

Camp near Murfreesboro, April 21st

My dear father:

I received your letter of Apr. 11th yesterday. I thank you very much for it. I received two State Journals also. Yesterday we were paid two month more pay. The "US" giving me \$6.00 and retaining \$20.00 to send to you. It is very warm weather here for drilling, but neverthe less the whole ~~regiment~~ Brigade continues a thorough system of drill. In the morning from 8 till 10 o'clock is company drill, from 10:30 till 12:30 Battallion drill, & from 2 o'clock P. M. comes Brigade drill. As far as "Doublequick March" is given, which is an order very frequently given in Brigade drill, which comes in the very hottest part of the day, the boys would all much prefer lying on the grass under the ~~xx~~ shade trees. We have got a new Lieut. Col. to our Reg. in place of that Unprincipled Hibbard. His name is West., He was formerly Adjutant of the 5th Wis. He makes the fourth officer we ~~xxxx~~ have had from the 5th Wis.; Col. Larrabee, Hibbard, & Lieut. Balding all having come from the 5th Wis.

April 25th. Our reg. has gone out to Salem to stay a few days on a scouting expedition. But I have finally appeared on the "Sick list" having been troubled with a cold & the diahea, & I have remained in camp. I am now nearly well. I have not yet received that "soldiers diary" you spoke about. I have called several times lately to see John Chaffee. He evidently has an easy time of it. His tent well stocked with reading matter, viz Harpers Monthlies & Weeklies, Frank Leslies, Nashville, Louisville & Cincinnati Papers, also various books among which I observed Lord Byrons Works. He has quite an intelligent contraband as a servant, an middleaged man, possessed of a considerable stock of common sense, which is not generally the case with the majority of the "darkies" here. But I must close this letter. Please give my best respects to Mr. John R. Lewis., John Chaffee sends his best respects to you. I understand that Fay Hubbard got a furlough and has gone home. Much love to all from---

Your affectionate son

Amandus Silsby

Camp near Murfreesboro, May 5, 1863

My dear father:

I received your letter yestorday afternoon, when out on picket duty. I thank you very much for it. We have had our large tents taken away from us, & we have to supply their places with our shelter tents. But I like them however much better than the big tents, as the shelter tents being only calculated to hold two persons. I can have a much quieter time to myself than I could in the old tent with 20 men in it. Oh! you probably recollect Charlie Napp, the Ambrotypist who boarded at our house. He is down here in our division taking pictures and has been for a long time. I did not know it however, until last week, when John Chaffee told me so. I went over with him to see him. He has a good sized tent (Painted black on the outside) with an opening in the top, which can be closed by means of a curtain. He has also a quite intelligent contraband as servant boy, whom he has taught how to finish the pictures, paint & gild them, and enclose them in the cases. Mr. Napp tells me he makes from five to fifteen dollars per day. I noticed that he had all the business he could possibly attend to. I do not ~~no~~ know of any thing particular that you could send by Fay unless it were a pair of boots or a couple of cotton shirts. The shoes we draw, are of such a poor quality of letter that they last but a short time. I can wear out 3 pairs of shoes or more in the time I wear out a pair of boots. I have worn out 5 pairs of shoes since I left Millwaukee. Uncle Sam furnishes ample enough funds to provide the army with good shoes, but the contractors cheat him tremendously in the quality of the leather. But anything will be ~~acceptable~~ acceptable in the army. I hope that you will in a few days receive the \$60. I

Part of the letter missing

Camp near Murfreesboro May 17th

My dear father;

I received your kind letter about fifteen minutes ago, & as I have time now I will immediately answer it. I was very glad to receive the plan of the lower part of the academy as I have often wondered how it looked. You ask me in your letter of May 4 which I have also received, why I do not write to E. Williams & others? I received a letter from Evan, a few days ago dated April 21st in which he states, he has written to me twice before without an answer. I have not received any letter but this one since the time he wrote to me during the march through Kentucky. If he wrote to me shortly before the Battle of Murfreesboro, I could tell the fate of that letter. Several mails were detained ~~x~~ and then sent on together to the army and was "gobbled up" by the enemies cavalry in our rear during the alternate advancing and retreating of the armys, during the battle. It was ~~Roxsxt~~ Forreest or Wheeler's Cavalry who are "eternally here--there-- & everywhere". In regard to the news, we receive it here at the same time you receive it at home, by the Nashville papers, and any particular rumor or news is received by the army before the papers ever got hold of it, for instance the report of Gen. Stoneman's getting in the rear of the rebs, and of the reinforcements he was receiving was sent up by Rosecrans in a forenoon, that afternoon, we received the newspapers, with their "latest news" & "Special Dispatch" which contained nothing but grievings for Hookers reverses & it was not till the next days papers that they had the news. If we had been ~~ixi~~ led into an engagement with the Rebs then, after we had just received that news, we would have felt so independent ~~stxx~~ that we would have walked into the enemy

like a "thousand of Brick" if with us during another battle as long as there was firing going on & the 24th Wis. was within gun shot of him with loaded guns in their hands, he knew his chance of coming out alive, wasn't worth a cent. I should not have be a bit surprised but what we would be on the march in a few days on the way to Chattanooga, that bug bear of the soldiers, that Richmond No. 2, and yet again we may stay here all summer. WE have had an examination of knapsacks, & all we are allowed to carry hereafter on a march is, besides what we are wearing to be--one shirt, 1 pr. socks, 1 pr. drawers & 1 blanket, a portfolio & Bible are also allowed, although not specified, anything else is to be packed in boxes and stored in Nashville till next winter. Our overcoats are already packed. You aks me if I am becoming acquainted with military science? To which I would reply--In some degree as such, but still not as much as I could wish. Am I becoming acquainted with men? Certain it is that I have become acquainted or rather beenbrought in contact with the different phrases and characters of the world, in more rapid succession, than I would in any other place. Here all ends seem to meet and all traits of character seem to be thrown together. Our company is composed of men who respect religion, but still are not religious, also skepticsRoman Catholics., Athesists, scoffers, and indifferent persons, & some who wish to do right but still are thoughtless although the best drilled, best disciplined and most orderly Co., in the Regt., I cannot point to one christian in it. But I must close this letter. Two young men by the name of Mat Snyder & Mat' G. Bovee" members of our company wish me to send their best respects to Mr. Vedder through you. Mr. Snyder used to clerk for him. Much love to all from--

Your affectionate son
Amandus Silsby

P. S. (first page) I wrote a letter to ~~Ex~~ Evan two or three days ago, directing to Ridgway Iowa Co. (I have written to others also)

(Second and third Pages) You ask me if I can send my Photograph,. There are no photographs taken here, but I could send my ambrotype but for one thing, & that is that out of my \$18,00 I owed \$6.00 & the remaining \$12.00 go so fast where things cost 5 times as much as at home (See second page margin) a luxury and quickly sell at 30 cts and often at a half dollar according to circumstances so that traveling along at that rate I haven't enough "ding bats" as the ~~halk~~ boys call 'em to any more than keep me in writing material, an ambrotype will cost from a dollar to \$2.00 plain style

Camp near Murfreesboro, May 25, 1863

My dear Mother:

I thank you very much for your kind letter. You ask how far advanced vegetation is here? I have been unable to see but one garden here. In that garden I noticed two weeks ago that the pea vines had got through blossoming and the pods were already forming. The strawberries are now about through with, corn is knee high wherever it is planted. But we have had no chance to procure ourselves any fresh vegetables as yet nor will we unless we leave this place. ~~We~~ We however receive our full rations now, (our former Quartermaster having ~~resigned~~ resigned and gone home to live in peace, if not in conscience at least sound in body--until the boys get home.) You would probably be interested in particulars of camp life at this time. I will endeavor to give them as near as I can. In the morning at five o'clock the bugle sounds reveille at Sheridans Headquarters, it is quickly "picked up" by the bugles at the different Brigade Head quarters & from thence it is picked up by the Regimental Buglers Then follows the drums & betwixt the two, there is enough noise made to wake the "Seven Sleepers". We have to fall into line, before the drums stop beating. When they stop beating at the command (from the Orderly) "Attention!" we have to give the military form of saluting our officers after which the roll is called. After roll call we have to put ~~in~~ our tents in order, brush or sweep out the dust sweep the streets each Co. sweeps its own streets--cleanse the ditches on each side of the street, & then the whole company marches down to the river and has a time for washing. When we get back from the river, ~~breakfast~~ breakfast is ready. (There are two men detailed from each Co. to cook for it). Breakfast generally consists of coffee & a piece of fat port. A box of "hard bread stands open, from which we can take all that we wish. "Hard bread" is a species of sea biscuit. There is now built by the Reg't a large brick oven in which two bakers appointed from the Reg't bake us soft bread. We now receive a piece daily one loaf of new bread. They have to bake 417 loaves per day, after breakfast, the bugle blows the "surgeons call", when all that are sick or pretend to be, go to the doctors quarters tell their ailments, get their powders, & what they most desire, are excused from drill for that day. This extra clause, causes many a shirk to go ~~xxxxxx~~ to the doctors, so as to get rid of drilling. At half past seven o'clock comes "Guard mounting" when the new "Officer of the guard" relieves the old one, "inspects the arms" of the new guard, (during which, the band plays some tune or other, generally "Hail to the Chief") after which, he takes them and relieves the old guard, who are allowed to go to their tents & rest till afternoon drill. At eight o'clock comes either company or Battalion drill, which lasts till ten o'clock. From 10 till 12 we rest. Then comes dinner, which consists of bean soup and meat; then we rest till 4 P. M., when we have Brigade Drill, which last till near sunset when we have Dress Parade. You ought to see our Reg't drill in the use of Arms once. Everything is done so precise, that it seems, if you were to judge by the sound, as if only one man was drilling; for instance at the command "Present Arms" you can hear two taps, one when the guns are brought against the shoulder, and one when the hands of the men not used to hold the guns fall back to their places. Now days they do not bring the gun into place, first one and then the other, like they did, when they first left the state. After Dress Parade, comes supper time. We usually have for supper

bread and coffee. After supper comes roll call again, then we rest till 8 P. M. when roll is called again at half past eight o'clock at the tapping of the drum the lights had to be blown out. Five minutes after, the patrols came round to see that all is quiet, & the lights out. I will have the doctor vaccinate me tomorrow. But I must close. Please tell father to never mind the boots, as I think I can get along ~~without them~~ this dry weather just as well without them. Much love to all from-

Your affectionate son
Amandus Silsby

Camp near Murfreesboro, May 29, /63

My Dear father,

I received your kind letter today noon, and having plenty of time- the weather being rainy- I will immediately answer it. The Reg't is at present engaged in covering their camp grounds by means of green boughs, laid on poles supported by crotches, thus making the camp cool & shady. Two days ago at 1 O'clock at night, we got orders to get ready to march at daylight the next morning, but when morning came the order was countermanded. We are all here deeply interested in watching the movements of Genral Grant at Vicksburg. If Grant whips them at Vicksburg, we may possibly have them up here to deal with. May 31st I was interrupted from writing this letter by being detailed to go after brush and poles to cover the campgrounds. Today being Sunday, I believe I will tell you how i it is spent. In the morning after breakfast, we have to clean our guns, then oil & polish them & then polish the brass plates on our accoutrements. (I dont know whether I have spelt that right or not) brush our clothes & Black our shoes. Then when that is done, we fall into line & present our guns for inspection, after having inserted the ramrods into the barrels. The captain inspects the front rank, and the 2d Lieutenant the rear rank. (Our first Lieut Balding is acting as Captain of the next Company in line ie Co "F") Henry Drake our former Orderly Sarjeant is 2d Lieut since Lieut George Bleyer was killed. The Inspecting officer examines first the lock and tube, then the stock & barrel, next examines the sliding sight (the sight nearest to the eye, on the Enfield Rifle is made to raise, similar to that of the Austrian, with the addition of a sliding sight, to elevate the gun still higher) He then let the ramrod spring in the barrell so as to determine whether it is rusty or not, and then looks at the end of the ramrod to see if the bottom of the barrell is clean. After that we stack arms & by that time dinner is ready. After dinner we washed ourselves, and spent the afternoon reading or sleeping till Dress Parade. After Dress Parade comes roll call, then supper. After supper I went to hear our chaplain preach, by moonlight, but I didnt get there in time to hear his text. The brass band has to serve in place of an organ. After the service was over, came roll call again, & half an hour afterwards bed time.

June 1st I forgot to tell you that Mr Hoffner an old friend of my Grandmothers, came out here from Cumminsville, Ohio, to visit his friends in this army. He called to see me, with a young man by the name of Mr. Thomson from the 4th Ohio Cavalry. He handed me a letter from Mrs. J. Thomson to me. She writes that her mother Mrs. Langlands has written to Grandmother Whiteside to make her a visit, & as they are frequently sending boxes to the army, they will send me some things. Mr Hoffner made quite a pleasant call. He said the last time he saw me I was three years odd. He knew my mother when she was a child. But I must close, I received yesterday another letter from Grandmother. Please give my respects to all my friends. Much love to all from-

Your affectionate son,
Amandus

June 4, 1863

Camp near Murfreesboro, June 4, 63

My dear father:

As I have plenty time tonight, I take this opportunity of writing again. We are at present out four miles South of Murfreesboro on the Salem Pike & about one mile and a half from Salem. We have been accustomed once a month to come out here and remain as a picket reserve, for five days, (ie our whole brigade) when we will be relieved by another Brigade, and then return to your old camp. This is a very pretty spot on which we are at present encamped, a fine spring of clear cold water near our company tents which makes quite an item as at our old camp most of the springs had dried up so that we had to go a good ways for water and then found such a crowd there from the Reg'ts round about, so that we had to wait some time till our turn came and by that time so many pails of water having been hastily dipped out, that the spring had become so shallow & "riley" that the water was absolutely muddy, and hardly fit to drink. Tennessee however unlike Kentucky has numerous brooks and springs. You cannot pass a plantation but what you will see near the house a large "spring house" the floor of which is entirely or nearly covered by a stream of clear cold water, that bubbles up from underneath but woe to the people of the place, if they leavy any butter, milk or any thing eatable in the spring house while we are around. In spite of all his care, we are sure to find it out & from that time it is among "the things that were". DIXX Ditto in regards to his smoke house & chicken houses. If the door is locked there is nothing to hinder removing a few bricks, or taking off a clap board. If "Old KK Secesh" and the "dorgs" are on the watch, a well got up disturbance in some other quarter, sends him over yonder to & out of the region of the smoke house, If we are sent out from the Regt on a foraging party, we hardly ever come to a house but what every woman is a "lone widow with fourteen children to support". Whose husband is however, probably skulking around the neighborhood or in the rebel army. Ask the Negroes and they will generally tell you that Marisa's good Union man now, but is strong "Secesh" when the Yankees are out of the way". June 6th; I received your kind letter of the 1st inst. yesterday. I have also received two Independents with letter paper in it. I received one letter with five stamps, & another with two in it, but forgot x to acknowledge them in my previous letters. Two days ago we drew seven days rations and prepared to march early that morning, but the order was changed to "be ready to march in case of need, at a moments notice". The rebel cavalry attacked our lines two days ago and tried to get in our rear, but were repulsed by the cavalry with us out here together with a battery of artillery, who shelled the woods from which they had come. The rebels seem to be feeling our pickets all around, which serves to help us when alone on post, to keek a sharp look out & during the night eye every stump suspiciously, that we hadn't noticed in the day time. I was quite interested in W. H. Bennet's letter, but I must close. Much love to all from---

Your affectionate son
Amandus Silsby

Camp near Murfreesboro June 12 (1863)

My dear father,

I received your letter dated June 5, two days ago, for which many thanks. You ask me if I received the writing paper, & whether our mails are opened before receiving them? I have never had, nor have I ever heard of any letters being opened, sent to soldiers. Citizens have their letters inspected I believe. I received the letter paper all safe. I have just returned from a visit to the 3d Wis Battery. Fay Hubbard has just got back yesterday. The boys think he has fattened up some since he was gone. They think a great deal of him & say that he is the best commissioned officer they have got. Goble Jackson & George Jarvis are looking hearty. Goble is evidently the same old six pence. I rode down with him to water his horses. It is the first horse I have sat on since I enlisted. Do you know that Maggie Rowley is in a house of ill fame in Madison? The 3d Wis Batty have received orders to stay and help garrison this place. Lucky for them! I wish that was the case with the 24th Wis. I was quite surprised to hear of Van Bennett's change from Capt of the 12th Wis to Col in a Black Regt. I wish him good success. You ask me if I have had any thought of trying for a commission in a Black Rempany? I should like to very much but it is impossible for me situated as I am, a private & in the 24th Wis too, to do anything myself toward anything of that kind. The officers with few exceptions, don't care a snap for ~~the~~ the men, as long as they get along well themselves. Capt Austin was in Milwaukee, one of the conceited fops or dandies and now that he is placed in power over his men, he rules but badly.. I f anyone is low lived enough to win his good graces by "cringing and fawning" upon him, he will allow him to do what he pleases, no matter how far out of the way, but anyone that minds his business and simply treats him with respect, does not fare any too good, especially those in the company from other counties. The fact is, he treats them as inferior beings, as beneath his notice. Even the negroes suppose & feel themselves above the privates. One of them told us tauntingly the other day that- "he didn't talk with the d--d privates, he talked with "de ossifers" Here he got his mouth stopped with a brickbat. I don't blame him, however, for thinking himself above us, after all the treatment he sees received by the privates from the officers. Lieuts Balding & Drake, are however, to do them justice, two different men. I am still however, as I always was, an- Abolitionist, but nearly alone in sentiment from the rest, the majority of whom are in favor of keeping the negroes in slavery. But I must close. Please send me some more postage stamps, as I have used all of yours in answering other letters. Much love to all, from----

Your affectionate son,

Amandus Silsby

Camp near Murfreesboro, June 15th 1863

My dear father,

Thinking you might like an account from me of the doings of Co "A", previous to the first letter you received from me. I have gone to work and written an account of it. We are still encamped in the same old place. I forgot to tell you in my last letter that Fay Hubbard could not find a copy of that book you were going to send me, in any store, & so came away without it. I called on John Chaffee yesterday, he was in good spirits as usual, he sends to you his respects. Oh! do you know whether Mr. Robinson who used to come to school & study Greek, enlisted, & if so, was it in the "Richland Center PlowBoys" of the 10th Wis? I know there was a James S Robinson from where he lived enlisted in that company. The 10th Wis is encamped near the 1st & 21st Wis in Crittenden's Division. But I must close, I am still enjoying good health. I received yesterday, an Independent with some paper in it, for which I return many thanks. Much love to all, from-

Your affectionate son,
Amandus Silsby

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

(First part of account above-mentioned seems to be missing)

-----to wait there more than an hour, during which time the people of the place, brought us baskets full of bread and butter, sandwiches, pies, cakes hard-boiled eggs, pickles and fruit. Having a sharp appetite, we did ample justice to everything that they offered us. We were afterwards served with coffee. we were obliged however to ride in wood cars, instead of passenger ones all night; and to make things worse, the engine burned coal, so that we were bothered all night, by a shower of cinders and in the morning, looked black and sooty enough. We entered Cincinnati about nine o'clock A. M. & marching up town, stacked our arms in Market House Square, marched into the building, where tables were spread & covered with a bounteous supply of eatables & hot coffee. The ladies after breakfast, filled our knapsacks full to last us, when hungry all day. After clearing, the people of Cincinnati we marched down to the river & crossing the pontoon bridge, we entered ~~Lex~~ Covington, where after resting a few minutes, we marched through town, and encamped on the west side of it. After staying there two days, we formed into a Brigade with the 36th Ill, 21st Mich, & 88th Ill, under the command of Col Greusel, Acting Brig. Gen. We then encamped on the south side of the town. Next to us were encamped the 2d & 15th Mo. After remaining there two more days we moved two miles further south, where we remained at least a week. We were encamped near Licking River, on the east side of it, for we had crossed it on a pontoon bridge. The first day we encamped there, we crossed the river on stepping stones, went to the house of a man who had some time before entered the rebel army, and made our first attack on geese, chickens & turkeys; which game we have kept up ever since. We also filled our haversacks with apples from his orchard, which giving to our cook, he made the Co. two large camp kettles full of apple sauce for supper. Peaches were in abundance also. About a quarter mile west of Licking River there was quite a little settlement, where there was a small grocery store (owned by a Dutchman) with a large board nailed over the door on which he had taken the notion to paint these words "Licking Garden Saloon". Here he kept fresh cider, bologna sausage, pies cakes, almonds, raisins, smoked hams & Yankee notions. During the stay of our brigade, he found plenty of customers, as the such things made quite a change from rusty bacon & "Hard tack" such as was given us in camp. After remaining there several days, we received orders to go to Louisville. So we marched down to the Ohio River again, and going on board steamboats, we started down the River. We left Covington the same day the 22' & 23' Wis.

entered it. So that I just missed seeing Romanzo and the other boys. We left Covington at four o'clock P. M. and after riding on the boats all night, we continued to run aground early next morning. After some trouble we managed to get clear again. When we were landed on the Northern side and marched down along the bank of the river, as the water at that spot was too shallow for the boats loaded down as they were, to keep afloat. After marching for a mile (during which time one of our Co. took the chance to desert) we again went on board the boats, and after riding all day, we arrived at Louisville at eight o'clock at night. Remaining on board all night we landed the next morning, when after waiting an hour (during which the ~~ped~~ pedlar women busied themselves selling cakes & pies to the boys) we marched through the city, and encamping a mile on the South side, we remained there three days. There we found a fine large vineyard of grapes and more fruit orchards, which did not hurt our feelings a bit. Leaving that camp, we encamped on the East side of town. Here we were (ie, our Brigade placed under the command of Gen'l Nelson and styled the 31st Brigade, 11th Division Army of the Ohio. On the arrival of Gen'l Bedl, after the death of Gen'l Olson, at the hands of Gen'l Feff C. Davis, we were placed in Bedl's army. We then moved our camp to the west side of the city, where after staying ~~xx~~ a few more days, we started our famous march (in chase of Bragg.) through Kentucky. The rest you have read in my previous letters. Our Regt then drew rations for 1030 men; it now only draws rations for about 420 men

June 18, 1863 Janet Thomson (Cummins Smith)

Dear Amandus:

I was very much pleased to get a letter from you a few days ago, but delayed answering it until I had got some little things which I sent by express today. So you must be on the look out for them, it is not a very large bundle. Perhaps if you see Sandy he might get it for you as he is going often to town. The weather is getting very warm here. I fear you will suffer from the heat you are so much further south than we are. I have heard that putting a silk handkerchief in your hat was a protection against sunstroke. There is another alarm got up again within the last two days that the rebels are coming down the Ohio after taking Pittsburg, to take Cincinnati and then Louisville and we expect to have Cincinnati under Marshal law again as it was last summer, but ~~it~~ it did no one any harm at that time and I think may not again. There is a great dread of the draft in some places but it would please me very much if some of our men that are lying around the beer saloons were sent away. They might save the lives of better men but whatever happens is for the best and we must do our duty wherever we are and leave the rest with him that doeth all things well. I hope ~~x~~ you will write to me sometime. I shall certainly write you if you would like me to although I may not have much that is interesting to you. Our Sabbath school are to have a picnic on Saturday in our woods. We have one there every year. We have the water to haul up in barrels from our well. Our hands are not as plenty as they used to be but my son that is at home is the same age of your cousin Milton Whiteside and very large and strong. He has a good deal to do in the absence of his brothers but in the case of a picnic he will make efforts to get through. I will close hoping you may keep your ~~head~~ health and come and see us on your way home. I remain

Truly your friend
Janet Thomson

June 18th '63

Camp near Murfreesboro, June (1863)

My dear father,

I received your kind letter dated June 10th three days ago, for which I thank you very much. Still "all is quiet" here. Some think the reason Rosecrans does not attack Bragg here is, that it might induce him to fall back, and thus add an extra supply of troops to those ~~of~~ threatening Grant at Vicksburg. But he however knows his business too well to let his other generals get hold of it. I have been once more reading Lieut Bennett's letter from the 25 Wis. It is lucky for his shoulder straps that his Regt does not belong to the Army of the Cumberland. The officers of one of the Reg'ts here petitioned their Colonel to resign, and the fact coming to Rosecrans' ears they were every one of them cashiered, or "dishonorably discharged". John Chaffee was relating the circumstance to me. He told me what Reg't it was, but I have forgotten ~~XXX~~ Here the sub officers have no business to petition their Colonel to resign but if they have anything very serious against him, they can prefer charges ~~xxxx~~ against him, which if sustained, will cause him to be cashiered. Oh! Goble Jackson got a letter stating that one of the young ladies of Richland City, has lately been the recipient of a fine piano from "some one" in the Army of the Cumberland, who had confiscated it from the "secesh" inhabitants of Tennessee. Have you heard of any such report. We have been trying to conjecture & "lay it" to John Chaffee. He however denies it. Such is army gossip. The fact is, the army beats all "the old women" for gossip. For six months we had it raging all around the brigade, that the 24th Wis. was going back to Milwaukee in a short time, to enforce the Conscription Act. Large bets were made, and morning, noon and night, whole groups would be seen standing around talking very excitedly about it. Some one had heard from some body, that some one else had seen some one ~~what~~ saw a man from Milwaukee, who said it was the general town talk in that city. A few days after, some one did come from Milwaukee, who said he had heard nothing about it, or even dreamed of such a thing. I believe however the Col knowing the boys' failing (that of running and telling all they heard) talked to the officers in that manner before the boys, on purpose to start the rumor, for his own especial amusement. Next thing up, we were going to Vicksburg (ie our brigade) next to Salt Lake, and now to Cincinnati & from thence to Pennsylvania to repel the rebel cavalry So it goes! Some one is getting up a lie all the time. I have forgotten whether Mrs. Thomson was the mother or aunt of Mr. Thomson in the Ohio Cavalry.

Things look fine here. Some species of plums are already ripe. The apples and peaches look plump & fine, but are of course still green. But I must close. I am still well and hearty. Much love to all, from-

Your affectionate Son,
Amandus Silsby

Camp near Mrfreesboro, June 23, (1863)

My dear father,

I received your letter dated June 16, for which many thanks. I thank you very much for the postage stamps. I received yesterday from George Spencer of 20 pages, detailing all their doings from the 25 April ~~xxxxxx~~ till the 27 May. Giving an account of their march to Jackson, Miss, Battle of Champion Hills, and proceedings at Vicksburg up to date. Today, I got a package from Mrs. Thomson by the Adams Express, also a letter from her which I enclose. I got in the package, a nice needle book (containing a pair of scissors, tooth brush, needles, pins, thread, buttons, a lead pencil, fine tooth comb, coarse comb & ten postage stamps), a coarse crash towel, two silk pocket handkerchiefs, a chunk of tiolet soap, two pairs of cotton stockings, and some writing paper and envelopes. I am going to write immediately to her, and thank her for them. We are out once more on a six days picket. We are now obliged to "walk our beats;" at night, (which I dont like, as it reveals the whereabouts) because two persons were detected crawling in through the lines, on their hands and knees. More gossip about moving again, but nothing substantial. The fact is, that I am perfectly puzzled to know what to write about, as everything is going on in the same daily routine. There is a perfect dearth of news. Half the Reg't, ~~among~~ among which is myself, were on picket duty, the first three days, of the six, and we were relieved by the other half, this morning, so we have got the remaining three days to do nothing but "stand idle" or sleep all day long in the tents. we have to look out therefore, that Satan does not-- "find some mischief still, for idle hands to do." But when there is little or no news, better to quit soon, than wait till the subject is worn out. News came in last night at 1 o'clock P. M. that Vicksburg has fallen. I hope so. I received the Independent with a sheet of paper in it, yesterday. But I must close. Mr. W. J. McDonald sends his respects to you. Please give my love to Miss Lizzie Joiner. Much love to all, from
Amandus

McCowan, 25 miles south of Tullahoma July 4, /63

My dear father,

I received your letters of the 20 & 26 ult, for which many thanks. We are at last once more on the forward movement. Left camp 24 ult. It rained steady for several days. My legs were muddy clear to the knees. Wet to the skin all day and all night. We had to follow in the rear of the 11th Ind Battery. The horses were "balky" which made tough work. Had to climb up steep hills, fell several times flat into the mud and water. While going through a gap in the side of a hill, one of the Battery caissons turned bottom side up and ~~the caisson~~ they had trouble getting it righted again, then we had to go it at our fastest gait to catch up again to our brigade. Taking our position during a skirmish, behind a fence in some brush woods, after waiting for our turn at it, we found the enemy were endeavoring to surround us. (We) doublequicked out of that in a hurry/ Rebs threw a shell in there after we left. Passed to the right of Shelbyville, entered ~~Max~~ Manchester on the 4 day out. Went to see John Chaffee in the 2d Brigade. On the 1st inst we entered Tullahoma. It is Quite well fortified. The rebels were obliged in their retreat from there to leave one siege gun, after ~~the~~ burning the gun carriage, three others were captured by General Thomas' Corps further down, stuck in the mud. We were put on half rations at that place and remain in that fix yet, with extra rations of rain. On the 2d inst started again, and in the evening forded a swift stream holding our guns and cartridge boxes over our heads. Water up to our arm pits. Went into camp wet to the skin. Up again at 4 A. M. and off again. So close onto the enemy, that our front was continually skirmishing with their rear guard. Lots of prisoners, among which is part od General Bragg's Brass Band,

July 4/63 cont'd

together with their instruments. Waded another stream, waist deep. Entered Winchester- All "secesh" there. The boys "went in heavy" for their potato and onion patches to fill up rations. Early fruit, chickens and smoked hams grew scarce. Started on again, in the evening waded another stream, holding our traps overhead. Went into camp at this place, (McCowan Station) not long afterward. Are staying here today. At 12 noon a National Salute was fired. Our Band struck up Hail Columbia; Star Spangled Banner; Red, White & Blue, &c. "They say" the enemy are waiting for us out on these hills south from here. Expect we wont see them till they get behind the fortifications at Chattanooga. A man in the 88 Ill today in a crazy fit cut his throat. The doctors sewed it up, dont know whether he will live though. He was "sun-struck" on the Kentucky march, last summer and has had crazy spells ever since. But I must close. I am still in good health and in good spirits too. The whole army feel like fighting this time. I hope you will succeed in the new enterprise and I should like very much to belong to your Battery. Much love to all.

Your affectionate son,

Amandus Silsby

Bridgeport, Ala. Aug. 10th 1863

My dear father,

I received your letters for which many thanks; but have been unable to answer them on account of having neither pen, ink or paper; my portfolio being in my knapsack & my knapsack back at Murfreesboro. I did not receive it again, till very lately. We stayed at Cowan till the 26th of July when we received 4 mos. pay. The next day we started down the railroad track ie "our Reg't" & the 21st Mich. Our company & co^B took the road over the mountains, to guard two sections of the "11th Ind Batty" Our C went ahead of the Batty & Co "B" followed behind it. The rest of the Reg't marched on the R. R. track, which is exceedingly unpleasant, as the spaces between the ties are filled up with broken rocks. After they have marched 12 miles they have to pass through a tunnel called the "Cumberland Tunnel" length 2228 ft. So many passing through it, makes it so dark to all except the first few, that you cany see your hand. There is more than one emerges from there with a bruised shin, or hurt of some kind or other from a fall he had over those stones" (we march 15 miles to Anderson and back on before). This time "A" & "B" climbed over the mountains and were allowed to remain at "Tantallon" a small wood and water station, while the rest marched on to Anderson. We stayed there ~~twelve~~ five days Having our pay, we lived on milk, cornbread &c. We also "foraged" and obtained potatoes, green corn, nice ripe peaches & apples &c. We got somewhat acquainted with the people. I never thought there was such a difference between the Northern & Southern people as there is. These people are hospitable even more so than some of us, but I have always noticed that they are a shiftless, untidy, indolent immoral set of people, if they work for themselves, if of the higher class, their "niggers" are ditto. If I owned a plantation, I could not bear to have a dirty ragged negro woman cooking my "grub" & at the same time a lot of "little" niggers" with running noses, getting into everything, at the same time. In regard to the intelligence of the majority of the whites, they dont know as much as some of their negroes. After remaining at Tantallon 12 days, we received orders to join our Reg't at Anderson. We joined it on the 6th of Aug. and at 3 o'clock in the morning of the 7th we started for Stevenson (The 2d Brig. is ~~now~~ posted there at present) where we encamped. Stevenson is the junction of the Memphis & Charleston, & Nashville & Chattanooga Railroads. The place consists of two or three dwelling houses, 2 depots, one store, and one tavern. (that looks something like the Empire House at P'du Lac) with Alabama House painted

August 10th cont'd

in large letters in front. It is at present, General Sheridan's Headquarters. ~~Ex~~
The next day we started for this present camp. (not properly Bridgeport) as that
is not yet in our hands) We arrived here at 9 o'clock A. M. of Aug. 8th. Bridge-
port is on the south side of the river, and we are on the north. The Tennessee
here is a beautiful stream, a little over 600 yds in width (or rather I should
say from here to an island opposite us. How wide it is on the other side, I ca
cannot say. The rebs burbt the ~~bridge~~ first two spans on this end, & last
~~two~~ three or four on the other end of the bridge on this side of the island.
Both bridges are splendid trussel work on stone piers. The ~~two bridges~~ 2d
brigg is not yet burned as the rebels still occupy the island. They come
down & swim on the opposite bank of the river from us. They and our boys frequently
talk across to each other. For instance one of our boys asked a reb where
Bragg's headquarters were, and he replied- In the cars. He said however that
Bragg would use "Rosy" up yet, by marching him to death, in pursuing him. (Bragg)
The last shot they fired at our men was one night on picket. Late at night some
of the boys had a light in a shed, where they were all busy playing "poker"
when the rebs fired into the tree & told them it was after "taps"- "time to put
out lights!" They sometimes exchange papers with us. There are only here the 1st
& 3d Brigades of our Division, not another soldier. Have you as yet received
the \$40.00 that I did not drw of my pay? The 2d Brig not having been with us for
some time. I have not been able to present John Chaffee that note, & have ~~had~~
during our "ups & downs" accidentally lost it. I have had the misfortune to
lose my Bible. When we left Cowan, we all thought we were only going to be gone
a day, the same as we had twice before done, & having no convenient place to put
it, I left it with one of the other boys, who was to remain in camp. Quite a
number of little things were left by the boys. When he received orders to
rejoin us, he had to leave them, as he could not bring them. Please to send me
another & when you do, if you can, please let the cover be one of plain substantial
leather, as these fancy covers do not last any length of time.
When I got my knapsack again, it had become mildewed, so had everything in it,
thus spoiling my postage stamps. Please send me some more of them.
But I must close. Much love to all, from-

Your affectionate son,
Amandus

Bridgeport, Ala, Aug 20th, '63

My dear father:

As I may not have another chance of writing for a while, I will take this opportunity. I wrote you a letter on the 11th inst. I hope you have received it. I was quite unwell three or four days, but am "all right" now, except that I have a very sore boil on the instep of my right foot. The rebels burned the 2' bridge (ie) the one from the island to the main shore on the opposite side of the river. (The main channel is also on the opposite side). There was a splendid drawbridge on the 2' bridge. It was fired Sunday night, towards midnight. Being previously tarred, it blazed up almost as soon as they set the match to it. The whole landscape brightened up, as if "lit" by gas lights. ~~Two~~ Two of our batteries began to throw shells at the rebs. It looked splendid in the night time. Some of the shells would burst prematurely, high up, over the river and ill fated bridge. Finally came a tremendous crash & all was over." But I must close with much x love to all from -----

Your affectionate son
Amandus

P. S. "Forward March!" tomorrow.

A Silsby.

Chattanooga Tenn, Oct. 16, '63

My dear father:

I received your kind letter of the 3' inst., day before yesterday for which I thank you very much. We have had quite rainy weather, since last I wrote to you for the last two or three days. John Chaffee came over the other day & got Capt. Austin to write me a pass & he and I went across the river on horse back to visit the hospitals. I saw several of the boys that belong to our company. The hospital tents are situated in a very pleasant valley. On our return we rode all over the town. Chattanooga was probably once a flourishing ~~xxx~~ place, at least so the ruins of the mills, factories, & machine shops, would indicate, but at present it is evidently a second Richland city, on a much larger scale. There are quite a number of deaths in the hospitals here. The "dead march" has got to be a common tune, as almost daily can be seen ambulances going by, at a slow pace bearing two or more coffins, followed by a squad of soldiers with arms reversed. The army has been reorganized. We are now the 1st Brigade, 2' Division, 4th Army Corps. Our Brigade is now composed of ten Reg'ts, viz, 24th M Wis., 36th, 44th, 73', & 88th Ill., 2' & 15th Mo., 21st Mich, & 1156h & 40th Ohio, Reg'ts all under the command of Brig. Gen. Seadman. Each brigade is composed of 10 instead of 4 regts. The Division is still commanded by G. Major ~~Sheridan~~ Gen. Sheridan. But the Corps is commanded by Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger, instead of Maj. Gen. McCook, who had been "relieved of his command." Our band lost 3 musicians taken prisoners at the last battle, but that does not hinder them making some music ~~xxx~~ yet. A full set of silver instruments is now on the way to them, from Boston purchased by contributions from the Regt. I am glad you can't change places with me. I have found out that being a private in every Co. is not "what its cracked up to be". A Captain like Austin, who----a shallow pated fop--looks down on the private as little better than brutes, is not the pleasantest man to be under. ~~But still if I get through this~~. He is a good Military man, but a decidedly unpleasant man to be under. But still if I get through this "stultifying process" safe, without a scratch, I shall not repent ever enlisting. But nobody will ever catch me enlisting again, under a man whose character I am unacquainted with. Adjutant McArthur having returned to the reg't, Lieut Balding is back with the company, a fact we are all glad of

He treats men as men. But I must close. Please send me some paper and envelopes,
as this is my last sheet, and our sutter is unable to get here with some ' I ~~xxxxxx~~
& I could not buy any if he was--not having a cent to my name. Much love to all
from----

your affectionate son
Amandus Silsby.

Loudon, January 29, 1864

My dear father,

I received your kind letter of the 21st ult. for which I thank you very much; also for mother's letters. I should have written to you much sooner, but could not on account of leaving my writing materials behind me. I will now endeavour to give you as good an account of our march into the land of Union People or Lincolnites, as they are called by the rebels.

We left Chattanooga the afternoon of the 28 of November. During that day's march I came across John Robinson and Dan Davis who were very glad to see me. The next day we marched to Harrison's Landing, quite a pretty little town, near which we camped and while there, I "confiscated" a ham. The next day we started on the march long before daylight. It was very cold, so that we marched fast so as to keep warm. At noon I dropped out and took dinner at a house near the road. Had some good hot corn bread and milk, which was quite a rarity to a soldier. That night we crossed the Hiwassee River on ferry boats. The steamboat that had been following us all the way from Chattanooga lay there at the landing, when we drew three days $\frac{3}{4}$ rations again. The next night we camped near the rebel general Bowen's house. Here General Sheridan confiscated a span of mules and a wagon and loaded it with hams, shoulders & sides out of the general's smokehouse these, he had dealt out to us as "extra rations". In the meantime your humble servant confiscated two chickens. The next days march proved to us we were in East Tennessee for certain. Flags at the windows, while numbers would come out on the road to "see the Yankees go by". A number of little girls were on the road standing in a line singing Union songs as we went by. Some of the boys straggled off the road to see what they could find; stopping at an old lady's house, they told her they were hungry soldiers and wanted something to eat: she replied that she had nothing for them, but when they said they were Yankees, "boys!" says she, "you are trying to deceive me!" "No, we are not", said they. "Is that so at last", she exclaimed, and running into the kitchen, she brought out cornbread molasses, butter, milk and meat, telling them to help themselves. That night we encamped at Decatur. The next night, after marching through Philadelphia, we camped six miles from Morgantown. Here our rations run out, nothing to eat and no way of getting more. So General Sheridan sent out forage wagons to gather corn and husk it; ~~and a neighboring mill was~~ a detail was then made to shell it and a neighboring mill was pressed to grind it for us. When dealt out as rations we each got $\frac{1}{2}$ pint for two days. We lay there one day, and the next ~~day~~ we crossed the Little Tennessee River and marching through Morgantown we kept on till night, when we camped near another mill. Here we drew another $\frac{1}{2}$ pint of corn meal. The next day we marched through Maysville or Maryville (a very neat and pretty town) and camped two miles on the other side of town, near another mill (not running) The next day we passed by a large thread factory, & crossed a small stream near it, on the way I got a havresack full of potatoes and a canteen full of molasses. We camped that night one mile from Knoxville. Here we drew another $\frac{1}{2}$ pint of cornmeal for two days. After laying there one day, companies "A", "B", "E", & "G", were detailed as Provost Guards at General Sheridan's Headquarters. When "said companies" again moved over to headquarters the next day we drew a pint of flour. Two days after, headquarters were moved to Knoxville and we marched over the pontoon bridge on the Holston & were quartered in a house in town.

Four days after, we moved out to Blains X Roads six miles from Strawberry Plains. We stayed there three or four days, during which time I drew another pair of pants (my old ones being nearly "gone up") a pair of shoes, stockings, one shirt & a blanket. We then moved (that is headquarters) near Richland Creek. Here an old gentleman came down and asked the general for a guard to protect his property and I happened to be the lucky one detailed. I packed up my things, and went and staid at his house. I found them very nice people. He had five sons and two daughters. One of his sons was a deserter from the rebel army, was in the Battle of Stone's River & had belonged to the very Cavalry that took me prisoner there. He could tell all about capturing that train. But now, (as authors say) "the scene has changed" and we now sleep together in the same bed & under the same roof. While there I had my milk and bread whenever I wanted it. I very easily became acquainted with the people in the neighborhood, was invited out to supper- to several social gatherings of the young people there. There is as much difference between the people of East & Middle Tennessee as there is between white and black. The people in East Tennessee are highly intelligent as a general thing, while those of Middle Tennessee, show ignorance to be in the ascendency. I remained there a month, when I was called back to headquarters, as the Division was moving "forward," and we had to follow. The next morning after my recall, we recrossed the Holston River, & after marching six miles, camped for the night on the E.T.&Va. R. R. The next day we marched to Dabdrige on the French Broad River. This is quite a nice town. Situated as it is among the hills, it reminds me very much of Richland Center. Two or three miles from there, the remaining six companies of our Regt. had quite a skirmish with Longstreet's men. The next day which was Sunday, we spent quietly. In the afternoon, there was heavy cannonading in front. Late in the evening we had to guard the supply train which fell back to ~~SEE~~ Strawberry Plains, which was seventeen miles from there. This kept us marching all night. Next morning the whole of our Corps, the 9th & 23 Corps fell back to Strawberry Plains. "A", "B", "E&G" ie the Provost Guard, were placed in barracks there where we stayed three days, when the whole Regt became Provost Guards, & we marched back to Knoxville and crossing the Holston River on the pontoon bridge camped again on the same spot where we were first detailed as Provost Guards. Here we remained one day, & then recrossing the river, we passed through the town on our way to Louden. We were three days on the march to this place, which is situated on the Tennessee River, where the railroad from Chattanooga to Knoxville crosses on a bridge. This bridge (if I understand aright) which the rebels have burned, General Sheridan intends to rebuild, before he leaves this place. We are quartered in two brick buildings used as barracks by us, formerly store houses. We are now quite comfortably fixed for winter quarters, although the weather feels decidedly like summer.

ut I must close, please send me some postage stamps, as I left those others in that volume of tactics. Please send me a fine tooth comb, as I have none, no chance to get one, or money to buy one if I had. Please give my love to mother and the children & if you think best, please send this letter to mother, as I have not much time to write after being on guard duty every day. When this railroad is mended to this place from Chattanooga I hope I shall have a chance to see you again. The cars are running regularly now from the other side of the river to Knoxville. But I must close- as ever

your affectionate son

Amandus

P. S. Quite a number of Regts here have reenlisted and gone home on furlough, among them the 15th Mo.

I have for the last two months enjoyed excellent health, and am as fat as a pig.

Amandus

Cleveland Tenn., April 28th, 64

My dear father:

Many thanks for your kind letters of the 10th and 22nd inst. I should have written sooner, but you see by the date of this letter, that we have one more been in a march, though this time of only three days and a half's duration. I have though really enjoyed this little march. We have had some queer doings during this short space of time, nevertheless. We packed up on the 18th inst. and started about noon. It rained a little at the beginning, but shortly after cleared up and has continued fine weather ever since. We had our knapsacks containing all our extra baggage carried. All I carried on my shoulders was a piece of "dog tent," & a woolen blanket, besides my rations. We passed through Philadelphia ~~about~~ about one o'clock P. M. "Not the Philadelphia so famous in history, but a plain little village without romance or mystery". If I may be allowed to pervert the poem of "Nothing to Wear." However if it was a ~~px~~ plain little village we marched through with the "Band playing, colors flying and arms at "right shoulder shift," to the no small delight of a troop of little "wooly headed" urchins who displayed their ivory in token of approbation of the "show". When safely through the town,--"arms at will", we once more trudged on our way. Here giving the reg't "the slip" I followed the railroad track and arrived at Sweetwater a full half hour before the boys did. One of the mounted orderlies, here offered to carry my gun for me as far as head-quarters, which I being tired, thankful accepted. When there, I waited until the reg't came up and once more fell into the ranks. Unknown to Gen'l Wagner, Col. Sherman Com'd'g the 1st Brig. ordered us into camp with the Brigade. While going into camp, the 88th Ill., the only contemptible reg't that ever left that state, commenced blackguarding our reg't--"Here's your white gloved reg't! Where now is your provost guard business? Shaw! Men! Put on your paper collars!" But no doubt remembering a blast they got from our reg't once before, they didn't keep it up. That night Col. Sherman---who by the by, is very much despised by our ~~last~~ reg't,---sent for the band to play at his head quarters. The band "couldn't see it", so the Major sent back word to him that the band belonged exclusively to the reg't. The next day we were to march in the rear of the brigade. After the 88th had passed, next came the 36th Ills. V. V. The band then commenced playing, when the 36th gave three cheers for the 24th. We then started on the march, the boys continually cracking jokes on each other all along the route. We passed through Mouse Creek station, where I once more took the railroad track. What happened to the reg't from thence, till they went into camp at Athens I heard from one of the boys. It appears that Col. Sherman probably in hopes that the reg't would hoot at him, in order that he might have the pleasure of arresting its officers, rode slowly by the reg't while they were resting on the road. But the boys very prudently held their tongues. A little before going into camp for the night, the A. A. G. from Division Head Quarters, rode up to our Major and told him to bring his reg't into town, where he (the A. A. G.) would find them a camp. Col. Sherman not knowing this stood at an opening in the fence ~~& ordered~~ & ordered the reg't to "file in" that way, when what was his "rage & astonishment" when he saw the ~~Major~~ Major pay no attention to him but continue on his way to town. In order to find out the meaning of such conduct he followed behind the reg't. On entering the town ~~the~~ the boys fell into their places at "right shoulder shift". The band struck up their music & away we marched, in the regular "style". Col. Sherman and all the little boys following behind. So

we marched through the principal streets of Athens, until the "A. A. G." rode up to the Col. and---as the boys call it---"put a flea in his ear", when he rode back to camp. The boys camped in the outskirts of the town near a mill dam. There I found them, having taken my own time on the march. Athens is quite a pleasant town. The majority of the inhabitants are strictly Union. All the unionists however generally gather for consultation on the street corners north of the court house square. While their misguided Bretherenⁿ gather on the corners south. Squads of our boys were ordered to patrol the streets at night. In the meantime, Col. Sherman sent orders for the band to march at the head of the Brigade, the next day, but finding that wouldn't work, he ordered the reg't to march in front of the Brigade. Two minutes after the Major had received this order another came from Brig. Gen'l Wagner, ordering us to march at the head of the Division. Well pleased at this, our band went over in the evening & serenaded the Gen'l. Next morning we got up at half past four, and marched at six o'clock. We rested awhile at Riceville, and then continued on our way, crossing the Hiwassee River, entering Charleston early in the afternoon. There we camped for the night. Here we also we learned that Major Gen'l Newton had arrived at Cleveland to take command of our division, as soon as it should reach that place. Col. West, our Col. we learned was also there, with Lieut ~~Ralston~~ Balding, awaiting our coming. Gen'l Wagner sent us notice that night, that we would have to march with our Brigade the next day during the march. The next morning we resumed our march, in our usual good humor for certain we were that Col. Sherman or no Col. Sherman, we would shortly have an officer over us that would not allow the reg't to be tampered with. While halting to rest, a short distance from Cleveland, Lt Col. West, accompanied by Lieut Balding came out to meet us. As soon as the boys caught a glimpse of their Col, they set up a shout, giving "three hearty cheers and a tiger for Col. West." Col. Sherman here sent for the band, to play at the head of the Brigade, while marching through town. This was promptly refused him, when what was his surprise and disappointment to see the 24th Wis. march away from the Brigade, and coming to a "Battalion front," on the outskirts of the town, stack arms and commence preparations for going into camp, on that spot as Provost Guard once more. As the 88th Ill's marched passed us, some of the boys shouted to them, "come over and see the white gloved reg't!" But they very prudently kept their mouths shut, looking as the boys style it,--"seven ways, for Sundays. Cleveland is a very pretty place. It reminds me more of home . than any place, I have ever yet come across, down in the "Sunny South." I have seen numerous little residences, where both-the buildings and grounds are so neat, elegantly & tastefully planned, which together with the noble old shade trees around them, make me fain to compare this place to an oasis in the Great Desert caused by the ravages of War. Cleveland has suffered but little at the hands of either army. Here is the Junction between the East Tennessee & Georgia Railroad---running from Knoxville to Dalton-- and the Chattanooga Branch Road. We are just twenty eight miles from Chattanooga. We are at present doing duty at Division Head Quarters, which makes it much easier for us than it was at Loudon. Three companies of the 36th Ills. have been, and still are doing provost duty in the town. I still maintain my position as orderly at Div. Head Quarters and feel as stout and "hearty as a buck." The next evening, at dress parade, we were--by Col. West-- presented a beautiful silk flag--on which were inscribed in gilt letters, the No. of the reg't and the names of the k different battles, which we have been through--from the ladies of Millwaukee, accompanied by an address highly complimentary to the regiment. But I must close. Please answer soon. In the mean time I shall remain as ever--

Your affectionate son
Amandus Silsby

P.S. I will recopy that form with the required changes, the next time I am on duty at the Generals, as I have not got any large sized paper with me, on which to write it. When we got here I tried to get five day leaves of absence to go & see you, but could not obtain it. In regard to the N. Y. Independent, I thank you very ~~much~~ much for it, but while I am on duty at Head Quarters I can get plenty there to read, as the news boys are obliged to leave there copies of every kind of papers, they have for sale, just as soon as the mail arrives, I have while there, free access to them,

Please direct as before to
Amandus Silsby
Co "A," 24th Reg't Wis, Vol. Inf.
2 Div. 4th Army Corps.
Cleveland, Tenn.

2nd Division commanded by--
Major Gen'l Newton
4th Army Corps, by--
Major Gen'l Howard,
We are still as ever--
"The same old Division."

Please give me, mothers P. O. address, when you have read this letter please send it to her. The last letter I got from Miss Walrath was written before she left Spring Green. She however promised me an account of her "new home" as soon as they got "fairly settled."

Amandus.

Camp 2 miles from Lost Mountain June 20, 1864
(near Kenesaw Mt. Ga.)

My dear father:

Since I last wrote to you (ie on the 17th instant) we have had a little more of it. Shortly after I mailed my letter, we were ordered to move forward as the rebels were----- . We advanced and took "those breastworks" and got over "that abatis" without the expected compliment of "grape and canister" we expected. They had strong works, both for their infantry and their Artillery. After resting, the 28th Kg., armed with Spencer rifles, went forward as skirmishers. They soon found the reb's skirmishers and soon the usual pop, pop began. We marched out in line of battle, and found the rebels were behind a line of strong works-----(~~eaten-out~~)-

Our batteries were massed near us and opened on their works in regular volleys and with tremendous effect, judging from the volleys of shells that burst over their works; adding to this a couple of 24 pounder Howitzers that expressed their opinions rather freely, the rebels were obliged to fall back to their ~~skirmish line~~ the next line of works leaving a heavy skirmish line, to hold the first line of works. To take the first line we had to cross a swamp, an open field, and wade a stream up to our waists; then run up a hill and then comes the abatis, as usual. Next morning it commenced raining hard, and as we commenced advancing, we had to lie down, once in the swamp, near where the rebels threw some solid ~~solid~~ shot. Then we advanced over the field, waded the creek and then commenced throwing up breastworks and took-----(~~roaches!~~)----- the rebel works and drove their skirmishers into some pits between that and the next line. We captured some Wisconsin men, belonging to a Georgia regiment. One of our regiments asked one of them if he knew George----- of Milwaukee, stating that he had been an old chum of his. The rebel replied that he had been in the same rifle pits with him that morning, but ran the moment he saw us ~~moving~~ advancing. While building breastworks, Corporal Fleming was shot through the fleshy part of the left arm. Battery "M" got a shell, bursting right over them. They replied in such volleys that the "rebels" "dried up" in a hurry. But Battery "B" 1st Pa. Reserves, were not so lucky. They sent two of their guns on the skirmish line, when the rebels "dried them up", killing eight men off those two guns. They had to pull out from there. Next morning the rebels were minus, and we advanced---(~~roaches~~) ---- (we) occupied their next line of works. From there we advanced again. After going some little distance, we had the usual dely, viz: the rebels. We crossed another creek, and happening by the batteries (one or two guns of which were firing). The rebels threw two shells and two solid shots. We got polite all at once, bowed, continued, and sometimes came the "spread eagle". The "niggers" you ought to have seen trabble though. Every stride they took measured about ten feet. Our batteries then opened in volleys. The rebels "dried up" again, but the boys had got their "dander riz" and kept it up for some time. We then moved forward into a piece of woods, where we camped, and where we are at present. Today Captain Horning of Company "E" got wounded. We have now but four commissioned officers in our regiment viz one major; one captain; and two 2d lieutenants. We have lost 5 or 6 men within the last three days. But I must close.

Your affectionate son,
Amandus Silsby

P. S. Please send me some paper. I had to trade this-----(~~missing~~)
Note by S. T. Wilson- This was probably Amandus' last letter. It was written from a camp two miles from Lost Mountain on June 20, 1864.
(three mountains make a triangle- Pine, Kenesaw and Lost Mountain)

P. S. Enclosed is a portrait that I picked up in the works at Resaca, as a memento.