"absent So long from those I love": The Civil War Letters of Joshua Jones

Edited by Eugene H. Berwanger

Joshua Jones served in the 19th Indiana Volunteer Infantry Regiment from his enlistment on July 29, 1861, until his death on September 30, 1862. His regiment was part of the Iron Brigade, one of the most outstanding military units in the Civil War. The brigade consisted of the 2nd, 6th, and 7th Wisconsin regiments; the 24th Michigan; and the Indiana 19th. Until 1863 it was the only unit on the eastern front to be composed solely of troops from the Old Northwest. Created as part of a military reorganization on the eastern front in October, 1861, the brigade remained undistinguished until the Battle of South Mountain (September 14, 1862) when General Joseph Hooker used the word "iron" to describe its valor. The Iron Brigade continued to serve with distinction through the Battle of Gettysburg, in which it lost two-thirds of its men. In the following months the brigade was strengthened with units from the eastern states. Losing its character as a western division, the Iron Brigade continued, but as Mark M. Boatner explains, "it never recovered its former punch."

Much of what is known about enlisted men in the Iron Brigade comes from Wisconsin and Michigan sources. In his definitive study of the brigade, Alan T. Nolan relied heavily on manuscript sources from those two states. He lists only three manuscript collections for Indiana, and among them, only one, a diary, was kept by an enlisted man. Joshua Jones's letters home during his brief military career are a valuable addition to what is known about the life of the common soldier in the Iron Brigade, especially those who served in the 19th Indiana.

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Aside from his letters, and his service and pension records, little is known about Jones. He was born in 1838 and may have lived his childhood and adolescence as a farm lad near Muncie, Indiana. On March 20, 1859, at the age of twenty-one, he married Celia Gibson, whom he had known for ten years. Their only child, George (Eddy) Edgarlie Jones, was born on June 3, 1860. What impelled Jones to leave his young wife and child for military service is unknown. He may well have been swept up in the wave of patriotism that spread throughout the North following the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter in April, 1861. Urged on by Indiana's Governor Oliver P. Morton, volunteers from throughout the Hoosier state responded favorably to President Abraham Lincoln's call for troops. Large numbers of them congregated at the state fairgrounds in Indianapolis to be organized into regiments and assigned to duty. In July, 1861, young men, most from central Indiana towns such as Muncie, Winchester, Franklin, Spencer, and Indianapolis, were mustered for a three-year tour of duty into the 19th Indiana Volunteer Regiment under the command of Solomon Meredith. A Republican and friend of Lincoln, Meredith had strong antislavery leanings, but if he influenced his men's thinking about abolitionism, it is not evident in Jones's letters. Jones never mentions slavery or any contact with blacks, although it seems likely he would have encountered slaves or free blacks in the Washington, D.C./Virginia area.

The letters clearly indicate the hardships of war. Jones was committed to the Union cause and hoped for an early Union victory. As the fighting became more intense and camp life less stationary, however, some pessimism began to creep in. Guard duty, unappealing food, and marching in cold, wet weather lessened his zeal for military life. By 1862 Jones was mentioning the possibility of death more frequently, all the while hoping for a leave of absence that would give him temporary relief from soldiering and a chance to see Celia and George again.

The letters also indicate that Jones was more contemplative than the average enlisted man. Bell I. Wiley, in his study of the Union soldier, reports that most enlisted men spent their free time gambling, drinking, or seeking other pleasures and that they frequently went into debt to engage in such entertainments. Perhaps because of his religious beliefs (although he does not dwell on the

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1 Joshua Jones files in "Service Records of Volunteer Soldiers who served in Organizations of the State of Indiana," Record Group 94 (National Archives, Washington, D.C.); and "Pension Records of Volunteer Soldiers who served in Organizations of the State of Indiana," ibid.


3 Bell, Report of a Remarried Widow's Pension, February 11, 1929, in Jones file, "Pension Records of Volunteer Soldiers who served in Organizations of the State of Indiana."
Dear Wife & little Boy & friends

I take my pen in hand to let you know that I am well hoping this will find you all the Same.

Well Celia we got our uniform yesterday & we are going to get our guns tomorrow & we leave here a Saturday [illegible] word for Washington City I will Send my Clothes to the Depo in Care of Garret Gibson¹ if I can get my likeness I will Send it too. I Cannot Come home any more untill the war is over if I live I will be at home when the war is over & if it falls to my lot to fall in Battle it will be in defence of my Country tell all that take themSolves to be my friends that I bid them farewell for my life is not Insured I dont know that I Shall ever have the pleasure of meeting you all any more or not but if I dont you must all take Care of your Selves while I am exposed to the Enemy who are trying to destroy our government I look for nothing but hardships Exposed to bad weather poor grub & long marches & dodging bullets and Sords & bayonets we may Come through Muncie but I dont know whether we will or not I will write when we get in Camp I guess I have wrote all for the time So farewell friends and Relations yours till Death

Joshua Jones

¹ Given the conditions under which they were written, Joshua Jones's letters are amazingly legible and easily read. As was true of many of his contemporaries, however, Jones infrequently used any marks of punctuation, including periods at the end of sentences, and frequently failed to capitalize the first word of a sentence. In addition, he used capital letters for many words, particularly those beginning with s, c, and y, that are not generally capitalized. To make for easier reading, double spaces have been used to indicate sentence breaks in this transcription. Although every effort was made to determine Jones's intent, arbitrary decisions concerning capitalization and paragraphing were sometimes unavoidable. Location of headings, greetings, and closings has been standardized to correspond to modern usage. Words, dates, and abbreviations that were inserted above the line have been brought down to the line. Words that were preprinted on Jones's very distinctive stationary have been transcribed in bold-faced type. Jones often drew hearts or flourishes at the end of his letters, frequently including the name of the person to whom the letter was written as well as his own. His and his wife's names were often connected in some way. These flourishes have been omitted. Words or phrases inserted in the margin have been placed at the end of the relevant letter after Jones's signature. Explanatory words or phrases have been placed in brackets; words that are unclear but for which an attempted transcription has been made have been followed by a question mark and enclosed in brackets; illegible words have been so designated in brackets.

² In all probability Garret Gibson, an early pioneer in Delaware County, was Jones's father-in-law.

Mr. J. W. Abrell²

Sir I take my pen in hand to Write you a few lines to let you know that I am well at present hoping these few lines may find you all in good health We are Encamped on the North Side of the Potomac River on mount Calarama in view of Washington City and Alexandria we Can See the Ships on the Hudson bay we can hear the Secession Cannons evry morning very plain This is a wet morning it has Rained evry day but three Since we have been hear I See the Battle ground of Arlington Heights the timber is all Cut to Smash with Bullets it is all pine and Cedar and loral on the mountains in the valleys it is privomum and Tamberac and Spruce Trees I want you to write and tell me whether George and Wm Ross has gone yet or not I would like to See George in Ranks here Running up and down the mountains I Rather think it makes aman look up for the ground to be out all night on a Scout and come in in the morning and Eat a little dry bread and cold meat then Rap up in a wet blanket and lay down on the Side of the hill with your feet against a rock to keep you from Sliding down the mountain and a Rock for a pillow if you want one the other night when we was a Sleep in our tents the Alarm was raised that the Rebels was coming it was just like a lot of Scard hogs Running over one another and falling down Some get Stuck with Bayonets while others got bumped with guns on the heads, there is Sevral boys here that would just as Soon be at home. We will [be] Called in to Action in 2 or 3 weeks then the fun cotenes

² Camp Kalarama was a temporary facility on Kalorama Heights, where a government hospital for communicable diseases was located. Today the Kalorama Heights triangle is bordered by Massachusetts and Connecticut avenues and the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway; it is bisected by Kalorama Road. Margaret Leech, Reveille in Washington, 1860–1865 (New York, 1941), 305.

² According to Ralph Becker, whose wife is a great-granddaughter of Joshua Jones, John W. Abrell was Jones's brother-in-law. At the close of this letter Jones— he was his wont—wrote the names of those to whom the letter was sent. J. W. Abrell and Rebecca Abrell, presumably John's wife.

² The reference here is unclear. Jones may have meant that portion of the Potomac River just to the east of present-day Theodore Roosevelt Island. It is wide enough to allow ocean-going vessels access to the city, and Jones would have been able to see it from his location on Kalorama Heights.

Indiana Magazine of History

I have wrote all that I can this time you must write as soon as you get this and tell me all the good news
So No more at present Yours with Respect

Joshua Jones

Washington City Fort Smith7 Sept the 12th 1861

Dear Companion

I am well this morning and hope this will find you the Same
I Received your letter and was glad to hear from you, but you did not write all that I wanted to know well now I Can tell what many others Cannot night before last while I was on guard our pickets was attacted I was on the Reserve we was rallied and the Bullets fell like hale around us yesterday about 3 oclock we marched 4 miles towards Fairfax Courthouse there we was fired on by the Rebels the [brim?] Shells flew and the Cannon Balls whistled and the dirt flew all around us they are just now barying one of our Regiment the report Sais that the Rebels lost one hundred and our Side Six and 7 wounded I did not get a Shot we was in the Rear of the brigade8 next Sunday we are going to have another trial at them I seen what I never seen before if I live through the next Battle I think I am all right now Celia go to Patrick Carnickles9 I Sent twenty dollars there for you keep this till I Come home I think we will be all rite when I get back the harest time I ever Saw has ben in the last two days I cannot tell you half but keep your Spirits up

Civil War Letters of Joshua Jones

I am bound to raise or fall nothing bothers me but my little family that I left be hind

write Soon

Farewell

Joshua Jones

Washington City D C October the 5th 1861

Dear Companion

I will have to Say to you that I am not well10 the Second day (Sept 14th) after I wrote your last letter (Sept 12th) I was taken Sick I was taken with a Chill and fever and it Run in to the Tifoid fever I never was So Sick in my life but I am getting better I can Set up in bed and write a little at a time I am very weak and poor it has Cut me down very fast I laid in my tent a little too long I got Cold on my lungs I have a bad Cough I am well taken Care of here I am in a good ward and have a good attendent ward No 27 You must not let my being Sick discourage you for I think I will get along now if I dont get a backset my Side hurts me more now than it ever did before I would like to hear from home mighty well I have not had a letter for a long time but there may be Some letters at the Camp for me I Suppose you got that money that I Sent to you keep that money it is better than gold it is worth 3 cts on the dollar at Indianapolis and in kansas and Nebraska it is 7 cts on a dollar it will be pay-day again the 2nd day of November then I will Send about 25 dollars I dont want you to forget me I want you to Remember where I am and what I Come here for

John and Rebecca [Abell] I want you to Remember that I am not out of Reach of letters yet I guess the old man does not Care where I am or what becomes of me I have never got a word from him yet he appears to [be] very distant to me I dont know why it I dont think I ever done him any harm in my life that I know of I would like to See you all being Sick makes me think of a great many things that I would not think of if I was well I am

E Street Hospital

8 There was no Fort Smith in the Washington, D. C., area; however, the reference in this letter to the fighting around Lewinsville implies that “Fort Smith” may have been a bivouac located on the Smith farm, about two miles east of Lewinsville. Joshua’s use of the term “bivouacs” to describe the locations for his letters to “camps” that were probably only temporary bivouacs. He and comrades undoubtedly termed these areas, but they never had any formal designation as camps. For locations see George B. Davis, Leslie J. Perry, and Joseph W. Kirkley, The Official Military Atlas of the Civil War (Washington, D. C., 1891-1895), plate VII.

7 The 19th Indiana was transferred into Virginia, just across the Chain Bridge from Washington, D. C., on September 3. There the men began constructing Fort Marcy, an earthworks guarding the approaches to the bridge. The first attack mentioned by Jones refers to a skirmish that occurred near Lewinsville, Virginia, on September 10, 1861. Lewinsville was four miles from the bridge. As Jones indicates, the 19th was also engaged on September 11 near Fairfax Courthouse, Virginia, where several Civil War skirmishes occurred. Nolan, Iron Brigade, 12, 22-23. Jones’s estimate of casualties at Lewinsville and in subsequent battles are, of course, often erroneous. For more exact figures see relevant reports in U. S. War Department, War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (128 vols., Washington, D. C., 1880-1901). These volumes are hereafter referred to as Official Records.

9 Jones probably refers to Patrick Carnickles since there was a family of that name in the Muncie area.

10 Jones was among the 40 percent of the 19th Indiana that became ill at this time. For a while Federal authorities feared that Confederates had poisoned wells in the area, but this rumor proved unfounded. More likely, the lack of sanitary conditions caused the outbreak of typhoid. Jones’s illness must have been severe, for only the worst cases were taken to the hospital. Nolan, Iron Brigade, 20-22.
getting very tired of staying in bed so long I hope I can walk out in a few day in to the hall I must stop writing I am so weak and tired you must all write to me

Joshua Jones

Well Celia I cant write much this time I am too feeble to sit up long at a time I do not know when I will get away from here but you may direct your letters the [same] as before and I will send for them if I stay here long oh how I would like to see little George but it is no use to think about it write often your husband till death

Joshua Jones

From a poor Soldier to his wife and little Boy good by

Loved ones at home
Ever of thee I am fondly dreaming
Thy gentle voice my spirit can cheer
Thou wert the star that mildly beaming
Shone o'er my path when all was dark and dreary
Still in my heart thy form I cherish
Every kind thought like a bird flies to thee
Then never till life and memory perish
Can I for get how dear thou art to me
Morn noon and night where e'er I may be
Fondly I am dreaming of thee.

Ever of thee when sad and lonely
Wandering afar my soul joys to dwell
And then I feel I love thee only
All seems to fade before affections spell
Years have not chilled the love I cherish
True as the stars hath my heart been to thee
Never till life and memory perish
Can I for get how dear thou art to me
I am ever fondly thinking of thee.

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11 Jones may well have written this letter in brief stints since it appears to be addressed first to Celia, then to John and Rebecca Abrell, and finally, after Jones's first signature, again to Celia.
12 Following are the words of a song entitled “Ever of Thee” by George Linley and Foley Hall. For words and music see Heart Songs Dear to the American People . . . (New York, 1909), 222-23.
Oct 12th 1861
Washington City

Headquarters Camp Fort Craig
Regt. 19th Co. E

Dear beloved

Wife I take my pen in hand to let you know that I am getting better. Since this morning I got your letter I was so glad to hear from you. I have got out of the hospital but I am very weak but I think I will get along now. I hope this will find my dear in good health and little boy also. Well Celia you said you got that money all safe. Our Regiment moved while I was sick. We are on Arlington hights 1 mile from long Bridge a cross the Patomac South of Washington garding Fort Craig. Well Darling about them feathers. I think if you can get them for 30 cts a pound you had better buy 25 or 30 pounds if you can get new feathers what do you think. I have to lay my oilcloth down and lay on that. My bones are getting Calloused. Celia I would give my interest in this war to see you and our little boy. I have often wanted to see you but never so bad as I do now. I would not take a thousand dollars for your picture but I got it wet. I laid out all night in the rain. The case is a little spoiled but the pretty girl is there yet that is all I care for. We will have a Sweet time when I get home but then that will be I do not know. There is some talk of us going to Hatteras Inlet on the North Carolina Coast a long ways from here.

Celia I Sent my boots with my clothes but not my hat. I expect that kigers folks got them for Vol's but I dont know whether they did or not. I dont want to loose them. Sam Pruitt paid me that too dollars. Be sure to pay Haines for that wheat. I dont know what

13 Fort Craig was located approximately one mile south of Arrington, Davis, Perry, and Kerkley, Official Military Atlas of the Civil War, plate VII.
14 A military expedition under General Benjamin Butler captured Cape Hatteras in August, 1861. On October 4 Confederates attacked an Indian regiment stationed near Chicamaugonico, North Carolina. Apparently Jones's comment was made in response to rumors about increasing troop strength in the Hatteras area. The 19th Indiana, however, remained near Washington, D. C. See Long, The Civil War Day by Day, 24.
15 Valentine, or Valentine, Kiger from Delaware County served with Jones in Company E of the 19th Indiana. Later, in July, 1865, Kiger was transferred to the 24th Indiana Volunteer Regiment and was mustered out of service in October of that year. (William H. H. Terrell), Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Indiana (8 vols., Indianapolis, 1866-1869), IV, 398; Kingman Brothers, publ., History of Delaware County, Indiana . . . (Chicago, 1881), 95. An Isaiah S. Pruitt from Delaware County—possibly the Sam Pruitt to whom Jones refers—also served in Company E of the 19th Indiana. Later, in 1864, Pruitt was transferred to Company E of the 20th Indiana (Reorganized) and from there was apparently moved to the Veterans Reserve Corps before he was mustered out of service. Report of the Adjutant General, IV, 398, 438. David T. Haines was engaged in the wholesale and retail grocery business in Muncie between 1846 and 1853. His later entrepreneurial ventures include railroad development and the grain business. G. H. Kemper, ed., A Twentieth Century History of Delaware County, Indiana (2 vols. in 1, Chicago, 1908), II, 643.
be so glad to see that my dear is trying to help me. I want to have the good of my hardships when I get home.
give my love and best respects to the old folks and Susan also
write soon and a good long letter
no more at present but remains your husband till death

Sweet wife good by

Joshua Jones

Arlington Hights
November the 12th 1861

Dearest little wife

I received your letter or Johns rather last night. I had just wrote a letter to you a day or two ago.
I have just come off guard. I had a hard night of it. I stood at
the magazine 4 hours and upon the parapet 4 hours to guard the
Canons. The magazine is what the Canon balls and Cartridges is
kept in. It rained some and the wind blew pretty cool. It was
dark and I could hardly see to keep on the parapet wall. It is only
6 feet wide. Well my sweet little wife you wanted to know if I had
[snooked?] any more apples. Since I was at paps or not. I have not
takes money to neck them there. A good apple sells for 5 cts here
and you know that I am too stingy to pay that. My little sweet I
thought that I seen more pleasure that time with you than ever I
seen in all my life without you.

I often think of the sweet times we have had together. I do
believe that we love each other the best of any too in the world.
You said you got that ring I sent you. Well I am going to send
another. Well it is in the other letters of the 7th of November you
said you had sold my dog that was right.

tell me if you have paid David Haines. You will find thirty
dollars at the Bank for you. I drew 26 and mad some making
rings. And some washing close for the boys. I dont spend much
I want to have a big pile when I get home. Write good long letters
when you write. Take that paper to the Bank and get gold for it
keep in good heart and save all that you can and it will be all
right when I get home. I am well and in good spirits. I look a
head to a better day. I have not much to write this time. I feel
Sleepy and bad to day. I will write more the next time. No more
at present. I ever remain your husband till death.

Joshua Jones
Dear and loving little wife

I can inform you that I am enjoying a reasonable portion of health and it is my greatest wishes that this will find my loving wife and sweet little boy in the same state of health. I received your loving letter and was glad to hear from you when I seen your hair and little Georges I could not help shedding tears. I never had such feelings in my life. It was almost like meeting with my lover. The happiest day of my life is to come that will be when I can take my loving wife by the hand and lay my arms around her and kiss her sweet lips. That is the day I am longing to see you know how well I used to like to have hold of your little hand. I can almost feel it now you know I like to feel it too my Celia and the good times we used to have and that we will have when we see each other again is all my studies? But that day is not known when we will meet but here is a consolation the longer I have to stay the more money I am that So Celia can you dout that I love you when I have Risked my life in this Rebellion and put up with all the hardships of soldiering just to make a raise for the comfort of my little family you know that it must be horrible to my mind to have to be absent so long from those I love so well besides the exposure and hardships I have to bear with who is doing mor for their family or country than your little boy.

The grandest review that ever was known your boy was at it was held between Munson's hill and Bailey's Cross roads on the 20th of Nov 1861. Seventy thousand troops 104 canons 17 batteries you will see the account of it in the papers it was a grand sight.

Well Celia if you put the money in the Bank it will draw 6 per cent interest although I am willing for you to keep it but every dollar is one when a man gets it by the hardest put it in the Bank if you want to.

tell me if you got them feathers I will have to stop it is time for dressparad here is my heart and some of my hair.

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[16] William Howard Russell, special correspondent of the London Times, described the review as follows: "Today a grand review, the most remarkable feature of which was the able disposition made by General McDowell to march seventy infantry regiments, seventeen batteries, and seven cavalry regiments into a very contracted space, from the adjoining camps... Among the 55,000 men present there were at least 20,000 Germans, and 12,000 Irish." William Howard Russell, My Diary North and South, ed. Eugene H. Berwanger (Philadelphia, 1988), 327-28. Bailey's Cross roads was located about three miles south of Fort Craig.
hope the day is coming when I can have a little quiet home with her once more and Enjoy the peace and pleasure around our own peaceable fire Side I want you all to write to me for it is cheering to Read a letter from you and the pleasure that a Soldier Enjoy... otherwise are few and far between.

I will close for the present by asking you to answer Soon I ever Remain yours till Death

Joshua Jones

let Celia Read this letter

19th Regt. Co. E
Camp Craig
Jan 8 1862

Dear Celia

I take my pen in hand to write you a few lines to let you know that I am well, and hope these few lines may find my dear Wife and little boy in the very best of health. Well Celia as there is not any thing of Importance going on in Camp I will have nothing new to tell you you wanted me to Send you a present well I dont know what to Send but when I go to the City I will try to get you Something I am going to Send my little George a picture of Col. Ellsworth who was killed at Alexandria while taking down a Rebell flag” if you Cant read this writing I will get Some body to write for me but however. Celia I will not Send any money home this time but look out next payday for Sixty dollars I bought a watch for twelve dollars and a half and Sold it to Isaac Branson for Eighteen and a half next payday Some is Smart and Some aint Smart well Celia I will tell you what I have been thinking a bout I think if pork is only worth $2.50 cts per hundred you had better buy about two hundred pounds and Salt it down it will be a good thing for us for pork will be high next Summer but do as you think best I would like to know what has become of my Corn you may Sell my watch if you can get ten dollars for it and if you Cant you may Send it to me and I will Sell it and Send you the Cash I heard that Vol Kiger was married I guess you will get

17 The incident occurred on May 24, 1861. James T. Jackson, proprietor of the Marshal House in Alexandria, shot Colonel Ephraim E. Ellsworth as he attempted to take down a Confederate flag that Jackson insisted on flying from the roof of his hotel. See Russell, My Diary North and South, 163-64, for a full account.
18 Isaac Branson from Delaware County served as sergeant of Company E, 19th Indiana from 1861 until April, 1863, when he was commissioned as second lieutenant; still later, in January, 1864, he became first lieutenant of the company. Report of the Adjutant General, II, 172, IV, 398.
money not any more than will pay the express on the fiddle and watch I loaned it all out but you can pay the express there and get a Receipt for the box if you want to but I hate to ask you to Send it and pay the expense [for shipping it] both for it is too much you can use your pleasure about Sending it. I Sent a num- berell [an umbrella] to Haines Store by a man that was here after a Soldier that died is [it] was Directed to Garrett Gibson I want you to get it and keep it here is your miniature but you must be Sure to Send Eddy's and yours back and take good care of this one you Spoke about me having to lay on my oilcloth you cant help that and if then that talks about it dont like it let them lump it. I think I will be at home in the Summer or fall you need not be uneasy for I love you and I know you are pretty and virtuous too and I dont want a better woman than my little Celia. I have not got the watch yet you Said that picture looked natural I thought it was a poor picture I will have another one taken if I have a chance and send it to you / look on the other Sheet I will Close my letter on this I am out of paper here is a kiss for aunt it Sweet it ought to be I have Saved it long enough. I dont know what to tell you only that you are pretty and Sweet and a good loving kind little wife and would like to see you and hug and kiss on them Sweet lips kiss Eddy for me and tell him to be a good little boy till pap comes home again.

No more this time
Your Ever loving husband
Write Soon.

Joshua Jones

Camp near Alexandria Va
April the 2nd 1862

Dear and Ever Remembered Wife

I take my pen in hand this morning to answer your kind letter which I Received lastnight and to let you know that I am well and hope these few lines may find my dear Wife and little boy in the very best of health. Will Celia as there is not any thing of Importance going on in Camp I will leave nothing new to tell you.

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19 If Jones did indeed include another sheet with this letter, it is no longer ex- tant.
laurel brush Ready to go any time. Well Dear we got our pay a day or two a go and I Sent 55 dollars to the Bank on deposit Cap Wilson Said he would make them give me 6 per cent Intrust So I Sent it there in stead of Sending it to Pary. I did not get all that was coming to me or I could Sent more. I will Send 50 dollars next time. I got them postage Stamps and was glad to get them but I did not get the pictures. I do wish you would Send them. I will send mine and then I do want yours. I got the watch and fiddle. I got 5 dollars for the fiddle and twelve for the watch next pay day. I save all of the money that I get to send home to keep my pretty Sweet wife and little boy and my Self when I get home keep in good Spirits. Dear for they cant kill me. I am coming home if any body does. then we will have a good time the balance of our lives. I think your father and John [mite ?] write to [me] oftener if they thought any thing of me but it is all Right. I will Remember them while I am fighting to Save their as well as my own Country. I will close for this time by asking you to answer Soon and send them pictures. Write good long letters and tell all of the news that you can think of. your Ever loving husband. 

Joshua Jones

when this you see
Remember me though
many miles a part we be
good by Celia

here is the picture of your ugly husband who is in the army
this is a Laurel leaf

Via
Camp Near Fredricksburg
April 28th 1862

Well my Dear Celia

I will write you a few lines to let you know that I am getting along as well as could be expected although I am not very well but it is my hearts Desire that this may find you well and Enjoying life pleasant. I can get along if I can hear of you and the little boy being well, for you are the main dependence for pleasure and Satisfaction. the longer I stay a way the more I think of you and the better I love you. I am getting tired of this way of living. it is so hard and disagreeable. I am not well half of my time any more. it Raines so much and we have to lay on the cold and wet ground and nothing that I like to eat. we was 5 days with 2 days Rations and 4 of them days we was marching hard Crackers and old tuff beef and no Salt and we had to Roast it on the fire. I got a letter from Pary last night. he said some of the friends did not like it because I talked of Sending my money to him. I want you to tell me who it is if you know. I think it would be safer in their house because it is not so apt to get burnt up. you may give that Certificate to Pary then if any thing should happen you will not be to blame. it is not because I think that you cant take care of it but I dont want you to be to blame if any thing should happen that the certificate was lost. I will send 50 or 55 dollars more in 2 or 3 weeks and I will let Pary go to the Bank and get the Certificate let me know how much money John Abrell got and who he give for Security you may look for me home this Sumer or fall you may dry apples and get evry thing that you can. I am coming home on a furlow if the war is not over but I think the war will soon be over then I will be the happiest man in the world when I can be with my Sweet wife and little boy but live in hops and do all you can for our future Comfort and pleasure. I will have to stop for this time. Write Soon give me all of the Satisfaction you can about evry thing.

Ever Yours Respectfully
Joshua Jones
to Celia

Fredericksburg Va
June 26th 1862

Dear Companion

I take my pen in hand to Inform you that I Received your letter of the 16th Stating that you was all well. it found me in good health & enjoying my Self well as it had Rained all night & when I got up this morning I was surrounded by water & in my nest the water was about two inches deep & I am not dry yet. it Stormed tremendous hard. it has Swept away the Rail Road a gain. some troops of the 19th Indiana were given the detail of keeping the Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad between Fredericksburg and Aquia Creek Landing in repair. nothing in the letters implies that Jones was part of the repair crew, but if he were camped near the line, he certainly would have been aware of the damage done. Nolan, Iron Brigade, 58-60.
has been 3 men drowned Since we come here but none of our Regt but Thomas Gilbert tried to cut his throat. You said that you got that money & my likeness also. I dont know whether I will send any money home this pay day or not for our year is up the 29th of July & we have to pay for all of the clothes that we drawn over the amount of $42 & I will not have but little to pay if any but I think I can make a Speculation a trading, you said that you had planted garden Stuff & was going to make apple butter & fix things all Right that is Right you will never lose any thing by it for I am coming home on a furlough this winter if we are not discharged Cap says he will get me a furlough if it can be had at all. I think Mat has made a wild Shot if he knows when he is well off he had better keep out of the army for it not a place for pleasure nor a field for play unless he wants to play with lead balls & Sometimes they throw them pretty hard & they Rattle a Round like hail tell mother that I will send her a present just as soon as I can get one that is worth sending tell her that if she will keep in as good Spirits as I am all will be Right.

I cant get home this summer but I will come next winter I think I am going to join the artillery if I can get off from Cap Wilson. Here is a paper for you to Read & a card as a token of my love for you I wish you would send me a Muncie paper you can send it as I did this I sent you two more pictures how do you think they look & who do you think they look like keep in good heart I think I will get to kiss your Sweet lips again Someday.

Well I must bring my letter to a close I am on Policie day corporal of the Policie Squad. kiss Eddy a time or two for me oh how I would like to See him & his mother.

No More but Remaines your Most Affectionate Husband

Joshua Jones Cpl

23 The best study on morale among northern troops is Bell I. Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union* (Garden City, N. Y., 1971). Wiley notes that morale fell when soldiers suffered long periods of illness and when conditions in camp became difficult. He writes that no reliable figures on suicide exist but notes that "accidental" shootings of soldiers with their own guns were very common. See pages 275-96. Thomas H. Gilbert of Delaware County served as waggoner for Company E, 19th Indiana during its entire three years of service. He was mustered out of the army in July, 1864. *Report of the Adjutant General*, IV, 398.

24 Although Jones was never listed as a corporal in the Indiana adjutant general's records in his service records the muster of December, 1861, indicates that he was a private, that of March, 1862, lists him as a corporal. *Report of the Adjutant General*, IV, 398; Jones file, "Service Records of Volunteer Soldiers who served in Organizations of the State of Indiana."

My Dear Wife

I am once more permitted to drop you a few lines in answer to your kind communication of the 5th and 8th which come to hand a few minets ago & was Read with great pleasure to hear from home once more & to hear that you was all well & in good Spirits for that is Really the only & greatest pleasure that I Enjoy.

Dear Celia if you only knew what a great pleasure & Satisfaction it is to me to Read a letter from your hand you would Surely feel more Interested in writing to me I began to think that I was Entirely forgotten by my only nearest & dearest friend for it was So long before I got a letter from her you said that you had put up Some currents & was going to put up Some cherries & had your quilt about half out you are Some[thing] I always knew that you was a Smart girl but I did not like to Say So.

I often think about the Evening that Eliza Jane called me to the house & you was on the bed crying & I talked So hard to you I feel Sorrow for it & hope you will forgive me for it I did not do it because I did not care but because I thought it the better way to get you Reconsiled you know that I think more of you than any thing Else on Earth for we could have So much fun & Satisfaction with Eachother Runing a Round & tagging & Catching Eachother & fondling over Eachother So loving you must have your picture taken Just as nice as you can So it will look pleasing & Sweet & Send it to me.

My Dear wife you must Ever Remember the one that loves you So dear you Said that you was at the forth [July 4] I was too but I was laying in my tent all day Sick & almost Smothered to death it was So warm I was thinking about you all day & wandering where you was & what you was doing.

We have had a pretty good time while we have been here but we are under marching orders now & will leave here soon for Rich mond or Gordensville. I think the fight at Richmond will End the war if they will Stand & fight & not Evacuate but I fear that we are going to have to fight England & if we do I have no hopes of Ever getting home but if not I think that you may look for me this

On June 26, 1862, McDowell's corp was incorporated into the Army of Northern Virginia, commanded by John Pope. The new army consisted of units stationed in northern Virginia and in the Shenandoah Valley. Although Jones does not say, the 19th was moved from Fredericksburg to Gordonsville to protect approaches to the Shenandoah along the Virginia Central Railroad. Nolan, *Iron Brigade*, 61.
winter, you Said that you got them pictures. I got Eddy’s picture he is a pretty little boy, he takes that after his pretty Mother & his Smartness too but his (Spokenness?) he takes after his old father.

there has Several died here this week it is So hot one man fell out of the Ranks yesterday at dress parade he was Sun Struck he had not been well for a few days tell John that I have wrote him too letters Since he has wrote to me, tell the old folks that I Received their Respects but can not give a letter in Return for compliments tell them to write oh how I would like to See my Celia & our little boy you must write when you feel like it but if I did I would write all of the time I will have to Close for this time asking you to write without delay I will Ever Remain your affectionate & Loving husband until Death

farewell Celia Eddy good by

when this you See Remember me though many miles a part we bee

Cedar Mountain
Culpepper Co Va
Aug 18th 1862

My Dear Companion

it is again that I am permitted to drop you a few lines to let you know that I am well & hope these few lines may Reach & find you well & in good Spirits. You must Excuse me for not writing Sooner for we have been marching for the last two weeks we made a Reconnoitering about two weeks ago cut toward Richmond & got in a Skirmish with the Rebels and for a while the case looked a little Billious but we got back by loosing Several prisoners they [Confederates] had us cut off Entirely at one time & they dashed away among us pretty lively for a while When we got back to Camp we got orders to march the next morning at 4 oclock to Reinforce Banks So we did not get much Rest we did not get here in time to get into the fight we are now laying at the foot of Cedar mountain on the Edge of the Battle ground I was all over the Battle ground yesterday there is plenty of the Rebels that is barried So Shallow that their hands & feet is Sticking out & Some places there is So many in one hole & since they have Swelled their Shoulders or hips are above the ground & the maggots are all over them it creates a dreadful Smell there is plenty of peaces of arms legs & all parts of men Scattered over the fields I Seen lots of hair & blood & bloody clothes with bullet holes in them & dead horses any amount of them our men is baried alittle better they are baried in trenches there is two trenches about 30 Rods long & there they are layed Side by Side our loss is Said to be over one thousand the Bomb Shells & bullet is laying thick all over our Camp two men was killed yesterday by leting a Shell fall & it Exploded it was a percussion Shell I Can not tell half in a letter but you will See the account in the papers the battle was between Slaughter mountain & Cedar mountain Tell Parys that I have wrote to them last I would like to know how Johns is getting along & whether they are Still trying the Serve the lord & how people Seem to like the drafting in general you used to Say that there was no danger of being drafted what do you think now what I Say comes true Sometimes.

This comment is made in response to numerous rumors that England and France planned to recognize the Confederacy, a move which would have almost forced the Union to declare war on the European powers. Following the battle of Antietam (Sharpsburg), such rumors became less frequent, and they were no longer heard after the Federal victory at Gettysburg. James Rawley, *Turning Points in the Civil War* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1966), 113-14.

This was one of a series of raids undertaken by the Iron Brigade between Richmond and the Shenandoah Valley in early August, 1861. The purpose was to break Confederate communications between Richmond and the Valley. Long, *Civil War Day by Day*, 247.
Bart Harter is not dead yet he is too [illegible] ornery I will Send you five dollars in this letter I did not get all that was coming to me this pay day & want to Send home enough next time to make out two hundred dollars I loned out Some on Intrest till next pay day
tell Mother to keep in good Spirits tell all of the friend to write if they [illegible] like it all of the boys gets more letters than I do. now my Dear Celia I want you to write me if no body Else does for I love you more than all the world & I am content when I can hear from you I dreamed of hugging and kissing you all night last night oh how [happy] I was but how bad I did feel this morning.
I must close write Soon oh how [I] love & want to See my Dear Celia good bye Celia from your [lover ?]

Joshua Jones cpl

Fort Warren Virginia
Sept 6th 1862

My Dear Wife

I am truly thankful that I am granted the privilege once more of Informing you that I am Still a live & well & Sincerely hope these few lines may find you all well & Enjoying your Selves well. Celia this is one privilege more then I Ever Expected to Enjoy but thanks to the Almighty I have come out alive. the Bombardment commenced at the Rappahannock [River] on the 21st of August & it lasted 3 days at that point we was under the fire three days & nights there then we marched to Gainesville & was Shelled all of the way there & on the Evening of the 28th one mile north of Gainesville we had an Engagement with the Enemy which lasted till after dark it was there that I feared that I would End my days the man on my left was Shot down & both of the men to my Right was Shot Jacob Miller was wounded & fell at my feet & his gun hit me on the Shoulder as he fell I got one ball hole in my hat & one through the left Side of my Coat we lost 260 that

31 Barton S. Harter was from Delaware County and served with Jones in Company E of the 19th Indiana. Harter was killed at Antietam on September 17, 1862, just one month after Jones's letter to Celia. Report of the Adjutant General, IV, 398.
32 This letter was written following the Second Battle of Bull Run. The 19th Indiana and other units engaged in the battle were brought closer to Washington in order to rest and recuperate. Fort Warren is perhaps the name given to the bivouac area, for at this time the unit was stationed on Upton's Hill about two miles southeast of Arlington. Fort Warren was located in Boston, Massachusetts. Nolan, Iron Brigade, 111.
33 Gainesville lies thirty-five miles southwest of Washington, D.C.
34 Jacob Miller of Delaware County served with Jones in Company E of the 19th Indiana. He was wounded in this encounter at Gainesville but continued to serve with the regiment until he was mustered out in July, 1864. Report of the Adjutant General, IV, 398.
night on the 30th near the old Bull Run Battle ground we had an other Engagement which lasted till the Evening of the 31st our losses is Said to be Seventeen thousand the dead & wounded lay so thick that we could not help Steping on them when we was changing our position on the field our Regiment come very near all being taken prisoners they did get Several I can tell you all about it when I get home we will not have to fight any more for a while for our corps is ordered back to Washington to rest & Recruit up & protect the cap[i]tal you need not be uneasy now I think I will get home Safe our flag is all Shot to peaces John Harter & Bart was not in the fight they are both cowards we have been under fire altogether 9 days Cap got your letter to day I wrote you a letter from Slaughters mountain about the 18th of Aug & Sent five dollars in it I have not had a letter for a long time I am going to quit writing I have not heard from your father nor John Abrell nor Pary nor any body Else for two or three months Can it be possible that they have all forgotten me I sometimes do not care if I am killed only for your sake I often thought of you during this Battle & thought if you only knew that I was on the battle field part of the time fighting & part of the time Standing watching & listening at the cannon balls & Brim Shells So I could dodge them or fall down when they bursted to keep from getting killed I would not had you or Mother to of known Just my Situation for nothing in the world while you was going about the house or in your bed asleep I was Either laying on the battle field in the Raine or Setting up anodding it Rained three days you have no Idea what we have to go through tell Neps that old John has got a Bulet in his neck our Major was killed the Adjutants horse was Shot from under him I will close on the other Sheet

33 For Barton S. Harter see note 30 above. John F. Harter of Delaware County also served in Company E of the 19th Indiana. When the regiment's three-year term of enlistment was completed in July, 1864, John Harter reenlisted and served until he was mustered out of the army in July, 1865. Report of the Adjutant General, IV, 398, 438.

34 Isaac M. May from Delaware County had been mustered into service as captain of Company A of the 19th Indiana. In February, 1862, he was promoted to major of the regiment. May was killed at Gainesville on August 28, 1862. Official Records, ser. I, vol. XII, p. 378; Report of the Adjutant General, II, 168, 169.

35 Lieutenant Colonel Solomon Meredith had his horse shot from under him at Gainesville and was forced to withdraw from the field. Nolan, Iron Brigade, 131; see also [Catharine Merritt], The Soldier's Idea in the War for the Union (2 vols., Indianapolis, 1866, 1869), 1, 587.

36 The second sheet of this letter is no longer extant. This was the last letter that Celia received from Joshua, or, at least, it was the last that she kept. On September 6, 1862, the day that Jones wrote it, "Stonewall" Jackson occupied Frederick, Maryland, and Confederate troops began the push northward that culminated in the Battle of Antietam (Sharpsburg). The battle, known as the "bloodiest day in the war" occurred on September 17 and resulted in the death of 5,100 men, with 18,600 wounded. James M. McPherson, Orderd by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstriction (New York, 1982), 282-87.

37 Keedysville was a hamlet midway between Sharpsburg and Boonesboro, Maryland.
liable to be mooved at any time—think the former the surest way—.
I presume that it will be some time yet before he will be able to
write himself—and it will doubtless be a gratification to you to
hear how he is getting along—. I will therefore take it upon myself
to inform you from time to time as I may be able to hear—, how
he is progressing. Trusting that you may bear this sad intelligence
with becoming fortitude, and in a manner worthy the wife of so
brave and patriotic a husband, remembering that though he must
suffer much pain and forever the loss of his limb—, yet his life has
been spared and that you will soon have the gratification of again
seeing and enjoying his presence—that though his loss is a severe
one—yet the reflection that the sacrifice was made in so noble a
cause will in part compensate for the inconvenience and he will
bear through life a living testimony of his devotion for his country
and her institutions.
With regards

I am very Respectfully

Geo. W. Greene

Sharpsburg Md Oct 8/62

Mrs. Joshua Jones
Dear Madam

Your letter to your husband directed to my care bearing date
Oct 1st came to hand today In reply I deeply regret to inform you
that your husband is no more, that he passed from this life Sept.
30th. You have doubtless received this melancholy intelligence ere
this, as a friend of his was here several days before his death when
all hope of his recovery was gone His leg was amputated below
the knee by Dr Obensole of this regiment several days before I saw
him (the 20th of Sept I believe) and while I was sick in Washing-
ton44 I just saw him about 7 days before his death Since the am-
putation up to that time the leg had been doing well, but on my

44 George W. Greene from Delaware County first served as lieutenant of Com-
pany E of the 19th Indiana. He was promoted to captain in April, 1863, and was
honorably discharged from service in March, 1865, after having been a prisoner of
war at Libby and other southern prisons for twenty months following the Battle of
County, 114-16, 119.

44 Jacob Ebersole from Aurora, Indiana, was surgeon of the 19th Indiana from
April, 1862, until he was mustered out of service in October, 1864, when the 19th
was consolidated with the 20th Indiana (Reorganized). Report of the Adjutant Gen-
eral, II, 169.
when he got better, but he [was] getting worse. I spoke to the lady nurse and she and I went in and told him that the Drs had given him u[pp] and if he wanted to send any word to you I would write it. he said for “you to take the best care of your selfe and child that you could.” “Selio you know I have done the best I could for you”. “I am prepared to die”. he was in hopes that he would get well until I told him he was going to die. he passed away very quietly not having but little pain. Capt Wilson had a coffin made for him costing $6.00. and a head board was placed up for him in the grave yard. Capt Wilson speaks very highly of him as a soldier both on the Battle field and camp. I always saw him at his post where ever it was. My sincere prayr is that God may bless you with the consolations which alone come from him and his protection in your bereavement that you may mee[t] togethe[r] arround the throne. You can learn of the date of my Father as I sent a letter to him stateing his death. Remaining your Friend I subscribe my selfe

H. C. Marsh

Dear Madam

Dr Green wrote the enclosed letter which he was not going to send as I had written to My Father of the death of your kind, noble and brave husband. the Drs and I found Joshua at a barn (where he had been taken by the secessh) his wounds had not reced any attentions until we came he was then taken to Keedysville on a litter (he had been put in an ambulance but he could not be hauled so they carried [him] there) [3 or 4 miles] where his foot was amputated and did well for a while but mortification set in when he sunk rapidly. I was sent with the Regt after the Battle but afterwards orderd to Keedysville as soon as I came he was glad to see me and wanted me to see to him which I did with the other nurses and a lady from Boston who was very kind to the boys. (she came to wait on the soldiers voluntarily) he received good attention after he was found. A day or so before he died I was talking to him of his relations he said he wanted me to write to you but not then,

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43 Henry C. Marsh of Muncie joined the 19th Indiana in November, 1861. He is listed in the adjutant general’s report as an unassigned recruit. When the 19th and 20th regiments were combined in January, 1864, Marsh was mustered into the 20th (Reorganized). He is listed there under regimental noncommissioned staff as a hospital steward. Report of the Adjutant General, IV, 409, 432.

44 J. N. Green of Indianapolis served as assistant surgeon of the 19th Indiana from September, 1861, until he resigned in December, 1862. Report of the Adjutant General, II, 189.