"Remembrance of My Army Life"

LOUIS BIR

Edited by George P. Clark

I was born in Clark Co. Ind.

My Father died 1849 Leaving my mother with 7 children. 1 I was the 4 So you see we all were young & had to work hard to make a living.

*The original manuscript contains forty handwritten pages, with two numbered pages 22 and 34. In general, the right edges of the sheets suffer from disintegration or curling. Some pages have deteriorated along the top edge; two pages have a hole in the center; and the first and last pages exhibit additional wear from serving as the de facto cover. Missing text has been supplied in square brackets and has been taken from the 1961 typescript.

Primary transcription and footnoting were carried out by George P. Clark, with additions by the editorial staff of the IMH. The editors retained all original ampersands, dashes, and underlining. Bir did not use periods (except for abbreviations), commas, or apostrophes. He used hyphens at the ends of some sentences and equal signs as dashes. New paragraphs, indicated here with indentation, were usually indicated by a break at the end of one line and the beginning of the next line at the left margin.

Bir’s spelling has been maintained as accurately as possible. He characteristically omitted the final “e” from place names such as Nashville and Gainesville, and he frequently dropped one of the double consonants from words such as battle and off. A few unclear words have been provided in square brackets. Names of people, places, and ships have been capitalized. Bir did not distinguish between lower- and upper-case forms of the letters a, m, n, and y; these ambiguous letters have been capitalized according to modern convention.

Bir’s father, also Louis, was born in Courcelles-Chaussy, Department of Moselle, France, in 1802. He died August 19, 1850, at age 48, according to the inscription on his headstone in the parish cemetery of St. Mary of the Knois Catholic Church, Floyd County, Indiana. Louis Bir fils
I began to work out by days work when I was 7 years old and I
earned 15 to 25 cts per day and worked from daylight until Dark
throughout the spring and Summer and went to School 3 months in a year.
This was the Extent of my Schooling.

When the war commenced I always was very anxious to
Inlist and mad Several attempts to do so but me Being at this time my mothers
main suport and an obedient Child woul giv up for mothers Sake but
Early in 61 Belonged to a company of Home guards and drilled Every
week 1/2 Day until August 1862. One Friday night I went Home and
told my mother I was going to T[own to] Enlist in the army the mother finely
concen[red so] after supper myself and William Atkins and [Val
Helbig] walked to this city getting here before day[light] we stood
around the market House unt[il the] Light & went to Joseph Renn for
our [breakfast]. After our meal we went out to find [someone] that
wanted Recruits and found Lafe Frederick on the corner of Pearl &
Market and We Three Put down our name & of Course we were men
then and we had to go and take a Drink & then anot[her] and So on and
in the after noon we went Hom[e] & Staid home over Sunday &

was born August 19, 1844. Although mistaken about the year of his father's death, he was only
7 at the time.

The Home Guards or militia, more formally the Indiana Legion, consisted entirely of volun-
teers organized by counties in militia fashion under officers commissioned by Governor
Oliver P. Morton. "Nearly all of the regiments composing the Legion were organized in the
counties near the Ohio River, where there was constant fear of raids by Confederate sympa-
thizers from Kentucky." Emma Lou Thornburgh, Indiana in the Civil War Era, 1850-1880
(Indianapolis, 1965), 441-42.

Bir and his fellow volunteers walked in darkness about ten miles from Mooresville (now
Floyds Knobs) to Renn's grocery on State Street in New Albany. William C. Atkins and
Valentine Helbig, both of New Albany, were mustered into Company K of the 93rd Indiana on
August 29, 1862. Helbig was mustered out at the end of the war on November 10, 1863, as a
Sergeant; Atkins rose to the rank of Corporal and was killed in the Battle of Guntown, June 10,
1864, as Bir relates later in this memoir. Bir's spelling of his friend Val Helbig's name probably
reflects the local pronunciation. W. H. H. Terrell, Report of the Adjutant General of the State of
Indiana (8 vols., Indianapolis, 1865-1869), 6:316.

Capt. LaFayette Frederick, of Galena, was recruiting in New Albany for the 93rd Infantry
Regiment. Frederick had been commissioned as an officer in August 1862 and was mustered
into service October 31, 1862. He resigned his commission August 13, 1863, and was replaced
as captain of Company K of the 93rd Indiana by William Lamb, also of Galena, who had been
promoted from First Lieutenant. Lamb was mustered out of the army with the rest of the com-
pany at the end of the war. Terrell, Report of the Adjutant General, 3:122. The initial appoint-
ment of officers and the subsequent history of promotions can be followed in "93rd IVI
Correspondence," Adjutant General of Indiana, microfilm, roll no. 97, Military Records Files,
drawer 401-A-7 (Indiana State Archives, Indianapolis).
Monday we walked Down to Galena and Joined our company which [was] mostly from Morsvill & Galina and Came to old Noble. On our way the People [along the route] gave us a Rousing & Hartily greeting [it instilled] in our young Harts great Patriotism and [one] feel Brave & [good].

We arrived at the fair ground about 11 oclock and found that the good Ladies of our vicinity had Hurried ahead of us and set us a fine dinner which I assure you we did it Justice.

So after this meal we Began our Souldier Cooking and of coars Lived Like Fighting Cocks with Plenty of coffee & Brown Sugar to Put in it us fellows that was not used to Having Sugar in our coffee used it to Freely and it made me sick. Finely had to use Sugar only moderately.

We Remained in Camp Noble for about 3 Weeks and Stood guard duty with clubs and Even Looked brav[e] about this time the Scare of Bragg's army actuating Louisvill was on and we had to on several occasion Doublequick down to the Riv to fight him & Did not Hav nothing to fight with only clubs yet we thought if he came over we would Lick him quick.

But I never will forget the day we Were Examined I was at this time very thin and Light & i was afraid i would be Regected we were all in Line and taken one at a time and Had to Stripp as naced as the day we were borned and I being a bashfull-good-Boy it was about the hardest Stask i Stood during the war the Doctor turned me around several times and then gave me a slapp and told me i was all Right. This Lightend my Hart considerable.

After being drilled Squad & co & Regimental Drill for several weeks and all of our Best girls would come to see us Drill it made us feel Like we were Some one.

However marching orders Came and we Packed our Knapsacks to the Size of a Saratoga Trunk and marched out Silver St to the old Pike that Led to Jeffersonvill the old Pike Road was what is now the J. M & I R. R. Bed.

This being about the 20 of Sept it was very warm and it tried Some of the Boys we arrived at Jeff about 11 oclock & wated for the Two oclock Packet and all abord we steamed up the River and then we began to bet where we were going we suposned we were on our way to the army of the Potomack. But after dake we was Landed at Madison Ind and ordered & marched to the old camp ground called Camp Emerson a very nice grove after Remaining Here a few days we drew our guns the old Springfield Rifle and bigan drilting and Target Shooting and we soon found out that we had a gun that killed behind as well as in front and we were just going Home and quit the army if they did not give us other guns— you Know—

However we concluded to Remain a while Longer as we was afraid that the war would come to a close Before we would be ordered to the front— Here I witness[ed] the first fellows Drummed out of Camp and it was quite a Sight to See the 2 fellows With their Head Shaved & marched out of camp—

Here Relate the Incidant of Camp duty—

Company K, 93rd Regiment, and was mustered in October 31, 1862, at Madison, Indiana, by Capt. Newman. Big is described as having dark eyes and hair and dark complexion, height greater than 5'10. "Civil War Mustee Cards," microfilm, roll no. 5, Military Records Files, Drawer 401-A-1 (Indiana State Archives). According to figures in Terrell, Report of the Adjutant General, 1:110. Appendix: Statistics and Documents, Doc. 14, Bir was about three inches taller than the average Hoosier soldier and, at 19, in the preponderant age group of those 20 and under.

A Saratoga trunk was a large traveling trunk, usually possessing a rounded top. When first built, the Jeffersonville Madison Railroad ran twenty miles north from Madison to Vermont. Eventually renamed the Jeffersonville Madison and Indianapolis, it was extended in segments until 1894 it reached the state capital. Richard S. Simons and Francis H. Parker, Railroads of Indiana (Bloomington, Ind., 1997), 30, 114-17.

Camp Emerson was situated on a floodplain of the Ohio River, now the site of the Madison Country Club. Bir's maligned "old Springfield rifle" might well have been in service since 1855 or earlier. The Springfield Model 1861 "with modifications, dominated the field of Union long-arms for the duration of the war." William C. Davis, Rebels and Yankees: The Fighting Men of the Civil War (New York, 1991), 56.

This is the first of several indications that Bir probably intended to read his memoir to veterans. The practical jokes that Bir related were typical of Civil War camp life. One Illinois soldier who was a pipe smoker had his tobacco laced with gunpowder by some of his compatriots. James I. Robertson, Jr., "Frolics, Frolics, and Firewater," in The Civil War Soldier: A Historical Reader, ed. by Michael Barton and Larry M. Logue (New York, 2002), 130-31.
And it was while in this camp that I had rather hard luck as I thought— I had been injuring joke[s] and all kinds of trick playd on other boys for some times I thought I was a kind of a pej and non[oe] of these old fellow[s] would play any trick on me. But it came to a focus at last and some one layed down behind me and another pushed me and I fell down hill about 20 feet and got up and began pawing the ground for something to kill these fellows with and they held me and only made me mad and I was going strait home this time sure for I would not stay with such a fellow that would treat me so. But I finly went to my quarters and cried it out and got up next morning feeling akin ashamed of myself. But it was a good lesson for me for after this I learned how to take a joke and plaid many a nother and had many plaid on my self.

Here I will say that our first col was old col Mcquider of state st. confectionest. But for some cause he was removed and col D. C. Thomas of Salem took charge of the regiment and about the middle of October we got marching orders and we marched up to the top of the hill and here we took the train for Indianapolis.13 Arriving there we turned our old Springfield rifles and drew the Infield rifle & we were happy now we left Indianapolis the same evening and arrived at Cairo about day light & stacked arms on the Leavy to wate for our boat—14 But while waiting a Baker with a 2 wheeled cart came along to sell us Pies cakes & bread & we were hungry of coarse and could not wate for him to hand them out at 10 a piece and we turned the truck over horse cart and man all toghather and of cors began to help him to get rid of his load—of coarse—I being a good boy did not take but 2 Pies & having no money I though I would pay him another time and will to if I ever see him—so if any of you see him tell him to come up to 13 & main and get his money and ill be glad to see him—We finly got aboard of the old Steamer Free Union & landed at Memphi Tenn the next day15 & was camped in some old building near the landing and the orders was for all to stay in camp for the town was well marashed and we would get in the guard house.

And the col ordred out guard to keep us in and we kept going out and he kept doubling up the guard until we could touch one Enother with our bayo[net] and yet they would get out and he finly took all of the guards of & told the provost marshall of the city to send every fellow that did not have a pass to Fort Pickering and put them to work on the fortifications this sort a checked us but after a few days we had marching orders and the col found about half of his regiment absent at Fort Pickering & had to go and get them out—16 We marched out a few miles to camp & here we first saw General Grant & Gen Shurman & here we was put in Brigades. Our Brigade at this time was composed of

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13 Bir has, for unknown reasons, conflated two different men. Major James F. McCurdy of New Albany, Indiana, commanded the post at Camp Noble for a time in 1862, and is listed in state records and documented in official correspondence as declining a commission to be colonel of the regiment. He was replaced, as Bir notes, by Col. DeWitt C. Thomas of Salem, who was commissioned and mustered in on October 21, 1862, and was mustered out with the regiment at the end of the war. Bir may or may not have met McCurdy at Camp Noble; he does not mention the name in his memoir. Bir did know Albert H. McCuddih, a confectioner on State Street in New Albany after the war and a member of Bir's Sanderson Post 191 of the GAR. Terrell, Report of the Adjutant General, 3:119; "93rd Ind. Correspondence," Indiana State Archives.

14 At Madison the celebrated inclined-plane railroad cars of 1841 brought horse-drawn cars from river level up 400 feet to the hilltop at North Madison. In time, specially designed wood-burning steam locomotives pulled cars up the grade. (One of these, the Reuben Wells, is preserved as a permanent exhibit at the Children's Museum of Indianapolis.) George P. Clark, Into the Old Northwest: Journeys with Charles H. Titus 1841-1846 (East Lansing, Mich., 1994), 49, 121 n4.

15 The Enfield rifle, manufactured in England, was more accurate than the Springfield. Enfields were purchased in large quantities by both the North and the South; the rifle issued to Bir was evidently bought in Europe by Robert Dale Owen for the state arsenal. Owen purchased 30,000 Enfield rifles for Indiana during the war. Thornborough, Indiana in the Civil War Era, 165. Calvin Fletcher recorded in his diary for the day of February 23, 1862, that the arsenal was "near the state house north side where some 100 women are making cartridge & c.e." Gayle Thornborough,

Dorothy L. Riber, Paula Corpuz, eds., The Diary of Calvin Fletcher (9 vols., Indianapolis, 1972-1983), 7:352.

16 Cairo, Illinois, situated at the confluence of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers, was a supply depot of the Union army and the base for Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's operations against Tennessee's Fort Henry and Donelson in February 1862. Ulysses S. Grant, Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant (2 vols., New York, 1885-1886), 1:287-93.

17 Forest Queen was one of several steamboats leased to the federal government by the Gulf brother's, prominent bankers and manufacturers of Aurora, Indiana; http://www.hillforest.org/intro.htm. On November 13, 1862, the 1st Division of the Army of the Kentucky, commanded by Brig. Gen. Andrew Jackson Smith, received orders to proceed to Memphis, Tennessee. Frank J. Welcher, The Union Army 1861-1865: Organization and Operations; Vol. 2, The Western Theater (Bloomington, Ind., 1993), 182.

18 Confederate Fort Pickering in south Memphis extended over a mile along the Mississippi and gave its name to a neighboring section of the city. Its numerous batteries opposed attack by land or river. Together with the city of Memphis, it fell into Federal hands on June 6, 1862, when the protective Confederate gunboat fleet was routed by U.S. naval rams and gunboats under Commodore Charles Davis. Calvin D. Cowles, comp., Atlas to Accompany the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (3 vols., Washington, 1891-1895), plate 114. E. B. Long with Barbara Long, The Civil War Day by Day: An Almanac 1861-1865 (New York, 1971), 222.
the following Regiments 72 & 95 Ohio 114 Ill 26 & 93 Ind With Gen Buckner as Comdr of Brigade. At this time I dont think the army was Put in core this was about the 1 of Nov 1862. Soon after we got marching orders and well do i Remembr the first days march in dry but I Stood it very well. The first night in camp we or Rather my mess got a Fine Turkey I a-good-boy Caught the turkey of coarse Being young and Excited I forgot to Pay for it but I will if I find the owner of it—of Coarse. The turkey was good—Up before day Light next morning we march all day and it was Rathr hard on us then the 1st day. Went in to camp on Peigon Creek & Rusted one day and while Resting myself & Pard Went out forging and got some chickens and Honey & on the way Home we Eat Honey and that night I Had the cramps until I thought my time Had come but I a-good Boy was not afraid to die= I dont Like Honey now—never took anybody Huney after that—

The next days march we had a Little scrumming to do and Here I heard the First Shrink of the Shell and of coars had Lots to tell about our first adventures.

That night we went into camp and we saw that we were going to hav a Storm and fixed our tents we thought all Right. Just after dark it Began to Rain & blow and in 3 minutes there was not a tent in the Brigad a Standing and we got an awfull Dranching and I a-good-boy of Coarse was not Praying about this time but felt Like going Home it Rained all night We was got out before daylight next morning and Started out and it Rained all day & we would march 10 Steps and wait 1 hour and so all day we did not go our 1 mile and so for several days. But we finely got near Moscow [Tennessee] and Here we were to go into winter quarters as we thought. We were Drilled Every day in Brigade Drill & doing Picket Duty for Some 2 Weeks or more and finely it was Reported that Vandorn was about to cut off our suplys and our brigade was ordered back to Hollow Springs to Hold this Post as it was the main Depot of Supplies for General Grants army. Here we Had one of the Hardest matches of our army life we went on a force march to beat Vandorn to Hollow Springs and march'd 2 days & 1 night with only about 4 hours stop we Reached Hollow Springs in time to see all of our Suplies going up in Smoke and Vandorn Riding out of town it seems as a Col Kelly of the 19 Ill Cavalry Had Suerendierd without firing a gun to only a small force of Vandorn Calvery. Of Coarse we were Completely worn out and camped near the Depot that was burning and in a Short time after going in to camp we were all asleep & at 9 o clock the Long Roll Beat and Here we lit out Leaving our old ciby tents Standing and we never seen them after this. We marched all night and all next day until after dark & Here we were allowed to sleep about 4 hours and Started out again Pasing through Bolivar and on to Grand Junction. Reaching this Place Just before dark having Marched 4 Days and 3 nights with only about 7 or 8 Hours Rest on Reaching Grand Junction our brigade did not Hav over 150 men in it I went in with our colers= Vandorn Picked up many of our straglers and went to Andersonville and other Prisons to die= This Ended one of the

"It was not Kelly but Col. R. C. Murphy of the 8th Wisconsin, commanding at Holly Springs, who surrendered the Union supply depot to Confederate Gen. Earl Van Dorn's forces on December 20, 1862. The southern troops destroyed the supplies and then escaped. Grant had already advanced to Oxford as part of his (first) campaign to Vicksburg and was forced to retreat to Grand Junction, Tennessee, after his supply line was effectively destroyed. Murphy was dismissed from military service. Grant wrote: 'The surrender of Holly Springs was most reprehensible and showed either the dishonesty of Colonel Murphy to the cause which he professed to serve, or gross cowardice.' (Grant, Personal Memoirs, 1:934. Battle summaries and biographical information on Union and Confederate officers for this and many subsequent notes are taken from Mark Mayo Boatner, III, The Civil War Dictionary, rev. ed. (New York, 1987); Long, Civil War Day by Day; James M. McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era (New York, 1988); and the American Battlefields Protection Program website at http://www2.nps.gov/abpp/battles/hollysprng.htm.)

"The long roll on the drums sounded a general alarm. The Sibley tent, used by both armies, was cone-shaped, supported by a center pole, and intended to house no more than a dozen soldiers. Davis, Rebels and Yankees, 132.

"Bir's brigade was following Van Dorn's forces who continued to attack Union posts, including the one at Bolivar, Tennessee. In the skirmish at Grand Junction, Tennessee, the Confederates, as Bir notes, were able to take a number of Union prisoners.

"Twenty-one comrades of Bir's 93rd Regiment were among the thousands of Union soldiers who perished in the notorious Confederate prison camp at Andersonville, Georgia. (State of Indiana), Report of the Unwelling and Dedication of Indiana Monuments at Andersonville, Georgia (Indianapolis, 1909), 91. On Andersonville, see William Marvel, Andersonville: The Last Depot (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1994)."
most unreasonable marches as ther was no good accomplished for Grant had to turn back & made his way to Memphis at his leasure. 21. We laid at Grand Juncton 1 Day and Resumed our march to Lafeyett Tenn & Here we built quite an Extensiv fort working Hard every day and after its completion we marched of and left it this was the 31 of decemb 1862 and on the 1 of Jan 1863 was the first mail we received since we left Memphis now nearly 2 Months. But my Heart Beat with Joy when i received 27 Letters. Our march from Lafeyett to Shilo & then on to Corenth & Here we went in winter quarters again. 22 Just below the town in a very low wet Place & Here is where our regiment became famous by using a long pecution shell for a dogiron this Hapend one Evening just after Dressperade and all were getting their sup in Co I of 93 the shell let go & you ought to see the Pans & Kettles & coffee pots up in the air and the company scatered all over the ground & strange to say it did not kill a man.

From this on we were called the bumb Shell Regiment & Co I the Bumb Co. Here we met that famous 66 Ind camped on a small Rise this was our Second meeting for they came in Camp Noble the day before we left they came from Ky. 23 While at Corinth lying in the mud & had nothing but green Black Jack wood to burn the meases was very bad and i think we left 40 pt cent of our regiment in the Hospital. 24 After lying here for 8 or 10 days we started and marched back to Memphis or a Station called Bunton Station a few miles from the city and Here we went in winter quarters again this time we built up quarters & was com-

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21 Historian Allan Nevins shares Bir's opinion of Grant's aborted excursion into Mississippi: “Grant had not covered himself with glory. He had marched from Grand Junction nearly a hundred miles to Oxford, and then marched back again. His two months of effort had merely lost valuable supplies and demonstrated that his route was badly chosen.” Nevins, The War For the Union: Vol. 2, War Becomes Revolution 1862-1863 (New York, 1960), 383.

22 Bir arrived at Corinth, a railroad junction in the northeast corner of Mississippi, three months after a battle in which Confederate forces failed to dislodge occupying Union troops, October 3-4, 1862.

23 The 66th Indiana, part of Second Brigade, Army of Kentucky, was probably “famous” in Bir’s estimation for having fared in disarray during the Battle of Richmond, August 1862. Welcher, The Union Army 1861-1865, 2: 629-30.

24 “Like many brigades, the 93rd Indiana lost more men to sickness and delayed death from wounds than to death on the battlefield. One example is provided in Michael W. Beck, “Sickbed Warrior,” Civil War Times Illustrated, 39 (May 2000), 88. Private Joseph Housshour was mustered into the 93rd Indiana but entered the hospital while the brigade was at the siege of Memphis; he spent six months in two Union hospitals and died without fighting.
fortable fixed. Here we built another fort and done Picket duty and had some cold wetter we lay here until about the 20 of Feb and we marched to Memphis & took the same old Forest Queen for Helena Ark & we laid here for a few days & (Relate Some of the Incidences) after spending 5 or 8 days here we got aboard of Steamer Molott & proceeded to what we called Duck Port at the head of the canal. Here we worked on this canal all night & day for some 4 weeks in water up to our Stomachs of coarse we were relieved we would work 6 hours & rest 18 hours. But here I struck oil for I was promoted to corporal & did not have to work and the weather was very pleasant while we staid here X (Relate the Jo Zoler & capybotem Incendat also (Paul gigenart going swimming).)

And it was here that we were put in army corps & Gen Shurman took charge of our corps I think at this time it was the 15 corp also it was here that the expedition of Blockade Runers was made up about the early Part of April 63 and it was here that I volunteered to run the Blockade. But there seemed that they had more volunteers than they needed and I was left with quite a number of our brigade but we did I

23The Duckport canal was part of Grant's spring 1863 Vicksburg campaign. The canal was dug from Duckport at Milliken's Bend on the Mississippi River “nearly three miles long” west to Willow Bayou. Sherman to Grant, April 26, 1863, in The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (128 vols., Washington, 1894-1922), Series 1, Volume 24/3 [Ser 38], 235, hereafter cited as Official Records. Bir was one of the 1,000 men of Sherman's Fifteenth Corps in addition to the 2,000 men from Gen. John A. McClernand's Thirteenth Corps assigned to the project. It was part of the complex system of roads and bayous Grant used to bypass Vicksburg, bring his army down the west bank of the Mississippi, cross below Grand Gulf, and attack the city from the east. Welcher, The Union Army 1861-1865, 2: 863-64. On the entire campaign, see Michael B. Ballard, Vicksburg: The Campaign That Opened the Mississippi (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2004); and the Vicksburg National Military Park website, http://www.nps.gov/vick/vcpmg/vcpmg.htm.

24Bir was promoted to corporal on April 28, 1863; he was promoted to sergeant in April 1865. “Civil War Muster Cards,” Indiana State Archives. Privates Joseph Zoller and Paul E. Guignard, both of New Albany, were mustered into the army on August 29, 1862. Guignard was mustered out on November 10, 1863, at the end of the war. Zoller died of an unrecorded cause on June 11, 1864. Terrell, Report of the Adjutant General, 6:516-17.

25While Union troops marched south through Louisiana, Rear Adm. David Dixon Porter began sending his fleet down the Mississippi River past enemy batteries on April 16. On April 17, Sherman informed First Division commander, Maj. Gen. Frederick Steele, “Seven gunboats and two transports ran the blockade successfully last night.” And he noted, “The Forest Queen had one shot in the hull and another through a steam pipe.” Official Records, Series 1, Volume 24/3 [Ser 38], p. 201; see also James M. Merritt, Battle Flags South: The Story of the Civil War Navies on Western Waters (Rutherford, N.J., 1970), 268. On April 30, beginning in the early morning darkness, 17,000 of Grant’s troops crossed the river at Bruinsburg, Mississippi.

Remembr the night that Started & how anxious we watched the flashes of the guns as they were Passing and the next morning how we waited for the news and when it came what a cheer went up all over the camp and then our work on the canal ceased for in a few days we had marching ords & we broke up camp and went to Mililgen Bend [Milliken's Bend, Louisiana] up the Rivr a few miles & staid here 2 days and then on the 2 Day of May we marched back to our old camp and our old canal & followed down the Biue through Louisiana untill we reached Port Gibson on this march i think we passed through the garden spot of the Earth as far as farming Land is concerned at Grand or apisept Grand Gulf we took the same Old Forest Queen & crossed to Grand Gulf this time the boat was very shaky for she had run the Blockade & had received many Shots through the dierant Parts of Hur we were landed here in the Evening and Eate the Last bit of Hard tack we had for suppr and suppose we would get Rations for Breakfast but early next morning we had marching Ords and were in line Ready to start when they
dumped 9 Barrels of flour for 3 Days Rations & of Coats being Ready to march and no way to take the flour we Pulled out and Left the flour & at this time it was vry dry and Grants Whole army on one Road it mad the dust very deep. So we marched 3 days & night without any thing to Eat Except Saw Belly that we had in our Havr sack. Had no forging Here for there was two many men on this Road. But i must Say that i felt frist rat Rate and very Light. It seemed I did not get tired but the 3 day we went in to camp and Drew a few hardtack and coffee and the boys was Happy. We camped on a field that the Rebs Had camped on the night before and we could Scratch any where in the Sand and find graybacks and on this campaign is the only time that I Ever Had Any of these Pets altho Some of the company Kpt them all the time.28

On the 12 of May was the Fight of Raynond. We did not get in the fight although very close to it.29 But it was over in a few minutts and on the night of the 13 it Began to Rain on the morning of the 14 of May we Started out about 2 in the morning and it Thunderd & Lightnd all the Day So Severe was the clashes that It Brought many to thir nees Rain Poured down untill about noon this is the day of the Battle of Jackson Miss30 and on our force march all the morning it Had Rained and filled all Low ground With Watr untill many times we had to carry our cartridge Boxes on our Sholdr to Keep them out of Watr and may a fellow fell in Places Where they would almost Drown. As we was Doublequicking in to Line of battle across a old field we Left many a man So Exhausted that he could not Pull himself out of the Mud (Ex) (here).

This was our firs Severe battle. Had been may Little Brushes & Here it was that I Had a Shell to tare of Parts of Both of my Pant Legs & Soon

28Graybacks are lice. Fleas and lice were common among all ranks of both armies. Reid Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers* (New York, 1888), 59.

29Lt. Gen. John C. Pemberton, commander at Vicksburg, ordered the forces of Brig. Gen. John Gregg to intercept approaching Union troops, and on May 12 the Confederates took their stand at a creek crossing near Raymond, Mississippi. Biv's recollection, formed as Sherman's corps passed by, is incorrect—the battle was not "over in a few minutes" but lasted for six hours. With heavy casualties on both sides, Union troops eventually advanced.

30The day after the Battle of Raymond, Gregg had fallen back with his troops to Jackson, Mississippi. Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, ordered to take command of Confederate forces in the state, arrived in and, learning that two Union army corps were approaching and that Gregg had only 6,000 men to defend the city, ordered an evacuation of Jackson under armed protection. After a few hours of fighting on May 14, with the evacuation complete, Confederate forces disengaged and withdrew. Biv's Fifteenth Corps, under Sherman, along with the Seventeenth Corps, commanded by Maj. Gen. James B. McPherson, took possession of the city.

after a ball Struck the But of my gun and took of the Stock and it was here that company B of our Regiment Lost 9 men By one Shell and it was Here that a few of our fellows got in an old frame house thinking they would be safe & they had more than got in and behind it until there was not Less then Dozen Shells Struck it and if you Ever saw a Satement it was at this time the fellows coming out of all openings Windows & doors. By Evening the Rain ceased & So did the Jonies for Jackson was ours. Our regiment went into camp at the West of town and all the boys broke for town & We had a Bonfire all that night So the boys could get away with thir Whisk Tobacco and all Kind of Supplies. I Being a good Boy just got a cople of Hams did not chew tobacco or drink Whisky—when I could not get it—but By 9 oclock that night the Whole of Shurmans Corps Was Drunk if Johnson had came back that Night I think one Regiment could have taken the Whole army. But will Say that I was Sober as a Judg & cared for the Company.31

For that night my capt had a Dusy John full of What he Said was the best He Ever taken and next morning i found it in my canteen & what my canteen did not Hold I filled all of my messis So we had good Whisky to Last us clear to Vicksburg the next morning Capt Began offering premium for the fellow that got His Whisky.32 I being at this time acting Ordry Sargent and the Capt Handy man had me to investigate and see if I could not find the fellow. I of Course obeyed and after an investigation I told him I could not find any Clew—But I Had some it may not Be as fine as his but I would Share with Him—Early in the morning we had marching Ordors and we Started out and most of our regiment Had on a Stove Pipe Hat these White Wooly ones and it was a fony Sity. Shurmans army corps Was Detailed to tear up the Railroad and soon after Leaving our Camp we marched out by Brigades and form Line on R R and Stack arms and 2 men to Every tyre. Just turned the track ovr the

31Union troops burned parts of Jackson and, as Biv notes, looted 'all Kind of Supplies.' As Biv also recalls, the Fifteenth was detailed to tear up the railroad which connected the city with Vicksburg. Although acts committed while drunk could be punished, drunkenness as such was not illegal for soldiers, and James Robertson notes that standards were inherently enforced because so many officers, like Biv's captain, also drank when the opportunity arose. Robertson, "Fun, Frolic, and Firewater," 134-36.

32A demijohn was a large jug-shaped bottle often enclosed in protective wicker. The reward offered by the captain was understandable. Robertson, drawing on first-person accounts, describes the whisky commonly drunk by soldiers as varying "between raw, rough, and unknown." Ibid., 135.
Length of the army Corps & then Pile up the cross tires and then Pile the Iron Rails across them and Set them afer the Rails would get Red Hot and bend in all Shapes this was the 15 of May I Supose we turned our 10 or 12 miles of Road in this way and then we marched most all night of the 15 and on the 16 Still on to Champion Hill. We did not get in the fight Being in the Reserve.\textsuperscript{13} We camped on the Batlefield the night of 16 and there was many Battle Seems here it near the top of the Hill where we Seen Where they said that Every hors of a Batery was Killed allso we seen Capt I think of 46 tud Kiled with 26 of His men.\textsuperscript{14}

On the morning of the 17 Shumrans Corps was ordrd on a Difrant Rout we went north or up the Black Rivr & so we missed the fight at Black Rivr Bridg on the 17.\textsuperscript{15} But the night of the 17 we Camped some 20 miles up the Rivr got in camp after Dark & the whole army corps camped in a Large Coton field. We being about the center of the field Went to bed with ordr to be Ready to march at 3 in the morning this was my time to get watr for coffee. I was up before many fires was started & Had no difaculty to get to the Rivr to get watr but when I started back the fires was springing up all ovr the camp and it got me bewilderd and in going back I would Run on fellows Lying on the ground and stumble over them and spill watr on them and if i was called a Sun of a bitch once I was called it 100 times before i got to my mess & here will Say it Did not take us Long to get coffee for this mess all we had to Eat Except these black Eyed Pease. On the morning of the 18 we Started for our Lasi days march this being the 18 day since we Left & Had not Had our Shoes of and Slept on our arms Every night it was Enough to make a man Lousy. So I hav heard it Said that Grant & Shurman Had the criters all so now you cant blame me for having them.

About noon or maybe Later we Reached the famous Hills around Vicksburg and my Regiment in the advance we came to where we had to throw our Scramishs & here Our Regimant Was ordrd to Pile our Knapsacks and our all Except we was given 40 Round & Deplaned as Scramishs & Here the wool began to Rase for we had Heard So much about [Vicksburg and we] could See the monster Work Looming up in front of us. Lucky for us on the 18 they did not Shell us so we stood it Purty well and Scramishing our Hill & through lowlls & at Dark we were Withdrawn and Joined our briged in Line Where we Dreamed of the dreedfull Tomorrow.\textsuperscript{16} In the morning of the 19 afer daylight we were in full view of the Reble Work & Strange to Say the Johnnies did not fire a gun. I hav often thought that they could Hav Killed Half of our Brigade if they Had opend fire on us. But Soon after Sun up we filed out and advanced Some Distance & took shelter Just at the top of a hill and Here we had time to meditate for we Lay in Line of battle untill about 2 oclock of the 19. Then it was that the first charge was made. Our Regiment Suppored our 6 gun Batery the 1 Ill Batery all Brass Pieces comanded by a Jerman Captan Waterhouse of Chicago as I Had Forgotten to Say this Batery Remained in our Brigad The Entire 3 years.\textsuperscript{17}

I think the charge all around the Line Started at one time it was a dreedfull Sight for from where we Lay we could See the Line on our Right & Left for a Half mile the Worst of it for us was to see the Wounded Carried back Through our Ranks and their moans & Curses Was many— and where we Lay in Front of our guns we were opposed to Both Sides for Some 6 or 8 of our Regiment Was Killed or Wounded by our own guns. Some Shells Would Explode Soon after Leaving our guns it was here Just to the Right of our Regiment that Grant & Shurman Stood fully Exposed to the Shots & Shells and viewed the charge Grant Smoking a cigar all the time [I thot to] my self if I had been in this Batts [how] Soon I would found Shelter from Shot & Shell. [Some] of & in fact most of our men charged up to the brest works and could go no further & we all Remained in our Position untill after dark and then Retired to Shelter we fell back about 50 yard and Remained here untill the 22 of May when the 2 general charge was made this was also a failure & on the 23 we were all

\textsuperscript{13}On May 16, 1863, at Champion Hill, midway between Vicksburg and Jackson, Grant von a costly battle against Pemberton.

\textsuperscript{14}According to state records, the only officer of that regiment who was killed that day was First Lt. Joel Ferris of Company F, 46th Indiana. Terrell, Report of the Adjutant General, 2:163.

\textsuperscript{15}On May 17, retreating Confederate forces tried to hold Black River Bridge but failed to do so. Although the bridge was burned to prevent its use by Union troops, the South suffered much larger casualties in the fight, and more than 1,800 Southern soldiers were captured. The remainder of the force withdrew to Vicksburg.

\textsuperscript{16}Grant wanted to take Vicksburg quickly, if possible, and ordered an assault on Confederate defenses on the morning of May 19. As Bir goes on to tell, Union troops moved against Stockade Redan and were met with heavy fire, sustaining 1,000 casualties that day.

Put in Our Position & Remained so till the 4 of July. In the meantime from the 23 on we were kept busy eher digging trenches or sharpshooting and Picket Duty at night it was one night Son after this that our Company was ordered out on Picket duty and this was the night that our Picket Lines were to be advanced so as to give our men a chance to dig up closer to the Rebs work and I had charge of 12 men and ordered out to a certain point in the corn field & had advanced just as far as intended to go and just ready to squat down when were surprised by a volley from the Rebs and they were so close to us that the flash of their guns burnt my Hair and others of my Squad & Strange to say not one of our 12 was hurt but scared we was & didn't forget it and Run we did & Strange to say 1 company of the 95 Ohio that was in the reserve had 36 men killed & wounded from this volley that missed us. But this company had to be in range of their guns. Many funny incidents happened along with our hard ships (one relate) on Ben Welker. And one night while out on Picket 1 stepped on a grave of some of our men that had been buried the day after the charge & my foot went down in to the decayed body and the awful smell it made me so sick this happened very frequently to others while out on duty. This smell was awful some nights when on duty. It was on July 1 that Jo Johnson had been concentrating quite a force in the Rear of Grants army and we were ordered to the rear to strengthening the lines and on the morning of the 4 when Pemberton surrendered Gen. Sherman with his core started for Johnson we marched all day 4 of July & on the 5 of July we laid a pontoon across Black River & our regiment crossed and drove the Johnnies back so the hole could come safely. All day on the 5 we were on the Scumish line through canebrake thickets & Hot was no name about 4 o'clock we drove the Johnnies out of their camp and got lots of grub

Some of it yet boiling on hot fires. In the night of the 5 we had a stumped & there was quite a number of our brigade got killed & wounded all cause by some mules running through our lines on the 6 we marched on without much trouble only Little Scourishing in front all so on the 7 this night we camped in a very fine corn field and the corn was just right for Rostingers & it was here on the morning of the 8 one of our company ate 16 large ears of corn & swore if the Janies killed him that day he would die with a full belly Early the morning of the 8 of July we started for our destination for about 10 o'clock we reached Jackson & by 12 o'clock of the same day we were all in position for the siege which lasted for 8 days. Many funny incidents happened during our fighting here

1. In regards to the mule we had in our company so relate
2. About the 64 pound gun that played on us
3. How the boys hustled for this moly a chuckeluck gun
4. How I was scared by a mortar shell
5. A Narrow escape under my dog tent
6. When we relieved the 49 Ind after the charge
7. Being under fire constantly for 8 days

But on the night Johnson sent one of his brass bands out on or near the fortification & surenaded us with some of the finest music I thought that I ever heard one of the pieces that captured my soul was the bonsy blue flag — & while we were charmed by this music Johnson was withdrawing his army and crossed Purl River & burned the Bridg leaving only enough men to hold the fort until morning. And on the morning of the 16 we had no trouble to take the work for we taken only a few Prisons and the town was ours. But we did not get as much Whisky & Tobacco & Provisions as we had got in May of same year.

*Pursued by Sherman's troops, Johnston retreated to Jackson, Mississippis, and Union forces once again laid siege to the city. On the evening of June 16 and through the early morning hours of the 17th (June 17th dates are one day off here), with inadequate supplies and numbers to defeat Sherman's forces or hold out indefitinctly, the Confederates marched out of the city and retreated across the Pearl River. Occupying Union troops had looted many of the supplies after their first victory, but they nevertheless went on what Michael Ballard calls "another orgy of vandalism" before leaving. Most of Sherman's forces returned to Vicksburg, as Bir relates, and did not pursue Johnston, who retreated northward in the summer heat, destroying potential sources of water for any pursuers. Ballard, Vicksburg, 404-411.

*Chuckaluck is a game played with three dice. Bets are placed on the outcome of each roll.

*Military bands and camp songs were popular with soldiers on both sides. "The Bonnie Blue Flag," among other historians, was second in popularity only to "Dixie" among Southerners.
The Bonnie Blue Flag.

We are a band of brothers native to the soil,
Fighting for our property we gained by honest toil;
But when our rights were threatened the cry went out and far
Hurrah for the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a single star.

Chorus.

Hurrah, hurrah, for Southern rights, hurrah,
Hurrah for the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears the single star.
As long as the Union was faithful to her trust,
Like friends and like brothers we were kind and just;
But now when Northern treachery estranges our rights to war,
We hail as high the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a single star.

Chorus.

Hurrah, hurrah, for Southern rights, hurrah,
Hurrah for the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears the single star.
Print, gallant South Carolina nobly made a stand.
Then come Alabamians who took her by the hand,
Next quickly Mississippi, Georgia and Florida,
All raised on high the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a single star.

Chorus.

Hurrah, hurrah, for Southern rights, hurrah,
Hurrah for the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears the single star.
To men of valor gather around the banner of right,
Texas and fair Louisiana will join us in the fight:
Davis our loved President, and Stephens' statesman rare;
Now rally round the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a single star.

Chorus.

Hurrah, hurrah, for Southern rights, hurrah,
Hurrah for the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears the single star.
Then here's to brave Virginia, the Old Dominion State,
With young Confederacy at heart she has lifted her fate,
Complied by her example to other states prepare,
To raise on high the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a single star.

Chorus.

Hurrah, hurrah, for Southern rights, hurrah,
Hurrah for the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a single star.
Then here's to our Confederacy, strong we are and brave
Like patriots of old we'll hold our heritage to save,
And rather than submit to slaves to die we would prefer.
So cheer up for the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a single star.

Chorus.

Hurrah, hurrah, for Southern rights, hurrah,
Hurrah for the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears the single star.
Then cheer, boys, cheer, and raise a joyous shout,
Arkansas and North Carolina now have both gone out:
Then let another morning close for Tennessee be given.
The single star of the Bonnie Blue Flag has grown to be eleven.

Chorus.

Hurrah, hurrah, for Southern rights, hurrah,
Hurrah for the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears eleven stars.

A sheet music for "Bonnie Blue Flag." It described it as "Some of the best music I thought that I've ever heard."

We Remained Here for 3 or 4 days and then the town was given back to Johnson & we marched back towards Vicksburg and in camp at what was called Black River Camp. We Remained Here Some 3 weeks and then we marched up near Yazoo City and camped for 2 or 3 Weeks at Oak Ridg. Here we built another fort and every morning we would have Long Roll and Doublequick to fort and wate for the Rebs to attack us but all in vain for they did not come and it was while in these camps that we were Put in the 16 army corps & part of Corps went up Red River & the Balance went to Chatenuga With Gen Shurman this was McAmher's Division this part of our Corps we never joined any more after our core was Divided. Our 1 Brigade of the 1 Division was sent to Memphis for to Recruit up and one man from each company Sent Home to Recruit for his company. While at Memphis we were called the independent brigade & here we See some very hard services for we were out on three different Expeditions one of these we marched as far as Moscow Miss & here old forest showed bright and after a half days fighting here we had to sneak back on a force March for Forrest had Drew us so far from home that he Run back and took Memphis & Plaid Havock with things in general and on another occasion we marched back to Hollow Springs & back by the way of Bolivar and back to Memphis on Each of these Expeditions we had fighting to do with old Forrest on one of these occasions he had our Regiment Surrounded & we took shelter in old house & a large Depot and used as forts to defend ourselves we kept him at bay this way for half of a day and it was here M V Malory and myself while Lying in a revine Shot 9 Shots each at forest on a white Horse & did not hit him we may had the buck agile for it looked like we were good for Andersonville. But finally the hol of our Brigade came to our Rescue & we was master of the

"The Sixteenth Corps was organized in December 1862 and temporarily deactivated in November 1864. Its four divisions were stationed around Memphis, LaGrange and Corinth until June 1863 when three were sent to reinforce Grant at Vicksburg. From that time until the end of the war, the corps suffered from continual separations and troop shifting, with divisions participating in operations on the Red River, from Chattanooga to Atlanta, and at Nashville. The reorganized corps (February 1865) joined the Army of the Gulf and took part in the siege of Mobile.


"But referring to Second Lt. Martin V. Mallory of Galena, Indiana, Buck agile and its equivalent, buck fever, are defined in Milford M. Mathews, A Dictionary of Americanisms on Historical Principles (Chicago, 1951), 199, as the "nervous excitement felt by a hunter at the sight of game."
 Situation. But two Late for us to save our chicken Stews for we were about Ready to Eat our diner & Being in a country Where they wer Plenty we all Had chicken on cooking. But Forests men got our diner insted of us for we had to fall Back to the Town & Depot for Shelter after our brigad came up and we became master of the Situation as we thought Forset Concluded He would Like to get us down in His country a Little farther but and kept agvating us and finly got us across a Small Rivr in the swamps & here he got in Our Rear and Had us in a very clos Place. Here the Whold Brigade Had to go on Picket Duty and next morning after Some fighting we got out & we Started for Memphis and Forest on our trial Clear back. So it was With us for 4 Expeditions as a Independent Brigade. I think it was done to keep him from going to Both Shurman at Chatamanga these expeditions was started from the fall of 63 to the 10 of June 64 in these marches it was Estimated that We had marched 13 hundred miles & it began to tell on our Little Brigade it was the winter of the cold new years that many of you remember we was in camp at Memphis at this time and when we was not out after Forest we had to do Picket Duty and Provost duty in the city and there was many frozen to death on this cold newyers around Memphis. I having Had another Stripe added to my arm I was Sargent and Had to go on duty in the city and I just got so cold that I could hav cried But the tears Would Freeze & Break of & so I quit trying to cry. However, we did not Patrole the city much that day for we Staid around the salons & drank Tom & gery all day & So we kept from Freezing to death it was here soon after this I was on duty with a squad of men & had occasion to visit a dance that was going on & a fight started and there was 4 fellows killed in Less then 2 minit all that saved me was the Ladies Runing to me for Protection & they Piled on me about 6 deep, But I came out all Right.

This is a Little Side show now and you Fellows out to tell on me for this. I had a girl in Memphis that I thought a great deal of and thought she did of me & had many pleasant chats and many square meal at the house— But after the war I went Down to Memphis to see hur & she was married. But I went to see hur all the same and all saw hur husband and took diner with them. So endeth this chapter. After remaining of & on between expeditions at Memphis until about May 1 1864 we started out on our 5 expedition with our Brigade and 2 negro Regiments and with our 1 Ill battery & some of griesons calvery this time with the intention of wiping up the fields with forest for I had caused us enough hardships. But Behold after he had drawn us as far as he wanted us that is 30 miles South of Coenth at what we called Guntown he concluded to wipe us up and I am safe to say he did it up purty fine for on the 10 day of May it was very war[al] we marched out Boldly until about 11 o'clock we began to hear fighting a head & saw for several hours the cavallery was driving him back but about 1 o'clock we got our orders to double quick and for 4 miles we were Run through the hot sun without water until we came to the battlefield & as soon as we arrived the cav[alry] was withdrawn & we Run in a thicket and laid down thought to get some Breath. But had just got down when the rebels raised up only about 40 feet of us & began to pour volley after volly in to us and they were 10 to our one of us. Our Lieutenant cornal went down from firs volly with 7 bullets through him all so our ajutant killed dead & I thought Evry body was killed. But as for myself I will say I felt just as though they could not Hit me & our regiment stood that grind for at least 20 minutes until we were Flanked & had to fall back or been prisner and the rebeles had charged our battery and taken it and turned on us ther was not a hors of our battery that was not shot down.

Guntown on June 10 and made their stand on June 11; the regiment fought at Tupelo on July 13-15 and returned to Memphis in early August.

"Brig. Gen. Samuel D. Sturgis engaged Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest at Guntown (also known as Brice's Cross Roads or as Tishomingo Creek) on June 10, 1864. Forrest's 3,500 defeated 7,800 Federals and chased them the following day, capturing 16 guns, 250 vehicles, and 184 horses. "For God's sake," the dispirited Yankee commander exclaimed, "If Mr. Forrest will let me alone I will let him alone!" Foote, The Civil War, 3:371.

"The "Report of Col. De Witt C. Thomas, Ninety-third Indiana Infantry," June 16, 1864, Official Record, Series I, Volume 39/1 [597-77], 111, validates Bir's recollection: "About 11 o'clock word came to me that it was necessary for me to move up at quick time; that the cavalry had been engaged and the enemy had turned their left flank. This was about three miles from the field of battle... In a few minutes we received a fire, and upon looking up I saw men advancing upon my line, dressed in our uniform and carrying the Union flag, but firing upon us as they advanced. Some of my men, upon receiving the fire, commenced firing upon them. Myself and Lieutenant- Colonel Poole, stopped the firing, supposing, of course, it was our own men, when they (the rebels) poured into my ranks a murderous fire, throwing my ranks at a fearful rate. I then gave the command to my men 'to fire.'"

"Lt. Col. John W. Poole, from Medora, was mustered into the regiment on September 1, 1863. He was wounded and captured at Brice's Cross Roads on June 10 and died of starvation at Macon, Georgia, March 5, 1865. The regiment's adjutant, Irving Moody, was killed in action on June 10. Terrell, Report of the Adjutant General, 3:119."
In this fight is where I lost my dearest friend I had on earth. He was shot while I was trying to lead him of the field. He being shot in the leg first & 2 time through the body. He and I raised together & enlisted together and slept together up to this time. Had told me the night before that he would be killed & He was Kill Right at the Start of the fight.

This comrade's name was William Atkins—I could not carry out his wishes in regards to some personal property about him which he had told me to send to different persons at home for as I said we held our position for some time after this. But had to finally fall back. Here allow me to say while at the encampment at Washington D.C. last fall I had the privilege to attend a Reunions of our corps and in many good speeches I heard in praise of the corps one from an officer who seen all of the fight at this place said in all of his army life he had not seen a regiment stand fire like the 93 Ind Did at Guntown with the over whelming forces against us this officer did not belong to the regiment either—So the few of us that attended this Reunion was well repaid for our long journey to Washington if we had not seen or heard any thing else.

At the time of starting on this campaign our recruiting officer had all come back with recruits and it swelled our Regiment to about 4 hundred & we returned with 70 men the balance killed wounded & taken prisoners.

After the fight on the evening of the 10 we started back & marched all night and in the morning about sun up crossed the Tallahatchie River and thought we were all right but in a few minutes the Reble calvary came charging on us from all sides & we had to fight our way out the best we could and all day long we marched with the Reble on us every few miles until we were completely worn out. It was along the evening of the 11 of May that a squad of 8 of us concluded that we would make a stand and die right here. We did so and fired several shots in the charging col and of course could not keep them [block] for they soon surrounded us and all was prisoners of war. But will say here that we killed 11 men right here for I saw them and don't know how many more we wounded this is the only time that I could swear that I killed a Reble this happened some 20 miles South of Lafeyett Tenn and as I was a prisoner I don't know how the hol of the Regiment got back to Memphis but can say somewhat demoralized.

After I was taken prisoner we were allowed to rest. Probably a half hour when we started for Anderson vill as the guards told us. Here I happened to get in conversation with one of the guards and he was very agreeable at least to me for he allowed me to ride his horse which was a great relief for me for we had been on the march for about 42 hours without sleep rest and only twist [twice] had we eaten anything in all this time & this is not all we marched all night and until about 8 o'clock next morning when our guards stopped at a Revine to wash a cloth and told us to sit down to rest & here is when I gave them the slip and got away from them. Here tell the story) How I was rescued and kept by a negro & how I seen them shoot down our men without asking them to surrender & how I was kept for 3 days in forests camp & how far I marched this night that I left & how I took the back track and how far I marched and got back to Memphis & how I looked I reached our command after dark of the 17th of May & found that the Regiment had marching orders & would leave on the 18th.

By this time we were put in the 16 corps & A.J. Smith had come back from the Red River campaign and he was ordered out after 011d Forest & we well knew if he ever caught up with him he would lick him shure so I was ready to start out with the company, but the doctor

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34Bir's reference to the encampment “Last fall” dates the memoir to early or mid-1865. The Twenty-sixth National Encampment was held on September 19–23 in Washington, D.C. “On the beautiful mall south of the President's grounds, known as the White Lot” (now known as the Ellipse). It was probably at the reunion of the Sixteenth Corps, held on the evening of the 20th, that Bir heard the 93rd Regiment praised for its stand at Guntown. Souvenir Program G.A.R. 26th National Encampment, Washington, D.C. September 20th (sic), 1892, (Philadelphia, 1892), 1. 2. Thanks to Will Elsberry of the Library of Congress humanities and social sciences division for the reference.

35June 11, 1864. Bir was one of 1,623 Union troops captured.

36A career soldier, Andrew Jackson Smith was cavalry commander at the Battle of Corinth; was promoted to brigadier general in March 1862; and took part in actions including the capture of Memphis, the siege of Vicksburg, the defeat of Nathan Bedell Forrest at Tupelo, the Battle of Nashville, and the siege of Mobile. Ezra J. Warner, Generals in Blue: Lives of the Union Commanders ( Baton Rouge, La., 1964), 454–55.

37Fearing the French threat in Mexico, Lincoln ordered military operations in Texas, although Grant, Sherman, and Banks were opposed. In the original plan, Banks was to move up Bayou Teche with 17,000 troops, Sherman was to send 10,000 up the Red River from Vicksburg under direction of A. J. Smith, while Maj. Gen. Frederick Steele was to send 15,000 south from Little Rock. Both Banks and Steele started late, the latter so late that he played no part in the operations. Banks and Smith were routed at Sabine Cross Roads on April 8 but repulsed their Confederate pursuers the next day at Pleasant Hill. After a defeat at Alexandria, Louisiana, May 1–8, the Federals abandoned the campaign.
would not let me go! Even as him to let me Straddle one of the canons. But it was no go for I was Just able to walk and I was put in charge of a Squad & did Provost duty until the Regiment Returned.

This time A. J. Smith liked to wiped Forest out of Existence in a 2 Days Fight at Tupelow Miss® Just 30 days from the fight at Guntown.

Left out of my First [Paper]™ only forgot to say that Our Batery that was captured at gun town By Forrest Was Retaken By Our brigade at the [i] First Days Fight at Tupelow Miss on June 10 of Same Yeare all in good order Just 1 month time. So I suppose Forest did not get much good out of them. Our Capt Waterhouse had come out in this fight with only 4 guns and these was a small Paret gun.™ So he was so glad to get his guns back[k] they say he would cry a while and the[n] laugh.

For it was 10 of June After this A J Smith Returned to Memphis this is the only time I was absent from my Regiment the Regiment got back about the 1 of July 64 and after Resting a few weeks we wet Ordrd to draw 3 Day Rations & we marched to the Rivr and Embarked on Steamers and Started down the River & up White River to St Charles Ark where we got of and camped hire for several week on the Bluffs here we had nothing to do and the wether was very Warm & we would go in Swimming to keep cool & the Sun Burnt our backs until the Scn would Peel off. We Borded the Steamers again & went up to Duvall Blufs & marched to Brownsville near Letle Rock & camped here for a few Days & then it was that we started on our famous march after Price through Arkansas & Over the Iron Mountain.™ (Relate goa Story We Kept Right on the Heels of Price

™On July 13, the Confederate force under S. D. Lee moved to attack A. J. Smith's command occupying Tupelo, Mississippi. The Federals held on the 13th and 14th but began to retreat on the morning of the 15th. The Confederates pursued, and Bell and Crossland engaged the Federal rear guard but were repulsed. Forrest was wounded while organizing for another attack.

™Some time later Bir wrote this paragraph, numbered it page 22 and inserted the page between the original manuscript pages 22 and 23. The paragraph has been placed at this point by the editors.

™Designed by Union officer R. P. Parrott of New Hampshire, the Parrott gun was a rifled, muzzle-loading cannon ranging from 3-inch (10-pound shell) to 10-inch (250-pound projectile). The gun was more accurate and had twice the range of smoothbore cannon, with the smaller 20-pound Parrott (3.67-inch) being effective at about 2,900 yards.

™In August 1864, Gen. Sterling "Pap" Price left Princeton, Arkansas, in an attempt to recover Missouri for the Confederacy. Gathering troops and supplies along the way, he entered for one night we camped on Iron Mountain and could see Prices camp. Below us we were marched to Cape Girardeau Mo & here we took a Steamer for St. Louis & from there to Jefferson City Mo So as to head to Price but the River was So low that we would often get of the Boat & march around so the Boat Co[jul] get of the Bars™ and by this delay when we got to Jefferson city Price was Just Passing through. Had help him Self of such & he wanted & Skiped out and us after him we followed him marching night & Day almost within 8 miles of Kansas City here we Run on Price & gave him a Respectfull thrashing & here the Infantry was allowed to Rest one day. I will say that on this march that it was Said that the Infantry Stood the Hard marching Better then the calvery or the Battery for it was on Ever day Seen to see 6 or 8 mules & Horses that gave out & were Left dead or turned Loos to Die this was about the middle of November 64 we marched Back to St Louis on this march we Waded the Osage Rivr and another River that I hav forgotten the name of after marching through snow 11 Inches deep all day the water was so cold that when we got across we were all num for the River was 1/2 mile wide we were 8 day marching to St Louis the distance was about 280 miles at St Louis we were taken to the Old Jefferson Barracks™ and said Here about one week and had a Jolly good time for we Did not walk when we went to town we would Press in a St car & Promis the conductor we would Pay Him Pay day. But Pay day did not come for we got marching orders and marched to

- Missouri on September 19 with 12,000 men (one third of whom were not armed) and 14 guns. The diversion of A. J. Smith's troops precluded his attack of St. Louis and Price went west, passing by Jefferson City while occupying Hermann, Boonville, Glasgow, and Sedalia in October. As troops under the command of Smith and Gen. Alfred Pleasonton pursued Price from the east, Gen. James G. Blunt and Gen. Samuel R. Curtis brought troops from Kansas, and 20,000 Federals engaged 9,000 Confederates at Westport, Missouri, on October 23. Price turned back, fighting rear guard skirmish actions before returning his 6,000 survivors to Arkansas. Criticized for "glares mismanagement and distressing mental and physical military incapaci-


- Jefferson Barracks has been the destination of soldiers of many generations since its first establishment as a frontier fort in 1826. Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, George H. Thomas, Ulysses S. Grant and soldiers of the Spanish-American War served there. In World War I it became "a clearing house for recruits from 12 states of the Middle West," and in the war years of 1941-1945 it became "the most important Air Replacement Center in the United States. Robert B. Roberts, Encyclopedia of Historic Forts: The Military, Pioneer and Trading Posts of the United States (New York, 1988), 459.
the River and took a Steamer & Steamed down the Mississippi to Cairo we were Landed at Cairo for a few hours & Here Smiths garrioles took the town at Least we took any thing we wanted for the town or the Business men were all Jews & we had no Love for them. 

You could see all Kinds of goods going to the diffrnt Boats & Diferant Regiments. I Did not want much So I just took one Bar[el of eggs] as they Had been Packed for shipment the Jews [seen A ] Smith coming & they Flocked around him & ass him to Send guards to Protect [them & he] just told them that his men was Hungry & he guest that would not take any more than they Could Eat & tipped his Hat and went on. I Seen Some of our men Catch a Hog and throw it through a large show window[es] I did Not Hav any money or I Should Hav Paid for that Barel of Eggs I did ass him what they were worth. But I Hav forgotten the price But it was 25 or 30 dollars we did Expect that we would get in trouble about this Doings But we did not. Once before at Nepollon [Napoleon, Arkansas] on the Mississippi Riv our brigade RAIDed 2 Jew Sutters and had our Pay held back for 4 month. But finally we Proved ourselves Innocent and we got our money we Left Cairo and Started up the Ohio Riv to Paducky Ky and after Stopping here a few hours we went up the Cumbrland Riv to Nashville Tenn this was about the 2 or 3 of Dec 1864 we arived here just in time to Keep Hood from marching in

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"Throughout the war, both sides distrusted Jewish merchants. On December 17, 1862, Grant issued "General Orders No. 11": "The Jews, as a class violating every regulation of trade established by the Treasury Department and also Department orders, are hereby expelled from the Department." John Y. Simon, ed., The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant (26 vols., Carbondale, Ill., 1967), 7:50. Lincoln rescinded the order and Grant later acknowledged his error, although he remained suspicious that Jews traded with both sides. John H. Baker and Michael E. Holt, The Civil War and Reconstruction (New York, 2001), 439, 458.

"The choice of a hog was an obvious religious insult. Religious differences were often used by soldiers to justify their treatment of Jews. Thomas Wise Durham of the 11th Indiana recalled that in Indianapolis, "The Wandering Jew" with his cheap "pure gold" watches and jewelry was greatly in evidence. They had rich pickings for a while but the boys soon got onto their racket and when one would appear in camp with his bogus jewelry, you would soon hear some fellow yell 'here is a Christ killer,' and that was the signal for the boys to gather in. They would take charge of mister Jew, confiscate his jewelry and give him such punishment that he would never want to return to camp again." Three Years With Wallace's Zouaves: The Civil War Memoirs of Thomas Wise Durham, ed., Jeffrey L. Patrick (Macon, Ga., 2003), 55.

"After giving up Atlanta on September 1, Gen. John Bell Hood attempted to draw Sherman north again by threatening his supply line and attacking Nashville. Sherman pursued as far as

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The steps of the Nashville, Tennessee, state capitol with cannon. Photograph by George Barnard.

The Union outer line at the siege of Nashville, Tennessee. Photograph by George Barnard.
to Nashville for the same day Thomas' army came in and Hood Right after him yet Thomas army came in in good order and I Hav no doubt that they would Hav stopped Hood Eaven if the 16 army core had not been there* we went in camp on the North Side of a Large Hill & Began throwing up Breast works the same day & a few day after this wood was very Scare we had nothing But green Hack wood. Our Regiment was Sint out to drive Hoods Pickets Back So we could get some dry wood to burn this was done on several occasions in our corps about the 12 & 13 & 14 of Dec it was Bitter cold & we Suferd very much from cold here until the morn-
ing of the 15 it was Some warmer & we orddrs to Hav our Breakfast at 4 oclck & Be Ready to move on the 15. The 72 Ohio Time Expired that is those that did not vetterise & Hav the Privelage to go Home. But it was Said that Every man voted to Stay with the Regiment and see them out of the battle & they did and quite a number of them were Killed on the 15 and 16 for this is the date of the battle we were marched out soon after day Light & Had not gone far until we were in the midst of the Fight. Early in the morning our Col Had His Horse Shot from under him the 12 Pounder Gun Enterd the Horses Breast and went through the horse this hapend not over 1/4 of mile from our camp and this was about as Hot a shelling as we Ever got it was in an old field and Just Back of our Regiment

*Chattanooga but recalled his troops and began his “March to the Sea.” Hood delayed for three weeks until Forrest arrived, the pair moving their forces northward in late October. The Confederates maneuvered Union troops out of positions at Pulaski and Spring Hill in November, and regrouping Federals took up position at Franklin, Tennessee. Nearly 27,000 Confederate troops attacked the slightly larger Federal force (27,939) on November 30, and while the Federals lost fewer men, they withdrew toward Nashville under cover of darkness and were joined there by A. J. Smith’s three divisions and 5,200 cavalry from Chattanooga, all under the command of Gen. George Henry Thomas, “The Rock of Chickamauga,” who been strengthening the city’s fortifications since taking charge October 3. Wielch, The Union Army 1861–1865, 2,600; and James Lee McDonough, Nashville: The Western Confederacy’s Final Gamble (Knoxville, Tenn., 2004), 244–52. Bt probably confused the arriving cavalry with Thomas’s forces; however, he recalls with remarkable detail his part in Thomas’s dramatic and overwhelming defeat of Hood’s army.

After Franklin, Hood’s forces were too weak to attack Nashville and took up position outside the city. Thomas delayed because of the freezing spell and the need to make preparations. In Washington, Secretary Stanton and Grant grew impatient and ordered Thomas to attack. When he continued to delay, Grant prepared to go personally to Nashville to assume the command; Grant, Personal Memoirs, 2,382-83.

*Early on the morning of December 15, Thomas’s Federals, numbering more than 49,000, began to press heavily on the Confederates, with 23,000 troops, and by the end of the day they had forced the Rebels out of their position and pushed them steadfastly back.

there was an old woods Pasture & in a few minutes half of the limbs of the trees Had been shot off. Explanation of my situatio[n]. From this on for 2 days we were in the front and under heavy fire. Here it was that I saw the first cavalry charge it was a grand sight I don know what comand it was But the 9 Penn was amongst them after this charge we orddrd forward and soon came up in a corn field and Behold we were in front of a 6 gun Batery & them behind Breast works and we was not over 150 yards from them and they open these 6 guns on us with grape Shot & Here Our col was Shot of His Horse with a grape shot & taken of the field for Dead. But finally he came to and after months Restored. While in this field it was that many of us tried to Hide behind corn stocks and 1 for one worked hard with my Bayont & fingers to make a Hole to Hide in we Lay in this Pas for Some 5 hours but it seemed to me it was 5 hours. But finely the ordrs came to charge the Batery and it did not take the 2 ordr to make us go for we were anxious to get out of this Position we Soon Had Position of the 6 guns and many Batle flags and about 15 hundred Prisoners this was the first charge & we did not go more then 3 hundred yards until we were Prepared for the 2 charge this time it was a Large fort Built on a very High Hill and very steep and in this fort i think there was 24 Pieces of artillery some Heavy guns we charged up this Hill and took these guns and many Prisoners and more flags it was in these Rifle Pits that I saw Dead Rebs three deep & many woundid when we went ovr the Works the Jolies would Hid his Hankerchief & Pieces of Shirt tails and all Kind of Signs of surendr & would beg Pitionly for us not to Hurt them here I saw one of our men thrust a bayonett through a Reb While he was being to be spared this Riled me to the core for this Same fellow Belonged to our company & I knew He was not a good Soldier and after this I saw the same man Shot [down] a Jew Because he would not credit Him*

In the first day fight our brigade took 4000 Prisoners & Some 30 Pieces of artillery & I dont know how many flags along in the Evening after the 2 charge we were advancing on toward Shies Hill* through the Woods and Passing Some cavalry troops when a canon Bal[l] cut a man in two Right alongside of me it Struck him in the upr Parts of his bowls and His Body fell over and it seemed to me that he stood on his feet

*Known before the battle by the name of its near resident Felix Compton, Compton’s Hill became known as Shys Hill in honor of Lieut. Col. William L. Shy of the 26th Tennessee who, refusing to surrender, was shot through the head by Union troops; McDonough, Nashville, 225.
Some Seconds before the Lower Part fell and His Livr & Lights" I could see them trembling & I well Rembrurb how it made me shudder.

We Lay in Line of battle at the Base of the Hill and near by a Farm House and I got a Ham there that I thought was the best I Evr Eat we were not all low any fires on our Line So we laid down but did not Sleep much for it was cold without fires. But [it] might havent been the Reason I did not Sleep there was a Wounded Rob close to where I lay that had been Shot through the Head and when he would breath his Brain wound out and this so Worked me that this might have been the cause of me not Sleeping— Early in the morning we were ordred forward & threw out Scumish or Sharpshoot & we laid exposed to the Fire from Early in morning untill about 3 oclcock in the Evening With a Regular Artillery Duel for I think it was the heaviest firing I Heared During my survivs Vixburg not Ex we laid Between the Two Fires and it seemed to me We Lay Here a week. But about 3 oclcock things began to Look Like Buiness and we was ordred Back to the Regular Line & Here we was told by A. J Smith Our core comandrd that he was authorised By Jen Thomas to give the Brigade a meddle that charged and would take Shies Hill this was the main fort on the Line and he told us that he had selected Our Brigade to do the work and He Knew it would be well Done. Our Brigade was composed of the following Regiments 72 & 95 Ohio 114 Ill & 10 Minessota & 93 Ind we made the charge and took the Hill But will say this was a Jeneral charge all along the Line. But we was the first to break this Lines as we did not hav so far to go as those did on

"The lungs of slaughtered livestock were referred to as lights, and soldiers used the term colloquially on the battlefield. Steven M. Stowe, email to editors, December 1, 2004.

"Under darkness, Hood regrouped his forces in a short line between Shy's Hill on the Confederate left (west) and Overton Hill on the right (east). On the morning of December 16, Union troops made an unsuccessful attempt to take Overton Hill. In the early afternoon, Brig. Gen. John McArthur of Illinois observed that the Rebels had taken up a poor position on Shy's Hill and that their guns would not be able to fire effectively upon advancing infantry. McArthur had no orders to advance and sent a messenger to his commanders advising that he would attack the hill in five minutes unless he was ordered not to do so. Thomas wanted to coordinate efforts for a maximum assault, but his message did not reach McArthur in time. The eighteen guns in McArthur's three batteries opened fire while the Union infantry advanced in two lines: the first composed of the 114th Illinois, 93rd Indiana, and 10th Minnesota; the second of the 72nd and 95th Ohio. In little more than one hour, the Confederate left was crushed and the entire line retreated. McDonough, Nashville, 244-52. McDonough contradicts Bir's memory that Smith was with his troops at the charge, placing him instead with McArthur.

"Of the terrain, James McDonough writes, "The hill was so steep at places that the ascents required all the strength one could put forth, together with assistance from grappling hushes, vines, saplings and limbs, pulling one self up by them"; and concerning the first regiment to reach the top, "Long after the last gun of the war had been fired, Union veterans, particularly those of the four Minnesota regiments in the front lines of McArthur's brigades, argued about which regiment first gained the Rebel works. Regardless of which . . . may have deserved recognition . . . the Yankee assault, from beginning to end, consumed very little time," perhaps not much more than ten minutes. McDonough, Nashville, 248, 252.

"Twenty-year-old James L. Cooper of the 20th Tennessee recalled that Confederate forces on the hill "had no enrenching tools and could make but little preparation." When the Union artillery opened fire Cooper believed that "[a]ll one time the fire of at least twenty guns were concentrated upon our position" and that "[i]f a man raised his head over the slight works, he was very apt to lose it . . . It was almost a miracle that anyone escaped." Cited in McDonough, Nashville, 253.

"Frequently the only thing remaining after Union soldiers set fire to a city or plantation were the blackened brick chimneys, which came to be known as "Sherman's monuments."
Parch thir corn and Eat it all in one meal & we Had Some men that
could not walk to the Rivr to take the Boat my mess fared Better for I
and one of my mess concluded we would go to market & we Did and we
found about 1 mile from our Picket Post & Poor Lone calf & a old
Woman to Begin for us not to Kill that calf for that was all She had Left
on hur Place. But we had no time to Parly for across the field we Saw a
Squad of men coming & we Killed the c[al]f and did not giv it time to Kick
for we tied its Legs togeth[er] and Hung it on, one of our guns and Left in a
Hury. But none two soon for before we [got] very far the Johnnies was
cutting the weed all around us with thir Shots. But we held on to our
meet and finly came to our Picket Post allmost Exaus[t]ed we had
Shiped out between Posts going out but we did not try to slip in & here
we got in trouble again. But we comprimised By giving up Part of our
meet & went on. So we fared Purty well while the othr boys ate thir
Parched corn & Hominy we had meat—While Here the Horses & mules
fared Worse then the men for the Boys would Steel the corn from the
mules & Horses and Eat it.

It was Here Gen A J Smith called to His ordely and said you Damed
Suntofable Mich go and bring my Hor[se] the ordely went and came up to
the gen and Saluted Him & Said Here you Olf Sunofable is your Horse
& the gen Saluted Back & Recced the Horse & smiled and told the ordely
to go in to Hd quarters and get a Drink."

About the Last of January we marched to the River & ear Brigade
& 6 gun battery was also Loded on on[le] Boat the Old Steemer Mississippi a
very Large Boat" and we Steamed Down the Tennessee Rivr and of Course
there was Lots of Wild Rumors we were going to the army of the
Potomack. But when we Reached the Ohio Rivr we Turned down Steem
and in a few hours Was Ankerd out in the Rivr at Cairo. So we did not
get ashore this time for we had Raied the town twice before and A J
Smith did not Propose that we Should Do so again.

After a few hours Stop we continued our way down the Mississippi
River when We Reached Vicksburg we were marched Back of the town

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"The “Old Steemer Mississipi” that carried Bir down the Tennessee Rivr in January 1865 bore the name of the historic sidewheeler Mississippi which had been blown up during the night of March 14, 1863, as Admiral Farragut’s ships ran the gauntlet of shore batteries at Port Hudson. Merrill, Battle Flags South, 263."
and went into camp on Some of our old Battle grounds of Coarse we
Went all Round the Lines and saw all the Sights for they were all There
as we had Left them— 86 While in camp here the Boats that the army
came on was being Scrubed & cleaned and after 3 day camping Here we
was marched Back to our Same quarters and continued our way down
the Mississippi to Neworleans and Here we were marched of the to the old
Jackson Battlegro[und] and went in camp this being along about the
middle of February 87 it was Rainy & wet and the Low ground[s] wer all
PurtY well covered with water only now and then there was High ground
Enough to [camp on and all the wood we Had to burn was green
Cypress. Just amain How it Burnt. But while here we had a good time
for we had nothing to do only go to town and see the Sights—
We Remained Here until the 4 of March then we was marched to
the Old Ship united States and again Our Brigade & Baerry Was Put
abord 1 Ship. 88 We Started Down the Miss again & Laied up for the night
Before we Reached the Jetes or the mout[h] of the Miss next morning
Mch the 5 we Reached Run through the Jetes about Sun up and this was
a grand Sight to see the sun Rise all went well for a few Hours and the
sea was very cam. But Later in the day it clouded up and a Storm was

86 Bir was viewing, almost as a tourist, "all the Sights" at Vickeburg. Thus he acquired a reprint
of the July 4 edition of the local Daily Citizen, the famous newspaper that resolute publisher
James Swords, who used wallpaper when he ran out of newsprint, issued regularly until the city
surrendered. When Union troops entered the city on July 4 they found the day's issue still in
type, and they printed a slightly revised edition, which included a note, beginning "Two days
earring great changes. The banner of the Union floats over Vickeburg." Col. A. B. Crampton, Seventeenth Corps, of Delphi, Indiana, was ordered to continue the Daily Citizen
as a U.S. Army paper. In 1997 the law Mrs. Robert J. Zoeller of New Albany, representing the
Bir family, presented the souvenir reprint to the Indiana Historical Society. Library of Congress,
Reference Department, Serials Division, Information Circular, "The Daily Citizen, Vicksburg,
Mississippi: Wall Paper Editions," http://www.memory.loc.gov/ammem/pheim.html; corre-
respondence with Leigh Darbee, curator of printed collections, Indiana Historical Society,
87 Gen. Andrew Jackson used defensive positions in the bayous and swampsland about New
Orleans to defeat British Gen. Edward Pakenham at the Battle of New Orleans, January 8,
88 Not the frigates United States, Stephen Decatur's flagship, which fought the British in the War
of 1812 and was captured at Norfolk Navy Yard by the Confederates in 1861. Retaken by the
Union, she was out of commission in 1864. Naval Historical Center website, http://www.
history.navy.mil/dans/vn/United_states.htm. Numerous requisitioned gunboat barges (i.e. with
sides suited to mounting guns) were designated "United States" (or "U.S.") with an added
number, and such a vessel likely carried Bir. Dr. Timothy L. Francis, Historian, Naval Historical
Center, Department of the Navy, Washington, D.C., to George Clark, August 11, 2004.

"MY ARMY LIFE"

Fort Morgan, Mobile Point, Alabama, after Union bombardment.
Courtesy American Civil War Photo, http://www.americancivilwarphoto.com
for us fellows that was Still sick would Steger arou[nd] & Step higher then a Blind Horse—I think if I had been Discharged there I would Hav spent the Balance of my days there Rather then go ov'r what I had Experenced on this trip.

When we went in camp on this Island we found the 13 army Core Here & Gen Canby was in command of all of the Forces this Island was Pure Sand and no trees on it and in March. So we got Plenty of sand in our Craw and we had nothing to do only gather Oysters for they were Plenty of them all around us. But we Had no boats or grab Hooks to gather them with so we would wade as far out as we dared go & grab them with our hands and often a Large Wave or Breaker would Come along and Scater the Boys End ov'r End. So we had fun this way while here along the middle of March Lightnen Struck in a Stack of arms near by a mess and Killed 5 men & it Stuned thousands of the army I Knew it Knocked me down and most of our brigad. It was also Here that on grand Review one sunday that Gen Oysterhouse was Inspecting Our company then he found one of our company Purty dirty & told me to get a Root Brush and scrub this man and i did so under His supervision and I did it well for this same fellow Had been an 1e Sore to the company for ov'r 2 years this same comrad is still Living in this city and He is still Dutty & makes about as good a citisen as He did a solidr I suppose you Know about what these Kind of fellows was worth to the army.

About the 20 of Mch we were Lodged on Steamers and taken to the mouth of Dog River & Here we Began our campa[ne] against Mobile the first thing when we Landed was to Build Brest works for our Protection through the night & March a few miles the next Day this March was through a dense forest of the Finest Pine I Evr saw. Lots of

trees seemd to be 100 ft to the Limbs and we Burnt Lots of Rosen Camps they would make an awfui fires & smoke as black as a Hats. So we Had nothing but Pine Knots to burn and Had no soap to wash with and we all got so Black that you could hardly told us from negro troops. But finally we Reached Spanish fort. I think it was the 1 of Aprile when we drove the Johnies in thir Holes & the Sieg was on we drove them in this fort and in 20 minutes from this time there was Breast works for 12 miles around this and it Don't Seem to me that it was over 2 hundred yard of thir main forts. But we had to be very careful in moving for many a fellow was blowed up with torpidoes they Had them Planted under all culverts along the Road & Scaterd in front of thir Breast works so you could hardly move without being in Danger of one. But we soon found thir mark where they were Put and would avoid them we Kep Diging up to them Josseies work untill we got in 20 yard of thir Fort so they could not shell us with thir guns and they Bored holes in Logs & Put a tuch hole and Enough Paudr to blow the shells ov'r in our trenches. But this was not all we had to guard against for they Had over on an Illrd in the Bay Seven 120 Pound morters & these would come ov'r in our Lines & when they Struck the ground & Burstd it would make a Hole Large Enough to Put a House in these did [not often] do any Execution But it kept us very uneasy all the time. So we Built great gofer Holes in the ground and Lived & Slep in these when not on duty. I well Remembur one of these Shell Bursting Just at the foot of my House in the ground and tore a Hole as Deep as the gofer was But Just missed us many funity Incidents Hapend Here that I will not take time to Right. I think this battle was Faithed by the 13 & 19 & 16 cores the 16 core Has the credit of firs Breaking the Lines and gaining admission this Fight Lasted for 8 days I think at the Surendr of the Forts it was our Lot to guard a


*Gen. Peter Joseph Osterhaus of Prussia emigrated to Missouri in 1848. He fought at Wilson's Creek, Pea Ridge, and Big Black River in the Vicksburg Campaign. After the war, he became Consul to France (1866-1877).

*"The Dog River, flowing eastward into Mobile Bay, is about 20 miles north of Dauphin Island and now within greater Mobile.

*On March 17, 1865, Canby set out with 45,000 troops to capture Mobile, which was held by 10,000 troops and 300 guns spread among a number of forts. Canby captured Forts Gaines and Morgan at the mouth of Mobile Bay and then, with naval support, captured the principal defenses at Spanish Fort (March 27-April 8) and Blakely (April 1-9). The Confederates evacuated Mobile on the night of April 11. Canby entered the following morning and on May 4 received the surrender of Gen. Richard Taylor, commander of the Department of East Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. Grant recalled, "I had tried for more than two years to have an expedition sent against Mobile when its possession by us would have been of great advantage. It finally cost lives to take it when its possession was of no importance, and when, if left alone, it would within a few days have fallen into our hands without any bloodshed whatsoever." Grant, Memoirs, 2:319.
Regiment of Alabama I think the 86 alabamy & thy were all boys. Lots of them did not look like they were ovr 12 or 13 years old a great many of them crying and wanted to go Home, I all so Recolect a Remark one of the Old veteran Reble made as they were marched by our comand. He said well I Bedamed if Every Pine tree aint got a Dozen yankees behind it & the woods is full of them no won dr the can come and invade our country & just do as they pleased. This was our Last Battle after Disposing of our Prisoners we marched of to Selma Alabama I think only the 16 core the Balance were Left in Charge of Mobile this march was a very Hard one for it was through the poorest country we had seen in the South nothing but sand & very thinly settled and it was on this march that we Heard that Lee Had Surrenderd & a few days Later We Heard of the assasination of Abraham Lincon this cast a great gloom ovr our Army. We Passed Seline on to Montgomery & Reached Montgomery Alabame in time to see the Ruins of Depo guns & coton Burning this Firing Had been done by the 4 Ky. So you need not be surprised this was the seat of the confederacy & of cource Plenty of money was obtained by the Boys & we had Some very Heavy games Beting as much as 100 thousand dollars on one game the country was full of new Bills Just Printed. We went in camp here & Remained for Several weeks. Sleeping & Eating was all we had to do we Left here and was taken to Meridan Miss. Staid here a few days & Bored the cars and was taken to Gainesville Ala on the Tom Bigby River. Here we guarded coton & corelled negroes & Had a good time in Jenera on the 4 of July the citizens of the Town & Surrounding co gave us a barbecue & it was a grand affere for us we feasted that day on the Best, the country afforded it was I claimed that there was 2500 People there Blacks & Whites for they Had a seperate table for the color People.

*Lee surrendered to Grant on April 9, 1865. Lincoln was assassinated five days later on April 14.

*As loans, customs duties, and taxes proved insufficient to finance the war, the Confederate treasury issued $1,554,000,000 in paper currency secured only by the promise of postwar redemption. "Though the gold value of these Confederate notes stood at 90 percent of their face value in 1861, it declined to 82.7 percent in early 1862, to 29 percent in early 1863, and to 4.6 percent in early 1864" and "by early 1865 these notes were worth only 1.7 cents on the dollar." Donald, Taker, and Holt, The Civil War and Reconstruction, 239.

*The 93rd Indiana traveled on the Southern Mississippi Railroad from Meridian to Gainesville, Alabama. Here, where Birt celebrated the end of the war at a Fourth of July picnic, Forrest just two months previously had given his final address to his troops. Foote, The Civil War, 3:101.

It was in August I was Sent 30 miles Down in the country to Correct Some negros that Had became unruly I was sent to scare the[n] & try & Persuade them to Remain at work on these Plantations and while on this mission is where I Hav allways thought I was two Hotfast for I could Hav made Thousands of Dollars By going around amongst the Planters thay would come after me to go to Shuch a Plantation and often ofed me as much as 100 Per trip & some would offer Less of Corse. But I was Sent by the Provost marshal to Such a man as would come to the marshel office & Probably Pay Him 5 hundred for my service & I was two Honest to go only where i was instructed to go. But I Know that I could Hav made Thousands of dollers this Way. But I could not see it then alltho I Had a High time for about 2 month amongst the Rich Planters & thir girls & felt Perfectly safe it was on one of these Expeditions that I went to one Planters Place for the Purpose of correct- ing one of his negroes for Killing one of his Masters Horses & the negro was about to do me up with a butcher knife & I Had to shoot Him. I was Reported to the Provost marshel for this & Had to Rid 30 miles to Report. But of corse I was sent back all Right but it caused me to Ride 60 miles.

While out on this mission I Learned how to Pick coton & How to bale the Same I enjoyed it ever so much when the time came to Leave a Mr Dr Williams offered me 1 thousand dollers Per yeer & Bord if i would stay with Him and also ofed the finest Rich coton land at 3 Dol Per acre. But I was bent on coming Home I Hav no doubt if I had Staid there it would Hav been a fine opertunity for me for thay Put this coton on flat boats and flooted it to Mobile Ala after a stay of about 7 month we Started Home on the Mobile & Ohio Road in Boxcars. I forgot to Say that we bid a due to our old comrades of the 72 & 95 Ohio & 114 Ill & 1 Ill Bat & 10 Minasota at Montgomery Alabama aft being Brigaded with them for nearly 3 years & in August 8 companys of our Regiment was Discharged & Left Co I & K to Hold the Post. But about Nov 14 we Left for Home.
we came to Columbus Ky & from there took boat for Cairo & then the Illinois Center for Indianapolis you may notice that we were at Cairo 4 times During the time of our Service we was Paid of the 20 of November 1865 in the afternoon & Left for Home on the J M & I & Reached Newbalbany about 12 oclock at noon the Dinky train only Runing 16 st at this time quite a number of the boys could not wate untill day Light to Stert Home. But most of them scaterd to [?] Home's some in city & the country. I staid all night at Joseph Renn on State St But did not sleep much for the Bed bugs Nearly Eat me up.

21 Being Sunday I went out and Bought me a Suit of Cloth Paid 48¢ for it 3 mon[ths] Pay. But can buy a better suit Now for [3] Dol. I went Home on 21 & Saw my good old mothr that I Had often thought of During my absense of nearly 40 months. When I Left Home I was my mothers main suport & I Promist Her I would Send Her money Every time I drew any & So I did I think I Had Sent about 375 dolars & to my surprise when I came Home She had Saved Every cent of it for me and gave it to me altho she Had Deprved Hurself of many things She Needed to do this. But yet how I appreciated it.

This is in Brief my Remenence of my army Life.

I think I forgot to Say that During my Servis in the army that we Belonged to [the 15 & 16 & 17 army Core.

Also it is Said that We traveld allmost 11 Thousand Miles—Soldiered in 9 Southern States. Was under fire of Reble Shot & shell 96 Days. 30

Was Slightly Wounded 2.

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WAS a Prisoner of War Part of 2 Days But Lay in Jen Forests camp 3 days Hid away. Run 58 mile in one night in May to get to our Lines. 31

Yours Louis Bir Sargent Co K 93 Ind

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30Columbus, Kentucky, was the northern terminus of the Mobile & Ohio Railroad. Bir would have transferred from the Illinois Central in order to travel eastward to Indianapolis. His travels by rail can be followed on National Geographic Society, *Battlefields of the Civil War* (map), 1:2,598,000 (Washington, D.C., 1974).

31Bir's dating is inaccurate: the Sunday following November 20, 1865, was the 26th. The J. M. & I. Railroad had brought him to Jeffersonville, still some miles from home.

31State records offer this summary of the regiment: "The regiment left for the field with an aggregate of nine hundred and twenty-three. It returned with eighteen officers and two hundred men. It has traveled, during its term of service, one thousand and sixty miles by rail; three thousand nine hundred and seventy-two miles by river, and marched two thousand four hundred miles, making a grand total of seven thousand four hundred and thirty-two miles." Terrill, *Report of the Adjutant General*, 3:125.