyed. Just think of two such armies as McClelland and Jacksons.

But I must close now - do write soon and often. Kisses in a hurry

Yours as ever,

W.C. (*Dr. William Child- 5<sup>th</sup> N.H.*)

September 25, 1862

My Dear Wife,

In looking over my pockets just now I find a letter written in Washington many days ago —but will send it now. I am well today only I DO want to see home. I am anxious about you - not but what you will get along well enough - but you must feel badly. But never mind my Dear Wife we shall meet again. Only think of the thousands and thousands away from their homes - Oh what times are these.

Now My Dear, please write often whether I do or not. Very often I cannot write for several days - - hen some of the letters never are mailed after they are written - and other after being mailed are never carried.

Tell me all you can. What is James doing. Tell him these old bomb shells remind me of Uncle Jo's stump machine they are might powerful things but if the "biler" happens to burst they blow a man to the devil.

It is almost dark - and I must go to supper. Am stopping now a few days at a good old farmers - plenty to eat and drink.

Goodnight. Kisses.

Goodnight - and thousands of blessings on yourself and children.

W.C. (*Dr. William Child- 5<sup>th</sup> N.H.*)

"The truth is, when bullets are whacking against tree trunks and solid shot are cracking skulls like eggshells, the consuming passion in the breast of the average man is to get out of the way." *Pvt. David L. Thompson, Company G, 9th New York Volunteers Battles and Leaders. Vol. II, p. 662.*

September 27, 1862

I have not yet removed from near the battlefield. The sick are being removed as fast as possible but it takes a long time to move 4 to 5,000 men - the number in our division. Am well.

Be sure and write often. Direct as always before. We shall soon have breakfast then I must go to the hospital. W. (*Dr. William Child- 5<sup>th</sup> N.H.*)

September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1862

Camp near Bunker Hill

Dear Father, Mother and Sisters,

It has been some time since I wrote to you all. I have heard from you two or three times. I am well at present and have been all the time since I left Richmond and hope these few lines may find you all enjoying the same great blessing. I have been in Maryland since I wrote to you and have been in two very hard battles in Maryland and came out unhurt. I see a great deal and could tell you more than I write if I could see you.

Our regiment did not have many wounded nor killed but a good many taken prisoners. Frank Shepherd and John Fennster we suppose are taken. We hve not heard from them since the fight. They were not in the fight; were left at the camp. The Yankees took them. On their escape they took a good many of our negroes. That was a great victory at Harper's Ferry. I would like to have been in that. Our men did not fire a gun. They burn the Yankees to death and they give up everything and raised a white flag and attack their army. The men say that they saw it and was the best thing they ever saw. The seventh regiment N.C. was there and saw it all. E. Morrison Scroggs was telling me about how they done. He saw it all. I would like to have been there.

Pa, I want you to have me a pair of boots made. Those shoes you had made for me ripped all to pieces. I want you to tell Uncle George about it and not have them made so large as the shoes. They were too large everyway. Have them on number eight for they are large aplenty. I will tell you who is wounded that you know. Jim Herbin is wounded in our company, that is the only one you would know, but is getting along fine. There are several others that we do not know about.

Our regiment used everything we had. I have no blanket nor any clothes but what I have got. I have got the suit on that you sent me. They came in a good time. I like them very well. If I had a good pair of shoes I would be the best clothed man in the regiment.

Cousin Dr. Hill is wounded in the knee very bad. I have nothing more for my paper is scarce. Write soon to your only son.

W. Adams (*4<sup>th</sup> N.C. Volunteers*)

Sunday Sept. 21, 1862  
Sharpsburg, MD

Dear Wife,

Your letters 3 in number reached me 1st evening, and it gave me much pleasure to hear from you. I should have written you before, but did not know for a certainty where to direct. You will doubtless have learned the details of this great battle before this reaches you. The loss of the 11<sup>th</sup> is dreadful.

I followed in the rear of the Regt. Until it reached the fatal bridge that crosses the creek, this bridge is composed of 3 stone arches and the stream is about the size of that one just west of Berlin. The enemies sharp shooters commenced the action being posted in trees and under cover of a wall on the high ground on the other side of the creek, the order was for the 11<sup>th</sup> to take and hold the bridge until the division of Genl. Rodman passed.

The action soon became general all along the lines, language would fail me to describe the scene. I was in company with the surgeons and we laid ourselves down between the hills of corn and in a lot west of the bridge being a corn field. I had a bag of bandages and some few other things in hand, we lay low I can assure you and the way the bullets whistled around us is better imagined than described. The shells also bursting over our heads and on the ground around us. The attack was perfectly successful, we fell back to a brick house 1/2 a mile in the rear and established a hospital.

I took off my coat to dress wounds and met with a great loss. Some villain riffled my pockets of several packages of medicine, my fine tooth comb and what I valued most my needle book containing the little lock of hair you put in. No money would have bought it. It was not the value that I cared for, but the giver. Can you replace it. I should be pleased with your photograph which you spoke of. I think that it will be so that I can get a little box by express soon. I am still in the hospital near the battle ground the Regt. having moved about 3 miles. I will tell you where to send the box soon. You need not put Co. K on my letters in future, but simply Dr G. Bronson 11 Regt. C Burnside division with name of place (Washington) for the present.

Give me love to all our friends.

Very truly yours

George (11<sup>th</sup> Conn. (*Fought at Burnside Bridge*))

Diary entry of September 17, 1862  
Robert Kellogg, 14th Conn. Vol.

This has been indeed a fearful day, and it is by God's kindness alone that I am here to write this. We woke up early in the morning. I went out and read The Bible and a prayer. In a few minutes the enemy began to throw shells at us from a battery which they had planted near us, killing several of the 8th C.V. We were then moved to the right into a cornfield, but we had hardly got there when the order was countermanded, and we were marched to the left, about 1/4 of a mile, directly under a rapid fire of shells from the rebels, into the forest. The shells burst all around and in us. Our Chaplain had his coat pocket torn by a fragment of shell, and one of Co. I was wounded in the arm. After lying in the woods awhile we were formed and marched about 2 mile over hills and through valleys, fording a river about knee deep. From the ford, we were marched to a side hill near it. Here the Rebels again opened on us from another battery, wounding some of our men. We were after awhile formed and marched over the hill and finally in a sort of valley, behind our battery - here we had to lie down under the bursting of the enemy's shells. One shell burst so near as to scatter dirt in my face as I laid upon the ground. After staying here a short time we were ordered over the hill and were formed in a cornfield upon the opposite side. While we were lying here we were suddenly ordered to come to "attention", as we were obeying this order, a most terrific volley was fired into us - Spiens(?), Maxwell, Willy, Tallcut, Pease and many others of Co. A were here wounded. It is said that the rebels carried the American flag and called to us "don't fire on your own." After staying here a little while and the storm of bullets keeping on I ——— through the valley to the hill beyond when we were formed with the 11th C.V. to support a battery. We went up the hill to the fence in a storm of shell and shot. The battery soon was withdrawn and we with the 11th C.V. were marched off the field some distance beyond the hospital when we formed and rested for the night. Co. A mustered 6 men beside the Capt. but soon a few more came in. Went over to see Thayer who was shot through the shoulder. Came back and laid down to sleep. Thus ended our first day of battle and a fearful one it was. (*14th Conn. Volunteers fought from near the Mumma farmhouse, down to the west of the Roulette farm near Sunken Road.*)

"I recall a Union soldier lying near the Dunker Church with his face turned upward, and his pocket Bible open upon his breast. I lifted the volume and read the words: Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.' Upon the fly-leaf were the words, 'We hope and pray that you may be permitted by kind Providence, after the war is over, to return.'" *Charles Carlton Coffin, Army Correspondent, Boston Journal*. "Antietam Scenes," *Battles and Leaders*. Vol. II, p. 685.

"Comrades with wounds of all conceivable shapes were brought in and placed side by side as thick as they could lay, and the bloody work of amputation commenced." *George Allen, Company A, 6th New York Volunteers From "Scenes in the Hospital at Keedysville," The Antietam Wavelet. Keedysville, Maryland, March 29, 1890*

Dear Folks,

On the 8<sup>th</sup> we struck up the refrain of "Maryland, My Maryland!" and camped in an apple orchard. We were hungry, for six days not a morsel of bread or meat had gone in our stomachs - and our menu consisted of apples and corn. We toasted, we burned, we stewed, we boiled, we roasted these two together, and singly, until there was not a man whose form had not caved in, and who had not a bad attack of diarrhea. Our under- clothes were foul and hanging in strips, our socks worn out, and half of the men were bare- footed, many were lame and were sent to the rear; others, of sterner stuff, hobbled along and managed to keep up, while gangs from every company went off in the surrounding country looking for food. . . Many became ill from exposure and starvation, and were left on the road. The ambulances were full, and the whole route was marked with a sick, lame, limping lot, that straggled to the farm- houses that lined the way, and who, in all cases, succored and cared for them. . .

In an hour after the passage of the Potomac the command continued the march through the rich fields of Maryland. The country people lined the roads, gazing in open- eyed wonder upon the long lines of infantry . . . and as far as the eye could reach, was the glitter of the swaying points of the bayonets. It was the first ragged Rebels they had ever seen, and though they did not act either as friends or foes, still they gave liberally, and every haversack was full that day at least. No houses were entered - no damage was done, and the farmers in the vicinity must have drawn a long breath as they saw how safe their property was in the very midst of the army.

Alexander Hunter (*17<sup>th</sup> Virginia Infantry, Kemper's Brigade*)

September 19, 1862

Dear People,

One moment of time before the mail leaves. I am well and in good spirits. We have just had a big battle day before yesterday. The baggage wagons are in sight and we will all not fit. We have not sent any mail for about a fortnight and I would have written more had I known we could have sent it. Will write more the first opportunity I have.

We are on the move and are going into Virginia probably now. We have served in the last two battles. Give my respects to all friends and others

Yours truly,

Henry (*8<sup>th</sup> Conn. Volunteers*)

October 14, 1862 Harper's Ferry

Dear Brothers and Sisters

I wish that I was home today; I have got a very mean job. You know that we lost our good Captain and now they think they must put me on guard, and I sit right down on the ground and write just as fast as I can to let you know how I am getting along. Not much you had better believe. My hearing is not as good as it was when I left Madison, and my health has not been good since I was on this hill not far from Harper's Ferry, but I keep about and train all the time is wanted of me. It seems rather hard to be a soldier, but I have got to be one after all, I think. But I can tell you one thing: If I ever live to get home, I won't be another I can tell you, but I suppose that you are making some cider. If you get a chance to send me anything, send me some cider put up in bottles, and some apples and a little bottle of pain killer, and don't try to send me any cake or anything that will get smashed, but I want anything that will keep a week. I have not any news to send you today because I wrote to you the other day and suppose that you will get that first. Give my love to all the neighbors and tell Mister Hill that I received his letter and was glad to hear from him and will try and answer him as soon as possible. Tell little Charley that I think a great deal of his letter. I used to say that he could read better than I could read better than I could and he beats me at writing and spelling both, and I could read it very fast, his letter. I am glad to hear that your crops are as good and I hope that all the folks are good because we don't have nothing to eat here, and so I hopes you have got something to eat there. I will try and answer as fast as I can, but won't you answer me as fast you can because that it makes me feel pleased to hear from home. Give my love to all the folks and tell them I want to see them all.

From a brother  
John D Redfield (14<sup>th</sup> Conn. Volunteers)

"It was no longer alone the boom of the batteries, but a rattle of musketry-- at first like pattering drops upon a roof; then a roll, crash, roar, and rush, like a mighty ocean billow upon the shore, chafing the pebbles, wave on wave, with deep and heavy explosions of the batteries, like the crashing of the thunderbolts." *Charles Carleton Coffin, Army Correspondent, Boston Journal.* "Antietam Scenes," *Battles and Leaders. Vol. II, p. 683.*

"I was lying on my back, supported on my elbows, watching the shells explode overhead and speculating as to how long I could hold up my finger before it would be shot off, for the very air seemed full of bullets, when the order to get up was given, I turned over quickly to look at Col. Kimball, who had given the order, thinking he had become suddenly insane." *Lt. Matthew J. Graham, Company H, 9th New York Volunteers. The 9th Regiment. New York Volunteers, p. 293.*

"A strong, sturdy- looking Reb was coming laboriously on with a Yank of no small proportions perched on his shoulders. Wonderingly I joined the group surrounding and accompanying them at every step, and then I learned why all this especial demonstration; why the Union soldiers cheered and again cheered this Confederate soldier, not because of the fact alone that he had brought into the hospital a sorely wounded Federal soldier, who must have died from hemorrhage had he been left on the field, but from the fact, that was palpable at a glance, that the Confederate too was wounded. He was totally blind; a Yankee bullet had passed directly across and destroyed both eyes, and the light for him had gone out forever. But on he marched, with his brother in misery perched on his sturdy shoulders. He would accept no assistance until his partner announced to him that they had reached their goal - the field hospital. It appears that they lay close together on the field, and after the roar of battle had been succeeded by that painfully intense silence that hangs over a hard- contested battlefield; where the issue is yet in doubt, and where a single rifle shot on the skirmish line falls on your ear like the crack of a thousand cannon. The groans of the wounded Yank reached the alert ears of his sightless Confederate neighbor, who called to him, asking him the nature and extent of his wounds. On learning the serious nature of them, he said: "Now, Yank, I can't see, or I'd get out of here mighty lively. Some darned Yank has shot away my eyes, but I feel as strong otherwise as ever. If you think you can get on my back and do the seeing, I will do the walking, and we'll sail into some hospital where we can both receive surgical treatment." This programme had been followed and with complete success.

We assisted the Yank to alight from his Rebel war- horse, and you can rest assured that loud and imperative call was made for the surgeons to give not only the Yank, but his noble Confederate partner, immediate and careful attention.

J. O. Smith (13<sup>th</sup> New Jersey)

(Roulette Farm Field Hospital)

"Sometimes a shell would burst just over our heads, scattering the fragments among us." *Lt. Thomas H. Evans, 12th U.S. Infantry. "Waiting to Attack by Burnside Bridge," Civil War Times. April 1968.*

November 28, 1862

Pa

I received your letter of the 5<sup>th</sup> Nov. a few days ago but have not had opportunity of writing until now. I am surprised at you not receiving my letters written after the Sharpsburg fight. I cannot see why my letter should not reach home as soon as others. I wrote you soon after the fight & gave you all the information I could about Robert. I have been inquiring and hunting for him ever since he was lost. I can hear nothing from him. I feel that he was slain although I cannot give him up yet. There is some chance for him to be alive yet. He may have been badly wounded and still in the hands of the enemy. There has been some of my boys sent back to Maryland that I thought was killed. They saw nothing of Robert but say he may be there somewhere as our boys were scattered all over Md. I hope he may turn up yet someday. I have felt miserable since he has been gone and it is with deep regret that I have to communicate his loss to you. I hope you all will not think hard of me for not giving you all the particulars of his fate when it was out of my power and as my letters failed to reach you. We were overpowered by the enemy and compelled to give up the battlefield leaving behind our killed and wounded with some prisoners & were not permitted to go on the field after the fight. Consequently I cannot tell the result of the missing. We are not lying in sight of the Yankee tents. Only the Rappahannock River behind us. May expect a fight any day but I do not think they will attempt to cross this winter. The weather is very cold but we stand it very well. Have plenty of clothes. Some shoes wanting. Our boys are in fine health and our army is in good condition. We expect to go into winter quarters shortly. I intend to come home this winter if I can. I may have to resign to do so but I intend to come. My health has not been good for some time & I think I have tried it long enough here to satisfy me. You spoke of coming here. I would advise you not to come as you cannot accomplish anything by the trip. If Robert can be found I will find him before I come. If killed, we will have to give him up for a time. I'm glad you sold Jake as Negroes are cheap. I think it my duty to come home awhile at least. Excuse my writing with pencil as ink is scarce in camp. Write to me often. I will do the same. I close,

This from your Son  
W.H. Gaston (*1<sup>st</sup> Texas Volunteers*)

"The third shell struck and killed my horse and bursting, blew him to pieces, knocked me down, of course, and tore off my right arm..." *Pvt. Ezra E. Stickley, Company A, 5th Virginia Infantry "Wounded at Sharpsburg," Confederate Veteran Magazine. Vol. XXV, No. 9, September 1917, p. 400.*

“Our first tire was rattling volley; then came the momentary interval occupied in loading. The rifles were, or course, muzzle loaders, with iron ramrods; the cartridges were new and the brown paper of the toughest description, so that strong fingers were required to tear out the conical ball and the little paper cap of gunpowder. Emptying these into the muzzle and ramming home and capping the piece took time—seemingly a long time in the hurry of action...” *History of the 35th Massachusetts Volunteers*, p. 47.

"Such a storm of balls I never conceived it possible for men to live through. Shot and shell shrieking and crashing, canister and bullets whistling and hissing most fiend-like through the air until you could almost see them. In that mile's ride I never expected to come back alive." *Lt. Col. A.S. "Sandie" Pendleton, CSA Douglass Southall Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants. New York, 1946, p. 208.*

"In the time that I am writing every stalk of corn in the northern and greater part of the field was cut as closely as could have been done with a knife, and the slain lay in rows precisely as they had stood in their ranks a few moments before. It was never my fortune to witness a more bloody, dismal battlefield." *Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker, USA, Commander, I Corps, Army of the Potomac. Gen. Hooker's report in Official Records (U.S. War Department, The War of the Rebellion), Vol. XIX, part I, p. 218.*

“The force of a mini ball or piece of shell striking any solid portion of a person is astonishing; it comes like a blow from a sledge hammer, and the recipient finds himself sprawling on the ground before he is conscious of being hit; then he feels about for the wound, the benumbing blow deadening sensation for a few moments. Unless struck in the head or about the heart, men mortally wounded live some time, often in great pain, and toss about upon the ground.” *History of the 35th Massachusetts Volunteers*, p. 48.

"A frenzy seized each man, and impatient with their small muzzle loaded guns, they tore the loaded ones from the hands of the dead and fired them with fearful rapidity, sending ramrods along with the bullets for double execution." *Pvt. G. L. Kilmer, Company I, 14th New York Artillery, John P. Smith, "History of the Antietam Fight," in Scrapbook of J. P. Smith.*

“Captain Bachellet had a fine Newfoundland dog, which had been trained to perform military salutes and many other remarkable things. In camp, on the march, and in the line of battle, the dog was his constant companion. The dog was by his side when he fell. Our line of men left the body when they retreated, but the dog stayed with his dead master, and was found on the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup> of September, lying dead upon his body.” *Union Major R. R. Dawes, 6th Wisconsin (Involved in the vicious fighting of the Cornfield).*

"Under the dark shade of a towering oak near the Dunker Church lay the lifeless form of a drummer boy, apparently not more than 17 years of age, flaxen hair and eyes of blue and form of delicate mould. As I approached him I stooped down and as I did so I perceived a bloody mark upon his forehead...It showed where the leaden messenger of death had produced the wound the caused his death. His lips were compressed, his eyes half open, a bright smile played upon his countenance. By his side lay his tenor drum, never to be tapped again." *Pvt. J. D. Hicks, Company K, 125th Pennsylvania Volunteers John P. Smith, "History of the Antietam Fight," in Scrapbook of J. P. Smith.*

"I recall a soldier with the cartridge between his thumb and finger, the end of the cartridge bitten off, and the paper between his teeth when the bullet had pierced his heart, and the machinery of life- all the muscles and nerves- had come to a standstill." *Charles Carlton Coffin, Army Correspondent, Boston Journal "Antietam Scenes," Battles and Leaders. Vol. III p. 685.*

"My ramrod is wrenched from my grasp as I am about to return it to its socket after loading. I look for it behind me, and the Lieutenant passes me another, pointing to my own, which lies bent and unfit for use across the face of a dead man. A bullet enters my knapsack just under my left arm while I am taking aim. Another passes through me haversack, which hangs upon my left hip. Still another cuts both strings of my canteen, and that useful article joins the debris now thickly covering the ground. Having lost all natural feeling I laugh at these mishaps as though they were huge jokes, and remark to my nearest neighbor that I shall soon be relieved of all my trappings. A man but a few paces from me is struck squarely in the face by a solid shot. Fragments of the poor fellow's head came crashing into my face and fill me with disgust. I grumble about it as though it was something that might have been avoided." *Union private of Lieutenant White's company. (Account of his own experiences in the fighting near the Cornfield)*

"Someone in the ranks asked what had become of John Ick and Reddy Mahar, two members of their company. Lem Smith, another member of the company, said that he saw them heading towards the rear at a run. Sergeant Hank Van Orden was then ordered to go find the two and bring them back. Off he went and before long he came to a tree at the base of which was a large rock. But as the sergeant moved closer, the rock started to look a little odd. Suddenly, the "rock" coughed. Van Orden gave the rock a swift kick and up popped John Ick. He had found an old, mud covered, rubber overcoat and drawn it over him. But not the jig was up and the sergeant ordered the skulker back to the regiment. Ick said that he had "had enough of the slaughter house business and was going home." The sergeant had no patience for this, however, and made him come along. In the end, though, Ick got over his panic and performed well in battle." *13<sup>th</sup> New Jersey (Area near the East Woods)*

"At the battle of Antietam, as one of the regiments was for the second time going into the conflict, a soldier staggered. It was from no wound, but in the group of dying and dead through which they were passing, he saw his father, of another regiment, lying dead. A wounded man, who knew them both, pointed to the father's corpse, and then upwards, saying only, 'It is all right with him.' Onward went the son, by his father's corpse, to do his duty in the line, which, with bayonets fixed, advanced upon the enemy. When the battle was over, he came back, and with other help, buried his father. From his person he took the only thing he had, a Bible, given to the father years before, when he was an apprentice." *Unknown author.*

September 26, 1862 (In a hospital near the Battlefield of Antietam)

Dear Wife,

Thinking perhaps that you would like to hear from me. I now have a few moments in writing to you to let you know of an accident which happened to me on the evening of the 18<sup>th</sup>. One of the 135 P.V. boys accidentally shot me through the back. The ball passed through my lungs and lodged some where and is in me yet. I suffered considerable pain for the few first days but now I am more comfortable now and am not in much pain. Our brigaid did not get along from Washington soon enough to be engaged in the Battle of the day before. There was a hard fought battle and many lives lost on both sides but I think the loss of the Rebels were more than double our loss. I hope that you will not grow uneasy about me for I am doing as well as can be and have good care for brother William is with me taking care of me and as soon as I get well enough I am coming home and to be with you again, I do not want you to write until you hear from me again for a letter would not come through. I am now 10 miles from Middletown Md and as soon as we get moved I will write to you to let you know where we are moved to. As I do not think of any thing more that will interest you I will bring this letter to a close and write to you again in a few days.

From your affectionate and loving husband, Erred Fowles

*(Erred Fowles died on October 6, 1862. He is buried in Grave #3724 in the cemetery at Antietam. His daughter, Ida May Fowles, was born October 10, 1862.)*

"You couldn't hear a dog bark nowhere, you couldn't hear no birds whistle or no crows caw. There wasn't no birds around till the next spring. We didn't even see a buzzard with all that stench... The farmer's didn't have no chickens to crow... When night come I was so lonesome that I see I didn't know what lonesome was before. It was a curious silent world." *Clifton Johnson, Battlefield Adventures, 103.*

September 21, 1862  
8th Florida Volunteer Infantry Regiment  
Sheherdstown, Jefferson County Virginia

My dear wife,

I write to let you know that I am now in this place badly wounded, was shot on Wednesday the 17th near Sharpsburg Washington County Maryland, about three miles from this place. The ball entered my left shoulder and lodged in my brest where it still is. I want you or my brother to come to see me Come by Richmond in Virginia then on to Winchester where you will only be twenty two miles from here. You can then get a conveyance to this place probably by the railway which comes down to Harpers Ferry where a connection is made to a station called Kearneys Ville that is only five miles from here and by the time can here from me and get to this region of country the stage which runs to that place in times of quiet about here, may be running again.

We have had hard marching to do, and desperate fighting, our Captain was killed the same day I was shot.

I remain as ever your  
Devoted husband  
Bird B Wright

"I was crossing the main street of town, when I saw a young lady, Miss Savilla Miller, whom I knew, standing on the porch of her father's house, as if unconscious of the danger she was in. At the time the firing was very heavy, and ever anon a shell would explode over the town or in the streets, breaking windows, knocking down chimneys, perforating houses and roofs. Otherwise the village was quiet and deserted, as if it was given up to ruin. It gave one an odd sensation to witness it. Knowing the great danger to which Miss Savilla was exposed, I rode up to protest and ask her to leave.

"I will remain here as long as our army is between me and the Yankees," she replied with a clam voice, although there was excitement in her face. "Won't you have a glass of water?"

Before I had time to answer, she was gone with her pitcher to the well and in an instant she was back again with a glass in her hand. As she approached me, a shell with a shriek in its flight came over the hill, passed just over us down the street and exploded not far off. My horse, "Ashby," sank so low in his fright that my foot nearly touched the curb, some cowardly stragglers on the other side of the street, trying to hide behind a low porch, pressed closer to the foundations of the house, but over the face of the heroic girl only a faint shadow passed through the house from the gable, she took refuge for a little while in the cellar; but when the battle ended, she was still holding the fort." *From the memoirs of Henry Kyd Douglas*

*A "green" Confederate soldier described the shelling of Sharpsburg that took place during the artillery bombardment of September 16: "Every shell went screaming, whistling, whining over our heads, and not a few burst near by us. Sometimes shell after shell would burst in quick succession over the village. . . . None of our soldiers were in the town, except the cooks and a few stragglers who hid themselves in the cellars as soon as the bombardment began, and told us afterwards of the wonderful escapes they made from 'them bursting lamp-posts.'*

*Many years after the battle, a former slave who lived at the Otto Farm on the Lower Bridge Road in Sharpsburg remembered his own adventure on the day before the battle: "On Tuesday all the Otto family left and went down country for safety. I stayed on the place. Once I fastened up the house tight and walked up the field. By and by I had a feelin' that I'd better go back and I went I found someone had broke a pane of glass in a window and reached in and took out the nail that kept the sash down. Then he'd raised the window and crawled in. Close by, inside of the room, was a wash bench, and he'd set a crock of preserves and a crock of flour on it ready to carry away. I took the things and put'em where they belonged and started on the trail of the thief. It was easy follerin' him, for he left all the doors open which he went through. In the dining room he'd poured out a lot of sugar on a handkerchief to take along, and he'd gone into my old boss's room and strewed his papers around over the floor. Next he'd gone upstairs, and I went up 'em too, and hyer he was in a little pantry. I was skeered, but he was mo' skeered than I was - certainly he was and I said, "You dirty houn' you, I have a notion to take you and throw you down those steps." Oh! I could have mashed him, for I saw he had no revolver. He didn't say anything. He left. I reckon I was too big for him."*

*"The men began to grumble at being forced to fight, on an empty stomach, and a long line of famine-drawn faces and gaunt figures sat there in the ranks, chewing straws merely to keep their jaws from rusting and stiffening entirely. Just at this time, a cow - a foolish, innocent, confiding animal - not knowing soldiers' ways, came grazing up to our lines; a dozen bullets crashed through her skull, and a score of knives were soon at work, in an incredibly short space of time, quicker indeed than you could skin a rabbit, the hide of the female bovine was pared and cut off, and a ravenous pack of wolves could not sooner have laid bare her bones than did these hungry soldiers. Everything was eaten, even her tail, that was but an hour ago calmly and easily switching the flies from her back. Some soldiers skinned it, burnt it over the fire, and picked it clean in a few minutes." *Private Alexander Hunter, 17<sup>th</sup> Virginia Infantry, Company A**