Longstreet and forever keeping them apart. We staid at Cleveland, the junction between the Eastern and Ga RR with the road to Chattanooga, a couple of days. Burnt a train of wagons for them, loaded with QM's stores and sutter's goods - Rebel uniforms were at a great discount I tell you. Over 200 prisoners and between 4 & 500 of the best of their mules. Since then we have been bothering Longstreet, chased his train over the Alleghaney Mountains into N.C. but did not get it. They had too much the start of us. Had a hard trip over the mts but found plenty to eat over there and lots of Union people.

The 4th Michigan is now doing courier duty between Charleston and Chattanooga. I am stationed 6 miles from Cleveland. There is some rebels reposted(?) at Benton, 15 miles from here, but I don't anticipate any trouble. I keep a good lookout for them.

Don't think about seeing me for I can't see anything that is the least encouraging on that score. I haven't had a letter or paper since the middle of Nov.
Write Soon. I will write often now - if I stay here.
Love to all
Albert

Henry Albert Potter almost gets "gobbled"(captured) while he is getting his horse shod at Morrison's courier station in Tennessee. Those who have followed Potter know he is sensative to what is being said back home. Having heard that the home folks are pushing for advance, Potter suggests they come on down and find out for themselves what it is like at the front. [Perhaps the editors of the "Northern papers" forgot in their exhuberance over Missionary Ridge, that two months before Missionary Ridge there was Chickamauga..... -mr]

Morrison's Courier Station Tennessee
Thursday Dec 24th 1863

Dear Uncle
[Evan Malben Potter, Ovid Michigan]

I am enjoying good health, have plenty to eat, roast turkey for dinner today, sleep in a bed, smoke 'Confederate' tobacco, and expect to be gobbled every day - "to be gobbled or not to be gobbled" is now the question, the momentous question at issue. I have taken the negative and if the "rebs" don't Take me, think I shall come out ahead.

I am on Courier duty posted between Charleston and Cleveland at a farmhouse. The 4th Michigan is strung out from Chattanooga to Calhoun on Hiawassee River. 40 miles away along the line of the Knoxville RR. We are all exposed to "raids" at any time by the enemy. I came very near being captured - went down to get my horse shod, had left one of my men at the shop, about 5 minutes when they charged in captured him and horse drove the Couriers away and got 2 or 3 of our rifles, revolvers and blankets - when getting scared they run back, leaving a man shot thro' the lungs. We had one wounded buddy, both are alive yet. We are not strong enough to fight them so we keep ready to run at a moment's warning. Expect them to dash on me next.

I have not heard one word from home since I left Marysville, Ala Nov 17th . Sent some money home the 19th and wrote a letter about the 23rd since which time have had no time until within a few days since on this duty. The people here are nearly all Union - still there are some Bitter Rebels. I know not how long we will be kept here. News I have none. I know that we are all right. The Battle at Chattanooga has decided, in my mind at least, that the war cannot last another year. Do not be impatient. I have seen some editorials in Northern Papers asking why we do not press on and force battle and bring the thing to a close at once. They don't know what they are talking about. If they had seen the poor barefooted soldier, half-naked, marching from Vicksburg to the Tennessee fighting the great

battle at Missionary Ridge their coming to Knoxville and driving out Longstreet. If they had seen him on the frozen hubs - or better had been in his place, they would not ask WHY? They would know that they are not only foolish but wicked. The soldier must have some rest, he must have shoes, he must have clothes. Let them go into camp a few weeks, get them shoes, get them clothes, and plenty to eat, let them recruit a little, and then they chafe, if you keep them back. Let the Patriot be patient and all will be right.

Tonight is Christmas Eve but it is not the Home Christmas to me. I trust I may meet you next Christmas in Peace.

Give my love to all and
Remember your nephew,
Albert

Henry Albert Potter retells his story of almost being "gobbled" to his parents. (The previous letter recounting this incident was to his Uncle) In this letter we get some more detail of the Rebels raid on Morrison's Courier Station mid way between Charleston and Cleveland Tennessee north of Chattanooga. He is very anxious after the raid and expects to be captured any moment.

Morrison's Courier Station, E Tenn
Thursday December 24th 1863

Dear Folks all
I again sit down to tell you that my health remains the same. It is rather dull and lonesome, otherwise we are enjoying soldier's life well. Still I had something to enliven the time on Tuesday and you may congratulate me on my good luck; that I am not now on my way to Richmond - that delightful place for poor Union Soldiers. I am now stationed six miles from Cleveland. I went up there Tuesday, took a man with me, to get my horse shod. I took two men with me instead of one. There is a Station in charge of a lieutenant. He had about 25 men. It is a very exposed point and subject to raid by the rebels. Citizens had told Redtelyon(?) that they would certainly surprise him. The pickets had been fired on several times; but, for the last few days, everything had been quiet - no disturbance and I thought there was no danger. It was a beautiful day, warm as summer. I had just left the Blacksmith shop and my two men there and reached the building occupied by the Couriers, tied my horse, leisurely lit my pipe and commenced smoking, when I heard the darndest yelling that ever issued from any human being - apparently from a thousand in the direction of the Dalton Road. I sprung for my horse, a picket came flying and told us the Rebels were on us in strong force. The yelling came like the wind and by the time I had mounted, they wheeled(?) the corner by the Court House about 30 rods away and I blazed away with my pistol and some of the boys fired which checked them a short time until the boys had mounted their horses - most of them with only a halter -- the lieut thinking there was no use of trying to stand. We moved away slowly firing at them as they came up. They did not expect we would fight them and seeing we were not disposed to run they got frightened and some of the citizens union, telling them they had better get out as quick as they could for we had reinforcements, they skeddaled back about as fast as they came in. They got some of our guns out of the building and blankets. They left one man shot through and we had a man wounded. Both are alive yet. There was 75 came in town and they had a reserve of 100 out in the woods. One of my men at the shop got away - the other was captured. He was one of my best men named Broman.
[Charles Brouman (or Broman) from Sparta, Michigan - taken prisoner Dec 22 - died of disease at Andersonville May 22, 1864 grave 1288 -mr]
We came back and held the place until a company of 80 men came from Charleston. Col Long's He'd Qrs[Headquarters] to reinforce us. As a courier was sent immediately after they had surprised us - 11 miles - They evaded the picket and came very near cutting them off. Just came in ahead of them, consequently, had no warning at all - this route is very much exposed. We are liable to be surprised and captured at any time. I have

only ten men and cannot keep pickets out far enough to give much warning. So don't be surprised if I go to Richmond, but rest assured, I am not going if I can help it. I am in a good house and have all I want - Roast Turkey for dinner.
Write to your,
Albert

Henry Albert Potter tells of a gallant defense against a raid by Wheeler and his men. I can find no corroboration for this raid in the books I have on Wheeler and Dyer only mentions a skirmish at Cleveland Dec 29, 1863 with "no reports". Since Potter has received his information 2nd hand, it is probably embelished. One would hope any action as large as is described should have shown up in Dyer or the OR. Wheeler did have a lot of trouble up to and including being accused of allowing his men to sack and plunder Southerners and disapline appears to have been a problem at one point so perhaps it is a band of marauders attached to Wheeler. In his defense, Wheeler was well enough thought of to command in the United States Army in Cuba against Spain in 1898. At any case, a Union wagon train was certainly fair game for any Confederate cavalry worth its salt.

Courier Station East Tennessee
January 1st 1864
Dear Father

I am still doing courier duty and am as well as usual --- it is a clear cold and windy day --- The ground is frozen quite hard. We lack snow to make is seem like New Year's. I have been out to the wood pile chopping wood. I came near freezing my ears off, too. The people in this country use fireplaces altogether -- don't know what a stove is hardly, they are about 50 years behind the times - but they are clever and hospitable and UNION through and through. A man by the name of Burton brought us a basket-full of cold chicken biscuit, cake and pies this morning as a present. It came very acceptable to the boys -- we gave him a lot of coffee and sugar a great handy[?] for a person to have in this country. Some families here have a son in the Federal Army and one also in the Rebel Army. It is no uncommon thing to see a father staunch Union and a son strong rebel. It is a bad thing to make the best of it, when one army holds the country awhile and then the other. It gives the little neighborhood jealousies and spites a chance to revenge each other. Great time to settle old scores. There are always enough mean ones you know to take advantage of such things on both sides. Makes a very unpleasant State of Society.

We Have not bee disturbed yet at our station. There was a large train of wagons went up the valley to Knoxville last Sunday. Wheeler, who has been raising ned' with us all the time at Cleveland, heard of it and the wagons were only guarded by about 250 infantry, thought he would have a Nice Time and get some sugar and coffee for his boys. So he came on after it with about 1500 cavalry and 3 pieces of artillery. The train passed on the same road as the courier line is on, but Wheeler came up the valley road east of us about 1 ½ miles only. Two little boys from that valley came running over early Monday morning to tell us that the rebel were swarming up the valley (it's a good thing to be among your friends) We saddled up and moved upon a hill nearby where we could see a ½ mile in any direction and staid there all day expecting every minute to see a company of Rebels come dashing after us. We didn't ask any odds of them. They couldn't catch us anyhow - but they didn't come - for they had plenty of fish to fry. Instead of 250 men with the train we happened to have between 4 and 5000 and Col. Long [Eli Long] at Calhoun had 500 Cavalry. A dispatch had gone thro' telling him Wheeler was coming. So they were ready for him. Wheeler's men had said while going up that "Wheeler was H-ll on Wagons" and they would get all the sugar and coffee we had. Well - when about 2 miles from Charleston Wheeler saw the train and ordered a charge, the Rebels

yelled and plunged forward each man trying to be first. But presently crack! crack! whiz! bang! A line of smoke 200 yds long rises from the grass on their left and the cedars on their right - ah! my boys what makes you falter! Why don't you go on and sweeten your coffee - they halted amazed, fired a few shots, whirled their horses, run back a quarter of a mile, and formed in line of battle. Their Artillery they thought would be up soon and the wagons would be theirs - but Fate was against them. The artillery was stuck in the mud and didn't come at all. The infantry were moving slowing upon them and at that moment Col Long with his gallant little 500 were seen with sabres drawn - coming up like the wind - at the command Charge! Boys Charge! The Infantry gave way and Long was upon them like an avalanche, cutting thro' their line and in their rear the work of death commenced, in 15 minutes we had 140 prisoners and had killed 30. The rebels were flying from the field in every direction terror stricken and helpless they threw away over 400 guns. Wheeler only had 40 men with him when he went back, the rest were scattered. He was never so badly whipped before or so badly misinformed - in fact he got his foot in it sure. Prisoner say he is superseded - they haven't bothered us since.
Love to all, write often, I have not had a word yet since Nov 15
Albert

Henry Albert Potter tells his sister that Abe Lincoln's Proclamation was just the thing to wreak havoc in the rebel army. It is not clear how exactly this havoc is to be wreaked, a bit of wishful thinking, perhaps. He shows again his Republican colors voting for either, Abe if he'll run, or Grant, who as I recollect was running the war and not for the presidency. Seems the rebels got one of his flannel shirts and his blankets too.....

Morrison's Courier Station
January 4th 1864

Dear Sister

I wrote a letter to Father on New Year's Eve and have written to you several times since here. But thought I would keep on writing and maybe you would get part of them at least. There are troops passing here nearly every day. There has been no disturbance since Wheeler came up and got whipped last Monday at Charleston. He wanted some coffee and sugar so badly but he didn't get any but expect to be relieved from duty here in a day or two as couriers as they are getting up the telegraph wire. It is in working order now as far as Charleston from Knoxville and as fast as that is put up the couriers are taken off. I don't know where we will go but expect to join our own brigade [Minty's Cavalry] and Division at Marysville or Huntsville Alabama. I must have a bushel of letters by this time at that place and as you may judge am somewhat anxious to go there and besides we are all needing some clothes. I hardly brought a change of shirts with me as we did not expect to be gone more than three or four days when we started. I have got a valise packed full of good clothes back in camp. But they don't do me much good. I'm saving them you know until I come home. The rebels got one of those cotton flannel shirts you sent me and some blankets when they drove us from Cleveland. But I have got enough left yet.

My health is good as long as it is so. I am satisfied when I begin to be sick.. Why? Then I shall come home sure. I have had no chance to made an application for leave of absence since we have been out.

Is there many enlistments up north now? How does Uncle Abe's message and Proclamation suit them up there? I 'm afraid his Proclamation will work such havoc with the Rebel Army they are deserting all the time. I believe it to be Just The Thing. The citizens down here like it. I think Tennessee will be back in time to vote for the next president. Who do you think will be nominated? Do the people begin to talk about the matter? I go in for Abraham, if he will accept, if not, I will vote for U S Grant. He would be elected if he run and is the Right Kind Of Man All Over.

How did you enjoy yourself Christmas and New Years? Where did you go? Do you have sleighing at Home? How are you getting along at school?

Everything looks encouraging to us down here. Old Jeff has made a call for all men from fifteen to sixty-five to join the army. That I believe is the Last Call he will ever make. The confederacy will bust up. In less than twelve months so must[?] it be.

You can see by this time that I have nothing to write. Only to ask questions. So I will close. Remember me to all my friends. Tell them I am the same as ever. Write often.
Henry A Potter
Lieut 4th Mich Cav

Henry Albert Potter returns to Nashville after the courier duty in East Tennessee with his detached company. Obviously sarcastic about the lack of letters, he wishes he was home gathering Maple Syrup.

Headquarters 4th Mich Cav
Near Nashville April 10th 1864

Dear Sister

I rec'd a paper from you this morning a Cincinnati Times but letters are out of the question it appears as I have rec'd but one from P.le. Blaskett since in Nashville.
Our regiment came from Ooltawah on the cars. At Decherd I stopped for breakfast and who should I see there but George Rawlings of Red House and Cherry fame. He is doing a smashing business at that place. His wife looked as natural as life as well as himself. Had a good meal ended with a real old doughnut twister just such as we have at home.
My health is a little below par, we have had very unpleasant weather, rainy and windy. I have taken cold in some way but it won't last long. I have been down town several times attended the theater saw the great Couldocle(?) and his daughter in the play of the Returned Convict. There is a rumor that we move to Columbia soon. Division Hed Qrs are there now. 38 miles from Nashville. Col Park [Lt Col Josiah B Park, Ovid, Mich] is in command now and is in good health. Carter[Lt Julius M Carter, Ovid, Mich] has been back some time.
I suppose you are making lots of maple sugar about this time. I wish I could be there to get some today - never mind. Some of these days I'll pop in maybe but I don't think it will be very soon. I believe I am unlucky but maybe all for the best. I rec'd a letter from Elder Bassett, a very good one too. I have not answered it yet. Haven't anything new to write to anyone. My love to you and to all. Write as often as you can to
Your Brother
Henry A Potter
Direct
Co H 4th Mich Cav
via Nashville

Henry Albert Potter and his buddy Julius Carter encounter the Belles of Tennessee. The Tennessee Belles may have come in second to the Yellow Rose of Texas but they do a number on the young lieutenants from Michigan. A bit of confusion appears in Potter's staunch anti-Rebel beliefs. Potter is not the first man nor the last to fall under the spell of Southern hospitality. He may not be a Copperhead but he appears to be wobbly of resolve as he explains how maybe he would be a Rebel too if he had grown up in the South. He muses over the unthinkable: what might happen if Lee outgenerals Grant. Duty calls and, from the standpoint of his career, it is just as well that he rejoins his horse, his regiment, Colonel Park, and reality in Chattanooga.

Columbia Tenn
May 3rd 1864

Dear Father

I rec'd a lettr from you a few days ago, but have lost it. Am glad you are all getting well again. I am not very tough at present but am felling better every day. The regiment and Brigade has moved to the front, I think to Chattanooga as soon as they get where I can rejoin them, I shall do so by rail. Col Park[Josiah B Park, Ovid Mich] told me he would telegraph me to what place to come. Lt Carter[Lt Julius M Carter, Ovid, Mich]is with me. We are boarding at a Rivalto(?) house, a Mr Shepard, very nice people especially Mrs Shepard. We have plenty of music and singing, a piano and plenty of girls. They are all Southern here at heart but they are loyal with the tongue. The girls sing us Southern songs with our permission of course -- we allow them to sing what they choose. They have a brother in the Southern Army and they feel a certain sympathy which is natural and right. I think of my own home very often and how anxious you all are and I can but admit that if we had all been born and lived down here that probably we would have been just as these people here are, Rebels. Perhaps you will think I am getting tainted with treason myself but you know me better than that. I do not approve of the course Tennessee has taken. She has brought ruin and desolution upon herself, but people here are so different. The flower and the pride of Tennessee is in the Rebel Army. Her educated and enlightened class are there and I believe them to be conscientious. They think, or thought, they were right and now their Pride will not let them come back. I cannot blame the mother or sister who will sympathize for the cause their sons and brothers are engaged in under the circumstances.
You must give up the idea of seeing me before Autumn. I cannot come if my health is good. The army has a great deal to do this summer and I have a company's responsibility to attend to. I cannot come. I believe the rebellion will be ended theis summer. I have all confidence in Grant. If Lee outgenerals him on the Potomac and we cannot get Richmond, I believe the Rebels will be recognized by foreign powers. But Grant knows that as well as anybody. This summer will tell the story.
Write as often as you can. Direct as usual via Chattanooga -- Albert

Love to all - the stamps prove very acceptable.

Henry Albert Potter, after writing earlier in the day to his father describing his interlude with the Columbia Rebel ladies, seems to have run out of literary gas as he writes to his sister Amelia.

Columbia Tenn
May 3rd 1864

Dear Sister
I have written one letter today to Father but I will also write a line to you. We are having very pleasant weather but rather cool. My health is not extra but gaining. Our regiment has moved. They went on last Saturday. I got permission to join them by railroad. I expect they are going to Chattanooga, it will be much easier for me than to march all the way on horseback. I expect to be here nearly a week yet. You must give up all ideas of me coming home this summer. It is impossible. I am in command of a company and am responsible for the Property and now the Army will move soon. You must [wait?] until next autumn.
Columbia is a real pretty place but nearly all Sesech. Gen Pillow's[CSA General Gideon Pillow] place is only about six miles from here. The Rebel. Our government has taken possession of it, I believe.
I must close as I am writing nothing of any consequence to anybody.
Write as often as you do to your brother
Henry A ---

Henry Albert Potter writes the last of his Columbia Tennessee letters to his sister Amelia, telling her he has been summoned to rejoin his regiment now taking part in Sherman's march toward Atlanta. Still under the spell, he understates his feelings about leaving the Shepard family in the add-on

to the letter.

Columbia Tenn
May 7th, 1864

Dear Sis
I am going to the front today to join my reg't. Expect to find it at Chattanooga. Rec'd a telegram last night from Stevenson. Carter[Julius M Carter, Ovid, Mich] is going with me. Don't know when I shall have a chance to write again. There has been some hard fighting already - near Ringold and Dalton. I believe the future of this once great country will be decided this campaign. I am feeling as well as ever and am anxious to join my company. Do not look for me home until next Autumn. I shall come then CERTAIN. Give my love to mother dear and father and all my friends at home. Write to me often this summer.
I send you a Recipe for making a Pudding and waffles - the last are excellent.
Love to you
Your affectionate
Brother Albert
The recipe is from Mrs Shepard where we have been boarding
Very nice woman

Henry Albert Potter is "back in the saddle again" and enjoying the action. It doesn't take him long to lose the "southern sympathies" which he acquired at Columbia and be back beating the Union drum again. Action seems to suit him, for his prose has picked up a notch or two as he recounts a march through storm and darkness into Villanow, Georgia.

Camp 4th Michigan Cavalry
Near Villanow, Ga May 13/64

Dear Father
I wrote home last from Columbia, Tenn. And a letter to John[John Gilbert, Ovid, Mich] from Chattanooga on Sunday the 8th. I started from Columbia last Saturday for the front by the RR. Reached Stevenson that night about 2 ½ pm Staid at Soldier's Home the only hotel in that place and that was kept free of expense by Uncle Sam. Reached Chattanooga at 5 pm Sunday found our Train then but the regiment was at Lafayette, Ga. Staid all night and part of Monday when we moved out to Rossville and camped for the night. Tuesday marched all day steady - found the regiment at Lafayette about 5 pm. Got a letter from Amelia. From [there] we marched that night 11 miles over Taylor's Ridge to Villanow where we are now. We had the most terrific storm of rain, thunder, and lightning I ever experienced that night. The column marched very fast which kept the rear on a trot. The darkness was so intense you could not distinguish ANYTHING above or below. The rain pound down so that gullies were formed even under the horses feet. The road was rough, steep, and rocky. The poor horses, urged onward by the men and blinded by the vivid and incandescent flashes, were totally bewildered. When the lightning flashed and lit up the path they would make a rush for the horse ahead of them, when the darkness, thick enough to be felt or cut, closed down they would stop like stocks or, still goaded, would pitch blindly into the bush on either side. The road in the morning was strewed with hats, caps, canteens, haversacks, rubber blankets, etc. with here and there a poor horse or mule who had given up the ghost. I cannot tell you - it was the worst night I ever saw of the kind. I have suffered with cold and hunger many nights, but this was ahead in honor and grandeur, in light and blackness in cursing and laughing that I ever saw or hope to see.
We have had no fighting yet, but are kept in readiness to move at a moment's notice. I send this by Dr Armstrong [Charles T Armstrong, Surgeon, Ovid, Mich] who has a leave of absence granted. There has been more or less cannonading at Dalton for 3 or 4 days. What the result is I do not know. The report is today that the Rebels are evacuating the place. By looking on a map you can see our position. We are SW from Dalton 12

miles. McPherson is reported in Sugar Valley near the RR to Atlanta at Resaca. Gen. Thomas Hd Qrs are within a mile of here. Sherman is near here. I believe we have the advantage of them at every point. Last night we recd a dispatch from Grant that he was within a mile of Richmond with 25,000 prisoners. I can hardly believe it is so. It is too early to speculate much yet. One more week will tell on way or the other. We are expecting to move every moment. I am feeling firstrate.
Love to All
Yours Affectionately
Henry A Potter
Lieut USA

Henry Albert Potter, in the style of obscurity used by military men everywhere, tells of his retreat in front of Confederate cavalry. It is probably prudent to reduce enemy numbers by 2 or 3 in any military account, no matter if the officer writing was victorious or defeated. To illustrate my point, I will give a possible translation of Potter's encounter with the rebel cavalry: "My men saw the situation as soon as I and giving orders to fall back to the road....." might be written in non-military jargon as: "we saw the rebels coming, turned as a man, and ran pell mell back to the road." Perhaps the orders were given, when time permitted, back on the road. I wasn't there, of course, but reading military reports of battles and comparing them to the actual battles leads one to these interpretations. The "Johnson" referred to by Potter is CSA General Joseph Eggleston Johnston, one of the best. Johnston's defense and retreat methods sapped the strength of USA General W T Sherman's more numerous troops which Johnston could never hope to defeat in open combat. On July 17th, 1864, Jefferson Davis, who disliked Johnston personally, replaced Johnston with CSA General John Bell Hood who immediately attacked out of his defenses and began frittering away the most valuable comodity he had, his men. One has only to read of Hood's sacrifice of the flower of the CSA's western officers (five Generals were killed including Patrick Cleburne maybe the best general in the West) at Franklin, Tennessee to realize Hood was much better off as a Brigadier General where his impetuous bravery created victories. It is interesting to speculate what might have happened if Davis had left Johnston in charge at Atlanta. Sherman's "March To The Sea" might have instead been known as "Sherman's Race Back To Chattanooga".....

(For Morris H Palmer from his grandfather)
[written at the top of the letter --this letter must have been given to my Uncle Morris by Henry Albert Potter--mr]

HeadQuarters 4th Mich Cavalary
Camp near Kingston Georgia
Sunday May 22nd AD 1864

Dear Sister

I wrote a letter to John[John Gilbert, Ovid, Mich] a few days ago telling of our hard fight the other day. But to day as we are in camp I will write to you. My health is good. We are having very warm weather at present. Our Division moves tomorrow with 20 days rations, as does the whole army. I believe.
I send you some Photographs. My company was in the extreme advance the 18th. I had my men deployed as skirmishers on the left on a hill our attention all directed to the front when a regiment of rebels came charging around to my left and near. Yelling like incarnate fiends. My men saw the situation as soon as I and giving orders to fall back to the road we succeeded in reaching amid a perfect shower of leaden hail which cut the boughs and twigs above my head in every direction. We had run upon two Brigades of Confederate cavalry and with in ½ mile of their permanent camp. The road runs between two hills all the way we had no support (that was the [truth] of it) for four miles back. But were obliged to fight it out alone. They flanked us badly and had us entirely surrounded all but

breaking the column. I did not expect to get out without being wounded or captured. But the bullets slighted me that time. Billy Egleston[William R Egleston, Lapeer, Mich, Captain Co B] was wounded in the fight near Rome, nothing serious however. Carter [Julius M Carter, Ovid, Mich] is doing well I hear and on his way home. I had one brave sergeant shot dead. I have some of the coolest and bravest men in any Co I ever saw. I saw many a rebel bite the dust from their shots, well-aimed. They lost a Col killed 2nd Georgia.
We are resting today. The Army will advance in a day or two. The Trains are running regular to Kingston four miles north of us. We are about 60 miles from Atlanta. Report says Johnson[CSA General J E Johnston] will make a stand not far below here. No betting. We will know when we try them. We have flanked them out of Dalton and Resaca, two very strongly fortified places, naturally and artificially and we can flank them again or, if they will fight, we can whip them. They say Johnson[sic] is reported to have said if he got whipped again he would retreat to Atlanta and hoist the stars and stripes.
I have not recd any letters in a long time. Don't know where they are. You must keep writing.
We are encamped in a good place. Plenty of shade and a beautiful spring of cool water near. Whatever the rebel have preached and said about holding this country against the whole Yankee army. I know one thing, the citizens have lost all faith in them or their army, as is proved by the fine deserted residences, beautiful gardens or flowers, superb carriages and plated harness left in the flight from the 'invader.' I tell you Southern Aristocracy is "played out" after this war is ended this country will be peopled by a different set of people.
Write to your Brother
Love to one and all
Albert

Henry Albert Potter writes of the battles called variously Dallas, New Hope Church, Pumpkinvine Creek, Allatoona Hills, or Burned Hickory. For the second time Potter writes in a letter home that CSA General Joseph E Johnston says "if he is whipped he will raise the stars and stripes in Atlanta" I know of no record of this statement anywhere else and it is naught but wishful thinking on the part of Potter. It is certainly not in character for Johnston. Potter ends with his off the mark prediction the war will end in 1864
In the fighting of 25 and 27 May 1864. Johnston successfully parried an attempt by USA General W T Sherman to circle his entrenched position on the west. Sherman then moved back to his original position and began a series of encounters which culminated at the bloody repulse of Sherman's army at Kenesaw Mountain on June 27, 1864. [I got the battle information from The Civil War Dictionary (Vintage Books) a fine reference work in paperback.]

In the field near Dallas Ga.
May 30th 1864
Dear Father

My health is good but we are all about tired out. The Cavalry has never had such hard wor[k] or so much fighting. Our horses have not had a feed of grain in four days. They cannot go much further.
The whole rebel army is in front of us. They are determined to drive us back or die. Night before last they made an assault upon our lines but were repulsed with a loss of 800. Last night there was the most terrific fighting I ever heard. The whole rebel army I should judge was charging upon our lines. I have had no report of the result yet. Only that we held our line firmly. Their loss must be terrible. Such firing and crashing and moaning was never heard. Our Cavalry fell back to the left and we were four miles in the rear when the assault was made. The whole sky was lit up as if the world was on fire. A sullen and continuous roar was heard. The sound would rise and fall like the waves of ocean. The earth fairly trembled and shrunk from the shock of hundreds of cannon. I am confident of success. We CANNOT fail. Our Army is large, larger than you imagine and our cause is just. From the Potomac I hear nothing. The 4th Mich has been in four fights at Kingston, Rome, Dallas and near Pumpkinvine Creek.

We have had one Maj. (Grant)[Horace D Grant, Jackson, Michigan] captured. Our Maj. Robbins [Richard B Robbins, Adrian, Michigan] wounded, one Capt. (Lawton)[George W Lawton, Antwerp, Michigan] severely wounded and Lieuts. Carter[Julius M Carter, Ovid, Michigan] and Randolph[Smith Randolph, Madison, Michigan]. Carter is coming home, he is badly wounded, but not fatally. Our loss may be near 75 men, killed, wounded, and missing, 5 officers and about 100 horses.
I have not had but one nights good rest in a week. We marched all last night. I am tough or I could not stand it.
We are receiving reenforcements enough to more than make up for their loss.
[USA]Gens [Oliver Otis] Howard and [Richard W] Johnson were wounded day before yesterday.
The rebels were cut to pieces with grape and canister when they charged. Dallas is full of rebel legs and arms. They were struck in the thigh and bowels mostly.
Joe Johns[t]on says if whipped here he will raise the stars and stripes in Atlanta.
[USA Generals]Thomas is the center. McPherson the right. Schofield the left and our cavalry has been on the right.
Our Army is now concentrated.
The war will close in 1864.
Write when you can.
Yours affectionately
Henry A Potter

Henry Albert Potter writes a letter home to his friend Albert. Still maintaining the war will be soon over, he repeats the complaint of almost every letter he has written: that he is not receiving enough letters from home.

Camp on the Etowah River
Near Cartersville, Georgia
Sunday June 5th 1864

Dear John [John Gilbert, Ovid, Michigan]

I rec'd your humid letter Friday. It was the first from Ovid in some time. Am sorry to hear of the brave boys of the 27th so many wounded and killed. It is hard. Has George [Barck?] arrived home yet? I suppose Lieut Carter[Julius M Carter, Ovid, Mich] is home ere this. He was badly hurt, but I hope he will get along well. He fought well and is a brave man. He will tell you of our fighting. Our loss has been 4 officers wounded, 1 captured, and about 50 killed and wounded enlisted men. Billy Egleston[William R Egleston, Ovid, Mich] was wounded, but slightly in leg. We have a great many horses shot, have been in two fights since Carter was wounded. I have escaped without a scratch so far. Our Cavalry has suffered much. We have been eight days without forage for our horses excepting green wheat which is bad and weakening.
[US Cavalry General] Stoneman went out with 4000 splendidly mounted men. I understand he has but 1500 now. We have been nearly as bad off. My health is good - first rate. I live well now. Have had young potatoes, green peas, strawberries.
If report is true, our forces are now in Marrietta. We are somewhat to the rear now. We had to get back on left[?] of our horses, are guarding an important Gap in the Allatoona Mts and protecting the RR. The cars run down to the River now. As soon as the Bridge is built we will have clear sailing to the Chatthoochee.
Everything is working as it should. I believe by the 4th July our Army will be in Atlanta and Grant in Richmond. If we whip them thorough, I hardly think they will concentrate again. They may make a show until after the election in hope that some other man will get into the presidency than Old Abe, but they will be disappointed and this I think will [--- unintelligible—]
I have rec'd but 3 letters in over a month. Write when you can and tell E M

and to write. I am well.
Yours Affectionately
Henry A Potter
Lieutenant

Mike Ruddy is source of these letters.
For a change of pace, we have a letter to the field from someone who is viewing the events in Ovid, Michigan during the recruiting efforts for Uncle Abraham (not all rushed to the colors, it seems). He is writing to his friend who enlisted in the 4th Michigan, Albert Potter, to tell him of the news. Potter is at Camp Minty in Detroit as the regiment is being readied to go to where the action is: Perryville, KY.
Mike

Ovid, August 7, 1862
Dear friend Albert
Yours came to hand yesterday

I am glad you enlisted when you did, it is all excitement here. Every man that is between 18 & 45 years of age is sick or going to be, or lost a finger, or a thumb, or a great toe. Any thing for an excuse.

One man has been down to get the Town Board together to appoint him Constable so he could stay at home. Another man has offered $200.00 for a substitute if he is drafted. Another man came 6 miles to tell us that he expected to have the palsy before another winter. It is really laughable.

This morning McIntyre, Knowles, Lounsbury, & Smith have gone. Fishbeck and a number of others are still coming. Charles Herdon has enlisted and a good many more from Dupeis? will enlist in a few days. The first call for 300,000, our quota will be filled this week. Next comes 300,000 more 9 months min. I think we are beginning to awake to the subject. It is time we have something to do to crush this rebellion & the sooner we go at it the better by far to do what we have to do. I read a letter from brother John yesterday. They are having warm times there.

Rubi wrote yesterday that he started with his regiment in two weeks. I do not know what regiment it is. Gustav is in 2nd with Barber. He is trying to get a discharge.

Rubi thinks she will come here this fall. It is lonely enough here. Take good care of yourself. We will try to keep everything straight here.

I should not be surprised if George Shepard, Binck & Button enlisted.

I will not write anymore this time all well

Yours respectfully
W H Faxon

Camp Minty
August 14th 1862

Dear John and Mary
We are having a rainy day in camp, nothing much to do, a line to you will probably be acceptable. We have been in camp now since last Tuesday. I have never felt better in my life than I do now. None of us have been sick except Frank Aldrich and Norman Smith and they are better. There are now five companies on the ground. They are full, I believe. Captain Wells, McFarlan, Fulton, Robbins and Shepard. Captain Horace Gray was our captain when we came here and Sherpard 1st LT. but Gray has a major's Commission now which makes Shepard our Captain. Captain Carter 1st LT, Hudson 2nd LT (brevet LT not appointed yet) I have the appointment as First Orderly Sergeant, which will be permanent, I think if I give satisfaction. John Gilbert is 2nd Duty Sergeant. I have been left in command nearly all the time. Shepard and Carter are down town busy making out the paper for mustering, and the bounty money. I keep the roll book. We have two roll calls, one at 5 o'clock am and at Retreat or Sundown. When we get organized we will have three. I give all passes from the camp, detail men for guard-mounting, march them to the guard house and deliver them to the Sergeant of the Guard and have to look after things in general. It keeps me busy all the time, but I don't mind that if I can only keep well. We have passed examination. All of the Ovid boys were all right. We expect to be mustered in this week, but there is no certainty. I hope we will get to drilling soon. Colonel Minty was in camp yesterday. He is a pleasant looking man and well-liked by everyone. Our camp is 1 3/4 miles from the city, up the river opposite the barracks, and adjoining the cememtery on the west. A very pleasant situation -- have a view of the city, we can see the boats pass up and down the river. Elmwood Cemetery is a splendid place, there are monuments there that cost from $1000.00 to $3000.00 I should judge, some are 25 ft. high. The grounds are kept in good order. Gravelled roads, flower-beds and 2 fountains which are playing all the time. At the entrance there is a green-house with an artificial rock, flight of stairs and a grotto with vines clambering round it. I can't tell you anything about it only it is very nice. Six Sibley tents are allowed to each Company, besides a square tent for the Capt and Lt each. Not a drop of rain can get in , we have plenty of hay and have drawn our blankets so we can sleep in the hay. I have never slept better than since I have been here, the tents are pitched in the streets, we are on Clinton Avenue, Ovid Block no.3. I have bought me a cap downtown. The caps allowed us are poor things. We are credited with all the articles which we do not draw, at a government price. We have not got our uniforms yet, all of us. 25 have been issued to us, we let those have them that needed them worst. I shall not be

home until I get my uniform and bounty money, and get mustered in, can't tell how soon that may be, probably two weeks yet,- We are allowed a plate, cup, knife, fork, & spoon. I raised a dollar yesterday, sent out and got some lumber and now we have tables to eat on, and we have plenty to eat, too -- bread , pork or bacon, fresh beef twice a week, beans, rice, onions, beets, cabbage, coffee, tea, sugar. No need of grumbling on that score. There was a fire about 1/2 mile from camp day before yesterday, a saw-mill burned -- it made an awful blaze. Estimated loss $70,000.00 -- thousands of feet of lumber were burnt -- riches take wings and fly away. Yesterday there were 3 fires brought out in the city, but the engines were on hand and put them out, -- no doubt the work of an incendiary...
Your letters just came to hand. I was glad to hear from you that you are well. I won't write any more now. Give my love to all, show this to Father if you see him. Mary your needles and pins have come in good play -- thank you. There are 98 in company now. Write soon.
Albert

Henry Albert Potter enters into the war with his regiment, the 4th Michigan Cavalry. Similiar to Morris of Indiana, he dwells on the battlefield dead and the chaos in the wake of the battle. It has come as a shock to these young soldiers to see the real panorama of war:

Friday Oct 17, 1862
Camp near Crab Orchard
Dear Father, Mother, and Sister
We are in camp near a village named Crab Orchard. We received marching orders last Friday the 10th at Jeffersonville Indiana. Started from there about noon. Crossed the Ohio for the first time into KY. Only part of the regiment was ready, six companies. Louisville is a handsome city, larger than Detroit. It was rather disagreeable marching the roads were very dusty. The roads in KY are excellent. We took the road for Bardstown. Put up in the woods the first night.
I have kept a kind of a memorandum every day since weve commenced this march. I will copy a day or two.
****
Friday Oct 11th
The clouds of threatening rain gave us a little shower last night, just enough to lay the dust. Passed quite a number of Sesesh prisoners that have been paroled. They are as dirty ragged set as ever I seen. Their clothes are just the color of the ground. They look half starved. I talked with one who was taken prisoner at the battle of Perryville. He belonged to the 25th Louisiana. Was under Gen Bragg. He said Bragg was not liked by his men and ought to have been in h long ago. Said he lied

to them so often that they did not believe anything he said. Said they were 3/4 Union men in the county where he lived but they were impressed in the Service against their will. I asked him if he thought if they would come out ahead. He said they were bound to keep trying. He thought they were [in the] right. I asked if he would fight against us after he was exchanged. He said he knew they would call for him but "he wouldn't be there." He said the majority of the men were tired of the war and would be glad to come back in the Union again but the leaders were not.
Reached Bardstown about 3 pm, quite a pretty village. Passed 4 hearses on their way to Louisville from the battlefield of Perryville. 3 Generals and a colonel were in them. Major Genl Jackson, Genl Tesril? & Col Hewitt? were all the names I learned rather gloomy picture. The road is filled with army wagons and trains of 100 to 200 wagons are constantly passing to & fro. Put up about 5 miles beyond Bardstown.

Sunday Oct 12th
Passed the battle field at Perryville. Saw a number of dead Sesesh on the field. One lay close by the side of the road. He was shot through the breast his pockets inside out, boots stolen. He had lain there since Wednesday. About a dozen lay upon the hillside. We were told that about 2500 were piled up in a valley out of sight & that the rebels burned 30 or 40 the night after the battle. They take every means to conceal the real number they lose in a battle. This is a hard picture, a war picture, such as I had read about but never seen before. My thoughts were rather serious. Put up at Danville. Carter, Shepard and myself went in a Union man's house & got an excellent supper. He was well informed & flowing over with hospitality. Two little wenches with white aprons stood behind their mistress to pass the coffee & hoe cakes.

Monday Oct 13th
Nothing of importance today. We march by fours. I am chief of the third platoon. Our horses are getting tired out. My horses back is quite sore and I don't feel first rate myself.

Tuesday Oct 14th
The bugle sounded at one o'clock this morning and we were soon in our saddles on the road after the rebels. They have been retreating since the battle. The last of them passed thro Danville on Saturday, I believe. We passed the outposts of our forces about 3 o'clock, a little after daylight our skirmishers drove in their picketts (a regiment of Ohio cavalry ahead of us) Major Parks called it quite a heavy skirmish. We formed under the brow of a hill expecting every minute to hear a cry of charge', but did not. They sent some shell among us but none hit. One shell passed about 20 ft over our heads and plowed a hole in a bank in the rear of us. Luckily it did not explode or perhaps I would not have been writing this. A rebel

Lieutenant Colonel was shot instantly by one of the Ohio boys. I don't know whether he is alive yet or not, only one of our men was wounded, an Ohio boy, shot in the arm.
****

Bragg is trying his biggest to get out of the State. That is now his object. I don't think we will have a battle until we get to Cumberland Gap which is in the South East corner of KY. That is where he is marching for now. The skirmish we had Tuesday morning was only with the rear guard of his Army. He is said to have over 100 thousand men. I think perhaps he has. Buell's army is 150,000 strong divided into three divisions of 50,000 apiece. I understand Wallace's Division is at Cumberland Gap waiting for re-enforcements whether so or not I cannot tell. I hope it will prove true. If we can get there before Bragg I think he will be taken with his army, if he succeeds in getting thro into Tennessee or Virginia he will make a great deal of trouble yet. The Federals have been chasing him thro Mississippi, Tennessee, up to Louisville and so far back, and have not caught him yet. He is like the paddy's flea.

Suppose we talk about something else. I have seen soldiers, cavalry, infantry until it is no sight at all. We soon get used to these things and to hardships. I've have had hard crackers and bacon since we commenced marching, and that is all pretty hard fare, I have felt well enough until the last two days. Yesterday morning I was quite sick. It was a bilious turn just the same as I have at home. The hard food and marching was a little too much for me. I did not ride my horse, yesterday but laid in an ambulance. Dr Bacon, our assistant surgeon is a very fine man. I feel a great deal better today. I am taking Swiss? Powders and quinine. Today we are lying still waiting for the rest of the regiment to come up & I am very glad. I shall keep still a day or two & then I will be all right again.

You know I promised to write if I was sick. I might very easily have kept this to myself.

John Gilbert had the ague last night, he is writing home today. We are writing under an Oak tree on a hill. Neerman, Lounsbury, & Nestrin? Knowles are also writing. Those likenesses that I wrote about sending home have not come. The trunk was not sent. I will get them back again when our baggage wagons come. You must have hard work to read this letter , I did not think of writing much when I commenced but kept writing just as thoughts came to me. See what a mixed up mess it is. And I have half done yet. Colonel Minty sent out Lieutenant Carter & 20 men foraging last night. They brought us in 8 sheep this morning. The boys drove about 20 pigs a yard and delivered them to the commissary. 3 men have passed me while I have been writing one had 4 turkeys, one had 2 turkeys & 3 chickens, the other had some geese. If we stay here a day or two eggs will be very high here next season I fear.

Colonel Minty asked very innocently of the cook this morning where he got that mutton. Cook said he didn't know. Twas brought there last night. The

colonel thought it was very singular . The colonel allows the men to get supplies. He keeps an account of it so that if necessary he can sign receipts for the same, if they belong to a union man and he makes complaint. He get a paper to show the facts and the government pays him for all that is taken. If it belongs to a rebel he will probably not make a complaint, for we should nab him. The colonel knows that if he did not allow the men to get forage in this way, that they would get it on their own hook and he takes a wise course.
The country through here is very hilly. All that we have marched over is rolling. Some places very rocky just fit for cattle & sheep & nothing else. Around Perryville the country is all laid waste. Fences torn down. Cornfields destroyed. I never saw so desolate a place. Every house for 2 miles is a Hospital. I tried to get supper at Perryville. Could not get a mouthfull. The rebels had impressed their flour mills. They could not get meal nor flour only as they pounded it up as used N---? F---? the water is poor, so many thousand passing through dries up the springs. All we get is muddy & brackish. I have wished many times I could have one good sip out of the spring at home. I have not got a word from you since I left Detroit. I have written this makes three times. Mail is very irregular. Direct to Company B. Fourth Michigan Cavalry near Louisville KY and I guess it will come through. Send the Tribune or Free Press every chance you get. A paper here is a rarity. You must excuse me to Wm Shepard, Elder Bassett and George Binck I promised to write to them but I do not have time nor place. If we ever get settled in quarters then I will have more time. But now I can't. Give my love to Nancy, Faxon & Family. I will write them as soon as I can. To uncle Em & aunt Phebe, John and Mary. Let George Binck read this if he can and Mary Longor. Give my love to all of Mrs Longor's folks, Mrs Gilbert, Shepard, Winfields, & everybody. I would like to and hope to see you all again.
Albert

Henry Albert Potter comes down with Yellow Jaundice. Eternally optimistic, expects to be out in a day or so. During the entire war he kept trying to get people to write him. The letters from home sometimes are the only bright part of an otherwise terrible day.

In the Hospital, New Market
Friday Oct 21, 1862
Dear Henry and Debbie
I will write you a line this morning. As I have time. I have been in the hospital 3 or 4 days with the yellow jaundice. No wise humid away from Louisville and kept on a forced march for 5 days, it was rather much for me. It is nothing but biliousness humor. I am about well now, Dr Bacon of

Dewitt, Clinton county is the Asst Surgeon and a very fine man. We are in a Presbyterian Church in New Market, a dirty little village among the hills. There is about 30 sick now, none dangerous, a little rest will cure them. Our baggage wagons are camped about a mile ahead of us across the river on a rich old Sesesh farm. The Regiment is away after Morgan on a three days scout.

I am sitting in the pulpit with pen and ink in the desk where the word of truth has been preached from Sabbath to Sabbath, where prayers have been offered by pious hearts in time past. When Peace reigned, but now , what a contrast! War makes everything different, a change for the worse, it appears.

There was a Sesesh paroled prisoner buried here this morning. A regiment of Cavalry was encamped around the Church. There was no acrimony whatever, but few even looked for a moment, he belonged to the 6th Arkansas, a poor deceived following of Jeff. There is a rumor in camp that an armistice of sixty days was being reached

upon between the North and South, that a settlement may be brought, but I don't believe it. We know nothing for certain never. Rumors of this and that are flying at all times. ----- send a paper now and then it is a great rarity to see a Michigan Paper or read the news. You may direct to Company B 4th Michigan Cavalry via Louisville, Kentucky and I guess it will find its way, Headqs? follow us up.

On our march here we passed the battlefield at Perryville. The battle was fought on Wednesday, we reached there Saturday. What a desolation it was Sesesh bodies were still lying on the field. Some close by the side of the road, dead horses, dead mules, broken wagons were scattered around. Our dead were all buried. 2500 Sesesh dead were where they lay in a valley yet unburied, they were hurried away without giving them time to bury those killed. One passed 4 hearses on their way back , 3 generals and 1 colonel. That was a picture. I had read about it but never seen it before. It was horrible.

I can write everything and & I can't write anything this morning excuse me. I shall leave the hospital tomorrow, I think. John Gilbert has been some sick. Write as often as you can for (?) get much time. Give my love to all. I hope to see you again, from Albert.

I understand that our quarters for the winter will be Nashville, but I doubt if we'll be given quarters at all. Bragg and Morgan are both running as fast as they can. Doubtful if they will risk another battle in Ky & T. [note written in margin]

I have not received one word from home since I left Detroit. Write Henry and tell everyone to write. [note in margin]