

Alexander Sterrett Paxton Diaries : Volume Five
July 15, 1862 – June 26, 1863
Transcribed Winter/Spring 2012

Cover Reads:

Commences July 15th /62
Alex S. Paxton's Book
Strictly private
L.H. Volunteers
4th Va

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Inside Front Cover Reads:

Alex S. Paxton's Book
L.H.V. 4th Va. Reg
Strickly private too
Camp near Winchester
Nov 23d 1861
"Pro Aris et Focis"

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1st Page Reads:

Alex. S. Paxton's Book
Camp at White Oak Swamp New Kent Co.
July 9th 1862
"Liberty Hall Volunteers"
Co. I 4th Va. Regt
"Stonewall Brigade"
"General Jackson's Army"

Pg. 1

Camp near Richmond

July 15th 1862

We had just gotten into regular camp & fixed up to some extent, in our nice grounds 3 miles below Ron the Mechanicksville road. Had been playing the washerwoman tailor &c, & were sprucing up again. On 14th McCoughtry & myself went to the city, to purchase various necessary articles. But imagine our surprise & regret, when on returning found the brigade had orders to leave in the morning & also that our Company had to go on picket. After our days walk thro' R- we little felt like going on picket. But consolation was offered as 'twas only about 400 yds. At early dawn on the 15th this morning revillee beat calling the soldiers from his couch of repose. Soon after sunrise took up line of march, took cars in R on Broad St & came to this point where the bridge over the Pamunkey was burned by the Yankees some time ago.

Pg. 2

As we came thro' Richmond, we were cheered on by the fair ladies who lined the walks of Broad. When twas' known that Jackson's Army & especially the old "Stonewall" was passing through, great was the enthusiasm. Ladies smiled upon us, & the aged bade us "God speed," in the glorious cause of our adoption. And welldid our brigade from the Cols to the humblest private deserve it all. These were men in our ranks who helped roll back the tide of battle at Manassas, who had toiled on the fields of Port Republic, Kernstown, &c in the Valley & who had again been ordered from the valley to help drive the foe from "the walls of our Capital. Tis now thought we are going back to the Valley or towards it at any rate. Hope we'll get back there where we can get something to eat, "something to drink", something to wear &c. The country around R- is eaten out, so cheer boys! Cheer for the good old Valley.

Pg. 3

Camp at Louisa Court House

July 17th 1862

Staid all night at the burnt bridge & took the cars soon in the morning. Arrived at this place yesterday evening & are camped in a beautiful piece of woods. Will wait here for our wagons for our two days rations have vanished. On these hot days, tis much more pleasant thundering a-long on a train than "plodding our wary way over the dusty roads. Had heavy rain on evening & night of 15th. I slept in a stable by a horse & lying on top of a hogshead & was glad of the place to keep dry &c. Ewells division is ahead of ours & are stopping at Gordonsville. Expect will go up there when our wagons get up & get some more "grub." This country all along here is very poor indeed, so poor that a dog in many places can hardly get a foot-hold to bark.

Pg. 4

Camp near Gordonsville

July 21st 1862

Left L.C.H. on morning of 18th & took the R. Road not cars, & marched to this place "Twould not have done for the "Stone Wall" to have rode all the way from R; that would have spoiled us. We are all packed up & ready to march this, Monday-morning, in the direction of Madison C- House I guess as are on that road. Wish we'd go back to the Valley. Ewell's division is passing us now, as ours will go in the rear of that. Since left R- blackberries have constituted One of principal constituents of our food. Risk our cooking reputation on a fire now & than. This is the anniversary of Manassas. Today one year ago we met & rolled back the tide of Yankee invasion on the plains of Manassas. This day also calls back to mind dear friends who there fell to rise no more.

Pg. 5

Camp 4 miles from Gordonsville

July 23^d 1862

Well moved away from our camp near G- on the morning of 21st. But contrary to our expectations only marched about 3 miles, when went into camp. Our Reg't is camped in a beautiful piece of woods, near good water &c. Have established a regular Camp with its daily routine of duties, drills roll-call &c. Our O. Sergt Raymond has gone off on sick list. I'm acting in his place. now & keeps me quite busy too As this is a central point we may stay here some time. Hope we will. As need rest & money too, since are talking about paying us off. Wish we'd gone up nearer Stanardsville to camp. My reason for such is think tis better & nicer place up that way &c &c. Tis quite gloomy this morning & may rain soon or later, should a storm come some of us w'd get beautifully ducked.

Pg. 6

Gordonsville

July 26th Midday? 1862

Before dawn this morning we were aroused by the roll of the drum & ordered to cook two day's rations. Did not move however until about 8 o'clock. 'Twas very warm & we marched back to this place where we are now resting for a time in a grove. Whither are going don't know. Have only conjectures. Well we were just beginning to enjoy the sweets of camp-life. For we were encamped in a beautiful grove, good spring near, & seemed fixed for a considerable rest. But some unforeseen circumstance broke in to mar our rest. We always hate to leave a regular established Camp, as it almost seems like leaving a kind of home. Home, tho' in its rude comforts & rustic appearance still gives us rest from our weary marching &c.

Pg. 7

Camp near Gordonsville

July 28th 1862

On evening of 26th we all were ordered back to our old camp. We were glad enough to do so & it seemed as we were going back to our old houses. The Yankees advanced about 2 miles towards Orange C.H. & that was cause of our being ordered out. However had a skirmish there (cavalry) & we succeeded in driving them back. They then fell back 10 miles below Orange C.H. To-day Suddarth & myself went out foraging & got abundance of what we wanted – butter – lard &c. Walked about 10 miles from Camp up into Albemarle County was pretty thoroughly foraged by the soldiers. Things are dreadful high. Eggs \$100 per doz, onions 75 cts &c We were due back at camp by 2 p.m. yet owing to the distance we went didn't make our appearance until about 7p.m.

Pg. 8

Camp in Louisa Co.

July 31st 1862

On the morning of 29th were ordered to pack up & move. We knew not whither. But soon saw the head of the column turn toward G- & knew we were going either towards R- or Orange C.H. Marched thro G & took the R. road. But great was the joy when turned off at right angles to R-road, towards Green Spring in Louisa. So came to this camp 6 miles from G, near Mechanicsville in Green Spring neighborhood, called the garden spot of this section of the Country. Have fixed up at this Camp & only hope we'll stay here for some time. Yet 'tis sort of a doubtful case. Have been living tolerably well of late, sugar, coffee, butter, &c. Have been reinforced of late from Richmond, how many don't know.

Pg. 9

Camp Garnett, Louisa Co.

Aug 4th 1862

Are still in our Camp & have no idea where will move. At any moment may be called out tho. For last night (Sunday) about 12 o'clock, here comes the unwelcome orders to have Rev'ee at 3 ½ in morning & be ready to march by sunrise. That news had a slight tendency to disturb our slumbers for a time at least. Yet it amounted to nothing, for did not march. 'Twas only a precautionary order, as the enemy in the evening made some demonstration towards G. by way of Orange C. House. Gen. Pope will provoke old Jack so by his raids, that he will go down some of these days & give the "old chick," a sound thrashing. Had heavy rain yesterday evening & some ducking too as these temporary shelters are not of much force against a storm.

Pg. 10

Camp near Gordonsville, on Madison C. House

Aug 7th 62

On evening of 5th, got orders to leave our camp (Garnett?) in Louisa Co. of course we thought the Yankees were coming doublequick, or else we were going to advance on them at some speed. That was a good camp, as water, apples &c were convenient. Apple dumplings were quite popular in camp. Also had a splendid showerbath at mill close by, which was very essential to the troops. 'Twas awful hot almost suffocating. Yet imagine our gratification when we marched through G- & learned that we were going back to our own Camp. So we are once more domesticated here in our old Quarters, it almost seemed like coming back to an old home. Our company is increasing. One recruit yesterday Wm Preston. Also absentees are fast coming in.

Pg. 11

Near the Rapidan river Madison Co.

On road leading to Culpeper .H.

Aug 8th 1862

On evening of 7th got orders to move at 4 p.m. having previously been ordered to cook two day's rations. Got orders before they were cooked. Took Orange C-H road & camped in grove last night about two miles above the C. House. The wagons were left behind. The whole army is on the move. Ewell's division before ours & Hill's behind. Passed thro the C.H. by sunrise this morning. 'Tis a beautiful little village. There we took Culpeper C.H. road. Waded the Rapidan minus shoes, socks, with pants rolled up. And have halted here in the woods to wait for our wagons & cook two days rations. 'Tis no doubt a grand move against

the enemy whose largest force is at Cu'per C.H. Our army seems willing if not eager for a fight, as have marched in the path of victory so long, that they feel checked since the victory at R-We may fight sooner or later. But_____when it will, we will do our best to place our country and our country's cause in (hands?) of the God of battles.

Pg. 12

On picket near Rapidan Station

Aug 11th 1862

{Battle in Culpeper Co. Aug 9th}

Battle of Cedar Run

On the morning of the 9th we were aroused before daylight by the fire of the pickets in direction of M'd C.H. At first 'twas only a few random shots but when a volley broke upon our ears, every man jumped up. Our picket lines only extended about 1½ miles in that direction & the Yankee calvary made a dash on them, but were repulsed. Of course we thought the whole Yankee army might be making a flank movement on us & expected to be into it hot & heavy by daylight. But then the mystery was solved, that 'Twas only a few of enemy's scouting calvary trying to ascertain our position. About Sun-rise we moved on down the road towards the C.H. distant 14 miles. The day was excessively warm, so had to move very slowly. Having marched

Pg. 13

about 7 miles came on Yankee pickets. They were in position, had their batteries planted & were awaiting to be attacked, altho' they came down here to overrun our country. They had chosen a good position. About 4 PM the fight commenced. Ewell was on our right & Jackson's old division fought on center & left. The cannonading was heavy in the opening of the fight. And Carpenter's & Poague's batteries, who were attached to our brigade did good work. Our brigade went into action on left of 2nd Brig & our Regton extreme left of our brigade. We came upon Yankees, they in a field & we in the woods. We fired a volley into them & they fell back to a piece of woods. We advanced firing & they still fell back. Our Reg't having got before the others of the brigade was halted & moved further over to the right, so as to form on line. Then we all moved up our line. The enemy then opened fire on us from behind fences on edge of woods. They also suc

Pg. 14

-ceeded to some extent in flanking our left. The fire to which we were now exposed was very hot. So had to fall back a short distance under cover of brow of gentle rise. Yankees then advanced. But we soon formed again & moved forward. We met the enemy & poured such deadly volleys into there ranks that they fell back across the wheat field in a hurry yet some of them fought pretty well firing back as they went with a dogged spirit. Every wheat shock seemed to have half dozen Yankees behind them, & as we advanced they would hustle out & "skedaddle" back to the woods. In the mean time the battle surged in centre & on the right with great fury. The enemy surrounded the 2nd Brigade, (they?) had to cut their way out. 'Twas now about dark & the enemy were falling back at all points. We were pursuing them slowly. At this moment, Gen Jackson rode along the lines, & on reaching the old brigade of his choice, he rode forward before us

Pg. 15

with shouts that made that blood stained field quake. The 1st brig. moved on after their Gen. The enemy had the cover of the woods to fall back under, so we had to sop the pursuit. We slept on the battle field. They kept up a cannonade a good par of the night. Next morning I walked over part of field and the slaughter on enemy's side was Heavy & ours considerable too.

On picket near Rapidan Station

Aug 11th 62

On yesterday morning our division fell back a few miles this side of battle field, leaving Hill & Ewell there. In the evening our Regt was sent out on picket some 3 miles on road leading to Rap Station. Have good fare here, potatoes, corn & apples. Is not much danger of Yankees coming in here. Tis only a precautionary move.

Pg. 16

Old Camp near Gordonsville near

Col Magraders Aug 12th 62

To day the whole Army fell back from the battle field for reasons known to the Gen. Our division came back to the old camps we had left. The day was excessively hot. I was taken sick on way and fell back. Hence, got up about dusk. It seemed like coming back to an old home to get here once again. But guess will not stay here long.

In same old camp

Aug 20th 1862

Well the Army left this morning for another grand expedition. All the sick were left behind & I was so unfortunate as to be left too. T'was quite a good place for those not very sick, but not so good for the severe cases. Plenty of fresh air, good water &c. Am going to draw rations, get tent, & fix up somewhat comfortably.

Pg. 17

Same old Camp

Aug 27th 1862

Well am still here. Have been quite sick too, having had a spell of the Jaundice. But a getting much better, tho am quite weak. Were three others of our Co. besides myself left. Godwin, Moore S. & Roberts. The two latter have gone to Regt. The surgeon – Dr. White of 27th is a good one & kinder to his patients than most of the Army surgeons. Yet he (in accordance with his orders) is very strict. Will not allow any one to leave, unless with a written pass. Have roll call twice a day. The citizens are very kind to “the poor soldiers,” only charging most exorbitant prices for every thing they sell. Altho tis a very wealthy community. Yet the sight of a confederate (V?) gives a fresh impulse to their gratitude & their philanthropy knows no bounds when told that the highest market prices will be paid them

Pg. 18

some of these would be aristocrats seem to look down with more contempt on a private soldier than on a negro. Our men brave noble & true to their old country Our men some of whom have been raised in greater luxury & refinement than they. And who have sacrificed their home interests, severed the tenderest ties, to come & fight even for these pitiful creatures who scorn to speak to them. Is a Mr Terrill living near the camp whose family play the contempt for the soldier with quite a perfection. One morning soon after we were left here, Godwin & myself went over there to get breakfast, think we would get a nice cup of coffee & something we could relish better than our rough Camp fare. I asked the lady of the house & she said “yes” if we would wait of course she meant for second table. I was so hungry that

Pg. 19

concluded to “wait” anyhow, as saw a nice dish of honey on table, consoling myself with the thought of tasting its sweets. The first table graced with some “officers”; ate & talked together about an age; & then the 2nd table was ready, But Lo! The honey was gone, dish & all & the coffee pot had flown away! Cold stark cold bread butter & strong buttermilk tempted our sick appetite. I was so mad that at first concluded not to eat any at all. But not knowing when we were going to get anything else did eat a little. “How much do we owe for our breakfast,” asked G. “50 cts apiece,” sang out the darkey who presided at our meal. If that’s a sample of Eastern Va hospitality I want none of it. Are only two real kind families in these parts, Messrs Goss & Newman. Will give Mr Graves a little credit even if he does sell sweet milk at 25 cts per quart to make even change.

Pg. 20

Same Camp

Aug 30th 1862

Well I’ve been on a visit to Sylvan Seminary at Dr. Early’s. I tried to get permission from Dr. White to go & stay a week or so then knowing that could recruit faster there than elsewhere. For who couldn’t regain lost spirits & health better amid a bevy of charming schoolgirls than in a sick camp or rather Hospt. Nonne est illud verum? (To _____ (in Greek)) However as the Dr. according to his instructions couldn’t let me go. I concluded I run the blockade & inspite of two roll calls a day go anyhow. So got Tom (alias Godwin) to answer for me at calls & on morning of 28th bright & early I got a pass to go after mutton & be absent 2 hours Walked about 2 ½ miles as far as could & borrowed a horse from Mr. Newman Who was so kind as to lend me one.

Pg. 21

Bucephalus, carried me high & dry & reached the Seminary about dinner time. I relished the ride very much & know it helped me, after being confined in the Camp so long found them all well, the girls as usual in the bloom of health & beauty of youth. For were about 9 of them there. Refugees who couldn’t get home. I staid until the next evening & you may know I enjoyed my visit on various accounts. Cousin Hannah was not at home, a circumstance which I regretted. Cousin Lizzie loaded me with “good things” to take back to Camp including a bottle of wine. I got to Mr. Newman’s about dusk. He insisted on my staying all night which Mr. Terrill would not have dreamed of doing. But to came on to Camp, feeling better than ever & as tho’ wouldn’t have taken 50\$ for my trip or its pleasure. Next morning Tom & I broached our bottle & each drank to the health of his favorite lass. Didn’t miss me from roll call & “all’s well.”

Pg. 22

In same old Camp

Sept 3d 1862

Tis getting quite cool at nights now, much like the fall of the year. A few “__ & yellow leaves,” emblems of the coming winter, are beginning to fall sadly from the tree. Well our army has been doing some hard fighting in the neighborhood of the old field of Manassas & routed them. That seems destined to be consecrated as the “dark & bloody ground.” Our brigade was in it hot & heavy & suffered badly. Our Co. had seven wounded, two of whom mortally ie. W- Preston of Lex & J. M’Coughtry of Jeff-County. Lt. Strickler wounded in left arm. D. Ruff in wrist, E. Meade badly in arm. Chas Brooks in ankle, Bob Dunlap arm broken. All rest well now. In old battle of M- we had 7 killed & now in late battle of M- 7 gallant boys! Their blood will not be shed in vain!

Pg. 23**Martinsburg Oct 21st 1862**

Quite a long interval has elapsed since last wrote on these pages. Have been home on sick list since. Got home about the 8th of Sept. Left G- on 5th. Was quite sick for a couple of weeks or so after getting home. But then began to recruit. Was fortunate in getting home ever way, plenty of good apples, watermelons &c. I missed the trip into Md., which regretted very much. Lost our Capt. H.A. White at battle on Saturday at Manassas. A sad loss to our company, to his friends, to the church & a loss to his country. Killed W. Preston & J. McCoughtry two good & gallant boys. The plains of Manassas seem to be ill fated to our Co. Lost 7 killed there the 1st battle & 3 the last & many wounded. But will mention these movements in another place -

Pg. 24

Mack my bro was in all those battles at M- but not at Sharpsburg. As I was coming down the Valley met him below Mt. Jackson. He was a paroled prisoner taken at Hospt in Shepherdstown where he had been sick & there was waiting on S-Moore one of our boys badly wounded at Sharpsburg. He looked as tho wanted to get home badly. Roberts & Lam were wounded at S’burg. Jones the only non-commissioned officer in Co- took 4 into the fight, & came out with 2. He went all around with the Co- & as a reward for his gallantry &c, he was elected 3d Lieut. He deserved it. I came to my Uncle’s near Staunton in a private conveyance & fortunately he was just coming down to bring home a wounded soldier Carlisle R. So rode in buggy with him as far as New Town 9 miles

Pg. 25

from W. Staid two days & nights in W- seeing my friends. Saw “Bonnie Eloise” Got to the company on morning of 17th. They were at Bunker Hill 10 miles this side of W. They had a fight on preceeding day down at Kearney’s Station on Balt & O. R. Road. They, ie our brigade was sent down to tear it up. The Yankees poured in overpowering numbers upon them, & they had to retreat after a little fight. We lost another good soldier boy in our Co- Dorman Moore of Rockbridge Raymond (Sergt) & corps Davidson & Johnson were wounded. They seem determined to cut up our brigade & especially our Company. Strickler is our Capt now. On evening of 17th left the camp near B- Hill & marched down the road a few miles. On the 18th came to M & commenced tearing

Pg. 26

up the R.R. We camp in the woods at night on other side of town & come back to work every morning. Have destroyed a great deal of it. Burnt the Engine house & large machine shop of Va. R.R. Company. This is a strong Union place as skunk as can be. Hence the women give us fits with their tongues. They can do it too. The Union feeling is chiefly with the lower classes. All the secessionists are wealthy & at least respectable when all the others are not. Every thing is now quiet along the lines. Have given them a glorious beat in Ky. Our whole Corps d’armie under Jackson is here working on the R.R. tearing it up & burning the ties. But must close this chapt.

Pg. 27**Camp Bunker Hill****Oct 23d 1862**

Finished tearing up the R.R. day before yesterday & yesterday evening we moved up here, back to our old Camp, which is 10 miles from W. Guess we will rest for a time now i.e. if the Yankees have no special objections. ‘Tis quite cool now. Is a fine spring here. Took a wash today. “Record that grand scribe.” Every-thing till quiet along lines.

Camp Allen Nov 1st 62

Left Bunker Hill on morning of 28th & came to this camp 6 miles from Berryville in Clarke co & 14 from W. Came here to get forage, as had to send down here after it. Are near the Shenandoah river & in a rich country, plenty of apples, apple butter & honey Plenty of pretty “gahals” too. All still quiet along lines. Reported that all on this side of Mts now is ours & Ewells division. J. Watson came down yesterday to get either discharge or transfer to cavalry. Got Rheumatism. Beautiful weather this is

Pg. 28

Camp on Berryville road

Nov 4th 1862

Left other camp on evening of 3d & came to this on road from B- to W. 5 miles from W. Not a desirable camp. Water mile off. Ramsey one of our Ft. De prisoners reported yesterday. Heard cannon in direction of Berry's Ferry today.

Camp on Millwood & Winchester road

Nov 5th 1862

Were ordered suddenly this morning to leave our camp & march. Came to this place 6 miles dist. Ashby's Gap is about opposite this. Yankees are over there too. We are flanking W. seems as tho' they are determined not to let us go there. Don't know much about Yanks over the Mts. Longstreet & Hill are over there to attend to them.

Pg. 29

Camp near Millwood

Nov 9th 1862

Sunday morning

On the morning of the 7th it commenced snowing & continued all day. "It snows cries the school-boy" &c "It "snows" cries the poor Soldier" & we have no tents! Tis quite early for snow. The camp surely presented a slight appearance to the old "Valley Forge". However the men fixed up shelters of forks, poles & brush & leaves. They do better in such times than their friends at home imagine. Got orders last night to have rev at 5 this morn cook a days rations, pack wagons & be ready to move by 9 a.m. Don't know which way we are going. Feels like snow again. We make pretty cold toilets these mornings - were paid off on 7th. Drew 117\$ -

Pg. 30

Camp Baylor

Nov 13th 1862

Did not leave our camp on Millwood road last Sunday morning as reported. But remained packed up all day. Moved early on Sunday morning. Expected we would either go towards Front Royal or Strasburg but imagine our surprise & gratification when on reaching W- we turned to right down Main Street & came to camp 4 miles from town, near old Camp Stevenson. If can only stay here will be satisfied. 'Tis reported the Yankees have fallen back. Send a Regt out at a time on picket. The 1st & (4th (La) brigade are on this the M. road, 3d is on the Pew(?) -town road & 2nd on Romney We therefore picket on all the roads leading to W. I went to W- yesterday. Saw some of my friends. Misses Logan, Ms. M Shepherd Dined at Mr. Logan's & spent nice time there. When left 'twas raining. Duty versus pleasure thought I - so had to come back from that

Pg. 31

warm & cozy parlor, leave my agreeable company & came back to our cold, damp & cheerless Camp. But consoled myself with the idea that better days might dawn - didn't rain much & last night cleared off beautiful.

Camp Baylor

Nov 17th 1862

Our Regt on the evening of the 13th went down on picket at Bunker Hill 8 miles below here. Our Company staid at one of the outposts on Smithfield road. Neither saw or heard anything of the Yankees. 'Twas miserable cold that night. Caught one old Dutchman who tried to "flank" us. About 3 next evening (Saturday) much to our gratification we saw the gleaming of the bayonets of the 1st La. coming to relieve us. Left there at 4 & got to camp about dark Thurs averaging 4mi to the hour. But on getting in sight of our old Camp

Pg. 32

'twas only a few dim fires that burned to welcome back the weary soldier. Everything was silent & the other Regts gone. "What is the matter" exclaimed one & all. Twas the two cases of Small Pox had broken out in our Regt & we were to be separated from the rest & placed in quarantine. They went about a mile off & we went to another _____. The "Dare Devils," who had the cases were also placed in an isolated place. How we are enjoying the delights of quarantine. _____ as yet are only two case so good bye! To W- & its fair "lasses" for a time at least. We have no tents yet either. Yet have made shelter of leaves, dirt, straw &c. Tis raining hard Today, yet keep pretty dry All prisoners taken and paroled before Nov 1are now exchanged So if Small Pox dies out soon will be reinforced.

Pg. 33

**Camp Baylor
Nov 19th 1862**

Has been raining for last day or so; hence weather has been gloomy & disagreeable in camp. We have made shelters out of leaves, rails straw, dirt, &c. So have managed to keep out of rain pretty well. The small Pox is getting along well only one new case & that doubtful. Hope it will not spread any more in the Regt. We are not cut off so closely from the rest of the world as thought we'd be. Get our mail regular. We in our brigade have a new Brigadier Gen since Winder killed at Cedar Run. Tis none else than Frank Paxton of Lex Va. He has been adjt. Gen to Gen Jackson for some time. Twas no doubt this the influence & recommendation of Gen Jackson that he was promoted. Looks like clearing out this morn. No news. All quiet at front.

Pg. 34

**Near Mt. Jackson-
Nov 23^d 1862**

On morning of 21st we left Camp Baylor & took up our line of march up the Valley. Put our Regt in with rest of the Brigade notwithstanding our being in quarantine for the Small Pox- Came thro' Winchester & 'twas with considerable regret we thought that we were leaving our friends there; perhaps to be again cursed with the foul Yankees. On the other hand they lamented our departure & tears were seen streaming down the fair cheek of many a lady as they saw our long column winding thro' their streets & take the Strasburg road. Some of those kind & patriotic women, had in our ranks, a brother, a husband, or perhaps one to whom they had pledged their hand. So no wonder that the slow & measured tread of our troops leaving, fell like a death-knell on their present happiness

Pg. 35

That day we marched about 15 miles & encamped a mile or so beyond Middletown. At early dawn on the 22^d we again started & came within a mile of Woodstock. 'Twas very cold in the evening, spitting snow. Yet, tho sleeping on the cold ground & the chilly night winds whistling over us we sleep as soundly & dream as well as if in our old house. Fatigue makes sleep sweet to our eyelids & repose is refreshing indeed. Early this morning - tho' Sunday too- our column again moved on up the road. Came to this Camp a short distance above Mt. Jackson. All along our rout up the people seemed to regret our coming up & leaving them. 'Tis very cold this evening. To day had not much the appearance of Sunday Yet tho' surrounded by so much bustle, pomp, parade it behooves us to remember the Sabbath day-

Pg. 36

**Camp near
Madison Court House
Nov 27th 62**

On the morning of the 24th we left camp bright & early. On arriving at New Market, we took the road to the left & crossed the Massanutten Mts. Is a fine view from the top, of that good old Valley we had just left. We cast a farewell glance at the scene of so many of our labors & the scene also of many of our pleasures. The 5th Regt. Band as we lost sight of it, struck up the good old tune of "Good Bye." And as the stirring strains woke up the echoes of the Mountain, we thought 'twas very appropriate. That evening we camped near the Shenandoah in the Page Valley. 'Twas very cold that night. Many of our Regt got some brandy and were on quite a "bust." Next morning (25th) we again struck out by early dawn, crossed the river on a foot bridge & filed away toward the Blue Ridge towering up before us.

Pg. 37

crossed this Mt., after much labor, tribulation, & suffering 'twas very steep & a winding road led us over staid all night in a "dismal hollow" at the foot. Rained on us in the night. Tea(?) and myself woke up & found a puddle of water under us, casting quite a damper over our personal feelings. However we lived to see the light of day. And fresh & fine to some extent we again. Struck out on the march to M - C - H. Got here, to this camp yesterday. Are resting today. But will soon strike out again. Got some excellent apples at the foot of the Mts. Fine apple country there. 'Tis not a very fine looking country about the Court House. Have brigade guard & strict orders too. Plenty of Persimmons over on this side of the Mts. & the troops seem to be fond of them from the way they make them fly.

Pg. 38

**Camp on Fredericksburg road
About 16 miles from the city
Nov 30th 62**

Left Madison Court House on morning of 28th. Below Gordonsville 5 miles, we took the Orange C H road & camped about 6 miles from my Bro Mack found us. We saw a La. soldier shot just before we came into camp. He broke into a house, insulted

some ladies & threatened to shoot an officer who ordered him out. The Louisianans are good at fighting the Yankees, but they are also noted for robbing & ill treating our own men. Yesterday, marched to Orange C.H. & took the Fredericksburg road. To-day came to this camp, full Of brush too. This is fine weather for marching, cool, & the roads sandy, are easy to march on too The country down this way is poor & thinly settled. It (speaks?) of the Chickohominy also, in pine woods, colored water, and c. This is sunday

Pg. 39

Camp near Guinia Station
___ R & Fredericksburg R. Road

Last night we camped about 6 miles from the city. Are no Yankees this side of the Rapahannock but are swarms of the m on the other side. They have threatened once or to shell the town. Just like them. 'Tis thought the enemy are again throwing a large body of troops on the peninsula. So we may once more have to visit R- Again the level fields below R- may tremble beneath the tread of mighty armies, and the solitudes of the Chickahominy be again awakened by the clash of arms. Today we marched to the F & R – road Turned towards R- marched 3 ½ miles, then turned to the left and came to this place, a few miles from Guinea Station. Ewell's Division camped About here last night. The weather now looks and feels like winter. It may snow anytime.

Pg. 40

Dec 7th 1862
Camp in Caroline Co near R- road

Left our last camp the other morning, and came to this camp about ½ mile from other. Are now in regular camp. The evening before last it rained, sleeted, and snowed. Hence cold as blazes this morning. Have got orders to build winter Qrs. and be as comfortable as possible. Have brigade guard. 'Tis hard on the men. All is still quiet along the lines. Fredericksburg is still threatened by the Yankee batteries with bombardment. Most of the citizens have left. Many of these unfortunate refugees are in old cabins along the wayside. Some of them are in tents This is one of the hard (facts?) of this cruel war. Is much suffering throughout the country and in the army too. Yesterday I saw some soldier going about barefooted on the cold snow and ground. Tis very cold today (Sunday).

Pg. 41

In some camp
Dec 11th 1862

Most of the men have built qrs. of some kind out of split rail, dirt and c. But have not long, to all appearances, to enjoy them in. For the booming of the cannon was our reveille this morning. 'Twas in the direction of Fredericksburg, and very heavy indeed. 'Tis now 1 ½ pm and the firing has ceased. Reported the enemy attempted to make pontoon bridges, but failed. Probably, 'tis only a feint. Hope they will not succeed. 'Tis cold these nights. Tom Godwin, who left G- on Sept 5th with me, came back today. Has had a good furlough. If we are to fight this winter the sooner the better. Once again let us the freemen of the South – meet the legions of despotism Let us be true to ourselves, true to our country, and true to one God and then having the right on our side, we will no doubt conquer However, let us hope for the best.

Pg. 42

Near Fredericksburg
Dec 12th 1862

Early this morning we left camp and marched towards F- . Have been maneuvering about a good deal to – dat. From the hill on which we are now drawn up one can climb a tree, for 'tis all covered with forest – and see away towards F-. And can see plenty of Yankees, in some places the ground is blue with the dogs. Yesterday they shelled the town burning many of the houses. This morning as we came up to the R. road, we saw many women and little children driven from their homes and seeking refuge from the coming storm that then hovered darkly over their birthplaces. Our position is a good one. 'Tis in the woods that skirt a line of hills about 1 ½ miles from the river. This is chiefly the position occupied now by the 2nd Corps (Jackson's). Guess by tomorrow we'll have the opening of the campaign.

Pg. 43

Dec 15, 1862
Near the Baattlefield of Fred-
-ricksburg

Battle of F-'burg fought Dec. 13th 1862

On the morning of the 13th we all get up bright and early, all expecting to hear the “big guns roar”. ‘Twas very smoky early in the morning, but the breeze stirring a little after sunrise cleared to some extent the hazy atmosphere. I speak only of what took place on our right occupied by Jackson’s Corps. Longstreet’s Corps occupied out left and stretched away to the left of F-. About 9 in the morning the deep booming of a gun broke in upon the stillness of the morning and told us the fight was about to begin. Then came the random shots of the skirmishers and the cannonade increased. Our division found a kind of reserve. A.P. Hill was in front of us. We were maneuvered around considerably before getting to the front. About 11 ½ A.M. the rattle of musketry in front of us told us that the fight had commenced in earnest.

Pg. 44

At this time we were fronted, formed in line of battle and commenced moving slowly towards the front. We had now been under shells for several hours, the enemy shelling the woods. If anything is calculated to confuse troops ‘tis to be shelled in the woods. The awful crashing thro’ the trees and the falling of broken limbs makes a dreadful noise. Our men had cut out a military road in the woods and formed on this. When our reserve line got to this road the enemy had been driven back about three quarters of a mile. Our brigade was marched along the road towards our right. Once we saw a great many of our troops falling back thro’ the woods. But they were soon supported by Gregg’s S.C. brigade. we were halted in the road just behind where Lorton’s brigade fought. They were straggling back to the rear too by numbers. They had run the enemy under cover of their heavy batteries. Then they were ordered to fall back and form on our line as had some beyond the line of battle.

Pg. 45

Expecting the enemy to from soon and advance again, we were ordered to hold the road at all hazards. Our Reg’t was on the right of our brigade. Soon we were moved more to the front. The fight was still raging on our left, having partially ceased in front of our line (Regt). The enemy did not show himself immediately in front of our Regt. again. But the 2nd and 33rd got into the musketry to some extent. About 4 p.m. the musketry died away, except a few stray shots from the skirmishers. The enemy now had fallen back all along our line and we felt that the day was ours. In the evening about dusk, one of our batteries on the right of our brigade opened on the enemy. Then followed the most terrific cannonade I ever heard. About 4 or 5 Yankee batteries opened on ours. Ours stood up manfully(?) for a while but was silenced. Then things quieted down to some extent, and darkness closed in in somber silence over the bloody scene.

Pg. 46

We could see the distant camp fires of the foe, and hear the cries and groans of the wounded. Some would cry “Help”! “Take me off boys”! “Water”, “one drop of water”! We threw out a line of skirmishers or had them out up on the left of our brigade. The enemy in the evening were driven across the R. Road. They made several attempts to again get possession of this but failed. Our brigade a while after dark drew back and slept in the woods. But at 3 in the morning we were roused up, taken down and put in position behind the R. Road, when by lying flat down in a kind of a ditch we could shield ourselves from the enemy’s fire. At daylight on the morning of the 14th skirmishing commenced in our front and the balls whistled across our backs. We thought they were coming. But they didn’t advance. Kept up a continual fire of the skirmishers all day. Whenever one of our men would poke up his head the Yankees fire at him. We drew in most of ours early in the morning. About 3 ½ in the evening hostilities ceased, the enemy

Pg. 47

sending in a flag of truce, as they said to hunt for the body of Gen. Hooker whom they said was supposed to have been killed. We would not grant the request, the flag returned and again the shots commenced. The armies of both sides stood up and confronted each other while the flag of truce was over. The enemy had a fine position should we advance. They were not more than six hundred yards from us. Had several batteries planted there and now and then when our men would show themselves too plainly, they would give us a discharge of canister. Had an alarm on the night of the 14th but ‘twas false. We were relieved this morning before daylight by Rhode’s brigade D. H. Hill’s division, and came back to this place to rest and get some fresh air after lying so long in the ditches. Is not much firing along the lines this morning of the 15th. Most of the men have gone to sleep, as had to sleep cold, with no blanket in the ditch! But I slept warm, throwing my cape over my head, some liked to freeze, having no overcoats.

Pg. 48

Dec 18th 1862

Camp about 7 miles above Port Royal

Was very little “firing” along the lines on the 15th. On the morning of the 16th it commenced raining, and rained hard for a while, somewhat dampening our feelings. However it roused us up from our beds... About 8 in the morning, Gen Stuart rode by and told us “the enemy are gone.” ‘Twas so. They had all recrossed the river and taken up their pontoon bridges. Cheer after cheer burst from our lines. ‘Twas reported they had gone down the river. About 9 we moved away from the late scene of action and

took the road leading towards Port Royal Went to within 7 or 8 miles from P. Royal and camped. On the 17th heard some of the casualties of the 13th The Rockbridge Battery (Capt. Poague) suffered badly. Amongst the killed was Baxter Mcorkle (*sic*), a classmate and college friend of mine. One by one the friends of my boyhood are sacrificed in this war. Gallant boys! We who survive will tell the story of their fall. Yesterday evening, Uncle Wm Paxton came down from Rockbridge with a wagon, bringing us some eatables and c; which of course we relished Home "eatins" go better than camp "dog ear".

Pg. 49

Dec 24th 1862

In some camp

Nothing of interest has happened during the last few days. A dull monotony has been resting over things in camp. Yet this dull monotony is by no means objectionable. For 'tis quite a relief to the highly exciting and stirring events whose shadow has not yet passed away. Tomorrow is Christmas day. Some of our company have already gotten boxes from home and are prepared to enjoy the morrow. Is another wagon expected from Lex in a day or so. We have been throwing up fortifications along the R-river. It looks like snow today— The enemy seems to have been most beautifully thrashed on the 13th inst. So I hope they will rest contented for a while at least---

Pg. 50

Dec 25th 1862

Same old Camp

In Caroline Co.

Well this is Christmas day! And 'tis a beautiful day, so calm and mild We are looking anxiously for our Christmas wagon from Lex- When it comes we will make merry and rejoice. And if is any wine in the boxes then we will each "drink to the health of his favorite lass". And if are any molasses "lasses" will express our admiration of the same by tasting largely. This is a day calculated to call up old recollections. Today memory "awakes with all her busy train", and brings up the scenes of this day years ago. How differently are we spending the birthday of our Saviour, from the way in which we spent it only a few years ago. Then there was peace; home and its calm joys were near and the comforts of life were near too. But now we are near the bloody field and the memory of those dear old scenes and fond associations comes back to visit us like a guardian spirit as we as we walk amid the clash of arms- the tread of armies and the struggle for Liberty

Pg. 51

The day, celebrated as the birthday of the herald of the religion of the Cross – and who came proclaiming peace on earth and good will to men", This sacred day finds us engaged in the great struggle for our Independence. The star of Bethlehem is to some extent shrouded by the smoke of the battlefield. The chorus of the angelic band hailing the dawn of this day would be drowned in the thunder and crash of battle. But there is hope. I think the darkest part of the cloud has passed away. There is a just God who reigns above. He is the God of nations and of battles. And I pray and trust that ere long he will speak to these warring and troubled elements and say "peace be still." This useless shedding of blood has long enough drenched these fair fields of the South. And Louis Napoleon never spoke a more noble or truthful sentiment than when standing alone (?) and undaunted in bold defiance of Europe he said that "the voice of humanity called upon combined Europe to interfere and stop this useless shedding of blood That step will place him high in the affections of the South and in the eyes of outraged humanity.

Pg. 52

At Home

Feb 21st 1863

I left the army on Jan 1st on detached service, to hunt up deserters in Rockbridge Co. Was a detail of _3 men sent to the Valley i.e. to Rockbridge Augusta & on down the Valley as far as the enemy will let them go. I was glad to get away for a time from the monotony of camp life. Took my friends all by surprise on getting home as were not looking for me. Were 17 of us sent to this co – under Lieut. Miley. Have been very successful too, as are a great many absent without leave. Have some sick times too. The old women bless us with a vengeance & the young ones look daggers at us too. But as we have no idea of marrying in these parts don't care at all.

Pg. 53

Lexington is our Head Qurs. We are mounted & branch out from Lex during the 1st of the week & return by the last of it. Often find the dogs hid about their houses. One night searched a house & were about to leave without our game. One of the boys noticed a loose plank in the floor near the hearth, raised it up. Put his gun down in the hole, said believed he would shoot. Some old fellow down there says "Hold on, I'm coming out." And out he rolled. Once found a young groom, hid in the trundle bed & sent him off with face long as a pair of tongs. Got orders the other day to also take up Conscripts who failed to report. Don't know when we will be ordered back. As soon I expect as active operations commence in the field.

Pg. 54

Camp Winder

Apr 10th 1863

Well are back once more in Camp. Left Lex on the 27th of last month. Staid in Augusta a week or so hunting up some of the deserters out in the Mts. Left Staunton on morning of 7th and got to camp on morning of the 8th {as came by Gordonsville caught a glimpse of "little coz" of mine and would have not missed seeing her for a pretty} Every thing is quiet down here. But expect will have some excitement before long, as the roads are getting dry. Hears cannon yesterday but know not what it means. However 'tis but the distant muttering of the storm that has been gathering on the North bank of the Rappahannock & whc will ere long burst upon us in all its fury.

Pg. 55

Apr 12th 1863

Camp Winder

This is Sunday and a "beautiful day it is too. Looks like Spring, hazy, warm, like what is called "Indian Summer". If the weather keeps warm and pretty much longer guess the roads woll so dry up that will be a move made by enemy soon The Reg'ts are larger now and better prepared for the enemy now than ever. The troops seem to be in fine spirits and are waiting with calmness yet confidence. The bursting of that storm, that for some time past has been gathering upon the North bank of the Rappahanock now and then we hear the report of cannon. These are but the low and distant mutterings of the hovering storm. No doubt the coming campaign will be an active and bloody one. Have preaching in the brigade church today. Have it almost every night and a good audience too.

Pg. 56

Apr 13th 1863

Camp Winder

'Tis tolerable cool this morning as it rained on yesterday evening. Our company are now on provost duty in camp, ie, help to guard the prisoners of the brigade. Have some who are sentenced to be shot, for desertion and for flanking out of the fight at Fredericksburg- Many of the troops have tents Our mess has one. 8 of us stay in it. Tis quite comfortable indeed We amuse ourselves in various ways. Reading the papers, playing chess, and c. I brought a Greek and Latin Testament down with me. It serves to pass off time in reading. Many go down fishing. Catch plenty of them down at the river. Will have preaching again tonight. Was a large crowd present last night.

Pg. 57

Apr 24th 1863

Have moved our camp about half a mile. Moved on account of wood. Yesterday morning had something to break up the monotony of the camp.'Twas raining as hard as ever saw it rain in my life. We boys were rolled up by the fire in our tents congratulating ourselves on the rain, thinking it would delay active operations. But our day dream was soon broken The long roll broke upon our ears and orders came to march immediately, as the Yankees were crossing at Port Royal about 9 miles below here. Out in the torrents of rain we went and marched about 4 miles when heard the enemy had all gone back. So we came back too.'Twas not a general move on the part of the enemy, only an independent squad who came over in flat boats to get the nets of our fishery. They got some fish too.

Pg. 58

May well imagine that we were glad to "about face", and come back to our good quarters. For did not like the idea of lying in the ditches all night. It has been raining off and on ever since. 'Twill make roads bad again and waters rise. In good weather we drill twice a day – 2 hours each time. Have fine view of country lying on the Rappahannock. 'Tis beautiful. Spring is coming again with its balmy day, green fields, and beautiful blossoms and sweet flowers. This time one year ago I was "in clover" –For was enjoying myself at Sylvan Seminary. Yet it makes me feel sad to think of those good old times there! For death has been there and with ruthless hand, had snatched away five of my cousins who were the sunlight and joy of the household. But we cannot murmur at the decrees of the Almighty.

Pg. 59

Apr 30th 1863

Near old Battlefield of Fredericksburg.

Yesterday morning about sunrise as we were engaged about our breakfast in our old camp, the deep booming of cannon fell upon our ears. And 'twas in the direction of F-. About 11 A.M. we left and took up a line of march for the scene of action. Got here about 5 in the eve. Rained on us considerably both in the evening and last night. 'Twas very disagreeable on the sleeping part.

The Yankees got their pontoons over yesterday morning and were crossing we knew of there whereabouts. They gave three cheers as came over, but when the Rockbridge battery came into a commanding position and pitched a few shells into their ranks, they soon "dried up." Rained quite hard this morning. 'Tis now about 11 am and has been no fighting yet. Our division is in the second line of battle. Enemy are still crossing at F. Are also reported crossing up the river. If so we'll have warm work yet.

Pg. 60

May 1st 1863

Halt on Fred & Orange C.H. Road

We moved at daylight this morning & have been moving up towards Kelly' Ford. For the enemy were only making a feint at F- whilst they were crossing their main force higher up. Early's Division was left at F- to observe the movements & hold in check the Yankees there. Yesterday evening had quite an artillery duel at F-. The old Rockbridge Battery was engaged. Made some excellent shots across the river 2 miles Yankees made miserable shots. Have engaged the enemy in front to some extent today; both artillery & musketry. Have seen some poor wounded coming back. Several Yankees prisoners have gone back to rear. 'Tis near 5 o'clock & seems to be a lull in the storm. Doubtless will be an engagement soon. Enemy have fallen back some distance.

Pg. 61

In Hosp near battle field

May 4th 1863

I will now relate the incidents of last few days. Early on the morning of the 2nd we our Division commenced to move the right of the enemy rested on and lapped (?) over the plank road ie Orange C.H. & F- road. Gen. Lee desired to get in their rear and turn this position of theirs so D.H. Hill's & our Divisions were sent on a flank movement on enemys right. Got around & in their rear by 4 p.m. Fought a battle that evening. Succeeded in routing the enemy. But our Brig was not engaged. Took great many prisoners. That night we moved our Brig up beyond the field of battle. The enemy were very restless & skirmishing continued nearly all night. That was a bad night for us for Gen. Jackson was wounded. He was near the front and was struck in the right arm. It has been amputated at the joint. The old ____ [Gen or Curr?] fell at last.

Pg. 62

Battle of Chancellorsville

As said was heavy skirmishing all night the 2nd. We were in the 2nd line of battle, yet got but little sleep as at every fresh roll of musketry we would have to jump out the word "Attention"! At one time the enemy made a desperate ____, attempting to force our lines but was repulsed. Early on the morning of the 3d we were called from a doze "to arms!" For the musketry was heavy in front of us. Our Brigade was at this moment drawn up in line of battle on north side of plank road. The Yankees line of battle extended diagonally across this road. During the night they had thrown up strong works & in some places two lines of these about 6 in the morning the fight became general. Heavy volleys of musketry broke on the ear & battery on battery belched forth their murderous thunders.

Pg. 63

Soon we our Brig commenced changing position so as to better supporting distance of the front line. Now we were under the most terrific fire of shells I ever saw. The enemy seem to be giving away in our front but on south side of road he is making a stubborn stand & loud cheers break on our line & the firing recedes. Our troops have driven the enemy from the first line of entrenchments & are following him to the second line they receive such a murderous fire, they have to fall back behind first line of works. Now our Brig is ordered to south of road. to this strongly contested pt. For enemy have begun to give way at other parts of the line "Double quick," & away we go. We fronted & march up toward the fatal spot. Halt for a moment behind the first line waiting for a brigade lying there to go but they preferred to lie low safely.

Pg. 64

Then came the order to the "Old Stone Wall," "Charge"! Forward men"! With a loud cheer she sprang over the fellows (North Carolinians I believe) mounted the works and advanced up toward the last line amid a murderous fire. Having got to within about 250 yds of it we stopped and opened fire. We shld have gone on, and then our brig. wd' not have suffered half so badly. Then our boys commenced to fall. Our company suffered badly. Having fired about quarter of hour we were ordered to "fall back" All would fall to ground. Inst as I fired my last shot I was shot through the right leg about 2 inches above the knee. Dropped my gun and as I turned to go back, another ball struck my left elbow only bruising it fortunately. All fell back now

Pg. 65

Lieut Jones and Capt. Strickler helped me back over the 1st line of works. Coming back he said to me "Alex- you boys fought well. I'm proud of you all." He was as cool I the midst of the fight as if on dress parade. A noble fellow he is: a gentleman, a

soldier, and a Christian, in every sense of the word. Soon as I got over the works I sank on the ground in a fainting condition. Then Lieut. Jones gave me some fresh water to drink. Threw some in my face, whereupon I immediately revived and started back by myself. Soon got a boy out of Co. E – our Regt (Franklin) to help me, together with one of the ambulance corps of N. Carolina Regt walked about a mile, then got in ambulance and came to this Hospt After I left our brigade charged twice and finally succeeded in driving the Yanks from their strong position. They fought well. By night the enemy had fallen back all along their line and changed it entirely.

Pg. 66

At Home

June 26th

I staid in that Hosp't at Barn until the next Friday evening, the 8th. Then started to Hamilton's crossing in a train of wagons. And as 'twas over very rough roads you may well imagine we suffered. On Friday night we camped in an open field & slept in the wagons. My wagon had no cover on it & as it rained that night on us had "tall time." Yet that night as I lay in that hard old wagon in the rain I slept. And as I slept I had one of the most delightful dreams I ever experienced. Got to H-Crossing the next day – about 2 o'clock & getting on the train, got to

Pg. 67

Richmond about dusk. Soon as train got there it was filled & surrounded with ladies bringing the wounded something to eat. We were almost starved. I never eat so much in my life at our meal & had the same lady given me all, I'd been ashamed. I did not go to Hospt, but to the house of cousin Jno McClure's. Staid there until Monday evening. When got on the packet boat (Edmonds.) & struck out for home. Heard of Gen. Jackson's death on Sunday eve--ing in R & it seemed that every one had lost a friend. The Army had indeed lost a friend, the confederacy a friend & Freedom one of her ablest advocates.

Pg. 68

Got to Lynchburg on the morning of 13th (Wednesday) Laid over there until evening for Gen. Jackson's body to come on the Orange train. It came in about dusk the people of L. gave the last remains of the old Hero an appropriate reception. Got home next morning the 14th about 9 a.m. They had only heard the day before of my being wounded. Am getting well fast & will soon be able to go back to shoot at the Yankees again. The Army now is over in Penn & Md. wish I was there too. I'd make the old Penn dutch roll up their eyes.