



1987

Lincoln's Boys: The Enlisted Men of the Illinois Infantry in the Civil War

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LINCOLN'S BOYS
The Enlisted Men of the Illinois Infantry
in the Civil War

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April 27, 1987
History 450
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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	v
Introduction	1
1. Tenting on the Old Camp Ground	5
2. Hard Crackers	19
3. Weeping Sad and Lonely	30
4. Gay and Happy Still	41
5. Shoulderstraps, Pimps and Skunks	51
6. Tramp, Tramp, Tramp	63
7. The Last Full Measure	78
8. The Union Forever	92
9. A Brothers' War	108
10. State Sovereignty, National Unity	124
Endnotes	134
Glossary	165
Bibliography	167

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the members of my project committee, Dr. Michael Young, Dr. Robert Bray, Mr. Robert Frizzell, and Dr. John Heyl, for their help in suggesting sources, reading drafts and offering criticism and advice as the project took shape. Special thanks are in order for the committee chair, Dr. Young, for agreeing to supervise a project outside of his own area of expertise. Thanks are also in order for several persons not directly involved in the project. Mr. Paul Bushnell helped make the necessary arrangements for my research in Springfield and Chicago. Dr. Jack Fields offered much-needed assistance with the word processing used in the project. Mr. Baxter Fite III of Peoria, Illinois, brought Levi Ross to my attention and also provided other useful insights concerning the 86th Illinois Infantry. Finally, I would like to thank my parents for allowing me to pursue my interest and letting me drive around Illinois doing research during January.

Peter R. Wells
Bloomington, Illinois
April 12, 1987

Introduction

"Co. B are all Old Abes Boys," wrote Frank Crowell about the 1864 election.¹ Frank and his comrades were also Lincoln's boys in another sense. They were the soldiers who enforced Lincoln's authority. This is a study of the enlisted men who served in the Illinois infantry regiments during the Civil War. The boys were the ones who faced the Confederates on the field of battle. Without them, all the speeches Lincoln ever made would be meaningless. This study attempts to explain how the boys lived and ate, marched and fought, and died. It also looks at their opinions on the important subjects of the issues involved in the war, their leaders, their enemies and themselves.

This is not a study of nameless masses, though. The boys I use as sources have names and personalities. They were all boys, too, regardless of age. Day Elmore told his brother and sister about an informal association of soldiers, called a "mess," to which he belonged. "[T]here is 10 of the best boys in our mess I Ever got in with, thay are not all boys. [T]hare is one 40 years of age . . . and Another 35."² Consequently, I refer to the enlisted men as "the boys" throughout the paper.

A number of the boys are excellent sources and are used with great frequency throughout the paper. Perhaps the best is Levi Ross, who was a school master from Princeville, Illinois. Levi wrote numerous letters and also kept a detailed diary. Furthermore, he gave clear, logical explanations of his feelings on many issues.

Other excellent sources are Ed and Frank Crowell, two farm boys from Marion township in Ogle County. Both men were extremely open and straightforward in their letters to their parents. They wrote about attitudes and behaviors that most other soldiers would not want to discuss with their

families. Also both possessed a good sense of humor, which makes them very pleasant to work with. Frank Crowell was determined to enjoy himself despite the war. Consequently he is indispensable to Chapter 4, "Gay and Happy Still."

Lyman Needham is another frequently cited soldier. While there is nothing particular about him, he wrote many letters on a broad variety of subjects. Lyman had something to say about almost every subject discussed in my paper. Allen Geer was a good-natured young teacher who was very observant and noted much of what he saw and did in his diary. Like Lyman, Allen is cited in almost every chapter.

Day Elmore is another fantastic but unfortunately tragic source. He was incredibly patriotic and dedicated to the cause of the Union. He enlisted at age seventeen as a drummer. By eighteen he was a corporal, by nineteen a sergeant. By the age of twenty he was another number on the long list of casualties. He was mortally wounded at the battle of Franklin, Tennessee.

A number of other sources were also used. In fact, the boys represent a small sample company, with Levi Ross as the first sergeant, Ed Crowell as the teamster, and John Tallman as the drummer. A number of other sergeants, corporals and privates round out the company. All of the boys in my paper were enlisted men, but three did become officers when the war was essentially over. On April 20, 1865, both Levi Ross and Allen Geer were commissioned as a captain and first lieutenant, respectively.³ Another, Joseph Ward, was promoted to second lieutenant on October 16, 1865, after the war was over.⁴

Most of the manuscript sources came from two archives which I visited during January 1987. The Illinois State Historical Library in Springfield has a number of interesting and useful collections of soldiers' documents, including the collections of Levi Ross and Lyman Needham. Day Elmore's

letters are located at the Chicago Historical Society, which has a smaller collection of manuscripts concerning Illinois soldiers than does the Illinois State Historical Library. The Crowell letters are part of my personal collection.

Throughout the paper, I have left the soldiers' eccentric spellings intact in the quotes. However, I have frequently modified the punctuation in order to make the passages easier to read. These modifications are not indicated in the paper. Other modification are indicated by brackets. The soldiers' capitalization of letters was random at best, and often words which began sentences had to be modified.

Finally, I would like to address the similarities between my study and Bell I. Wiley's The Life of Billy Yank. Wiley's classic work was the inspiration for my project, but there are several important differences. My study is much more limited in scope than Wiley's. I deal only with soldiers who served in the Illinois infantry regiments. (Mounted infantry, which were essentially highly mobile infantry and distinctly different from cavalry, are included.) Also, all of my sources are enlisted men. Naturally some similarities do exist. Soldiers from Illinois ate the same rations as other Union troops, for example. However, I have tried to approach these similar topics from a different angle. Regarding the topic of food, for example, I did not itemize what the boys foraged but concentrated, instead, on how they rationalized their foraging.

I have also tried to explore different topics. Wiley did not include chapters on attitudes about officers, marching or the soldiers' thoughts about the issues involved in the war, although these topics did receive some attention in various chapters. One great difference exists between Wiley's

findings and my own. He claimed that most Federal soldiers disliked the South--its people, climate and land. I have found just the opposite.

My study focuses on the enlisted men of Illinois and how they experienced the Civil War. I hope it does these brave men justice. The Illinois boys were volunteers, and the war in which they fought was the bloodiest in American history. They spent many hours at the tedious routines of drill and picket duty while they endured the ignorant, monotonous life of the army camps. While in the army they ate poorly, and many of the soldiers became sick and died. The soldiers had to serve under officers who frequently knew no more about war than the enlisted men. Many officers were more concerned about themselves than the welfare and morale of the troops. These officers led the men on long marches and into battle, where many of the boys fell in combat. The boys volunteered for all of this because they loved their nation. They viewed their Southern brethren as traitors attempting to destroy the Union. The Illinois boys were willing to sacrifice all for their beloved Union, and they performed their duties with courage and a good measure of humor.

Many historians like to write about the movers and the shakers. The boys moved miles carrying heavy loads, and when they clashed with the enemy the earth shook. The boys were the ones who fought the Civil War. Because they volunteered to fight in this terrible war, their views of it are more important than the opinions of those who did not serve. That is why I chose to look at the war from the bottom ranks.

CHAPTER 1

Tenting on the Old Camp Ground

"Times dull, news scarce, mail seldom, Rations bad, rumors false & hopes disappointed. Nothing happens to disturb the dull monotony of camp life."¹ This is the synopsis of camp life given by Allen Geer; and most soldiers, if not all, would have agreed with him. Before Sherman's sustained campaign in Georgia in 1864, most of the Illinois troops spent their time in camp, only occasionally venturing out to fight the Confederates. Life in these camps was frequently incredibly boring; the day-to-day routine was rarely varied. Because the soldiers spent so much time in camp, an examination of their camp life is an appropriate place to start.

Camping implies some form of shelter, and whenever the soldiers were camped for more than a night or two, they pitched tents or built other shelters. During the first years of the war, the most prevalent tent was the Sibley tent. The Sibley tent was designed before the war by Major Henry Sibley, who later became a Confederate general. It was a conical tent, twelve feet tall and eighteen and one-half feet in diameter, and could accomodate twenty soldiers and their gear.²

The soldiers generally found the Sibley tents to be quite comfortable. David King lived in one with nine other men, even though it was designed for twenty. He and his tent-mates spread straw on the ground, put their knapsacks around the edges of the tent and slept with their feet towards the center.³ Levi Ross's tent was not completely filled, either. Sixteen men shared that tent, and they took advantage of an opening at the top of the tent to have a fire inside.⁴ William Marsh shared a tent with ten others. They fixed it up by adding a cook stove, for which they paid fifteen dollars, and made a bed

tick out of an old tent filled with straw.⁵ John Tallman's stove was less impressive, it being an old kettle with holes punched in it with a bayonet.⁶

Although the Sibley tents were comfortable, they were large and difficult to transport. Consequently, in the spring of 1863 many regiments received shelter tents. The shelter tent came in two pieces which were buttoned together to make the tent. Each man was to carry his own half.⁷ Ed Crowell, a teamster in the 92nd Illinois, gave a description of a his new shelter tent in April 1863.

Well Mother, they have taken our tents away from us and given us the shelter tent, but we call them dog kennel[s]. . . . I will describe the tent to you so you will know what our houses are like. Well it would be just the same as taking a common sheet only a little wider and tie a rope in the middle of each side and then take two stakes and drive [them] into the ground about two feet and a half high and stick into the holes where the ropes go in and then stake down the four corners and you have a shelter tent with both ends open so that the wind and rain can blow in at its leasure, but still its only a soldier that haves to lay in them. [T]hat['s] all that what we get for being brave.⁸

As alluded to by Ed Crowell, the shelter tents were not always well received. In the fall of 1862, John Given feared that his regiment would be issued the shelter tents, which he did not want to carry.⁹ (Sibleys were moved by wagons.) Levi Ross called the open-ended shelters, "a mear apology to protect one from wind & wet."¹⁰ The 129th Illinois did not receive shelter tents until January 1864. Curtiss Judd, the sergeant-major of the 129th, thought that the shelters ruined the appearance of his regiment's camp, noting in his diary: "Tents to be struck at 9am, 'Shelter' to be issued--Boys rapidly putting up the 'Dogs'--our beautiful camp in ruins."¹¹

Other soldiers, however, found the shelters to be useful tents. George Marsh, a sergeant in the 104th Illinois, said that shelter tents provided a good shade from the sun and that they kept out the rain rather well.¹² In the

19th Illinois, Joseph Johnston noted that, "The pup-tents still flourish and are growing in favor."¹³

Although Ed Crowell complained about the openness of the shelter tents, he and others in the 92nd accepted the tents with humor. Ed used his "dog kennel" as an excuse for staying up late, writing, "Why, I slept in one last night, and it made me feel so dogy I couldnt sleep if I was to be darned but I was up doging round camp most all night. . . ."¹⁴ Ed also noted the fun the boys in his regiment had with the "dogs," writing, "it is laughable to hear the boys in the Reg when they go to bed; they will all set up the damdest barking and howling you ever heard in your life. . . ."¹⁵ The transition from Sibleys to shelters was easier when the soldiers kept their sense of humor.

Whenever they had the chance, the soldiers gathered material to build more permanent shelters. These constructions were usually called "shebangs." Shebangs were huts with walls made out of boards, poles, and clay and roofs fashioned out of several shelter halves.¹⁶ Shebangs were usually built by an association of men called a mess when they believed that they would stay in one place all winter. While camped near Chattanooga, Tennessee, in October 1863, the boys of the 86th Illinois began to construct shebangs for the winter. Henry Nurse reported on the building: "The boys are most all building log houses and putting in fire places and chimneys. They are very comfortable. I have not got one yet. We (that is our mess) talk of putting up one soon."¹⁷

Like Nurse, a number of the boys described their shebangs as comfortable. When the 122nd Illinois was camped near Corinth, Mississippi, the boys made cabins which William Peter claimed were eighteen feet square. Fourteen men lived in William's shebang, and he said they were all comfortable there.¹⁸ The men in William Marsh's mess added bunks and a brick fireplace to their

shanty.¹⁹ Austin Andrews and his friends insulated their cabin by building it partially underground. He informed his sister that, "our shebang now is about half underground which make[s] it very warm."²⁰

While the soldiers were probably sincere when they wrote about the comfort of their shebangs, their standards of comfort were most likely low. Frank Crowell gave an example of a soldier's concept of comfort when he told his father about the shebangs his regiment found when they occupied the former camp of the 6th Kentucky (U.S.) Cavalry. "Our mess was very fortunate and got a very nice little house as we call it, but probbaly you would term it a small Pig pen."²¹ The cabins may have been warm, but, considering the wide variety of materials which were thrown together, they probably did look like pig pens.

When a regiment was supposed to stay in one place for an extended period of time, the camp was generally set up in an orderly fashion. George Marsh gave a detailed description of the camp of the 104th Illinois near Graysville, Georgia. The parade ground was on the north and was separated from the rest of the camp by a drainage ditch, ten inches wide and about six inches deep. Immediately south of the ditch were the soldiers' quarters. These were organized by company with Company A on the extreme east and Company K on the extreme west. Each company had a row of shebangs, running from north to south. In George's company (D), there were ten shebangs with four men in each shebang. Behind each company row and perpendicular to the main ditch were smaller ditches. South of the soldiers' quarters was another ditch, an open area, yet another ditch, and then the tents of the company officers. Further south were the regimental officers' tents, the regimental hospital and the commissary.²²

The parade ground to the north of the 104th's camp was a frequently used feature which could be found in any regiment's camp. While in camp the men

performed various forms of drill to prepare them for battle. Drill often began early in the morning. In the 104th, a 4:00 am roll call was immediately followed by two hours of drill.²³ In the 36th Illinois, John Sackett reported having battalion drill at 4:00 am on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Brigade drill, which involved more troops, began at 4:30 am on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The half-hour delay was presumably due to the fact that more men had to be assembled. Finally, the 36th had company drill Monday through Saturday at 4:00 pm.²⁴ The amount of time spent drilling varied with the experience of the troops. When the 86th Illinois had been in the service for about one month, Levi Ross wrote that he spent eight hours a day drilling.²⁵ John Tallman, in the 76th Illinois, said he only spent four hours a day at drill after his regiment had been in service for a number of months.²⁶

The soldiers learned a number of forms of drill in camp. At the lowest level was the School of the Soldier. This consisted of movements which a soldier could practice by himself and included the manual of arms (Order Arms, Shoulder Arms, etc.) and facings.²⁷ Company drill involved a small number of men moving together and acting as one body. Battalion drill consisted of the coordination of two or more companies, and was the type of drill that a regiment could practice as one body. Brigade drill drew on all the lower forms of drill and combined the movements of several regiments.

Many of the soldiers disliked drill and saw it as nothing but hard work. John Given was busy writing to his sister when he was summoned to drill. "The drum has just beat for the battalion drill, but I'll not go if I can help it, for I have enough to do without drilling, and battalion drill is the hardest work I ever did."²⁸ Writing his reminiscences years after the war, Robert Burdette recalled that "The soldier did not love to drill. On the other hand,

his colonel was perfectly infatuated with the game of war. And brigade drill! This is the delight of the general. . . . It is an inspiring spectacle to mounted officers. To the infantryman, down in the dust and stubble of old cotton and corn-fields . . . it is indescribably dull and tiresome."²⁹

Others did not like the idea of having to drill after they had been in the service for awhile. Lyman Needham thought it was a waste of time to drill soldiers who had been in the army for over a year. "I don't see much use in drilling old soldiers, for we might drill our three years out and not do any better than we do now."³⁰ Henry Nurse shared Lyman's opinion, writing after the fall of Atlanta, "there is no use of drilling now; we have been in the service too long to drill to learn anything, for we don't take any interest in it."³¹

While regular forms of drill may have been dull, the soldiers tended to find skirmish drill and sham battles to be interesting. In skirmish drill soldiers were taught the techniques of open-order fighting. Levi Ross once noted in his diary that the 86th Illinois was "Practicing in the skirmish drill, which is more interesting than solid drill."³² Allen Geer described his skirmish drills as being lively.³³

Sham battles were just that--mock fights between several regiments, occasionally from different branches of the service. Levi Ross participated in a sham battle and wrote that his regiment "Made a double quick bayonet charge on our own Illinois battery and took it. This breaks the monotony of camp life and is real enjoyable."³⁴ Joseph Johnston also noted the pleasant change of pace afforded by sham battles. "I must not forget the little excitement of to day, a sham battle which is just over. There was a few bruises, a few blunders, & a few laughable incidents, at least laughable to a lot of camp-confined soldiers."³⁵ Sham battles were sometimes confused with

the real thing by non-participants. A sham battle in which George Childress participated alarmed other Union troops camped near by and resulted in the arrest of the officer who organized the fight.³⁶

The proficiency with which drill was performed varied with different regiments. The 129th Illinois was apparently poorly drilled. In April 1864, Curtiss Judd made the following notation in his diary: "Once more commenced a course of Tactics. . . . 20 mos. in U.S. A[rmy] & don't Know Shoulder Arms."³⁷ On the other hand, the 36th Illinois received praise for their drill from General Rosecrans. Day Elmore reported an incident which occurred in November 1862:

Maj. Gen. Rosecrans, after the Review was over, he Rode up to our Regt and sayed this is supposed to be the best drilled Regt now in the service. [T]he Rest of the Brigade wer then all brought fronting us; we then went through the manul of arms. [A]fter we wer through he turned to the new troops and sayed thare when I Review you Agan I want to see you beat that, but thay never Can.³⁸

A well drilled regiment could look very impressive, and some soldiers were proud of their regiment's skill. When he was a recruit at Camp Butler, near Springfield, Illinois, in the spring of 1864, Napoleon Bartlett saw the recently replenished 8th Illinois drill and was amazed by their precision. "[W]hen they were at shoulder arms [the colonel] would give the order 'Order Arms,' and with on[e] click & chug the whole 1000 guns would come down."³⁹ Frank Crowell expressed pride in his own regiment's performance. "[O]ur Battallion drills every day and they do it finely. I tell you, when the band is playing and the Battallion is moveing, it looks fine to see every man step to the time, and they do it and do it good."⁴⁰

The parade grounds were also used for dress parades. Dress parades were reviews of regiments or brigades conducted by the commanding officer of the unit being paraded. Almost all of the soldiers wrote about participating in dress parades at least once a week when they were in permanent camps. However

they said little more about them other than that they participated in them, indicating that dress parades were perfunctory duties in which they took little interest. Dress parades were shows for officers, not for the troops.

Another activity besides drill which occupied the soldiers' time was picket duty. Picketing involved guarding the camp. The frequency of picketing varied and so did the size of the unit used as guards. A small camp might have been guarded by a company, whereas an entire brigade might have been put on picket around a large camp. When camped near Murfreesboro, Tennessee, in the spring of 1863, the 36th Illinois picketted one day out of every eight, and it performed this duty with the rest of its brigade. Day Elmore of the 36th explained how the picket line was operated. His regiment picketted stations 8, 9, 10, and 11. His station consisted of 3 outposts. The soldiers were on picket for twenty-four hours, walking their beats for two hours and then going off duty for four hours before returning to their beats. At Day's station twenty-six privates, three corporals and three sergeants were on duty at a time.⁴¹ Despite other differences in picket duty in other commands, all seem to have been on picket for twenty-four hours and had cycles of two hours on and four off.

Picket duty was a serious matter, for the camps had to be protected from sudden attacks. The 36th Illinois even had a picket reserve. The reserve consisted of five men from each company who were to be reinforcements in the event that the pickets were attacked.⁴² Pickets were to prevent any unauthorized crossing of their lines. Thomas Miller wrote of his duty as a guard, "if any person attempts to brake guard, we are ordered to Either bayonet or Shoot them."⁴³

Not only were the pickets to prevent an unauthorized entrance into a camp; they were also supposed to prevent soldiers from leaving. Soldiers in

camp were often confined within the picket lines. Thomas Miller must have realized that his fellow soldiers might want to try to break guard and get out of camp. "[W]e are under Extremely Strict order and Confining Rules. [W]e are not allowed to go out of Camp with out a pass from head quarters and then it is to go after provisions," he wrote.⁴⁴ Austin Andrews wrote that "we cannot go a mile from camp with out a pass signed by the brigade and division commanders and that is not easily obtained. . . ."⁴⁵ Once, a special guard was placed around the 124th Illinois because the general commanding the post believed that they were responsible for a series of thefts.⁴⁶

Drilling, picketting, sleeping and eating made for a rather dull life in camp. The soldiers' letters are full of descriptions about the boredom of camp life, and a recitation of their complaints would be just as dull as they claimed camp life was. The boredom, however, was made worse by the lack of news. "Camp life is a ignorant life; we know nothing of what is going on only what we do our Selves," wrote Thomas Miller.⁴⁷ Lyman Needham was not sure if they even knew what they did themselves, writing "we do not know one minute what we shall do the next."⁴⁸

Since they were kept in ignorance about most events, the soldiers were thrilled to receive news from outside. Reading material of any kind was greatly prized. After William March received a package of magazines, he described the effect of the gift to his father. "Reading mater is something that we feel the want of, More than Most any thing else. If you could have seen how those Magazines were seized hold of When I opened the package & heard the questions, May I take one of them, you would have seen how your present was appreciated."⁴⁹

Newspapers were a very popular source of information. Some soldiers were able to obtain rather current papers. Austin Andrews was able to get papers

from Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis which were only three days late and cost ten or fifteen cents each.⁵⁰ While at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, Joseph Johnston was able to get the Chicago Tribune from a newsboy the second morning after it was issued.⁵¹

Newspapers were treasured items among the soldiers. Camped near Natchez, Mississippi, John Tallman had difficulty getting newspapers. When he did get a copy of the Northwestern Advocate, he read it until he almost had it memorized.⁵² Like William Marsh and his magazines, soldiers usually shared their papers with others. Austin Andrews explained, "When one in the Co. gets a paper it generally pass the rounds."⁵³

The news which interested the soldiers the most was news about home. George Marsh complained about the inadequacy of city newspapers, writing, "The Nashville papers are not worth a cent, for they contain not much war news & no family news at all."⁵⁴ Many soldiers asked for home-town papers, but the best sources of news were letters from friends and family at home. "Mother write to me quick and tell me all the news and all the little affairs that have happened, for them are the ones that I like to hear," wrote Frank Crowell, expressing a desire common to most soldiers for news about their families.⁵⁵

No soldier Joseph Ward expressed every soldier's thoughts when he wrote, "Every mail I think, why don't they write?"⁵⁶ Many soldiers agitated their families for more letters throughout the war. "But why in the world don't you write to us once in a while that is if you are a live and able to write, if you anint why just say so and we will excuse you. But as it is, we don't know wheather you are dead or not," wrote Ed Crowell on behalf of himself and his brother Frank.⁵⁷ Earlier in the war, Ed had staged a "strike," refusing to write during most of the spring and summer of 1863, protesting the lack of mail. Frank explained, "he says they

don't write to him, and he won't write to anybody."⁵⁸ When Ed finally broke his silence, he closed his letter by informing his mother that he would write, "only when I am obliged."⁵⁹

The scarcity of news led to an abundance of rumors in the camps. Some of the rumors edged close to the border of ridiculousness. When Grant began his first thrusts towards Vicksburg, William Ross told his father, "I understand that President Jefferson Davis of the Young Confederacy is in Command at Vicksburg in Person."⁶⁰ Allen Geer repeated the same rumor while the siege of Vicksburg was in progress, showing that some rumors died hard.⁶¹ Rumors about other events changed quickly, however. Following the Seven Days Battles near Richmond in July 1862, Allen Geer, who was camped near Jackson, Tennessee, first heard rumors of a Union defeat near Richmond. The next day, however, the rumor was that "The rebels acknowledge a sad defeat. McClellan occupying more advantageous position."⁶² While General Lee did lose the battle of Malvern Hill, on the whole, the first rumor was correct.

Early in their service, some soldiers believed rumors with a great degree of gullibility. In June 1862, Joseph Ward and his comrades heard, while they were on picket, that Richmond had fallen; so they went back to camp and began to turn over their equipment to the government.⁶³ Eventually, the soldiers came to disregard most, if not all, rumors. "If we believed half of the camp reports, we should be at home in two or three days, and then again we would stay in the army for a life time," wrote Lyman Needham after a year and a half of service.⁶⁴ Richard Puffer of the 8th Illinois told his sister that "the camp is all the time filled with the most absurd rumors, & we do not believe any of them until we see them in the papers & hardly then."⁶⁵

The one piece of news which always produced excitement in camp was news of a visit from the paymaster. "A little excitement is now got up about the

paymaster, Major McDowell, who has visited the camp & is expected to 'settle up' pretty soon," wrote Joseph Johnstor.⁶⁶ John Sackett described his first pay day, writing "Saturday the 9 inst was a happy day for this regiment as we were marched company after company to headquarters and received our pay. . .
 ."⁶⁷

While everyone is pleased by pay day, the soldiers appreciated their scant pay even more because pay days were irregular. The soldiers' pay was quite low--only thirteen dollars a month for a private at the beginning of the war. On May 1, 1864, their pay was raised to sixteen dollars a month.⁶⁸ By comparison, before the war, Day Elmore earned ten dollars a week working as a farm hand.⁶⁹ The pay was also late, dreadfully late. The soldiers often had six, eight, or even ten months' back pay due them. Regarding the late pay, Lyman Needham concluded, "When they have money that they don't know what to do with it, They may pay us."⁷⁰

Even when the soldiers were paid, they sometimes did not receive their full amount. Soldiers who drew more clothing than they were allowed had their pay reduced. Also many soldiers were in debt to the regimental sutler and had that bill taken out of their pay. (Sutlers were merchants licensed by the government to sell goods to the soldiers.) Joseph Ward described how many soldiers had their wages disappear before they received their pay when he wrote about one pay day in September 1863. "Many of the boys had but litte to take after settling with the Government for cloathing and the Sulter for things received from him. This seemed hard, to see some take a few dollars and some a few cents while others were actually in debt to the Government."⁷¹

Even when they did receive cash for their pay, many soldiers had difficulty holding on to it for long. "A great many have spent half of their money although they were paid but yesterday, and a boy of our company . . .

lost all last night gambleing. [A]nother was robbed of the last cent; in fact I think a great many would be the better of no pay," wrote Austin Andrews.⁷² Gambling was rampant among the boys after they received their pay. Shortly before the battle of Shiloh, when the 20th Illinois was camped near Pittsburg Landing, they received two months' pay. Allen Geer reported: "Gambling commenced at once: many started for the [Tennessee] river to have a spree."⁷³ From Vicksburg, Napoleon Bartlett wrote, "The men got 6 months pay today, & they are gambling here in my tent now."⁷⁴

Austin Andrews also mentioned that one of the boys was robbed of his money. While theft was far less common than gambling, it did occur, and some theives would take anything. Ed Crowell told of an experience he had with a thief once in Georgia. "Night before last there was some midnight thief went around through this detachment to every tent and picked every man's pocket, while he was asleep, of watches, money, and every thing of value that they could get hold of. I found my pocket[book] laying in my bunk opened and the money gon. But I only had \$2.50. . . . they even took my stockens out of my boots."⁷⁵ Ed estimated that the thief stole money and goods totalling over fifteen-hundred dollars in value.

Those men who did not gamble their money away or did not have it stolen frequently sent much of their pay home to their families. Some sent the money to be used for specific purposes. William Peter decided that his pay should be used to provide his sisters with music lessons.⁷⁶ George Marsh had his brother invest the money he sent home in farm land.⁷⁷ Others allowed their families to use their money as they wished. Frank Crowell wrote to his mother, "you said you wanted to take some of my money to by a bonnet. Pitch right in. [Y]ou are welcome to all you want; buy a nice one Mother if it costs 20 dollars."⁷⁸

After they received and dispensed with their pay, the boys settled back into the dull ignorant drudgery of their camp routine. However, there was something about camp life, perhaps the fact that they were away from home, that seemed attractive to some of the boys. Austin Andrews was not alone when he voiced his opinion that, "If I should leave the army tomorrow, it would be with regrets. . . . in a great many respects, I really like camp life."⁷⁹

CHAPTER 2

Hard Crackers

"[S]oldiers eat a great deal more than they fight," claimed Robert Burdette, and his statement is certainly true.¹ Eating was an activity that the men tried to perform at least three times a day. The numerous references to their current fare found in most of the soldiers' letters indicate that they were rather preoccupied with what they ate. Since eating was a common activity of the boys, it is appropriate to describe what and how they ate while in the army.

The principle ration in the soldiers' diets was hard bread, better known as hardtack or hard crackers. Occasionally, it was referred to as pilot bread or simply called crackers, but the names did not matter. Hardtack by any other name was just as unappetizing. Soldier accounts leave little doubt as to the aptness of the word hard. Robert Burdette called it a "concrete breakfast slab," and Lyman Needham referred to his crackers as "Breastplates."² Besides being hard, hardtack was occasionally infested with assorted vermin. "[S]ome say the crackers have magets in them, but I dont look for them," reported John Tallman.³ William Marsh of the 13th Illinois Infantry described his crackers as "Wormy."⁴

Whatever the soldiers thought of their hard crackers, these were a standard portion of the daily food ration. Hardtack was the basic ration; all else was considered additional. Napoleon Bartlett revealed its regular use in the menu he described to his brother. "For breakfast we have coffee & hardtack; for Dinner we sometimes have Beans & sometimes Peas & hardtack; for supper we have coffee & meat with the hardtack."⁵ It was not just that they had hardtack all the time; it is important to notice that all else was served with the hardtack. Hardtack was the basis for every meal.

Napolean Bartlett mentioned other items in his diet in addition to hard crackers and, indeed, the soldiers sometimes ate quite a variety of food. William Peter, while encamped at Corinth, Mississippi, said his fare "consists of crackers as a basis to which may be added bakers bread as a luxury, beans, rice, tea & coffee, sugar, concentrated potatoes & mixed vegetables. . . . We have beef about once a week the rest of the time we get a tolerable good article of side meat."⁶ Other soldiers reported similar diets. When the 86th Illinois was in winter quarters during February 1864, Private Henry Nurse gave a list comparable to William's, with several exceptions. The 86th had soft bread at the time, and received onions and "sour crout" instead of mixed vegetables.⁷

Apart from hardtack, the other most common foods appear to be pork and coffee. Pork was issued to the boys salted or pickled or in the form of bacon.⁸ The ration of pork was not greatly appreciated by the men, and Levi Ross noted in his diary that, "One very unpleasant duty required of all soldiers is to dispose of about three fourths of a pound of old, rusty, salt bacon, every time the earth revolves."⁹ Several others commented that the pork which was issued was fat.¹⁰ Coffee was typically drunk black and in large quantities. Henry Nurse claimed to drink two or three pints at each meal.¹¹

The Illinois soldiers may have had a number of items to eat when in camp, but on a march, often all they had was hardtack, pork and coffee. On his first march into enemy territory in January 1862, Thomas Miller wrote that he had "nothing to Eat but Some old fat bacon and hard crackers that is not postivily fit for a dog to Eat. . . ."¹² Austin Andrews had only hardtack and coffee on one march through Tennessee in December 1863.¹³ Other soldiers made

similar claims. They might fare well in camp, but on a campaign their stomachs suffered.

While hardtack could be ingested as issued and pork was frequently consumed raw, other parts of the soldiers' diets had to be cooked. To facilitate cooking and the related chores of fetching fire wood and water, the soldiers formed small groups called "messes." Sometimes, messes were formally created by the officers of a company. Napoleon Bartlett's company was divided into four messes of thirteen men each, while George Marsh's company initially had three messes of thirty men each.¹⁴ Other messes were based on voluntary association. Just before the battle of Shiloh, Allen Geer noted the formation of a new mess in his diary. "A revolution brought about in the cooking arrangement; 5 of us formed an independent colony with B.F. Noll for cook."¹⁵ Some soldiers had much fun with their messes, giving them names and creating "formal" organizations. James Snell of the 52nd Illinois was the president of his "Hyena Mess." Each member of the group had a nickname and a position as shown below.

<u>Soldier</u>	<u>Nickname(s)</u>	<u>Position</u>
Snell	Elephant	President
Murray	Bulldog, Clipper	Correspondent
Ellis	Greyhound	Grand Scribbler
Barnes	Rhinoceros	Reporter (Shorthand)
Leslie	Piss-ant	Artist
Murphy	Spaniel	Fry-master
Harrington	Jackal	Historian
Kutcher	Weasel	Absent, in his hole, asleep
Lane	Buffalo	Inspector-General
Swanson	Tiger	Scout & Foragemaster
Simpson	Monkey	Acrobat & Tumbler
Sanderson	Fox	Chesterfield gent.
Miller (cook)	Chicken	Caterer General ¹⁶

Regardless of a mess's organization, its main purpose was to cook the members' rations. Within the framework of a mess, the soldiers found several

ways to accomplish this task. The men of William Marsh's mess paid one of their members fifteen dollars a month to do the cooking.¹⁷ In other messes, such as those of Napoleon Bartlett and Day Elmore, each man took his turn cooking for one week.¹⁸ Still other groups hired outsiders, principally blacks, to do their cooking.¹⁹

The quality of the cooking done by the messes could vary greatly from mess to mess. John Given said that his mess's black cook had been a cook all of his life and cooked well.²⁰ William Marsh said his mess's cook, Hyde, was the best cook in the regiment and baked cakes, pies and apple dumplings. Hyde's pork and beans received praise from his brigade commander, General Wyman, when he joined the mess for dinner.²¹ Most other soldiers did not eat as well. The most common method of preparation was frying. Consider the culinary skills of Day Elmore when confronted with cooking dinner. "[W]hat shall we have is the question. Why some good Pickled Porck Fryed. . . ." ²² Henry Nurse wrote that, "When we can get any corn we grate it and make kakes fried in grease. . . ." ²³

Many of the boys were at a loss as to how to use rations of flour. Hyde may have turned it into cakes and pies, but more typical was the preparation given by Joseph Ward. His mess mixed the flour with salt and water to make a batter. "This we fry on a tin plate with a little greese. This makes very unwholesome food that rocks round in ones stomach like rocks and is not at all binding."²⁴ Allen Geer's mess wrapped their batter around sticks and baked it over a fire.²⁵

The poor quality of cooking, coupled with the poor quality of the food issued caused many of the soldiers to complain about their fare. One of the most eloquent disparagers of army food was Levi Ross of the 86th Illinois. "The boys say that our 'grub' is enough to make a mule desert and a hog wish

he had never been born," wrote Levi about the food in general. Ross also complained about the age of his rations of bacon and hardtack. "Some of the boys say they saw the date 1776 on the bacon and 'b.C.' on the hard tack. I would judge that it all belonged to the antedeluvian age."²⁷ John Tallman referred to his bacon and hardtack as "sow belly and magets."²⁸ Beef, which usually arrived salted or pickled, was given a number of irreverent euphemisms, such as "salt horse," "old bull," and "embalmed beef."²⁹

Besides the quality of their rations, the soldiers also complained about the quantity they received. While most conceded that they usually had enough to eat, the "Cracker line" would occasionally fail to meet their demands. Allen Geer noted a time when his regiment's rations were drastically cut, writing, "We draw 28 crackers today for 36 men for two days rations." The day before the boys in his company picked up a few navy beans that some commissary had carelessly spilled on the ground.³⁰

Despite the complaints about the food, most of the soldiers became accustomed to it, and did not grumble about the quality as long as the quantity was sufficient. After returning from his first long march, Thomas Miller appreciated the improvement in diet. "[O]ur fare is not the best in the world but it [is] good Enough when we are not marching . . . when we are in our Camps we fare as well as I wish to a present but I dont know how long good times will last . . . I have Seen the time that I would give considerable to [have] had as much as I Could Eat. . . ."³¹ Thomas was satisfied with his standard fare, but he also realized that feast could quickly give way to famine. One day they might eat well; the next they might scramble for a few beans left on the ground.

A few soldiers with questionable tastes came to like the standard issue bacon and hardtack. "Bacon raw and hard Bread with a cup of Coffee is good

Enough for A soldier," wrote Day Elmore, the same boy who enjoyed fried pickled pork.³² Joseph Ward was at least temporarily satisfied with the standard issue when he was chasing Stonewall Jackson's elusive Confederates in the Shenandoah Valley. One of his suppers consisted of "A hard cracker, a canteen of water, and a piece of raw pork, and I tell you the truth when I tell you it went good. . . ."³³

Good, bad, or indifferent, the army fare was dull and monotonous. "[W]e get plenty but Eating one kind of diet all the time we get tired of it," wrote Thomas Miller from his camp at Cairo, Illinois.³⁴ While in the defences around Washington, D.C., in the summer of 1862, David King gave his sister a description of his company's menu. Breakfast consisted of coffee, bread and fat pork; dinner was water, bread and fat pork; and supper brought tea, bread and fat pork. For a change of pace "instead of bread & fat pork we have fat pork & bread. . . ."³⁵ The day after day sameness of the army food led the men to supplement their rations whenever possible.

"I expect we would get a little hungry sometimes if we didn'[t] steal provisions from the rebels. . . . We don't exactly steal, but go in broad daylight and don't care who sees us at it."³⁶ This is how Private John Given of the 124th Illinois described foraging--the taking of provisions from Southern citizens. Most of the soldiers did not feel guilty about robbing from the Southerners. "I have no conscientious scruples about thus taking what we want to eat, for if it is rebel property it virtually belongs to us by right of forfeit on their part, and if it be the property of Union Men, then the self-sacrificing men who are defending their homes are, in justice, entitled to it," wrote Levi Ross while he was in Kentucky--a state with greatly divided loyalties.³⁷

The boys also rationalized their taking of food on more humorous bases. When the 20th Illinois was camped by a plantation near Pinson Station, Tennessee, the boys of Allen Geer's company quickly began foraging. "Our boys are learning the ways of the place: hogs are savage have to be killed in self-defence, sheep get mistook for wild deer and get shot, sweet potatoes grow wild." Geer himself shot two hogs or "slow deer" as he called them.³⁸ Rebel animals that refused to take an oath of allegiance to the Union forfeited their lives. "I had some [chicken] for dinner the other day, but they was secesh chidkins and would not take the oath so we killed them. [W]e get a pig every little while in the same way," reported John Tallman from Tennessee.³⁹ After his comrades brought in a variety of meat, fruit and vegetables from surrounding farms, Levi Ross admitted that, "Everything that will not give the countersign has to surrender at the point of the bayonet."⁴⁰

When foraging was prohibited by a commanding officer, some soldiers would trade with the Southern citizens rather than risk punishment for disobeying orders. The major problem facing the boys was finding a way to pay for the food they wanted to purchase. Allen Geer was probably the most formal of the soldiers. He exchanged his "greenbacks" for Confederate money, receiving five dollars Confederate for every United States dollar.⁴¹ Lyman Needham asked his brother to send him any Southern or worthless money he had, noting that "most anything will go here."⁴² Joseph Ward and his comrades swindled the inhabitants of the Shenandoah Valley by purchasing food from them with counterfeit Confederate bonds, which they bought for five cents per dozen.⁴³ Frank Crowell had the most direct approach to solving the currency problem, which he disclosed in a letter to his mother. "I went to buy a cake from a darkey the other day. I asked him the price; one cent he said. I handed him

a cent, no cant take that Master says it ant good. I kept the cake and told him to tell his master to kiss my ass."⁴⁴

Soldiers could also supplement their rations by purchasing food from sutlers. John Given gave a list of the variety of food offered by his regimental sutler in the fall of 1862. Pies could be brought for twenty-five cents each, and biscuits could be had at a cost of fifty cents per dozen. Cheese cost thirty cents per pound, and bacon was twenty cents per pound. Onions were a bargain at three for a nickle. Fresh, dried and canned fruit could be purchased, the canned fruit (pineapple, strawberries and peaches) costing one dollar per quart.⁴⁵ The privates, however, were paid only thirteen dollars a month, and they were usually short of cash. Consequently, they tended to visit sutlers infrequently.

The boys usually would purchase food for special dinners on holidays. For the Fourth of July in 1862, Lyman Needham bought gingerbread, candy, maple sugar, dried beef and lemonade.⁴⁶ In the 36th Illinois, the boys of John Sackett's mess celebrated Christmas of 1861 with six pints of oysters, two pounds of crackers and one pound of candy, all purchased from the sutler.⁴⁷ The soldiers of the 76th Illinois also treated themselves to an oyster dinner for Christmas 1863, and their officers donated whiskey to the feast.⁴⁸

One way in which soldiers could afford to purchase food was by selling unused rations back to the government. William Marsh explained how his mess used this program to advantage. "We do not eat all our rations, we are intitled to pay from Government for What rations We do not eat, and will get it if the quartermaster does not cheat us our of it. . . . our Mess saves Coffee enough in a Week to buy 2 bushels of potatoes, still we have coffee twice a day. . . ."⁴⁹ In the 92nd Illinois, Frank Crowell's mess also saved

their coffee to buy potatoes.⁵⁰ This method did not necessarily provide any more food, but it did increase the variety in the soldiers' diets.

Finally, a soldier might be fortunate and receive a box containing food from his family. Boxes from home were highly prized and generally contained deserts and delicacies, not regular food. "I received your kind letter & a box of cake week before last, for Which I am very much obliged to you; the Cake Was of a quality Which is seldom Seen by a soldier. It did not last a great While for there Was only eleven of us to eat it; the boys in our Mess are very Much obliged to you," wrote Willam Marsh to his mother.⁵¹ Boxes from home were true treasures, and soldiers frequently shared the contents with their messes.

Many choice edibles found their way to the soldiers packed in boxes sent by their families. Levi Ross received one which contained, among other things, cheese, five pounds of butter, three pecks of dried fruit, one quart of cherry wine, two cans of honey, and one can of preserves.⁵² Robert Burdette once received a variety of cakes, including fruit cake, gingerbread, cookies and jelly in a box from his mother.⁵³ Napoleon Bartlett once received a very rare item--chewing gum.⁵⁴

Foraging, sutlers and boxes from home did bring variety to the soldiers' diets, but their effect was limited. Boxes were highly prized items in part because they were so rare. Robert Burdette received but one in three years of service.⁵⁵ Also, families could not afford to send their soldier sons every meal by mail. The high prices of the sutlers compared to the soldiers' low wages prevented them from patronizing the sutlers more frequently. The currency problem prevented them from buying much from Southerners when they could not forage. Fruits and vegetables could only be effectively foraged when in season. All provisions became difficult to forage when a large number

of troops were concentrated in an area. While most soldiers mentioned alternative sources of food, they mostly wrote about military rations, which is what they generally had to eat.

The diet of the Illinois infantry soldiers was determined by several limitations. Limited time affected both the variety of food and its preparation. Foraging took time and could only be indulged in when the soldiers were not very busy. When the soldiers were on a march, they did not have time to prepare much food, and camp activities prevented most messes from attempting any extravagant meals. It is of little wonder that some soldiers ate their bacon raw.

The boys were also faced with limited resources. Cooking utensils were generally at a minimum in camp and almost non-existent during a march. Even if they had utensils, the army rations did not lend themselves to many means of preparation. The most often mentioned foods were hardtack, pork, usually either pickled or heavily salted, coffee, beans, rice and potatoes. The boys simply did not have much with which to create interesting meals.

The third limitation concerned the soldiers' lack of cooking skills. A few like Hyde, the cook in William Marsh's mess, were competent cooks who could prepare decent meals. Others were like Day Elmore and Joseph Ward. Napoleon Bartlett had to write to his mother to learn how to make pancakes.⁵⁶ Apparently he and the others in his company did not know how to make this rather simple food. Essentially, the soldiers had three primary choices about what to do with their food. They could eat it as issued, fry it in grease, or roast it on a stick held over a fire. Coffee, of course, was boiled in a pot, but few items were ever baked or stewed.

Finally, the boys were limited by their own tastes. By enjoying raw bacon and fried pickled pork, Day Elmore may have been in a minority, but

other soldiers were certainly satisfied by rather plain fare. William Marsh, who paid for the services of the best cook in the regiment, held pork and beans to be his favorite dish.⁵⁷ The boys were basically satisfied with bread, meat, potatoes and other vegetables. Even if they complained about their fare, they admitted that they usually had enough to eat. Lyman Needham summed it up best, saying, "We have enough to eat such as it is, so you need not fear of us starving to death."⁵⁸

CHAPTER 3

Weeping Sad and Lonely

"I can hardly keep back the tears as I think of him, lying cold in death," wrote William Marsh about the death of his friend William Radcliff.¹ Radcliff was one of the many soldiers who became ill and died in camp. Disease was a mess-mate of the soldiers during the war, and death was an ever-present spectre in camp. In addition to the misery of illness and death, accidents tragically claimed the lives of other soldiers. Healthy soldiers also suffered from homesickness, and were distressed because events at home were beyond their control. Life in the camps could be truly heartbreaking.

During the war, disease raged through the regiments. Almost every soldier was seriously ill during the war, and a number of them died of the diseases. Illness could quickly deplete the ranks of a regiment. During an outbreak of jaundice in the 92nd Illinois, Frank Crowell informed his father that, "there aint only 35 men in our co. fit for duty."² While most of the sick would recover, repeated incidents of disease permanently lowered a regiment's strength. William Ross described the cumulative effect of illness in the 40th Illinois. "[W]e can not muster over three hundred for duty in our Regt. now; we have lost a good many men by sickness."³ Although the 40th had lost some men in battle, William implied that most of the deaths had been due to illness.

When disease struck a regiment, many men could die in a short period of time. During the first winter of the 92nd Illinois's service, Ed Crowell wrote that, "there is one dies almost every day now from the Reg.. It has been very sickly for some time past. . . ."⁴ Austin Andrews wrote of an even greater rate of deaths in the 12th Illinois during its first winter in the field. "There are two or three funerals and sometimes more daily. One of our

Co was burried yesterday, & the Capt says there are two more that he don't think can get well," wrote Austin.⁵ A regiment's first few months in service appear to have been mournful times.

Although Austin's captain believed he could determine who could not recover, other times deaths could come as quite a suprise to the boys. Joseph Ward reported the death of one of his comrades which occurred while he was on picket. "When we return[ed] to camp we were very much suprisd to learn one of our comrades was dead. He had been sick sometime but none thought dangerously so, but he is no more now."⁶ Indeed, sickness and death could come quite quickly. When telling his father about deaths in his regiment, William Marsh described the swift fate of one recruit. "One of them [was] a strong healthy looking young man came here from Sterling, Ill. only 3 weeks ago, & after being here 2 weeks he was taken sick; last friday he was taken home a Corpse."⁷

While it was difficult and saddening to watch ailing comrades in camp, being sick was dreadful. When the soldiers were ill, they usually waited until they were well before writing a letter informing their family that they had been sick. Fortunately, Ed Crowell managed to write two letters to his family while he was sick with "the Ague, Rheumatism and fever Combined."⁸ In these letters he described the effects of his illness. At first he reported, "I have been waiting to get better, but I dont see as I gain much. I get weaker every day. I have no apatite at all, and every thing that I eat makes me sick to my stomach, and I throe it up. I have not eat any thing for three day but what I throwed up."⁹ About two weeks later, he attempted to write again but told his parents, "you must excuse the writing; I am so weak and my hand trembles so that I can heardly write at all. . . ."¹⁰ The trembling may have been due to his ague--the Civil War term for malaria. Vomiting and

weakness were not enjoyable at home, but in camp, where one did not even have a clean bed, they were frightening. When Ed had this illness, the regiment was losing about one man each day to disease.

Some of the soldiers believed that their food was responsible for the poor health of their regiments. Joseph Johnston thought that the poor quality of the rations caused sickness. "The rations which the soldiers were compelled to live on were Bakers Bread made from condensed flour & always sour & fresh meat. All other rations were not to be had. There was consequently a great deal of sickness which, since hard crackers made of good flour is now issued, is daily decreasing."¹¹ Frank Crowell believed that the preparation of the food affected the health of the soldiers. When he heard that a friend was considering enlistment, Frank urged his father to tell him to join the 92nd, writing, "a new Recruit is much less liable to get sick for the reason we know how to cook. . . ."¹² In light of the previous chapter's discussion on food and its preparation, both men were probably right; poor food and poor cooking produced poor health.

Regardless of the causes of illness, sick soldiers were often sent to a hospital for recovery. The army hospitals were generally regarded with a combination of dread and disrespect. After learning of a friend's death in a hospital, Joseph Ward wrote that an "army Hospital is what every soldier dreads far worse than the boom of cannon and the din of musketry."¹³ Thomas Miller feared the hospitals because of a perceived lack of attention given to soldiers. "[A] Sic man is no more cared for here than if he was a hog," wrote Thomas, "if a man gets Sick and goes to the hospitle he [is] shure to die."¹⁴

William Ross was certain that he would have died had he remained in the hospital when he was suffering from a fever. Fortunately, the lieutenant commanding his company rescued him from the hospital, and he recovered. He

described the incident to his brother as such: "I came very neare to going to the grave and would have died, I expect, had Lieut Gelvin not taken me out of the hospital. [H]e took me to his tent and gave me up his cot and got a new Doctor, and now I am abel to walk around. I will always remember him for that."¹⁵

William Ross did not like hospitals at all. About a year after the last episode he began to suffer from chronic diarrhea. He lived with the condition for three months, giving the explanation: "I do not like to go in a hospital. They is so many goes in that never comes out."¹⁶ After finally entering a hospital, he recalled that he had been, "a poor dirty soldier hauled along in an army waggon by Six muels, not able to help myself," and concluded that, "Now I am here washed and cleaned up, and I feel like another person."¹⁷ He survived and was able to continue service until the end of his term.

Lyman Needham did not have any complaints about army hospitals in general, but he greatly disliked the doctors. Once when he was ill, he wrote, "I do not doctor any, for I do not like our doctors. [T]he medicine they give makes a person sick if he is ever so well."¹⁸ About a month later, he had such a severe cough that he could not lie down. "I have given up all hope of ever getting home alive," he told his brother and sister, ". . . The Surgeon thinks there is not much the matter with me. (He is an old fool.)"¹⁹ Lyman recovered from his illness, but he never got home alive. Wounded and captured at Chickamauga, he died at Andersonville.

Other soldiers shared Needham's distrust of doctors and took to improvising their own remedies. Joseph Ward described a rather questionable practice of his as follows: "Last night I was rather sick, but, after applying a cloth wetted with cold water to the pit of my stomach, I was [relieved], and this morning I felt right smart."²⁰ Curtiss Judd treated his

headache with morphine--a rather powerful pain killer.²¹ Allen Geer noted that he had "Checked the dysentery by dieting on scant meals of cheese & light bread."²²

While most soldiers feared sickness and hospitals, a few regarded illness as a mere nuisance. Frank Crowell was one of these soldiers. In March 1863, he informed his father that, "I have got the ear ache to day, and it makes me pretty cross."²³ Later, he was not worried about having the mumps. "I have got the mumps the Doc says, but I dont think they are. [M]y face is swelled up pretty hard, but it isnt sore. And I think if I dont catch cold I will be all right, dont you?"²⁴ Frank's attitude only made him more ill. His brother, Ed, later informed their father, "Frank is not well at this time; he caught cold before he got fairly well over with the mumps. I think he wanted to show his spunk and exposed himself when he was not obliged to."²⁵ Returning to duty before one was well was not advisable.

Day Elmore also felt that illness was an inconvenience and not always an excuse to avoid duty. When he was recovering from a wound received at Chicakamauga, he became impatient and wanted to rejoin his regiment. He also became disgusted with the sick and wounded men around him who were not so eager.

The question What becomes of the or many of the Soldiers that sutch and sutch states sent out is very easy answered now. Look at Evry town that has a U.S. Hospital and particularly Annapolis; you will see hundreds of them struting arround with thare convalesent gowns on putting on more style than any Major Gen. . . . In fact thay show that thare is ²⁶A soft spot some whare in thare heads. I am disgusted with them.

In addition to illness, accidents also claimed the lives of some of the soldiers. Lyman Needham saw several deaths caused by carelessness. One soldier killed himself when he tried to remove his loaded gun from a stack of rifles.²⁷ Another was killed when his comrades chopped down a tree, and it

fell on him.²⁸ A soldier in George Marsh's company wounded himself because of his carelessness with his rifle. While on picket, the man rested the butt of his loaded rifle on a railroad track and placed his hand over the muzzle. The rifle slipped off the track, causing the hammer to be struck against the rail. The hammer struck the percussion cap, and both the bullet and the tompon (a wooden plug used to keep moisture out of the barrel) were sent through his hand.²⁹

Accidents with firearms were apparently common. John Tallman once told his brother that, "a man in Company C shot his fore finger of his right hand yesterday while on picket, but that accurse [occurs] so often that no body thinks any thing of it any more."³⁰ The soldier's action may not have been accidental. By shooting his forefinger--his trigger-finger--he could avoid further service. The accidents did not decrease over time. While the incidents described by Needham occurred shortly after his regiment went into service, those described by Marsh and Tallman happened after the regiments had some experience.

"When a person is sick in the army it is enough to make any one homesick . . . but if I could be healthy, I would not go home for considerable; I would just like to call on you and get a meal of victuals," wrote Lyman Needham to his brother and sister.³¹ Illness apparently did lead to homesickness among the soldiers. When he was seriously ill around Christmas 1862, Ed Crowell told his parents, "Tell Mary [his sister-in-law] I should like to have one of her turkeys well baked for dinner, and I should like to be there to eat it to. . . ."³² Henry Nurse also noted the relationship between health and homesickness. "There is no danger of my getting homesick as long as I keep my health, for we can keep up some excitement all of the time. So if any one has any spunk he need not get homesick," wrote Henry.³³

Although most soldiers were able to avoid real homesickness, many were distressed by events that happened at home. One of the most discouraging pieces of news that a soldier could receive was that a friend or relative was a Southern sympathizer--a "Copperhead." Copperheads in general were despised by the soldiers, who considered the sympathizers to be traitors. (The subject of Copperheads will be discussed in more detail in chapter 8.) Copperheads at home were the most annoying, however, for the soldiers felt betrayed. Cyrus Eyster of the 92nd Illinois expressed the sentiment best, writing, "I think we might all be at home to day had it not been for Northern traitors. . . . We left loved homes, sacrificed all the endearments and comforts of that circle, and come forth to face the enemy little thinking that we had left friends and relatives at home who are now ready to strike the dagger in our backs."³⁴ Henry Nurse merely wrote off his Copperhead relatives. He once wrote, "I understand that Theadore is a copperhead. If that is so, I do not consider him any relation of mine."³⁵

Relations with Copperhead friends and relatives could be severed, but some associations could not be dismissed very easily. Imagine Austin Andrew's consternation when he learned that his sister, Sophia, had gone to a picnic with a Copperhead. "I hope all went right at your Picnic last Saturday," he told her, "but I dont know that I wish you a particular good time with your Copperhead escort." Austin went on to lecture her about her poor choice of companions. "I think such company would be my last resort, and then it would only be with the hope of converting them to the true faith. I know that I would be loud in the denunciation of Sympathizers if the subject was brought up while in their presence."³⁶ Austin gives the impression that he would denounce Copperheads, even if he had to bring up the subject himself.

The one subject which caused the soldiers the most distress was women--or "girls" as the boys called them. The boys were interested both in specific girls and women in general. With regards to women in general, the soldiers were afraid that there would be none left for them when they returned. This fear was manifest in a list of resolutions written by Thomas Miller which he wanted the girls of his home county to adopt. Several resolutions were as follows.

Resolved: that we will now and forever withhold our favor, friendship, and Love from Every able-bodied young man who will not Enlist at his Countrys Call. [O]n the other hand, to those who volunteer we profer our most active Service to Relieve their wants and promise them our brightest Smiles and hiest [highest] Esteem for Ever.

Resolved: that not one of us will Ever mary during this bloody Struggle. . . .

Resolved: that when the goal is past and a peaceful Calm Settles down on our triumphant and glorius Republic, Should any young man not having ben Engaged in this war have the presumption to offer us his Cowardly heart we will Say unto him no never!!! never!!! never!!!³⁷

At least one woman let a soldier believe that she might behave in a manner similar to that which Thomas Miller desired. In the spring of 1863, the boys of the 122nd Illinois drew the names and addresses of young women who would correspond with the soldiers. William Peter drew the name of Miss Fanny Holliday, and she told him, "I think we will value [the soldiers] much more when they return, for now we know their worth. The merits of the home guard will not be thought much of, when the defenders of our much loved country return. Although they may be disabled and maimed by their hardships they have to endure, each scare will make them much dearer to us."³⁸

Other women were not as comforting to a soldier as Miss Holliday was. Several soldiers experienced heartache at the hands of a woman they had left at home. In the spring of 1863, Ed Crowell ended a relationship he had with a woman named Maggie. Maggie continued to attend parties and dances in Ed's

absence, and he refused to tolerate her behavior. Ed wrote to his mother and explained what happened. "[A]bout our corrispondence, she wrote to me about her going to the dances and I answered it, and then she wrote and begged pardon but said she had been to an other, but she would not do so again. But I wrote to her and told her if she wanted to corrispond with me as a friend that I should be happy to do so but as nothing more."³⁹

Ed recovered from the break up quite well. He later began writing to Maggie again and wrote to his perplexed mother about his activities.

[Y]ou seem to think I am trying to work into Maggie's affections again, and also you give me quite a curtain lecture about it in a mild way. . . . I have a good many idle hours, and I have to have something to amuse myself about, and I think I might as well do it in that way as any other, dont you? [A]nd then there is policy in war, you know. I think I might as well blarny to Maggie as any one else, for she can return the compliment, you know, with out galling her consciense in the least.⁴⁰

Ed's sarcastic sense of humor helped him through the trials of war. He knew that he could lie to Maggie because she would just lie to him anyway.

Ed Crowell's relationship fell apart during the war; Lyman Needham carried the pieces of a broken one with him. Early in his service he wrote to his brother and sister about his relationship with a woman named Lovina.

You may write and think as you will of me for still thinking of one I have professed to love. I cannot help it. Perhaps I am foolish and will rue the money &c that I spend writing to her, I cannot tell, neither do I care. She has been very dear to me, and feeling as I have every moment since I first saw her, She ever will be. . . . I think she has used me wrong, but love will go where it is sent, and true love will stay there. Think of me as you will. ⁴¹Disown me. Call me a fool &c, but I cannot do otherwise.

While Lyman admitted that some might find him foolish, he refused to give up on Lovina. A year later he wrote, "I am very sorry if I did not do as I agreed to with Lovina, but just ask her for me, if she knows of any body else that has not done as they bound themselves to do, by all the ties of honor,

before God and man. [A]sk her who broke those ties first, but I suppose I did as I was not wealthy."42

Frank Crowell, who was usually in very good spirits, was also subject to depression caused by women. Frank's relationships are difficult to follow because two women he knew were both named Charlotte (Lottie). He apparently corresponded with both women, one of whom did housework for his mother. In October 1864, Frank became despondent when he faced losing both women. "I am not Feeling very well since I heard of a late marriage in Iowa," he wrote, "[W]hen I go to bed and get to thinking of Lottie, I cant hardly Sleep for some cause or rather, I can not tell what. [A]nd my other Lottie is sick. I was afraid so for the reason that I hadent herd from her in some time."43 Illness was deadly for civilians, too, and, with one Lottie suddenly married, he was afraid he would lose the other.

When Frank Crowell wrote that last letter, his spirit was the lowest it had been during the war. Another passage in the same letter expressed his disgust with being removed from home life. His outburst was triggered by the news that his older brother, Putney (Put), and his wife, Mary, had a new son. Frank's exact commentary was, "Put has a Boy. Bulley for Put may he ever wave. hand Mary han his Married his She? Hextend my best wishes to them, han to the late Republican Huncle Turner Hand Hant Harriet Robert and all the Family and all Dingledary."44 The quote should probably read, "Put has a boy. Bulley for Put, may he ever wave! And Mary is married, is she? Extend my best wishes to them and to the late Republican Uncle Turner and Aunt Harriet, Robert and all the family and all dingledary." The miserable spelling and strained coherence of the original quote was not characteristic of Frank's writing. He was under great emotional stress when he wrote the letter. After losing one Lottie and facing the risk of losing the other, Frank was

unimpressed by the new addition to his brother's family. Frank's service was a three-year hole in his life, during which he gave up friends, family and the opportunity to live a normal life. In late October 1864, his jovial personality could no longer protect him from the fact that he was missing out on much at home.

Life in the Civil War camps could be saddening indeed. Diseases spread through the ranks, killing young men at an alarming rate. Even if one survived the ordeals of sickness, separation from home could be difficult. Some friends and family members who were looked to for support turned their backs on the soldiers' dear cause. Other soldiers lost women because they chose to go to war and fight for their country, and all lost an opportunity to live the life which so may at home took for granted. Richard Puffer was quite correct when he told his sister, "if there is any truth in the old adage that 'misery loves company' then I have the consolation of knowing that I have plenty of it."⁴⁵

CHAPTER 4

Gay and Happy Still

"[S]o let this wide world wag as it will, I'll be gay and happy still," wrote Ed Crowell, quoting a popular song of the war.¹ Despite the boredom and routine of camp life, and despite the sickness, death and tears, many soldiers tried to enjoy themselves. Considering their scant resources, the soldiers found many entertaining ways to occupy their idle time.

Ed Crowell had a rather easy time remaining entertained, for his younger brother, Frank, was full of humor and practical jokes. One of Frank's comrades once noted in his diary, "It has been cheerful in Company B to night. Frank Crowell is a natural clown, and his presence is always welcome. He soon makes everything merry in a company."² Frank described himself as "mischievous" and gave this example of his character. "[T]his morning the Liut went to put on his coat and found a Chicken's leg in his Pocket, and the first thing I Knew he had me by the Knap of my neck and wanted to Know what I done it for. [B]ut he was mistaken that time; it wasent me, but if their is any Joke played on the Boys I get the chokeing whether I done it or not."³

Not only was Frank an irrepressible practical joker, but he could also find humor in rather uncomical events. Ed, a teamster, once had a serious accident with one of his mules. "The other day when I was saddling my mule it undertook to put its hind foot in my pocket but missed its mark a little and hit me where I don't dare to tell of it."⁴ Frank, however, thought the incident was rather funny, writing "the mule kicked [Ed] the other night in rather a particular Spot to talk about. I told him it would [make a] Splended scar for a Veteran to Wear."⁵

One did not need to be a practical joker or be full of humor in order to have a good time, though. Whenever possible, the soldiers took to sports for

entertainment. Perhaps the favorite sport of the boys was baseball. "While in camp the regt has its plays, and I have been brightening up my base-ball play," wrote Joseph Jonhston in the spring of 1863.⁶ As soon as the weather permitted, soldiers turned their parade grounds into ball diamonds. In the South, baseball commenced rather early. The 129th Illinois began playing ball on February 10, 1864, when they were camped near Nashville, Tennessee.⁷ Baseball was not limited to the enlisted men. Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Sheets of the 92nd Illinois joined his boys in the game.⁸

Besides baseball, the boys participated in a few other sports. In the 104th Illinois, the captain of Company D bought some boxing gloves for his troops, and they had some matches.⁹ Other soldiers competed in pitching quales--a game similar to horseshoes. Both Levi Ross and Frank Crowell commented about the playing of this sport.¹⁰

Other sports involved competitions between animals instead of the soldiers. Allen Geer noted that, "Some boys spent their time in buying fighting cocks and matching them."¹¹ In the 12th Illinois, some soldiers once captured three raccoons and had them fight dogs. Austin Andrews described the scene to his sister. "You can imagine how a lot of school boys would enjoy such sport; then add six or eight years on an average to their age, and consider them the roughest and most reckless set you ever saw. [T]hen you have some idea what sport is with the soldiers."¹²

All soldier entertainment did not involve physical activity; they already had enough of that. A number preferred to pass their time with mental games rather than physical sports. The most popular games among the soldiers were card games. "You wanted to know if we played cards. I don't know what a Soldier would do if it was not for cards, but there is little playing for money," wrote Lyman Needham to his brother and sister.¹³ Although there was

much gambling after the soldiers were paid, pay days were rare, and playing for money would not last long. Joseph Johnston was an avid card player and played whist, seven up, and solo.¹⁴ Besides cards, Joseph also enjoyed playing chess, which was also popular in Frank Crowell's company.¹⁵

Another favorite pass-time of the boys was reading. Reading material of any kind was scarce and books were quickly snatched up when they were available. After receiving some books Curtiss Judd wrote in his diary, "An opportunity to devote more time to Literature & less to Ladies--good logic but perhaps sown in waste soil."¹⁶ Allen Geer's mind, however, was quite fertile. Allen was constantly reading books on many varied subjects such as: law, Latin grammar, the Constitution, religion, history and French, in addition to novels.¹⁷

Geer, who had been a teacher before the war, probably read more than other soldiers, but most soldiers seemed to enjoy some reading. Geer once purchased some books from Confederate citizens so the men in his company could have something to read.¹⁸ Day Elmore once received some books from the American Tract Society, but he did not say what sort of books they were.¹⁹ Frank Crowell liked to keep current and once reported reading a book titled The Police Record of Spies and Smugglers and Rebel Emissaries of the Army of the Cumberland. He claimed that it could be obtained at any book establishment.²⁰

When the opportunity presented itself, soldiers would produce their own reading material. Soldier newspapers were published at various times by several regiments. "Our boys took charge of a printing office and started a Soldier newspaper," noted Allen Geer shortly after the 20th Illinois arrived in Oxford, Mississippi.²¹ After the 92nd Illinois captured a printing press, Frank Crowell told his mother, "we are a going to hav a paper; there will be

considerable reading matter in it."²² The 19th Illinois published the Zouave Gazette, and the 96th Illinois had their Soldier's Letter. The Soldier's Letter was read outside of the 96th; the first issue consisted of 2,500 copies.²³

Another form of entertainment which the soldiers enjoyed when they had the opportunity was the theater. While camped near Nashville, Tennessee, Sergeant George Marsh spent fifty cents to go to the theater. He informed his brother that he "Saw Booth act Shylock, also 'Taming the Shrew'--a very funny thing. Both were Shakespeare, as you doubtless well know."²⁴ Whether he saw Edwin Booth or John Wilkes Booth is not known. Other soldiers did not have a chance to see famous actors perform Shakespeare, but they enjoyed themselves anyhow. Some theatrical productions were put on by the soldiers themselves. At Corinth, Mississippi, Austin Andrews wrote that "There is a theater in town in full blast carried on principally by the soldiers of different regiments."²⁵ Other times, the performers were blacks who put on minstrel shows. Frank Crowell attended one of these "nigger shows" at Franklin, Tennessee in April 1863.²⁶

Music was another form of entertainment enjoyed by the boys. Some regiments had regular bands to provide music. The 92nd Illinois had a band with silver instruments which accompanied the troops as they marched.²⁷ The 19th Illinois probably had more music than any other regiment. They had a fife and drum corps, a brass band and a choir. All of these groups were led by a music teacher hired by the colonel, who wanted to keep the boys away from less wholesome pursuits.²⁸

Vocal music was more popular than instrumental because more soldiers could participate in it. Most singing consisted of rather informal sing alongs. Allen Geer's mess once spent an entire evening singing various songs

together.²⁹ Other singing was much more organized. Joseph Johnston belonged to the 19th Illinois's "Zouave Glee Club" with about fifty other soldiers. They practiced every night at a Masonic hall and had great fun together. Joseph told his mother about one of the groups capers.

The first time they met, they explored the building & found about 30 gowns of the defunct "Sons of Malta." They were donned double quick, &, headed by the Grand Master in white & your humble servant in blue, a long black string of figures visited the hotels & printing office making the night hideous generally. Anything³⁰ for fun, for as the song says "A Soldiers life is always gay."

A few musically inclined soldiers even wrote their own songs. Allen Geer wrote a song called "American Rebellion", which he had printed, and sold copies of it in his camp.³¹ Unfortunately, a copy of his song is not available. One soldier's song which is still in existence is "I'm Off For Charlston," written by Frank Crowell in 1864. The lyrics are as follows:

1st

My Massa and my Missus day both am gon away
Day gone down to Sulphur Springs de summer months to stay
And while dey'r off togeder on dis little kind of spree
I'll go down to Charlston the Pretty Girls to see

Chorus:

I'm off for Charlston early in de morning
I'm off for Charlston a little while to stay;
Give my respects to every pretty yaller Gal,
I'm off to Charlston befor de break of day.

2nd

My Nelly waved her handkerchief when she seed me go,
Floating down the river wid de old banjo,
As I stood and gazed upon her I wiped away a tear,
And de last I said to her was fare you well my dear

3rd

It begin to rain a little the night was very dark,
And when my Nelly said "Good by" the dog begun to bark
De dog he scart de buzzard de buzzard scart de coon
Dey all maid a nigger run till next day noon

4th

De Coon begin to tire, de dog he tire too
 De Nigger he got tireder, and he didnt know what to do,
 De Buzzard kept a flying till de Chickins begin to crow
 Den he came down to here me play the old banjo.

5th

Charlston is a Pretty place de Gals dey Kiss so sweet
 Dey am so slender bout de waist and dress so very neat
 But I'd radder Kiss my Nell dan all de Gals I eber see³²
 Kase her tress is like an Orange Blossom hangin on a tree

Apart from being entertaining by itself, music was also used as an important part of dances. "Old Bartlett of Co. G is Fiddling, and they are having a dance. I must close and go; you can hear them halloo ten miles," wrote Frank Crowell to his brother Putney.³³ Dances were a common form of recreation for the soldiers. After receiving their pay in September 1863, the various companies of the 12th Illinois had their own dances. Austin Andrews claimed, "our companie's party was much the best; we had the most ladies and the best order of ladies. . . ." ³⁴ Not all companies were as fortunate as Austin's; some had to have dances without the assistance of ladies. Lyman Needham participated in one such dance. "Last night we had a dance in our Barracks, had a good dance as could be expected, without the help of the fair sex. There is to be another at Co. B to night; think I shall go over."³⁵ Even if the soldiers had to dance with each other, such parties were a welcome change of pace for the boys.

Blacks were a great source of entertainment for the boys. Many blacks, "contrabands" as they were called, came into the regimental camps, and many worked as servants, cooks and laundresses. Many soldiers were amused by the blacks and often had fun at their expense. "We had a good deal of fun with the niggers who are all contrabands and have some good yarns to tell," wrote John Given.³⁶ Frank Crowell enjoyed playing on the gullibility of the recently freed slaves, and told of one conversation he had with a contraband

in camp. "I asked him how much they threshed here, and he said about 100 bushels; then I told him they threshed a 1000 up [north]. Jesus, he says, and stuck out his eyes."³⁷ Some soldiers were rather cruel in the way they used blacks for their own enjoyment. Napoleon Bartlett wrote of the evening entertainment in the 76th Illinois while it was camped at Vicksburg. "We have got 1/2 dozen darkies in the company. Evry night the darkies of the regiment get together and have a general good time scuffling & fighting. The boys get them to fighting just for the fun."³⁸

Black church services aroused the curiosity of some of the soldiers, and the boys who saw a service thought they were quite funny. "Attended a right out & out Ethiopian religious meeting for the first time. Was amused and interested," wrote Allen Geer about his experience.³⁹ Levi Ross described his visit to a black church in more detail:

Never before saw such a "pow-wow" since I was born. About four hundred of both sexes all prayed, sang, screamed, bellowed, yelled, shouted, puffed, snorted, jumped, danced, hugged, kissed, tumbled down, rolled over, jumped up, shook hands, embraced and sang and danced and stunk until they were completely exhausted! This they call true worship of Almighty God. The untutored African is impulsive and sincere, and he sees not impropriety in this worse than Babel confusion, but deliver me from another such fandango as this.⁴⁰

While they found the blacks' religious services amusing, the soldiers were greatly delighted by black dancing. "I was at a nigger dance last night and saw some of the big dancing," John Given told his brother.⁴¹ John Tallman told his sister about a black child who danced for his regiment. "[W]e have got a little tame darkey here in camp, a real little wooly pate. [H]e is so black his face shines like a piece of black glass; he is about six years old, and the way he can danse is a caution."⁴² Although the boys watched the black men dance, occasionally they joined the black women. Frank Crowell participated in one of these dances in Georgia.

Mother you must excuse my poor writing as I attended a Nigger dance last evening, and a great time we had. [W]e got them to dancing Pretty Briskly and than some of the Boys spred Red Pepper on the floor and the damdest Sneezing ensued that you ever saw. [T]han the wenchies got mad and wouldnt dance, and one of the Boys run and caught the candle and left them in the dark, and the Boys made for the Wenchies and they for the dogs, and they all piled up togeather. [D]ont you think we had fun?

Some unique forms of entertainment do not fit in with the more common forms, and these comprise the "other" category. Company K of the 86th Illinois once had a sham courts martial, and the boys amused themselves by practicing their legal rhetoric.⁴⁴ In the 20th Illinois, Allen Geer once gave painting lessons to a group of his comrades. Another time, when they camped near a lake, the boys of the 20th were able to go boating in their free time.⁴⁵

Austin Andrews had described his comrades as being like a rough set of school-boys, just a little older. Therefore, it is not surprising that snowball fights erupted during winter. The fights, however, were not those fought by school-boys. When the camp of the 92nd Illinois was split in several parts because of terrain, a fight occurred which had a very martial spirit. Frank Crowell described the combat to his mother.

I must tell you about the Snow ball match . . . yesterday Companies E, H and A and G came marching up in line of battle with their colors flying (which was a Red [handkerchief]), and they ordered our Camp [Companies B, C and F] to surrender, and we all pitched in. [A]fter one hour's hard fighting drove them back to their Quarters. [W]e went through the reg battle movements--Charged, flanked and every other way. [W]e took three Prisoners; it was quite exciting times. [S]ome of the Boys got black eyes and bloody Noses, and some got mad and throwed stones in the Balls.⁴⁶

The last incident in the "other" category occurred in the 12th Illinois. Some of the boys in Austin Andrew's regiment became bored and began to raid Southern homes. Austin reported the results.

[T]he men would come in to camp with their caps trimmed with the costliest kind of artificials twisted up to their [letter torn]

calling them badges of "the Knights of the Golden Circle." One morning one of our men (Tom Short) came in wearing a ladies gown with a long blue pigeon tail coat over it and his cap trimmed as above mentioned, calling himself a "Knight of the Golden Circle." All such work was against orders, but the Company officers would not report their men.⁴⁷

The Knights of the Golden Circle had been an organization of Southern secessionists before the war, and during the war, they were alleged to be spies and saboteurs.⁴⁸ Consequently, the boys were also ridiculing their enemies while having fun.

"Hugh Massey was tight & wanted whiskey," wrote Joseph Johnston in his diary one day in March 1863.⁴⁹ Getting drunk--"tight" in soldier parlance--was the favorite activity of some troops. When all else failed, when even men in women's dresses could not produce mirth, one could always turn to the bottle. From Memphis, Tennessee, Richard Puffer wrote his sister, "the soldiers spend their time to suit themselves. Some (& they are not a very small class) go to the city & get drunk. . . ." ⁵⁰

Sometimes liquor was rather easily obtained by the soldiers, even though officers usually tried to prevent drinking. When in Missouri, Lyman Needham wrote, "Liquor dont cost anything here. Whiskey only 60cts a pint. I haven't bought much yet, but don't know but I shall soon."⁵¹ Austin Andrews, who did not drink, noted that in Corinth, Mississippi, "Nearly every stable left is occupied as a saloon. . . ." ⁵²

Other times, however, alcohol could not be purchased. When the men ran out of money, the drinking stopped. "The boys are most all out of money; consequently there is not much liquor drank, and we have much civiler times than usual," wrote Austin Andrews.⁵³ Restrictive orders or lack of money did not prevent Joseph Ward and his comrades from getting tight. Near Suffolk, Virginia, they went out on a scouting expedition and destroyed a railroad bridge. "After that we found a distillery. Here we found all the apples,

apple brandy we could drink. We got back to camp at midnight. A good many of the boys felt pretty fine, so much that they woke up all the camp."⁵⁴

While a number of soldiers drank frequently, drinking was really a last resort for those who could not find another kind of fun. The most consistently cheerful soldiers, such as Frank Crowell, Allen Geer, Austin Andrews, and Joseph Johnston, did not drink. Instead, they and others relieved the heartache in the camps with humor and enjoyed many diverse pursuits like sports, games, reading, music, dances and a few other activities. In fact, the soldiers were limited only by their imaginations, and a few imaginations seemed to have had no limit. The Civil War was not always terrible, and in the spring of 1864, Ed and Frank Crowell realized "what good times we were having and didnt know it."⁵⁵

CHAPTER 5

Shoulderstraps, Pimps and Skunks

"Col Atkins has resigned; bully for him, I say. Now if Lt. Col Dunham should die, I think the 92nd would [feel] as though they had been relieved of all the drunken pimps of Freeport," wrote Ed Crowell, expressing the universal disgust the enlisted men had for most officers--"shoulderstraps" as they were called.¹ The soldiers disliked most of their officers, from the lieutenants and captains in their companies, through the colonels of their regiments, to the commanding generals. The soldiers held grudges against both specific officers and officers in general, though some officers were well liked. Since their lives were controlled by the officers, the enlisted soldiers' attitudes toward them comprise a significant portion of their Civil War experiences.

Disrespect for the officers was widespread among the soldiers, who doubted their abilities and hated their privileges. Levi Ross claimed, "it is a fact that the majority of our officers high in rank are no more fit to lead an Army onto the battle field than the horses on which they ride."² William Marsh displayed a more general dissatisfaction for officers, writing, "Gen Curtis is not very popular among his soldiers; they lack confidence in him. I pity the soldiers Who serve under Just Osgood, he is nothing but a low lived skunk anyway."³

One reason for the boy's dislike of officers stemmed from the fact that the majority of the officers had no more military training than the boys themselves. As Levi Ross put it, "The officers of our regt are nearly all green, just from the prairie plow. . . ."⁴ The young farmers in the Illinois regiments had difficulty accepting the fact that some men, who were their legal equals in civilian life, were their superiors in war. This was manifest in their distaste for the officers' privileges.

One privilege, indeed duty, of an officer was to give orders. While most soldiers obeyed orders they received, they were occasionally provoked by particularly unpopular edicts. Joseph Ward called General Terry a tyrant after he "issued some of the most foolish orders," which required the soldiers to pack up all of their gear and take it with them when on picket. Joseph saw this as perfectly ridiculous since the picket line at the time was within speaking distance of their camp.⁵ John Given was not particularly pleased with orders prohibiting the appropriation of Southern civilians' property for the benefit of the soldiers. He stated his intention to ignore the commands, telling his aunt, "I say 'Hang all the officers who won't let us steal from the rebel property,' an[d] I will steal it whenever I get a chance, regardless of all rules and regulations to the contrary."⁶ So much for the military discipline in the 124th Illinois.

Another privilege and responsibility of officers which upset the soldiers was the ability to discipline their troops for infractions of rules and orders. Excessive punishment aroused the antipathy of the officer's men. One unpopular general who was extremely harsh was General Gordon Granger. John Sackett described him as "a mean, old scoundrell," and related an incident that occurred in his brigade. Granger had issued orders to the effect "That if any soldier should be found taking the property of any citizen he should be severely punished." Several men of the 47th Illinois were caught taking a few ears of corn apiece from a farmer's field. General Granger, "tied one of them up by the thumbs, his hands above his head, and kept him six hours in the hot sun; when he released him he was taken to the hospital and died in 4 hours. . . . [T]he Col of the 47th is now under arrest for trying to get this man released."⁷

Earlier in their service, the boys of the 36th Illinois rioted when a company commander inflicted a less severe punishment on one of their comrades. Writing from Rolla, Missouri, in December 1861, John Sackett told his father what happened. "Capt Smith . . . did buck and gag a man as was reported and had to leave this place or he would have been dragged all over Camp Rolla by his heels; however he is back now . . . [He] went into his tent, in a few minutes two third of the regt was around his tent pelting him with stones, hisses [and] groans, and he sought Protection from the Col."⁸ Captain Smith was compelled to leave camp a second time and did not return for over a month.⁹ Apparently, the soldiers could influence the behavior of their company officers better than that of their generals.

Most officers disciplined their men for disobeying commands, but a few seemed to enjoy punishing their men out of sheer spite. Henry Nurse told what his brigade commander, Colonel Daniel McCook, did to a soldier of the brigade. "There was one of the fifty-second Ohio boys got married to a widow night before last, and Dan McCook tied him up to a tree yesterday because he did not get his consent. Old McCook had been caught in close connection with her several times, and I suppose it made him a little grouchy about it."¹⁰ Along with General Granger, Colonel McCook was one of the most despised commanders in the Union army. "The Gen commanding our brigade is McCook, who is held in utter contempt by all who know him," wrote Levi Ross, "so much so that the boys say that if ever they get into battle he is the first man who will fall by their own lead. . . ."¹¹ McCook was finally killed, along with many of his men, while charging up Kennesaw Mountain in Georgia.¹² He was most likely killed by the Confederates, but his men did not mourn his loss.

Colonel McCook was not the only officer whom some boys wanted to shoot in battle. Ed Crowell told a story about how one soldier, who was punished on a

march, swore revenge. "[Y]esterday morning there was a coble of men got to fighting in Co. H, and the Col said they should cary there knapsack, and one of them would not do it, and they tied his hands behind him and tied him to one of the wagons and led him all day. [H]e swore he would shoot the Lieut of the Co.s and the Col also." Ed did not like officers at all, but he thought that the man's vows were extreme, adding, "I dont know what they will do with him."¹³

The soldiers did not get upset about the harsh punishment of comrades if they felt that it was needed. In the 92nd Illinois, Lieutenant Light struck a soldier in Company I with his sword, tearing a hole in the man's ear. Major Woodcock was angry with Light, but Frank Crowell did not mind, saying "I would like to have him strike some of the boys in the co [B] that I could pick out."¹⁴ The boys realized that some amount of discipline was necessary to maintain order.

"We have to many band box officers in the army," claimed William Marsh, expressing the belief that officers were too concerned about their appearance and style.¹⁵ Officers had their equipment moved by wagons, and they generally had several uniforms. Many had fancy dress uniforms with polished brass buttons, good braid and silk sashes which they wore for parades and reviews. The soldiers frequently held such manifestations of pomp and pageantry in complete contempt. Ed Crowell told his mother, "I think our Officers are more for show than for fight; I think if it was not for dressperade that most of the Officers would resign and go home."¹⁶ Ed wanted to associate officers with leadership, but his officers were more interested in fancy uniforms.

Contempt for style was not necessarily limited to officers. Occasionally, some soldiers put on more pomp than their comrades believed was appropriate. George Marsh told of Henry Clark, the fourth corporal in his

company, who was unpopular with the boys because he affected too much style for his position.¹⁷ Some soldiers were very impressed by the displays their officers made, however. Day Elmore told his brother, "If you could see us on dress parade it would make your Eys stick out. We have the best Col and Liu Col and major you Ever see."¹⁸

Ed Crowell said that he believed that, were it not for dress parade, the officers would resign and go home. The ability of officers to resign their commissions made many soldiers envious of their shoulderstraps. The enlisted men were enlisted for a period of three years (except for the three month troops of 1861 and a few rare cases), and officially leaving the army in good health before one's time was over was probably impossible. Lyman Needham asked a question which must have crossed the minds of many enlisted men: "Why Couldnt I have been a Lieut so I could resign and go home?"¹⁹ George Marsh, a sergeant, hoped to be promoted into a position that he could resign. "I will soon be Orderly Sergt," he told his brother, "& then the next change will be Lieut & can then resign & go home when I please."²⁰ The jealousy over commissions only further harmed the soldiers' attitudes towards their commanders.

Most officers did not resign their commission and go home, and the soldiers knew why--they were getting rich in the army. While the soldiers thought of a number of ways in which the officers were getting wealthy, one thing was certain: the officers were paid much more than the enlisted men. In May 1864, Day Elmore told his parents that he made \$17 a month as a sergeant, but a second lieutenant, just one grade higher, made \$105 per month.²¹ Although officers were required to pay for their own uniforms and food, this was still an excessive difference. Also, sergeants had more responsibilities than lieutenants, who basically waited for something to

happen to their captains.²² Levi Ross also noted the inequities in pay. After receiving several months pay in April 1863, Levi mentioned that the boys in his company received between \$70 and \$80 apiece, but the captain had been paid \$860.²³ The differences in pay could be considerable when accumulated over time.

The higher an officer's rank was, the higher his pay. Consequently, many soldiers were convinced that the high ranking officers were getting excessively rich. Day Elmore believed that they were purposely prolonging the war in order to get more wealth.

[T]here is no honesty in the army; it was got up for to make them high Officers Rich, nothing more. [T]hey seem to delight in laying still and line there pockets with Gold, where if they would let us go on we could clean them [the Confederates] out in a short time, but no, they have some Excuse for Keeping us Idle. [T]hey do not want the war to End, for they have not got quite Enough Riches yet.²⁴

Levi Ross said the same, and more, about the officer he and others loved to hate, Daniel McCook. During a time in which the soldiers of the 86th Illinois were on very short rations, Levi wrote "Brig. Gen. Dan McCook had biscuit and butter, ham, potatoes, chickens, fresh fish and honey for dinner. . . . Our generals don't want the war to end. They are living like Kings and becoming rich."²⁵

Some soldiers were convinced that the officers were getting wealthy through illegal activities. William Marsh was certain that the generals made money off of confiscated Southern cotton. "Our Gens are getting rich Stealing Cotton; the 33 Ill In., 11 Wis. In. & the 13 Ill. Cavalry have been used for that purpose. . . . The line officers & privates did not like the business very Well; I do not suppose this Army will do any thing While there is any Cotton to Steal."²⁶ Richard Puffer accused some of swindling the government out of money. He told his sister about a soldier who was dismissed

from the service for forging an order and then was re-hired as a civilian clerk. "The services of a dishonest clerk cannot be dispensed with among officers that make it a business to plunder the Government."²⁷

Besides fortune, some soldiers believed that the war was prolonged because officers were concerned with fame. After being marched around Virginia for several months by men trying in vain to out-wit Generals Lee and Jackson, Joseph Ward became disgusted with his generals. "There is too much useless sacrifice for ambitious men's glory. I am about tired being run round enough to kill a mule, just to make a general a large name or try his ability in maneuvering troops before the enemy. This war is to make many a man kill thousands to make them great, damned raskles."²⁸

If officers tried to gain glory in the war, the boys tried their best to take it away. Lost battles and poor performances were easily blamed on the officers. After a fight in Georgia, Henry Nurse told his father, "we had a pretty short fight here last night. . . . [W]e had to give back at first, but it was more the fault of our Officers than anything else."²⁹ Of course, victories could be credited to the valor of the soldiers. An interesting example is provided by Day Elmore. Day's regiment, the 36th, had been part of Brigadier General Phil Sheridan's division at the battle of Stone's River. The 36th performed valiantly, and Sheridan was promoted to major general for saving the right flank of the Army of the Cumberland. After Sheridan was sent East, Day commented, "they took the man the old 36 made and put him on the Potomac in command of the cavalry; that is Phil Sheridan. We put the 2nd star on his shoulder at Stone River."³⁰

The one thing an officer could do to ensure the disrespect of his men was to drink. Regardless of their own behavior, nearly all soldiers detested officers who drank, especially those who got drunk. "I have as poor an

opinion of General McCarthy as I have of General Dennis; he is known among the boys as the whiskey commander from his keeping him self so well soaked in that artical," wrote John Tallman to his father.³¹ Officers who drank were laughable and received irreverent nicknames. As John indicated, the soldiers did have a low opinion of such officers. Joseph Ward once wrote, "I was detailed for camp guard. We had a very pleasant day but a tyrant for an officer who was and always is so drunk he knows not which end his head is on. These kind of officers are the only thing I dislike about the army."³²

While a few officers, like the one mentioned by Ward, were habitual drunks, many only drank occasionally. This was still enough to anger some soldiers. Ed Crowell was perfectly disgusted when some officers had a party, following the fall of Atlanta, at which they got drunk.

Our Brig Commander, wishing to present the officers with his thank for their conduct in this campaign invited them all to his Head Qr for a sociable, and in compliance with his wishes they met at his Qr night befor last and had a beautiful drunken spree that is thoes belonging to the [Kentucky] Regs. All the Officers from the 92nd with the exceptions of one conducted themselves with sobriety. [T]hat one was a member of the church at home and the leader of the class, also He was from Polo. It was the most inhuman thing I have seen since I have been in the army. [A]fter they had got set up pretty well and began to be noisy they commensed drinking toasts and our Brigade Com (I am sorry to say) preposed the toast to be drank by that drinking rabble (for you cant call it any thing else) In memory of the fallen braves of our Brigad in the recent Campaign. But some one had respect enough for the dead to prepose to have it drank in silense. It wounded up like all other southern sprees in a fight by the Major of the 3rd Ky striking the Adjutant of the same Reg. . . .³³

Ed's strong words and the amount of space he devoted to the incident show how indignant he was at the thought that his officers were getting drunk while some of his comrades were still fresh in the grave.

Officers in other regiments also had parties where alcohol caused a problem. Austin Andrews found it amusing that the officers could not get some Southern women to attend their parties when the same women would go to the

soldiers' dances. "The citizens will not allow the girls to go to an officers ball which plagues some of the officers considerably. The last one they had (the 4th of July) broke up in a drunken row, and since the ladies will not attend their parties," wrote Austin.³⁴ The boys of the 104th Illinois once broke up one of their officers' drinking parties which had gotten noisy. At 1:00 am the boys complained to the officer of the guard, Lieutenant Jones of Company D, and he sent an armed guard led by Sergeant Hutton to disperse the officers. After the men surrounded the officers with bayonets fixed on their rifles, Sergeant Hutton told them, "Gentlemen: my orders are to arrest every one of you, to take you to the guard house, if this disturbance is not quieted & the company dispersed in 5 minutes." The major tried to get the soldiers to join the officers, but the boys refused, and the party dispersed. After that George Marsh said, "The officers are down on Lieut Jones for it, & the boys uphold him."³⁵ With the authority of a responsible officer, the boys could discipline their own officers.

While drinking in camp may have been considered humorous or embarrassing, drunken behavior by officers during combat was not tolerated in the least. The 86th Illinois was disgraced by the actions of its major at Chickamauga. Henry Nurse told his father, "I suppose you have heard how our major acted on that day. He was drunk and went around giving orders, and he gave his sword a slap around a little sapling, and it broke it in two in the middle. He has been discharged for the good of the service and gone home. And our Brigade Commander [Daniel] McCook was not much better."³⁶ Of course, the boys of the 86th probably did not expect much out of Colonel McCook anyway.

Obviously, not all officers were unpopular and disliked by their men; in fact, some were respected and even regarded with reverence. Officers who were competent in their duties and performed them with responsibility, like the

104th's Lieutenant Jones, had the trust and support of the men under them. Officers who had previous military training and experience tended to be more popular than volunteers who knew no more than their men. Even if an officer lacked military experience, he could still win the support of his men by being brave in battle and friendly in camp.

Levi Ross said that most of his officers were fresh "from the prairie plow." They had no more knowledge of military matters than the privates did, and they boys could not easily respect a superior commander who was ignorant of his duties. The 86th Illinois provides a good example of the difference that experience could make. The 86th's first colonel was David Irons, a volunteer who knew nothing of war, and their first lieutenant colonel was David Magee, a trained officer and veteran of the Mexican War. Although Irons commanded the regiment, Magee was the officer who drilled it.³⁷ Colonel Irons's lack of knowledge caused him to lose the respect of his men. Levi Ross said of Magee, "We esteem him more highly than we do Col. Irons."³⁸ After he forced the regiment to elect his son adjutant, Irons's sagging popularity broke; Levi noted, "Magee is a 'Trump' and is very highly esteemed as an officer, while, on the other hand, Co. Irons is very unpopular."³⁹ Henry Nurse displayed his lack of respect for Colonel Irons with wit, writing, "Old Colonel Iron's wife got here last night. I don't expect he slept much last night; so we have got the old man and woman and son in the regiment, so we are most iron clad."⁴⁰

Regular officers were popular for a number of reasons, but principally they were liked because they made the boys feel like soldiers and not a mob. Robert Burdette once had a regular army officer for a colonel. "He made us dress better, stand better, keep neater, behave more soldierly and jump more

promptly at an order." Furthermore, they were also better supplied with food and clothing under him.⁴¹

Regardless of their previous experience, brave officers were well liked by the men. Officers were expected to physically lead their men in battle, like Colonel Scott of the 19th Illinois who stayed in front of his regiment and led the charges at Stone's River.⁴² Colonel Roberts of the 42nd Illinois was such an officer. Lyman Needham said of him, "'we all' think everything of him as a commander. When we go to meet the enemy, he does not get in ther rear and say Boys go and do this or that, but he goes in 'front' and says Boys Come, and there is but few in the Regt but that delight in going where he says."⁴³ Brave officers were an inspiration to their men, who followed the examples set by their officers. Robert Burdette wrote of his favorite colonel, John McClure, "Under fire, his calmness was contagious. His courage rose above excitement."⁴⁴

Another attribute that would make an officer popular with the boys was friendliness. William Marsh was thrilled with his brigade commander, General Wyman. When camped near Helena, Arkansas, General Wyman's tent was only about five or six steps away from William's mess arbor, and Wyman would occasionally join the boys for dinner. Wyman was good natured; William told how "He sometimes in going along through the Reg. will stop & laugh & talk with [the soldiers]; he Seems to treat a private better than an officer."⁴⁵ Another popular officer was Colonel Wilder, the commander of the famous "Lightening Brigade." When the 92nd Illinois was in his brigade, he treated them with food he brought from the North for Christmas. "[W]e gave him three harty cheers," said Frank Crowell.⁴⁶

The most popular officer among the Illinois troops was their very own General Ulysses S. Grant, "whose greatness every western soldier held in

unquestioning reverence."⁴⁷ Although Grant had been born in Ohio, he was living in Illinois when the war started, and he began his Civil War service as the colonel of the 21st Illinois.⁴⁸ Consequently, the Illinois soldiers claimed him as one of theirs.⁴⁹ Richard Puffer reported an incident which occurred during the siege of Vicksburg that illustrates the down-to-earth qualities of Grant which the boys admired. "Gen Grant came along the line last night; he had on his old clothes & was alone. [H]e sat down on the ground & talked with the boys with less reserve than many a little puppy of a Lieutenant."⁵⁰ Grant was a soldier's general: no ceremony or style, just straightforward.

The Illinois troops demanded much of their officers, and many did not live up to these expectations. The boys wanted their officers to be brave, friendly, experienced and sober. Instead, they received many who were concerned more with pomp and ceremony, their own wealth, and glory. Others misused their authority and issued unpopular orders and disciplined the men with unwarranted cruelty. The boys adjusted to the reality by turning the tables on the officers as the soldiers in the 36th and 104th did. Finally, they looked up to and respected those commanders who did conform to their expectations.

CHAPTER 6

Tramp, Tramp, Tramp

During the early years of the war, the soldiers spent much of their time in camps. Longing for a change from camp life, many soldiers looked forward to a march, which would take them to a battlefield or, quite likely, another camp-ground. However, they quickly found out that marching was very difficult work, and that life on the march was greatly different from life in camp.

The first harbingers of a coming march were orders to prepare several days' rations and a load of ammunition. Common orders were like those given to the 29th Illinois when they were preparing to leave Suffolk, Virginia. The soldiers were to have three days' rations in their haversacks and fifty rounds of cartridges in their cartridge boxes.¹ Marching orders were not standard, and occasionally larger allowances of food and ammunition were called for. Although he thought that the load was too heavy, the five days' rations and eighty rounds carried by Thomas Miller on his first march were not as heavy as *as much weight as* what other soldiers were required to carry.² Joseph Johnston was once required to carry eight days' rations, which did not all fit in his haversack, and George Childress in the 66th Illinois was once ordered to carry the unbelievable amount of two-hundred rounds.³

Preparing to march could be a group effort. William Marsh reported how his mess worked together to get ready for a campaign. The cook, Hyde, prepared the rations for the group, while two others repaired the mess's tent. Other members converted knapsacks (which were for carrying blankets and clothes on one's back) into haversacks (which were slung over one's shoulder and held food).⁴ Despite the best coordinated efforts, the soldiers were still foiled by the principle of "hurry up and wait." More than a week after Marsh's preparations, his regiment was still in their camp.⁵

Eventually, however, the regiments would commence to march. Their destination was generally a mystery to the enlisted men. Marching soldiers were as uninformed as camping soldiers. John Tallman explained, "we dont ever know even whare we are agoin when we commence to march; we just follow the Colonel wharever he goes, and when he tells us to stop we stop."⁶ When marching, the soldiers marched in columns, four men abreast. In the country, the troops did not keep straight columns, did not keep step, and carried their arms at will.⁷ When they came through a town, though, the 104th Illinois would have their band play. The soldiers would then keep step and carry their rifles at right shoulder shift (high on the right shoulder, with the lockplate level with the right ear).⁸

When close to the enemy, the troops would move in a more defensive manner. John Tallman was on an expedition once in Mississippi which was attacked by Confederates. After the Southerners were beaten back, the 15th Illinois deployed in front as skirmishers. The 14th Illinois and the 76th Illinois both formed in line of battle, each on one side of the road. Cavalry were placed on both flanks, and the group marched in that fashion for some time.⁹

Regardless of how they marched, the soldiers found the marching to be toilsome. William Marsh described what marching was like to his younger brother, writing:

[D]o you think you could even take your rifle & walk from 15 to 20 miles a day With Nothing to eat but a peice of Wormy Cracker & 2 or 3 Cups of Coffee in 24 hours, Say nothing about Sleeping on the ground often Without anything but a blanket to protect you from the rain. If you Should eat nothing but bred & water for 2 or 3 days & a little fat pork, take a blanket and lay out in the grass under the apple trees, if it rains all the better, then you can imagine what Soldiering is.¹⁰

William was trying to dissuade his brother from joining the army when he wrote his description, but his images are no worse than those presented by others.

If marching during the day was bad, marching after dark could be a nightmare. Cyrus Eyster described some of the marching done by the 92nd Illinois to his cousin:

We done a great deal of our marching after night, dark as pitch, through swollen streams waist deep, over logs, stumps, and brush, and then pell mell into holes and ditches, and when we laid down in wet clothes on the wet ground to bivoac for the remainder of the night, we could scarcely refrain from casting a hurried wish or thought after a once comfortable home before yielding to the claims of our taxed Nature.¹¹

Sometimes the soldiers had to march during the day and into the night. While General Buell was organizing a defence against General Bragg's invasion of Kentucky in the autumn of 1862, the 36th Illinois marched so much that their supply wagons could not keep up with the troops. Day Elmore wrote about his experience: "night after night we have marched so far that the [supply wagons] could not keep up with us on the account of the bad Roads. [T]hen we would build a fire and dry the snow off the ground; as soon as that was don we would Roll up in our Blankets, one half of a blanket at that, nothing to eat. [T]he teams would get around in time for starting out in the morning."¹²

Marching was distasteful during both day and night, and it was miserable in all kinds of weather. In the summer, when most campaigning was done, the soldiers sweltered in the heat. As if that was not bad enough, the columns of marching men kicked up clouds of dust from the dirt roads. "Clouds of dust went searching [for] a place to enter us; and filled eyes; noses, mouths, and ears in the attempt," wrote Joseph Johnston about the march which led to Chickamauga.¹³ In the South, marching could be hot work even in the winter. While in Tennessee, John Tallman told his sister, "the 24th of Dec I marched about fifteen miles, and it was so hot that I sweat like a man in the harvest field. . . ."¹⁴

The winter could be quite cold in the South, and winter campaigns were often slowed by snow. Thomas Miller's first march was in January 1862 through snow and rain. "[U]pon the whole, it was the damdest time that I Ever Seen," he concluded.¹⁵ In January 1863, the 92nd Illinois marched through Kentucky, and it snowed constantly for two days. This turned the pike into a river of mud, which then froze and thawed out again.¹⁶

Life during a march was significantly different from life in a camp. Food, for example, changed greatly, as was mentioned in chapter two. Levi Ross was disappointed and puzzled by the change of diet which occurred on his first campaign. "Hard bread, bacon and coffee is all we draw. Are Entitled to rice & beans, but for some reason we have not had them on our march."¹⁷ Sleeping arrangements also changed, but the soldiers adjusted to the new conditions. "I have got so that I can lay down and sleep almost any place," wrote John Tallman, ". . . I use to pittty the horses to stay in sush a place as I did last night, after raining yesterday and night before last, the water run through our tent ankle deep once."¹⁸

Because of the change in diet and the exhaustive effort required by marches, many soldiers could not keep up with their regiments. Straggling seemed to be a problem largely encountered by new troops. On a march of twenty-five miles through the spring mud of the Shenandoah Valley, the 29th Illinois lost half its force because of straggling.¹⁹ Thomas Miller described the stragglers he saw on his first march. "[I]t was a hard Sight to See hundreds of Stout young men that was give out a Sitting and lying along by the Road, and Some of them a Crying and weeping because they Could not keep up with the [column]."²⁰ As time wore on, the troops became accustomed to the pace of the marching, and straggling was reduced.

Some regiments tried to reduce straggling by stopping for rest along the march. John Given told his sister that the 124th Illinois would march one mile and then rest for fifteen minutes.²¹ This was done fairly early in the regiment's service and may have changed later in the war. While officers may have ordered rests for new troops, experienced soldiers sometimes took matters into their own hands. After the 86th Illinois had been in service for nearly one year, Henry Nurse told his father, "They cannot make us kill ourselves by marching, for when we get tired we sit down and rest and then come up like the cows when we get ready. That is the way we come the shenanigan on them shoulder-straped fellows."²²

Another way to prevent straggling and to ease the burdens of the soldiers on the march was to keep up the morale of the troops. "[W]e have a deal of fun on the road . . . as long as we keep fun agoing we will do first rate," wrote Henry Nurse.²³ The responsibility for boosting morale fell upon the soldiers, and those who led the fun in camp also led the fun on the march. Joseph Johnston claimed that the 19th Illinois "kept up a continual chaffing with the regiments they passed," and told of some of the exchanges they had on the Chickamauga campaign.

The oft repeated question "What regiment is that?" showered on us as we passed by met with a different set of answers from what it would have done "two years ago." Then when the question was asket it was answered by a dozen voices "19th Illinois;" now it meets with answers like the following--"2^d Presbyterian regt," "1st Ohio Conscripts: Hurrah for Vallandingham," "1st Utah," "4th Loyal East Tennessee nigger regiment," "Our regiment," "99th Ingy-army regiment--from Hoop-pole County, Posey Township," "N-i-nth A-rmy Corpse, Burnside's Forty-second M-a-s-s-a-ch-es-etts. It takes the Potomac A-r-my to clean out Bragg."²⁴

The soldiers had more fun saying who they were not than who they were. Also, Joseph showed that the men enjoyed making fun of some of their least favorite people, such as blacks, Ohioans, Clement Vallandingham, General Ambrose

Burnside and anyone else connected with the Army of the Potomac. These dislikes will be discussed in detail in later chapters.

Just as they were a source of amusement in camps, blacks were also comical for the soldiers to watch while on the march. Frank Crowell told of an incident which occurred as the 92nd Illinois (as mounted infantry) marched through northern Alabama in December 1863. "[W]hile on the march down here we were passing a large Plantation, and the Band struck up and Played 'Get out of the wilderness,' and their wasent a Nigger even to those that were cutting teeth but what went dancing (or rather shuffling). [S]ome Big Wenches that would weigh at least thre hundred went right in on the rerd."²⁵ (A rerd is a noisy cry or a roar.) By Frank's description of the sight, the soldiers probably had a good laugh as they watched the "shuffling."

Laughter on a march could be infectious. (Afer) the war, Robert Burdette recalled an incident in the 47th Illinois which happened on a march through rain and mud. "A tired soldier sought an easier footway up on the sloping roadside, and pulled off both shoes, one after the other, in the sticky clay bank--an insult in the face of misery. The men who saw him roared with pitiless mirth. The next company, which could not see, howled in sympathy with the laughter they could not understand." The laughter was passed down the column and gained in volume. According to Robert, incidents such as this were common; the appearance of a general or a rabbit could cause a large cheer which grew louder as more and more soldiers joined in.²⁶

Besides high morale, another ingredient for a successful movement was supply. Supply was principally provided by the army wagons. Every regiment had several wagons, and most had one per company. The wagons were driven by soldiers specially appointed as teamsters. The wagons were pulled by six mules, hitched in three pairs, called, from front to back, the lead, swing and

wheel teams.²⁷ The driver rode one of the wheel mules, and this apparently made a comical sight. Ed Crowell, the teamster for Company B, 92nd Illinois, said of his first experience driving his team, "I guess you would of laughed to of seen me the first time . . . of all the pictures you ever saw I guess that it would of beat them all."²⁸

The wagons were supposed to carry items which the soldiers could not carry with them. Some of the equipment to be hauled in the wagons were: Sibley tents, cooking utensils, extra rations and ammunition. Occasionally the wagons also carried the soldiers' knapsacks. Other times, however, the wagons would not carry all that was needed by the men. "The wagons will have only the officers tent & the cooking utensils, and a full load will be made out for them with rations," wrote Joseph Johnston before one march.²⁹

Frequently, the wagons could not keep up with the soldiers on the march. The Crowell letters show that when the 92nd Illinois was moving, Frank and Ed were rarely together. The failure of the wagon trains to keep pace with the men led to shortages of food. While marching through Arkansas, Day Elmore said of the unpredictable supply, "some time the wagons would get up; some time we would have to march on our empty stomach."³⁰ On the Tullahoma campaign, Day's regiment was on quarter rations because of the lack of supply.³¹

Another result of slow supply wagons was the absence of large tents on the march. In the first years of the war, when Sibley tents were the common shelter, marching soldiers were often without them. While pursuing Bragg's army after the battle of Perryville, Kentucky, the 86th Illinois was without tents. Four inches of snow fell one night, and all the men had for protection was one blanket apiece, which they had carried with them.³² In September 1862, the 42nd Illinois arrived in Nashville to find that all railroad

connections to the city had been cut by the Confederates. Since they were ahead of their wagons, they had no tents, and the lack of rail connections prevented them from receiving more rations.³³

Driving the wagons was a difficult, potentially dangerous, and thankless job. Although he did not have to march, Ed Crowell put in many hard hours trying to keep his company supplied. When the 92nd Illinois was marching over the mountains in eastern Tennessee, the teamsters were cut off from the regiment for three days, and they put in many long hours trying to catch the regiment. Ed described the effort to his sister-in-law: "the second night I drove untill one O'clock at night, and it was darker than a stack of black cats, and the roads were as bad as you ever traveled and how we ever got through with six mules is more than I can tell, but at last we got into a mud hole and had to stay untill morning." After freeing his wagon from the mud the next morning, Ed continued to drive his team until late in the evening. On the fourth day the wagons finally met up with the rest of the regiment.³⁴ When moving through Alabama in 1864, Ed worked from four in the morning until ten at night to keep his company supplied.³⁵

Driving mules was not without danger, either. Ed was still obligated to perform picket duty when not on the march.³⁶ Teamsters were also exposed to attacks which the Confederates frequently made on Federal supply lines. Ed described a close call he had while hauling rations to his company on the Atlanta campaign:

[W]e have to haul all our grub between 10 and 15 miles. I came very near getting captured the other day again. I was going down to the Reg with a lode of forage and passed with[in] a few rods of a squad of rebs . . . [they hid] supposing that I had an escort with me, but it was not so; they could of gobbled me if they had not been afraid that there was more with me.³⁷

Given the danger and long hours of his job, Ed felt that he had a thankless position and complained, "they work the mule drivers like the devil, yet they

act as though they thought we had no feelings at all because we drive mules."³⁸

Anything which was not transported by the wagons had to be carried by the soldiers themselves. Just their uniforms alone could be quite a load to take with them. John Sackett described the first uniform he was issued in 1861:

We have received all our uniform. It consistest of a blanket 5 x 14 feet, 2 pair sky blue pants, a blouse, a tight fitting round about of dark blue, a dark blue cap, a black hat trimmed with a sky blue cord with tassels in lieu of a band a brass trumpet on the front of the crown and the letter of our company, the left side turned up and fasened with a brass pinsion and a black feather on the other side, two pair of socks, two pair of cotton flanel drawers, two shirts, a pair of army shoes, an sky blue overcoat which reaches below the knee, a cape on the ³⁹same reaching to the elbow, [and] an India rubber blanket 5 x 7 ft.

The black hat which John described in detail was a Hardee hat, which was only used in the early part of the war.⁴⁰ The cap was a forage cap. Forage caps were different from the sporty kepis which are frequently and incorrectly associated with Union troops. The forage cap had a taller crown than the kepi, and it generally slouched forward, sometimes being almost perpendicular to the visor.

Although the Hardee hats and forage caps were official government issue, the soldiers soon discovered that both were of little use. The Hardee hats were too decorative for regular wear. Forage caps did not protect one's face from the sun, nor did they keep rain off one's neck. Consequently, the troops obtained better, more useful hats from sutlers or from home. Before the Atlanta campaign commenced, Day Elmore wrote to his parents and asked for a light-weight, black "low crowned, broad rimed, fine woolen hat." He told his parents about other soldiers' hats, "The Boys get them in most Evry make, and it is very warm hear. I have nothing but my Cap . . . send [the hat] as soon as you get this as my face is burning up."⁴¹ Allen Geer also stated that most

of his comrades wore a variety of hats but noted that caps were required for dressparade.⁴²

Two other important articles mentioned by John Sackett were the blouse and the roundabout. The blouse was the dark blue fatigue jacket or sack coat, which all soldiers were to have for informal wear. As the term "sack coat" implies, these were loose fitting jackets which came down below the wearer's waist, much like a modern sport jacket. The roundabout was the dress coat for the 36th Illinois. It was a shell jacket--coming just down to the waist. Most regiments, however, had a frock coat for their dress coat. Frock coats were tapered and buttoned to the waist and then extended to just above the knee. While soldiers were to have both a fatigue jacket and a dress coat, most soldiers appear to have only worn one of the two. Photographs of the 86th Illinois indicate that, during 1863, most of the enlisted men wore frock coats while a few wore fatigue jackets. By 1864, about half wore frocks and half had sacks.⁴³

The first uniform issue was provided by the government, but subsequent reissues of clothing were at the soldier's expense. The troops were given an allowance of forty-two dollars a year (\$3.50 per month) for clothing. If a soldier drew more than his allowance, the difference was deducted from his pay. On the other hand, the soldier recieved a bonus at the end of the year if he drew less than his allowance. Requisitions for more clothes had to be made at the beginning of a month. Day Elmore explained, "we have to put in what we want at the first of the month, &, if we do not, we wate untill the first of next month."⁴⁴ Replacing an entire uniform could be quite expensive for the soldiers. Some of the prices they had to pay for government uniforms and equipment were as follows: \$5.00 for a rubber blanket, \$2.95 for a wool

blanket, 63 cents for a forage cap, \$2.00 for pants, \$4.00 for army shoes, and \$7.20 for an overcoat.⁴⁵

Just as they obtained hats from other sources, the soldiers also got clothes from sutlers and from their families at home. The clothing which the sutlers sold was more expensive than the government's clothing, and the soldiers only bought from them in emergencies. After failing to requisition clothing at the first of the month, Day Elmore was once compelled to pay fifteen dollars for a hat, a fatigue jacket and some woolen shirts.⁴⁶ When the army had a shortage of shirts, William Marsh paid a sutler five dollars for two of them.⁴⁷

Sometimes soldiers obtained items of clothing from their families. Although shirts could be obtained from the government or from sutlers, soldiers seemed to prefer shirts which came from home. Lyman Needham once asked for two colored woolen shirts made of "pretty cloth."⁴⁸ The army issue shirts were white, and, apparently, the soldiers wanted more variety. Other common items sent to the soldiers by their families were socks, boots, hats, handkerchiefs, and gloves, for the winter.⁴⁹ Occasionally, more significant portions of a soldier's uniform came from home. Joseph Johnston once received a pair of pants from his mother.⁵⁰ Joseph was not the only soldier who did not wear uniform sky blue pants; one man in Austin Andrew's company had captured Confederate pants.⁵¹

In additions to his clothes, a soldier on the march had a number of other items to carry with him. Day Elmore gave his brother a list of the equipment he carried on a march:

[Y]ou have 3 days Ration in your haversack; you can Eat it up in one or make it last, for you will get no more untill the three days are up. [B]esides your board, you have your Bed to carry; you can take as mutch as you think will keep you warm, also cartrig Box with 50 rounds in each Round weighing one ounce, your

Belt and Bayonet, Cap Box, Canteen. ⁵² But thare is nothing you have to carry But your gun & Equipments.

Except for one point of variance, all the soldiers (who were combatants) carried the equipment on Day's list. The one point of difference was the bedding. Day was right; one could carry as much as one wanted to carry.

Most soldiers carried only a limited amount for bedding. On the Chickamauga campaign, Lyman Needham carried only a rubber blanket.⁵³ Earlier that summer, he had carried a shelter half in addition to the rubber blanket.⁵⁴ On one expedition in Mississippi, the boys of the 76th Illinois took only one blanket apiece.⁵⁵ Although shelter tents were intended to be easy to carry, it appears as if many soldiers did not carry them. During the action around Chattanooga, Tennessee, prior to Chickamauga, Frank Crowell claimed that "I have slept in a tent twice in 34 days."⁵⁶

A soldier was supposed to carry his bedding on his back in a knapsack, but the knapsack was an unpopular and useless item. Ed Crowell, who did not have to carry a knapsack, feared being returned to the ranks and having to march with one on his back. "I could not stand it to carry a knapsack five miles to save my neck," he told his mother, "and I wont try."⁵⁷ Since many soldiers travelled light, a knapsack was generally not needed to carry their equipment. Robert Burdette wrote about the knapsacks with contempt. "My regiment was a marching and fighting regiment, and knapsacks were luxuries of effeminacy, indulged in only in winter quarters."⁵⁸ Since he and others only carried a blanket or two and perhaps a shelter half, they rolled up their blankets and carried them over their shoulders. ⁵⁹

A few soldiers, however, kept their knapsacks and loaded themselves down with much extra equipment. After he had been in the army for more than a year, William Peter carried one woolen blanket, one rubber blanket, one shelter half, one dress coat, two shirts, two pairs of socks, a pair of

drawers, and "a few trinkets" in his knapsack.⁶⁰ Joseph Ward carried, among other things, a revolver in his knapsack.⁶¹ Most soldiers would have considered this "impedimentia"--useless extra weight.

Early in the war, many soldiers, like Peter and Ward, were loaded with impedimentia. However, much of the excess equipment was thrown away on the first long march. Joseph Johnston described what happened on the first major march of the 19th Illinois:

The day was so hot on our march from Birds Point that the soldiers threw everything away which they could. They would not care about any flannel bandages as they would not use them much & would throw them away the first thing. Very little care has been taken of any thing, & they have so little baggage that they are emphatically light Infantry.⁶²

On a march which would lead them to their first battle at Perryville, Kentucky, the recent recruits of the 86th Illinois relieved themselves of excess baggage. "Wagon loads of clothing was thrown away by the new recruits who started with full knapsacks. Thousands of over coats, extra pants, shirts, socks, etc. were scattered all along our line of march by the tired and nearly exhausted boys," wrote Levi Ross.⁶³ A few days later, while on the same march, Levi noted, "nearly all threw away their knapsacks and clothing."⁶⁴ The knapsacks, which had been issued in September, lasted less than a month in the 86th Illinois.⁶⁵

New soldiers were not the only ones to throw away clothing and equipment. Veterans would often accumulate articles of clothing during the inactive months of winter which would be thrown away during the first march of the following spring. In May 1862, Lyman Needham wrote, "I have thrown away two shirts and one pair of drawers since I came, and if we march much more I shall throw away all but my Blanket, for I cannot carry them. I have seen thousands of Over coats and every kind of clothing thrown away, and a great many have burnt their extra clothing."⁶⁶ The 20th Illinois repeated the shedding

process again in the spring of 1863. On the Port Gibson Road on the march towards Vicksburg, the boys threw away their knapsacks and their contents.⁶⁷

"It is not the stile for a soldier to think of past troubles or future danger, but live in the present for all it is worth," wrote Joseph Ward, and this was the mentality behind the discarding of extra equipment and clothing.⁶⁸ Their disregard for the future allowed soldiers to have a lighter load, but the lack of spare clothes led to raggedness. "Soldiers here do not look much as they do in Ill.," William Marsh cautioned his brother, "here they look rough & many of them ragged. When our Reg. reached this Place there was hadly a man in it, that had a Whole pair of pants."⁶⁹ Marching was rough on clothes, and replacements were not always available. During Sherman's Atlanta campaign, Henry Nurse said of the 86th Illinois, "the boys are pretty ragged. That is about the seat of their pants. Some have not got any seat to their pants."⁷⁰

Besides pants, another item which wore out was shoes. Since few, if any, soldiers ever intended to carry an extra pair of shoes, the condition of soldiers' shoes can not be blamed on waste. Nevertheless, a lack of shoes had a serious effect on the troops' performance. As a campaign continued, soldiers' shoes would wear out, and many of the boys would be barefoot by the end. The experiences of the 86th Illinois serve as a good example. By the end of the Tullahoma Campaign, three hundred men were without shoes.⁷¹ After they had been resupplied, they wore out their shoes around Chattanooga, and were barefoot by the battle of Missionary Ridge.⁷² After the fall of Atlanta, the boys of the 86th were once again without shoes.⁷³

To attempt to summarize the gear of a typical Illinois soldier is difficult because of the great differences between individuals and regiments. If a "typical" Illinois soldier did exist in a "typical" company, some general

comments could be made about his appearance on a campaign. On his head would be perched a black, wide-brimmed, wool felt hat. He would wear either a dark blue frock coat or a fatigue jacket, under which he wore a shirt made by his mother. His sky blue pants would be tucked into his grey wool socks, which separated his feet from his black, well-worn, leather brogans.⁷⁴ On his left side hung his black haversack, with a tin cup hanging on its closure strap, and his canteen.⁷⁵ On his right side, his leather cartridge box hung by a strap over his left shoulder. His belt held a bayonet on his left side and a cap box on his right. Over his left shoulder a rolled up woolen or rubber blanket was hung and the ends tied together on his right. In this bed-roll, he carried an extra shirt, a pair of socks, a pair of drawers and a few personal items. Most importantly, in his hands he carried his rifle.

Other soldiers in his company looked a little different. Some wore a dress coat while others had a sack coat. A few kept their forage caps, and some still used their knapsacks. One or two of his comrades might have had non-regulation pants, obtained from home or possibly from his enemy. This is a generic picture of Illinois troops as they looked when they marched off to face their enemy in battle.

CHAPTER 7

The Last Full Measure

"[A] Soldier's Duties and Ententions are to kill or get killed," wrote Thomas Miller, completely describing a soldier's reason for existence in a few choice words.¹ The sole purpose of the soldiers was to close with the enemy in combat. This is what the marching was for. This is what the drill was for. This is what they enlisted for. Combat was a new experience for the vast majority of the boys. It was something they eagerly awaited at first and later came to regard as a loathsome task. Since the soldiers were in the army to fight, combat was an important part of their military experience.

Initially, the soldiers impatiently waited for their first battle, and many feared that they would never be in one. When he was in the 10th Illinois (3 months) Infantry in the spring of 1861, David King told his mother, "the boys are so impatient for a fight that they would leave their dinner any time to fight."² The longer the boys had to wait, the more impatient and eager they became. William Marsh had been in the 13th Illinois for almost nine months and not been in combat when he marched through the battlefield at Pea Ridge (Arkansas). After surveying the damage, he wrote, "When our troops have another fight I hope I shall be there to take part in the fun."³

As Marsh indicated, the new troops had no idea about what they were going to experience in battle. When he was green, John Given was afraid that he would not have the "good fortune" of being in an anticipated battle.⁴ Some soldiers had rather fanciful and romantic ideas about what battle would be like. Joseph Johnston reported his regiment's intentions to his father. "In a battle the colonel will have the fife & drum, the brass band & bugles, & the regimental choir will sing a national air to inspire enthusiasm in the ranks, at least so he says."⁵ Others believed that their battle would be the one to

end the war. Lyman Needham, when camped near Pittsburg Landing (Tennessee) and expecting an attack, wrote, "We are just foolish enough to think that this battle will decide the whole thing."⁶

As the eagerly awaited battle began to approach, some of the soldiers would loose their enthusiasm to fight. Late in December 1861, the soldiers in the 29th Illinois expected to go on an expedition to take Columbus, Kentucky. Camped at Cairo, Illinois, Thomas Miller wrote, "there will undoubtedly be Several men to have to die, but they all appear to be willing to go and Risk it."⁷ Appearances changed when orders finally came requiring them to prepare to leave camp. "[A]bout four o clock this Evening the orders Came from head Quarters that we must be Ready to march at nine o clk in the morning. [I]t made Some of the boys look very Serious, and in fact Some of them [were] taken very Sick and Departed them Selves unable to march and will be Excused from duty and left in Camp."⁸

After the troops left camps and were finally about to enter a battle, they had to spend a few agonizing hours waiting for the "ball" to be opened. At first, soldiers acted differently during the hours preceding a battle. When the 86th Illinois had been in the field for less than a fortnight, they expected to be attacked in their camp in Kentucky. As they formed in line to meet the enemy, Levi Ross noted the disposition of his comrades. "Some of the boys look pale; others are jesting, swearing, and playing cards."⁹ After the 86th had been baptized by fire, the boys began to act alike. While waiting to receive an attack at Chickamauga, Levi reported "I glanced along the files of men to note their appearance in this most trying ordeal to any and all soldiers--the suspence just before the battle opens. Some were pale as death; some trembled; all were as silent as the tomb. . . ."¹⁰

Levi Ross noticed the frightening ordeal of waiting to receive an enemy attack; Robert Burdette showed that waiting to attack was just as bad. Writing after the war, Robert described what might happen during the "awful quiet before the battle."

As you lie on the ground to hide the position of the regiment from the enemy and to keep underneath the searching shell-fire and the skirmish shots that get past your skirmishers, a man is talking to you, with his face turned toward your own, a foot away. You are listening to him with interest, because he is asking you about something that happened in your own town, in the Lincoln campaign. As you start to answer him, something fearful blots out his face with a smear of blood, and he is a shuddering thing without voice or breath or soul, huddled there at your side. A shell has burst above your company and a piece of it struck that man in the face like an angry specter that resented his question.¹¹

Lying on the ground with nothing to do but think about the coming fray was terrible, but it was worse when comrades were killed before retaliation was possible.

Finally, all the drill, all the marching and all the waiting would have their purpose, and the troops would engage in combat. As the men rose to their feet to receive the enemy attack or to charge the enemy position, cartridge boxes were brought forward so they were more accessible, and bayonets were fixed on the ends of their rifles.¹² The soldiers were now ready for battle, and the moment of reckoning had come.

The soldiers had spent hours upon hours drilling in preparation for battle. While drill had taught the soldiers how to use their rifles and instilled a sense of confidence in them, it did not depict the confusion and disorder that usually accompanied a battle. Occasionally, the regimental lines were kept in good order. After a small battle in Georgia, Henry Nurse claimed that "Our line was as straight as though we were on parade."¹³ Other times, the regimental and even brigade formations completely disintegrated.

William Peter described an attack on a Confederate fort during the siege of Mobile, Alabama.

Our Regt was placed in reserve of the brig, but when we got across the swamp and the line started for the works The 122^d was not to be held back. The wild scene which followed cannot be depicted. . . . When the Order to charge was given every man went on his own hook, no such a thing as keeping lines. [W]hen the first ones reached the works it was as if the brig had been scattered all over the ground from where we started. . . . Altho we were in the rear at starting some of us got into the works most as soon as any.¹⁴

This was not the performance of green troops. The men were veterans with over two and one half years of experience.

Sometimes, a regiment's organization would change several times during a battle. At Parker's Crossroads, the 122nd was initially deployed lying behind a rail fence. When they were informed that the enemy was in the timber behind them, they charged into the woods "each man fighting on his own hook." After driving the Confederates from the woods, they halted on the opposite side and formed in a line. Before they could do much else, Federal reinforcements arrived, and the Confederates withdrew.¹⁵

Generally, on the battlefield, confusion was the rule. Sometimes confusion was caused by the terrain. Wooded areas spread ranks and could cause chaos, and so could streams and rivers. Joseph Johnston recalled a charge across Stones River. "The banks were steep & rocky, & going down it the whole division was mixed up & every man had to act for himself. Without waiting to form of the other side, they rushed forward on the enemy."¹⁶ At Chickamauga the 92nd Illinois was disrupted when the brigade they were supporting routed and ran into them. Frank Crowell explained what happened, "the brigade that wer in front of us wer driven, and than they piled in to us and we had to fight falling back, and if they [the Confederates] didnt sent in the bullets than I dont Know."¹⁷

Part of the confusion in battle was due to the fact that the soldiers did not see all of what was happening around them. Soldiers never actually saw a battle; instead, they saw the small parts in which they participated. When writing about the May 22, 1863 assault on Vicksburg, Robert Burdette told his readers, "You know more about it than I do, because you have read its many histories, and I was only in one little corner of it, very small, exceedingly hot, and extremely dangerous, so that my personal observations, being much concerned with myself, were limited by distracting circumstances."¹⁸ Some soldiers became so distracted that they did not even realize what the men next to them were doing. Allen Geer reached this level of detachment at the battle of Raymond, Mississippi. "After firing some minutes from our first position I looked around and saw all gone on either side except T. Johnson."¹⁹ He had been so absorbed by the fighting that he did not notice that his regiment had fallen back to a new position.

One device used to try to prevent such complete distraction was the regiment's flag. The flag did much more than identify the regiment; it was the very heart and soul of the regiment. The banner bore the regiment's name and the battles in which it had participated honorably. The soldiers took great pride in their flags and the honor badges on them. "Every time Honor writes a new battle name in gold on the flag she blots the names of a few men off the regimental roll, in blood. That's the price of battle inscriptions. That's what makes them so precious. The inscriptions are laid on in gold, underlaid and made indelible with blood," wrote Robert Burdette.²⁰ Since the flag was the symbol of the regiment, the soldiers glanced at their banner to see where their regiment was. "I can't see how men could go into battle without the Flag to glance at now and again," wrote Robert Burdette.²¹ The consequences of not carrying a flag could be tragic. Allen Geer reported

that, during a battle on the road to Vicksburg, the "20th got fired into by our own men for not having our colors with us."²² In the smoke of battle, blue could not be easily distinguished from gray and butternut.

Smoke, caused by the black powder used by the weapons, covered the battlefields of the Civil War, obscuring the enemy positions and making rifle fire wildly inaccurate. The rifle fire was inaccurate to begin with; the soldiers had a tendency to fire too high. Perhaps the most frequently heard command on the battlefield was "Aim low!" The sergeants continually repeated this order. Robert Burdette recalled that, "The repeated expostulation of the sergeants is, 'Fire low boys; fire low! Rake 'em! Shin 'em!'"²³ The obscuring smoke concealed the enemy and made aiming impossible once a battle was underway. George Marsh admitted that he just shot at the smoke; it was all he could do.²⁴ Consequently, the men did not know the effect of their fire. Of the soldiers used in this study, only one, Allen Geer, stated that he knew he hit a Confederate. That occurred while skirrimishing and not during a large battle.²⁵

As the battle continued, the soldier's senses were bombarded and irritated by a variety of stimuli. The became blinded and choked by the clouds of smoke which hung over the battlefields.²⁶ As they fired, the barrels of their rifles would heat up and become difficult to hold.²⁷ Their ears were assaulted by many sounds: the roar of the cannons, the rattle of musketry, the profanity of their comrades and the cries of the wounded. Then one terrible sound would rise above the rest--the Rebel Yell. When the Confederates charged they rushed, "yelling like so many demons from hell."²⁸ Many soldiers remarked about the Confederates yelling as they attacked. Thomas Miller, writing about Shiloh, said that the Confederates charged, "as though the Entended to Scare us out. . . ."²⁹ Confederate attacks could

indeed be frightening. Robert Burdette claimed that nothing could stop them during the first day at the battle of Corinth (Mississippi). They pressed on, "like a human torrent," which, "drove through all opposition. . . ." ³⁰

So terrible were the Confederate attacks that many of the boys grossly overestimated the size of the Confederate forces. At Shiloh, William Ross was certain that the Confederate army was twice the size of the Federal one. ³¹ In fact the Federals had the advantage, having about 75,000 men to the Confederate 44,000. ³² Writing after the Seven Days' Battles around Richmond, Joseph Ward estimated Lee's army to number 200,000, when it was, in reality, less than half that size. ³³ The engagements which produced the most ridiculous estimations of Confederate strength were Chickamauga and the subsequent siege of Chattanooga. Part of the confusion was caused by the fact that General Lee had sent five brigades of his Army of Northern Virginia to assist General Bragg's Army of Tennessee. ³⁴ Levi Ross claimed that Lee had sent half his army (a huge exaggeration) to Georgia and, from Chattanooga, told his parents that "the whole Confederacy is concentrated here, except a portion of Lee's Army, and the Charleston forces." ³⁵ Frank Crowell gave an even more incredible report of Chickamauga, claiming that "the whole Southern Confederacy were fighting us. . . ." ³⁶ The few additional troops from Virginia undoubtedly caused some confusion in this case, but, in general, the boys inflated the number of their opponents. Perhaps they could not accept the fact that they were roughly handled, and sometimes defeated, by a smaller army.

The troops were indeed handled roughly; casualties were a sad fact of the battles. Of the twenty-six soldiers in this study for whom complete military records exist, more than one-third became battle casualties. Six, Cyrus Eyster, Henry Nurse, Allen Geer, Joseph Johnston, William Marsh and George

Marsh, were wounded in combat. Four gave their lives. Day Elmore, Samuel Peter and John Sackett were killed in battle, and Lyman Needham was captured at Chickamauga and died at Andersonville Prison.³⁷ Casualties in a single battle could be staggering. After Chickamauga, Frank Crowell listed the casualties of the 92nd Illinois for his family:

[S]ome of our boys wer shot. I will tell you who they wer. James J. Guthrie wounded in the arm slightly, William F Campbell through the heal (slight), Edgar S. Lent through the breast seriously. [H]e is in Hospital probbaly in Nashville. John D. M^cSherry was shot through the breast and is Missing and probbaly is dead. Cyrus Eyster from White Rock was shot though the mouth, & he is with the reg. [Illegible] Preston Killed--the fellow Ed and I threshed for in White Rock. [T]hose wer all the killed and wounded that you know.³⁸

The last sentence betrays the suffering of the 92nd Illinois.

No amount of drill or any kind of instruction could have prepared the soldiers for the horrible carnage they witnessed on the battlefield. William Peter had the sad misfortune to witness the deaths of both his brother and a good friend in their first battle, Parker's Crossroads. The friend, George Finch, was the first to die.

[A]fter we had been at the fence about 15 minits a shell struck the bottom rail about 3 feet from where I was standing. [I]t came thro & exploded under George Finch who was lying on his hands & knees just behind me. I turned around, raised him up and carried him back; the shell had torn his legs off above the knee. . . . while I was lying by George, Sammy cralled up to him and exclaimed, Oh my God!³⁹

Afterwards, while fighting in the woods, Sam was wounded in the leg. William did not get to him until the battle was over. "[B]ut, Oh, I was too late. [H]e was to far gone too recognize me; I cound but fall beside him and weep bitter tears. . . . [H]e was struck by a shell . . . it exploded about 20 feet from where he was lying. [I]t struck his legs above the knee, severing them both almost from his body."⁴⁰

Those who were hit but not killed outright in battle frequently had to endure the surgery of the field hospitals. Henry Nurse, who was unable to fight at Kennesaw Mountain (Georgia), described a hospital during a battle. "I never was at a field hospital in the time of battle before. It is awful. The doctors cut and slash among the wounded just as though they were butchering hogs."⁴¹ While most of the wounded would survive, the soldiers did not think the wounded had much of a chance and spoke of them in the past tense. Joseph Ward provides a good example of this attitude, ". . . a shell burst in the head of the collums, a fragment of which struck Sergeant Smith Co. A 39th Ill. in the leg below the knee, fracturing it badly. It has since been amputated. He was a fine fellow."⁴²

Those who were not wounded still experienced a number of close calls when the bullets flew thickly. "So far I have not ben tuched with a bullet yet, but I ashure you that they have Sang Some mournful Songs around my Ears that made me feel like I was hardly Safe in being there, but they was not Entended for me," wrote Thomas Miller.⁴³ Several men had pieces of equipment which they were carrying shot up by the firing. "I had A good many close-calls; thay spoilt my little Coffee pot that was hung on my Belt that displeasd me very mutch to have A Bullet through the middle of it," wrote Day Elmore after the battle of Perryville.⁴⁴ After giving a list of the casualties suffered at Chickamauga, Frank Crowell also told about a number of near misses. "Ruben Edgar was struck with a spent Ball on the right breast John King [shot] through the back of his coat; R B Lockwood through canteen, R J O'Conner and Wm Nicholas through Cartridge box, F H Wagenor a Bayonet shot off and lots of others just the same."⁴⁵ Many soldiers must have been shocked when they discovered that a bullet had just missed them and hit their canteen instead.

Battles were not always deadly or serious; occasionally, the boys got into some situations which were rather humorous when they looked back at them. Consider the "battle" that the 76th Illinois had near Boliver, Tennessee.

John Tallman described the action which took place on one march:

[W]hen the regiment was about twelve miles out the cavelry a head saw three rebles scouts and sent word to col. mack that the enemy was in line of battle right a head. [S]o the col brought the boys up on the double quick after a while when he could get them into line, but, by the time they had got thar, the scouts had got so far off that the cavelry could not catch them. [S]o our boys charged on a picket fence that some said there was rebles behind but they found non . . . you will no doubt hear of this battle and that we were half killed, but thare is nobody limping around here from the effect of it.⁴⁶

Even during actual combat a few humorous scenes were observed. Several months after the battle, Joseph Johnston visited the field at Stones River and recalled some of the events that happened. "There were ammusing scences amidst the hottest fire. Then men were half crazy--One man went to Col. Roffin & gave him an embrace as a tribute to his bravery," he told his brother.⁴⁷ Other times, humor was caused by the grotesque. Robert Burdette, recalling a time he saw a man who did not realize that his fingers were shot off try to pick up his rifle, explained, "Sometimes a tragedy has a ghastly sense of wonderment that is near to grim humor."⁴⁸

Other events in battle were both humorous and discouraging at the same time. Every regiment, and probably every company, had its own shirks and cowards who would not fight. While the ways some played the coward were amusing, the boys were disappointed when those in positions of leadership refused to stand and fight. One excellent example is provided by William Peter.

I wrote home that all our Co behaved well at the battle. Since that I have herd some things which are rather discredibile to our valient Ord. Sg "Carter." It seems that he had obtained a wrong notion as to his duty in a fight and had set down just back of the Co under cover of the house. One of the boys, Wm Young, asked him

what he was doing there, told him not to act the coward, and to come and fight like a man. Cart told him it wasent his place to shoot, but to see that the others done it. I supposed he finally concluded that it wouldnt do to set their, and commenced shooting round the corner. It was mentioned to the Capt, and he said it should be ⁴⁹investigated and if it was so he should be reduced to the ranks.

Most battles lasted a day or two, or perhaps even three, and then the fighting would be over for awhile. However, several times during the Civil War, the troops were in continual combat for prolonged periods of time. Illinois soldiers were greatly involved in two of these operations--Grant's siege of Vicksburg, Mississippi, and Sherman's Atlanta campaign. During these conflicts, the soldiers were in almost continual contact with the enemy, whether it was a series of battles and skirmishes or trench warfare.

Although the daily casualties during the operations were not as high as during most battles, the steady drain of life greatly reduced the ranks. "For nearly three months the Army of Sherman's has been Exposed to the life destroying missiles of the Enemy--night and day, almost incessantly," wrote Levi Ross from near Atlanta in July 1864, "and the daily drain has depleted our ranks and added a surprisingly large list of casualties to the 'Roll of Honor'."⁵⁰ A few weeks later, one of Levi's comrades in the 86th Illinois, Henry Nurse, wrote that "The boys are getting picked off one at a time in the Regiment; we have lost one every day out of our Regiment since we have been here."⁵¹

The siege of Vicksburg was just as deadly; the men were continuously under fire. Sitting in the trenches around the city, Richard Puffer described the situation to his sister:

[A] continual cracking is kept up all around the line; the rebs also keep firing & if a man shows himself in range he is sure to get shot at. [S]hots are continually flying over us & sticking in the bank opposite; men are daly wounded by exposing themselves. [O]ne man was killed last night about 300 yds to our right by

carelessly getting in sight, & a man from our reg was shot through the leg near the same place today.⁵²

At Vicksburg, Allen Geer noticed that as the siege progressed, the firing decreased, but it became more accurate.⁵³

The firing in Georgia in 1864 was constant, though. From the trenches around Dallas, Georgia, Day Elmore wrote "Day times it is one continued Bang, Bang, Bang, Mixed with the hoarse booming of artillery."⁵⁴ The rifle fire was so frequent that some soldiers began to ignore the sounds made by the flying bullets. Levi Ross noted "one becomes indifferent to the sound of these missiles, even though he may be in imminent danger."⁵⁵ Others became so accustomed to the sound, that they were disturbed when the firing ceased. Curtiss Judd wrote in his diary, "bullets whizzing past have become a regular occurrence; am lonesome when deprived even for a few minutes of their song."⁵⁶ Perhaps he was being sarcastic, or perhaps he felt that something was wrong when the firing stopped.

Besides the rifle-fire, the siege operations were accompanied by cannons, especially the large siege guns and mortars. Although the large guns may have looked and sounded terrible, the soldiers discovered that their effects were minimal. While writing to his parents near Atlanta, Day Elmore noted, "just from Atlanta a thirty two pounder [shell] a creaching and Howling but passes over with out doing any damage. . . ."⁵⁷ Richard Puffer told his sister, "Large shells are not so dangerous as most people imagine. The rebs have thrown 250 or 300 shells over our camp from that one mortar in the last week & only killed two men & wounded two or three. . . . One can see a Morter shell & dodge it."⁵⁸

Regardless of their respective lengths, all battles eventually ended, and the survivors were left to pick up the pieces in the aftermath of the fight. "Those who were in the battle can point out places of interest," Joseph

Johnston told his brother, "but there are places that speak for themselves: where the trees are barked by bullets and cut down by cannon balls, where a row of mounds with a rude board marks the graves of the fallen."⁵⁹ After a battle, the dead, the dying and the wounded were left all over the ground. After the battle of Shiloh had ended, the weary men of the 20th Illinois laid down to sleep, "but the groans of the dying & wounded were so loud that sleep was almost impossible."⁶⁰ Sometimes, a battle would end in such a way that the casualties lay in a deadly no man's land, and special arrangements had to be made to remove them. After the repulse of the Federal assault on Kennesaw Mountain, Henry Nurse wrote, "We had a cessation of hostilities today while our men went to get off our dead, for they smelt so bad that they couldn't stand it any longer."⁶¹

After the dead had been buried and the wounded removed to hospitals, the soldiers reflected upon their experiences. Generally, after their first battle, the soldiers commented that it had been nothing like what they expected. "It didn't look like any picture of a battle I ever saw in a book," said Robert Burdette.⁶² Levi Ross gave a more detailed account of his impressions:

I have read of bloody battles and of all the horrors of war, but I must acknowledge that my preconceived ideas of a battle was far short of the reality. The half had never been told me, and I know now that no one can have any true conception of the horrors of war unless they are eye witnesses of the mortal struggle on the ensanguined field, and see with their own eyes the carnage, and hear with their own ears the groans of the dying.⁶³

Although he was a teamster, Ed Crowell became very familiar with the horrors of the battlefield. After he had been in the service for about eight months, he had seen enough to become disgusted with those politicians and rabble-rousers who spoke of war in romantic and idealistic terms. He expressed these feelings to his mother in a beautiful passage:

[Y]ou know there is a great many eloquent speakers that keep themselves as far from the scene of action as they possibly can and preach up to the poore deluded devils about there laying there lives at the foot of there countrys alter and spill the last drop of blood in defense of that noble old flag the emblem of all that is noble and great But d-m them I tink you place them where they could hear the boom of the thirty two pounder[s] as they [belch] forth there deadly shot and shell and the rattle of the musketry as they discharge volly after volley of there leaden hail and as they messengers of death come whistling round there heads I think they would drop that brilliant crest and curl there tail[s] between there legs and sneak of to some save covert where they could meditate and ponder upon the horrors of war for it is not quite so funny when you come to the reality of the thing.⁶⁴

After a soldier participated in his first battle, he was not eager to be in another one, although most would continue to serve with devotion and courage. Thomas Miller, writing after the fall of Fort Donelson, expressed his feelings. "Since I have ben in a battle and afterwards walked over the battlefield field and Seen hundreds of men lieing dead and wounded on the ground it has a bout Satisfied me to live in Peace at home."⁶⁵ Levi Ross noted similar responses among his comrades. "[S]ince they have 'seen the Elephant' they are anxious to return again to the lived ones and the sweet endearments of their prarie homes."⁶⁶

Although they longed to go home after their first battle, most of the soldiers remained in the ranks. Many endured the choking smoke, wild confusion and terrible carnage of numerous battles. Their desire for combat disappeared, but their desire for victory let them continue fighting. Levi Ross spoke for every soldier when he wrote, "how fully I can appreciate the blessings and enjoyments of home and peace. God grant war and rumors of war may soon end, and the awful waste of blood and life be stopped forever."⁶⁷

CHAPTER 8

The Union Forever

After considering the boredom of camp life, the poor food, the long, hard marches, and the horrors of combat, it is appropriate to ask why the soldiers endured the hardships they did. It certainly was not because they could play baseball and cards. The boys had a deep devotion to a cause which they believed was worth the sacrifices they made--the preservation of their beloved Union. On the whole, the boys were not concerned with freeing the slaves--the cause traditionally assigned to the Union troops. Some were ambivalent about abolition, and many strongly opposed it. Since they were the ones who set aside their civilian lives, left families and friends, and faced the storm of fire and metal in battle, their opinions about the reasons for the war were, and still are, more important than those of the politicians and newspaper editors who remained safely at home.

The misconception that the soldiers were fighting to free the slaves has been around for many years. Such a suggestion would have puzzled some of the boys and angered many others. Before President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, the boys did not even associate slavery with the war. In July 1862, Allen Geer noted in his diary, "Had earnest discussions upon the policy of arming negroes to fight our battles for us. I am conscientiously opposed to it in every manner. 1st because it is inhuman, 2nd unprecedented, and 3d because it would be selfish and cowardly on our part to bring a people into this war to fight our battles and lose their lives who have no interest in the result."¹ After Lincoln gave the blacks a reason to be concerned about the war, most soldiers were opposed to the goal of abolition. Of the twenty-nine soldiers examined in this study, only one, Joseph Ward, fully supported emancipation as an objective of the war. In

October 1862, he told his parents, ". . . I have no wish to stay untill this once happy land shall be what it never was befor--free and there shall be no more slaves, no never."²

The other soldiers disagreed with Ward's position. Many disliked abolitionism and hated abolitionists. William Marsh expressed his position, writing, "If the War policy advocated by the New York Tribune & Chicago Tribune was adopted, I for one should give up in dispair. I do despise & hate and Abolitionist almost as bad as a secess."³ He hated the "secess" the most because they were attempting to destroy the Union. Although he opposed slavery, Levi Ross also hated abolitionists, whom he saw as people trying to destroy the nation. "I believe Slavery to be a great curse to any country, and abstractly speaking a huge moral evil and a crime against humanity. But I would not sacrifice my country most dear, and her fair temple of Libery, for the exclusive benefit of the black race." Levi was glad that he was at war, suppressing the rebellion, while the abolitionists stayed home and ranted.⁴

The Emancipation Proclamation was very upsetting to most of the boys. Allen Geer pronounced it a "fearful experiment."⁵ Frank Crowell claimed that it "played the devil with the war," and he was certain that the action would prolong the war.⁶ William Ross of the 40th Illinois gave a detailed account of his reactions, and those of others, to the measure from the time it was issued in September 1862, until after it went into effect in 1863.

Initially the soldiers reacted with much anger to the Proclamation, for they were opposed to freeing the slaves. Writing to his brother shortly after Lincoln announced his Proclamation, William Ross tried to dissuade him from enlisting, telling him, "But for Gods sake do not volunteer til this negro question is settled, for the Devil is going to bee kicked up be for long for the soldiers are Swaring that they will stack there arms, Desert, or go to the

confedert army or any thing be for they will figt to free the negros."⁷

Within a few weeks, however, the soldiers had decided not to desert the cause. "The President's negro Proclamation is getting to bee an old thing. [S]ome of the soldiers is in favor of it, but a great many of them is not, but they can not help them selves. [T]hey are sworn to stand to Abryham, and what he says must bee law and gospel."⁸

By November 1862, the soldiers had come to a grudging acceptance of the Proclamation. Discussion of the matter declined, and the soldiers decided that they would have to accept the new war aims. "The Negro quetion is about dropped, but I think a majority of the Volunteers is against the Presidents Proclimation, but they have about come to the conclussion that they will have to submit to what ever old Abe says," wrote William Ross.⁹

The Emancipation Proclamation remained a dead issue throughout the remainder of 1862. The emotions rose again in 1863 when it went into effect, starting with the mutiny of the 109th Illinois. Lincoln had stated that the Proclamation would go into effect on January 1, 1863. That morning the 109th Illinois mutinied. William Ross saw what happened. "The 109 Illinois Regt . . . was arrested this morning for mutiny. [T]hey Stacked arms and swor they would not fight to free the negroes, and I heare other Regts talk the same way."¹⁰ Later, William reported that the 109th was in Memphis, under guard. "I can not blame the Boys much. I was at Holly Springs when they Stacked there arms; they Said that they was deceived and that they never would fight to free the Negroes."¹¹ According to William, many other soldiers felt deceived. They had enlisted to save the Union and were then told to free the slaves, which they did not want to do.

The 109th was the only Illinois infantry regiment to mutiny because of the Emancipation Proclamation. If, as William Ross claimed, other soldiers

were so upset by the measure, why did others not mutiny or desert? William answered that question himself. In February 1863, he told his father, "There is a great many Soldiers deserting our of the army now, but never shall a man looking in my face tell me I was a deserter. I had rather die a thousand death than to have that throwed up to me."¹² Most of the soldiers had deep senses of personal integrity, honor and duty; they would not desert the army when they had volunteered to fight. Furthermore, they could still accomplish their original and major objective, restoring the Union, even though they had been handed, what was in their minds, an offensive task. Of the twenty-nine, only one, Thomas Miller, deserted, and he apparently did so because of the privations of army life.

While William Ross provides the best narrative of the soldiers' reactions to the Emancipation Proclamation, he was certainly not the only one to notice the lack of support for it among the soldiers. Levi Ross told his father, "you can judge how we feel here in the 86th when I tell you that only 8 men in Co. K [his company] approve the policy and proclamation of Mr. Lincoln. . . . Many of the boys here are in favor of a compromise; some are of the opinion that the Southern Confederacy will soon be recognized by the U.S. Alas, for beloved Republic!!"¹³ Levi was concerned for his country, and, although he hated slavery, he opposed the Proclamation because it further divided the separated nation.

In regard to my own views I will say Amen to this or any measure if I thought it would facilitate in supressing this unholy rebellion, restoring the grand old Union, and punishing treason. But it seems to us soldiers now, that it will have the opposite effect. It will undoubtedly tend to divide the North and more strongly unite the South, hence it will be and element of weakness to us¹⁴ and our cause. For these reasons I deem it an inexpedient act.

Levi clearly shows that restoring the union and abolishing slavery were two separate and possibly opposite goals.

Levi Ross was not the only soldier whose reaction to the Emancipation Proclamation was surprising. Thomas Miller, who opposed abolition, supported the measure because he felt it weakened the South's ability to resist. Thomas explained his position in detail in a lengthy passage:

[T]his Emancipation bill of old Abraham has Caused in Some parts of the army Considerable disturbance and is Called the Lincoln Negro Proclimation. [A]s for my part I Consider it a war Proclimation. I dont think that old abe Ever Entended to free the negroes or Even propose Such a thing. I look at the affair in this way. [H]e considers himself at the head of the Government and that he is Compelled to addopt all Plans that will be Calculated to Restore Peac to our distracted Government. So I think that th[e] President had after So long a time arrived to the Conclusion that the ting that Caused this Great trouble will have to be Removed before this thing Can or will be Settled. I dont think that it is the Desire or wish of Mr. Lincoln to Emancipate the Slaves, but he Sees, and that Plainly to, that we Cannot whip th[e] South and let them hold there Slaves. [I]t is to much like holding them up with one hand and fighting them with the other. I have long Since ben convinced of this fact and have often wondered what wood be done with the negros and havent yet decided Satisfactory in my own mind what wood or Could be done with them. I am So far as myself Concerned as much opposed to the Emancipating of the Slaves as any man in th[e] army or out of it if the Constitution of the United States Could be Restored with out, but at th[e] Present Stage of the Game I am willing to free the last negro that is in the Southern Confederacy but what we Shal Crush out this Read hot Rebellion and Give to all traitors there Just dues and Recompense of Reward.¹⁵

Thomas claims that slavery caused the war; however, the causes of the war are beyond the scope of this study. Certainly, the boys were not interested in freeing the slaves, so it is difficult to conceive of slavery as something they would identify as a cause. What is interesting about Thomas's assessment of the Proclamation is that he showed the same concern for the Union as did Levi Ross, but he arrived at an opposite conclusion. Apparently, the boys' reactions to the measure were based on how they believed it would affect the cause of the Union, regardless of their opinions on slavery.

Most of the boys did not want to free the slaves for one simple reason: they did not like them. In fact, some of the boys hated the blacks and did

not want to see them free. William Marsh was one of those soldiers. From Helena, Arkansas, he wrote to his father, "There are 2 or 3 thousand Negroes in this town. Most of the officers & a great Many privates have Niger servants. I would not have a Negro around me for 10 dollars a month; I almost hate them. If they only Knew enough to stay With their Masters it would be better for them. I can not help be glad that the Negroes are excluded from the state of Ill."¹⁶ Napoleon Bartlett was in complete agreement with William. "Do any new niggers com into town now," he asked his brother, "I hope that they never will see the day that they will be allowed to roam freely over the north. I am for colonizing them & not have a mothers son of them there. I perfectly Detest the sight of them."¹⁷

Other soldiers, while they might not have hated the blacks, believed that they were somewhat less than human. John Given described one as looking like "a recently imported monkey."¹⁸ Austin Andrews was not certain if the blacks were even comparable with monkeys. "Sometimes one can see 30 or 40 little black brats ranging from two to ten years old all playing together wallowing around in the dirt like pigs with the exception that pigs always seeks a shade when the Sun Shines hot but where the Sun Shines hottest they are always to be found."¹⁹ Having determined that they were less intelligent than pigs, Austin wanted to amuse his sister with one. He considered taking a small black child; then he would "box it up with some Potatoe peelings, old shoes and other trash and send it home to see what you would call it."²⁰ Austin was certainly joking about mailing one home, but his attitudes are clear.

Some of the boys were disgusted by any suggestion that blacks were equal to whites. When George Marsh's friend, George Houghton, received a letter from a mutual acquaintance back home, Marsh told his brother about the contents of the letter. "He also made some very affectionate inquiries about

the negro wenches here. Houghton showed it to several of us & it nearly spoiled our dinner."²¹ Black women were almost always referred to as "wenches," indicating that the soldiers did not view them as real women.

William Marsh had mentioned that a number of soldiers had black servants, but these servants were not necessarily liked. Some found their blacks to be abominably lazy. Many of the messes in the 122nd Illinois hired "contrabands" to cook for them; Samuel Peter described the one his mess had: "we have one that is worth about as much as if he was blind, for he hardly ever gets his eyes open."²² Even Levi Ross noted the laziness of the blacks. When detailed to unload a boat at Nashville, he claimed that forty men from his company did more work in one hour than sixty blacks did all day.²³ John Given was even less impressed by the blacks who worked in his company. "[Some] of the niggers we have confiscated are real sharp fellows, while others, and the greater part of them, have not enough sense to live if they were turned loose, except that they could steal a living. They are exceedingly good at that and practice it a great deal."²⁴

John Given's claim that most blacks could not earn a living if they were free was a common claim, and a number of soldiers believed that the blacks were better off as slaves. The slaves that some soldiers saw bore little or no resemblance to those depicted by abolitionists. For instance, they describe the slaves as being well fed. From Helena, Arkansas, William Marsh wrote, "the Nigers all look fat & hearty."²⁵ Frank Crowell wrote about the three-hundred pound black women he saw in Alabama.²⁶ Instead of rags, Allen Geer said he saw slaves wearing "gaudy dresses."²⁷ George Marsh described slave quarters he saw as being comfortable white-washed shanties.²⁸ When he was in Alabama, Lyman Needham said, "I have learnt more about slavery within

the last month than I ever knew before. A great many of them are better off than they would be if they was free."²⁹

Richard Puffer, whose views on slavery are not clear, also felt that the blacks were best left in slavery, because no one would accept them as free people. "The question in my mind is will the people of the north like or treat them any better than their southern bretherin, but I do not propose to discuss that question now," he told his sister.³⁰ He also pointed out the fact that those who wanted to free the slaves had made no plans for bringing them into society. "[N]ot the first thing has been done for their future welfare, but they are left to shift for themselves. [I]f they stay here, they will be made slaves of or worse; if they go north, the same prejudice meets them there."³¹ By recognizing the prejudice, Richard appears to be well-disposed towards blacks; however, he detested the radicals who brought about emancipation.

While most of the boys agreed that the slaves should not be freed, they were more divided on the issue of arming blacks. Austin Andrews was surprised and impressed when he saw a black regiment. He told his sister, "they have an aptness for drill that is astonishing and it gives them a bold, manly appearance which I never expected to see those Southern negroes assume."³²

William Peter supported the idea of black regiments and described the reactions when General Thomas told the soldiers around Corinth, Mississippi, about plans to arm the freed slaves. "At this some began to curse the nigger, but as he proceeded the hearty cheers which rent the air were proof conclusive that the heart of the Army at Corinth was with him. [W]e never hear the old troops say anything against this measure; the opposition comes from those who have'nt marched far enough or fought the rebels long enough to cure their prejudice."³³

William Ross, who had volunteered a year before William Peter, described a much different reaction. In February 1863, Ross first heard about plans to have black soldiers. "I understand they are going to arm the negroes now, but the first Negro that ever I see caring a Musket I am going to shoot him as shoore as they is a god," he wrote.³⁴ About two weeks later he told his father:

Father I bleave I now my duty, but it is heard for me to do it, and now I have to go in to the field and fight beside a Negro. [C]an I do it? [C]an any white man do it? I do not bleave he can without he has got a black heart, and under these sircumstances I can not tell hardly what is best to do. I have sometimes a notion to take my gun to the Captain and tell him I will fight no more, and I could get plenty more to go with me but then I would be arrested for mutiny.³⁵

Obviously, the majority of the boys were not fighting to emancipate the slaves. They were not fighting, as is occasionally suggested, for the money either. The enlisted men's pay was low compared to what they could have made in civilian jobs. As previously mentioned, Day Elmore earned ten dollars a week as a farm hand before he enlisted. Lyman Needham felt that he could have earned even more. "I spend a good deal, probably more than I ought to," he told his brother and sister, "but I did not come into the army to make money, and if I had, I should have certainly found out that it is no place to make money, although if I was not a soldier, I believe I could average \$5⁰⁰ per day."³⁶ Although the Panic of 1859 had created some unemployment in the north, many of the boys probably never considered working for someone else. Most came into the army fresh off the family farm.

One thing the soldiers did want to accomplish in the war was the restoration of peace. After the war was effectively over, Ed Crowell told his mother, "we can return home happy and content, knowing that Peace, which has cost so much precious blood reigns throughout our beloved country."³⁷ As strange as it may seem, peace was a goal mentioned by soldiers even as they

marched off for war. Shortly after he enlisted, Samuel Peter informed his sister, "I am glad today that I am a Souldier, that I among the many am willing to leave Home and friends for the purpose of helping restor peace."³⁸

While going to war to restore peace sounds more like 1984 than 1861, the soldiers did not want just any kind of peace. They desired an honorable peace, which could only be obtained by a victory over the Confederacy. Henry Nurse longed for an end to the war, writing, "War is a dreadful thing. It separates friends of all kinds, never to meet again, but I hope peace will soon come and war will be no more."³⁹ However, when he learned that his uncle favored a cessation of hostilities with the Confederates, Henry wrote, "If Uncle Jimmy don't like my opinion of the peace meetings he must not listen to them, but if they should come down here with such meetings, they would get blowed out in a hurry. There is more treason than loyalty in them."⁴⁰ The boys were not interested in peace without a restored Union.

One of the greatest non-military threats to an honorable peace was the 1864 presidential election. President Lincoln was challenged by General George B. McClellan, a ^Ddemocrat who proposed that the Union negotiate a peace with the Confederacy. Day Elmore, who volunteered at the age of 17, was appalled by McClellan's peace program and was outraged by his supporters. To Day, support for such a platform was inexplicable. Writing with more emotion than clarity, Day nevertheless conveyed his feelings to his parents on the day of the election. His exact words and punctuation were:

[A]s I think of it to day is the day that decides the fate of our "Country." Yes in a few short days we will Know Whether we have been fighting three long years for nought but shame and disgrace, or whether we are to be honored for so doing! But if George B. McLellan be elected & acts as his "Chicag Platform" directs if he does I say then will we the "soldiers" take the rains of this Government in our own hands and "Go on with the war" until that dear old flag whoes fortunes we have followed since the fall of "Sumpter" is floating from every house top and all the lesser buildings in the so called "Confed" States! No we want no such

"peace" as "Little Mac" and his "Chicago Platform" would give us and now I do not see why citizens in the North enjoying all the comforts of civil life I do not see I say why it is that they continue to Grumble and complain as long as we Soldiers men who do the fighting and endure the hard ships with out complaint Now why is it that they wish to disgrace us by a dishonorable peace are they "blind or cant they see" the wall of human Bodies standing between them and there comfortable Homes deprived of all the comforts that they daily enjoy and yet they Cry for "Peace" no matter how dishonorable of disgraceful. Oh if they could only see it as we see it and if they only loved their Country as we love ours "George B. Mac" would be where a last years snow storm is to day no where.⁴¹

Levi Ross shared Day Elmore's emotion and hated the notion of a dishonorable peace. Levi was ashamed that twenty-two men in his company voted for McClellan. This was particularly shameful, since only eighteen other men in the rest of the regiment voted for McClellan. Like Day, Levi was also perplexed by such a choice for President.

Is it possible that a soldier after serving in this victorious army nearly three years can cast his vote for men whose platform declares that we have fought and struggled in vain, and just as we are about to realize the great reward of our labors and sacrifice, they cry for our "immediate cessation of hostilities." Shame on such party worshiping "patriots". . . . They are cowards, fools, traitors, strictly, justly truthfully speaking. I condemn them. I despise their principles. Perhaps I'm too enthusiastic, but I can't help it when men feign so much loyalty and love of country, and then go deliberately and vote for every thing that is corrupt, treasonable, and destructive of all that a free and enlightened people should hold sacred and preserve unsullied.⁴²

Throughout the war, southern sympathizers in the north posed a threat to the chance of an honorable peace. The soldiers hated these "Copperheads" who they believed prolonged the war. Cyrus Eyster described his hatred for the Copperheads, telling his cousin:

It is them that adds fuel to the flames of rebellion. It is to them that the South now looks for help as a last and declining ray of success. But we will attend to them when our work is done here. Mark my word for it . . . there is a fearful retribution awaiting them. Go where you will among the soldiers in the Army of the Cumberland and you can hear them swear and avow vengeance upon the "Copperheads" or northern peace makers.⁴³

The Copperheads, and especially their chief spokesman, Clement Vallandigham, were the people most despised by the boys.

While Cyrus Eyster and others vowed vengeance on the northern traitors, some other soldiers believed that time in the army would cure the Copperheads of their mistaken views of the war. Conscription was the cure for Copperheads. At least Frank Crowell believed so. "[D]ont this conscript act make some of them stick their eyes out," Frank asked his father, "wouldnt it make me feel good to see some of them Copperheads marching along with a good old 60 pound Knapsack, 60 rounds of cartridge, 2 days rations, canteen, and gun on their Backs. I guess they would change their tune."⁴⁴ Lyman Needham shared the same sentiments. He wrote to his brother and sister and told them, "I hope ere long they [the Copperheads] will be obliged to Shoulder a Musket and pace the Sentinel's beat, or face battle in its most fierce array, and I rather guess they will be sorry for the prolongation of the war, which they alone have caused. [T]heir talk does not discourage the soldiers so much, but it encourages the Rebels."⁴⁵

Levi Ross believed that drastic events were required to cure the Copperheads of their treason. When General Robert E. Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia invaded Pennsylvania in June 1863, Levi applauded the movement, hoping that the realities of war would turn the Copperheads against the Confederates. He explained his views to his parents, writing:

I will say that I rejoice & hope Lee will invade all the Copperhead territory of those border free-states. I think a little smell of gun powder & a good taste of the bitter realities of war will have a salutary effect upon their treason loving souls. I want no innocent women & children to suffer, but those God-provoking, hell deserving "Copperheads"-- "Vallandinghammers", I fain would see weltering in their own gore,--The Devil ought to be ashamed of them.⁴⁶

While the soldiers wished various fates upon Vallandigham and the Copperheads, they were often confused when southern sympathizers were actually

punished. General Burnside's suppression of the Chicago Times, a Copperhead paper critical of the Lincoln administration, is an example. Although the boys hated the position of the Times, Allen Geer reported that they were "pained to see arbitrary military power subverting Civil Law in Illinois."⁴⁷ Such action was alien to the form of government the boys were fighting to preserve. They might have detested the Copperheads, but they knew that the Copperheads had rights, too. The boys became even more confused when Lincoln repealed Burnside's order and allowed the Times to continue publishing. "I don't see why 'Abe' saw fit to revoke that order of Burnside, suppressing the publication of that rotten sheet the Chicago Times, but I dare say it is all right, or he would not have done so," concluded Lyman Needham.⁴⁸

The reason for desiring an honorable peace was to restore the Union and make it whole again. The vast weight of the evidence indicates that the goal and concern of the soldiers was the restoration of the Union and the preservation of what they held to be the best government in the world. After he reenlisted as a veteran, Day Elmore expressed his goals and determination to his father. "No, Pa, while the Old and tried 36 are in the field fighting for that flag and this Good old Union Will Day Elmore give up the contest if God Spares My life."⁴⁹

The soldiers believed that the Confederates were assailing the government and threatening to destroy the Union and the Constitution. While serving in a three month regiment in the summer of 1861, David King told his sister, "I ought to go to school next winter, but if the rebbles still persist in overthrowing our country, I think it is my duty to throw my strength against them. . . ."⁵⁰ William Peter told his sister, "I dont think any one loves home and friends better than I do, and this is the reason I am fighting--to save our Government, for it is by its protection that we are to enjoy home &

friends."⁵¹ The boys felt that their entire way of life would be changed if the Confederates succeeded.

The boys were not just fighting to preserve their way of life and their government; they wanted it to be preserved for future generations. Thomas Miller stated that he wanted the "government [to] be perpetuated for Ever."⁵² Levi Ross explained his feeling with greater detail. "We can conquer the south and we will do it if it costs every last dollar and the flower of the loyal American people! This is a duty that every philanthropist and patriot owes to posterity. With the death of our proud republic, and the overthrow of this Government dies the sacred liberties and constitutional freedom of the American People."⁵³ The Union and the way of life it protected was to be preserved at all costs.

The boys were strongly devoted to the preservation of their beloved Union, and they hated all who appeared to threaten it. Not only were they opposed to abolition because they did not like the blacks, they also detested abolitionists who seemed to be destroying the nation. After discussing the issue of emancipation with his sister, Richard Puffer sarcastically concluded, "fanaticism must have its say if it destroys the country."⁵⁴ Other soldiers also denounced the abolitionists as fanatics. Even though he hated slavery, Levi Ross hated the abolitionists even more. "We know that there are many 'one ideaed' fanatics who fain would sacrifice every last white man (save themselves) and every dollar in the country and sometimes I think they would even throw the country in too, if they could thereby secure the equality of the black race."⁵⁵ While Levi believed that all should be sacrificed to save the Union, he felt that emancipation was not very important. In fact he felt that the issue of slavery should be dropped if the Union could be preserved.

Politically, the boys were moderate. They did not trust either extreme, and felt that both Copperheads and abolitionists were dangerous. "I have no sympathy for the fanatics of either party," Levi Ross told his sister, "Thank Heaven I belong to the Union party and believe it my duty to denounce the Extreme Elements as disloyal and dangerous men."⁵⁶ Henry Nurse made a very interesting comment when he heard a rumor that John Fremont, an abolitionist, might run for President in 1864. He told his father, "There is some talk of old Fremont running for President--any one that would vote for him would vote for Vallandigham."⁵⁷ Although Fremont and Vallandigham represented opposite ends of the political spectrum, Henry's comment made sense. The extreme elements were equally dangerous and threatening to the Union.

As the war dragged on, some soldiers began to feel that they would not succeed in restoring the Union. In December 1862, after a number of federal reverses, Lyman Needham expressed his doubts. "[N]ow there is no prospect of [the war] ever ending, except by a concession that would not be satisfactory to us all that have been in the field for nearly 18 months. [W]e have sacrificed a great deal, and are ready and willing to do more if we can only feel as though it was doing any good."⁵⁸ A few became very disillusioned with the army and felt like giving up. Richard Puffer told his sister, "I will not attempt to discribe my disgust for the army; it is one great swindle. . . . There is no such thing as patriotism in this army."⁵⁹

Others were more dedicated to their cause and did not give up hope so easily. William Peter told his parents, "I cannot weigh, as some of the boys do, my own happiness against the happiness and Destiny of my Country."⁶⁰ Day Elmore was another self-sacrificing soldier whose patriotism never failed. Reenlisting before his first term of service was over, he wrote, "I can not express my self so I will only say that my whole soul is wrapt up in this our

Countrys Caus. I ought to be at school, but I feel that I am only doing My duty to my self and You Pa."⁶¹

Whether their patriotism was weak or strong, the boys were determined to achieve an honorable peace for the Union. Although the majority were not interested in, or were even angrily opposed to, the emancipation of the slaves, they were dedicated to a cause which they believed was of vastly greater importance: the preservation for all time of the Constitution of the United States and the Union it formed. Their commander-in-chief expressed their goals best when, in dedicating the cemetery at Gettysburg, he said, "that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."⁶²

CHAPTER 9

A Brothers' War

The soldiers were fighting to preserve the Union. Consequently, they viewed the Confederates as vile traitors who were bent on destroying the Union and all that went with it. However, for the boys, the Confederates were unlike the enemies faced by most soldiers. The Southerners were Americans, too, and they all shared a common language and national heritage. "We were brethren a little while estranged," was how Robert Burdette described the situation.¹ The hatred and loathing the boys felt for traitors was mixed with the respect they held for brave foes. Nor could the Illinois boys hate the whole South. They generally liked the climate and the land, and they were infatuated with the pretty belles. These confused emotions led to a confused but terribly bloody war.

Some of the boys did display a great amount of hatred for the Confederates. Joseph Ward was one such soldier. He referred to the Confederates as "the cursed of God's creation," "inhuman devils," and "infernal rebels."² Joseph was particularly upset by the Confederates' use of land mines during the siege of Charleston. "[T]hey had burried powder barrels filled with combustical mater and it so arranged that to step on a peice of board directly above it, it would explode thus blowing the unfortunate one up in the air to come down a disfigured shape of flesh & bones."³ Such combat was deemed unethical and caused Joseph to think of the Southerners as less than human.

Levi Ross was not very complimentary in his assessment of his enemy, either. He called the Confederates "our implacable, desperate, blood-thirsty enemy," and claimed that they were on the side of the Devil.⁴ When Sherman's army reached Savannah, Georgia, in December 1864, Levi was eager to cross the

Savannah River into South Carolina and punish the birth-place of the Confederacy. "We would carry the bayonet in one hand and the torch in the other, leaving root nor branch until the parent state of disunion and secession felt the just retribution for her manifold crimes."⁵

Some soldiers did not display a real hatred for their enemy, but did show contempt and regarded the Confederates as inferior. When guarding some prisoners, John Given said, "They are [the] most miserable, contemptable set of men that I ever looked on."⁶ Ed Crowell initially had a low opinion of the men he would later come to respect. After a failed Confederate attempt to retake Fort Donelson in 1863, Ed wrote, "It was a pretty heard sight to see them drag the dead Rebbles and throw them into a hole four and five togeather, but I think it is as good as they deserve."⁷

One of the reasons for the contempt the boys had for the Southerners was the perceived ignorance and backwardness of the Southern people. Joseph Ward called the inhabitants of the Shenandoah Valley, "the most ignorant set of men in this little world."⁸ When camped near Bridgeport, Alabama, Day Elmore noticed the lack of education among the citizens. "[T]he people, what few thare is left, are very Ignorant. I have not seen A school house in the state, and I have talked with men of what is called higher and lower classes & thay all have the same odd expressions, do not seem to know any thing About what is going on Around them."⁹ Day's observations are amusing, for the Southerners must have thought that he had some odd expressions too.

Some of the other soldiers were amazed at the lack of initiative among the Southern people. William Peter was pleased to learn that, in 1863, some people in Tennessee were beginning to think about rejoining the Union, but he was dismayed by their slow movement. "Tennisee needs men to take the lead, and then they could do something, but the men who used to lead are all in the

reb army, and their people here as a class are very ignorent, and they dont know to act for themselves like the people in the North."¹⁰ Levi Ross believed that the ignorance and lack of initiative among the Southerners caused them to be backward and behind the north in development. He thought that Tennessee was a wonderful state with many resources, but it was 100 years behind the northern states.¹¹

At least one soldier disagreed with the notion that the Southerners were ignorant and inferior. Allen Geer, who spent much time talking with Southerners near his various camps, was impressed with the people of Dixie. Of the citizens of Oxford, Mississippi, he said, "They are a refined, educated people."¹² They offered to loan him some books, but he declined because he did not know when he would be required to leave town and did not want to take any of the books with him.¹³ Another time, he and some others found a deserted house near Corinth, Mississippi, and took some books and culinary articles from it. "The people were well informed as the books show," he noted.¹⁴

Another cause for contempt was the belief that the Confederates were cowards. Initially, many of the boys thought that the Confederates would not fight but would run away at first sight. Before he had been in any major engagement, Joseph Ward claimed that the Confederate soldiers did not fight "like men but they run at the first fire like coward[s]."¹⁵ Confederate partisans who used hit-and-run tactics gave some soldiers their impressions of Southern courage. When trying to catch some partisans in Missouri, Edwin Sackett told his family, "they are a pack of cowards; they are like a thief in the night. [I]f they are persued by troops the cut & run. . . ."¹⁶

The belief that the Confederates were cowards did not last long among most soldiers. After being in a hard fight and hearing the spine-chilling

Rebel Yell, the boys would learn that their foes were no cowards. Many of the boys acknowledged the courage of the Confederates and came to respect them as tough opponents. After fighting at Shiloh, William Ross told his father, "never did I see Such men to fight (When ever you heare a man say they wont fight tell him he knows nothing about them) for wen our canons would mow them down by hundreds, others would fall in and take there place and fight like demons."¹⁷ Even Levi Ross had to admit "The Rebel Army is heroic and powerful, and the Rebel Generals are skillful and determined."¹⁸ Levi may have hated the Confederates for their opinions, but he respected their courage and determination.

Robert Burdette and one of his comrades had an experience after the battle of Corinth which convinced them of the courage and devotion of the Confederate soldiers. They were detailed to bury the Confederate dead that were left on the ground, and they found a Texan who had only a handful of roasted acorns for rations. Robert's partner looked at him and said, "And he's been fighting like a tiger for two days on that hog's forage. . . . [T]his is what I call patriotism."¹⁹ Robert described how this experience affected him.

I never changed my opinion of the cause of the Confederacy. I was more and more devoted to the Union as the war went on. But I never questioned the sincerity of the men in the Confederate ranks. I realized how dearly a man must love his own section who would fight for it on parched acorns. I wished that his love and patriotism had been broader, reaching from the Gulf to the Lakes-- a love for Union rather than for a state. But I understood him. I hated his attitude toward the Union as much as ever, but I admired the man. And after Corinth, I never could get a prisoner half-way to the rear and have anything left in my haversack.

Although the boys detested the attitudes and principles of their enemies, they learned to respect the Confederates as brave fighters who were strongly devoted to their cause.

An important reason for the respect and understanding between the two sides was the fact that they were all Americans. They spoke the same language and had similar cultural backgrounds. As Robert Burdette said, they were brothers. Some of the opposing soldiers were brothers in the literal sense. Richard Puffer described an incident that occurred at Vicksburg when the fighting stopped while Pemberton sent a message to Grant. "[H]undreds of the boys on both sides met between the lines & had quite a sociable. . . . several brothers met & any quantity of cosins. It was a strange scene."²¹

While Richard Puffer may have thought that such a meeting was strange, the boys would occasionally meet with Confederates when they had a chance. The Confederate soldiers provided the boys with a chance to meet new people and perhaps to trade food and other articles. Henry Nurse told of a gathering of troops in Georgia. "Their skirmishers and ours had a great time the other day. [A]bout two hundred of them from each side met in the middle of an oat field and stacked their arms and sat down and had a good long talk. [O]ur men traded coffee for tobacco and hardtack for cornbread; some traded hats and had a good time generally."²² While the Confederate soldiers were good conversation and trading partners, not all of the boys necessarily liked them. Day Elmore told his parents about some gatherings during the Atlanta campaign and added, "I do not love them so I could not take them by the hand as some of the Boys did."²³

Sometimes, obstacles prevented the boys from getting together with the Confederates, but if they were within shouting distance they would still be able to talk. Frequently the two opposing sides would keep up a good natured banter, joking about the war. While at Bridgeport, Alabama, waiting for a bridge to be built across the Tennessee River to replace the one the Confederates had burned, the boys of the 36th Illinois spoke with the

Confederates on the other side of the stream. Day Elmore reported, "we have great times talking with them and many a Rich joke is passed."²⁴ The 42nd was present with the 36th, and Lyman Needham told what some of the jokes were like. "We asked the Rebs where Bragg was, and they answered Safe in Virginia. We asked them who burned the bridge, and the answer came Some damn fool. They want to change papers with us, and when asked if they would give us the 'Rebel' for the 'Union', the[y] answered, no damn the Union, give us a Chicago Times."²⁵

Sometimes all the talking and joking would replace shooting. Frank Crowell described the situation that developed along a stretch of the Tennessee River in the winter of 1864. "[W]e are joust on the shore of the Tenn, and the rebs are on the opposite shore, plenty of them. [W]e do not shoot; it is the best way. [W]e talk with them all we want to. [A] Liut (Rebel) Halloed over and says you hadent shoot Cannons at us. . . . [W]e asked them why not. [H]e said we would shoot through the Confederacy and Kill our own men."²⁶ During the winter, when there was little activity, such behavior was not damaging to the war effort, but officers had to prevent fraternization during active campaigns. During the siege of Vicksburg, orders were issued that prohibited talking with the Confederates.²⁷

Since the boys were not always eager to fight the men they joked with across the lines, officers tried to prevent their men from socializing with the Confederates. While they could keep their troops from speaking with active Confederates, officers could not stop them from talking with the prisoners they captured. Ed Crowell spoke with some the 92nd captured in Kentucky and found them to be "saussy." He said that the Confederates claimed that they could not be defeated, and, at that point in the war, Ed was inclined to agree with them.²⁸ Richard Puffer talked with some Confederates

captured near Jackson, Tennessee, and both sides admitted that they were tired of the war.²⁹

Like Robert Burdette, a number of the boys felt sorry for their prisoners and often shared rations with them. Henry Nurse told his father that he "would rather feed than fight them" and hoped that the Confederates would surrender more quickly so that the war would end.³⁰ Even Levi Ross, who despised the Confederates, took pity on hungry prisoners. When he was in Nashville, he saw some prisoners captured at Stones River, and he divided his rations among them.³¹

Regardless of their opinions of the Confederate soldiers and citizens, most of the boys loved the Southern land. Dixie had a climate which the Illinois boys found quite agreeable especially in the fall and winter. The winters in the South were generally much milder than those in Illinois. Even in late November 1862, John Given and his comrades were able to go about their camp in Tennessee without jackets.³² Levi Ross was amazed to see green grass and flowers in bloom in January and told his parents, "Three days is all the winter we have had in Tennessee."³³ Ed Crowell wrote about the Southern winter in glowing terms. "Oh Mother, you never saw as pretty weather as we have been haveing the past week. [I]t is the most deliteful weather I ever saw, and the birds are makeing the woods melodious with ther songs. [I]t is so warm that I am seting out doors to write in my shirt sleeves and never was more comfortable in my life."³⁴

The Southern spring was considered pleasant in terms of temperature; however, the boys were not pleased with all the rain. "You wanted to know how the weather is here," Ed Crowell wrote to his mother in March 1863, "it is very nice when it dont rain, but is rains a good deal of the time. When we have a warm day it is as warm as may in Illinois."³⁵ Ed's brother, Frank,

concurred. He told his father, "it is very pleasant weather down here when it dont rain, but it rains considerable."³⁶

Dixie's summer met with mixed reviews from the Illinois boys. Allen Geer described the summer weather as "extremely hot and suffocating."³⁷ Joseph Johnston disliked the heat and claimed that it made him lazy and also gave him prickly heat.³⁸ The southern heat could be deadly at times. Several men in Levi Ross's brigade died of sunstroke during a review parade ordered by Colonel Daniel McCook in September 1862. Levi said "our northern Illinois boys sunk under the burning blaze of a Kentucky sun."³⁹

A few of the boys did find the summers agreeable, however. In June 1862, when the 36th Illinois was near Corinth, Mississippi, John Sackett told his brother that "The hot weather of the Gulf States agrees with me first rate."⁴⁰ As the summer wore on, the Mississippi heat began to get uncomfortable for John, and in August he told his brother that it was "hot enough to roast niggers."⁴¹ George Marsh enjoyed the South's climate year-round and wrote, "Dixie is a grand place to stay during the winter & suits me first rate in the summer."⁴²

"[T]his is the hansomest place you ever see," wrote John Tallman about La Grange, Tennessee.⁴³ The boys were frequently very impressed with the towns and plantations of the South. While plantations were new to them, the towns in Dixie must have been different from those of Illinois. Joseph Johnston, a native of Chicago, was enchanted by the town of Athens, Alabama. "It is a place of home-like-contented looking beauty, a perfect garden of roses & flowers whose delicate perfume fills every corner of the place. You walk the streets and every garden sends out its peculiar scent according to the kind & quantity of flowers . . . Taken all together, Athens is the prettiest & best looking town I have yet seen."⁴⁴ Likewise, Ed Crowell was charmed by Chapel

Hill, North Carolina. Camped there at the war's end, Ed described the town's beauty to his mother:

[T]he place that we are now camped in is adapted as well to the comfort and pleasure of a tired and wornout soldier as could of been selected. [I]t is located on a high tract of land surrounded by a beautiful and fertile country and the town is kept clean and tidy. The houses are all set back from the street and completely sheltered from the scorching sun by the wide spreading branches of the forest oak and elm which constitutes the principle shade trees of the town. And then the yards are all tastifuly layed out and decorated by every specie and kind of ⁴⁵plant, flower and shrub that can be raised in this country. . . .

Most of the boys had probably never seen a plantation until they went South as soldiers. They generally reacted positively toward the plantations, although some were awe-struck while others thought that they were merely quaint. William Marsh simply thought that they were beautiful and was fascinated by their abundance. "Yesterdays March Was through a beautiful Country," he told his father, "large plantations, beautiful houses, Were to be seen all along the road."⁴⁶

Joseph Johnston thought that the plantations he saw around Athens, Alabama, looked peaceful and relaxing. "[E]ven round some of the most elegant houses, the fence is only white washed; this gives the place the appearance, as if it would say 'here we all are at home, in our every day dress, not caring if the neighbors see us so because they are just as we are and not in visiting trim'."⁴⁷ Frank Crowell, on the other hand, was dumbfounded by a large plantation he saw in Tennessee. "[W]e are camped on a plantation of 15 hundred acres; there is 15 Nigger houses and the Old mans that ownes it. [H]is house cost 65 thousand dollars. I wont try to discribe it because I cant find language to do so, and the garden is about ten acres and is a perfect eaden. [I]t is laid off in walks and so many flowers and plants it will make your [eyes] stick out."⁴⁸

The gardens, whether on plantations or around small houses, were well liked by the boys. John Tallman reported to his sister about the gardens he saw while in Dixie. "I wish you could come down to Memphis and see all the pretty houses and gardens and dore yards, with flowers and evergreens of all kinds in them."⁴⁹ Another time, he described a garden he saw near Natchez, Mississippi and pronounced it "one of the handsomeist gardings I think that ther is in the United States."⁵⁰ Frank Crowell told his mother about a rose he saw in Franklin, Tennessee. "Mother there is a rose I saw in town; it is called the seven sisters. [I]t is a creeping vine, and it is the prettiest thing that I ever saw. [T]he roses grow in clusters and one will be white and one red, blue and every color you can think of. I will try and Bring home a root."⁵¹ Although their comments about gardens were almost always directed to mothers or sisters, the boys seem to have been genuinely interested in them. A stroll through a garden provided a pleasant departure from soldier life.

Given the agreeable weather and pleasant surroundings found in the South, it is not surprising that a number of soldiers declared that they would like to live in Dixie after the war. George Marsh called Tennessee a "splendid magnificent country" which he would never leave if he had been born there. However, he did not like the inhabitants of the state, finding them all to be "aristocrats or slaves." He would have preferred living with a "better kind of folks."⁵² Ed Crowell shared George's views on Tennessee. "Mother, I tell you Dixey is not the worst place in the world if the secesh do own it. [I]t is a beautiful country, and they have fine buildings here to, and I like the climate better than I do in Ill. I think I should like living here if the people were such as they are in the northern states, but they are not."⁵³ John Given, however, disagreed. He found Tennessee to be better than Illinois and said that anything could be grown there.⁵⁴

Although his brother did not like the inhabitants of the state, Frank Crowell decided that he should live in Tennessee. "Mother Tenn. is a splendid country. I think I shall marry and settle here when the war is over; there is some pretty Girls down here and darned fine Land."⁵⁵ Lyman Needham was another who considered living in Tennessee. When camped near Nashville, he wrote, "I think I shall make it my home in Tenn or Ala. as I have perfectly fell in love with the Country, as well as the young ladies."⁵⁶ Ed Crowell liked Tennessee but did not like the idea of living with Southerners. However, when he came to Georgia, he decided that such neighbors would not be terrible. "Mother, We are in as pretty country now as I have seen since I left home. I think I should like to live here in peacable times and I wouldnt mind haveing some of these little Rebs to keep house for me," he wrote from northern Georgia.⁵⁷

A few soldiers had some reservations about living in the South. Joseph Ward liked the Shenandoah Valley, but he said he would live there only if the government provided him with a farm.⁵⁸ Day Elmore was one who did not like Dixie at all and would not live there under any condition.⁵⁹

Both Frank Crowell and Lyman Needham mentioned women as a reason for wanting to live in the South, and, indeed, the boys were charmed by the lovely Southern belles. Frank Crowell, who kept an eye out for attractive women everywhere, was particularly delighted with the girls of Chapel Hill, North Carolina. He told his mother that there were "some of the Pretiest Girls their you ever saw. [T]hey all seem to be very rich. [I]t is quite amusing to see them talk; they do it so fast."⁶⁰ Apparently these women did not speak with the famous Southern drawl.

A number of the boys liked to visit with the Southern girls whenever they had the time. When his regiment was stationed at Nashville, Curtiss Judd made

acquaintances with several of the city's belles. Curtiss was sad when he had to leave the city and wrote in his diary, "a long farewell to Nashville--Oh Tenn, my Tenn--how I love the[e] & thy fair maidens."⁶¹ Ed Crowell managed to meet women who lived along the routes he took with his wagon, hauling food to his company. Once, during the Atlanta campaign, he told his mother, "I was out about six mile yesterday. I got all the sweet milk I could drink and all the apples and watermelons that I could eat besides haveing a pleasant chat with a number of pretty girls, so you see soldiering is not as bad as it might be after all."⁶² Frank once became attracted to a woman he met in Georgia who sold pies to the boys and looked like his sister-in-law. "Father, you Must tell Put [his brother] that their is a little Widow down here that looks just like Mary. I never Saw Sisters look so near alike. She is quite takative and Smart. I have to go and See her every day."⁶³ While she may have reminded Frank of home, he was no doubt primarily interested in the fact that she was a woman.

The soldiers took particular notice of blonde women--"yellow girls." When near Courtland, Alabama, Lyman Needham reported, "There is some very pretty yellow girls near here."⁶⁴ "Yellow girls" were occasionally subjects of soldiers' songs. Frank Crowell wrote about them in his song "I'm Off For Charlston" (see Chapter 4 for the lyrics).⁶⁵ Henry Nurse once included the following verse in a letter to his father:

Oh de yaller gals de gal for me
De gal dey call susanna
Oh she's de gal dat's got my heart
Way down in Alabama.

Since Henry had not been to Alabama, he was not referring to any particular woman, but the verse shows his interest in blondes.

Some boys became so enamoured with particular Southern belles that they married during the war. Austin Andrews said that two men in his regiment

married women from Corinth, Mississippi, despite the efforts of their officers to stop the weddings. The officers felt that the boys would not claim their wives when the regiment had to leave town.⁶⁷ Austin never said what did occur after the weddings.

Of course, there were those soldiers who were not impressed by Southern women, and, in all fairness, there probably were some belles who were not impressive. William Peter did not think much of the women he met at a dance. "Co C are having a dance today," he reported to his sister, "there are fifteen or twenty of the fair sex who have come in to the dance. . . . There are none of them very good looking or intelligent either in my opinion."⁶⁸

One habit which the boys discovered was sometimes engaged in by Southern women which disappointed them was the use of tobacco. Henry Nurse claimed that smoking and chewing was common among both sexes and all ages in Dixie.⁶⁹ John Tallman found the use of tobacco disgusting and told his sister:

[T]here are some nice looking girls, but they will chew tobacco, Sweet little things. Dont you think that "I" for instance would look or rather make a nice show riding along in a carrage with a young lady, me spitting tobacco juice out of one side of the carrage and she out of the other. [T]hen we would each of us take a cigar and have a ⁷⁶real old fashioned smoke to gether; wall aint that nice, Oh Cow.

Austin Andrews was completely mystified by another form of tobacco consumption practiced by the women. He described the procedure, called "dipping," to his sister.

The ladies of The Sunny South has a habit of using tobacco that heads anything that ever I witnessed. They take Scotch, Snuff or fine cut tobacco (I never examined it) and mix it with water in a basin (a small tin box which they carry in their pocket) for the express purpose, and then with what looks like a stick with a rag wrapt on the end of it they dip into the mixture and put it in to their mouths apparantly with the same relish that one would a stick of sugar candy. [A]fter sucking it for awhile and rolling it around in their mouth as a child would a chicken bone, they replace it in the basin and spit around over the floor with as much gusto as an old ⁷¹tobacco chewer; in a short time the same old swab is sucked again.

Some soldiers had rather extensive contact with the people of the South. Those who did meet with the Southerners found that the famous Southern Hospitality was the rule. Henry Upton of the 104th Illinois wrote to his friend, John Marsh, the brother of George Marsh, and told him about his impressions of the Southerners. "I have been much deceived in them. Instead of finding them Barbarous in their customs and especially in their treatment of their slaves; I find them courteous & friendly."⁷² A number of the boys spent time visiting with the young ladies of Dixie, but a few took time to meet with other citizens as well. Levi Ross, for one, visited the widow of President James K. Polk when he was in Nashville. He enjoyed her company and said that she possessed "dignified bearing and considerable personal beauty."⁷³

Allen Geer was one who readily availed himself to the hospitality he was offered. When he was stationed at Jackson, Tennessee, he befriended the Hurt family and called on them frequently. The Hurts were not northern sympathizers or Unionists, but were ardent Confederates. Allen was sociable none-the-less and was impressed with Mrs. Hurt. He once noted in his diary, "Called on Mrs. Hurt, an accomplished lady; she maintained her position for Southern Rights with ability."⁷⁴ Allen also found the citizens of Oxford, Mississippi, to be hospitable towards the Illinoisans. "The people here are very friendly and yet devoted to the rebel cause," he wrote.⁷⁵ As with the Hurts of Jackson, Allen liked to visit the families of Oxford. One time he wrote in his diary, "Visited a very respectable Southern family and was well treated. Had a discussion over the war, all in a good humor although we differed greatly in opinion."⁷⁶

Other soldiers were forced into contact with Southerners less voluntarily, but they still found the people to be friendly. In the first

years of the war, before the horrors of Andersonville and Rock Island were endured by prisoners, captured soldiers were treated in a much more civil manner. Prisoners were generally paroled and sent back to their own lines. Paroled prisoners were under honor not to fight until they were formally exchanged.⁷⁷ This policy led to some rather strange events. Allen Geer was once captured at Raymond, Mississippi, when he was in a hospital, recovering from a wound. The 20th Mississippi Mounted Infantry rode in to town, captured the hospital, paroled their prisoners, and rode back out without firing a shot.⁷⁸

Most of the prisoners generally spent a little time with their captors before they were paroled, and the boys said they were well treated. When much of the 104th Illinois was captured by John Morgan's Confederates, Henry Upton managed to miss being taken. He later spoke with his paroled comrades and reported their experiences. "All of the prisoners speak of [Morgan] as being courteous and friendly."⁷⁹ William Marsh was wounded and left on the field at the battle of Chicasaw Bluffs. The Confederates sent him to one of their hospitals, where he wrote to his family, "Have been as Well treated as I could have been in our own hospitals. We have good Wheat bread, Beef & Pork, Tea & Coffee, plenty to eat. We have good Nurses."⁸⁰

Faced with an enemy who could invite their foes into their homes and treat them as guests, some soldiers wondered if war was the way to settle the problems dividing the nation. Levi Ross once expressed his thoughts on the uselessness of war. "Father, if this war is ever ended, it will not be effected by fighting. You know not the spirit of our enemy. We may over run and conquer the would be Confederacy, but we never can whip or coerce the people back to friendly feelings and relations with us."⁸¹ William Peter disagreed. Shortly after the war had ended, he told his mother, "I wish I had

a paper to send you that you might see how the Ed's talk about 'One Country,' 'Our Flag' &c. It shows how false have been the predictions that if we did conquer the South they never could be reconciled. [W]hy it is just like whipping a child till it is conquered. It loves you all the better."⁸²

Whether or not the war settled the problems is open to debate, but the problems dividing North and South were arbitrated by war--a very bloody war. Despite feelings of respect, despite admiration of the South's climate and land, and despite the hospitality, the more than 600,000 casualties attest to the great animosity between the two sides. The Civil War was often strange and confusing; the two sides hated each other during battle but could talk, joke and trade when the shooting stopped.

The Illinois boys were all individuals. Some like Joseph Ward hated the Southerners; others like Allen Geer could not hate them. Most others fell in between these two attitudes. In general, the Illinois boys found the South to be a beautiful land with a pleasant climate. Dixie was inhabited by pretty girls and kind citizens. It was the home of the brave and honorable soldiers the boys faced in battle. It was also the home of secession, division and, in the minds of the boys, treason, and this they hated.

CHAPTER 10

State Sovereignty, National Unity

"Well Father, it takes Ill to make soldiers and fighting men," wrote Day Elmore to his father in New York.¹ The boys were not just Union soldiers; they were Illinois soldiers. They displayed a deep pride in their state and regiments and held some other parts of the North in contempt. Although they were fed and clothed much the same as any other federal troops, the Illinois boys saw themselves as different from, indeed better than, other Unionists. Since this is a study of Illinois soldiers, an examination of their distinguishing characteristics, both perceived and real, is necessary.

To begin with, the Illinois boys were not Yankees, regardless of what Southerners called them. Yankees were from the North East, and the boys referred to Easterners as Yankees. Joseph Ward was in one of the very few Illinois regiments to serve out east, and he often called the eastern troops around him Yankees.² After enduring the presence of some New York regiments for a few weeks, William Peter was glad to see them leave. He told his mother, "some boats are going out today; they are going to take all the Yankees a way with them."³

The Illinois boys preferred to avoid Easterners whenever possible, and they believed that the Easterners could not fight. The Illinoisans felt that the greater part of the war effort was being borne by the Western troops, and they pointed to the repeated defeats of the Army of the Potomac as evidence. After hearing of the Army of the Potomac's defeat at Chancellorsville, Lyman Needham moaned, "Oh, why is it that they cant do anything there, but get defeated in everything they undertake?"⁴ In February 1863, William Ross summed up the progress of the war to date, telling his father, "we have gaind

some ground [in the] west here, but in the east they have done nothing but get thousand[s] of brave men butchered up."⁵

Some boys who were not certain that the Eastern troops were brave had an answer for Lyman Needham's question. It was commonly believed that the Eastern soldiers could not fight as well as the Western boys. After hearing about the Confederate victory at the Second Manassas, Allen Geer noted "am fast coming to the conclusion that the eastern troops are not as good fighting men as the Western boys."⁶ The subsequent Confederate invasion of Maryland was taken as further proof of the Easterners' inability to fight. "The news causes general indignation among the Western troops," wrote Allen about the invasion, "They impute it all to lack of soldierly courage in officers and men."⁷

Some of the boys did not agree that the Easterners could not fight, but their protests showed that many of the boys thought the Eastern troops were cowards. After the battle of Chancellorsville, Day Elmore reported, "The Soldiers hear think that it is A fault of the troops and not the Gen, or thay men to say that Eastern troops will not fight as well as Western, and that I do not beleav so we have some quite spirited arguments about it."⁸ Levi Ross reported about a debate which was held in the 86th Illinois. "The boys indulged in quite a debate today on the question: 'Resolved that the soldier's of the Western Department are better, in every respect, than those of the Eastern Department.' Nearly all of the prairie boys spoke on the affirmative. I took the negative."⁹

Even after the Army of the Potomac finally defeated the Army of Northern Virginia at Gettysburg, the Illinois boys were reluctant to acknowledge an Eastern victory. Many applauded the Western victory at Vicksburg on July 4, 1863, but few mentioned the battle of Gettysburg which was fought on July 1-3,

1863. Some did not think that Lee had really been defeated and believed that they would have to go and defeat him, too. "I think we have got some heard fighting to do yet for Lee's army is good yet," wrote Ed Crowell after Gettysburg.¹⁰

While Lee's Army of Northern Virginia was a tough army to fight, the boys noticed that the Eastern troops did no better when they came out West to fight. "Banks fights as none but an Eastern man can fight and gets whipped," wrote Allen Geer about General Nathaniel Banks's assault on Port Hudson, Louisiana.¹¹ Henry Nurse claimed that the Eastern troops present on the Atlanta campaign were impressed with the courage of the Western boys. "The Potomac boys say they never saw fighting carried on the way the western boys do. [T]hey say that we go right out on the skirmish line and cook just as though there was no rebs in forty miles of us."¹²

Eastern troops who were sent out West were not generally well received by the boys, who resented the thought that they might have needed Eastern help to fight the Confederates. Occasionally there was conflict between the two groups. Frank Crowell told about how the 92nd Illinois related to the Easterners:

[T]heir is some of the Eastern troops here, and we bother them almost to death--tell them they cant fight. [O]ne of them was guarding a rich old Farmers Goods, and some of our Boys came along and was agoing to take some corn, and the guard stept out to stop him, and the boys took and held him while the rest took everything. [H]e said we did [not] know any rules, but we do and dont like them.¹³

Some of the conflicts were serious, and the boys claimed they would take drastic action against Easterners. Henry Nurse reported the fury in his brigade over the behavior of the Eastern XX Corps. "I know they have killed three men belonging to our Brigade since we came to this place while they were putting on their stile in [Atlanta], but if our brigade should get to doing

Patrol duty in town and any of the twentyeth corps boys come round they will get popped over as sure as the world stands."¹⁴

The boys also saw themselves as more virtuous than the Easterners. Levi Ross thought the Eastern troops wasted Government supplies. During a time when the 86th Illinois was on short rations and suffered from a lack of clothing, Levi indignantly reported that "The boys from the Potomac say that they always wasted more than they have drawn from the Commissary for the last four months."¹⁵ Robert Burdette recalled an occasion when he witnessed the execution of three men of the 3rd New Jersey Cavalry who had been convicted of raping two Southern women. "I can remember so well how many of the men congratulated one another and themselves that the offense had been committed by an eastern regiment; for we insisted that the native chivalry common to the western men would have held them back from the commission of such a crime."¹⁶ Clearly the boys saw themselves as being better, in every respect, than the Eastern troops.

While the Illinois boys felt that the Western troops were better than the Eastern troops, not all Western troops were equal. The boys also held Ohio and Ohioans in contempt. Their dislike for Ohio began at Shiloh, where Allen Geer reported, "Many of the Ohio regts fled disgracefully from the field of action."¹⁷ The boys never forgot the behavior of the Ohioans at Shiloh. About a month later, the 19th Illinois and the 18th Ohio became engaged with some Confederates outside of Athens, Alabama. Joseph Johnston said, "The 18th Ohio regiment showed the spirit of the Ohio regiments at Shiloh and retreated from a far inferior force."¹⁸

Having to fight alongside Ohio troops was always a good excuse for losing a battle. Henry Upton described what happened to the 104th Illinois when they and the 106th and 108th Ohio Infantry regiments fought John H. Morgan's

Confederates near Hartsville, Tennessee. "The infantry then advanced until they came in musket range and opened fire, but no sooner had two volleys been exchanged than the two Ohio regs broke and ran, leaving the 104th Ills to contend against 5 times its own number."¹⁹ Consequently, the 104th was captured.

Most of the boys had a fierce pride and were quick to defend the honor of their regiments. Imagine Lyman Needham's dismay when the newspapers claimed that the 39th Ohio was the first regiment to raise their flag over Corinth, Mississippi, when he claimed that the 42nd Illinois had been the first. He told his brother that both regiments had gone in to town at about the same time; however, "The 42^d went into Corinth in good order, while the 39th Ohio were scattered all over."²⁰

Not only were the Ohio troops thought of as poor soldiers, the Illinois boys questioned their loyalty. Ohio was the native state of Clement Vallandigham and was thus associated with Copperheads and opposition to the war. Joseph Johnston and his comrades ridiculed Ohio when they sarcastically told other regiments that they were the "1st Ohio conscripts: Hurrah for Vallandigham."²¹ Some soldiers' suspicions of Ohioans were confirmed when Henry Nurse discovered a former member of his brigade serving in the Confederate army. "There was one of them fifty second Ohio boys that was captured at Peachtree Creek came over last night. He had taken the oath of allegiance and was bearing arms for the Rebs. . . ."²² While there were undoubtedly Copperheads and cowards from every state, Ohio was the only one that the Illinois boys singled out for such ridicule.

One of the reasons the boys detested cowardice and Copperheads was because they saw themselves as volunteers. They had volunteered to fight and were dismayed by those who refused to do their duty. The Illinoisans were

volunteer troops; less than one and one-half percent were conscripts.²³ Those soldiers who were among the first to enlist--those who enlisted in 1861--felt a sense of superiority over those who did not volunteer until later. In the summer of 1862 when Lincoln called for more volunteers and Congress threatened to have a draft, many more Illinois regiments were raised. The old soldiers were prone to ridicule the late comers. John Sackett of the 36th Illinois told his brother, "I was glad to hear that so many of the cowardly portion of the population have enlisted (to escape drafting I suppose) but still there is some mor that might go and not hurt themselves."²⁴ Bounties, bonuses for enlisting, were given to the new troops, and Day Elmore concluded "it looks [a] little to me as if the larg Bounty Brought a good many in not thare Patriotic feelings."²⁵ Still, Day was glad to see the new troops coming in such large numbers. "We the soldiers of Illinois are feeling good to see them turn out. [T]he town ship that Miner [a friend] lives in will not have A man to draft."²⁶

Although rumors of conscription began in August 1862, a law was not passed until the spring of 1863, and it did not go into effect until that summer. By that time, the volunteers of both 1861 and 1862 were eager to see men drafted to perform the duty they had volunteered to do. Austin Andrews of the 12th Illinois told his sister, "We are all anxious to hear of them drafting in Illinois; we would like to see our regiment full again."²⁷ Frank Crowell wanted to see some of his neighbors drafted and told his mother, "I hope to god they will draft. I want to meet some of them in the ranks and see if they have a soldierly appearance."²⁸

The boys were not pleased with the Conscription Act, however. The Act allowed draftees to pay a sum of money instead of going into the army. This

provision infuriated the soldiers. Levi Ross explained his feelings on the issue:

Father how do you like the Conscription Act? I approve all except the exemption for the small sum of \$300, or less as the Secretary of War may determine. I believe that a poor man's life is as dear as a rich man's. The blood of a poor man is as precious as that of the wealthy. The rich have more at stake in the issue now pending, therefore should sacrifice more in suppressing this infernal Rebellion and in restoring²⁹ the Union, and thereby save their property, homes, and liberty.

Frank Crowell agreed with Levi and told his mother, "I know Men up their that you would think was bursting with Patriotism that would pay their last red [cent] before they would enlist, and those are the ones I want to see drafted."³⁰

Lyman Needham did not like the Conscription Act because he feared there would be entire regiments composed exclusively of conscripts. He felt that it would make more sense to put the conscripts in with the veterans. He explained his position as follows:

I think this Conscript law is a good thing, but I am afraid they will Consolidate the old Regts and organize new one's of the drafted men. [T]hey should fill up the old Regts and keep them full. They would learn a great deal faster than they would by themselves, and their officers would be more experienced, and besides ³¹they should not have a higher position than that of a private.

Lyman wanted to be an officer, and consolidated regiments would make it more difficult to advance because there would have been more competition among veteran troops for positions. Also, he was chagrined by the thought that he, a veteran volunteer, might remain an enlisted man, while some new conscripts might be made officers. Lyman did not have to worry, though; the conscripts were placed in the old regiments as privates.

Because they were volunteers, the boys had much pride in their own regiments. Robert Burdette enlisted in the 47th Illinois after the regiment had been in the field for a year. When he joined it near Corinth he was

dismayed at its tattered appearance. "I never dreamed, when first I looked upon it in the field, how proud I was going to be of it. . . . In my dreams it had always looked like a replica of the Old Guard at Marengo. Now it looked more like the retreat from Moscow. Save that it never retreated."³² Joseph Johnston expected that his regiment would always receive compliments from officers who reviewed it. "The 19th was reviewed a few days since by Gen. Buell & received as usual the highest praise from that officer," he told his father.³³ Day Elmore was convinced that his regiment was capable of anything. In the summer of 1862 he told his father, "A private in Company B was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant of one of the companys in the new Regiments. . . . I am glad of it, for evry Boy in the 36 Ill Regt is fully compident to hold any 2^{ond} Le-- of any company in the new Regt, for we have ben tryed, and thay all know what we did and can do."³⁴

Not surprisingly, some of the boys felt that their regiment was the best in the service. John Sackett said of his 36th Illinois, "This is every where spoken of as the biggest and best reg in the west so you see we feel quite proud of our success so far."³⁵ Day Elmore claimed even more for the 36th, saying "This Regiment is sayed to bee the best in the U.S. service by goo[d] judges."³⁶ Lyman Needham topped both. Of the 42nd Illinois he said, "We have the name of being the best Regiment in -- anywhere."³⁷

The boys were quick to claim victories for their regiments. Both Day Elmore and Joseph Johnston credited the "victory" at Stones River (it was more of a bloody draw than anything else) to their respective regiments. The 36th Illinois was in Sheridan's Division which stubbornly resisted the Confederate attacks on the first day while the rest of the Federal right flank collapsed. Day reported, "We hurd Roscrans say that the 36 of sheriden Division saved his army. . . ."³⁸ Since the 19th Illinois spear-headed the last charge of the

battle, Joseph concluded, "I suppose the success of the battle will be credited to the 19th."³⁹ Ed Crowell claimed that the 92nd Illinois carried the rest of their division through the Atlanta campaign and did most of its fighting. "[T]hey had the brunt of the battle to fight for the whole division. It made no odds wheather it was in the rear or front that the fighting was to be done, the 92^d had to go and do it, and for that reason they lost heavy."⁴⁰

Because of the boys' pride for their regiments, inter-regimental rivalries developed. Napoleon Bartlett told about the rivalry between his own 76th Illinois and the 72nd Illinois:

There is a regiment in Vicksburg doing guard duty; the No. of it is the 72nd Ills. They are called the soft bread regiment [because] of their having so much to say about getting home when they are on the march. When the 76 or 46 pass the 72 you can hardly hear for the hooting and yelling. When we went out & had that fight the 72nd staid in town & after we came in The 72 went out & the Col of the 72 told his boys that the 76 come back picking balls out of their butts, but he wanted the 72 to bring their balls back in their breasts.⁴¹

The 42nd wanted the honor of being the first regiment to enter Tullahoma, Tennessee, which had been abandoned by the Confederates. Lyman Needham said that, in order to be the first, they raced the 51st Illinois to the city and won.⁴²

Although the boys were proud to be Illinois soldiers, many were not natives of the state. Day Elmore said that only one man in his company was a native of Illinois.⁴³ Of those soldiers used in this study, only one, Joseph Johnston, is known for certain to have been born in Illinois.⁴⁴ Two, Day Elmore and Levi Ross, are known to have been from New York.⁴⁵ Three of the soldiers were born in New England. Lyman Needham was from Vermont, and Ed and Frank Crowell were born in New Hampshire.⁴⁶ Joseph Ward was an immigrant; he was born in Norfolkshire, England and came to Illinois in 1850.⁴⁷

Even though they were born elsewhere, the boys were very attached to Illinois. Although he had been born in New York and his parents still lived there, Day Elmore would not think of serving in a New York regiment. "I would not belong to a NY Regiment; they do not look like our Western Boys. [O]ne thing I know, they are A great deal more loaferish . . . I got disgusted with New York Soldiers . . . all they could talk about would be some drunken spree."⁴⁸ Levi Ross also preferred the Prairie State over the Empire State, exclaiming "Lovely Illinois! I am much attached to thee."⁴⁹ Joseph Ward was fond of Illinois and was glad to get a chance to meet some of the few other Illinois regiments out East. In July 1862, he got a chance to visit the 8th Illinois Cavalry in Virginia. "I have seen some of the 8th Ill. Cavalry. These are the only Ill. boys I have seen since we left St. Louis. They were glad to see us."⁵⁰ Life could be lonely for a few prairie boys lost among a sea of Yankees.

Robert Burdette best expressed the boys' love for Illinois when he told about a time when his regiment was sent by boat up the Mississippi River to St. Louis. This was the closest he had been to Illinois since he had enlisted. "And one day from Cairo to St. Louis we steamed up along the pleasant panorama of the Illinois shore of the Mississippi. I think there was also a shore on the Missouri side--there is now, I know, and it is quite probable there may have been a bank in that direction in 1864. I never saw it."⁵¹

ENDNOTES

Introduction

¹Frank Crowell, letter to his mother, October 26, 1864, in the author's personal collection.

²Day Elmore, letter to his brother and sister, October 15, 1861, in the Day Elmore collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

³Brigadier General J.N. Reece, Adjutant General, Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Illinois (Springfield, Illinois: Phillip's Bros. State Printers, 1901). For Allen Geer, see Volume II, p. 158. For Levi Ross, see Volume V, pp. 212-213.

⁴D. Duane Cummins and Daryl Hohweiler, eds., An Enlisted Soldier's View of the Civil War (West Lafayette, Indiana: Belle Publications, 1981), p. xxi. The Adjutant General's Report states that he was mustered out as a first sergeant. See Volume III, pp. 124-126.

CHAPTER 1

Tenting on the Old Camp Ground

¹Mary Ann Andersen, ed., The Civil War Diary of Allen Morgan Geer, Twentieth Regiment, Illinois Volunteers (Denver: Robert C. Appleman, 1977), p. 83.

²Patricia L. Faust, ed., Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1986), pp. 687-688.

³David King, Jr., letter to his mother, August 8, 1864, in the King family collection (Box #4) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁴Levi Ross, diary entry for January 15-20, 1863, in the Levi Ross collection at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁵William Marsh, letter to his mother, February 18, 1862, in the William Marsh collection (SC 1002) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁶John Tallman, letter to his sister, February 20, 1863, in the John Tallman collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

⁷Bell I. Wiley, The Life of Billy Yank (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), p. 56.

⁸Edward Crowell, letter to his mother, April 24, 1863, in the author's personal collection.

⁹John Given, letter to his mother, November 26, 1862, in the John Given collection (SC 562) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

¹⁰Levi Ross, letter to his parents, November 18, 1863.

¹¹Curtiss Judd, diary entry for January 30, 1864, in the Curtiss Judd collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

¹²George Marsh, letter to his brother, April 19, 1863, in the George Marsh collection (SC 1000) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

¹³Joseph Johnston, letter to his mother, May 10, 1863, in the Joseph Johnston collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

¹⁴Edward Crowell, letter to his mother, April 24, 1863.

¹⁵Ibid..

¹⁶George Marsh, letter to his brother, February 4, 1864.

¹⁷Henry Nurse, letter to his mother, October 25, 1863, in the Henry Nurse collection (SC 2048) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

¹⁸William Peter, letter to his mother, October 11, 1863, in the William and Samuel Peter collection (SC 1166) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

¹⁹William Marsh, letter to his mother, November 15, 1862.

²⁰Austin Andrews, letter to his sister, December 2, 1862, in the Austin Andrews collection (SC 1706) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

²¹Frank Crowell, letter to his father, December 6, 1863, in the author's personal collection.

²²George Marsh, letter to his brother, April 3, 1864.

²³George Marsh, letter to his brother, June 22, 1863.

²⁴John Sackett, letter to his brother, September 4, 1862, in the John Sackett collection (SC 1318) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

²⁵Levi Ross, letter to his father, September 9, 1862.

²⁶John Tallman, letter to his brother, March 3, 1863.

²⁷Robert Burdette, The Drums of the 47th (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1914), p. 109.

- 28 John Given, letter to his sister, November 13, 1862.
- 29 Burdette, Drums, p. 31.
- 30 Lyman Needham, letter to his brother and sister, December 17, 1862, in the Lyman Needham collection (SC 1094) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.
- 31 Henry Nurse, letter to his father, September 23, 1864.
- 32 Levi Ross, diary entry for November 27-29, 1862.
- 33 Andersen, Geer, p. 69.
- 34 Levi Ross, diary entry for March 12, 1863.
- 35 Joseph Johnston, letter to his mother, October 14, 1861.
- 36 George Childress, diary entries for August 2 and 4, 1862, in the George Childress collection (SC 283) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.
- 37 Curtiss Judd, diary entry for April 13, 1864.
- 38 Day Elmore, letter to his father, November 24, 1862, in the Day Elmore collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.
- 39 Napoleon Bartlett, letter to his father, April ?, 1864, in the Napoleon Bartlett collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.
- 40 Frank Crowell, letter to his father, March 2, 1863.
- 41 Day Elmore, letter to his parents, May 24, 1863.
- 42 John Sackett, letter to his brother, July 30, 1862.
- 43 Thomas Miller, letter to Mr. Benjamin Newton, January 8, 1862, in the Thomas Miller collection (SC 1050a) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.
- 44 Thomas Miller, letter to Mr. Benjamin Newton, December 30, 1861.
- 45 Austin Andrews, letter to his sister, July 1, 1862.
- 46 John Given, letter to his sister, November 13, 1862.
- 47 Thomas Miller, letter to Mr. Benjamin Newton, June 3, 1862.
- 48 Lyman Needham, letter to his friends, May 25, 1862.
- 49 William Marsh, letter to his father, January 10, 1862.
- 50 Austin Andrews, letter to his sister, August 11, 1862.

- 51 Joseph Johnston, letter to his mother, May 23, 1863.
- 52 John Tallman, letter to his brother, November 4, 1863.
- 53 Austin Andrews, letter to his sister, August 11, 1862.
- 54 George Marsh, letter to his family, October 4, 1863.
- 55 Frank Crowell, letter to his mother, March 5, 1863.
- 56 D. Duane Cummins and Daryl Hohweiler, eds., An Enlisted Soldier's View of the Civil War (West Lafayette, Indiana: Belle Publications, 1981), p. 63.
- 57 Edward Crowell, letter to his parents, July 22, 1864.
- 58 Frank Crowell, letter to his mother, June 9, 1863.
- 59 Edward Crowell, letter to his mother, August 9, 1863.
- 60 William Ross, letter to his father, January 12, 1863, in the William Ross collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.
- 61 Andersen, Geer, p. 105.
- 62 Ibid., p. 42.
- 63 Cummins and Hohweiler, Enlisted, p. 22.
- 64 Lyman Needham, letter to his friends, February 3, 1863.
- 65 Richard Puffer, letter to his sister, December 20, 1863, in the Richard Puffer collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.
- 66 Joseph Johnston, letter to his mother, October 14, 1861.
- 67 John Sackett, unaddressed letter, November 12, 1861.
- 68 Wiley, Yank, p. 49.
- 69 Day Elmore, letter to his brother and sister, October 15, 1861.
- 70 Lyman Needham, letter to his brother and sister, October 3, 1861.
- 71 Cummins and Hohweiler, Enlisted, p. 58.
- 72 Austin Andrews, letter to his sister, January 29, 1862.
- 73 Andersen, Geer, p. 24.
- 74 Napoleon Bartlett, letter to his mother, May 24, 1864.
- 75 Edward Crowell, letter to his parents, August 30, 1864.
- 76 William Peter, letter to his family, February 20, 1864.

⁷⁷George Marsh, letter to his brother, May 19, 1863.

⁷⁸Frank Crowell, letter to his parents, May 18, 1863.

⁷⁹Austin Andrews, letter to his sister, August 11, 1862.

CHAPTER 2

Hard Crackers

¹Robert Burdette, The Drums of the 47th (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1914), p. 133.

²Ibid., p. 131; and Lyman Needham, letter to his brother and sister, October 20, 1861, in the Lyman Needham collection (SC 1094) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

³John Tallman, letter to his brother, October 18, 1862, in the John Tallman collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

⁴William Marsh, letter to his brother, September 15, 1862, in the William Marsh collection (SC 1002) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁵Napolean Bartlett, letter to his brother, May 24, 1864, in the Napolean Bartlett collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

⁶William Peter, letter to his sister, March 18, 1863, in the William and Samuel Peter collection (SC 1166) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield Illinois.

⁷Henry Nurse, letter to his father, February 9, 1864, in the Henry Nurse collection (SC 2048) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁸For example, see William Marsh, letter to his mother, March 2, 1862 and Day Elmore, letter to his brother, March 18, 1863, in the Day Elmore collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

⁹Levi Ross, diary entry for February 16, 1863, in the Levi Ross collection at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

¹⁰David King, Jr., letter to his sister, July 27, 1862, in the King family collection (Box #4); and Thomas Miller, letter to Mr. Benjamin Newton, January 23, 1862, in the Thomas Miller collection (SC 1050a), both at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield Illinois.

¹¹Henry Nurse, letter to his father, February 9, 1864; and Burdette, Drums, p. 43.

¹²Thomas Miller, letter to Mr. Benjamin Newton, January 23, 1862.

¹³Austin Andrews, letter to his brother, December 30, 1863, in the Austin Andrews collection (SC 1706) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

¹⁴Napolean Bartlett, letter to his brother, June 28, 1864; and George Marsh, letter to his brother, September 25, 1862, in the George Marsh collection (SC 1000) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

¹⁵Mary Ann Andersen, ed., The Civil War Diary of Allen Morgan Geer, Twentieth Regiment, Illinois Volunteers (Denver: Robert C. Appelman, 1977), p. 24.

¹⁶Notation in the back of the diary of James Snell in the James Snell collection at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

¹⁷William Marsh, letter to his mother, August 14, 1862.

¹⁸Napolean Bartlett, letter to his brother, May 24, 1864; and Day Elmore, letter to his parents, December 8, 1861.

¹⁹John Given, letter to his sister, November 13, 1862, in the John Given collection (SC 562) at the Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹William Marsh, letter to his mother, August 14, 1862, and letter to his father, August 14, 1862.

²²Day Elmore, letter to his parents, April 14, 1863.

²³Henry Nurse, letter to his father, October 20, 1863.

²⁴D. Duane Cummins and Daryl Hohweiler, eds., An Enlisted Soldier's View of the Civil War (West Lafayette, Indiana: Belle Publications, 1981), p. 22.

²⁵Andersen, Geer, p. 98.

²⁶Levi Ross, letter to his father, October 26, 1862.

²⁷Levi Ross, diary entry for December 16, 1862.

²⁸John Tallman, letter to his brother, October 18, 1862.

²⁹Cummins and Hohweiler, Enlisted, p. 41; Napolean Bartlett, letter to his father, April ?, 1864; and Burdette, Drums, p. 28.

³⁰Andersen, Geer, p. 74. Each cracker was approximately three inches square. (Henry Nurse, letter to his mother, October 25, 1863.)

³¹Thomas Miller, letter to Mr. Benjamin Newton, January 23, 1862.

³²Day Elmore, letter to his father, October 25, 1862.

- ³³Cummins and Hohweiller, Enlisted, p. 7.
- ³⁴Thomas Miller, letter to Mr. Benjamin Newton, January 23, 1862.
- ³⁵David King, Jr., letter to his sister, July 27, 1862.
- ³⁶John Given, letter to his parents, October 23, 1862.
- ³⁷Levi Ross, diary entry for October 2, 1862.
- ³⁸Andersen, Geer, pp. 65-66.
- ³⁹John Tallman, letter to his sister, November 14, 1862.
- ⁴⁰Levi Ross, diary entry for May 15, 1863.
- ⁴¹Andersen, Geer, p. 72.
- ⁴²Lyman Needham, letter to his brother, June 6, 1862.
- ⁴³Cummins and Hohweiller, Enlisted, p. 26.
- ⁴⁴Frank Crowell, letter to his mother, December 2, 1862, in the author's personal collection.
- ⁴⁵John Given, letter to his sister, November 13, 1862.
- ⁴⁶Lyman Needham, letter to his friends, July 4, 1862.
- ⁴⁷John Sackett, letter to his brother, January 2, 1862, in the John Sackett collection (SC 1318) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.
- ⁴⁸John Tallman, letter to his brother, January 4, 1864.
- ⁴⁹William Marsh, letter to his mother, March 2, 1862.
- ⁵⁰Frank Crowell, letter to his mother, April 29, 1863.
- ⁵¹William Marsh, letter to his mother, February 18, 1862.
- ⁵²Levi Ross, diary entry for March 4, 1863.
- ⁵³Burdette, Drums, p. 143.
- ⁵⁴Napolean Bartlett, letter to his brother, August 2, 1864.
- ⁵⁵Burdette, Drums, p. 139.
- ⁵⁶Napolean Bartlett, letter to his mother, June 14, 1864.
- ⁵⁷William Marsh, letter to his mother, March 2, 1862.
- ⁵⁸Lyman Needham, letter to his brother and sister, November 20, 1861.

CHAPTER 3

Weeping Sad and Lonely

¹William Marsh, letter to his mother, November 15, 1862, in the William Marsh collection (SC 1002) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

²Frank Crowell, letter to his father, March 2, 1863, in the author's personal collection.

³William Ross, letter to his father, October 6, 1862, in the William Ross collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

⁴Edward Crowell, letter to his parents, January 3, 1863, in the author's personal collection.

⁵Austin Andrews, letter to his sisters, November 20, 1861, in the Austin Andrews collection (SC 1706) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁶D. Duane Cummins and Daryl Hohweiler, eds., An Enlisted Soldier's View of the Civil War (West Lafayette, Indiana: Belle Publications, 1981), p. 62.

⁷William Marsh, letter to his father, September 22, 1861.

⁸Edward Crowell, letter to his parents, January 3, 1863.

⁹Edward Crowell, letter to his parents, December 21, 1862.

¹⁰Edward Crowell, letter to his parents, January 3, 1863.

¹¹Joseph Johnston, letter to his father, November 10, 1862, in the Joseph Johnston collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

¹²Frank Crowell, letter to his father, February 1, 1864.

¹³Cummins and Hohweiler, Enlisted, p. 27.

¹⁴Thomas Miller, letter to Mr. Benjamin Newton, March 29, 1862, in the Thomas Miller collection (SC 1050a) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

¹⁵William Ross, letter to his brother, September 30, 1862.

¹⁶William Ross, letter to his father, October 26, 1863.

¹⁷William Ross, letter to his father, December 11, 1863.

¹⁸Lyman Needham, letter to his friends, December 15, 1861, in the Lyman Needham collection (SC 1094) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

¹⁹Lyman Needham, letter to his brother and sister, January 12, 1862.

²⁰Cummins and Hohweiler, Enlisted, p. 52.

²¹Curtiss Judd, diary entry for April 16, 1864, in the Curtiss Judd collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

²²Mary Ann Andersen, ed., The Civil War Diary of Allen Morgan Geer, Twentieth Regiment, Illinois Volunteers (Denver: Robert C. Appleman, 1977), p. 77.

²³Frank Crowell, letter to his father, March 2, 1863.

²⁴Frank Crowell, letter to his mother, April 7, 1863.

²⁵Edward Crowell, letter to his father, April 15, 1863.

²⁶Day Elmore, letter to his parents, November 26, 1863, in the Day Elmore collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

²⁷Lyman Needham, letter to his brother and sister, October 30, 1861.

²⁸Lyman Needham, letter to his friends, December 6, 1861.

²⁹George Marsh, letter to his brother, May 19, 1863, in the George Marsh collection (SC 1000) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

³⁰John Tallman, letter to his brother, March 3, 1863, in the John Tallman collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

³¹Lyman Needham, letter to his brother and sister, November 20, 1861.

³²Edward Crowell, letter to his parents, December 21, 1862.

³³Henry Nurse, letter to his father, November 30, 1862, in the Henry Nurse collection (SC 2048) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

³⁴Cyrus Eyster, letter to his cousin, April 6, 1863, in the Lyman Needham collection (SC 1094) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

³⁵Henry Nurse, letter to his father, July 25, 1863.

³⁶Austin Andrews, letter to his sister, June 2, 1863.

³⁷Thomas Miller, undated manuscript.

³⁸Fanny Holliday, letter to William Peter, April 18, 1863, in the William and Samuel Peter collection (SC 1166) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

³⁹Edward Crowell, letter to his mother, April 24, 1863.

⁴⁰Edward Crowell, letter to his mother, January 23, 1864.

⁴¹Lyman Needham, letter to his brother and sister, October 30, 1861.

⁴²Lyman Needham, letter to his brother and sister, November 28, 1862.

⁴³Frank Crowell, letter to his mother, October 26, 1864.

⁴⁴Ibid..

⁴⁵Richard Puffer, letter to his sister, October 17, 1862, in the Richard Puffer collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

CHAPTER 4

Gay and Happy Still

¹Edward Crowell, letter to his mother, April 24, 1863, in the author's personal collection.

²General S.D. Atkins, General B.F. Sheets, and Major R.M.A. Hawk, Ninety-Second Illinois Volunteers (Freeport, Illinois: Journal Steam Publishing House and Bookbindery, 1875), p. 166.

³Frank Crowell, letter to his parents, undated, presumably winter, 1864, in the author's personal collection.

⁴Edward Crowell, letter to his mother, July 9, 1864.

⁵Frank Crowell, letter to his mother, July 6, 1864.

⁶Joseph Johnston, letter to his brother, June 6, 1864, in the Joseph Johnston collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

⁷Curtiss Judd, diary entries for February 10 and 11, 1864, in the Curtiss Judd collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

⁸Ed Crowell, letter to his parents, December 21, 1862.

⁹George Marsh, letter to his brother, April 19, 1863, in the George Marsh collection (SC 1000) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

¹⁰Levi Ross, letter to his parents, January 25, 1863, in the Levi Ross collection at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois; and Frank Crowell, letter to his mother, December 13, 1862.

¹¹Mary Ann Anderson, ed., The Civil War Diary of Allen Morgan Geer, Twentieth Regiment, Illinois Volunteers (Denver: Robert C. Appleman, 1977), p. 67.

¹²Austin Andrews, letter to his sister, July 14, 1863, in the Austin Andrews collection (SC 1706) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

¹³Lyman Needham, letter to his brother and sister, March 3, 1863, in the Lyman Needham collection (SC 1094) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

¹⁴Joseph Johnston, diary entries for March 4, 12, and 16, 1863.

¹⁵Joseph Johnston, letter to his father, November ?, 1861; and Frank Crowell, letter to his father, November 23, 1862.

¹⁶Curtiss Judd, diary entry for January 4, 1864.

¹⁷Andersen, Geer, pp. 20, 34, 49, 78, 130, 133.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 78.

¹⁹Day Elmore, letter to his parents, March 15, 1863, in the Day Elmore collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

²⁰Frank Crowell, letter to his father, December 6, 1863.

²¹Andersen, Geer, p. 71.

²²Frank Crowell, letter to his mother, November 5, 1862.

²³Joseph Johnston, letter to his father, November ?, 1861; and Bell I. Wiley, The Life of Billy Yank (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1986), p. 183.

²⁴George Marsh, letter to his brother, February 14, 1864.

²⁵Austin Andrews, letter to his sister, December 2, 1862.

²⁶Frank Crowell, letter to his mother, April 29, 1863.

²⁷Frank Crowell, letter to his mother, December 2, 1862, and letter to his father, March 2, 1863.

²⁸Joseph Johnston, letter to his father, November ?, 1861.

²⁹Anderson, Geer, p. 11.

³⁰Joseph Johnston, letter to his mother, December 4, 1861.

³¹Andersen, Geer, pp. 43-46.

³²Frank Crowell, "I'm Off For Charlston," January 23, 1864, in the author's personal collection.

³³Frank Crowell, letter to his brother, March 3, 1864.

³⁴Austin Andrews, letter to hi sister, September 9, 1863.

³⁵Lyman Needham, unaddressed fragment, undated.

³⁶John Given, letter to his brother, October 14, 1862, in the John Given collection (SC 562) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

³⁷Frank Crowell, letter to his mother, November 5, 1862.

³⁸Napolean Bartlett, letter to his brother, July 22, 1864, in the Napolean Bartlett collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

³⁹Andersen, Geer, p. 60.

⁴⁰Levi Ross, diary entry for March 15, 1863.

⁴¹John Given, letter to his brother, October 14, 1862.

⁴²John Tallman, letter to his sister, April 21, 1863, in the John Tallman collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

⁴³Frank Crowell, letter to his mother, October 11, 1864.

⁴⁴Levi Ross, diary entry for December 9, 1862.

⁴⁵Andersen, Geer, pp. 15 and 81.

⁴⁶Frank Cowell, letter to his mother, March 24, 1864.

⁴⁷Austin Andrews, letter to his sister, January 29, 1862.

⁴⁸Patricia L. Faust, ed., Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1986), p. 420.

⁴⁹Joseph Johnston, diary entry for March 16, 1863.

⁵⁰Richard Puffer, letter to his sister, February 12, 1863, in the Richard Puffer collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

⁵¹Lyman Needham, letter to his friends, December 15, 1861.

⁵²Austin Andrews, letter to his sister, July 1, 1862.

⁵³Austin Andrews, letter to his sister, June 12, 1863.

⁵⁴D. Duane Cummins and Daryl Hohweiler, eds., An Enlisted Soldeir's View of the Civil War (West Lafayette, Indiana: Belle Publications, 1981), p. 38.

⁵⁵Edward Crowell, letter to his parents, undated, presumably winter, 1864.

CHAPTER 5

Shoulderstraps, Pimps and Skunks

¹Edward Crowell, letter to his mother, June 30, 1864, in the author's personal collection.

²Levi Ross, letter to his father, September 16, 1862, in the Levi Ross collection at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

³William Marsh, letter to his father, August 14, 1862, in the William Marsh collection (SC 1002) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁴Levi Ross, letter to his father, September 16, 1862.

⁵D. Duane Cummins and Daryl Hohweiler, eds., An Enlisted Soldier's View of the Civil War (West Lafayette, Indiana: Belle Publications, 1981), p. 66.

⁶John Given, letter to his aunt, October 11, 1862, in the John Given collection (SC 562) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁷John Sackett, letter to his brother, August 17, 1862, in the John Sackett collection (SC 1318) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁸John Sackett, letter to his father, December 8, 1861. "Bucking and gagging" consisted of gagging a soldier by tying a bayonet in his mouth.

⁹John Sackett, letter to his brother, January 14, 1862.

¹⁰Henry Nurse, letter to his father, April 20, 1864, in the Henry Nurse collection (SC 2048) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

¹¹Levi Ross, letter to his father, September 16, 1862. McCook was only a colonel. It is not known why Ross calls him a general.

¹²Velma Griffen, ed., "The Tribe of Dan . . . and Martha," Blue & Gray Magazine, II, 4, (March 1985), pp. 28-29.

¹³Edward Crowell, letter to his mother, January 30, 1863.

¹⁴Frank Crowell, letter to his father, July 9, 1863, in the author's personal collection.

¹⁵William Marsh, letter to his father, August 14, 1862.

¹⁶Edward Crowell, letter to his mother, January 12, 1863.

¹⁷George Marsh, letter to his brother, June 22, 1863, in the George Marsh collection (SC 1000) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

¹⁸Day Elmore, letter to his brother, October 25, 1861, in the Day Elmore collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

- ¹⁹Lyman Needham, letter to his brother, June 18, 1862, in the Lyman Needham collection (SC 1094) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.
- ²⁰George Marsh, letter to his brother, April 19, 1863.
- ²¹Day Elmore, letter to his parents, May 1, 1864.
- ²²George Marsh, letter to his brother, April 2, 1863, and letter to his brother, May 19, 1863; and Robert Burdette, The Drums of the 47th (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1914), pp. 111-112.
- ²³Levi Ross, diary entry for April 20, 1863.
- ²⁴Day Elmore, letter to his sister, January 27, 1862.
- ²⁵Levi Ross, diary entry for entry October 26-27, 1863. Again, Ross refers to McCook as a general.
- ²⁶William Marsh, letter to his father, October 14, 1862.
- ²⁷Richard Puffer, letter to his sister, October 1, 1863, in the Richard Puffer collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.
- ²⁸Cummins and Hohweiler, Enlisted, pp. 41-42.
- ²⁹Henry Nurse, letter to his father, May 18, 1864.
- ³⁰Day Elmore, letter to his parents, June 1, 1864.
- ³¹John Tallman, letter to his father, May 25, 1864, in the John Tallman collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.
- ³²Cummins and Hohweiler, Enlisted, p. 58.
- ³³Edward Crowell, letter to his mother, September 11, 1864.
- ³⁴Austin Andrews, letter to his sister, September 6, 1863, in the Austin Andrews collection (SC 1706) at the Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois.
- ³⁵George Marsh, letter to his brother, August 2, 1863.
- ³⁶Henry Nurse, letter to his father, October 20, 1863.
- ³⁷Levi Ross, diary entry for November 27-29, 1862.
- ³⁸Levi Ross, diary entry for October 8, 1862.
- ³⁹Levi Ross, diary entry for April 13, 1863.
- ⁴⁰Henry Nurse, letter to his father, July 5, 1863.
- ⁴¹Burdette, Drums, pp. 163-164.

⁴²Joseph Johnston, letter to his mother, January 14, 1863, in the Joseph Johnston collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

⁴³Lyman Needham, letter to his friends, November 9, 1862.

⁴⁴Burdette, Drums, p. 162.

⁴⁵William Marsh, letter to his father, August 14, 1862.

⁴⁶Frank Crowell, letter to his father, December 27, 1863.

⁴⁷Burdette, Drums, p. 141.

⁴⁸Patricia L. Faust, ed., Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1986), p. 320.

⁴⁹Levi Ross, letter to his parents, June 26, 1863.

⁵⁰Richard Puffer, letter to his sister, May 28, 1863, in the Richard Puffer collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

CHAPTER 6

Tramp, Tramp, Tramp

¹D. Duane Cummins and Daryl Hohweiler, eds., An Enlisted Soldier's View of the Civil War (West Lafayette, Indiana: Belle Publications, 1981), p. 42.

²Thomas Miller, letter to Mr. Benjamin Newton, January 8, 1862, in the Thomas Miller collection (SC 1050a) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

³Joseph Johnston, letter to his mother, June 8, 1863, in the Joseph Johnston collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois; and George Childress, diary entry for May 6, 1862, in the George Childress collection (SC 283) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁴William Marsh, letter to his father, September 26, 1862, in the William Marsh collection (SC 1002) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁵William Marsh, letter to his father, October 4, 1862.

⁶John Tallman, letter to his brother, November 27, 1862, in the John Tallman collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

⁷George Marsh, letter to his brother, November 29, 1862, in the George Marsh collection (SC 1000) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois; John Given, letter to his sister, November 2, 1862, in the John Given collection (SC 562) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois; and Robert Burdette, The Drums of the 47th (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1914), p. 200.

- ⁸George Marsh, letter to his brother, November 29, 1862.
- ⁹John Tallman, letter to his father, March 5, 1864.
- ¹⁰William Marsh, letter to his brother, September 15, 1862.
- ¹¹Cyrus Eyster, letter to his cousin, July 4, 1863, in the Lyman Needham collection (SC 1094) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.
- ¹²Day Elmore, letter to his parents, September 29, 1862, in the Day Elmore collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.
- ¹³Joseph Johnston, letter to his mother, September 5, 1863.
- ¹⁴John Tallman, letter to his sister, February 3, 1863.
- ¹⁵Thomas Miller, letter to Mr. Benjamin Newton, January 23, 1862, in the Thomas Miller collection (SC 1050a) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.
- ¹⁶Edward Crowell, letter to his mother, January 30, 1863, in the author's personal collection.
- ¹⁷Levi Ross, letter to his father, October 26, 1862, in the Levi Ross collection at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.
- ¹⁸John Tallman, letter to his brother, January 14, 1863.
- ¹⁹Cummins and Hohweiler, Enlisted, p. 11.
- ²⁰Thomas Miller, letter to Mr. Benjamin Newton, January 23, 1862.
- ²¹John Given, letter to his sister, November 2, 1862.
- ²²Henry Nurse, letter to his father, August 16, 1863, in the Henry Nurse collection (SC 2048) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.
- ²³Henry Nurse, letter to his father, October 30, 1862.
- ²⁴Joseph Johnston, letter to his mother, September 5, 1863.
- ²⁵Frank Crowell, letter to his father, December 27, 1863, in the author's personal collection.
- ²⁶Burdette, Drums, pp. 32-33.
- ²⁷Napolean Bartlett, letter to his brother, June 28, 1864, in the Napolean Bartlett collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.
- ²⁸Edward Crowell, letter to his parents, October 11, 1862.

²⁹Joseph Johnston, letter to his mother, May 23, 1863.

³⁰Day Elmore, letter to his parents, May 4, 1862.

³¹Day Elmore, letter to his parents, July 17, 1863.

³²Levi Ross, letter to his father, October 26, 1862.

³³Lyman Needham, letter to his brother and sister, September 14, 1862, in the Lyman Needham collection (SC 1094) at the Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois.

³⁴Edward Crowell, letter to his sister-in-law, August 23, 1863.

³⁵Edward Crowell, letter to his mother, January 23, 1864.

³⁶Frank Crowell, letter to his father, June 5, 1863.

³⁷Edward Crowell, letter to his mother, August 10, 1864.

³⁸Edward Crowell, letter to his mother, January 23, 1864.

³⁹John Sackett, letter to his brothers, November 6, 1861, in the John Sackett collection (SC 1318) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁴⁰Patricia L. Faust, ed., Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1986), p. 338.

⁴¹Day Elmore, letter to his parents, May 1, 1864.

⁴²Mary Ann Andersen, ed., The Civil War Diary of Allen Morgan Geer, Twentieth Regiment, Illinois Volunteers (Denver: Robert C. Appleman, 1977), p. 88.

⁴³This information was provided by Mr. Baxter Fite III, of Peoria, Illinois. All descriptions of uniform jackets assume that the coat fits the soldier.

⁴⁴Day Elmore, letter to his parents, May 24, 1863.

⁴⁵George Marsh, letter to his brother, April 19, 1863; and Lyman Needham, letter to his friends, December 6, 1861, letter to his brother and sister, July 26, 1863, and letter to his brother and sister, November 28, 1862.

⁴⁶Day Elmore, letter to his parents, May 24, 1863.

⁴⁷William Marsh, letter to his father, October 4, 1862.

⁴⁸Lyman Needham, letter to his brother and sister, August 26, 1863.

⁴⁹See: Austin Andrews, letter to his sister, August 16, 1863, in the Austin Andrews collection (SC 1706) at the Illinois State Historical Library,

Springfield, Illinois; Frank Crowell, letter to his mother, November 5, 1863; and Edward Crowell, letter to his parents, undated, presumably winter 1864. .

⁵⁰Joseph Johnston, letter to his mother, August 16, 1862.

⁵¹Austin Andrews, letter to his father, March 27, 1862.

⁵²Day Elmore, letter to his brother, March 18, 1863.

⁵³Lyman Needham, letter to his brother and sister, August 26, 1863.

⁵⁴Lyman Needham, letter to his brother and sister, July 18, 1863.

⁵⁵John Tallman, letter to his brother, March 13, 1864.

⁵⁶Frank Crowell, letter to his family, September 15, 1863.

⁵⁷Edward Crowell, letter to his mother, January 30, 1863.

⁵⁸Burdette, Drums, p. 43.

⁵⁹Ibid.; Levi Ross, diary entry for February 25, 1864; and Lyman Needham, letter to his brother and sister, March 3, 1863.

⁶⁰William Peter, letter to his mother, November 8, 1863, in the William and Samuel Peter collection (SC 1166) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁶¹Cummins and Hohweiller, Enlisted, pp. 37-38.

⁶²Joseph Johnston, letter to his father, August 8, 1861.

⁶³Levi Ross, diary entry for October 1, 1862.

⁶⁴Levi Ross, diary entry for October 6, 1862.

⁶⁵Levi Ross, diary entry for September 10-13, 1862.

⁶⁶Lyman Needham, letter to his friends, May 6, 1862.

⁶⁷Andersen, Geer, p. 95.

⁶⁸Cummins and Hohweiller, Enlisted, pp. 11-12.

⁶⁹William Marsh, letter to his brother, September 15, 1862.

⁷⁰Henry Nurse, letter to his father, July 8, 1864.

⁷¹Levi Ross, letter to his parents, September 13, 1863.

⁷²Levi Ross, diary entry for November 30, 1863.

⁷³Henry Nurse, letter to his father, October 13, 1864.

⁷⁴Burdette, Drums, pp. 15-16.

⁷⁵Frank Crowell, letter to his mother, April 29, 1863.

CHAPTER 7

The Last Full Measure

¹Thomas Miller, letter to Mr. Benjamin Newton, May 2, 1862, in the Thomas Miller collection (SC 1050a) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

²David King, Jr., letter to his mother, May 10, 1861, in the King family collection (Box #4) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

³William Marsh, letter to his father, March 21, 1862, in the William Marsh collection (SC 1002) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁴John Given, letter to his mother, November 9, 1862, in the John Given collection (SC 562) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁵Joseph Johnston, letter to his father, November ?, 1861, in the Joseph Johnston collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

⁶Lyman Needham, letter to his friends, April 23, 1862, in the Lyman Needham collection (SC 1094) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁷Thomas Miller, letter to Mr. Benjamin Newton, December 30, 1861.

⁸Thomas Miller, letter to Mr. Benjamin Newton, January 8, 1862.

⁹Levi Ross, diary entry for September 23, 1862, in the Levi Ross collection at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

¹⁰Levi Ross, diary entry for September 19, 1863.

¹¹Robert Burdette, The Drums of the 47th (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1914), pp. 91-93.

¹²Levi Ross, diary entry for September 19, 1863; and Burdette, Drums, p. 204.

¹³Henry Nurse, letter to his father, February 29, 1864, in the Henry Nurse collection (SC 2048) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

¹⁴William Peter, letter to his family, May 10, 1865, in the William and Samuel Peter collection (SC 1166) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

- ¹⁵William Peter, letter to his family, January 4, 1863.
- ¹⁶Joseph Johnston, letter to his mother, January 14, 1863.
- ¹⁷Frank Crowell, letter to his family, September 29, 1863, in the author's personal collection.
- ¹⁸Burdette, Drums, p. 79.
- ¹⁹Mary Ann Andersen, ed., The Civil War Diary of Allen Morgan Geer, Twentieth Regiment, Illinois Volunteers (Denver: Robert C. Appleman, 1977), p. 99.
- ²⁰Burdette, Drums, p. 63.
- ²¹Ibid., p. 64.
- ²²Andersen, Geer, p. 95.
- ²³Burdette, Drums, pp. 26-27.
- ²⁴George Marsh, letter to his brother, August 2, 1863, in the George Marsh collection (SC 1000) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.
- ²⁵Andersen, Geer, p. 18.
- ²⁶Levi Ross, diary entry for September 20, 1863.
- ²⁷John Sackett, letter to his brother, October 16, 1862, in the John Sackett collection (SC 1318) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.
- ²⁸Levi Ross, diary entry for September 20, 1863.
- ²⁹Thomas Miller, letter to Mr. Benjamin Newton, April 20, 1862.
- ³⁰Burdette, Drums, pp. 123-124.
- ³¹William Ross, letter to his father, April 10, 1862, in the William Ross collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.
- ³²Patricia L. Faust, ed., Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1986), p. 684.
- ³³D. Duane Cummins and Daryl Hohweiler, eds., An Enlisted Soldier's View of the Civil War (West Lafayette, Indiana: Belle Publications, 1981), p. 35; and Faust, Encyclopedia, p. 667.
- ³⁴Faust, Encyclopedia, p. 137.
- ³⁵Levi Ross, letter to his parents, October 6, 1863.
- ³⁶Frank Crowell, letter to his family, September 29, 1863.

³⁷This information can be found in: Brigadier General J.N. Reece, Report of The Adjutant General of the State of Illinois (Springfield: Phillips Bros. State Printers, 1901), volumes I-VI.

For William Marsh, see volume I, p. 603.

For George Marsh, see volume V, p. 649.

For Day Elmore, see volume III, pp. 25-27.

For John Sackett, see volume III, p. 26.

For Samuel Peter, see volume VI, p. 379.

For Lyman Needham, see volume III, p. 237.

See also, Frank Crowell, letter to his family, September 29, 1863; Andersen, Geer, p. 99; Henry Nurse, letter to his father, March 28, 1865; and Joseph Johnston, letter to his mother, October 1, 1863. The information on Edwin Sackett, David King, and James Snell is inadequate.

³⁸Frank Crowell, letter to his family, September 29, 1863.

³⁹William Peter, letter to his family, January 4, 1863.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Henry Nurse, letter to his father, June 29, 1864.

⁴²Cummins and Hohweiler, Enlisted, p. 63.

⁴³Thomas Miller, letter to Mr. Benjamin Newton, May 2, 1862.

⁴⁴Day Elmore, letter to his father, October 25, 1862, in the Day Elmore collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

⁴⁵Frank Crowell, letter to his family, September 29, 1863.

⁴⁶John Tallman, letter to his family, October 31, 1862, in the John Tallman collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

⁴⁷Joseph Johnston, letter to his brother, June 7, 1863.

⁴⁸Burdette, Drums, pp. 94-95.

⁴⁹William Peter, letter to his mother, August 10, 1864.

⁵⁰Levi Ross, letter to his parents, July 21, 1864.

⁵¹Henry Nurse, letter to his father, August 10, 1864.

⁵²Richard Puffer, letter to his sister, May 28, 1863, in the Richard Puffer collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

⁵³Andersen, Geer, p. 104.

⁵⁴Day Elmore, letter to his parents, June 1, 1864.

⁵⁵Levi Ross, letter to his parents, May 11, 1864.

⁵⁶Curtiss Judd, diary entry for August 7, 1864, in the Curtiss Judd collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

⁵⁷Day Elmore, letter to his parents, July 26, 1864.

⁵⁸Richard Puffer, letter to his sister, June 23, 1863.

⁵⁹Joseph Johnston, letter to his brother, June 7, 1863.

⁶⁰Andersen, Geer, p. 25.

⁶¹Henry Nurse, letter to his father, June 29, 1864.

⁶²Burdette, Drums, p. 50.

⁶³Levi Ross, diary entry for October 8, 1862.

⁶⁴Edward Crowell, letter to his mother, April 24, 1863.

⁶⁵Thomas Miller, letter to Mr. Benjamin Newton, February 18, 1862.

⁶⁶Levi Ross, diary entry for October 10, 1862.

⁶⁷Levi Ross, letter to his father, October 26, 1862.

CHAPTER 8

The Union Forever

¹Mary Ann Andersen, ed., The Civil War Diary of Allen Morgan Geer, Twentieth Regiment, Illinois Volunteers (Denver: Robert C. Appleman, 1977), p. 43.

²D. Duane Cummins and Daryl Hohweiler, eds., An Enlisted Soldier's View of the Civil War (West Lafayette, Indiana: Belle Publications, 1981), p. 40.

³William Marsh, letter to his mother, August 14, 1862, in the William Marsh collection (SC 1002) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁴Levi Ross, diary entry for February 3, 1863.

⁵Andersen, Geer, p. 56.

⁶Frank Crowell, letter to his mother, December 20, 1862, in the author's personal collection.

⁷William Ross, letter to his brother, September 30, 1862, in the William Ross collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

⁸William Ross, letter to his father, October 15, 1862.

⁹William Ross, letter to his father, November 2, 1862.

- ¹⁰William Ross, letter to his father, January 1, 1863.
- ¹¹William Ross, letter to his father, February 18, 1863.
- ¹²William Ross, letter to his father, February 2, 1863.
- ¹³Levi Ross, letter to his father, February 3, 1863.
- ¹⁴Levi Ross, diary entry for November 30, 1862.
- ¹⁵Thomas Miller, letter to Mr. Benjamin Newton, February 21, 1863, in the Thomas Miller collection (SC 1050a) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.
- ¹⁶William Marsh, letter to his father, August 14, 1862. The Illinois State Constitution during the war prohibited blacks from residing in the state.
- ¹⁷Napolean Bartlett, letter to his brother, August 2, 1864, in the Napolean Bartlett collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.
- ¹⁸John Given, letter to his sister, November 13, 1862, in the John Given collection (SC 562) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.
- ¹⁹Austin Andrews, letter to his sister, December 2, 1862, in the Austin Andrews collection (SC 1706) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.
- ²⁰Ibid..
- ²¹George Marsh, letter to his brother, December 25, 1863, in the George Marsh collection (SC 1000) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.
- ²²Samuel Peter, letter to his brother and sister, October 27, 1862, in the William and Samuel Peter collection (SC 1166) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.
- ²³Levi Ross, diary entry for March 23, 1863.
- ²⁴John Given, letter to his sister, November 13, 1862.
- ²⁵William Marsh, letter to his father, July 15, 1862.
- ²⁶Frank Crowell, letter to his father, December 27, 1863.
- ²⁷Andersen, Geer, p. 26.
- ²⁸George Marsh, letter to his brother, September 25, 1862.

²⁹Lyman Needham, letter to his brother and sister, August 20, 1862, in the Lyman Needham collection (SC 1094) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

³⁰Richard Puffer, letter to his sister, October 17, 1862, in the Richard Puffer collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

³¹Richard Puffer, letter to his sister, February 12, 1863.

³²Austin Andrews, letter to his sister, June 2, 1863.

³³William Peter, letter to his sister, August 27, 1863, in the William and Samuel Peter collection (SC 1166) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

³⁴William Ross, letter to his father, February 2, 1863.

³⁵William Ross, letter to his father, February 18, 1863.

³⁶Lyman Needham, letter to his brother and sister, March 6, 1863.

³⁷Edward Crowell, letter to his mother, May 1, 1865, in the author's personal collection.

³⁸Samuel Peter, letter to his sister, October 6, 1862.

³⁹Henry Nurse, letter to his father, November 30, 1862, in the Henry Nurse collection (SC 2048) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁴⁰Henry Nurse, letter to his father, April 3, 1863.

⁴¹Day Elmore, letter to his parents, November 8, 1864, in the Day Elmore collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

⁴²Levi Ross, letter to his parents, November 3, 1864.

⁴³Cyrus Eyster, letter to his cousin, April 6, 1863, in the Lyman Needham collection (SC 1094) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁴⁴Frank Crowell, letter to his father, March 2, 1863.

⁴⁵Lyman Needham, letter to his brother and sister, April 3, 1863.

⁴⁶Levi Ross, letter to his parents, June 26, 1863.

⁴⁷Andersen, Geer, p. 106.

⁴⁸Lyman Needham, letter to his brother and sister, June 13, 1863.

⁴⁹Day Elmore, letter to his parents, February 3, 1864.

⁵⁰David King, Jr., letter to his sister, June 16, 1861, in the King family collection (Box #4) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁵¹William Peter, letter to his sister, September 23, 1863.

⁵²Thomas Miller, letter to Mr. Benjamin Newton, February 10, 1862.

⁵³Levi Ross, diary entry for April 12, 1863.

⁵⁴Richard Puffer, letter to his sister, October 17, 1862.

⁵⁵Levi Ross, diary entry for November 30, 1862.

⁵⁶Levi Ross, letter to his sister, March 3, 1863.

⁵⁷Henry Nurse, letter to his father, March 30, 1864.

⁵⁸Lyman Needham, letter to his brother and sister, December 17, 1862.

⁵⁹Richard Puffer, letter to his sister, December 20, 1863.

⁶⁰William Peter, letter to his parents, January 8, 1863.

⁶¹Day Elmore, letter to his parents, February 3, 1864.

⁶²Roy P. Basler, ed., The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln, VII (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1953), p. 23.

CHAPTER 9

A Brother's War

¹Robert Burdette, The Drums of the 47th (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1914), p. 22.

²D. Duane Cummins and Daryl Hohweiler, eds., An Enlisted Soldier's View of the Civil War (West Lafayette, Indiana: Belle Publications, 1981), pp. 4, 48, 65.

³Ibid., p. 48.

⁴Levi Ross, letter to his parents, October 6, 1863, and letter to his parents, May 4, 1864, both in the Levi Ross collection at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁵Levi Ross, letter, letter to his parents, December 16, 1864.

⁶John Given, letter to his mother, November 9, 1862, in the John Given collection (SC 562) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁷Edward Crowell, letter to his mother, February 10, 1863, in the author's personal collection.

⁸Cummins and Hohweiler, Enlisted, p. 5.

⁹Day Elmore, letter to his parents, August 7, 1863, in the Day Elmore collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

¹⁰William Peter, letter to his sister, August 27, 1863, in the William and Samuel Peter collection (SC 1166) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

¹¹Levi Ross, diary entry for December 3, 1863.

¹²Mary Ann Andersen, ed., The Civil War Diary of Allen Morgan Geer, Twentieth Regiment, Illinois Volunteers (Denver: Robert C. Appleman, 1977), p. 71.

¹³Ibid., p. 72.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 33.

¹⁵Cummins and Hohweiler, Enlisted, p. 9.

¹⁶Edwin Sackett, letter to his family, December 27, 1861, in the John Sackett collection (SC 1318) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

¹⁷William Ross, letter to his father, April 10, 1862, in the William Ross collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

¹⁸Levi Ross, letter to his parents, July 21, 1864.

¹⁹Burdette, Drums, p. 128.

²⁰Ibid., p. 129.

²¹Richard Puffer, letter to his sister, May 28, 1863, in the Richard Puffer collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

²²Henry Nurse, letter to his father, June 20, 1864, in the Henry Nurse collection (SC 2048) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

²³Day Elmore, letter to his parents, July 2, 1864.

²⁴Day Elmore, letter to his parents, August 7, 1863.

²⁵Lyman Needham, letter to his brother and sister, August 3, 1863, in the Lyman Needham collection (SC 1094) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

²⁶Frank Crowell, letter to his father, February 1, 1864, in the author's personal collection.

²⁷Andersen, Geer, p. 105.

²⁸Edward Crowell, letter to his mother, January 12, 1863.

²⁹Richard Puffer, letter to his sister, October 17, 1863.

³⁰Henry Nurse, letter to his father, June 15, 1864.

³¹Levi Ross, diary entry for January 2, 1863.

³²John Given, letter to his mother, November 26, 1862.

³³Levi Ross, letter to his parents, January 25, 1863.

³⁴Edward Crowell, letter to his mother, January 23, 1864.

³⁵Edward Crowell, letter to his mother, March 4, 1863.

³⁶Frank Crowell, letter to his father, March 2, 1863.

³⁷Andersen, Geer, p. 41.

³⁸Joseph Johnston, letter to his mother, March 31, 1862, and letter to his mother, August 16, 1862, both in the Joseph Johnston collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

³⁹Levi Ross, letter to his father, September 16, 1862.

⁴⁰John Sackett, letter to his brother, June 10, 1862, in the John Sackett collection (SC 1318) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁴¹John Sackett, letter to his brother, August 17, 1862.

⁴²George Marsh, letter to his brother, January 14, 1864, in the George Marsh collection (SC 1000) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁴³John Tallman, letter to his brother, November 27, 1862, in the John Tallman collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

⁴⁴Joseph Johnston, letter to his mother, May ?, 1862.

⁴⁵Edward Crowell, letter to his mother, May 1, 1865.

⁴⁶William Marsh, letter to his father, July 15, 1862, in the William Marsh collection (SC 1002) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁴⁷Joseph Johnston, letter to his mother, May ?, 1862.

⁴⁸Frank Crowell, letter to his father, June 5, 1863.

⁴⁹John Tallman, letter to his sister, March 25, 1863.

- 50 John Tallman, letter to his sister, October 25, 1863.
- 51 Frank Crowell, letter to his mother, April 29, 1863.
- 52 George Marsh, letter to his brother, May 19, 1863.
- 53 Edward Crowell, letter to his mother, March 4, 1863.
- 54 John Given, letter to his brother, October 14, 1862.
- 55 Frank Crowell, letter to his mother, April 7, 1863.
- 56 Lyman Needham, letter to his friends, November 9, 1862.
- 57 Edward Crowell, letter to his mother, May 23, 1864.
- 58 Cummins and Hohweiler, Enlisted, p. 8.
- 59 Day Elmore, letter to his parents, April 14, 1863.
- 60 Frank Crowell, letter to his mother, April 23, 1865.
- 61 Curtiss Judd, diary entry for January 31, 1864, in the Curtiss Judd collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.
- 62 Edward Crowell, letter to his mother, July, 22, 1864.
- 63 Frank Crowell, letter to his father, June 26, 1864.
- 64 Lyman Needham, letter to his brother and sister, August 20, 1862.
- 65 Frank Crowell, "I'm Off For Charlston," January 23, 1864.
- 66 Henry Nurse, letter to his father, November 30, 1862.
- 67 Austin Andrews, letter to his sister, December 2, 1862, in the Austin Andrews collection (SC 1706) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.
- 68 William Peter, letter to his sister, August 27, 1863.
- 69 Henry Nurse, letter to his father, November 30, 1863.
- 70 John Tallman, letter to his sister, April 12, 1864.
- 71 Austin Andrews, letter to his sister, December 2, 1862.
- 72 Henry Upton, letter to Mr. John Marsh, December 16, 1862, in the George Marsh collection (SC 1000) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.
- 73 Levi Ross, diary entry for November 8, 1863.
- 74 Andersen, Geer, pp. 37-38.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 72.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 73.

⁷⁷Patricia L. Faust, ed., Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1986), pp. 603-604.

⁷⁸Andersen, Geer, p. 102.

⁷⁹Henry Upton, letter to Mr. John Marsh, December 16, 1862.

⁸⁰William Marsh, letter to his family, February 17, 1863.

⁸¹Levi Ross, letter to his father, January 6, 1863.

⁸²William Peter, letter to his mother, May 11, 1865.

CHAPTER 10

State Sovereignty, National Unity

¹Day Elmore, letter to his parents, September 17, 1862, in the Day Elmore collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

²D. Duane Cummins and Daryl Hohweiler, eds., An Enlisted Soldier's View of the Civil War (West Lafayette, Indiana: Belle Publications, 1981), pp. 9 and 52.

³William Peter, letter to his mother, November 23, 1863, in the William and Samuel Peter collection (SC 1166) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁴Lyman Needham, letter to his brother and sister, May 10, 1863, in the Lyman Needham collection (SC 1094) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁵William Ross, letter to his father, February 18, 1863, in the William Ross collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

⁶Mary Ann Andersen, ed., The Civil War Diary of Allen Morgan Geer, Twentieth Regiment, Illinois Volunteers (Denver: Robert C. Appleman, 1977), p. 52.

⁷Ibid., p. 53.

⁸Day Elmore, letter to his parents, May 24, 1863.

⁹Levi Ross, diary entry for May 6, 1863, in the Levi Ross collection at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

¹⁰Edward Crowell, letter to his mother, August 9, 1863, in the author's personal collection.

- ¹¹Andersen, Geer, p. 113.
- ¹²Henry Nurse, letter to his father, June 7, 1864, in the Henry Nurse collection (SC 2048) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.
- ¹³Frank Crowell, letter to his mother, November 5, 1863, in the author's personal collection.
- ¹⁴Henry Nurse, letter to his father, September 10, 1864.
- ¹⁵Levi Ross, letter to his sister, January 24, 1864.
- ¹⁶Robert Burdette, The Drums of the 47th (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1914), p. 176.
- ¹⁷Andersen, Geer, p. 25.
- ¹⁸Joseph Johnston, letter to his mother, May ?, 1862, in the Joseph Johnston collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.
- ¹⁹Henry Upton, letter to Mr. John Marsh, December 16, 1862, in the George Marsh collection (SC 1000) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.
- ²⁰Lyman Needham, letter to his brother, June 6, 1862.
- ²¹Joseph Johnston, letter to his mother, September 5, 1863.
- ²²Henry Nurse, letter to his father, December 17, 1864.
- ²³Patricia L. Faust, ed., Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1986), p. 378.
- ²⁴John Sackett, letter to his brother, September 4, 1862, in the John Sackett collection (SC 1318) at the Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois.
- ²⁵Day Elmore, letter to his parents, September 29, 1862.
- ²⁶Day Elmore, letter to his father, August 23, 1862.
- ²⁷Austin Andrews, letter to his sister, August 16, 1863, in the Austin Andrews collection (SC 1706) at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.
- ²⁸Frank Crowell, letter to his mother, January 15, 1864.
- ²⁹Levi Ross, letter to his father, March 25, 1863.
- ³⁰Frank Crowell, letter to his mother, January 15, 1864.
- ³¹Lyman Needham, letter to his brother and sister, March 6, 1863.

³²Burdette, Drums, p. 13.

³³Joseph Johnston, letter to his father, November 3, 1861.

³⁴Day Elmore, letter to his father, August 23, 1862.

³⁵John Sackett, letter to his brothers, November 6, 1861.

³⁶Day Elmore, letter to his brother, October 25, 1861.

³⁷Lyman Needham, letter to his brother and sister, September 24, 1861.

³⁸Day Elmore, letter to his parents, January 8, 1863.

³⁹Joseph Johnston, letter to his mother, January 14, 1863.

⁴⁰Edward Crowell, letter to his mother, September 11, 1864.

⁴¹Napolean Bartlett, letter to his brother, July 22, 1864, in the Napolean Bartlett collection at the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

⁴²Lyman Needham, letter to his brother and sister, July 18, 1863.

⁴³Day Elmore, letter to his parents, May 24, 1863.

⁴⁴This information was provided in the collection at the Chicago Historical Society. He was born February 2, 1843 at State and Lake in Chicago.

⁴⁵Day Elmore's discharge for his first term, issued April 28, 1864, stated that he was born in Trumansburg, New York. In his application for membership in the Military Order of the Loyal Legion, dated January 19, 1903, Levi Ross stated that he was born in Eden, New York. Both manuscripts are part of the respective collections.

⁴⁶Lyman Needham, letter to his brother and sister, August 4, 1861; and United States Census of 1860, state of Illinois, Ogle County, Marion Township.

⁴⁷Cummins and Hohweiler, Enlisted, p. xix.

⁴⁸Day Elmore, letter to his brother, April 3, 1864.

⁴⁹Levi Ross, letter to his parents, January 25, 1863.

⁵⁰Cummins and Hohweiler, Enlisted, p. 34.

⁵¹Burdette, Drums, pp. 136-137.

Glossary

Army: (1) All of the land forces of a nation, such as the United States Army. (2) The largest form of military organization. Large armies contained several **corps**. Federal armies, such as the Army of the Potomac, were commanded by **major generals**. Important armies in which Illinois soldiers served were: the Army of the Tennessee, the Army of the Cumberland, the Army of the Ohio, and the Army of Georgia.

Battalion: (1) Informal, a collection of two or more **companies**. (2) Formal, an infantry unit consisting of fewer than ten companies. All **regiments** were battalions (informal); not every battalion was a regiment (formal). See: Regiment, Company.

Battery: The basic unit of organization for artillery. For Federal field artillery, usually six guns, plus the required limbers and caissons.

Brigade (abbreviated Brig.): An organization of two or more **regiments**, usually about three to five regiments. Federal brigades were commanded by **colonels** or **brigadier generals**.

Captain (abbreviated Capt.): A commissioned officer, above a **lieutenant**, and below a **major**. **Companies** were supposed to be commanded by a captain. See: Company.

Cavalry: Mounted troops trained to fight on horseback. They were armed with sabers, pistols, and carbines. Mounted infantry rode horses but were trained to fight on foot. They were armed with rifles and bayonets.

Colonel (abbreviated Col.): A commissioned officer in rank above a **lieutenant colonel** and below a **brigadier general**. Colonels were to lead **regiments** and frequently commanded **brigades**. See: Regiment, Brigade.

Company (abbreviated Co.): Volunteer **regiments** had 10 companies, lettered A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, K. Companies were supposed to contain 100 men: one **captain**, two **lieutenants**, five **sergeants**, eight **corporals**, and 84 **privates**. After deaths from combat and disease, and discharges due to poor health, most companies had much less than 100 men. Many companies never began full. Recruits enlisted for a specific company of a regiment and almost always remained in that company. See: Regiment.

Corps: An organization of two to four **divisions**. Corps were the second largest unit of organization after **armies**. Federal corps were given a Roman numeral to identify them and were usually commanded by **major generals**.

Corporal: A non-commissioned officer between a **private** and a **sergeant**. Identified by two chevrons on the sleeve.

Division: A unit consisting of two or more (usually three) **brigades**. Federal divisions were usually commanded by **brigadier generals**.

General: The highest officer rank consisting of three grades in the Federal Army. The highest was lieutenant general and was signified by three stars. (Grant was the only lieutenant general.) The middle grade, major general, was signified by two stars. The lowest were the brigadier generals. They wore one star. Regardless of grade, all were addressed as "general."

Lieutenant (Abbreviated Lieut., Lieu., etc.): The lowest rank of commissioned officers. Each **company** was to have a first and a second lieutenant.

Lieutenant Colonel: Each **regiment** was to have a lieutenant colonel as a second in command. If the **colonel** of a regiment was lost, the regiment would be commanded by the lieutenant colonel, who frequently was not promoted to colonel.

Major: Each **regiment** had one major, whose duties were obscure. Majors assisted the **colonel**.

Picket: (1) Noun, an advance guard of a larger force. Pickets were to prevent surprise attacks. (2) Verb, the act of being a guard, eg "picketing a camp."

Private: The lowest grade of the enlisted men.

Regiment (Abbreviated Reg. or Regt.): The basic unit for Civil War organization. Volunteer (as opposed to U.S. Regular) infantry regiments were to have ten **companies** each of 100 men. Most regiments were much smaller once they had been in service for a while. Veteran regiments usually numbered between 200 to 400 men. The most important aspect of regiments is integrity. The soldiers of a regiment were kept together. **Brigades, divisions, and corps** may have been rearranged, but regiments stayed as one unit. A soldier might serve in a number of brigades, divisions and corps, but be in only one regiment. Regiments were organized by states and given a number. A Federal regiment was known by its state and number.

Sergeant: The highest non-commissioned officer identified by three chevrons on the sleeve. Sergeants were responsible for much of the drill. First sergeants performed the administrative duties of a **company**. **Captains** led a company in battle; the sergeants, in practice, ran a company while in camp.

Skirmishers: Troops who formed a loose, open-order line in advance of the main battle line. Generally used by the attacker to determine the enemy's strength before large quantities of troops were committed to action.

Straggler: A soldier who did not keep up with his regiment on a march.

Sutler: Merchants licensed by the government to sell food, clothing and other goods to the soldiers. Generally, each **regiment** had its own sutler who would extend credit to the members of that regiment.

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