

Civil War letters of our Great Uncle, Harvey Earl. Most were written to his brother, Alfred Earl, and his wife, Almira "Tip" Hubbard Earl.

Spelling is as written in original letters. No periods were used in these letters. But it is surprising how well the writing has been preserved. I was told by Wilson Milks (in 1972) that Harvey Earl never returned from the war, and no news of what happened to him was ever received. He, himself, while travelling in Virginia, tried to find some record of his death, but could find none. It was said that at one time during the Civil War, there was an exchange of prisoners and when they were lined up for the exchange, Harvey was one of the last in line and that he stepped back and allowed another to go in his place.

October the 5 1862

Dear brother I thought I would rite a few lines to you to let you no that I was alive and well and I hope that these few lines will find you well we are camped in Vrginia about three miles on the other side of the Potomac river it is rather warme heer I did not see you when I cum thru Calmaca I seen Joe Gorge he cum up whar the cars stoped bill was over heer to day he is as tuff as A buck ~~tell~~ rite to me as soon as you git this

Wal tip I thought that you I would rite A word or to to you tell Jane that I am very glad that she cum over to your house that knight for I would hav hted to cum away without seeing her you and Alfred must rite to me and all of the folks must rite and not wate for me ~~god~~ good by for this time Drect to Wasingten D.C. 154 E ragment US State Volenteers Co. H in care of Cap F J Nelson ~~from your a ferende~~ this is badley crald up from Harv Earl to Mister Alfred Earl and Co Remembr Harvey Earl

Farifax Oct the 19 1862 dear ~~frie~~ brother I got your letter this morning and was glar to hear from you and to hear that you was well your letter found me well and I hope those few lines will find you well I dont like sodering very well when we mached from washington it was a weake a go to day and we marched all day it was about 10 oclock at knight we camped and rained like heel all knight and we slep out in the rain like hogs I was as wet as A drowned rat what kind of wether is it out ther it is warmb dayes and cold knigts heer I was glad to hear that father had traidid of that jugnut I sent him a letter a good while ago and hav not got eney from him atole I cant write eny more so good by

~~rite~~ Wal tip i will rite a few lines to you to to let you know that I am alive and well and as foolish as ever ~~and~~ I hope those few lines will find you well that liknes I sent you was rather poor Joes was better J Jane sent me a letter I got it yesterday I hav a hard place to write you must excuse my poor riting and speeling I don't know whare Bill is now I hav not seen him since I rote to you before how dose Olive get A long now She will git mad at me if I dont write to her it is as helthey heer as it is ther with the same kind of for it is hard fare that makes the boyes sik heer in sted of the climet

I Cant rite eny more So Good by rite as soon as you git this and oblige Harvey Earl Drect as you did before Mr Harvey Earl Good By

Fairfax Oct the 30 1862

Dear brother

I resevd your letter this morning and was very glade to hear from you and to hear that you was well your letter found me well and tuff as a buck I am giting fat I way 159 pounds now well Alfred we had a very cold rain hear last Sunday it was very cold that knight the boys run into woods to make a fire to ceape warmb I think we shal stay hear all wintr

I rote in Charleys leter to tell you to send me sum stamps I wint you would for I cant git eny hear send sum if you can I had A leter from father the other day he was well

I hav seen the place whare Nate Hourd was shot (Note—he had an arm shot off—mentioned in another letter.)

I was out on picket gard the other knight I hurd sum houns a runing a fore the fox run rite clost to me I dart not shot at him it made me think of home I cant think of much more to rite

give my love to all of the folks rite soon

Good by for this time from harve

Mr Harvey Earl to Alfred Earl

Fairfax Nov 22 862

Dear friend

I reseved A letter from you the other day and was very glad to hear from you and to hear that you was all well I ant very well just now but I think I feeld better this morning then I hav in tow weaks before we hav been on the march for 3 weaks more ore less and we hav got back whare we started from now I dont know whare we ~~started from~~ shal go next

Tell lib that I believe I had rather set up with hur when she had the rheumatism then to be hear (Lib was my Grandmother)

Wal tip I dont like this cind of bisness much but I expect it is all for the best

I cant write much more fore my fingers is so cold I cant rite giv my love to all

So good by from Harvy Earl rite soon

Fairfax Dec the 9 862

Dear brother and sister I recivd your kind letter and was glad to hear from you and to hear that you was well anuf to write to me I like to hear from you you rote me the best letter that I hav had since I hav been hear I like to hear from all of the folks when I hear from home Alfred I got them stamps you sent me but they are all gone now I shal hafta beg one to send this one I hant got eny money to git eny thing at all we hav got marching orders now I don't know whare wel shal go to it is warmb and plesent hear to day it has ben cold for 3 or 4 day back the snow has been 3 inches

deap hear but it is warmb to day Wal I should like to be out ther for a while that is so giv my love to all

rite as soon as you git this

from Harvey Earl

Dec the 22 862

Dear sister I got your letter this morning and was very glad to hear from you and to hear that you was well I am well at present

I hant been in the hospetle a tal Delas lide a bout that they hav had a g big fit and the rebs giv us a good flaling they cild 5 of our meen to 1 of them bill was in the fite but did not git hurt tom pratt got shot in the back and in the leg I hav seen and bill since the fite we ware camped on one side of the river and the rebs are on the other side I dont know whether we shal fite hear a gane or not I cant think of much more to write

rite as soon as you git this

from Harvey Earl

to tip

Jan the 7 862 [sic] [1863 by context]

Dear Brother

I got your letter this morning and was very glad to hear from you and to hear that you was well your letter found me as well as comon it rather cold hear this morning our hous is rather cold you must know that it can not be very plesent sleeping on the ground at this time of wether we are in Campe in the same camp that we was when I rote to tip it is very sikley hear now there has ben 9 dide in this riment since we cume hear

I think Marten and lib is getting a long very well Sur teel them that they must name him after me and I will giv him a nice pressent when I git home what does the folks think of this wore out ther I can teel you what the privets thinks of it they are sik of it I dont think it will close very soon we dont git anuf to eate now fore they cant git it heer for ~~sum~~ so meny men you did not rite very soon after you got my letter I loked for a letter from you for tow or three days I want you to write as often as you can fore I dont have a very good chance to write I has father got them Stags yet he hant sed a word from home in a good while

You must write as soon as you git this

From Harve

Fredrickburg Jan the 17 1863

Dear friend tip

I recived your letter last nite and was very glad to hear from you and to hear that you was all well your letter found me all right Wal I should think that the folks was doing very well I dont think that I know that Brown of Janes I suspose that he and Jane thinks they hav sholde there donet Wal tip teel them both that I wish them much joy and the first year a boy but for I think ther will wante more solders heer if they take ther boyes ovr the river agane and I think ther will be another move made before long and think we shal go in to for we hav drod 3 dayes rashens and orderd to be redy to march at eny time what does the folks think about this wore teel Alfred to send me a doler worth of stamps and when I git my pay I will send him a doler in a letter for I hant got eny stamps nor eny monney and if I had a hundred dolers I could not git eny for ther is non to be had heer I should think that had and Charley would be a gitting Wal I cant write as soon as you git this

From Harvey Earl

Jan the 31 1863

Dear brother and sister

I got 2 letters from you the other day I very glad to hear from you and to hear that you was all well I got them stamps I was very glad to git them I had 2 or 3 letters and could not ansure them for I could not git eny stamps

Wal I supose you hav hurd of the move that was made last weak we had to move out of our tent we had a log hut made and it was quite a good place to sleep but we hav got back with in a mild of ther and hav got up a nother house but I dont know how long we shal stay heer we are gitting so that we dont car for eny thing

Wal I seen bill when he was a going back to his old camp he was well he feels very good for his time is almost out I wish my time was as near out as his I would think I mite git back a gane but a man stands a very poor chance for his life

Wal you must write as soon as you git this

From Harve

Feb the 19 1863

Staffords Corthouse

Dear brother and sister I recived your letter last nite and was glad to hear from you and to hear that you was well your letter found me well

Wal we have moved back towards washington about teen miles they say that we hav got to go down to teenassee but I dont know how that is and dont car a dam you sed the folks thought that the wor would close up by spring I dont se how it will close so soon

I don't see as the wor is eny neer a close then it was when we com down hear

Wal I hav just ben to grub we had ~~to~~ a good meal this morning we had sum potatos and we stold a quarter of beaf last ~~mi~~ nite but for a generel thing we hav rathe hard fair it is very bad wether now it snows one day and the next day it will rain that makes rather hard times for us Wal you rot me a very short letter you must do better then that Wal what do you think of I doing this sumer I hav got the starte of you I know what my bisness will be for 2 years if I should happen to liv Wal what is gorges folks doing this winter did Charley git ~~this~~ my letter I rote him he did not rite to me since teel rachel that she mite rite a few lines and let me know how she gets a long let her rite and send it with your letter

Wal I cant rite much more rite soon

From Harvey

March the 3 1862 [sic] [1863 by context]

Stafford Corthouse

Dear friends

I recived your sad letter last nite I ~~was was~~ felt the worst that I hav ~~been~~ since since I hav been in Vergina when I red that leter but ~~tell~~ you must ceap up good curag he has gon to a place whare they nevr hav war he will see his little aunt ther I feel so bad that I cant rite if you hav eny more bad nuse dont tell it to me for it is bad a nuf to stay heer with out heering eny bad nuse from home I am not very well at present but I hope that I shal git better in a few dayes it is plesent wether hear now the birds sings just as swet as they evr did in old Cattaraugus it make me home sik but that never will do I will ceap up good curag and ~~they~~ when this wor is ovr I will come home and see my friends once mre and nevr go to rambel agane then I will have good old times once more ther is a olde fortion teeler hear and I am going ovr and hav him tell mine in a few dayes ther has bed sum of the boyes ovr and he ses that this regment will never see a fite but I don't think he knows eny thing a bout it but the boyes that has had them told say he will tell what has part just as it is

I cant rite eny more now for my hand trembels so so good by for this time from Harvey Earl

March the 10

Stafford Corthouse

Dear ~~fr~~ brother and sister I thought I would write you a few lines to let you know how I am g gitting a long Wal I cant say that I am well for I ant by no menes I hav got a lame side and it is prety lame to Wal it has snow sum to day and it looks rather lonesum the dayes is most all out on picket and I got to thinking a bout you and I thought you was as lonsom as I since the joy of your livs was gon but he has gon to a beter world then this I hope those few lines will find you well I hope I shal get better soon

I had a letter from Rachel the other day she wrote me a very good letter

Wal they say that we are nine months mean but that is a camp story I think that is too good to believe

Wal it is nite now it is a bad nite it rains sum and it is quite cold the boys will have a hard time on picket but I know how to pity them for I have had sum hard times on picket and expect sum more before this thing runs down

Wal the roads is very bad yet but as soon as they better they will put us on the move again we have been in this camp five weeks

Wal you must write and let me know how all of the folks gets along Wal I shall send this without a stamp for I have not got any I thought I would try it and see if it would get through(?)

write as soon as you get this

from Harvey Earl

March the 15 1863

Stafford Courthouse

Dear brother I received your this evening and was very glad to hear from you and to hear that you was well your letter found me well as common I had a letter from home last week they had had sum fuss Tom and father and father turned Tom out doors I think they might have better business then to fight and quarrel all of the time but they may do as they like about that

Wal it is Sunday nite and it is a very bad nite for it rains and snows like the very devil

Wal I think that news is scarce up there by the looks of your letter but I am glad to get a letter if it is short Wal I can't think of much to write myself

We have got marching orders now but we may stay here to weeks yet but when they move away they will take us in to a fight I think but it may be that they won't

Wal this is Monday morning the snow is an inch deep and ~~ground~~ it is very cold here for this time of year

I can't think of any more to write now and I will close up write soon

From Harvey Earl

--Note--the father spoken of was Lewis Earl, our Great Grandfather. Tom was Harvey's brother. He had a large family and Wilson Milks said that he was killed by a train.

March the 26 1863

Stafford Corthouse

Dear Brother I got your letter last nite and was glad to hear from you and to hear that you was well I got them stamps I am well as comon if I should live to git back I will make the thing all rite with you I hant got eny nuse to write but I will try to write a few lines to let you know what I think of this war I think this will be a bludy sumer and I think that will make the thing will end I hop se we hant moved yet and I dont know when we shal we hav had orders to hav 60 rounds of cattredgs we hant thad to cary onley 40 rounds that is a nuf for a man to carey when we git our lode on it makes a muels lod

Wal rite soon

From Harve Earl

Camp "John Manley," 154th Reg't N.Y. Vol., 1st Brigade, 2d Division, 11th Corps, Army
Potomac

Near Stafford C. H., Va., 1863. (This heading was printed on the stationary he wrote the letter on)

April the 12 1863

Dear brother I thought I would write a few lines to you to let you know that I am alive and well and I hope those few lines will find you all well I got a letter from you last friday nite I was glad to hear from you and to hear that you was well

this is a nice day it makes me home sike but that wont do eny good to bo home sike the frogs sings hear and hav for fore weeks I think we shal move before long but I don't know which way

Wal Alfred you hant told me what you was a going to do this sumer I want you to rite all of the nuse that is a going what do they say about drafting now I hope they will draft and end this thing up this sumer for I dont want to stay heer another winter for this is a hard place to winter if you don't belive that cum down and try it for your self I don't want you to think that I want you to ~~think that~~ cum down hear for I dont want you to by no meanes for 2 out of a famley is a nuf I think Wal we went out and see old Abe the other day he was hear and revewed our Corps Jenrel Haurd is in Comand of this Corps now in Sigel place he ant as smart a looking man as Sigel is he hant got but one arme he got it shot of the batel of fair oks he led the old 64 into batel ther

Wal I cant think of eny more to write now So good by giv my love to All

From Harvey Earl

May the 12 1863 Stafford Corthouse

Dear brother and sister I thought I would write a few lines to you to let you know that I am a live and well but a little sore on my leg that wont amount to much

I hav got a little time and I will try and tell you a little about the fite our brigade left this camp the 15 of april and went to keles ford we stade ther a bout to weeks and we had to go on picket evry other day and then we had to put down the pontons bridges the nite that the arney crosed the river and then we had to wate for the arney to cros it and then we had to gard the bageg train thru to whare we had the fite we marched 21 miles in one day had 8 days rshens but the rebs got them and all the rest of the thing that I had in my knapsak that pare of soks you may charge to the rebs they got them i think for I throd them evry thing a way and the balls cum round my head like hale sone and the meen was a falling on all sids of me I hope I shant see a nother such a time it ant a very plesent place to be in they hav gon ovr the rver to day after the wounded men the story is heer that they burnt the ded up for they could not git them undr ground

Harmen Fisher is among the misin I dont know whether the was kild or not

Wal I cant write eny more now So good by for this time

Giv my lov to all to alive a sphell

May the 23 1863

Stafford Corthouse

Dear brother I recived your letter last nite and was very glad to hear from you and to hear that you was well your letter found me well all but my leg hant got well yet

I hant got much nuse to write this time for ther ant much going on but I know one thing that is that this is a warm day for this time of year

The regment had gon out on revue I don eny duty since we hav been in this camp for I ~~hav~~hav had a sore leg

Wal Alfred what do you think of this war do you think that it will end this sumer you had not hurd that this regment was 9 month men the boys sum of ~~th~~ them thinks that we be but I dont think that is so but I hope that is so for I hav seen a nuf of this niger war you don't know eny thing a bout what a solder has to go thru they sufer in camp and then they take them in to a slotter yards and then they hafto stand ther chance with the rebs mabe you think that I am making this out to be a hard place for a man if you think that it ant you ask bill when he gits home

Wal you must writ write me a good long letter

From Harvey Earl

June the 10 1863

Dear father and sister I thought I would try and write a few lines to you to let you know that I am well and I hope those few lines will find you all well my leg has got better and I do duty ~~on~~ now the wether is very warm hear now

I got that letter with them stamps in it if I should live to get home I will make that all right with you we hav ben uder marching orders for the last weak but we hav not moved yet it is very still times hear now ther ant but few papers cums to camp Wal Alfred what do you think of this war do you think it will end this year I don't think that it will end in 2 years the head men dont want it to stop for they make muney very fast and esy

Wal ther ant much to write this time why don't tip write sum I will write a few lines to rachel

Write soon

From Harvey

June the 10 1863 Stafford Corthouse

Dear aunt I will try and write a few lines to you to let you know that I hav not forgaten you yet I an well at present and I hope those few lines will find you all well the sore on my leg has got most well I do not know what did ale it but I know that the rebs did not hit me eny whar but they may next time the bals struck all round me and the meen fel on all sids of me it is warm wether and very dry they say that we shal hafto hav a fite before long but I think not in a weak or to

How does grandfather get along this sumer tell him that I should like to be ther to help him do his haying this sumer

Wal I cant write much ~~at~~ more now So good by

From harve

Giv my lov to all

You must excuse my short letter for I hav got to go out on picket and be out 3 dayes

Certificate of Exemption.

Cattaraugus County SS.

Alfred Earl of Lit Vally

Having been examined by me is found to be exempt from draft into the military service of the United States under the order of the President of the United States bearing date August 4th 1862, for 300,000 Militia.

Dated Nov 1 1862

W. Woodbury.

Commissioner for Catt. County

Transcription revised by Grace Wroblewski Summer 2024