were, many of them, better than most dwellings, which usually consisted of bar lodge or cabin, serving for all the purposes of home and family. Although the bedrooms, sitting rooms, and kitchen, and the entertaining of company were placed in large rooms, some perhaps had small suites of rooms, set up with a large bed on the one side, and the hearth on the other. The maids of the big fireplace. His legs, his shoes, and his pantaloons hung down behind, and gave the children the impression that he was a specter.

LETTERS OF PRIVATES COOK AND BALL

Introduction

The writer of the letters here printed, Charles N. Cook, was born and reared in Williamstown, Massachusetts, where his father was a shoemaker and a small farmer. In the spring of 1853, when twenty-three years of age, he set out for California with the hope of making his fortune. An older brother, Edward Cook, who lived in the new state, made that distant frontier seem less remote. The young adventurer, instead of making the trip by land, chose the water route by way of the Isthmus of Panama, at that time very widely advertised, although the isthmian railroad had not yet been built.

No record of the trip remains save that his brother met him at San Francisco and together they went to Stockton where the older brother had staked out a claim. Evidently the gold did not "pan out" very well for the young fortune hunter. A letter written to his father and mother on October 25, 1853, shows him somewhat disillusioned and homesick but still hopeful of making his "pile". He then expected to remain from two to five years, but he was back in his Berkshire Hills by the return of cold weather in the fall of 1854. Sixteen months of California was enough. Like many another ambitious youth of his generation he left more gold in California than he took away.

Two years later the wanderlust seized him and again he went West but to a more settled country this time. His oldest

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1 Jacob Platt Dunn, Greater Indianapolis, I, 75-76.
2 The original copies of many letters written by Privates Charles N. Cook and Lafayette Ball during the Civil War are in the possession of Mrs. John Hoday of Oxford, Ohio. A daughter of the former. Most of the letters in the collection were written to Margaret Ball by Private Cook while in the army. A few months after Antietam, the returned veteran married Miss Ball. The Rev. R. A. Smith, a graduate-instructor at Miami University during 1930-1931, read copies of the correspondence to be printed which he carefully checked. Credit for the introduction and other explanatory matter also belongs to Mr. Smith. The Editor having made only such modifications and added such comments as were rendered necessary by the omission of various letters or parts of letters.

3 Charles N. Cook to his father and mother, Nicholas (California), Oct. 28, 1853.
brother, Allison H. Cook, had settled in Logansport, Indiana, to which place Charles repaired. A letter written by Allison Cook to his mother, in 1854, gives a rare and accurate account of the cholera plague in the middle west during that fateful year. In the summer of 1856, about six weeks after Charles arrived at Logansport, his brother, Allison died, a victim, not of the dreaded cholera, but of typhoid fever. Charles remained in the vicinity of Logansport where he worked for different farmers and market gardeners finally acquiring some desirable land and setting up for himself. He raised garden produce, small fruits and kept bees.

Then came the Civil War. President Lincoln’s call for volunteers, in July of 1862, met with an indifferent response in some sections of Indiana and 3000 men remained to be drafted in order to complete the quota for the state. Each township was apportioned its share with the provision that further volunteers would reduce the number to be drafted. On August 11th, Charles N. Cook volunteered and exchanged his overalls and hoe for the blue uniform and rifle of a private soldier. Eventually he was assigned to the 99th Regiment of Indiana Volunteers, Company K, and served three years in that regiment and company.

In training camp, in Indianapolis, Cook became the bunkmate of a youth from Logansport by the name of Lafayette Ball. One day when Ball was writing to his sister Margaret, Cook expressed a wish to write to her also although he had never met her. He was known to Miss Ball by reputation and the request for permission to write to her was granted. His first message was a few lines written at the end of the brother’s next letter. This was answered promptly. There followed a long and, most of the time, a very happy correspondence. The letters which were written in camp, while on the march and even during quiet intervals on the battle field were preserved. The collection, now in the possession of the daughter of Charles N. Cook, Mrs. John Hodge of Oxford, Ohio, contains some letters written by Lafayette Ball and some that were written to his parents by Cook and which later passed into his hands again.

The romance, which began in the training camp at Indianapolis, finally ended happily. After the war was over, when

"Johnny came marching home", Private Cook returned to Logansport. This was in the fall of 1865. In February, 1866, Charles N. Cook and Margaret Ball were married. They lived all their lives on a farm in the vicinity of Logansport. In 1897 Mrs. Cook died, but the veteran with the incurable diseases contracted during the war lived to be 90 years of age. He died in 1920 at the home of his daughter, Mrs. John Hodge, near Oxford, Ohio.

[Lafayette Ball to Margaret Ball]

Camp Joe Reynolds [Indianapolis], Oct 21st '62

Dear Sister Marg,

Last night at 8 o'clock our reg. (99th) rec'd orders to proceed at once to Kentucky consequently the camp was all up as usual on such occasions. the busy hum and bustle of preparations was heard on all sides. the cooks were busy preparing a midnight meal, the soldiers were packing their knapsacks, at about 11 o'clock the drums were beat the ranks were formed, the rolls called and the gay 99th with the exception of two companies were on their way to the depot. I belong to one of companies that remained behind. we will probably follow on after the regt tomorrow & we expect soon to be in the land of the traitors. the reason we stoped behind was in order to get our company filled up & get mustered in. there is a prospect that we will get 25 men from camp Sullivan.

Oct, 24th I laid aside this letter a few days in order to ascertain when we were to leave for the south. we were disappointed in getting the men & how long we will have to remain here I cannot tell but probably two or three weeks. we expect to be moved to a comfortable situation tomorrow or next day. it is about a mile and a half from here. I am getting along very well. my health is very good only I feel a little like the ague today, we have had some pretty frosty nights the past week & we feel the need of beds, yet I suppose we will have to get used to it. I rec'd your letter yesterday & was very glad to hear from home once more. Now Marg. cant you write a little oftener. I want you to write soon as you get this. Charles C. [Cook] has his bunk with me & asks me [to] give his respects to my sister, & says he was acquainted he would put in a few lines. O Marg. you cannot think what a wicked place a camp is. it seems as if young men lose all respect [for] themselves & their maker, at a time when they ought to reflect & consider their ways & have impressed on their minds the awful realities of an endless eternity. they are most reckless & careless. O time what art thou & Death what canst thou give that poor frail mortals like us should exchange for thee an inheritance incorruptible & that fadeth not away. O that we might comprehend it & learn to love & adore the great creator, & that I may never be led to profane his holy name but rather to speak his name in prayer & praise. in camp one is surrounded by a great many temptations & if he has not strength given from him on high it will be impos-
Dear Sister,

Lafayette and I are well. He has kindly offered a little space for me. I hope you will not look upon it as an intrusion. I once had a sister, an only sister. Death came & with its relentless grasp summoned her to the skies. She is an angel now. How my heart strings quiver as I think of her. She was lovely [———-?]

Far away among the hills of old Berkshire is my native home. Around it are clustered the objects of my greatest affections. I am a stranger in a strange land & need a friend.

C.N.C. [Cook]

Miss Margaret

Shall I open the few words I desire to write & send you with an apology? I trust your liberality of feeling will not demand it. We have hitherto been strangers. Is that any reason why we should be so in the future? I think not. Perhaps I am breaking the ordinary rules of formalities. I hate formalities, give me the outgoings of an honest heart. Give me a being whose soul is unblemished with vain pride and whose mind is pure & who cares not for the scandal of the world. One who loves the works of nature & loves to look up from nature to nature's God. There is such a friend I want.

Camp life does not suit us very well. I have not been used to hear so much profanity. To hear the name of Him who created us & gives us our being in whom we are dependent for every breath & the numberless blessings we are enjoying. He who came down from Heaven to live & suffer & die that there might be open for us a fountain that whoever drinks thereof may obtain eternal life.

Your brother will send you a letter soon & I will leave all the camp news for him to write. We are well with the exception of bad colds caused by being exposed to the night air we will probably be mustered in this week & soon be ordered off to the south.

Hoping these few lines will be acceptable to you & that you will be my friend & trusting a kind Providence to carry me safe through this war & that I may some day be personally acquainted with you I say farewell.

From one who is disposed to be your friend.

C.N.C. [Cook]

[Fragment of letter from Private Cook to Miss Ball]

spread out before us I feel we have a great deal to be thankful for & it would be wrong to complain. Oh how dark & fearful is the prospect of the new year that is soon to dawn upon us, how many of us will live to tell the sad tale of war & desolation that threatens us, God only knows. We are in his hands, he can protect us & shield us from all harm if are
at peace with him nothing can harm our souls, though the wicked kill the body they have no power harm the soul. Several hundred of paroled prisoners just went past our camp to camp Noble. they just arrived from the south. Our prospects for whipping the rebels is not very encouraging at present [end of 1862]. there are too many of them in our very midst, even in this camp several of them were detected in a plot to take possession of our guns but the scamps are caged & hope they will be severely dealt with. I wish this war might end and we be permitted to go to our homes. I am glad to say there is less profanity in our quarters than formerly as some of the worst of our company are absent and there are three or four that I never want to see again.

Perhaps you will be interested to know that we had a good Christmas dinner thanks to the ladies. It is the first donation we have had since we first went into camp to my remembrance. I have often wished we were encamped in Logansport. I know we would have had a shower of presents there are so many soldiers here it has got to be an old story. If we were near Logansport we would be near our friends.

Now Maggie I have not stopped to study the propriety of again writing to you before getting an answer from my last yet I have the pleasure to know it was kindly reed. I have no claims of the least notice on your part to my letters as I must plead guilty as an intruder yet my intentions are innocent from any dishonest purpose. Every thing comes from an honest heart.

[Charles N. Cook]

[Private Cook to Miss Ball]

Camp Carrington Jan. 25th 1863

Dear Maggie:

I am going to sit down this afternoon and enjoy the privilege of penning you a few lines. Oh it is so kind in you to notice my poor letters, my heart flows with gratitude. I want to thank you for the picture I think a great deal of it & I would not part with it for anything. the other present was very acceptable we don’t get such nice things in camp very often. I hope to be unfortunate enough to get a wish bone that I can make cakes & pies as nice, but I want one that has a sweet & lovely disposition for she will be my main dependence for society. when I was a boy under my father’s roof I used to spend most of my time at home & sought the enjoyments of home. now I am a thousand miles away from those familiar scenes. my only sister has long since been called to the skies, she had a lovely disposition. the elder of my only two brothers died in Logansport in the spring of 1866, & my only brother not quite two years older than myself joined the army on the Potomac & has been lost to us since early in the month of March & my dear parents have no child but me. Now Maggie you will not wonder I sometimes get lonely & sad. you will not wonder I want to find “some kindred spirit fitty strung to echo back the tones of mine”.

Maggie I want to see you very much & if we stop here long enough I will try to get a furlough & visit you. I came near going the last time, but thought it best to wait until I got well, my eyes are very weak yet, otherwise I am well, I don’t think we will leave here for some time, some troops are needed at home to keep down the traitors at home. I have an idea this war will be over soon. The boys got back safe & sound only Carter, his mumps are not as well & he went over to the hospital. Lef. [Bail] was rather tired when he got to camp he bunked with me last night, it is rather all night to sleep on a board with a small handful of straw & only one thickness of blanket under you. you know we soldiers don’t get things as nice here as at home. I shall want to hear you play some nice tunes on the accordion when I come to see you. you may depend I will come if I can. if any of the home guard should ask you to marry them, tell such ones that you are waiting for a soldier. forgive me for such an expression I mean no harm.

I want to hear from you again soon. you can find enough to write anything from you will interest me. give my best respects to your father & mother & remember me.

With love I remain your friend

Chas N. Cook

[Private Cook to Miss Ball]

Camp Carrington, Feb 8th 1863

My Dear Friend

Maggie It is with feelings of great pleasure I sit down to drop you a few lines this afternoon. yours of Jan 20th was kindly reed today. I will try to tell you something of our prospects for the future, the dark clouds that have so long shut out the bright sunbeams of our once happy existence now and then nearly overwhelming us with a fearful forbiddings of the future seems for the present to be gradually dispelled.

It is not natural for man to run into danger unless a sense of duty leads him to it, & if Uncle Sam should conclude to keep our company here for the protection of our own homes it would be far better for us than the hardships of a southern campaign. I know that you would rejoice to hear that your dear brother had escaped the exposures of disease & in a measure the bullets of southern traitors.

The reason that I have thus written is that at the present time there seems to be a little prospect that we will be assigned to the 6th Regt & kept here to guard rebel prisoners or government property. Yet it is a matter of uncertainty. we must wait & time will soon reveal to us the future & we must be prepared to for wherever duty calls.

Once more has our camp been called upon to be in readiness for an expected skirmish last sunday night as I got home from church I found the boys all astir loading their guns, orders were given from head quarters for every man to sleep with his gun loaded & his clothes on. the reason for this was the arrest of nine prisoners in Morgan Co. [Indiana] by a company of cavalry from our camp who went out there for the purpose of bringing back some 40 deserters of the 1st Cavalry who are traitors in principle & had combined with some citizens of the same stamp for the purpose of resisting the laws. it was by some expected an attempt would be made to release the prisoners who were confined in the
guard house of this camp. squads of soldiers were stationed at the most accessible points of the camp on Sunday night, but no disturbance took place. another squad of cavalry have gone to Morgan [Co.] to arrest the balance of the rebels.

I will not commence this last page with camp items. there are things I would like to write but do not feel at liberty. if we should happen to stop here any considerable length of time I may get a chance to go to Logan [Logansport] & perhaps make you a visit. I expect we will get our bounty soon. your brother will write soon.

With a wish that you may have health & happiness I remain your affectionate friend.

Chas. N. Cook

P. S. Write soon as convenient.

[Private Ball to his Sister]


My Dear Sister,

I suppose you are looking for a letter from me by this time so I will sit down & write you a few lines this afternoon. we are getting along very well & are well suited with our new quarters. our company is at present attached to the 7th regt on guard duty. we did not go to the soldier’s home as we expected. the duty assigned to us is the guarding of the rebel prisoners about 400 in number. the guard is divided into nine reliefs each one being on duty two hours out of every 18 or one ninth of the time. I dont mind it in the daytime but to be called out of bed in the middle of the night is not very pleasant. yet we must look for some hardships. I read your letter of the 26th of Feb. & was glad to know you was all well. I was somewhat disappointed that Chris Lindament did not get back as I expected him to bring me something from home. I dont know but we will get furloughs before long. therefore I will not express any money at present until I ascertain. we were paid off last friday. I think it will be some time before we leave here. I dont care how long for we are doing very well here. the weather is quite cool now I hope spring will soon open the bluebirds were singing this morning, which made it seem like spring.

We are not kept as close in camp as when at Camp Carrington the Col seems to be a nice man & I think if we do right he will be good to us, he says so at any rate. we are over run with rats here in camp & I dont know but they will take up prisoners our Lieut. caught four in an old boot. there is a bakery in camp so we get our bread fresh. all our grub is good & we cant complain our company is in 4 messes & we have two large stoves to cook by, which is much nicer than out door cooking. we have got a lovely place I know it is beautiful in summer when the leaves are on the trees. I dont know but I have told you all. Charley Cook wants to know if Christ. Lindament paid his tax yet he sent money by him if the boys see him tell them to ask him about it. I have no more at present to write. Write soon.

From your affectionate Brother

Lafayette Ball.

Private Cook wrote letters to Miss Margaret Ball from Camp Morton on April 2, April 14, April 25, and May 5, 1863. While at Indianapolis, with little to break the monotony save guard duty and drill, life was rather dull. In his letter of April 14, Cook registered this complaint: “If we ever get away from this dull place, I will have something to write about that will interest you but here it is nothing but drill, drill. I wonder why we must have to stay here while, many at most all of our fellow soldiers are allowed the privilege of drubing the rebels and the satisfaction of getting their legs and heads shot off while we are boxed up here as if we were too nice an article for common use.”

Through these weary months but two companies of the 99th Indiana were detained at Indianapolis. In the ranks of one of these (Company K), were Privates Cook and Ball. During this dreary period, the love affair between Cook and the girl at Logansport whom he had never seen progressed rapidly. By April 25, 1863, Cook had reached the stage where he could say in all sincerity: “Maggie you are mine and I am yours and may the attachment that has sprung up in each of our hearts one for the other be the germ that shall bud on earth and blossom in heaven.” Not long after this message was penned the two companies were sent to join their regiment at Moscow, Tennessee, where they arrived on May 14.

A little over a week later, Cook wrote a long letter to Miss Ball in which he tried to find some comfort in calculating the time until he should be free: “Only a few short weeks more to the 14th of Aug. and our time will be one third past—only two more years then to serve—and then [also] we have the chance of sooner discharge.”

The last portion of this letter which was begun on May 23, was finished the next day. The young soldier first saw Negro regiments at Moscow, and began to learn from personal observation something about the destructiveness of war: “the devastations of war are visible on every side & the boys of our regt who have but a couple of weeks since returned from a campaign of 200 miles through Miss. say it is the case all through the country. Farms are laid waste fences are burned.”

In the next letter, written on June 2, 1863, Cook mentioned Memphis was nearly forty miles east of Memphis near the Mississippi River on the railroad which connected Chattanooga and Memphis, which was named after the city of Memphis, running from Cairo southward, crossed the east and west line at La Grange, Tenn.
that during the week that had just passed, thousands of troops had been carried through Mosby by train for Vicksburg, "the scene of battle and bloodshed." The forces were being moved to the neighborhood of Vicksburg in order that Joseph E. Johnston might not be able to attack Grant's army in the rear and furnish General Pemberton a chance to escape. By June 5th, the brigade to which the 99th Indiana belonged was making ready to move from Moscow, Tennessee, toward Vicksburg, and the transfer was begun the next morning.

[Private Cook to Miss Ball]

June 12th 1863.

In Camp at Haines Bluffs, Miss

Dear Margaret:

Here we are at last safely landed far away on the southeastern shore of [the] Miss., the dim and distant northern horizon only points to us the direction of the homes & loved ones we left far behind, how instinctively with lightening speed does the mind retrace the long distance that now lies between us & those we love, knowing that you are anxiously waiting for tidings from your friend & brother I will embrace this first opportunity of writing to you & give you a little outline of our trip down the river. The same evening I sent your last letter just one week ago today, several regts of infantry & battery came into Moscow from above & started on with us the next morning for the river, we had to walk thru as there was not transportation for us, it took two days, Saturday and Sunday, & it was the hottest Sunday's work I ever did, our feet were pretty lame when we got through, the distance we walked was 40 miles, we were fortunate enough to get our knapsacks hauled, on Sunday we camped on the edge of Memphis about a mile & halfe from the river, we reached this camping ground in the middle of the afternoon & remained there until one oclock on Monday when we marched on to the river & went aboard the steam boat here we found Chris Lindament & two other of our boys who had just come down the river in time to go on with us, the landings were full of boats waiting to take soldiers down the river [Mississippi] we went aboard on Monday afternoon but did not start until the next day about noon, the time seemed short as we had much to see that was interesting, the loading of the boats with wagons stores cannon amunition &c. each boat took a regt & some took two, there were 13 boats in our fleet, the time occupied in coming down was from tuesday noon until thursday about three in the afternoon when we landed near where we are now, we are about 12 miles up the Yazoo river & about 400 [?] from Memphis, you see we are a long way from old sweet Logan [Logansport]. Nothing of much import happened on the trip down, we met with no opposition not a shot was fired into us from the shore one or two gunboats escorted us past the most dangerous points &

\[Haines Bluffs was northwest of Vicksburg on the Yazoo River a short distance from the Mississippi.\]

in one instance poured a broadside volley into the timber but no rebels made their appearance, the scenery down the banks of the river presents a beautiful appearance at this time of year as the foliage is in its full growth, for a good portion of the way the banks are low & sandy, & the trees are small & so thick that a man could hardly get through it, when the banks were high we would frequently pass large plantations apparently deserted, it is a common sight to see the naked chimneys of houses that have been burned by our troops & in some instances whole towns, as we passed along the niggers would collect on the shore & wave their handkerchiefs & caps as we passed. we passed several large camps 20 miles from where we came into the river [Yazoo]. We are on a high range of bluffs formerly occupied & pretty well fortified by the rebels, their earth works are still in tolerable good condition & there are several heavy guns here by them the carriages are burned & guns spiked, there is one in particular that is very large and heavy the diameter of the bore is 11 inches & it weighs thirteen thousand & three hundred pounds. we are about 10 miles from Vicksburg & while I am writing I can hear the roar of the heavy siege guns at Vicksburg, how soon we may be called upon to advance & assist in storming that rebel stronghold is not in my power to say, the reports that come from there are favorable, whether we stop here or advance to Vicksburg I cannot say be that as it may we are in the hands of [a] just God, who I trust will guide & protect us where ever we may go, We in the God of battles trust, for we know our cause is just, Maggie this is the last letter I may ever get to write to you yet I trust I will live to write you severall & I do hope you may get all of them I shall endeavor to send you a letter about once in two weeks & I think Laf. will write often & when can I look for another letter from Maggie I have not been able to comply with your request yet, I think of you often & hope you think of me in my wanderings, O Mag. you would laugh to see us cook. we got us some old oyster cans & put in wire bales & in these we boil our coffee & tea, then we sharpen a stick & put our meat on it & hold it to the fire until it is cooked well I must once more say goodbye & ask you to write soon & direct to

1st Division
3rd Brigade
Near Vicksburg, Miss.

I will enclose a specimen of Spanish moss it grows out of the limbs of trees, many of which are completely covered with it.

Saturday Eve. June 13th

I had just got your letter wrote yesterday when our orderly Sargent called on me to get ready for picket duty, the notice was so short I did not get the letter mailed, so I will write a little more before I send it, there is 20 detailed out our company each day for guard duty, picketing is not here the same as at the north, we know not what day a rebel force may break in upon us therefore the responsibility that rests upon a sentinel is great & death would be the portion for the man who sleeps on his post the pickets are stationed near two miles out of camp & 20 in a
squad. two are on watch at a time & this makes it light for all. Orlando Powell & I were on together last night & we had only one hour to stand. the rest of the night we had for sleep. we spread our oil clothes & blankets on the ground & the rest of the men on the ground between us for shelter. this does tolerate well in summer but in winter & cold stormy weather I would not envy the berth. yesterday a new picket line was being established we had about 8 miles of awful rough country to walk over as I ever saw. it is nothing but a succession of ridges & gullies & perpendicular bluffs which if man should happen to make a mistake it would plunge him over a hundred feet in to the abyss below. our troops are planting their cannon on some of these commanding bluffs to keep off the enemy we were pretty tired when night came & were glad to get t chance to spread our blankets & get some rest. our duty will be light here I think. we are rather crowded for tent room there being only five for a company but we must expect to suffer under some disadvantages where there is so many. Sunday morning June 14th I was tired last night & as the mail does not leave until tomorrow I thought I would postpone finishing this letter today. I think we will be kept here for the purpose of keeping the rebels from reinforcing Vicksburg. I hope in my next to be able to tell you that it has fallen into our hands. Oh Maggie I carried your likeness in my bosom with the letter & came near spilling them with sweat but the inside of the likeness & the lock of hair was unharmed. Well, I must close this & get it in the mail. will you write me a long letter soon as you get this. I love to get just such letters as your last two was & I want another. Mag. I want you to love me a little better & more every day. I thank you for sending me that post stamp. I know you love to hear from me & I do love to write to my love. I do not hear from home yet but hope to soon—no more but remain your until death. once more Goodbye Maggie

from Charles N. Cook

Lafayette is out on picket duty today. we have ripe blackberries.

[Private Cook to Miss Ball]

Snyders Bluff, Miss.
Friday, June 19th 1863.

My Dear beloved Maggie,

Only five days since I mailed my last letter to my love and find it now as always is to me a delightful task to take my portfolio on my lap & study up something to write that I think will interest her. I want you to go in some nice pleasant place & as you read this just imagine me by your side & just as I write I would talk to you. as I came from picket duty today the joyful tiding, “a letter for you Chas. N.” O how gladly did I grasp the ever welcome message for I knew before I opened it that it was from Maggie & she never writes anything but what I love to read. I went down to the river bank or near it & selected a shady spot all alone with none to molest me with their impudent inquisitiveness, a good stock of which some of the boys are possessed with. I sat there a long while reading your good long letter & watching the steamboats as they plowed their way up and down the river. while I sat there one boat came up with a regt of soldiers aboard. there were several boats at the landing being unloaded of army stores these too but a couple of days since came up the river [Yano] loaded with nothing but soldiers wagon cannon ammunition—all has been about 18 boats up with soldiers since our flat of 13 boats came up. Uncle Samuel is just rushing the troops down [the Mississippi River] to this point & great preparations are being made for the purpose of keeping the rebels from reinforcing Pemberton at Vicksburg. everyday we hear the booming of cannon at that place & at night also. that the rebels are suffering in Vicksburg there can be no doubt we have them hemmed in and I hope soon to hear they have surrendered. squads of them come outside at night & try to break through our lines but are drove back. if we get that place it will be a decisive blow towards closing up this rebellion. I wish you could look at the miles of breast works that are thrown up round the bows of the hills facing every point that would be possible for an enemy to get in at. deep ravines & gullies jut down in every direction perpendicular precipices from 80 to 100 feet deep are to be seen. I have some opportunity of seeing some of the country yesterday a lot from our company was sent out among the advance pickets there were about 1000 all together & we were put outside of the old line. the fartherest of all from camp it was three miles out & that was the most fatiguing 3 miles march I ever took. you can hardly have an idea how oppressive it is here & if it were not for an occasional thunder shower & the refreshing breeze that blows from the river the heat would be intolerable. our camp is on a hillside & the sun strikes the tents so hot that we can hardly stay in them in the heat of the day. we have to spread our blankets on the grounds as there is not room for bunks we are so crowded. This is a great country for fruit as I ever saw as we were marching out on the picket line on both sides of the road we could see the blackberry bushes loaded down with ripe and red berries & we could not get out to gratify our appetites but this morning I managed to get behind & feasted to my heart’s content. yesterday I picked a fine lot of mulberries & stewed them the country produces the finest quality of plums & it is plum time here now I long for the peaches to get ripe I am very fond of them. Laff. came in from guard today he was with some others across the river guarding a lot of cattle that had been "drafted in", when Uncle Sam wants cattle or mules he sends his boys out into accessia & they bring in a supply. they also brought in a lot of dainties. their masters were off fighting against their country, & left them at home to take care of things & the union boys press them into service. it is getting dark and I will say good night to you & in the morning bright and early while it is cool I will write more unless I am called out on duty.

Saturday morning June 20th. I have not been detailed for duty yet. we have had our breakfast the bill of fare was hard crackers, bacon & tea. we have got so used to our rough fare that it tastes good to us. but I know what would be far better a slice of Maggie’s good bread & sweet butter & a cup of her good coffee then to enjoy her sweet smiles, & listen to the sound of her voice, to get away from the cold unfeeling world & all alone to enjoy each others love & confidence—to get away from a set
of miserable beings whose life it is to make others miserable, but they are not worth minding—such people are low minded & mean—they are quarrelsome & peevish we have some in our company, some that you know & they know you & I know you all & I like it & I like this & if I can't do it, I feel thankful that all they can do or say cannot separate me from my own sweet Maggie—who I love more & more every kind letter I get from her O what joy it gives me to know that she loves me.

I expect we will have some important news to write before I send this because there has been a constant war of cannon at Vicksburg since three hours before day until within the last hour it has somewhat subsided. O how many poor souls have been ushered into eternity. There is a rebel force not a great distance from here & if they attempt to reinforce the rebels at Vicksburg we will be apt to get into an engagement. I will not mail this until tomorrow evening & perhaps I will have something interesting to write. When Laff came in from duty last evening we went away alone & I read most of your kind letter to him & it did him good to hear from home again Laff says he will write soon & write about what you requested to know. That sweet little rose came in good order & I put it between my lips in token of my love to you. I think your cake will be nice trimmed with those sweet roses. There is a nice little book I would like you to have it is a small book & will cost about 50 cts in blue & gold. The title is "The language of flowers" when I get my money I will have you get it, we need our money very much but I know not when we will get any, we have a sutler & he sells things at about three prices. the government authorizes him to issue two dollars each month to a man of his check & he draws his pay from the paymaster but it is optional with the men to draw the checks or not as they like. I suppose our sutler sells a thousand dollars worth of goods & establishes a month & will probably make his fortune. last evening at dusk a private of the 90th Ill. was shot dead by one of his fellow soldiers while under the influence of liquor & the same shot passed through the serje's hand this murder occurred only a short distance from our tent & we heard the report of the gun. I felt very sorry to hear such sad news from your cousin it seems hard to think of but such are the vicissitudes of war life is very uncertain with us all. I will be heartily glad when this dreadful war is over. I am getting very anxious to hear from my native home once more I have not heard a word from there since we left Camp Morton. I miss my mother's good letters very much. I sometimes think it will not be my privilege to ever see my dear mother again in this world. I have not seen my parents for over seventeen years. I hope I hear from them soon. I suppose my mother is about 67 years of age & my father about 74. It makes me sad when I think of them in their old age all alone not a child to comfort them. Oh how I long to visit home sweet home. to breathe the pure air & drink the pure cold water & see those good old hills [Berksire's in Mass.] again but it will not do to build hopes for this world.

Sunday eve. June 21st. The sun of another sabbath is once more sinking near the western horizon, to friends at home it has shed its rays on assembled multitudes enjoying its sacred hours in prayer & praise to the creator of all things. to the soldiers in the field how different. The name of that holy being is irreverently used card playing is followed & many other things unbecoming to mortals is practiced. & dear Maggie I will tell you how I spent the day. this morning just at five o'clock most of our company (including Laff & me) were called into line with our guns & equipment for duty, they took us out together with others from other companies making in all 150 men (Monday morning June 22nd) we were supplied with 50 chopping axes & marched out to Uncle Sam's great clearing, there are thousands of acres of heavy timber in the ravines and hillsides that are being cut down to make a barrier against the approach of the enemy, instead of a shelter as it would be if left standing. The 150 men were divided into three reliefs each relief working one hour at a time, & each man had only two hours work to do during the day. this was light on us & we could not complain. the fortifying is progressing very fast the soldiers are taking the spikes out of the big guns that the rebels left there & they are hauling them to the high points where they will be used in a better cause than formerly, it has been only a little over one month since the rebels occupied those cliffs & it is astonishing to see the amount of work the Yankees have done in so short a time. Well Maggie I have got your letter most finished & I know not how long it will be before it will reach you for Gen. Grant has issued an order that no more letters shall go from here until the fall of Vicksburg, but mails from home will continue so we can hear from our loved ones. you were a good girl to send me such a kind letter. I read them over many times & think of my gentle confiding Maggie. we can think of each other now & write often & strengthen the cords of affection that is entwining itself closer & nearer our hearts until it shall never no never be severed until death & then to be reunited in a better world where partings are never known. Mag. I want after awhile when we get our money to get a good picture [of you] to send home to my mother & I would like to have mine in the same case but don't know as I can arrange it. I think it is out of the question to get one taken here. Monday evening. Mag. I have been a few minutes to finish this letter we are to leave home tomorrow morning at six they say & we are drawing three days rations, where we are going it is impossible for me to say but I think up the river [Yazoo] again but I will close & tell you all about it when time reveals it to us so good bye dear Maggie for a few days I remain your true lover until death

Chas. N. Cook

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of miserable beings whose life it is to make others miserable, but they are not worth mind—such people are low minded & mean—they are quarrelsome & peevish we have some in our company some that you know & they know you & know that I correspond with you, & were impudent enough to write a letter while we were at camp Morton imitating your hand writing & signing your name to it & directing it to me. it has not been done but once & I feel thankful that all they can do or say cannot separate me from my own sweet Maggie—who I love more & more every kind letter I get from her O what joy it gives me to know that she loves me.

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camp near the Black River are portrayed in the following excerpt from Cook’s letter of July 27, 1863:

On the morning of the 4th of July the joyful tidings of the surrender of Vicksburg fell upon our ears & Oh what a thrill of joy it gave us all to hear such glorious news, to a soldier such news is music, it makes him feel as if one step was taken towards the accomplishment of his desires & his home & friends seem a little nearer brought to the time when he is once more to enjoy their presence & love. the same day at 4 P.M. we were under orders to proceed on [eastward] to black river & at 5 we were on our way & did not reach a camping ground until 10 at night, we were all tired & sleep was a welcome guest to us. early Sunday morning we got our breakfast & drew rations & traveled until noon when we took refuge from the scorching [searching] sun in the edges of big cornfields which bordered on the river & within half a mile of where we supposed Johnston to be fortified on the other side. we lay hid until dark when we were formed into line of battle & marched across the field towards the river arriving close to the river we were ordered to lay down to rest with our guns by our sides, in the night one of our batteries commenced shelling the woods on opposite side & the next day we lay there & our skirmishers a short distance in our advance & under shelter of the trees on the bank of the river kept up a brisk fire at the rebel pickets on the other side, & they were so near each other we could hear our men curse them & they would ask our men to go over & get something to drink. we did go over that evening about a fourth of a mile below we got a rope across & crossed on a flat boat. by the time we were across the rebels were making a hasty retreat back to Jackson the capital & we followed on. we passed the plantation & mansion of Joe Davis a brother of Jeff’s & I will here mention on our return we found it burned to ashes & the finest peach orchard on this place I ever saw & I got some as we came back, some varities were nearly ripe & of an enormous size. on Friday the 10th we came within 3 miles of Jackson & were formed into a line of battle & were moved in this way very cautiously the skirmishers in advance feeling to find out the position of the enemy they were fortified close in the edge of town & we met with so much trouble that night but kept advancing until pretty close to their lines, & about 10 o’clock we camped with our guns at our sides. our company & regt lay across a railroad & next morning we were annoyed by the bullets of the rebel sharpshooters as they had a good range on us down the railroad. it got most too warm for us so the Colonel ordered us to take our guns & move one side under shelter of the timber, while we were in the act of taking arms one man a member of Company I received a ball which passed through his head killing him instantly. soon the rebels commenced throwing shell amongst us as we were under cover of the timber they passed harmless by yet some burst very close & some of our men came close to hitting it. we soon changed our position & were put in line of battle before the rebel works & under cover of the oak grubs here we lay for three days exposed to the shot & shell of the enemy & living almost entirely on dry crackers as we dare not build a fire for it would show the rebels our position & expose us to their shells. while we lay there they kept up an al-

most constant fire & several shells burst almost in our midst. on Wednesday we were moved to the rear a mile to forage & recruit up the boys soon brought in a good supply of beef mutton & pork, & we got plenty of coffee, & soon we began to get recruited. on Wednesday night the 19th [July] the rebels probably finding the force against them was too great evacuated the place & fled by railroad on the opposite side just in time to avoid being surrounded we were then ordered down the railroad to tear up the track, & burn the ties & bend the iron so as to make a good job of it we spent the remainder of the week at this work & destroyed about ten miles of the road & Sunday morning the 19th were ordered back to camp where we remained next day. on Wednesday the Division with colors flying marched through the town & the soldiers had one hour to stop & bathe in the Pearl river this was intended for a pleasure excision yet it did not seem much like it to us, as the sun was extremely hot & it was very dusty. we were glad to get back to camp. the town is yet near as large as Indianapolis & near all the business part is burnt & it presents a most desolating appearance. Thursday morning before daylight we left our camp before Jackson & retraced our march to this place where we arrived last Saturday it is only about one quarter mile from black river where we are camped in the timber. it is a lovely place & we get tolerable good water. our teams got back from the bluffs today with our knapsacks & we were glad to get our blankets again & I was glad to see my old portfolio & again with my writing paper & ink. Tuesday July 28th for want of time I did not finish this letter yesterday & now I will tell you that the prospect is that we will stop here for several weeks, & I feel glad for I can get the rest I need & I can write to my true love & read her kind letters.

Following the marching and skirmishing in Mississippi of July, 1863, the 99th Indiana was held for some time in a camp near the Black River which was christened Camp Sherman. While here, Private Cook received a letter from his brother Edward, whom he had long believed to be dead. This brother, now thirty-six years of age and two years the senior of Charles N., who had gone to California during the gold rush, joined the Army of the Potomac early in the War. When released from the service, in 1863, he visited his parents in Williams-town, Massachusetts. He had not been in touch with them for over a year and a half, and, like Charles, they believed that he had lost his life soon after going to the front.

In his letters to Margaret Ball, Private Cook continued to pour out his love, but he also described quite minutely the life of the camp. He was very religious and older than most of his comrades in the ranks. He was never able to accustom himself to the profanity and vulgar speech so often indulged in by

many of those about him. At almost every opportunity he would wander off by himself to re-read Margaret's letters, to write replies, to enjoy what nature had to offer, or to commune with himself. It would seem that many of his companions in arms developed a dislike for him. In a letter of August 6, 1863, he wrote:

Maggie that man who will curse his maker and profane his Name will curse his best and nearest earthly friend if he gets provoked or crossed by that friend & you know it is not pleasant to be cursed. I suppose every boy you know in our Company has given me a cursing they don't like me very well & I don't like their ways either & keep pretty well on my side. I intend to do as near right as I know how & I will come out right in the end.

While in the South, Private Cook contracted chronic diarrhea and rheumatism, ailments that were to trouble him to the end of his life. While in the service, he frequently recovered from these afflictions, for shorter or longer periods, so that in spite of them he was able to complete the three years for which he had volunteered. Many times, he wrote "Maggie" that he was anxious to obtain a furlough, that he might visit Logansport and possibly go to the Berkshires to see his father and mother. He was consumed with a desire to visit "Maggie", whom, it will be recalled he had never seen. When he finally obtained a furlough near the beginning of September, 1863, he was obliged to inform his "sweetheart" that he felt it best not to make the long journey: "I don't know Maggie but you will blame me if I tell you I had the chance to go north & did not improve it. You will remember it is a long trip from here to Logansport & I have been sick for several weeks & consequently am weak so I think it better to remain here until I get another chance when I am in good health and in a condition to enjoy the visit." The furlough was transferred to a comrade, and Private Cook did not reach Logansport until two more years had passed. Though thirty-four years of age, he was a typical lover who often succeeded in expressing himself in somewhat poetic phrases, especially when painting the future:

In the springtime we will plant flowers & they will spring up by the pathway and shed their fragrance around our happy home the tiny humming bird will visit us and feast on the bouquet that Jupiter sips. our paths shall be pleasantness & the end thereof will be peace. we will at-tune our voices to the praise of the giver of all good & acknowledge him in all our ways. Maggie I love you.

In a letter of September 16, 1863, an attempt was made to explain fully the discipline and duties of soldiers in camp. In another of the next day, also written at Camp Sherman near Vicksburg, the following appeared:

Our Lieut. Col. Dehart [DeHart] has gone back to Logan [Logansport] & I hope he may stay there and put on all the airs he plases we don't care if he never comes back. there is a little too much poppy show about him for my use. We all like our Col. Fowler he is a whole souled man & works for the well being of the men, but he is now acting as commander of the brigade so we have for the present lost him. he took a trip north a few weeks since. it was after dark when he arrived at the camp the report of his arrival soon spread out among the regt & the boys flocked together at his tent like children welcoming a returning parent. the drums were brought out & beat three times three cheers rent the air & the out Col. had to come out so he told the boys he was as glad to see them as they were him & requested them to go back to their quarters and make less noise. the next day the Col. had many a good shake of hands. that is the kind of an officer we want, not the little upstarts who make the men stand out on guard & keep a man pacing before his quarters & set the men to grubbing up big stumps & usurping his authority to the discomfort of the men. give me an old patriot to serve under one that knows what active service is & feels for his men.

The next message was written at Memphis on October 10, but it seems not to have reached Miss Ball. The troops were being moved toward East Tennessee. By October 18, they had reached Iuka, Mississippi. There was much marching and plenty of hardships to be endured while the troops were covering the distance from Vicksburg to Scottsboro, Alabama, near Chattanooga, as the following passages will show:

before light Sunday morning [Oct. 11, 1863, at Memphis] the drums beat & we got a hurried breakfast & drew rations for 10 days we were soon equipped & in line—except as were unable to march they were left behind with the tents & to be taken on the cars. the morning was fine the air cool & refreshing before the sun had cast its first morning ray upon the earth the drums were beating on every side & regt after regt were in motion—the heavy rumbling of artillery—the clatter of horses hoofs as officers rode by—all presented a lively and interesting appearance. . . . we traveled 9 miles & then stopped & took a cup of coffee. . . . after resting a couple of hours

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1 Charles N. Cook to Margaret Ball, Camp Sherman [Miss.], Sept. 9, 1863.
2 There is no such letter in the Cook collection. It may have been lost, of course.
we moved on & just at dark camped in the black oak timber—having marched just about 20 miles the first day—.

The troops reached Florence, Alabama, on the afternoon of October 29. From here the soldier from the Berkshire Hills reported on the following day:

we arrived here yesterday afternoon. the country we passed over [from Iuka to Florence] was beautiful but very rough. we found an abundance of the purest water I have seen for a long time. it runs through beds of gravel & is as clear as Cristal. everything looks like destruction with a few exceptions. we have at four times been within hearing of cannonading since we left Memphis. This march was a pleasant one to me. I must say this fatigue on is called upon to endure is amply repaid by the ever changing scenery.

For a number of weeks while on this march, Private Cook gained strength and seems really to have enjoyed army life. At Scottsboro, Alabama, he was happy to write to his parents on January 28, 1864: “My health is getting excellent & I have recovered from my lameness.” This statement is somewhat surprising as he had passed through a harrowing experience for a man with rheumatism, only a few weeks before. In his own words the story runs:

you probably recollect my telling you that we lay over at or near Stephens' [Alabama] on Christmas day & on the night or towards morning of the next day it set in to raining, or pouring down our tents were not ditched around & as we had spread our blankets on the ground of course we got a soaking & the ground was like a pond of water. think of us miserable beings standing for hours nearly over shoe [top] in water waiting for day to come. then soon as light had come & we had managed to have a little fire & get a cup of hot coffee about made the order come to strike tents & after that order there is only 20 minutes before the troops are moving. some threw away their coffee and began packing their knapsacks the rain was still pouring down. I finished my breakfast and by that time the reg't was gone. Yet I was not able to walk even a common gait but [because] my legs were so disabled & on the day previous to our arrival at Stephens [following the night when they stood in the water] I was behind the whole train [body of troops] & suffered very much. I here made up my mind in spite of all orders from the officers I was going to stop at Stephens until alessants train went out and then get aboard. so I accordingly moved into town as fast as my greatly exhausted powers of locomotion would admit & after wandering about the town for a while (this was the day I expressed $50 home) &

10 Cook to Margaret Ball, Iuka, Miss., Oct. 18, 1862.
11 Cook to Margaret Ball, Florence, Ala., Oct. 30, 1862.

finally noticed considerable of a gathering of soldiers in & about an old building which was minus doors & winders. having made my condition known to an officer among the group I was told that was the place where convalescents were stopping for a train was to take them on & was invited to make myself at home as no train was to leave until 9 A.M. of next day. so that night I lay on the floor with my damp shawl and oil cloth & about you don’t know how comfortable [I was able] to be under shelter once more & a dry floor to rest my bones on. the next morning rather early we went board [the cars] unfortunately for us was obliged to take to top of the car for it & after awhile it set in to raining again & so we had to take it. it was about noon before we got started early that afternoon [Dec. 27, 1863] the train arrived at S—boro [Scottsboro] me.

The 99th Indiana remained at Scottsboro, Alabama, until late in the spring of 1864, when it moved forward to participate in Sherman’s movement from Chattanooga to Atlanta. Private Cook, having recruited his health during the winter months at Scottsboro, held up remarkably well through the long campaign of 1864. In regard to his part, there is a brief account in a letter to his parents, and a short statement made to Miss Ball soon after the fall of Atlanta. To her he wrote:

I will say we have gone through a long and tedious campaign & are now encamped in a pleasant forest of oaks and pine and chestnut trees it is a delightful place. Atlanta is about four miles from here up the railroad it is three weeks today since we came into camp after taking Atlanta & driving the rebs into Lovejoy station about 10 or 12 miles below the campaign has been a very successful one as you are probably aware.

There are no letters to Margaret Ball in the Cook manuscript collection from March, 1864, to almost the end of September. If any were written, they are not preserved. The probability is that none were mailed by Private Cook in that period. His letters to his parents generally included much about “Maggie”, but in one of April 8, 1864, he merely said: “I have given up the idea of comitting the crime of Matrimony at present.” On September 29, 1864, after having heard from Margaret again, he opened his reply with these sentences:

It affords deep & heartfelt pleasure to me, after so long time silence, once more to trace out a few lines to you & to feel assured that the troubled waters of our peace are getting calmer & that after he or

12 Cook to his father and mother, Scottsboro, Ala., Jan. 28, 1864.
13 Cook to his father and mother (Northwestern Georgia), June 2, 3, 4, 7, 1864.
14 Cook to Margaret Ball, Camp near Eastpoint, Ga., Sept. 29, 1864.
those who made the evil attempt to destroy it no longer have the power or influence & that at the present time I can feel the happy assurance that I have the confidence & love of one I do truely love 'is it not so Maggie'. Our former correspondence was a source of great pleasure to me.  

The cloud which arose to darken the hitherto bright path of love for these young people appeared in February, 1864. Some acquaintance of Miss Ball, who was in camp with her lover, sent her an account of him which gave her pause. She, however, wrote him the substance of the evil report that she had heard which was that he was a man without moral character and an object of disgust covered with dirt and vermin. His reply indicates an adequate amount of righteous indignation, but is manly and sincere. He declared that he would not write to defend his character, that he had no fears in regard to it, believing that by the help of God it would stand, since his life was, he trusted, based on "principles firm as rock." In regard to the "dirt and vermine", the much distressed and disturbed lover bravely told the truth and gave what should have been an entirely satisfactory explanation. The next letter from "Maggie" was comforting to Private Cook, and the correspondence went on for a short time much as before. It was not long, however, until the letters ceased to pass between them for several months. The cause seems to have been that enemies of Private Cook continued to send evil reports to Miss Ball, which led her to believe that her soldier lover had betrayed her confidence by allowing others to see her letters to him. After the reconciliation, Cook made a statement relative to this charge which he considered very serious:

all I can say with regard to the matter is your letters to me have never by my consent been read by a second person except an occasional one I read a portion to your brother [Lafayette Ball] by your leave, & if any other man in the company or any other person says they have seen one of your letters to me I will say it was without my consent & that person is guilty of an act that ought to mak a devil blush.  

After the Atlanta Campaign, the 99th Indiana was one of the regiments sent back to Tennessee. In January, 1865, a large force was transported from Tennessee to the East on the Tennessee and Ohio rivers to Cincinnati, and from there by rail via Columbus and Pittsburgh to Alexandria, Virginia. Here they were available for service in Virginia or the Carolinas. While on one of the transport boats, Private Cook met with an accident. From a fall, he suffered a bruised side and was left behind in a hospital at Columbus, Ohio, when the troops entrained for the East. The troops had arrived at Columbus on the morning of January 26, and Cook saw his comrades depart three days later. The disabled soldier improved rapidly and was soon sent to North Carolina to join his Company. Here he saw service for many weeks and then further hospital experience.

[Private Cook to his Parents]

Post Hospital Smithville
N. C. May 17th 1865

Dear Father & Mother
As I have a good opportunity I will write a few lines home today & let you know how I am getting along & the reason of my being here & of my future prospects &c I with several other sick & crippled soldiers was brought from the camp near Wilmington to that place last Thursday & stoped in the Hospital there until the next day when we took the boat & came down Fear river to this place which is situated at the mouth of Fear river & near the ocean so we get a good bracing sea-breeze which is quite reviving, this seems to be a general Hospital, there are several hundred patience [patients] here. We are in large Hospital tents, have good matras 1 wollen blanket & good pillow & linen sheets, with iron bedsteads, for "grub" we get pretty good tea 3 times a day with milk & sugar, a slice of good bread & butter & sanitary stores such as Tomatoes blackberries &c this is for light diet & I am on that our food is scant but good but I must tell you how I came to get in to a hospital, for some time I have felt the rhumatism coming on & of course it first took me in my lame side & soon I got so that I was hardly able to walk about & take care of myself so the Doctor sent me off to the Hosp. I will state since the rhumatism took hold of me my diærea entirely left me & I have a good apetite & hope soon to be well, it is probable we will all be shipped north in a few days & be discharged I am told that it is the order for all men in Hosp who are not under a physicians care are to be discharged immediately. I hope to get home some time in June or July, so we will try & be patient you will not need to worry about me for I am cared for. I dont think it worth while for me to have you send any letter to this place as it is very uncertain if we stay here long I long to hear from you but must be patient From your affate son

Chas N Cook

10 Ibid.
11 Cook to Margaret Ball, Scottsboro, Ala., Feb. 8, 1864.
12 Ibid.
13 Cook to Margaret Ball, Camp Near Eastpoint, Ga., Sept. 29, 1864.
No letters were written by Cook to "Maggie" from the middle of May to the last day of June, 1865, when he was on an island in Long Island Sound.

[Private Cook to Miss Ball]

D Camp Genl Hosp.
N.Y. Harbor June 30th 1865

Dear Margaret,

After so long a silence on my part, I dont now but you have long since given me up for dead or perhaps think I may have forgotten a certain light haired & blue eyed lady whom I call Maggie & from whom during my wanderings over the wilderness of the would be but couldnt be Southern Confederacy, I have read many a comforting little message, which like angel visits seemed to buoy up my spirits & better fit me for the burden of the day. Now those days that tried men's souls is past & gone.

I think the last letter I sent you was written while in the convalescent camp near Wilmington N.C. & if you read that letter you know something of my movements up to that time; & starting from that time & place I will give you a little idea of my journeys & circumstances up to the present & of my plans for the future. I will state that the latter part of April & early in May I was taken down with the rhumatism which proceeded from the injury in my side which you will recollect I got a fall on the boat last winter. About the 10th of May several of us were crowded into government waggons & hauled to the city of Wilmington a distance of about 3 miles, & it was the toughest ride I ever took. To my great joy we at length turned up to a good hospital in the city, a fine three story building here we got a good upper bed & breakfast—but our quiet harbour was soon intruded upon & our baggage was brought out & we were soon aboard a steamer after another jolting in the old lumber waggons at noon the boat had steamed down the river & hauled up to a small town called Smithville situated on the beach here we were again introduced into a Gen. rec. Hosp. all new tents & very nice, here I soon began to recruit & in a few days was free from my Rhumatism but my old trouble the Diareah fastened on me & it has been a series of ups & downs with me ever since. I remained in that hospital until the first week in June when a splendid hospital Steamer came in for us & we were soon on board our prospect for a pleasant trip to New York was fair we had good bunks & beds to sleep on plenty of room on deck our meals cooked & brought to us good ice water to drink & a smooth sea to sail on, & Oh! what a happy thought going towards home sweet home with the expectations of soon seeing our dear friends, three long weeks has passed since we came in sight of New York Harbour & here I am still waiting on still hoping longings, within a few hours ride of my old native home. The Hosp. I am in is on David's Island down Long Island sound about 25 miles from the city of N.Y. it is a Gen. Hosp. & rather extensive there being 20 Pavilions to accommodate 1600 patients these are long wooden buildings well built & airy, besides these there are a great number of tents. Nearly every day a squad are sent to N.Y. to be discharged I am put down for a dis-

charge & know not what day I will be called up. I suppose my descriptive list is on the way before this time, it is a matter of uncertainty to me when my turn will come. I am so near my Father's that I intend to visit them before going west & try to get my strength. I will write to you when I get home [Williamstown, Mass.]. It is my present intention to go to Logansport after my visit to Father's & of course I will calculate to see you & have a nice talk with you, but I must say good bye for this time & will ask you to sit down as soon as you receive this & write me a long letter & tell all the news.

Direct to Chas N. Cook Williamstown Mass.

As the reader knows, the love affair between the returned veteran and Margaret Ball turned out happily, the marriage taking place early in 1866. The following letter, written after eleven years of married life is the last in the Cook collection.

[Charles N. Cook to his Parents]

Logansport Feb. 18th 1877.

Dear Father & Mother

So long a time has passed since I have written to you I dont know but you will begin to say to each other I do believe our children are forgetting us in our old age. Far as I am concerned you can rest assured that such is not the case, for I often think of you & the scenes that used to surround my birthplace & the many familiar faces, most of which are no more seen on earth. & as often do I feel a longing to set my eyes on those grand old mountains & have a ramble over them, but circumstances at present are rather unfavorable to realize anything & this winter has been very poor, for near all the time I have not been able to do even light work & Margaret has done my feeding and built the fires most of the time and her brothers have cut my stove wood so you see we have had it rather rough. My trouble has been the old complaint with chills & fever I have been having what is called third day age, & the most obstinate to get broke of all. & I was reduced down & very weak from the effects of diarrheea which made it still worse. I have applied for an increase in Pension with a fair prospect of getting it, was at Logan yesterday & got examined, had another chill after getting home, although I have had it so rough the past few months my wife & children have got along with less sickness than common & Margaret has braved it through nobly, our two little [ones] are in good health. Willie is the picture of health he has been going to school has one more week his progress is good & he is fond of reading but does not like to work except when he anticipates some pay after it is done, then he will work like a good fellow. Anabel is peicing a quilt & if she lives I think will be like her mother, a good seamstress. We have three cows to come in soon & about 70 hens & pullets, so I will get a custard now & then, no letter from Ed. do you hear from him, if possible let us heat from you soon write all about how you are getting along this winter.

your children Charles & Margaret
Mother will you send me by mail those 3 little volumes called Masterman Ready that John Tappan presented me. I want them for Willie to read. Whatever postage it costs I will refund in due time.