

Wallace Benson Diary 36th Illinois Infantry, Company H

Lay-out of Diary pages

Diary Pages

1861 Sept Oct Nov Dec

1862 Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

1863 Jan Feb Mar Apr May

Battles

Pea Ridge March 7, 1862

Corinth May 29, 1862

Perryville October 8, 1862

January through May 1863

Lexington Hospital and Return Home

January 16

Snow fell twenty-two inches deep, the deepest know for forty years.

January 30

John Brink and Mr. Bunker called. They had Orlando Nash and Al Bunker's bodies. Henry Tower called and brought me something from home.

February 9

I received twenty-six dollars from U.S. and sent sixty dollars home by Briggs.

[Ed. – Morris Briggs was First Lieutenant in Company H.]

February 17

I called at Mr. Cole's and stayed all night. The first time I have slept on a bed since I left home about fifteen (?) months
[Ed. – Mr. Cole is unknown person.]

February 25

I wrote to the Sentinel
(Ed. – Sentinel was the newspaper printed in Woodstock, IL.)

March 1

I attended church in the evening, the first time since I volunteered. Choir singing with a fine organ.

March 5

I went before a board of examiners. They decided I would not be fit for service for a long time and my certificate of disability was made out.

March 12

[rest is missing]

A Girl of the Civil War

By Martha Josephine Buck Harwood

This diary was written by Martha Josephine Buck, who lived on a farm in Algonquin Township near Crystal Lake. The Buck family moved from Elmira, Chemung County, New York to Crystal Lake in 1944 [sic]. Martha provides us with a genealogical record of the Buck family, as well as a description of her life in Crystal Lake between 1844 and 1863.

The Buck family were members of the First Congregational Church of Crystal Lake. In November 1863, Martha marries the church minister, Rev. James Harwood. Beginning with January 8, 1863, Martha begins to keep a detailed diary which provides us with an engrossing and lovely story of life in Crystal Lake over a century ago.

Her diary entry of February 5th 1863 provides some insight into the circumstances of the burial of Orlando Wells Nash, a Civil War soldier, who was killed at the Battle of Stones River at Murfreesboro, Tennessee. It was diary entry which started my quest to

find out more about Orlando Nash, and the discovery that his grave did not have a headstone.

Thursday, February 5th 1863

It has been snowing nearly all day, --and I think if we make a great deal of haste abut [sic] it, we can manage to get a sleighride yet this winter. It can't be possible for it to last a great while. This has been pretty busy week so far. I feel in my bones that it has. Tuesday the funeral of Orlando Nash took place. The corpse arrived the day before. It had been buried about 3 weeks when Mr. Brink got there. He gave \$90 for a metallic coffin and had the body taken up and brought home. It looked quite natural even after so long a time so those say who saw it. The coffin was not opened at the Church. There was a great crowd there. Mr. Harwood delivered an excellent discourse on the occasion.

Woodstock Sentinel January 21, 1863

From the 36th Illinois Regiment

Murfreesboro, Tenn [sic]

Jan. 8, 1863

EDITOR WOODSTOCK SENTINEL:

As there is a chance to send mail to-day – the first since the battle – I will pen a few hurried lines to inform our friends at home of our present condition, and of the awful casualties which befell our Regiment, and particularly Company H, during the great battle on Stone [sic] River, near this place.

Our Company lost seven killed and twelve wounded.

Corporals O.W. Nash, and W. H. Hutchins, killed. Also, Alvin S. Bunker, Robert Archibald, Harrison Jones, Washington M. Floyd, Lorenzo D. Keys, all killed. Lieut. Smith, missing, Sergeant Chittendon wounded in left arm. Sergeant Sherwood, wounded in head. Sergeant Wolf wound in the thigh. Calvin Jones wounded in the breast. Myron Harris shot through the leg. J. H. Sacket wounded in the hips. D. L. Warwick shot in the arm. J. C. Ford wounded and a prisoner. M. M. [illegible] shot in the hand and a prisoner. Jackson Conroe slightly wounded in the head. Other wounds slight. Our Regiment lost in killed, wounded and missing, 268. Major Miller wounded and taken prisoner. Our Regiment stood two charges from the enemy. On the second charge, they advanced six ranks deep, and the Regiment that was supporting ours ran at the first appearance of the Confeds, [sic] thus throwing their whole fire upon us which accounts for our being so badly cut up.

Gen. Sill was killed in the early part of Wednesday, and Col. Greusel immediately took command of the Brigade.

Our boys were all killed on Wednesday Dec. 31st.

We are now in camp near the Shelbyville Pike, two miles south of Murfreesboro. What remains of us are in good health.

SENTINELS of Dec. 24th received

Yours,
Q. R.

Woodstock Sentinel January 7, 1863
GEN. ROSECRANS' OFFICIAL REPORT.

HEADQUARTERS 14TH ARMY CORPS,
DEPARTMENT OF THE CUMBERLAND,
IN FRONT OF MURFREESBORO, JAN. 2

via

NASHVILLE, JAN. 4, 1863.

To Major General H.W. Halleck:

On the 29th of December we marched from Nashville in three columns, Gen. McCook by the Nolansville Pike, Gen. Thomas from his encampment on Franklin Pike via Wilson Pike, and Gen. Crittenden on the main Murfreesboro Pike. Our left and centre [sic] met with a strong resistance, such as the nature of the country permits. The rolling or hilly routes, skirted by cedar thickets and farms, intersected by small streams with rocky bluff banks, formed serious obstacles.

Gen. McCook drove Gen. Hardee's corps a mile and a half from Nolansville, and occupied the place. Gen. Crittenden reached within a mile and half of Lavergue. Gen. Sherman reached Wilson Pike, meeting with no serious opposition.

On the 27th Gen. McCook drove Gen. Hardee from Nolansville, and pushed a reconnoitering division six miles towards Shelbyville, which found that Gen. Hardee had retreated towards Murfreesboro.

Gen. Crittenden fought and drove the enemy before, occupying the line of Stewart's Creek, and captured some prisoners, with slight loss.

Gen. Thomas occupied the vicinity of Nolansville, when he was partially surprised and thrown into confusion and driven back.

Gen. Sherman's division had repulsed the enemy four times, and protected the flank of the center, which not only held its own, but advanced until this untoward event, which compelled me to retain the left wing to support the right until it should be rallied and resume a new position.

On the 1st the rebels opened by an attack on us and were again repulsed.

On the 2nd inst., there was skirmishing along the front with threats of an attack, until 3 o'clock p.m., when the enemy advanced and threw a small division across Stone [sic] River to occupy the commanding ground.

They were reconnoitering the ground occupied by this division, which had no artillery. I saw a heavy force coming from the woods and advancing in line of battle three lines deep.

They drove our little division before them after a brief contest, in which we lost seventy or 80 killed, and 375 wounded. They were finally repulsed by Gen. Negley's division and the remaining troops of the left wing of Gen. Morton's Pioneer brigade, and fled far over the field and beyond their entrenchments, their officers rallying them with great difficulty.

They lost heavily. We occupied the ground with the left wing last night. The lines were completed at four o'clock in the morning.

The 3rd inst. was spent in bringing up and distributing provisions and ammunition.

It has been raining all day and the ground is very heavy.

Woodstock Sentinel February 11, 1863, From the 36th Illinois

Camp Bradley, Tenn.

Jan. 29th, 1863

Editor Sentinel:

If there is any more lack of water in the Cumberland for the next ten years, it will be a mystery to us all, where so much of the aqueous fluid goes to, for it has been rain,

sprinkle, drizzle, pour, for the past four weeks, and the face of the earth presents one grand mud hole.

Saturday last, our brigade went out to guard a forage train, in the direction of Shelbyville. The advance companies fired a couple of shots at rebel scouts, but we saw nothing of them. About 11 o'clock it commenced raining, and did not slacken until we reached camp, just after dark. Imagine our surprise when we had just commenced cooking our suppers, four old familiar faces suddenly appeared amount us – viz: George Bunker, of Ridgefield, John Brink, Mr. Ford and Mr. Sherwood, of Algonquin. Our uncomfortable day's work was soon forgotten, for it is needless to say, every one [sic] was highly gratified to grasp the friendly hand of an old neighbor, direct from home.

Their stay with us was very short, as they started back Monday. They convey homeward the remains of Alvin Bunker and Orlando Nash, two young men who possessed the entire confidence and respect of all their comrades, and their absence throws a deep gloom over the company. They died as a "soldier loves to die," nobly defending their country's honor.

Lieut. Colonel Jenks has arrived from Mississippi, and taken command of the regiment. Just before the battle, the number of our brigade and division were changed. Gen. Sheridan now commands the 3d division, and Col. Greusel the 1st Brigade.

The following promotions have been announced in company H, to fill vacancies, Samuel Archibald, to be 6th Corporal, Barent Van Ness, 8th Corporal, we have now twenty-two men for duty. Our wounded boys, so far as we know are doing well.

Respectfully Yours,

Q.R.