

David Henry Talbot Diary May 1863 – Sept 1863

Lieutenant and Quartermaster 34th Regiment Illinois Volunteers

May 25th. 1863 Camp Drake
Murfreesboro, Tenn.

After breakfast went over to procure some slabs from saw mill. The Adj. and myself contemplate putting us up a sleeping room. After dinner received a letter from Carrie full of good news and language which only comes from the heart of innocence pure noble and loving. Commenced to ans. so to send tomorrow. Completed it in the evening.

May 26
Remained in camp. Mailed letter to Carrie. After dinner helped construct our house and moved in before night.

May 27
Went down town to pay over to Col. Boyd A.Q.M. some money left by Lieut. Morgan did not find him at home. Adj. had some very w t[sic] games of marbles in afternoon.

May 28th.
Went down town to see Boyd but could not. On my way home came around by the 74th. but they have not yet got in from Pickett [sic].

May 29th.
Showery nearly all day so I did not go out of camp. Looking over papers etc.

30th.
After breakfast went down to the mule pen and drew two mules. Arrived home just in time to save myself from getting a wetting. Continued to rain by spells the rest of the day. Rec. letter from coz[sic] Lizzie.

May 31
Just 5 months from the fight which proved so disasterous[sic] to our Regt. I went in Co. with our Col. and several others out on the battle ground. Was out most of the day. Stopped at one Mrs. Smiths. A very clever people but they I know are Secesh. (Wrote to Coz[sic] Lizzie) Mrs. S. is a well educated lady of perhaps 40. They have a piano, but it being the Sabbath we lost the music. Saw an abundance of flowers. At one house we stopped as there were quite a number of ladies on the stoop but as soon as

we commenced to alight they run into the house all but one and she was daubed with paint. They hate the Yankees, yet they don't object to marry one. – Press was over this morning he is looking bad (camp complaint)
Received a letter from Hattie and answered it this evening.
Did not attend church today at all today.

June 1st.

Remained in camp until nearly evening then went over to see Press who is quite unwell.
Some signs of a move

June 2

Early in the morning had quite a shower. After which I went and drew rations. Q.M.s have the oversight of drawing at present. Toward evening Adj. and myself took a ride to town. Quite damp & indications of more rain.

June 3

In morning went down to town to procure some contrabands for company cooks. Could not get them on account of they being consolidated into a pioneer brigade. Came around by the 74th. to see Press he seems to be better. About tomorrow we received orders to move had to draw pork in lieu of F. Beef. and the orders are to have the men take 7 days rations and ready to march at a moments [sic] warning. Some troops I understand have moved this camp.

June 4

Remain in Camp the fore part of the day. Press was over and took dinner and staid[sic] an hour or so. About 4 P.M. drew rations 5 days – also clothing camp & garrison equipage. In the evening went over to Headquarters and heard a speech from Ex Governor Williams of Ind. was very good. Rather amusing, but is about a third rate speaker.

June 5

Remained all day in camp rainy and rather a disagreeable day. No news of importance.

June 6

Remained in camp reading in the fore noon. Drew some clothing in afternoon. In evening wrote letters up quite late.

June 7

Arose quite early and went down to the river and had a bath. After breakfast QM Sargt. and myself went over to regular brigade. Saw scaffold on which a citizen was hung on

Friday for murdering a Union Citizen. Came around to see Press. found he had gone over to our Regt. returned to camp and found that our Regt. has by order been relieved from work on the works also Co. A orderly back all looks like active service for which I am glad. Went to church 11 o'clock. Wrote to Molly Piper? Tipet? aaTiper?[sic]

June 8

Remained in camp all day. Received one of those good letters from Carrie. Commenced to answer at once and finished in the evening.

June 9

In camp all day. Drew rations in evening.

June 10

In camp all day until near evening when I went down to Div's. Q.M. to see about procuring some tents.

June 11

Drew some clothing in afternoon. Regiment was paid off for two months up to the 18th. May. Received letter from Cheshire.

June 12

In camp all day until evening when I went over to see Press. Find him some better than a short time since.

June 13

Very warm day. After dinner went down to town and had some pictures taken.

June 14

Sabbath. After breakfast went down and had a bath. At 9 o'clock went to Sabbath School. Did not attend church. After noon Lieut. Handley was over and staid [sic] until 3 o'clock.

June 15

Remained in camp all day engaged in reading. In the evening wrote letter to Cheshire. Received one from Hattie.

June 16

After breakfast went down town and expenses \$77.44 to C.R. Goodwin being some money was collected for him under my supervision. After dinner went down town with

two other brother officers and sat for photograph. Came back to camp and engaged myself in my duties.

June 17

Remained in camp all day.

June 18

In camp. Nothing of moment transpiring.

June 19

Received letter from Hattie.

June 20

Went down town. Drew rations.

June 21 Sunday.

Our Chaplain being gone did not have church. Staid [sic] at home and had some visitors from the 74th. Ill.

June 22

After dinner went down town. Capt. Rawlings resigned and gone home today. Was sorry to see him leave. The soldier dislikes to part with his comanders [sic].

June 23

All quiet in camp until noon when we got "orders" to be ready to march soon orders came to draw five days rations. Rumor says Bragg is reinforcing Johnston. No orders as yet what time we will arm.

June 24

In the evening swords and belts were presented to Col. Dysart & Maj. Miller by the Officers and men of the Regt. They were elegant & cost some two or three hundred dolls [sic].

June 24th Wednes [sic]-

Orders came about day light to be ready to march in one hour which we are with the entire train took the Shelbyville pike which we kept 6 miles out from town. When we struck off on a dirt road to the left in the direction of Liberty Gap. Our Divis. & W part of Davisis [sic]. Sheridan kept on the pike and made a feint on Shelbyville which drew away a part of the enemy's force at the Gap- Skirmishing was going on in both Sheridan's & our front. The 1st. Brig. of our Div. became engaged late in the afternoon

trying to dislodge the enemy who were posted on a commanding position at the Gap. They lost quite a number of men killed & wounded. The 29th. of our Brig. were ordered in just at dark and lost some men. Gen. Thomas took the Manchester Pike and had quite a severe skirmish with the enemy at Hoover Gap 13 miles from Manchester they- enemy-occupied three very strong positions but they were soon dislodged. Gen. Crittenden took the McMinnville pike. Intending to get well in the rear. Camped about 5 miles from the Gap in hearing of Musquetry [sic]. Rained all day. Broke one wagon wheel. Had to send back to town after one. Saw Press in evening.

Thursday June 25

Raining very hard. No move. Sent out to the Regt. two days rations. Got letters from Mother and Care. Read and reread them as I had nothing to read. Moved out about two P.M. Floundered through the mud and camped 8 miles from the Manchester pike.

June 27

Moved early in morning. Raining. Passed through Hoovers Gap where Gen. Thomas drove the enemy from his strong holds. Arrived about noon at Beech Grove. Broke one wheel. Regt. joined us in the evening. Raining in the evening. Wrote in the evening a letter to Mother. Ascertained that our Regt. loss on the 25th at Liberty Gap killed 4 men of Co. F. two privates 1 from H and 1 from F and 23 wounded. Co. E. had 3 Sergts.[sic] 3 Corpls.[sic] and 1 Private – wounded. Avery Tap hurt through the leg and Mines in the head neither dangerously so. Orders to move at 5 in the morning.

June 28th.

Left camp a little past 5 A.M. for Manchester 13 miles distant. Rained part of the day so was very busy. Broke one wagon 5 miles from town. Arrived in camp near town after dark. Slept out doors to[sic] tired to put up tent thunder showers in the night got some wet all for the Union. Got new wheel and got my other wagon up in the night. June 28th. moved train over and near Duck River. Orders came in afternoon to cut down to 7 wagons to a Regt. & send back all baggage to Murfe [sic]. which I done in a heavy shower got very wet. Teams stuck fast getting out on to the road. Horrid time.

June 29

Still in camp. Nothing of importance transpiring.

June 30th.

Lay in camp writing etc. Q. M. Sergt.[sic] went back to M.

July 1st.

Troops moved in forenoon toward Tullahoma. Wagons was moved over near town. Sent team out after forrage [sic]. This is a small town of a few hundred inhabitants- before the war-

July 2nd.

Large body of cavalry passed through town going to the front. Tullahoma is said to be evacuated and our men have occupied it. Orders to move a 1 ½ AM did not get off until 3. Roads very bad. Travelled all night and arrived at Tullahoma at day light in the morning of July 3rd. After two or three hours rest we moved over to the Regt. on the north side of town. This is a small inferior town but well fortified but the rebs were afraid of being outflanked. We captured hundreds of tents 2000 bush corn meal guns quantity of tools & some seige[sic] guns.

July 4th.

The glorious Fourth of July was spent by us in a very quiet manner if we may except the roar of a National Salute of 35 guns. How natural it is for the mind to revert to past scenes when our land was unstirbed [sic] by the horrid ravages of war - God grant that another Fourth may find us in the enjoyment of an honorable peace – our country saved. The Union victorious. Wrote a letter to Mother & Care.

July 5

Tullahoma is situated on the Nashville and Chattanooga[sic] R.R. 70 miles from the former. A branch of the same road connects it with Manchester 12 miles distant. The town is rather inferior – about 100 houses – but well calculated for a military pass – surrounded by low wet land – The rebs have cut the timber and formed an abuttis[sic] for quite a distance in front

July 6

Cheering news was received today from Virginia – Lee's Army has been routed and are in full retreat – A salute was fired – The Army of the Potomac has met with so many reverses that discouragement has almost paralyzed [sic] its efforts. Now encouraged by success it will hence forth fight but to conquer.

July 7

Another official despatch [sic] from the Sec. of War announcing the fall of Vicksburg on the 4th. What a glorious event for a glorious day – 27000 prisoners – Now rebs hunt your last ditch. No news from the front. Still Reb pris.[sic] come in.

Wednesday July 8th.

Bad roads are beginning to have their effect on our rations. Hard tack & pork has "played out" – and the men had to go out on pickett [sic] with nothing to eat. Yet they grumble not for they sympathize with the boys in front, who must be far more destitute – Supply train near at hand but mud bound

July 9th

Was awakened last night by the prolonged sound of the car whistle, and today we have plenty of H. bread. Several trains arrived during the day.

July 10th

The papers say that John Morgan after cutting the L & S R.R. passed over into Ind. devastating the country as he advanced. In the end this raid must prove a benefit to us as it will awaken the people of the north. It would seem that Morgan can hardly escape capture.

Sat. 11th.

Went out in charge of a squad of men to pick berries. Got plenty to eat & 3 qts. besides. They are recommended by the surgeons & the boys acknowledge they are not hard to like

Sund.[sic] 12th.

Lieut. Col. Van Tassel arrived today, he was wounded at Stone River been home ever since. Adj. Leavitt's resignation papers arrived today. The Regt. loses in him a faithful officer – Divine Service in the evening – wrote to Care

Mon. 13th.

Prisoners still arrive from They are mostly Ten. & Ken. troops who have deserted & are bound not to fight out of the state. They are some of them enlisting in some of the Ten. Regt.

Tues. 14th.

Heavily laden trains are arriving and passing down the road some 10 or 12 miles to Elk River near Dechend & Winchester. A report is current of the fall of Port Hudson. Hurrah for our side – whether true or not is only a question of time at all events.

Wednesday 15th.

The fall of Port Hudson is confirmed with 7000 prisoners & Sherman is in full pursuit of Johnson. Letters from Mother & Cheshire.

Thurs. 16th.

Morgan said to be in Ohio somewhere near Camp Dennison and is endeavoring to cross the river back again into Ky. – Regt. making out their Pay Rolls. The Paymaster being in the Brigade – Gen. Rosa is away at Nashville

Friday 17th.

Sent our forage wagons – All quiet in camp – This evening the Maj. Jun came in and says McCook sent word to Johnson that Charleston, S.C. is taken – Good

Sat. 18th.

Pay Master in the Regt. and the boys' hearts are made glad by two months pay. Rec. pay from the 7th day of May to the 30th. of June and Sgts. pay from the 1st. to 6th. May in all \$228.95. Rec. check for 150 payable to Perry – Rec. letter from Press & one from Care all very welcome.

July 19th.

Very warm day. Remained in Regt. all day. Divine services in evening. Wrote letters to Carrie & Perry. Sent check to him of 150.00.

July 20th.

Drew some clothing. Weather warm.

July 21st.

Nothing of importance transpiring during the day. About 9 P.M. received a despatch [sic] from Hed[sic] Quarters of the capture of Morgan and all of his forces with the exception of 300, cheer after cheer was sent up – Received letter from Carrie.

July 22nd.

Paid and discharged servant David for being a worthless negro. Went and procured boarding of a lady living near by. Have not yet learned their name. Drew some clothing in the evening. Weather very hot.

July 24th. 1863

Morn – Every indication of being very warm day. After breakfast went to the creek and had a fine bathe. Throughout the day it was very hot, the most so of the season. News by the papers that Jackson, Miss. is occupied by Gen. Sherman. Our banner appears to be in the ascendent. God grant it may soon wave oer [sic] every foot of our soil –

25th.

In camp all day nothing of importance transpiring. Report that Gen. R. is trying to transfer his command to S. Carolina.

26th.

Spent the most of the forenoon in reading. – Wrote letter to Care P.M. Despatch [sic] came in the evening stating that Morgan had surrendered.

July 27th.

Went out with Brigade forage train on the Lynchburg road being 14 or 15 miles. For two or three miles the road was bad yet as a general thing good but rough. Passed through a wooded and sparsely settled country until we came into a valley. After approaching within two miles of L. burg turned into a valley to the right, passed into a valley where we procured oats in the bundle. Found a very illiterate people, and we hate that system more than ever which so degrades, a portion of the people when it exalts the others. Boys procured some chickens & pigs. 1 Sheep, corn & potatoes. Berries were to be found in abundance.

July 28th.

Spent the most of the day in reading. No letters today.

29th.

Nothing of importance taking place. In camp all day.

30th.

Just before dinner drew a very large amount of clothing for the month of August which kept me busy all day.

July 31st.

In camp

August 1

In camp doing but little. Weather very warm.

Aug. 2nd.

Went to meeting at the church, which our Chaplain has been siciting. [sic] Sermon by Rev. – Phillips of the Cal – Con – very good

Aug. 3rd.

In camp until after noon. Got a letter from Mother. Good. About 3 P.M. a letter was handed me by an orderly from Hd Quarters. It was from Lt. Handy of the 74th. Ill.

stating that Press had met with an accident whilst out practicing with the band he was hit by a musket ball by one of the 22nd. Ind. who were out on skirmish drill – I immediately had a leave of absence drawn by our Adj. and took it to Brig. & then to Divis. got it all signed right but could not get off on the cars until the morrow

Aug. 4

Took the cars about 11 o'clock A.M. arrived at Winchester about 1 o'clock P.M. Found Witey at the depot and went immediately for the camp. Found Press in the Regt's. Hospital quite cheerful and comfortable he was hit just under the right shoulder blade the ball showing itself near the surface of the skin on the inside of the right arm. Came some three inches below the shoulder joint where it was cut out. He being in good health when wounded thus with proper care I doubt not that it will get well but no doubt the bone of the arm is fractured. Found the rest of the boys all well. The boys of Co. G. & the drummers strive to see how much they can do for him. Did not sit up with him very late.

Aug. 5 1863

Found that Press had had a very good night's rest only being tired obliged to lie on one position so long. Yet he complains not much and seems cheerful only as he speaks of Mother who may worry so much about him when she hears of it. Went up town and procured a small piece of ice. We have good water here and by frequent bathings [sic] are able to keep the inflammation down to a great extent. Remained by him all day. Went to bed quite early in the evening one of the drummers sitting up with him until ½ past 11 P.M. at which time I got up and staid [sic] with him the rest of the night.

Aug. 6th.

He rested very well yet feels tired. I having to home today I staid [sic] very close with him left him quite cheerful at noon as my "Leave" expires today. Raining very hard when I went to the cars. Bid him good bye and I know not when I may see him again. God grant that I may. Winchester is quite a pretty place with fine camping ground. Gen's Rosecrans, McCook, & Davis Hd. Quarters are here. The latter in command of the "Post". This being fast or Thanksgiving day all is very quiet for this army. Arrived at Tullahoma about 4 P.M.

Aug. 7th.

Orders came last night to be ready to march at one hours notice with ten days forage & rations but here we are. Did not move as yet – Went to the camp to see if Press was sent for the front. Did not find him on the train however.

Aug. 8th.

After dinner took a nap and did not wake until just as the train was leaving the depot, and Press in charge of N. Burrough was on board for Nashville. Am very sorry that I did not get to see him. but am glad that Sgt. is with train.

Sunday 9th.

Went to church in forenoon. Our chaplain preached – 3 P.M. went to church and heard another sermon from an old negro who could not read or write. I never was so surprised in my life. His language was good, delivery excellent he was truly excellent. Eloquent. I had rather hear him than many college learnt men.

9th.

A large old house was set on fire by some of the boys. It made a very brilliant light. Had letter from Care. commenced to answer.

Mon. 10th.

Finished letter to Care. Had a letter from Sgt. Burroughs who is with Press in Hospital. He assured me he was doing well, but was quite tired and sore from the effects of his journey.

Tues. 11th.

In camp all day nothing of importance going on.

Wedn. [sic] 12th.

Col. received his resignation papers took the Rgt. quite by surprise.

Thurs. 13th.

One Miss Eikels who has a brother in the Rgt. is boarding where I do appears to be a fine girl and is not afraid to travel. She has gone today to get a furlough for her brother who is still unwell.

Friday 14

Col. left for home. Seemed to feel very bad on leaving & such is the case we are loth[sic] to go home and leave our comrades in arms.

Sat. 15th.

In camp all day. Every appearance of a move soon.

Sun. 16

My birthday. Feel very thankful that it is as well with me as it is. Providence has dealt with me very mercifully. God is good. Did not go to church for there was none. Rained quite hard about noon. Intended to write after taking a nap, but before the journey had hardly commenced into the land of nod orders came that we would march at three, which we did taking the Winchester road 12 miles distant. 79th in the lead and we third. The road from Tullahoma to W is through a thick growth of timber the most of the way and the wet fall of rain had made the roads quite bad. However got along very well until dark and then Qm's had their hands full. I had 3 wagons upset broke on tongue maimed a mule and only got 4 out of eight through to Elk River. 6 miles. Was up very near all night, it was very dark.

Mon. 17

As soon as light rode back and soon had all my agoing [sic] again. A great many wagons were broken. There is great deal of very poor management in trying to move a wagon train in a dark night. About noon Davise's [sic] Divis. had marching orders at 2 P.M. Went four miles S. of town and camped. Very warm day.

Tues 18

Left camp at 6 on the direct route to Huntsville after traveling 6 miles came to the small town of Salem at which place we took a road to the left leading to Belfonte. After four miles travel came to a spur of the Cumberland Mountain over which we passed then into a valley called the Paint Rock. The valley was very narrow with a small stream which we crossed and recrossed no less than twenty times in 7 miles and many of the crossing were very bad. Did not go into camp until after dark. Our Brigade was in the rear and the men owing to the darkness of the night could not pick their route, so they "went it blind" water often times to the waist. Marched 20 miles and very hard on the men. Had two wagons which did not get in.

Wednes. [sic] 19th.

Left camp at 5 ½ o'clock. Passed over a very rough section of country the valley widening after a travel of 6 miles came to the foot on the Mountain proper. Halt for drivers and were to lay until 3 P.M.

Thurs. 20th.

Awoke at 3. Ordered the teams to unhitch and feed and there we laid until noon, when we who were in the rear advanced up the hill which is three miles up. All of the teams in advance had 8 to 10 mules to a wagon & 10 men to push and lift. Three of my teams made it alone owing to some mismanagement about sending back mules. It was killing to the mules however got the praise of having the best teams & drives in the Divis.

Never did I pass over such lands. After we reached the top found that a portion of Davis [sic] Divis. had crossed by another route and taken the Stevenson road. Had very good road on top. Traveled 7 miles and camped. Water very scarce dark before we got into camp. Traveled 13 miles

Friday 21st.

Left camp soon after 5. 4 miles to where we descend the mountain. There are some southern farms on top and such a class of people I never dreamt [sic] of. The women all both young & old chew tobacco & are a loose (squalid) (spurlin) [sic] set. Such are the poor people of the South. Where we first commence to make the descent it is quite steep but not so rough two miles down. Had one or two wagons that I was fearful of but got down all right. Stopped 7 miles from Bellefonte for dinner. Section of county rough but some very good farms. 4 miles from town broke a wheel to my wagon. Left Qm [sic] Sergt. [sic] back with it with orders to cut a pole and drag it into camp. Had quite a shower. Camped near town about 4 P.M. My team soon came in. He got a mail the first since we left T. Had a letter from Care – good.

Sat. 22nd.

Our Rgt. is detailed as provost Guard and we moved up town the Rgt. going into camp nearby and the Filu and staff into houses the Col Adjut & Surgeon in the Court House and I have taken for my quarters a store with the sign of McCanvey & Co. Had letter from Press by proxy. This town of Bellefonte is the county seat of Jackson Co. is a small place of 300 inhabitants in times of peace but it was very nearly deserted now.

Sund [sic] 23rd.

Had to go out in charge of forage train. Went out 5 miles got 13 loads of old corn 1 Bbl [sic] Tar & 1 B smiths bellows. Peaches were very plenty in fact the boys made a nice thing of it and I felt rather inclined to let them go it. Returned to camp which we reached early in afternoon. Had a letter from Mother the first one since she heard he was wounded. She tries to be calm over it but I know that she must suffer in mind. God bless him. Wrote to Care a long letter.

Mon. 24th.

Was busy in getting my shops ready so they might do repairs. Found some past time in an old deserted printing shop the type are all in beautiful "Pie"

Tues. 25th.

Busied myself the most of the day in setting up some type and printing some orders which I could not do in a very workmanlike manner on the act of my press

Wed. 26th.

Arose with the expectation of going out into the Country but Gen. Johnson refused to grant any more passes for the present. Letter from Prescott who is getting better slowly. Commenced this noon four of us in my Divn. to board at a McArmsbrorgs who has his daughters who are very strong Secesh I had quite an argument with the younger who is a school marm on the right of secession. She was not able to give the reason of the hope within.

Thurs. 27th.

Remain in camp all day busy in getting my wagons repaired etc. In the evening went with Ogden & other bro-officers to my boarding house where Ogden played the piano & sang national songs. Had very good time.

Friday 28th.

In camp all day busy about duty & setting type. Letter from Hattie. Answered it.

Sat. 29th.

Engaged very much as yesterday. Appearances of a speedy move. Letter from McCurt. Very cool in evening.

Sunday 30th.

Orders came last night at one to be ready to move at 7 A.M. Having some wagons to be repaired had to get mechanics up and had more work to get my teams out on time. Moved on the direct route to Stevenson 13 mi. Encamped at Crow Creek 3 miles from town early in the afternoon on the same ground nearly that we did on when I found the Regt. on my return from home over one year ago. After dinner rode to town on buimun. [sic]

Mon. 31st.

Left camp near 7 A.M. Moved near two miles & then crossed the Tenn. river on a pontoon bridge 1212 feet long & 59 pontoons. Camped near the river. Had a good bathe in the river which caused me to feel very much refreshed after the heat & dust of marching. Found letter in camp from Carrie & after partaking of a good dinner felt first rate. No orders came today about moving. Wrote letter to Care in the evening.

Sept. 1st A.D. 1863

Was awakened by the Col's orderly saying the Col. wished to see me. Went. Found an order requiring all of the teams turned over but three & the remaining ones to take

nothing but officers baggage. Reg't. & Co. clerk, one tent and three to a Rgt. Men to carry three days rations. So was kept very busy all day and very tired at night. Sent letter to Care.

Sept. 2nd. 1863

Was in camp all day. Divis. moved & our Regt. was left here as guard & to throw up rifle pits to defend the bridge in case of an attack, with the expectation of being relieved in a day or two.

Sept. 3rd.

[missing text]

Sept. 4th.

Remained in camp all day. Boys went out on to a McCoffers plantation the place where the Secesh all through the country sent stock darkies from the north side of the river the boys got 6 mules and 5 or 6 darkies. I have two of them cooking for me. Wrote to mother

Original diary in metal box.