William Wallace Morgan and Sarah E. Allen Letters
given to Patti R. Oldaker by Marion J. Oldaker in the Fall of 1980, Boulder, Colorado

Letter 1 – dated 14 May 1862

From Sarah E. Allen to her sister Mary Jane Taylor

Sarah is WWMorgan's future first wife..Sarah was in Morristown, IN at the time teaching school there

On the back of this letter is a poem written by WWMorgan, apparently written in April, but the year is unknown. The poem is titled "Midnight Hours".

There is a loose, tan-colored envelope addressed "To Imogene Morgan care of Ellen Allen". We don't know if this envelope is related to this letter or not. On the back of the envelope it says "Care of L. B. G.". Imogene Morgan is WWMorgan's and SEAllen's daughter. Ellen Allen is another of Sarah's sisters. "LBG" is William's brother-in-law, Lem B. Guernsey, who is married to William's sister, Emmore, known as "Em" or "M".

[WWMorgan enlisted in the Union Army at Henryville, IN, on 14 August 1862. He was commissioned as a 1st LT in B Co, LTC Timberlake's Battalion, COL Woodruff's 81st Indiana Volunteer Regiment. During the time of the following letters, WWMorgan was the "acting Captain" of B Co as he notes in the letter below, since 2 October 1862. He was killed on 31 Dec 1962 on the first day of the Battle of Stone's River (Murfreesboro), Tennessee. Murfreesboro is southeast of Nashville.]

May the 14th 1852

I supposing you would like to heare of my schoolroom and surrounding I will now give you a short and [illegible] sketch of this place our schoolhous is a large and convenient room situated on a beautiful level piese of ground at the outside of morristown about fifty yards from the woods and about one hundred yards from the railroade which afords us a full view of the cars as they pass; east of us we have a full view of the village which is made up with mechanics blacksmiths merchants doctors farmers and many other men of business you must excuse the brevity of this for I have not time to give you a full discription at present so I will bring this to a close by subscribing my self your affectionate sister

Sarah E Allen

Miss Imogene Morgan
Hubbard
Clark Co.
Indiana

Care of
Miss Ellen Allen

Midnight hours

Apr

'Tis midnight hours the moo
The dew drops blaze beneath it
The twinkling stars there
Like heavenly eyes
Then sleep no more for round thy heart
Some tender dreames may idly play
For midnight hours with magic art
Shall chase those dreames away

'Tis midnight hours from flower to flower
The wayward zephyr flotes along
He lingers in some shady bower
To heare the nightbirds song

'Tis midnight hours the moon

Methinkes it were no paine to lie
On such an cave with such a sky
Ore canopies the dark west
To gaze my fill on you calm deep
And like an infant sink to sleep
On earth my mothers breast

To trace their veins of liquid gold
Ere they so solemnly unfold
Their soft and fleecy wings

Mrs Anne Taylor
Rhode Island
Clark Co

Letter 2 – dated 16 Oct 1862, Crab Orchard, KY

From WWM to "LB" and "Em" – LB is his brother-in-law, Lem B. Guernsey and Em is his sister, Emmore.

WWMorgan had been in the Army for approximately 2 months. He discusses his acting Captaincy and speculates on making Captain someday. WWM also discusses a LT Clark, and has little good to say about him. This Clark is a distant relative of BGO. People mentioned in this letter are Emma (who is his daughter Imogene Morgan) and Mother Allen's folks (who are his first wife's family. Sarah Allen Morgan died 19 June 1854, a few months after delivering Imogene, 2 Jan 1854, probably to disease although we have no reference for this. James Allen had died in 1852 so Imogene was raised primarily by her Grandmother, Mary McBride Allen, who lived nearby.)

Crab Orchard Ky. Oct 16th 1862

L. B. & Em

This is the first day that we have been idle since we left Louisville on the first day of the present month, we have in the last 15 days, marched nearly 200 miles although we are only about 110 miles from Louisville, at the present time. we have wandered around all over Ky. there is some fine land & some of the poorest land I ever saw, the blue grass region of Ky is splendid but the majority of the land is very poor. You long ere this have heard of the Perryville fight, or, it may be called the Dog Spring fight. the main body of both armies were only 8 miles the rebels had their entire force in the fight while not more than one third of our men were engaged yet we gave them a glorious thrashing our regiment was not in the fight but about 3 o'clk in the evening we were drawn up in line and expected every minute to pitch in but the fight was over and we had no hand in it we could distinctly hear the rattle of musketry & the whistling of the balls & yet there was not a man that faltered. Our Co was out on Picket at the time under my command & the General told me I would have a fight since but many fight that time the next day but one after we were drawn up in line of battle again still the Devils did not come and again Yesterday at Lancaster we were in line nearly

nearly 2 hours the cannon booming the shells screaming & bursting it was a grand sight but dangerous to the Buttermilk but the Cowardly devils did not reply but run like deer there will be no more fighting in Kentucky unless we can surround the rebels and compel them to fight we have men enough to whale them any way they want to take it I think the rebels are making for the Cumberland gap but I do not know I have no news You have no idea how lost we are without the papers I have not seen a paper since we left Louisville consequently we are perfect Know nothings.

I like Soldiering first rate considering the hard work we have to do we have no tents with us the men left ~~[illegible]~~ the men have slept without blankets or covering of any kind in the open air the consequence is there is several of our men sick I had three Blankets Stolen from me and I had to sleep for 2 nights without any covering but I soon stepped up on three other fine blankets that is one way to do things one thing sure I will have blankets. I have been acting Captain of our Company for the last 12 days Cap Howard acting Major of the regt there is fair prospect of my promotion to a Captaincy & Howard to a majority I would as soon be captain as to act in that Capacity for Lieut's pay.

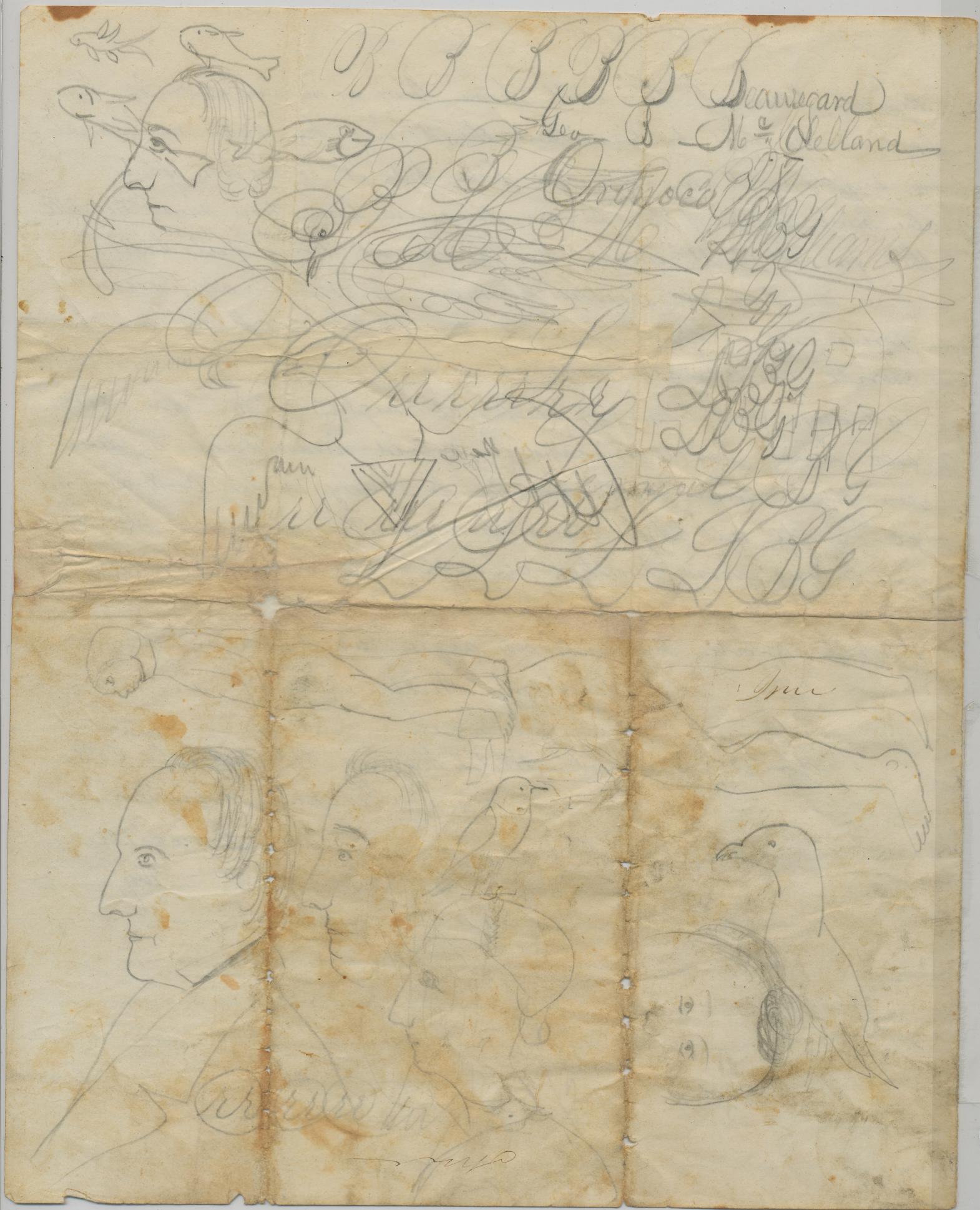
Lieut. Clark is considerably below par and I would not be surprised if he had an opportunity to octivate home our Col says he must qualify

himself better or he will have him examined & if that happens he will be dismissed the service he takes no interest in anything I am sorry for him but it is his own fault also nine tenths of the Cs are down on him. You must not tell this for it will make his friends at home feel bad.

I have nothing more to write at present write me often I used to think a Soldier could write any time but it is a mistake after marching all day we like to sleep at night & take our rest our mess has confiscated a Colored individual as Servant we find him very handy to carry water Cook our grub &c- write all the news how all the folks are how Emma gets along how Mother Allen's folks are [illegible] Tell them I am [illegible] & will write again as soon as I can

from Will

direct to Lieut. W. W. Morgan 81st Ind Vols Co B.
Mitchels division
Via Louisville
Ky.



Letter 3 – dated 25 Oct 1862, Lebanon, KY

From WWM to "LB" – his brother-in-law, Lem B. Guernsey

People mentioned in this letter are Em (WWM's daughter, Imogene), Martha (WWM's second wife, Martha Covert), Jim Mitchell (a neighbor and also a soldier), and "Doc. Jim Mc". This last reference may be to a "McBride" but it's not clear this is the case. Mary McBride married James Allen. They are the parents of Sarah Allen.

Camp 6 miles from Lebanon Ky. Oct 25th 1862

L. B.

I expect you will write me after a while but when I cannot tell I have been expecting letters until the arrival of the Mail has ceased to cause any pleasure.

Almost every man in the company gets letters from home but me I have almost concluded that there is bad news at home, and you wish to withhold it from me. I have ~~not~~ received but one letter since I came to Kentucky & that was from Em. it is dis encouraging, but to quit grumbling and give you some news if I have any of interest to You, which is very doubtful. I see by the papers that we are chasing Bragg near the Kentucky river You recollect that I wrote You from Crab Orchard we had been chasing Bragg on the Slow that is we would March 10 or 12 miles after him then for fear of catching him would countermarch nearly as far giving him all chances of getting away which he has done decently while at camp near Crab Orchard we received marching orders we all thought Hurrah for the Cape but

but we took the Lebanon road and marched for three days in an opposite direction from the Gap We marched about 60 miles that was the hardest marching we have done yet our men were completely broken down I never saw men give out before their feet completely worn out Some of the strongest men in the company begged me to let them lie down by the road side but I could not we were compelled to make them keep up there was no way to haul broken down men so they had to walk all of our company but Fred. Lutz & Peter Stein came up with the company they fell behind and I cannot tell where they are.

We left Camp Noble with 94 men we now have 45 men able for duty that is falling off for you et posure is the cause since we left Louisville on the first of this month we have had no tents and for nearly half of the time have had no blankets is it any wonder the men are sick march them all day then make them lie down without any covering but I think such things have played out to night we have two tents for the men & one Officers tent for each company which will keep them dry & out of the snow

the Soldier will have his fun let come what may. My health still continues Bully a no 1 first rate I had the blues for a day or so but I soon threw them off and am now all right. I do not think there is a prospect of an immediate move or fight but if we move far from here we will have a twist sure but I have no idea we will leave here until the Cumberland rises so the Gun Boats can cooperate with us we may take another tramp through Ky as there are some fears that the Rebs will make a dash on Lebanon but it is not for me to know anything about the moves

~~I received this afternoon that Gen~~ Jeff. C. Davis our Division commander had appointed an Examining Committee to examine Officers in his command as to their qualifications if they put me through closely I may pay you a visit yet this winter and tarry with you until my beard is grown because I know I cannot pass a close and strict examination and I do not believe there are three Officers in the Regt. that can I am as easy about it as an old shoe if I can pass I can come home that's all

So long as I and my family keep well I don't want to stay where I am and if they force me home nobody can say

but enough I expect to soldier for a long time yet because we cant whip the Rebs until Richmond is taken and that will be some time next year, that is if they let McClelland have command again

I suppose Em is at home send this up. tell the folks to all write and tell Doc Jim Mc he has my Prayers in his affliction What a pity for the poor fellows. I have not received a letter from home for a week but I know letters are on the road. I started a letter to My Martha yesterday and one to Em last monday or Tuesday

Write as often as you can Send me a pair of Leather Gauntlets by Mitchell if she has not gone when you get this (if you have them) Such things are awful high here from 3 to 10 dolls per pair

No more at this time

Your Bro. Bill

Letter 4 – dated 14 Nov 1862, Nashville, TN

From WWM to "Emma" – his daughter Imogene, who was 8 years old

People mentioned are Charlie (WWM and Martha's son, 1 year old at the time), Mel and Ellen (WWM's sisters-in-law, sisters of Sarah Allen), Grandma Allen (this is Mary McBride Allen who married James Allen), and Cass (Sarah Allen's brother, Cassius, WWM's brother-in-law by his first marriage).

Nashville Tenn. Nov. 14th 1862

My dear

Emma

I now take time to write you a few lines I am away down in the State of Tennessee about 200 miles from Louisville we are Camped on the banks of the Cumberland river opposite the City of Nashville. We do not live in houses as you do but in tents made out of Canvas like they cover wagons with we do not have beds to sleep on but spread our blankets on the cold ground. Still we sleep very well Sometimes we have nothing to eat for 2 days yet we do not go hungry very often but all we eat has to be brought from Louisville a part of the way by railroad and some of way by Wagons. They send a large train of 5 or 600 Wagons away off to Bowling Green for provisions. The Soldier has a hard life we never see little girls like you about us nothing but Soldiers around us I get tired of seeing so many men but there is no help for it now I do not know when I will see you again but you must be a good Girl & Mind Grand ma You must learn to read & write so you can read my letters and write to me I should like to read a

letter from my little pet Emma
I would rather see you and Charlie
than any person I know of but when we meet
I will see all at once. On our road from
Bowling Green to Nashville we had a little fight
with the rebels I could see them running
but our company did not get to fight them they
run too fast Yet our men killed 40 or 50 of them
before they got away I am well and hope you
and Grand Mothers are all well. You must make
the Girls write to me often I do not have time
to write much but will write to you as often
as I can Give my love to all till Aunt Eliza
that she must write to me. Let Mela Ella
keep Cass straight if they can they must not
get Married until the war is over I have several
boxes for them that I expect to bring home with
me when I come I must now go on duty so
good bye
from Will
to his pet Emma

direct to Nashville Tenn.
to follow the regt.

Letter 5 – dated 20 Nov 1862, Nashville, TN

From WWM to "Brother Lem" – his brother-in-law, Lem B. Guernsey

Jim Mitchell, WWM's neighbor and fellow soldier, is mentioned.

Nashville Tenn. Nov. 20 1862

Brother Lem,

Yours of the 16 is received it came to hand Yesterday I am glad to hear that you are all well and doing well

Soldiering is some easier here than on the march yet there is but little of it here We have Picket duty every five days fatigue duty they call it that is working on Fortifications one day in five besides Guard duty

Last night about 9 o'clk I was ordered to Guard a provision train I took 30 men and traveled 2 miles through the woods rain & mud to the train after getting there the Officer who had charge of the train was not there so I had nothing to do but stay in the mud & rain until morning.

The last two times I have been on picket it rained nicely that is how the work is done and the kind of weather to do it in

When in camp we drill all the spare time So we are kept busy, and have no time for home sickness.

Many thanks for those Stamps they cannot be had here and Officers are not allowed to frank letters home as the privates are

I shall send you some Green backs before long as the pay master is in town and we expect to be paid immediately

I think the time long because I am out of Money & have been for some time

but the longer the time the more money

I am sorry Mitchell is sick as we have to report him as a deserter according to Army Regulations which says a Soldier being 2 miles from Camp without a pass shall be considered a deserter & reported accordingly.

I presume Lieut Clark is home by this time I wish you would write me his reasons for resigning also what he says about me and Capt. Howard I hope he received his pay & I presume he did.

I cannot tell how long we will remain here but hope all winter

I should write more but Clark will post you no doubt in all the Mysteries of Soldier life.

Pardon this Scrawl because my writeing Table is a Board & not good at that my health is first-rate & my weight 175 a falling off of 25 since I left home

Provisions are famine prices here

Potatoes 40¢ Coffee 100 Sugar 7¢ Beef 8¢ Butter 100

Eggs 60 Tobacco from 25¢ - 50¢ per lb — &c

I shall write soon again & do better the boys have the Measles in camp Neal Fields & Wilson Evans are both in the hospital sick Levi Sturdevant is came but on duty in the Hospital department Neal is at Bowling Green, but not much sick I guess.

No more now

from Will.

Letter 6 – dated 8 Dec 1862, Nashville, TN

From WWM to "Sister Em" – his sister. Emmore

People mentioned are Jim Mitchell (who is now home sick and is bordering on being reported AWOL) and Guernsey (Emmore's husband, Lem. B. Guernsey).

In Camp near Nashville Dec. 8 1862

Sister Em.

I hear from you sometimes by the boys who get letters from Home and once in a great while I get a short letter from You. You must keep me posted as to matters and things in and about Henryville because the letters that come from them are filled with family affairs and have nothing of interest to me.

Jim Mitchell has not yet got back and when he he does come he will have to Snffer the consequences every man that has gone home yet has taken sick and the Officers Suppose they are playing off. I think Mitchell will lose all his Back pay also his position as Sergant if Jim had Staid here he would have climbed in the co just but the fault is his own Yet I shall do all I can for him when he returns

We are about 5 miles from Nashville on the Columbia road we had expected to have been left at the city this winter but it is ordered otherwise we are expecting an attact from the rebs every morning yet I do not bilive it will come

We are under marching orders everything is ready for a move at a moments notice but for what point I know not and care less.

The Army has confidence in Rosecrans and think there will be something done when he makes a move Gen. McCook our Corps commander is a good officer Young Jeff Davis will surely fight and our Brigades Genral Woodruff is also all right as far as Generals are concerned we are well supplied and with good men but Our Regiment has no Officers worth a cent Our Colonel Caldwell is at home sick he is a drilled man and could make something of the regiment were he with it. Our Lt. Col. is also at home sick and I hope he will stay there because he is of no account here Major Woodbury the present commander of the regiment is no part of a military man yet he is learning and will in time make a good Officer yet we need good Officers now. Capt. Howard is acting Major consequently I have command of the Company again I might as well be Capt as to have all his duties to do. and for Lieut's pay

The Paymaster has passed us by but has promised to be back next month I think they should have paid the Officers at least because we have never received a cent yet and I for one need money to pay my debts and clothe my family yet it will come before long and then I will pay Guernsey and all. every thing we buy here costs very high paper such as this is worth 2½ cents per sheet I have lost my pen and

have to write with an old steel pen worn out during the last war hence the scratches

My health is good I would give you the news if I had any but beyond the regiment I know nothing Neal Fields Levi Sturdevant and Wilson Evans are all in the Hospital, Fields was left at Bowling Green and I do not know how he is Evans is getting well Sturdevant went yesterday he is in a bad fix and I think he will be sent home. Bob Kirk is also sick in the Hospital I do not know how he is I cannot get to see them and so I know very little of them all the rest of our boys are well.

I do not know when I shall write again but soon my writing material has played out You must write often

Give my best respects to all

and believe me as ever

Will

3

Letter 7 – dated 21 Dec 1862, Nashville, TN

From WWM to "Brother LB" – his brother-in-law, Lem. B. Guernsey

People mentioned are Uncle Ebenn (WWM's Uncle Ebennezer Morgan), Martha (WWG's second and present wife), and "Mother" (unclear which one he is referring to).

1862

Camp near Nashville Dec 21

Brother L. B.

I received one Letter from You dated 17 and one from Sister Em of the 18 many thanks for them. as nothing does the Soldier so much good as letters from home. In reference to that watch of Dads You have done just right I thought several times that if Luke knew I had Papa's watch he would fly off the handle and I was sorry I had brought it with me now I am satisfied. and am glad [illegible] to. You propose to sell me yours I need a good Watch & will be obliged to have one and would as soon buy of you as any person and rather because Yours has been tried and proved so if You can Spare Yours send it by Mitchell. Give my best respects to Uncle Elam Many thanks for papers sent by You and him that is about the only way we get news here You have no idea how ignorant we fellows are here in the Army outside of our Regiment but one thing we do know that is Burnside received an awful thrashing at the Battle of Fredericksburgh What You thinks

Yesterday afternoon General Rosecrans was visiting through the Sappers & Miners brigade (but so you may understand the fun of the thing you must know they have the shelter tent a little tent made out of muslin and just large enough for two men to lie in by crawling in on hands & knees) one of the boys stuck his head out and saw the Genl with his guard in goes the chaps head and every man began the bow-wow-wow like a lot of Dogs. (the boys call their tents dog houses) the general dismounted and crawled into one of them. One devilish fellow sung out, Sit still General I will bring a bucket of water and show you how Uncle Sam's things take in a rain but Old Sam crawled out quick not wishing a ducking. he enjoyed the thing hugely and told the boys that if Uncle Sam could not furnish the boys better tents than them he had better send them all home he also told them if their Officers did not get good tents for them when they started on a march to set fire to the things and charge them to him. and the boys will burn them sure. It must have been funny to have heard 2000 men all barking like Dogs at once. at every roll call they set up the yelp and at night when one of them awakes he commences barking and then they all get at it

for it is snowing like everything to night and it is very disagreeable

We are in Gen. McCooks army corps Gilbert has played out it has been proven that Gilbert never was commissioned as general yet he commanded 33,000 men in Buells grand army. his proper rank is Captain of artillery is it any wonder that there is nothing done when such jackasses command an Army Corps but McCook is a good Officer takes good care of his men & will fight if they will let him at any rate we are all satisfied with our change

I do not know where we are going from here but think Nashville is the point of destination

I will now give you some of the prices we have to pay for grub in the army Molasses $6.40 per gal. Butter $1.00 per pound Hams .40 per pound Chickens .50 Bacon .25 Cheese .50 Sausage .50 but that is among every thing else in proportion but we do not buy any thing of the kind but draw from the Commisary at cost prices. the paymaster has not been around yet but I expect him in a short time I am broke and have no Stamps nor can I get any for love or money because there is none to be had

Give my best respects to all write soon
& if you will send me some Stamps I will
send you the money I have $5 but no change
& cannot get it broke here at present or I
would send it now. I hope you are all well
I am perfectly so and am getting along fine
so far I like Soldiering first rate and will like
it better when we get our Complete out fit.
my Shoes are worn out & I cannot get any others
until I can draw from the govmt which will be
in a few days. Let Martha & Mother have what
they need and the pay is sure to come before long
Send me some Stamps if you can
Sunday 26 there is about 4 in Snow on the ground
this morning direct as heretofore
I shall write again in a few days
we have nothing to write on but the ground
Excuse this scrawl.

Will

Lieut W. W. Morgan Co. B. 81st Ind Vols

Via Louisville
Ky

P.S. John Cole loafing around Henryville he is a
deserter & will be published in a few days then grab
him & make 30 dollars.

Letter 8 – dated 21 Feb 1863

From L. H. Morgan (WWM's father, Lewis Howell) to Second Auditor of the US Treasury

This is WWM's father asking that WWM's pay be forwarded to the family as WWM was never paid all the while on active duty. E. B. Guernsey, Postmaster, Hubbard, Clark CO, IN is mentioned as a character reference.

Henryville Ind. Feby 21st 1863

Second Auditor of Treasury
Washington City
D. C.

Do Sir

My son 1st Lieut.
W. W. Morgan Co. B. 81st Indiana Regt.
was mustered into the U.S. Service at
New Albany Ind. on the 14th day of
August 1862, and was killed in the
Murfreesboro battle on the 31st December
while commanding the Company — he
had been acting as Captain for some
time before the Battle
He has never received any pay
and leaves a Wife & two small
Children — had contracted some small
debts in getting an outfit &c
I am anxious to have his affairs
settled up & applied to Hon. Will. Cumback
our State, who informs me that he
not the necessary Blanks and
ects me to apply to you.
do not wish to employ a Lawyer
it can be avoided.
Will you be so good as to send

me the necessary Blanks, & such instructions
as you may deem necessary & oblige
Respty Yours
L. H. Morgan

am well acquainted with L. H. Morgan
and have known Lieut W. W. Morgan for
the past ten years — a great part of his
company lived in & near this town.
All his men unite in testifying to
his sobriety and efficiency as an officer
E. B. Guernsey P. M
Hubbard P O
Clarke Co.
Indiana

Our town is called Henryville
Our Post office " Hubbard

Morgan

Henryville

Ind.

Send Circulars

Widow must apply

Correct. Widow

Mary

Wants information

Rec'd Feb. 28, 1863

Letter 9 – date is unclear

From James Mitchell to possibly LH Morgan

This indicates that James is trying to get WWMs body but Captain Howard indicates that the "wagon went home already" but reports that "he was buried decent and the grave marked".

tha[illegible]
is se[illegible]
Something might hap[illegible]
yow to See all the friends his
wife arspasly if it is thoregnest
that he Shold be Sent home
and Sight Sore and let us no
Capt Howard Says that as Soon
as he can get to go to
Parkvill & So he can get
Som Money he will ten to it
that is all that is the matter
So Sir i have got that
watch yet i forgit to give
it to Elend and i never thoust
of it tel after i got in
Dons vill and i hadent no
chance to Send it hame
So i will have to close now
My helth is good as comon
James Mitchel

with Som dispa[illegible]
i arrived at Bro[illegible]
found my regiment 14 miles
west of town on the 21st Jan
but Did Not finding the
Regiment i left I was Struck
with Solemnity finding Sitch
A wonderful change Som of
My best friends yes the best
of Frint Morgon Strikes me
to the bottom of my heart
and it has caused genral Sadness
in this Company for more
than one reson the last one
is this Man was A recomendation
Sent on the day before i got here.
for Capt Howard for Major

…s the capten
…ys is very much
discouraged about it wee have
31 men in Co B and Some of
them aint fit for duty
and i dont think that any
of the others Companys are
Longer So you may see what the
riment is Capt Howards
Report as i Supose you have
Sean was correct i believe
Sarg Prichard was wounded in
the left hand & Lay Locklen
is Dangerous ill in the mouth
Corp Zalazer & Self and
a Prisoner & Francis Daley
Newton Davis Donovan &
others Still

…Dead
…Sean
…also and also his
Wagon and all that was with
So i lost all my Clothes
and Gunn and Rigging
but i aint any worse than
the balance of the boys for
they lost there Knapsacks in
the fight So the lost to as
all is bad enough at this time
though wee have got both
Gunn and woolen Blankets
now I Consulted Capt Howard
in regard to going or Sending
Lieut Morgans Corps home
he Said he wished to do So
but the wagon went home
and So he couldnt Leave he Says
that he Saw that he was buried
decent and the grave marked

Letter 10 – loose poem written by WWMorgan titled "The Friend I Love" (probably refers to Sarah Morgan, his first wife, as he annotates his signature with "Morristown")

The friend I Love.

I love the friend whoes cheering voice
Can soothe my aching heart,
Can wipe the tears of grief away
When sorrow bids them start;

I love the friend whoes gentle hand
Removes the cup of grief,
Binds up the wounds it did not make,
And kindly brings relief;

I love the friend whoes beaming smile
Is like a ray of light,
To cheer me on my lonely way
Through sorrows darksome night.

W. W. Morgan Morristown (Henryville)