

# The Love Letters of a Union Soldier

being the true correspondence  
of one Edgar Shannon,  
of Leon, New York, whose courtship  
of the girl he left behind  
was carried on by post  
while he was at the front, on  
furlough and from an army hospital  
— compiled and edited  
by John Sinclair, who also prepared  
the accompanying commentary



*"I will give you my undivided love. You may  
think, judging from the past that I cannot —  
but I can, as well and truly as any other person.  
Yours in love."*

— Edgar Shannon

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**Six Installments Starting Monday in**

The Jamestown  **SUN**

# The Love Letters Of a Union Soldier

## Prologue

A song titled "The Girl I Left Behind Me" was just beginning its journey into history as a song for soldiers when Edgar Shannon traveled the 20-odd miles to Jamestown from his home in Leon.

As a member of the 154th New York Volunteer Infantry, Shannon found himself in August, 1862, considering the sentiment incorporated in the song. Following the pattern filled by unnumbered soldiers before and since, the 20-year-old volunteer sat under a tree at the dusty recruiting camp at Jamestown and began the first of many letters to the girl he left behind him.

Except for having a little more education, Edgar Shannon was much like the other Northern boys who answered President Abraham Lincoln's call for more volunteers after the Union Army was repulsed in the battles around Richmond. Shannon was born and raised in the rural atmosphere of Western New York. He was familiar with the woods and streams and hamlets of Chautauqua and Cattaraugus Counties. He had a certain familiarity with Jamestown, the nearest community of any size, and an awkward nodding acquaintance with the city of Buffalo — which he thought was "too crowded."

Edgar Shannon was raised by his Uncle Lorenzo, a farmer with a solid reputation but a modest social standing. The girl he was leaving behind was far above him in both wealth and social position. Her name was Francelia Hunt, the daughter of Horatio N. Hunt, one of the area's more prominent citizens, now absent from the area while serving as a captain in the crack 64th New York Regiment. Francelia was attending a ladies' seminary — a "normal school" designed to turn out polished young women and — for those so inclined — school teachers.

Despite her eminence in society of the area, the relationship between Edgar Shannon and Francelia Hunt was relaxed. They had been neighbors for years, and had both belonged to a group of young people who found entertainment together in sleigh rides, song fests, sugar parties and camp meetings.

Any romantic by-play between Edgar and Francelia was out of the question, considering the prim manners of the day. But a soldier, even a new one needs to have "a girl he left behind him," even though he has only letters with which to maintain contact — letters which must be couched in the reserved language of the 1860's.

So Edgar Shannon began his correspondence with Francelia Hunt — or, as he called her, "Frant." A letter from Jamestown . . . a letter from Washington, which he labored over in an effort to make it so interesting it would guarantee a reply . . . and, finally, a third poignant missive from suburban Fairfax, Virginia, were written before he received an answer.

CAMP JAMES M. BROWN, JAMESTOWN,  
August 30, 1862  
Dear Frant,

I seat myself to commune with you through the medium of the pen, and as I think of you and the times that we have passed together I can hardly realize that I am going to war. God only knows things look dark at present, at least those things which concern our nation, but as for myself, I feel first rate.

We all got paid 25 dollars yesterday so now we can all have a spree if we wish. No, we will all be steady until we get home, and THEN we will raise heck.

Frant, I had my likeness taken four times last Saturday. I gave three to the family, and if you will give the one you've got to M.—, I will give you the other.

Write soon and tell me when you are going to school and where to direct your letters.

Yours truly,  
Edgar Shannon.

WASHINGTON, OCT. 12, 1862  
Dear Frant,

Here I am in Washington — a regular hog's nest. It is the meanest city I have seen since I started. I am sitting in sight of the Capitol — the place where men whom the people have chosen to make laws have wrangled and quarreled and tended to everything but their own business. They have brought on this war, taking the cream of our land to waste and pine away beneath a Southern sun.

This month of July, 1961, marks the 100th anniversary of the first major battle of the Civil War. The Battle of Bull Run and the other battles which followed brought thousands of men into new and strange surroundings—an environment and a way of life which most of them tried to picture in letters to their families and friends.

Through the gracious generosity of a friend, who prefers to remain anonymous, The Jamestown Sun has had access to a series of letters written by a young soldier from this area who was more successful than most soldiers in putting his observations down on paper.

Edgar Shannon was 20 years old when he joined the 154th New York Volunteers, recruited in Chautauqua and Cattaraugus Counties. The letters he wrote to 18-year-old Francelia Hunt, the girl he left behind in the hamlet of Leon, were love letters, despite the broad range of subjects they covered and the reserved style of their phrasing.

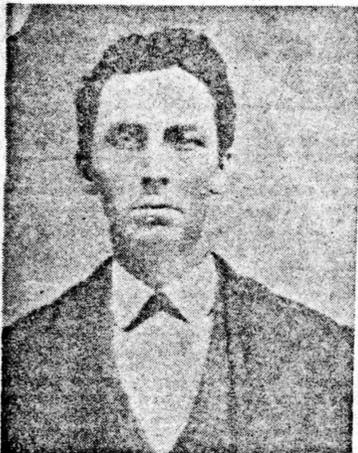
John Sinclair, Civil War columnist for The Jamestown Sun, has compiled and edited the letters, and written the commentary to this courtship of the Civil War.

I tell you, Frant, I have seen enough pale cheeks of many a poor boy caused by men in high places. But enough of this.

While I am writing, the Regiment is getting ready to march to Camp Seward, which is five miles from here.

We started from Jamestown last Monday, the 29th, at 6 o'clock in the evening and got to Elmira the next morning. We stayed there and got our equipment — gun, cartridge box, and cap box, along with a knapsack, haevr sack, canteen and all. I tell you what — it makes a load! But then, I can stand it if the rest can.

We started from Elmira Tuesday and got to Baltimore the next day. Then we had to sit right down in the dust until we started for Washington. Three of us got on the top of the railroad cars, put our overcoats and blankets on top of us and slept sound a good part of the night, but we were afraid of rolling off. The train stopped right in a big



EDGAR SHANNON — The only known photograph of Edgar Shannon is this tintype, taken by an itinerant photographer in Leon. It is used here through the courtesy of Shannon's grandson and namesake, Dr. Edgar Shannon Anderson, Curator of Useful Plants at the famed Missouri Botanical Gardens in St. Louis.

swamp, and they said that the 24th New York Regiment had been fired into and two of the men killed and that Rebels had torn up 3 or 6 rods of the track. I tell you what, — it made me feel rather curious for a few minutes there in the stillness of the night, in a country where the enemy are pretty thick — and me on top of a railroad car. But then the report proved to be false.

Frant, who do you think I have seen this morning? Captain H. N. Hunt. He is looking pretty well again. I guess you would have liked to be in my place. The 64th New York is near Harper's Ferry.

We shall cross the Potomac in about half an hour, so now, Miss Frant, goodbye.

Yours now as ever,  
Edgar Shannon.

FAIRFAX, OCTOBER 16, 1862  
Dear Frant,

Once more I seat myself to write to you, although I have got no answer to either of the last two letters I wrote. I wrote one in Jamestown and one in Washington, but as we are going out on picket duty in a day or two, I thought I would write now, as I might not get time out there. I want you to write every time you get a chance, for I tell you what — it does a fellow good to get a letter. The boys most all got one last night except me, and they were a tickled set. I have not had one since I left Jamestown.

We left Camp Seward last Sunday at noon, marched 10 miles and struck our tents for the night. It rained like split, but I slept good. We started the next morning at 6 o'clock and marched 7 miles to this place, making a total of 17 miles. With 70 pounds on a fellow's back, it makes quite a mark.

But what Godforsaken country to march through! No fences, no crops, no nothing but a few grinning blacks and worse-looking whites! We are on ground that was held by the Rebels last year.

Frant, I wish I could sit down and talk with you as we used to talk over the times which we have passed together. Oh Frant, if I were only down there in that school with you, couldn't I enjoy myself!

The other night, I was on guard. All around was still — no noise but the mules chawing hay, and now and then a guard calling for the Corporal. The moon shone bright, shedding a dim luster over every object — reminding me of many such pleasant nights that I had passed in Leon. My thought wandered back to scenes which are gone, never to return. Thoughts of my dear friend Frant came into my mind unawares, and before I knew it, my eyes were about half full of tears.

Yours truly,  
Edgar.

Private Shannon was no longer a raw recruit when he received the first answer to his letters. After more than two months in the Army he had learned the rudiments of drill and was learning that the routine order followed a pattern of "hurry-up-and-wait."

While his correspondence was progressing, the young soldier was not averse to taking a sly poke at "young gentlemen" who disdained to go to war — but whose attendance could be counted on at dances.

THOROUGFARE GAP, NOVEMBER 11, 1862  
Dear Frant,

I was very glad to hear from you and to hear that you was well, but I was surprised to learn that you had not read any of my letters. They must have been directed wrong, or else they have got stopped on the way.

Now we will commence new. Frant, I want you to write once or twice a week, and I will do the same. It is a great pleasure for me to receive and to answer letters from my friends. Our privileges for writing are rather poor. All we have for a bench is our knee and a lead pencil for a pen.

We did our first foraging near Fairfax. We drove in ten head of cattle, and had them shot and cooking in less than an hour. At Haymarket, we just walked right in to the houses and helped ourselves to what we liked best. How the geese, hens, turkeys, sheep, hogs and cattle came into camp!

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Commentary by John Sinclair Compiled and Edited by John Sinclair

# The Love Letters Of a Union Soldier

## Part Two

The Eleventh Corps, to which the 154th New York belonged had been so badly mauled during the Shenandoah Valley campaign that it had been unable to participate in the Battle of Antietam. Instead, it had stayed near Washington, recovering.

During the relative quiet after Antietam, Edgar Shannon and his companions saw a new commander take over the Army of the Potomac . . . Maj. Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside.

After protesting his fitness for promotion, Burnside dutifully started moving the Army of the Potomac toward its destination. The soldiers of the Eleventh Corps were alerted to join the main body at a history-steeped town on the Rappahannock River — Fredericksburg.

The letters Francelia Hunt received from Private Edgar Shannon in December, 1862, were different from those he wrote when he first joined the 154th New York Volunteer Infantry. Evidence of war's essential ugliness was close at hand when his regiment arrived at Fredericksburg, Va., a week after the Army of the Potomac had recoiled, bloody and bruised, from the sunken road and stone wall fronting Marye's Heights.

After a battle in which the Federal forces suffered more than 12,000 casualties attacking the strongly-posted Confederate Army, the Northerners were now camped north of the Rappahannock River. While they warily watched the enemy and waited for General Burnside's next move, Edgar Shannon began to think and feel and write like a campaigner.

FREDERICKSBURG, DECEMBER 21, 1862

Dear Frant,

It has been so long since I have read a letter or answered one that I don't know who I wrote to last, or who wrote to me.

It is about noon, and I have just washed up and cleaned and combed my hair. I'm going to be shaved when I finish this, so you see we are not wholly void of pride.

It is most all-fired cold here at present. I got up this morning and chopped some wood, built a nice fire and got some breakfast — which consisted of coffee, fresh beef and hardtack. After breakfast, I sat by the fire a spell, brushed up and got ready for company inspection.

I got my knapsack all packed when some of the boys said there was some cattle over the hill beyond our batteries. So I started after them. I got over even with a nice, fat two-year old, and I guess he was a Rebel, for he started into the woods, right towards the Rebs line.

I went after him and went clear to the river — beyond our pickets and within eight rods of the Rebel pickets, but I lost sight of my "game." I stood and looked at the river, wondering when I should cross it. As I stood there, I heard the brush go "crack" down to the left. But it was just our pickets going on inspection.

Well, Frant, we are as near to the Rebs as any of our Army. We lay behind a small hill and they can shell us if they want anytime. Our pickets talk with them and go over and eat with them. They say they don't want to kill us, but our officers.

I have just had a cold so I couldn't talk, but it is better now.

Yours truly,  
Edgar Shannon.

FREDERICKSBURG, DECEMBER 25, 1862

Dear Frant,

It is rather cold this morning, with a very thick fog. The sun sends forth NO bright rays to cheer the heart of the soldier as he goes to his daily duties — or watches with eagerness for some little signs of a return of peace — or listens to hear the dreaded boom of a cannon off towards the Rebels.

This is Christmas, and when I contrast it with those I have passed at home, it creates a longing for old times and friends and I feel a kind of homesickness way down in the bottom of my soul. Still, I would not banish this feeling, for it opens the fountains of my better nature.

It does me good, sometimes, to think of old times. But then when I get a little down and think how foolish it is, I nerve myself up to the duties which devolve on me to act like a man and not play baby in this great conquest.

I guess I will change the subject, for you will

think I am getting homesick, and I am not in the least.

I was over to the 64th New York day before yesterday and I stayed all night and took breakfast with your father. I had a first-rate time, and I expect some of them over here today.

Well, Frant, I have just eaten my Christmas dinner of hardtack and sugar. Eat a chicken leg for me, Frant, and write soon.

Your friend,  
Edgar.

The month following the Battle of Fredericksburg was quiet enough to allow Shannon several visits with Captain Horatio N. Hunt. It allowed him ample time to suffer pangs of homesickness — no matter how he might deny being afflicted with the ailment.

The lazy routine of winter quarters was interrupted by the famous "Mud March." Burnside planned to march his troops up the north bank of the river, cross at several fords and then fall upon the left flank of the Army of Northern Virginia. A relentless rain that began shortly after the maneuver got underway bogged down the Union Army so completely that it could neither advance nor retreat. Private Shannon was not the only soldier to experience the back-breaking toil of "corduroying" a road — laying 12-foot lengths of tree limbs and trunks side by side to form a roadway atop the gummy Virginia mud.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, JANUARY 16, 1863

Dear Frant,

You said it has been four or five weeks since you have had any letters from me. They must have got lost or laid by, for I wrote one and sometimes two every week. I will keep track and number each letter from now on, and you do the same. Then we shall know if any get lost or not.

We have had quite a MARCH of late. Tuesday night, we were told to have three days rations in our haversacks and be ready to march at 2 o'clock in the morning. We marched until about 9 o'clock in the morning, stopped, rested and ate and then went to work building a corduroy road down to the river. We stayed until the next day and then had to march 9 miles back to camp. Oh, if it did not seem like home to get back to our tent!

While I have been writing this letter, the order has come to get three days rations ready and be ready to march at any moment. I think we shall go in the morning, but we may go tonight. I can give a guess where, however, I trust to a kind Providence that we shall all come out safe and return

home to enjoy the comforts and pleasures of peace once more.

You spoke about the cold weather. It has been very warm here thus far — the nicest winter I ever saw.

You have got a good lot of studies. I guess they will keep you busy. How I would like to be there to go to school! I may have a chance to go to school yet, and if I do, I believe I shall improve the time. You said you were studying music. It seems to me that music is the nicest study that a person can pursue, for there is nothing like music to soothe the soul. A schoolboy will stop his play to listen to it; the gambler will stop for a moment to think of youth and innocence; the soldier will hear it and think of dear ones at home.

Frant, I will send you some verses, a song rather. I wish I could send you the tune. When it is sung good, it is the nicest thing I ever heard.

Write soon. Write often.

From your ever true friend,  
Edgar S.

NEAR FALMOUTH, FEBRUARY 2, 1863

Dear Frant,

Again I take this old pen to commune with my old friend Frant. The old pen, I am afraid, will not wear like my old friend Frant, as it seems to be kind of "give out."

It is about four o'clock, and has been one of the nicest days I ever saw. It is as nigh like May at home as it can be.

You made a wish in your last letter that you could be at a Methodist prayer meeting. I think there was one here last night — or the next thing to one. They were singing hymns, at an rate.

Saturday, I got paid 25 dollars and 55 cents. I sent twenty home and kept the rest. Guess I'll have enough to buy a wife, time the war is over. I ought to have got 65 instead of 25 but I suppose it was good I got the 25 dollars.

I should have written this letter yesterday, but a lot of boys from the 64th New York were over and I had visitors all day. That's the way where one keeps home!

Frant, you must excuse this miserable, awful, poor, good-for-nothing letter, and I will certainly do better next time. I will write my letters with ink when I can after this.

From your true and faithful friend,  
Edgar S.

Edgar Shannon, in the days following the "Mud March" felt enough of the old campaigner to offer his views on strategy and tactics — and was surprisingly accurate in diagnosing a Federal shortcoming when he said the generals should "strike with all their force."

CAMP NEAR STAFFORD COURTHOUSE,  
FEBRUARY 9, 1863

Dear Frant,

You must excuse me for not writing sooner. As you see from the heading, we have changed our place of abode since I wrote last. We have had to march through mud and rain and build a new house with a fireplace in it, and it has kept us pretty busy.

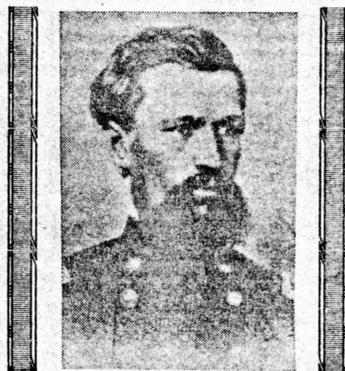
The report is that we have got to leave in two or three days on an expedition to Charleston, but we can tell nothing about it until we get started, so we do not worry about it at all. For my part, I can travel my three years out and fight three years more besides. But I want to to COUNT. Let our head men fight the Rebels, and not fight amongst themselves. I think that if our generals take the right course NOW, and move cautious and not let the Rebs get the start of them — and when they DO strike, strike with all their force, that this rebellion will soon be closed.

I was thinking this morning about how I would like to spend ONE pleasant Sunday at home once more. Oh, would it not be bliss to be free and happy again. I get a little downhearted sometimes when I think how I am sold out for three years, but I guess it will all come out all right.

I promised to write a better letter, but have failed. Write soon, and remember me as your true friend.

Edgar S.

More Tomorrow



GENERAL O. O. HOWARD, a one-armed, religious-minded officer, relieved General Franz Sigel as Commander of the Eleventh Corps. He was in command during the Battle of Chancellorsville. (Photo from Ernest J. Muzzy Collection.)

# The Love Letters Of a Union Soldier

## Part Three

A new commander was named to head the Army of the Potomac. Well-liked — but ineffectual — Burnside was superseded by Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker—called "Fighting Joe." Hooker was an admirable battle leader; his strength of character, however, was not sufficient for the task he was called upon to perform.

While General Hooker was repairing the shattered morale of the Union Army, Private Shannon found his spirits at an ebb. Perhaps it was the touch of fever he suffered, perhaps it was a phrase in one of Frant's letters he misconstrued. His sedate romance, at any rate, apparently was following a rocky course.

STAFFORD C.H., FEBRUARY 15, 1863

Dear Frant,

I received your letter last night and I was very glad to hear from my old friend and to receive renewed assurances that I am not forgotten by you. You said you wished I was there to tell you what to write just as you used to talk — just what you think.

Your speaking about going home almost makes me homesick, although I would rather be where you are now. Going to school, you are well situated to enjoy yourself. Still, I see you are longing for the time to come when you will return home. Thus it is with the human race. We are looking forward to something better, never contented with the present.

As I think of your returning home and think of the last month you spent at home, it seems as if there was more connected with that last month than with all the rest of my life. Why is it there are times which are always remembered and sink in, as the rest fade into obscurity?

You told me to write as soon as I could — if I "felt so disposed." Now, lady, I don't want you to talk so anymore! You know I will write as often as I can — that is, as often as it is proper. I assure you it is a pleasure for me to write to you and to have your answers in return. But it is my prayer that the time may soon come when we shall not have to write and then wait for an answer for so long.

This is from your ever true friend,

Edgar Shannon.

CAMP AT STAFFORD, MARCH 9, 1863.

Dear Frant,

I received yours of the 3rd. I was pleased to get a letter, for it has been so long since I had one that I began to think I had not got a friend outside of the 154th Regiment. Perhaps I have not, for friends are fickle and change with every breath.

Frant, I have every reason to believe that you were once my best friend, and trust that you still remain the same. But, Frant, your last letter was awful cold. That is, it seemed so to me after I had read it. I thought perhaps I was unwell, so I would go to sleep and read it again in the morning. I felt first rate this morning, but when I read your letter it made me colder than a bear. Why was it? You said you was cross, and I guess it was catching.

I have been sick about two weeks with a touch of the fever. I guess I lost about 30 pounds, but I am well now and will soon get well again. I did not get a letter while I was sick and the time seemed awful long.

How I would like to go to a sugar party — and have you there, too! Wouldn't we have fun? How

we could talk over old times, and then we should not misunderstand each other as we do when writing. I don't wonder we get out of patience. We write a few words and then wait a month for an answer. But then I must content myself with things as they are, as that is the best way there is at present.

Most all of the regiment have gone out on pickets for three days. It is awful dull here in camp. If it keeps as pleasant as it is now, we shall have to get to work. Then it will be more exciting — if not as safe.

Frant, if I have written anything which you think is not all right, forgive me, and remember this is from your true friend,

EDGAR SHANNON.

Happy with the improvement in his personal life, Edgar went into considerable detail in drawing a picture of camp life, and made his only mention of seeing President Lincoln.

CAMP JOHN MANLEY, MARCH 24, 1863.

Dear Frant,

How glad I was to get your letter! I had been looking for it for two or three days and wondering what you would write. Would you answer in the same cold tone that characterized my letter? But no — it was in that same kind, good tone which always showed itself in your letters. And Frant, how GLAD I am that you DID write so! It showed me that I was in the wrong and not you. Frant, I ask you to excuse me and forget it all, and I will do the same. I was sorry I sent it after it was gone, but it was too late.

I was just eating when they brought in my letter. You may guess I did not eat anymore till I read your letter and knew what was in it. It seemed as if a great load fell off from me all at once. Frant, that was the best letter I ever had!

I am glad you learned that you are going to school another term. I believe it will be for your future happiness.



GENERAL JOSEPH HOOKER — tabbed "Fighting Joe" by contemporary newspapermen—commanded the Army of the Potomac when it was defeated by Lee's forces at Chancellorsville.

(Photo from Ernest J. Muzzy Collection.)

You say your father is going to make you a short visit. I should like to go home with him. I guess I might have had a ten day furlough if I had wanted it, but I could not have turned around more than twice, so I thought it would not pay. Anyway, I guess we will be home in a few months, for I think we shall whip them in the next three months. I think the next place we shall make a move will be to cross the river at Fredericksburg, and I feel confident that we shall drive them from their strong position. It will cost a good many noble lives, but it must be done.

Excuse all mistakes, and write as soon as you can. From your ever true friend,

EDGAR SHANNON.

NEAR STAFFORD C. H. APRIL 10, 1863

DEAR FRANT,

We are having so many grand reviews and so much drilling, I don't get time to write or anything else. We had a Grand Review yesterday for General Howard and staff. He is our Major General now. He has taken command and Sigel has gone West. I believe I'd rather have Sigel.

Today we had a Grand Review at which the President, General Hooker and all the division generals and brigadiers in the Corps were present. It was a grand show — the grandest I have seen since I was in Virginia. We were told to get ready, then marched two miles to the place where the review was to be held. Here we were lined up, one line behind the other, a brigade in a line. We had just got formed and stacked our guns when every one started looking toward the station. It was a body of Lancers that attracted their attention. They were gayly dressed and mounted on fine horses, each man bearing a lance about 10 feet long with a little red flag on it.

Next was the roar of the cannon, followed by 25 more in honor of the President. All eyes were strained to get a glimpse of that chap, Lincoln. He soon came in sight, followed by about 500 generals and officers and cavalry. (There were three women with him, and they looked a great deal better to me than he did.) After they rode around and showed themselves to US, we had to walk along and show ourselves to THEM. There was a little boy about as big as Dutch Shannon who rode by the side of the President.

After we had passed in review, we marched back to camp and sat down to a dinner of boiled pork and hardtack. I made up my mind that all their pomp was only an outside show—only a mask to cover the miseries, the anguish and tears which are caused by war.

This writing paper was a present from John Manley. He gave everyone in the regiment two sheets because we named the camp after him. I must close this letter and get some wood.

From your true friend,

Edgar Shannon.

Review and parades were colorful and entertaining, but the Army of the Potomac was ready to move. Hidden behind the veil of the future was an appointment for that rejuvenated army at a spot called Chancellorsville. Edgar Shannon, too, had an appointment—with a Rebel bullet.

MORE TOMORROW

Compiled and Edited by John Sinclair

Commentary by John Sinclair

# The Love Letters Of a Union Soldier

## Part Four

When Edgar Shannon was wounded at Chancellorsville, he had no way of knowing that the Eleventh Corps, to which he belonged, would come in for much undeserved opprobrium.

Because the Eleventh Corps contained a large contingent of German immigrants, the men were often lumped together as "the Dutchmen." Americans in 1882 had little regard for tolerance, and foreigners were often chosen as scapegoats. So it was with the Eleventh Corps. Although it was mostly made up of outfits like the 154th New York — not Germans — poor luck and poor commanding gave it a bad reputation.

Private Shannon felt only pride in his regiment; indeed, a close investigation of the assembled evidence shows the 154th Regiment and others in their Brigade fought fiercely before the massed troops of Stonewall Jackson overwhelmed them. The tactical daring of the Confederates and poor generalship on the part of the Federals share responsibility for the rout of the Eleventh Corps, not any lack of valor on the part of the soldiers on the battle line.

A wound which was not serious, pleasant surroundings and a relief from the tedium of Army life should have been all Edgar Shannon desired. However, a new enemy kept him from the enjoyment of his surroundings. Although he denied it vehemently, it is obvious that jealousy created a situation which the young soldier found most unpleasant.

CARVER HOSPITAL, MAY 10, 1863

Dear Frant,

Having an opportunity, I hasten to answer your letter — which I received when we were on the ground where we had the battle.

Well, I might as well begin and tell you the news. One week ago last Tuesday night we crossed the Rappahannock and laid down the pontoons. Then we went back to camp. The next day we crossed and lay at Kelly's Ford 24 hours, then we crossed the Rapidan and marched to the front, making 25 miles in all in one day.

The next day we rested. At evening the Rebs shelled us, but did no damage. Saturday, we built breastworks. There was heavy fighting on our left, and at 6 p.m., as we were watching the Rebs, they came right in on our back. We had to just jump over on the other side of our works, and then how we piled up the Rebs! The cannons on our right fired triple charges of grape and canister, and I could see the Rebs fly 30 feet high. But they came up in such solid columns that after we fired eight or ten rounds, we had to retreat or be taken prisoner — and we did not fancy the latter much.

When we had the order to retreat, we ran like split! How the balls did zip by our ears! I bet there was one hundred went within a foot of me going the ten rods back to the woods. Here, we formed again — and again had to retreat. The first time we retreated, I got a wound in my right arm between the elbow and the shoulder. The first four or five days it was awfully lame. I could hardly touch it. It is getting better now and it will be all right in one or two weeks.

Our regiment was cut up awfully. There are 261 killed, wounded and missing out of 500 who went in.

In the hottest of the fight I thought of you, Frant. You have been my guardian angel since I came into the Army, and I hope you will continue to give me that same affection you always have. As ever your true and affectionate friend,

Edgar

P.S. I have not heard from the 64th, only that they were in the fight.

CARVER HOSPITAL, MAY 12, 1863

Dear Frant,

The other day when I wrote you, my thoughts were all over Creation. The exciting scenes of the battlefield, together with the march and being dragged around from one hospital to another, unwell from my exposure and wound had me muddled.

Now I have got all rested up and slept up. Everything here is nice — good, soft beds such as I had not seen in many a month, and vittles as

good as need be. My wound is getting well very fast, and I shall soon be able to pay back those Rebs for the slight hit they gave me.

Everything in the hospital is as pleasant as can be, but I cannot content myself. I should not have come as it was if the captain and doctor had not both sent me. I suppose they did not want me bothering around when I could do nothing.

All I have to do is sit or lay and read. I help the nurse wait on the other boys — anything I can do with one hand, like bring water and wet their wounds.

I forgot to tell you before how to direct your letters — to Carver Hospital, Washington, D.C.

I have not heard from the 64th, only that they were cut up badly. I think Cattaraugus has reason to be proud of her soldiers in the 64th and 154th.

Write soon. Yours truly,

Edgar.

CARVER HOSPITAL, MAY 24, 1863

Dear Frant,

I received your letter in due time, and was very glad to hear from you. You see, Frant, I can tell who my friends are. They don't forget to write. I got a letter from the folks at Leon yesterday — the first letter from home in six weeks. They say "Come home." I told them to look for me when I come, which would probably be after the war was over.

Our doctor said he would give me a chance to go before the board to get a furlough in two or three days. I may get one and I may not; I shant cry whichever way it is. I might as well be home for thirty or forty days as to be here.

I have not heard from the regiment lately. There were 23 missing and wounded out of our company, and only 18 left in Company "K."

I went down to the city the other day and visited the Capitol, the Smithsonian Institute and the Patent Office. They are grand beyond anything I ever conceived. They are all there is to Washington that amounts to much.

Write soon, and remember me as your ever-true friend,

Edgar

P.S. R. E. Fenton's clerk was up here, and he franked three or four letters for me.

CARVER HOSPITAL, JUNE 10, 1863

Dear Frant,

When I got done reading your other letter my hand shook like a leaf. There were some things in it which did not set at all. It was not about your receiving the young "gentleman," for I do not care a row of dimes about that. You spoke as though you thought I was jealous, but you mistake my nature if you judge it thus. I would have you receive them and go in company as much as you should wish. For I think it is a part of every person's education. It is your duty to learn the ways of every society into which you are thrown.

Frant, this kind of writing must not continue longer. Our letters must be in better tone or we must drop it altogether. If we can continue as we have until here lately, I should be very happy to place that confidence in you which I always have. I have held you as my best friend and the truest one I had on earth. For my part, I am willing to let the dead past bury its dead and recall it never again.

Perhaps I am to blame. If I am, forgive me and I will try to do better hereafter. I shall wait anxiously for an answer to this Frant. I wish you to take this in kindness. Some of the terms may seem harsh, but they are meant in kindness. Forget the past and be friends once more. Excuse bad writing and all mistakes.

This is from one who wishes as ever to be your true friend,

Edgar

Oh, how I would like one hour's visit with you! It is such blind business, writing!!

CARVER HOSPITAL, JUNE 17, 1863

Dear Frant,

It was indeed with pleasure that I received your kind letter. What a load it took off my mind! I did not know HOW you would answer my letter, but I am glad you did not answer it as I did yours. It always was my fault if I got displeased and carried it too far, even with my old friends. I hope I may conquer myself of this bad habit, for it is very wrong. I have learned a good lesson — one which will last me as long as life itself shall last.

When I got your letter, I had just got a pass to go down to the city. I went to the Capital and Patent Office, got a very nice dinner and tired myself out.

What a dull place this hospital is. They won't keep me here much longer. All that keeps me quiet is I am expecting a furlough. I was before the Board last Friday. I don't know for certain, but I think I will get one. If I get one it will be for thirty days or more. If I get it, I shall have it about the 21st, so I shall be at home the Fourth.

If you go home after the term is out, you will be there a week or two before I come away. I hope you may, but if you do not, I had thought of starting back two or three days early and going by way of Buffalo and New York City to see you. But this is counting my chickens before they are hatched. I will not lay anymore plans until I get a furlough.

Everybody is excited here about the Rebs invading Pennsylvania. I think they will be as fast to get out as they were to get in. The rumor is that our forces have beaten them on the old Bull Run battlefield. I hope it is so, but fear it is false.

Frant, I am sorry things are as they are. I wish you to forget all that has passed, and let us be friends again. Should our friendship be broken, I would never trust a human being again.

Edgar.

With his mind eased and the optimism of youth restored, Edgar Shannon prepared to return to Western New York for the first time in almost a year. The picture his imagination drew for him was pleasant — a soldier, honorably wounded in battle, returning to the scenes of earlier days . . . to friends and relatives and, perhaps, to the girl he left behind him.

More Tomorrow

Commentary by John Sinclair



MONUMENT AND CROSS — The granite monument above was erected at Chancellorsville by the State of Virginia as a tribute to "Stonewall" Jackson. The small wooden cross near it marks the grave of an unknown Union soldier killed in the Battle of Chancellorsville.

Photo by John Sinclair.

Compiled and Edited by John Sinclair

# The Love Letters Of a Union Soldier

## Part Five

All good things must end, and Edgar Shannon's furlough—even though he missed seeing *Francelia Hunt*—was a good thing. Recovered from his wound and refreshed, he returned to the Army of the Potomac.

The Federal troops, following the holocaust at Gettysburg, were engaged in maneuvering back and forth across Virginia's countryside in watchful opposition to the veterans under General Robert E. Lee.

Private Shannon, who had seen more of America in one year than he had seen in his entire life, was destined to take an even longer journey—one which would find him fighting alongside troops commanded by two "Western" generals—Ulysses S. Grant and William Tecumseh Sherman.

LEON, JULY 11, 1863  
Dear Frant,

I got home all right. I left Washington Friday night and got home Sunday morning at five, all tucked out completely. I went to meeting and Sunday School and saw the folks. I kept awake until the preacher got done praying, and that was the last I knew until they got up to sing. That woke me up, and it startled me. I did not know where I was for half a minute.

It is pleasant to meet old friends again, and it seems like living once more to be at home and to be free—to not have to get up when the bugle blows or the drum beats.

Frant, how I wish you were home! It don't look right to go by your place and not hear any music or see you there. I was in there the other day and it made me think of old times. The table is there with the books and likenesses, the bureau stands in the corner as of old, that old lounge is in the same place: In fact, everything looks as it used to, but one thing is lacking—you were not there.

The folks got a letter from your father last night. He is well. Our regiment is cut up awfully from the battle of Gettysburg. I think I shall soon be with it again. The boys are almost all gone and I know it will be lonesome at first, but there is my place.

Frant, if you can come home before the 26th, I wish you would, but perhaps it is not possible. If you answer this as soon as you get it, I will get your letter before I leave.

I must close, for this sheet is almost full. Goodbye from your true friend,

Edgar Shannon.

CARVER HOSPITAL, JULY 29, 1863  
Dear Frant,

I got here safe and sound after stopping at Elmira until Monday night. While at Elmira, I learned that you had been there and had started for home Saturday morning. Oh, Frant, if only I had known, I would have given a great deal. I got there Friday night at 12 o'clock, stayed at the Soldier's Home until morning and then went to the Hospital. It was hard to be so near and not see each other.

I had a very nice time while at home, but I missed you very much. When I got on the cars, oh, how lonely I felt. Such a dreadful uncertainty lay before me . . . where would I be a year from this time? . . . when should I meet with my old friends again? Then I thought of my regiment, and how it was scattered—not hardly a boy that I knew left. I saw my country, struggling for life. I saw slaveholders and ambitious men, trying to trample underfoot the liberty of the people and to destroy that government under which our nation prospered beyond anything ever known before.

Then the darkness cleared away. I saw my duty plain before me, and resolved to perform it though it cost me my life. . . . May God help me and preserve me to see the rebellious states come back under the old Stars and Stripes and all be united.

Frant, when I wrote about taking those girls to the meeting on the Fourth, I did not think you would be jealous. When I wrote that letter, I thought I would tell you before someone else did.

Remember me as your true friend,

Edgar.

Write soon please.

ALEXANDRIA, SEPTEMBER 24, 1863  
Dear Frant,

How much more pleasant it would be if we could converse as we used to! I could say more in half an hour than I can write in a week. I am always glad to get a letter from you. I write to a good many people to get all the news and pass the time, but it makes no matter how many letters I get, yours are read first and with the most pleasure.

Your letters are a great help to me here to help me do right. This is the worst place I have been in—there are the most ways to tempt me to do wrong. But when I am tempted, I think "What would Frant say?" I TRY to do right, and trust that I am as good at least as when I left home. Would I were a good deal better; there is need of it.

How good it would be to go up to the camp meetings and fairs—but I cannot, so I will content myself. I cannot say I hate this kind of life. There is a great deal of excitement, and much to please—something new every day.

I went three miles beyond Culpepper yesterday. For sixty miles the whole distance is a picture of desolation. The meadows and cornfields are covered with bushes, the fences are all burned, barns torn down. The chimneys of the houses are all that's left to mark the places of once-happy homes. Hardly an inhabitant is to be seen. In going this distance, we pass places which have been the scene of many bloody battles—Fairfax, Manassas, Bull Run, Bealeton, Brandy Station, Warrenton . . .

Kilpatrick's cavalry passed us last night. They had a heavy fight with the Rebs yesterday, across the Rapidan. The troops have orders to have eight days ration ready to carry and seven to draw with the teams. I think there will be a fight soon—a large one, too.

And now, Frant, goodbye. Write soon, and believe me to be as ever your true friend,

Edgar.

When General James Longstreet's hard-hitting soldiers from the Army of Northern Virginia joined



SOLDIER MONUMENT—A watchful figure of a Union soldier stands atop the impressive Civil War monument erected by the people of Leon, New York, as a tribute to those who served in the War Between the States. The monument is located near the grave of Edgar Shannon in the Leon Cemetery. —Photo by John Sinclair

Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee in corraling the Union Army in Chattanooga after the Battle of Chickamauga, the Eleventh and Twelfth Corps of the Army of the Potomac were sent to reinforce Grant's new command. So, Edgar Shannon became a participant in the actions which included the colorful "Battle Above the Clouds"—Lookout Mountain—and Missionary Ridge.

BRIDGEPORT, ALA. OCTOBER 23, 1863  
Dearest Frant,

Here I am, away down in Old Alabama—and I never felt better in my life, for all we had a hard journey and a long one. We were on the cars six days and nights and came about 15-hundred miles.

Riding on the cars is the hardest work I ever done. My face got so dirty it would stay in any shape I put it. If I wanted to keep awake, all I had to do was push my eyes open and they would stay until I closed them.

We received a hearty welcome all along the route by the citizens. The little children would straddle the fence and hurrah and swing their flags. The girls would swing handkerchiefs, bonnets and aprons and throw a kiss at us. The women in Ohio and Indiana brought out their sweet cakes, biscuits and butter, hot coffee and apples by the bushel. The young ladies were not too bashful, but got acquainted right along. You could see our boys making love to them at every station. They would put their addresses on their cakes, and in books they gave us. We put ours on hardtack and gave it to them.

Well, we are a good ways from home, and in one of the most southern states. This is as poor-looking country as I have seen. There are no crops at all, only a few earthworks and forts, old slashings and woods. We get our water out of the Tennessee River to wash and cook with. Yesterday there was more than a thousand in swimming and washing clothes. I went about 15 rods in the river to fill my canteens. I dare not drink much water, and I make it into coffee. Some of our boys have got the fever again, shaking like leaves with the cold when it is warm enough to roast.

I will send this now. I can't write at all this morning. I ain't got any thoughts at all. Write soon. Goodbye from your true friend,

Edgar.

LOOKOUT VALLEY, NOVEMBER 4, 1863  
Dear Frant,

We got mail yesterday, and I was much pleased to get two letters from you. It was the first time I had had a letter in six weeks and you may guess I felt well.

We were at Bridgeport until October 27, building corduroy road and getting out railroad ties. The morning of the 27th we got our breakfast, packed up our things by firelight and marched. We went 17 miles, drove out a regiment and a company of Rebs and staid all night in their camp. They left about half an hour before we got there.

They had us up the next morning before dawn. About 10 o'clock, we came in sight of Lookout Mountain and saw the smoke of the cannon—although we could hear no report. We were ordered to load our guns.

We marched along until about two, all quiet, when a sharp firing broke out right ahead and 5 or 6 bullets came zzzzing over our heads and a cavalryman came back wounded. Our faces paled a little, for we expected a big fight—but there was no "run" in us. Every man was ready; we were deployed left and right as skirmishers—that is, one line, with each man five paces from the other.

We skirmished about half a mile and then were ordered to charge. The way the Rebs got out of our way was fun! The fighting was mostly on the right wing of the regiment; our company is the left company.

Our faces were red enough when we stopped, for we went nearly on a dog trot with knapsack, canteen, haversack, gun and ammunition. We then formed in column and started along the road. They began to shell us from Lookout, but they hurt no one—only quickened our pace a little. One shell

Continued on Next Page

Compiled and Edited by John Sinclair

Commentary by John Sinclair

# The Love Letters Of a Union Soldier

Edgar Shannon DID give Francelia Hunt his "undivided love."

Only a few days after the young soldier threw caution and decorum to the winds and declared his love, his status in life improved. In March, 1864, Shannon was promoted to First Sergeant of his company. In April, he was commissioned a First Lieutenant.

Lt. Shannon served with Sherman's army in the famous "March to the Sea" after the fall of Atlanta, and served as quartermaster for his regiment in the plunge through the Carolinas.

Francelia Hunt and Edgar Shannon were married after the war. Hard work and a winning personality gained the young veteran a toehold in the business world and he became one of the more successful merchants of the area.

Shannon was well liked by his fellow townsmen. He represented the Town of Leon on the Board of Supervisors for five terms. In 1876, Cattaraugus County sent him to the State Legislature as its Assemblyman.

Leon gave a hero's burial to Edgar Shannon after his untimely death in 1882. In the cemetery just outside the hamlet is a tall, impressive granite column marked "Shannon." At its side are two modest markers. One is engraved "Frant," the other "Edgar."

As life in the Army goes, the months after Lookout Mountain were easy ones for young Shannon. He had increased responsibilities, but he also had more time for reflection.

Spring comes early in the South. While General Sherman was perfecting the plans which would take the Army to Atlanta and the March to the Sea, the thoughts of Edgar Shannon turned more and more to the gentler pursuits.

For more than a year and a half, he had maintained the decorum and reserve demanded by propriety. Letters signed "your true friend" gave no indication of the depth or tenor of his feelings, but Spring—and a growing sense of confidence—changed the picture.

Edgar Shannon's last letter was signed with a pen—with words from his heart.

KELLEY'S FERRY, JANUARY 26, 1864

Dear Frant,

I received your letter last Saturday night and should have answered it sooner, but we had orders Sunday night to march at 8 o'clock the next morning to relieve the 101st Illinois Regiment.

Our duty is to unload boats and guard the stores here. We have full rations, draw soft bread two days, flour 1 day out of 5 and the other rations in good quantities. This is the roughest place I ever saw, though, all rocks and now and then homely women.

You seemed to be in a melancholy mood when you wrote. You said you cared for nobody and nobody cared for you. Now, Frant, you **KNOW** better. You have friends that are good and true—one at least and I know plenty who are your friends.

To be sure, these are gloomy times. But if we do our duty, each one in his place, we shall be gay and happy still—in spite of Rebs or Copperheads.

I guess by your talk there is a good deal said about you at home. If so, it is caused by their jealousy, because you have a stronger hold upon my affections than they.

You thought my letters read very down. It must be a mistake if they do. I never was more cheerful than since I got back to the regiment—never so full of fun, never so fat and never healthier.

I have written plain—perhaps some things I

## Afterword

ought not. If so, they are mistakes of the head and not the heart. We might as well be plain, tell each other our thoughts as keep them to ourselves. Let us be friend whate'er betide.

Give my love to all my friends. Good night.

Edgar.

CHATTANOOGA, NOVEMBER 30, 1863

Dear Frant,

There is thirty of our regiment here today. We came here with 91 prisoners yesterday, leaving our regiment Friday morning at Parker's Gap—about 25 miles from here towards Atlanta.

Our regiment lost only six in the fight at Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge. They were wounded—none of them dangerously. We were right in the midst of it for three days.

The enemy had the best position I ever saw. They held a range of hills all around and our men had to charge up them to drive the Rebs off. Our loss is comparatively small, considering the amount of fighting there was done. Our victory is complete. Chattanooga is full of prisoners; they are coming in all the time. The report is that Hooker took one thousand prisoners last night.

The Sanitary Commission has a large room on purpose for the soldiers to write home, so I stopped in here and went to writing. They have to draw wood about two miles, so they don't keep much fire—and I'm colder than a barn.

Excuse this short letter. I will be better next time.

From your friend,

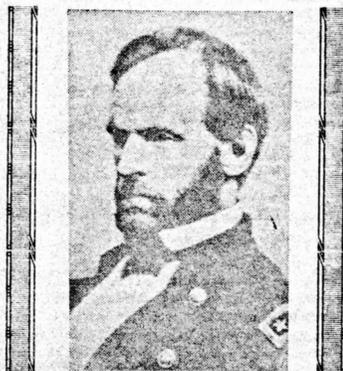
Edgar Shannon.

LOOKOUT VALLEY, FEBRUARY 13, 1864

My dear friend,

Today is Sunday and everything is calm and quiet. Everything seems like peace—my mind along with the rest. I wish I could always feel thus, but it is not my nature. A soldier is generally what they would call at home "rough." He does not plaster over his actions as smooth as some of those at home, but at heart he is apt to be the better of the two; what he says, you can depend on.

Frant, let them not influence you. Take a straightforward course and keep it. Remember, you are responsible for your acts. Pleasure is not the object of this life, but a recreation from sterner duties. (Perhaps I am giving too much advice; if



MARCHING THROUGH GEORGIA—General William T. Sherman was the commander of the Eleventh Corps which fought from "Atlanta to the Sea."—(Photo from Ernest J. Muzzy Collection.)

so, excuse it.) I feel an interest for you which I feel for no other. I like fun and nonsense as well as anyone, but to have only that spoils the whole.

Now for the news: The Rebs, they say, have got the blues. I guess they have, the way they desert. The report is we are going to get paid in a day or two. I hope we shall, for then I'll get a new hat. I have one with about 70 holes in the top of it.

I got a pass yesterday and went to the cave in Lookout Mountain. In there, just at the entrance, stands a rough headboard on which is inscribed the following: "An unknown woman, a victim of Rebel cruelty." Some Ohio troops found and buried her.

As I looked at it, I thought how the women of this country must suffer and I prayed this war might close. But there has got to be more fighting, more blood spilt ere peace shall again return. The South are straining every nerve to fill their armies. I think when the Spring campaign opens they will have as large an army as ever they had at any one time and there will be bloody fighting. About the results, I have not a doubt—we shall conquer them though it takes ten years.

The reason I speak of this in the papers all talk so favorably. They think we are going to have peace right away. I can't see it; I wish I could.

I have been shaved and had my hair cut today. I let my mustache remain. I'm going to let it grow; perhaps you won't know me when I get home!

Frant, I must leave you. It is about as hard to stop writing as it used to be to go home sometimes. I guess it is chore-time, so I will bid you goodbye. I remain your true friend.

Edgar.

LOOKOUT VALLEY, FEBRUARY 22, 1863

Dear Frant,

Your welcome letter lies on the desk before me a little paper with a few marks upon it, yet what a power it possesses! It takes me back again to those happy times which we passed together. Again I am with you, listening to the music of the melodeon or your voice.

But there goes a bugle, so I guess I'm in the army yet. How the time flies; it seems as though Sunday came every other day lately.

My duty is very easy. All I have to do is make a few details each day. The rest of the time passes cooking, mending, writing letters and reading—mostly stories and "Casey's Tactics." The weather is beautiful, just like Indian Summer. I should like to live here in time of peace.

There is a prospect of our staying here some time. I think things look very favorable at present. Sherman's move is going to make the Rebs tremble. I think its object is to take Mobile, and make it a base of supplies. It will be a shorter route than this long line of railroad, besides depriving them of a large amount of supplies. I think next Fall will find this weary war nearly—if not quite—finished. I hope so, for this life—even with nothing to do—is no life for a man to live. I would rather be busy, have something to do and live to some purpose besides shooting some miserable Reb.

This is Washington's Birthday. Tomorrow is my birthday; I shall be 22—and no whiskers yet! About four years ago now I came down to your house to a party. Do you remember?

Yours as ever,

Edgar.

LOOKOUT VALLEY, FEBRUARY 29, 1864

Dearest Frant,

With what pleasure it would be to spend the evening with you and sit by your side and talk over what has passed since last we met. It would take some time; I have got a good deal to say.

I am all alone tonight, and oh! how pleasant it feels. It is so seldom I am alone here that I prize such moments greatly, for then I can think over, undisturbed, the pleasures of the past and the happiness I passed with you. How time magnifies the pleasures of the past! As the space of time

Continued on Next Page

Commentary by John Sinclair

Compiled and Edited by John Sinclair

## Congressional Record -- Good Reading

By GEORGE DIXON

WASHINGTON — I can't understand why the Congressional Record doesn't catch on and become our most avidly read publication. It has everything: conflict — love — mystery — sex. It also contains some of the world's most unconscious — and unconscionable — humor.

Take, for example, the unconscious jab that Senator Frank Carlson of Kansas took at the intelligence of Americans in a recent issue. Commenting on proposals by Senator John F. Williams of Delaware to change the Internal Revenue Code, Senator Carlson said:

"I wish to commend the distinguished Senator from Delaware for coming forward with a depreciation program that is so simple that the people of the United States can understand it."

In another issue of the fascinating publication, Rep. Brent Spence of Kentucky revealed that \$140 million has been lost somewhere. The Treasury can't account for it. This \$140 million disappeared, no one seems to know where, but nevertheless the Government has to pay interest of \$10,000 a day on it.

Rep. Spence, who is chairman of the House Banking and Currency Committee, said the lost, strayed or stolen fortune is in old currency, which has a tendency to disappear faster the older it gets.

The account made me glad once again that we don't keep our house the way the Government keeps its. I would be quite provoked with my wife if she couldn't account for \$140 million. In fact, I wouldn't be jovial and lighthearted about it if she lost any old currency at all, including a buffalo nickel.

Still another issue of the Congressional Record contains column after column of praise for Senator Margaret Chase Smith of Maine because she showed up for her one thousandth consecutive roll call vote.

The eulogies made this feat sound more praiseworthy than being the millionth person to cross a

bridge. Mrs. Smith was hailed as being the only Senator, of any age or sex, who ever made 1,000 consecutive roll call votes—and this despite the fact that 26 Senators have held office longer than she has, and six more just as long.

I would be the last to detract from the glories of the senatorial lady, but I've showed up — usually accidentally — for a lot of Senate roll call votes myself, and I would say that four out of every five were waste of anybody's time.

The Senate clangs those confounded bells at the slightest provocation, and often no provocation at all. Most Senators have a spy planted in the chamber who phones to head them off if the matter to be voted upon is of no consequence. A veteran Senator confided to me the other day that he estimates he has saved a couple of years of his time by not answering trivial roll calls.

This old-timer said a Senator could fritter away much of his career by answering quorum calls alone.

He said that many quorum calls were sounded merely because some senatorial windbag craved an audience to hear him rant. The windjammer would suggest the absence of a quorum — one more than half the 100 Senators — and such a suggestion must not be ignored.

A freshman Senator, who boasted it took him less than ten days to learn to skip most roll call votes, said that Mrs. Smith must have run her shapely legs off this month.

"On June 8," he recounted, "we had fourteen roll call votes on one housing bill alone. Senators kept offering amendments, and amendments to amendments. I made just one of the fourteen votes and hid out for the rest, but Margaret Smith made 'em all. We repeated our respective performances a week later on the aid-to-education bill. There were sixteen roll call votes on it."

I don't see why every one isn't captivated by the Congressional Record. It's all I can do to put it down.

## Profiles in Science

By PATRICK and GETZE



CHARLES H. BEST  
FREDERICK G. BANTING

Diabetes is an incurable disease, affecting millions of people. Many of its victims do not realize they have the disease until it almost runs its course.

Now, however, diabetics can live practically normal lives in length and activity, thanks to the perseverance of two great Canadian scientists, Charles H. Best (pictured at left) and Sir Frederick G. Banting, discoverers of insulin.

Insulin is not a cure for diabetes but has made it possible for victims to live comfortably with the disease.

The presence of a mysterious substance in the pancreas gland was first guessed as early as the 1880's when two German scientists, Minkowski and Minkowski, showed that removal of the gland caused death in dogs.

They surmised that the gland secreted a hormone that governs the rate at which the carbohydrates or sugar was used by the body as fuel.

In 1909, Sir E. S. Schafer named this substance insulin, from the Latin word for island. It had been shown by then that insulin is the substance manufactured by groups of cells in the pancreas called the "islets of Langerhans."

Two Scotsmen, Rennie and Fraser, set out in the early years of this century to help diabetics by feeding them the pancreas glands of animals. It didn't work because digestive juices destroyed the hormone. They then tried injections, but this treatment failed because impurities set up reactions. But Rennie and Fraser, within a few experiments of discovering insulin.

This great accomplishment was reserved for the Canadian team of the third team to study the subject.

In 1921 Banting and Best began their now famous investigation at the University of Toronto. They succeeded in isolating insulin in 1922 but it took many months of work after that before they were able to solve the vitally important question of what dosages should be used for both safety's sake and effectiveness.

Banting shared the Nobel Prize for medicine in 1923 with Macleod, a University of Toronto professor who had worked in Aberdeen with Rennie and Fraser and who had helped Banting and Best.

Banting shared his half of the prize money with Best. "I gave it to him, always," he said.

Banting, who was knighted in 1934, was killed in a Newfoundland airplane crash in 1941. Best became professor of physiology at the University of Toronto and director of the famed Jackson laboratory. He had been honored by many governments.

Reading: Macleod and Campbell, "Insulin"; Thomas and Thomas, "Living Biographies."  
NEXT WEEK: Albert Einstein, the genius of geniuses.

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## The Civil War Almanac



June 30, 1861

The Jamestown Sun observes the Centennial of America's epic struggle with a diary of events taking place during the tragic years of conflict. Here are the happenings that made news in the Nation—and in Chautauque County—in 1861. Here, too, is a backward look from the vantage point of today at some of the people, places and events mentioned.

—Compiled and Edited by John Sinclair

### National Happenings

A special election has been held in Kentucky to fill Congressional seats in 10 districts. The pro-Union candidate was elected in nine of the contests, while the remaining seat was won by a "neutralist."

The total vote in the state was: Union, 92,460; States Rights, 37,700.

New York troops have been involved in two skirmishes with Confederate forces.

A detachment of the 71st Militia aboard a U.S. war vessel in the Potomac River, made an attack upon Matthias Point, Va. One company of the 9th Infantry skirmished at Baker Lee's, Va. Neither action involved any casualties.

### Being of Interest to Chautauque County

Congressman Reuben E. Fenton has left for Washington. The Chautauque County legislator will

join other senators and congressmen at the special session of Congress, which convenes July 4.

S. B. Brown has been appointed postmaster at Ashville. He replaces former postmaster Daniel Williams.

### In Retrospect

Kentucky, like Missouri, was a prize sought by both the North and the South. The combined population of the two states was more than two million—almost one-fifth of the total population of the Confederacy.

Kentucky sent men to fight in both armies, although more of them fought for the North than the South. That Kentucky was less troubled with guerrillas and bushwhackers than Missouri is credited to the more moderate stand taken by both Union and Confederate leaders.

By coincidence, both the Northern and Southern presidents, Max Fabert Anterson, the officer in charge at the opening of the Civil War, and Gen. Richard Taylor, whose surrender ended Confederate resistance east of the Mississippi, were natives of Kentucky.



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