
The civil war diary and letters of William Winter

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William Winter was born in Connecticut in 1830. His father was a landowner and owned slaves, and from an early age, he disagreed with his father about the slave laws. He loved to write poetry. As a young man he came—possibly in company with other members of his family—to Cincinnati, Ohio, where in 1853 he married Harriet J. Smith. She was twenty-years-old, and a native to Ohio. William Winter moved to Hope, Indiana in the mid-1850s. He and Hattie had four children, Edith, Effah Mae "Mae", Maggie, and William. Maggie and William died in childhood. Mr. Winters was a saddle maker and owned his own business in Hope. His name is on the petition that was sent to the State of Indiana requesting for Hope to be incorporated as a town. William died at Sabine Cross Roads, Louisiana in August, 1864. he is buried at Chalmette National Cemetery in Chalmette, St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana, USA.
ONE ..."An Army amongst Them"

The newly sworn-in Hoosiers of the Sixty-seventh might have been as green as Indiana grass that summer, but a crisis was brewing in Kentucky, just across the Ohio River, and the War Department hastily threw the new regiment and others like it from all over the Midwest into the thick of the campaign. The Sixty-seventh hastily organized, drew uniforms and equipment, and marched down to the steamship landing for transportation to the seat of war. "Uncle Sam," the regimental historian later observed, "had urgent need of us."1

Arriving in Munfordville, Kentucky, they found elements of several other regiments defending fortifications on the south bank of the Green River. From this period dates William Winters's first letter. Characteristically, his interest was in the countryside, the people of the region, and their reactions to the "army amongst them."

Camp Jackson, Munfordville, K.Y., Aug. 31st, [18]62

Dear wife, it is sunday to day in all the world, but in camp and here it is the same as any other day. almost the only differance is we know that it is the sabath. there is the same noise, bustle, and confusion as
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Camp Jackson, Munfordville, K.Y., Aug. 31st, [18]62

Dear wife, it is sunday to day in all the world, but in camp and here it is the same as any other day. almost the only differance is we know that it is the sabath. there is the same noise, bustle, and confusion as on any other of the seven, but we are all well and enjoying ourselves as well as we can. I have just eat my diner and the balance of our mess are washing the dishes. I do the most of the cooking as the rest of our mess say they cant cook.

We are situated on the top of a hill on the bank of green river and in sight of the towns of woodsonville and Munfordville and in one of the poorest countrys that I ever saw.2 there is not a spear of grain or a rick of straw to be seen in any direction and not a plow at work, but the people dont seem to mind it much. it may be that they have got so used to haveing an army amongst them that they dont notice it any more. the country is very rough and broken, and I dont think it has rained any here for the last three months, as the ground is perfectly parched up. the grass looks as dry as if there had never been any rain since the world commenced.
We have all kinds of reports here about old Morgan. The last is this morning that he was down about Glasgow, a town of about three or four hundred inhabitants. It is about sixteen miles from here. They say he had some two thousand men with him now, but if there is no more than his forces comes against us we don’t care, as we have some twenty five hundred here now, as we were reinforced with one more regiment on yesterday and two more pieces of artillery and we expect two more regiments on to day or to morrow and four more canon, and we are throwing up brest works and building a stockade, and I think that if we can get the works done that we have commenced before he trys to take us, he will meet a last repulse for this life.
The war department are impressing all the negroes to work on the fortifications that are in the country. They have some fifty-five contrysbands at work here now and colonial Emerson says they must do the work and save the men, but it makes some of these old fellows around here awfull mad to think that they must give up their hands to work for unkle sam when they dont like him a single bit. and yesterday they commenced impresing horses and oxen to work on the works to save the soldiers. we have our watter hauled here to our tents now, and it saves us a heap of hard work, for it was an awfull job to carry watter more than a half mile in buckets, camp kettles, and coffe pots to drinkand cook with. we had a nice lot of fresh beef dealt out to us to day, the first that I have had since I came into camp. we have plenty of work and plenty to eat if we only had a good way of cooking it, but we will soon get used to it. I would like to have some of your bread for supper to night. we have crackers instead of bread, but I think they intend to change it as often as they can.
Winters's first taste of combat came just two weeks to the day after he wrote this letter. On Sunday morning, September 14, Confederate brigadier general James R. Chalmers assaulted the Federals at Munfordville.

Inside the Federal works, the Sixty-seventh Indiana held a powerful earthwork called Fort Craig, on the extreme left of the Union line near the village of Woodsonville. The hard work on the entrenchments Winters mentioned, both by the soldiers and by commandeered slaves, now paid off for the new troops. Though it was their first fight, the men of the Sixty-seventh found the job simple enough for their level of training, as they stood behind their breastworks and fired at the oncoming Rebels. They also found that they possessed skills and aptitude for the job. It was "Hoosier squirrel hunt drill," recalled one participant. Officers seemed to have more difficulty guessing appropriate behavior. Maj. Augustus H. Abbot of the Sixty-seventh leapt atop the parapet shouting, "Shoot low," and was promptly cut down by a Confederate bullet.
THE ARMY AMONGST THEM

- When the Confederates retreated, the green Hoosiers of the Sixty-seventh had been seasoned by combat, and a serious enough fight it was, while it lasted. They noted with pride that their flag had been pierced by 146 enemy bullets.

- Two days later, Confederate general Braxton Bragg showed up with his whole army. That was more than the Munfordville garrison could handle, and the Federals, including the Sixty-seventh Indiana, surrendered, marched out "with all the honors of war, drums beating and colors flying," stacked their arms, and became prisoners of war.
The author of our first letter is of course William Winter, and the letter is addressed to his wife.

He was at Camp Jackson, in Munfordville, K.Y., waiting for battle, and on a national level, the Civil War was raging on.

Yes, we believe there is bias in this letter. Towards the end of this letter, William Winters about the slaves being posted into the army, which caused him to remark about how the slave owners must be these “Old fellows around here awful mad to think that they must give up their hands to work for uncle Sam when they don't like him a single bit.” He grew up in a family that owned slaves – which he strongly disagreed with – so his opinion showed that the slave owners were extremely reluctant to give away there worker at all, even for the war effort.
THE ARMY AMONGST THEM AUDIENCE QUESTIONS

- What do you think this letter meant and what it showed about William’s situation in the war?
- How do you think William’s wife felt when she red this letter?
- What stood out to you the most in this letter?
LETTERS OF A CIVIL WAR NURSE

About: Cornelia Hancock, 1863-1865

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EVEN on a sand-hill one may acquire a reputation for independence of character bordering on eccentricity by doing nothing more than going quietly one's own way and letting one's neighbor go his; and this was the reputation my family had acquired in the little village of Hancock's Bridge, New Jersey, long before the Civil War broke out.

All through the Township, my father was known as "Thomas Y., the fisherman," and as the one man in those parts who was foolish enough to vote for Fremont in the election of 1856. He was a silent man who spent his time thinking and fishing in the little stream known as Alloway's Creek, a tributary of the Delaware, and I never knew of his having any other occupation except that of reading the newspapers. In order to fish more successfully, he went to bed with the tide and got up when it turned; his days and nights were planned solely with reference to slack water. He owned a canoe built to suit himself and to hold but one person. On it were painted the letters "ItyT"--the title having been invented with great care and ingenuity for the exclusive purpose of baffling idle curiosity. No one could pronounce the word or imagine what it meant, and it pleased him never to tell his numerous questioners that the pronunciation consisted in naming each letter separately. We lived on our inherited property and ate fish every day. As it was impossible for us to eat all the fish father caught in Alloway's Creek, a large number was given away to the village people, about six of the finest being reserved.
Famous writer and civil war nurse Cornelia Hancock is a major staple in women's Civil War history. She was born February 08, 1840, in the city of Hancock's Bridge, NJ. She had one brother and three sisters. Her brother and cousins joined the Union army when the Civil War was kicking off, but Cornelia wanted to aid in the war as well. Her brother-in-law, her sister Ellen’s husband, offered to take her to Gettysburg, and she leapt at the chance. She worked for Dorthea Dix, the head nurse, and provided exemplary care to wounded and ill soldiers. After the war, she founded an African American school in South Carolina and started many charities in Philadelphia. She served as president of the National Association of Army Nurses of The Civil War. In 1914, Hancock retired to Atlantic City to live with her niece. She died of nephritides on December 31, 1927.
This letter was written almost like a diary entry to herself or to whoever read it.

At this time, the war has not yet started, and she is discussing her daily life while tensions grow stronger each day between the North and South.

No, she was simply discussing her father’s and her life in her village.
What do you think Cornelia thought about her father?
What do you think was the authors greatest achievement?
What part of the letter was the best in your opinion?
WAR LETTERS, 1862-1865, OF JOHN CHIPMAN GRAY ... AND JOHN CODMAN ROPES ... WITH PORTRAITS

By John Chipman Gray; John Codman Ropes
DEAR MOTHER, -- After leaving Boston on Thursday morning we had about as hot a ride as I ever felt to Philadelphia with nothing noticeable happening, except that the Express in New York lost Tom's valise in carrying the luggage from one depot to another, and I had to leave directions for it to be forwarded here by express. Tom bears his misfortune like a philosopher. After we got seated in the train for Baltimore there was a loud cheering and I found that General McClellan was on board the train; he had come to Philadelphia for his wife who returned with him to camp. I had quite a good look at him. He was in citizen's clothes and had neither a military nor an easy look, a very red face and hair a great deal darker than I had supposed -- not nearly so striking a man as his father-in-law General Marcy; Mrs. McClellan was much better looking than I had imagined; the mother-in-law Mrs. Marcy looked -- like a mother-in-law; and the baby seemed to be of most vigorous disposition, and tossed about its pillow in a very lively manner. I had the honor of seeing it drink something out of a tin mug.
I had to pass the night in Baltimore, much to my disgust, in a solitary manner, but partially consoled myself by having onions for dinner. Saturday morning I left Baltimore and after a long slow railroad ride arrived at Sandy Hook nearly opposite Harper's Ferry. General Gordon2 I found

1She was daughter of Randolph Barnes Marcy.

2George Henry Gordon (1825-1886), in command of the First Division, Twelfth Army Corps. Author of A War Diary of Events, 1863-1865.
Mr. John Chipman Gray was born July 14th, 1839, in the city of Brighton, Boston, MA. He had only one sibling - Horace Gray-who was eleven years older than John, and who grew up to become a famous politician. He to enjoyed politics, but also found passion for writing and teaching. He graduated Harvard with flying colors in 1861. He was an American scholar of poverty law, and he taught at the prestigious law school, Harvard. Before becoming professor, the civil war beckoned him to fight. He first enlisted as 2nd Lieutenant in the company “B” battalion on 27th of May, 1862. Then he was moved out and put in company “H” shortly afterward in October of the same year. After recovering from a wound sustained in the Battle of Opequon, he took up his profession as a professor at Harvard law school. John C. Gray died February 25th, 1915 in Boston Massachusetts.
This letter was addressed to his mother in Boston, Massachusetts.

The author is on the train going to Philadelphia, and just as the last letter, tensions are growing toward war between the North and South.

There is no bias in the letter, it simply is telling about his journey to the train in Philadelphia and the dinner afterwards.
JOHN C. GRAY, JR., TO HIS MOTHER
MARYLAND HEIGHTS SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1862 AUDIENCE QUESTIONS

• What do you think was his mother's reaction to this letter?
• What was the mood of this letter?
• What did the author accomplish that he is most known for?
• What was your favorite part of the letter?
Although all three letters are by different writers and about different topics, they all relate to the Civil War. All three people played a major part in the war by either serving in combat or helping the wounded. We have one more question to ask the audience, who was the author you related to yourself.


THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!

By: Shelby O’Neal, Caitlin Little, and Eathen Gadberry