

Campaigning with the First Minnesota

A Civil War Diary

Edited by Hazel C. Wolf

[THE PRESENT installment brings to a close Isaac Lyman Taylor's Civil War diary, sections of which have appeared in this magazine throughout 1944. The entries that follow were written in the third and last of the little leather-bound volumes in which the young soldier recorded his experiences while serving with Company E of the First Minnesota Volunteer Infantry. About half of the pages remain blank. Taylor penned his last entry near Gettysburg in the early dawn of July 2, 1863, the day of a battle in which his regiment played the decisive role. The charge of the First Minnesota in the late afternoon is believed to have turned the tide in favor of the Union, but it resulted in what was once described as the "heaviest loss known in the records of modern warfare." More than two hundred men of the First Minnesota were killed or wounded in the charge at Gettysburg; only forty-seven went through the ordeal unscathed. Among those who fell was the writer of this diary. Ed.]

Diary No. 3

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

Please forward this diary to J. H. Taylor, Prairie City, McDonough Co. Ill.

Respectfully yours

ISAAC L. TAYLOR

Co. E, 1st Regt. Minn. Vols.

FALMOUTH, VA., April 28th. 1863

1863

Wed. [April] 15 Commenced raining about twelve o'clock last night & continues to storm violently till late in P.M. when the storm abates for a time Raining this evening. This storm will probably delay "Joe's" contemplated movement. This reminds us of the storm

that ended Burnside's career. Providence never fails to weep over a movement of the Army of the Potomac & the soldier never fails to be ungrateful for such sympathy. I send my diary, up to this date, to cousin Dency E. Keyes, Prairie City.

Thur. [April] 16. Quite pleasant in A.M.; lowery in P.M. Cool drying wind. On camp guard. Studying Geology.

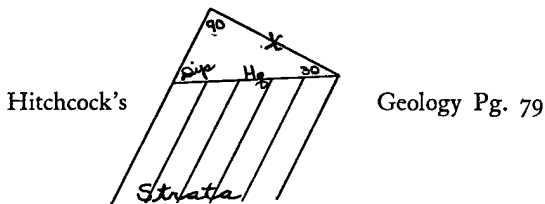
Fri. [April] 17. High clouds — quite pleasant Matt Standish, Q.M. Com'y Sergt., gets "tightly slight," damns Q.M. [Francis] Bassen [*Baasen*] & is put under arrest

Sat. [April] 18. Clear, warm day. Matt Standish has "resigned" & is ordered back to the ranks. Gen. Fogliardi of Switzerland is around taking a peep at the Army of the Potomac

Sun. [April] 19. Clear, warm day. Chaplin Canwell delivers a sermon in A.M. & lecture on "Time," in P.M.

Mon [April] 20. Lowery & drizzly. On picket. Peach trees along the river are in full bloom

Tues. [April] 21. Cool & cloudy. Relieved at 10 A.M. Ex Lieut. James H. Shepl[e]y is in camp.¹⁷



Wed. [April] 22. Warm pleasant day though somewhat cloudy. Raining at 9 P.M. The Rebels have abandoned the siege of Washington N.C.¹⁸ Col. Morgan leaves on sick furlough.

Thur. [April] 23. Very rainy. Studying geology as usual. Doble takes a lump of rock salt down to the Chaplin's tent to get him to tell what kind of a rock it is. The preacher not being at home our investment yields a less per cent of fun than we anticipated.

Fri. [April] 24. Very rainy. The ram "Queen of the West" has been recaptured in Grand Lake, La. by Gen. Banks forces.¹⁹

¹⁷ After serving as a second lieutenant with Company E, Shepley became a first lieutenant in Company G of the First Minnesota in July, 1862. He served until January, 1863, when he resigned. *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars*, 1: 56, 59.

¹⁸ Union re-enforcements from New Berne raised the siege, which had been in progress since March 30, on April 15. *Official Records*, series 1, vol. 18, p. 210.

¹⁹ The "Queen of the West," which was originally a Union vessel, was captured in

Sat. [April] 25 Warm & clear. On picket. A member of 15th. Mass. is put under arrest for having three loaves of bread on his bayonet. Studying the *drift* of geology. On reserve in day time & on out post at night

Sun. [April] 26. Relieved at 10 A.M. Recd. of Maj. Henry L. King, U.S. P'y Master, per Lieut [David B.] Demerist [*Demerest*] \$52.00 The 7th. N.Y. (two year's men) start for home this morning, their term of enlistment having expired. I hear their hurraing before I come off picket. We get a good supply of wood from the shanties of the 7th. The "Negro mania" seems to be spreading rapidly in the Western army. Warm, clear day

Mon. [April] 27 Warm & pleasant though a little hazy in P.M. Chet Warren and W^m Law of 12th. Ill. Cavalry call on us this P.M. Chet stays with us over night. Troops moving. Extra picket of 55 men detailed from our Regt. after dark. I send three dollars to C. C. Cogswell, Washington, for postage stamps. Send my likeness to Sarah.

Tues. [April] 28. Cloudy & drizzly. Troops moving. The detail from our Regt. last night relieved the 14th. Conn. below Fredericksburg. Everything indicates a big row before many days. General inspection at 4 P.M. I recd. this book to day. Send twenty dollars by mail to J. H. Taylor, Prairie City, Ill.

Wed. [April] 29. Cloudy—some rain in P.M. We hear occasional cannonading down river. It is reported that Sedgwick's corps (6th) has crossed below.²⁰ I send a "specimen" to the Geological Society of Prairie City Academy. On camp guard.

Corps badges distributed to us.

Thur. [April] 30. Drizzling rain last night & this A.M. Partially clear in P.M. This afternoon & evening we see the flash of artillery just below Fredericksburg; the report is scarcely audible. We have orders to march tomorrow morning with eight day's rations. "Fighting Joe" says that the enemy is in such a position that he will be compelled to

February, 1863, in the Mississippi River campaign by the Confederates, who repaired and used it in their western operations. Upon being recaptured, it was destroyed. *Official Records*, series 1, vol. 15, p. 3, 297.

²⁰ This was part of a drive against Lee, who had occupied the heights of the Rappahannock back of Fredericksburg for a distance of about twenty-five miles above and below the city. Hooker began to send Union troops across the river on April 28, but the First Minnesota, which was encamped in direct view of the enemy, was ordered to remain inactive. Swinton, *Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac*, 270-275; *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 3:154-157, 161, 173-176; *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars*, 1:31; *History of the First Minnesota*, 285-287.

make a hasty retreat or come out & fight us on our own ground. "Joe", we'll do the best we can for you. Two balloons up; one above & the other below Fredericksburg.

Fri. [May] 1st. Reveille at 4 A.M. Dense fog this morning. A portion of the 34th. N.Y. stack their arms this morning & claim that their term of enlistment has expired. They are put under arrest. Cannonading commences up river about eleven A.M. & continues, with intervals, till about 8 P.M. Our troops are reported across the River at Kelly's Ford in heavy force. Since early this morning we have had every thing packed up ready for a march. It is reported that the Pa. Reserves are to relieve our Div. Fine warm day. Light clouds skirt the horizon. Clear starlight evening. Gen. Gibbon makes a speech to the 34th. N.Y. & they return to their "allegiance." The news boy reports "no more papers allowed to come to this army till further orders" Reading geology; pitching quoits &c.

Sat. [May] 2. At 7-15 A.M. the ball opens on the right & left. Go on picket at 8 A.M. Heavy musketry & artillery firing on the right in P.M. This P.M. Capt. [Elijah] Heyden [*Hayden*] of the 8th. Ohio calls at our picket support & gives a favorable account of affairs on the right. Fine pleasant day with some light flying clouds. A slight sprinkle about middle of P.M. Hazy this evening. Moon full & about 20° high at dark. Beautiful night.

Sun. [May] 3. At 2-15 A.M. our pickets are entirely withdrawn & we are ordered back to camp where we arrive just at day-break & find our Regt. gone. At daylight heavy firing commences in the vicinity of Fredericksburg.²¹ At six A.M. our picket squad leave camp, march down to the Lacy House, cross the Rappahannock on a pontoon bridge at the precise point where we crossed on the 11th. of Dec. last, & join our Regt. in the city.²² We then move up river across a level open field & halt just above Falmouth. During this movement seven of our Regt are wounded by shell from the enemy's batteries on the heights.

²¹ The fighting on May 2 had been in and near Chancellorsville. Sedgwick carried out orders to occupy Fredericksburg, seize Marye's Heights, and move out toward Chancellorsville to attack Lee's rear. On May 3 the two armies met at Salem Heights, between Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. Swinton, *Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac*, 296-299; *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 3:157-164, 176, 203-214; *History of the First Minnesota*, 287.

²² The Lacy House, better known as Chatham, is the ancestral home of Mrs. Robert E. Lee. It stands on the eastern heights of the Rappahannock opposite Fredericksburg. During the Rappahannock campaign it was used as headquarters for Union officers. John T. Goolrick, *Fredericksburg and the Cavalier Country*, 63-65 (Richmond, 1935); Alvin T. Embrey, *History of Fredericksburg*, 185-190 (Richmond, 1937).

The Rebs having weakened their line by extending it to correspond with our movement, [Hiram] Burnum's [*Burnham's*] "light division" of Sedgewick's Corps (6th.) storm the highths back of the city scattering the Secesh & capturing several cannon belonging to the "Washington Artillery".²³ This assault is made at eleven A.M. We immediately occupy the highths & after remaining a short time the two brigades of our Div. are ordered back to the city. The 1st Minn recrosses the river & goes into camp on the left bank. We are all in good spirits to night. Every thing appears favorable at this point & we hear that "Fighting Joe" has been equally successful on the right. Firing on the right commences quite early this morning & is pretty heavy during the day. We hear Sedgewick's guns beyond the highths this P.M.

127th. Pa. skedaddle, as usual

A detail of 100 men from our brigade cross the river to drive away the Secesh so that the pontoon bridge can be laid. After the highths are carried they skirmish some distance beyond, capture 80 prisoners, 2 wooden cannon & one stove-pipe gun. Fowler is wounded slightly by a musket ball

Mon. [May] 4. Early this morning the Secesh attack the highths in rear of Sedgewick's & occupy them without much resistance. Cos. B & E of 1st Minn. ordered to the lower bridge to arrest the tide of stragglers that begins to flow pretty freely across the river. Wagon train, wounded &c all taken across to the left bank of the river. A little skirmishing just back of the city during the day. At 5-30 P.M. our Regt. recross the river & the engineers "swing" the lower pontoon bridge. Soon after heavy musketry & artillery firing commences beyond the hills. We can see the flash of the guns very distinctly. I suppose Sedgewick is trying to retake the highths. Our batteries shell the enemy from the left bank of the river. The firing seems to recede indicating that Sedgewick is being driven.²⁴ At sunset one half of our Regt go on picket & at 10 P.M. the remainder move up to the Lacy House & occupy the rifle pits at the two upper bridges

Tues. [May] 5. The two remaining pontoon bridges are taken up

²³ The Light Division, which was organized on February 3, 1863, and was commanded by Hiram Burnham of the Sixth Maine Volunteer Infantry, consisted of five infantry regiments and a battery. The Washington Artillery was a Confederate reserve group stationed at Chancellorsville. *Official Records*, series 1, vol. 25, pt. 1, p. 790; vol. 51, pt. 1, p. 180-184.

²⁴ On May 4 the Confederates forced Sedgewick to withdraw his entire command across the Rappahannock. Swinton, *Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac*, 299.

early this morning after Dana's old brigade has recrossed. At 11 A.M. Mrs. Lee makes an assault on 4 young Secesh ladies & puts them all to flight. She says they can insult the "well ones" as much as they please but not the "wounded Union soldiers" when she is arround.²⁵ At 2 P.M. a thunder shower commences. Very heavy rain all the rest of P.M. At 3 P.M. we move down to the lower bridge. "Ball opens" on the right at 7-45 A.M. Not much cannonading throughout the day.

Wed. [May] 6. Stormy last night & considerable rain to day. At 2 P.M. we move our camp up & back from the river. This P.M. we see large columns of troops coming down river. It is reported that Hooker's army has all recrossed the river.²⁶

It seems we have not *exactly* whipped the Secesh *this time*. The 11th Army Corps is said to have behaved badly. I suppose we will have to recruit up a little & "try again."

Thur. [May] 7. Go on picket in front of the city at 8 A.M. Cloudy with some rain. Report says Pres. Lincoln, Sec'y Stanton & Gen. Halleck have arrived.²⁷ Secesh appear to be quite jubilant

Fri. [May] 8. Cloudy & some rain. Relieved at 9 A.M. Flag of truce crosses the river. I send a piece of petrified wood to Prof. D[avid] Branch of Prairie City Academy.

Sat. [May] 9. Clear warm day. We got the Washington Chronicle, the first newspaper we have seen since the army commenced to move. Flags of truce cross & recross the river. Our men ferry ambulances across the river on a pontoon raft & bring in a portion of Sedgwick's wounded. About 200 of them still lie on the field of Monday's fight. Studying geology.

Sun. [May] 10. Very warm day. Sermon in A.M. by chaplain. In P.M. we move our camp about 40 rods. We receive orders to keep 3 day's cooked rations on hands "till further orders." It seems that our

²⁵ This incident occurred at the Lacy House, which was being used as a hospital for Union soldiers. According to Marvin, a Mrs. Lee who was in charge of the hospital went after four Southern visitors with a board because they "insulted" the patients. Three left, but a fourth fought back, and the men cheered as Mrs. Lee chased her to the provost marshal's office, where she was put under arrest. Marvin Diary, May 5, 1863.

²⁶ Lee prepared for another assault on Hooker's position at Chancellorsville. His skirmishers, however, found that all Union forces had retired across the Rappahannock. Douglas S. Freeman, ed., *Lee's Dispatches*, 90 (New York, 1915); *Official Records*, series 1, vol. 25, pt. 1, p. 802; Swinton, *Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac*, 300.

²⁷ Stanton did not accompany Lincoln and Halleck when they conferred with Hooker on the Chancellorsville disaster. Welles, *Diary*, 1: 294; Williams, *Lincoln and the Radicals*, 284.

cavalry were very successful in their late raid in rear of the Rebel army²⁸

Mon. [May] 11 Clear & very warm. Gen. Sully is ordered to Minnesota to prosecute the war against the Indians. In his farewell address to the "1st Brig." Gen. Sully says, "I have the satisfaction of knowing that in all the battles I have fought with you, you have done your duty & never yielded an inch of ground to the enemy. You are a body of men which I have always been proud to command."

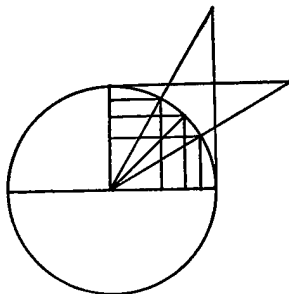
Tues. [May] 12. Clear, warm day. Poker playing is active. The boys are rejoicing over the "good news" — 127th. Pa. has *gone home*.^{*} Report says the N.Y. Herald is not allowed to come to the army We have had nothing but the Chronicle since the late fight & consequently get rather meager accounts of the affair. At dress parade Fighting Joe's "General Orders No 49" was read to us.²⁹ He "congratulates" the army on its "achievements of the last seven days" & adds "If it has not accomplished all that was expected, the reasons are well known to the army. It is sufficient to say they were of a character not to be foreseen or prevented by human sagacity or resources." He also says we captured five thousand prisoners, 7 pieces of artillery 15 colors & placed "hors du combat" eighteen thousand Rebels. We draw soft bread again

Wed. [May] 13. Clear & warm in AM. Clouds up & sprinkles a little in P.M. I finish reading Hitchcock's Geology. We hear that "Stonewall" Jackson died at 3-30 P.M. of the 10th. inst., from wounds recd. in the late battle. He had his left arm amputated. I send to Philp & Solomons "Metropolitan Book Store" 332 Pa. Avenue, Washington D.C. for Wood's Botany. "The decrease of the mean temperature from the equator towards the poles is nearly in the proportion of the cosines of latitude." Hitchcock's Geology, Pg. 306.

²⁸ The raid was led by George Stoneman. It is described in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 3:152.

^{*} Not gone [*author's note*].

²⁹ For the text of Hooker's general order, see *Official Records*, series 1, vol. 25, pt. 1, p. 171.



Thur. [May] 14. Cloudy. Thunder showers in P.M. The 127th. Pa. left the depot for home. As the train starts off the boys annoy them with such impudent questions as "Who run at Fredericksburg?" Col. Morehead of 106 Pa. is in command of our brigade. This evening Sergts. W^m L. Wakefield & P. H. Taylor are arrested & taken to the guard house for burning lights after "taps." Doble, Fowler & myself crawl out the back side of the tent & escape. We do not like the idea of being arrested for such *light* offenses. 100 Pdr. Parrott gun came in on the cars this morning. It is 13 feet long & 6 1/2 inch bore

Fri. [May] 15. Somewhat cloudy & a little cooler than usual. Co. drill in A.M. Col. Morgan & Cogswell are in camp. Two year's & nine month's men are being sent off on the cars every day. It is said there are sixty Regts. of this class in the Army of the Potomac To night the Rebs have dress parade just back of the city within easy range of our batteries

Sat. [May] 16. Cool, clear & pleasant. Grand foot race this P.M. for a purse of \$17.00 One man from each company enters the "lists." F, G & D win the three prizes. Two "contraband" races.

Attend prayer meeting this evening at Lacy House. Mrs. Harris.

Sun. [May] 17. Warm & fair. Towards night strong wind & some clouds On camp guard. Instructions "Walk your beat & salute officers according to their rank." Nine posts. Countersign at night, "Riga."

Mon. [May] 18. Pleasant day. Gen'l inspection in A.M. I read the history of the "S[i]oux War" as detailed in report of A[djutant] Gen'l [Oscar Malmros] of the State of Minn.⁸⁰ Vols. called for to fill up the batteries of 2^d Corps; those thus volunteering are merely "detached["] They get none of Co. E.

⁸⁰ A special section on "The Sioux War" appears in the *Annual Report of the Adjutant General to the Governor of Minnesota, 1863, 23-133* (St. Paul, 1863).

Tues. [May] 19. Clear & pleasant. Skirmish drill in A.M. Div. drill by Gen. Owens in P.M. Ordered to draw fatigue caps so as to look "putty," on parade. The officers of this army appear to think that *show* is the *grand object* while fighting is *merely incidental*. I think we have played boy long enough & if we can't act like men we might as well go home & see "ma."

Wed. [May] 20. Warm & pleasant. Co. & Div. drill. Hon. Clement L. Vallandigham has been sentenced by court martial to confinement "during the war" for "declaring disloyal sentiments & opinions" &c at Mount Vernon, Knox Co., Ohio "on or about the first day of May 1863."³¹ Gen. A. E. Burnside has selected Fort Warren, Boston Harbor, as the residence of this noted Copperhead. We await news from Grant's army in the rear of Vicksburg with much anxiety. We hope that Col. [Benjamin H.] Grierson's late raid will prevent to[o] great a concentration of Secesh forces.³²

Thur. [May] 21. Warm clear day. On fatigue burning rubbish about our old camps. The order to keep three days cooked rations on hand is revoked. Our Co. never obeyed the order.

Fri. [May] 22. Clear & warm. Co. & battalion drill as usual. Henry & I make a geological exploration & find fine examples of clayey "concretions" in sandstone. Yesterday while on "fatigue" I explored about ¼ of a mile of upturned strata containing "joints," numerous "veins of segregation" &c. Doble is ordered to black his shoes before going out to bury dead mules. Fatigue parties are strictly forbidden to wear "white hats" on such solemn oc[c]asions. I suppose that our Col. in issuing this order is actuated by respect for the dead & we receive it as evidence of a genuine regard for his fellows.

Sat. [May] 23. Clear & warm. Our brigade reviewed by Gen. Gibbons at 5 P.M.

Sun. [May] 24. Clear in A.M. Cloudy in P.M. Cool night. On camp guard. We get the news that Gen. Grant's army has defeated the rebels in several engagements taking large numbers of cannon & prisoners & that Vicksburg is now closely invested by our troops.³³

³¹ For an account of the Vallandigham affair, see the *Dictionary of American History*, 2:57.

³² Grierson's raid was at Baton Rouge on May 2. *Dictionary of American Biography*, 7:614.

³³ On May 22, after three disastrous assaults upon Vicksburg, Grant began his siege of the city. *Dictionary of American History*, 5:367.

Mon. [May] 25. Cloudy & cool. Vicksburg is reported in our possession. The army of the Potomac ought to have sent to the gallant Western boys, notes of victory from the Rappahannock

Tues. [May] 26. Cloudy & comfortably cool. We have brigade drill in P.M. close to the bank of the river. Secesh drill on opposite side within easy cannon range. Attend meeting at Lacy House this evening & listen to addresses from the Pres. [George H.] (Stewart [Stuart]) & other members of the "Christian Commission"⁸⁴

Wed. [May] 27. Warm, clear day. I receive Wood's Botany by mail. Vicksburg not ours at latest account.

Thur. [May] 28. Fair, warm day. On picket at Lacy House. Reading [Robert] Pollok's "Course of Time." This evening we hear sacred songs assending from prayer meetings on both sides of the Rappahannock. We hear that the Rebs are making some demonstrations up river.

Fri. [May] 29. Warm day. Somewhat cloudy in P.M. Relieved at 9 A.M. Our Div. reviewed in AM. by Gen. Hancock who, in absence of Gen. Couch, com'ds 2d. Corps.

Sat. [May] 30. Hap'y Reading Pollok & playing chess. We line the Co. street with young pines

Sun. [May] 31. Pleasant day—light clouds. Our brigade turned out under arms this morning. Unusual noises heard in Fredericksburg last night. Both Div. & Corps officer of the day, unusually drunk. Orders giving to the pickets to not allow the enemy to fish in the river with the seine. Reading Pollok & attending church. Three women at meeting at Lacy house this evening. Blessed relics of civilization!

Anniversary of battle of Fair Oaks

Mon. [June] 1st Very pleasant day—cool southern breeze. On picket. Flag of truce crosses the river. Reading Pollok. Our Regt. receive two months pay. Meeting as usual at Lacy House. Anniversary of 2^d day's battle of Fair Oaks

Tues. [June] 2^d Clear warm, dusty day. Div. drill in P.M. I send ten dollars, by mail, to J. H. Taylor Prairie City Ill.

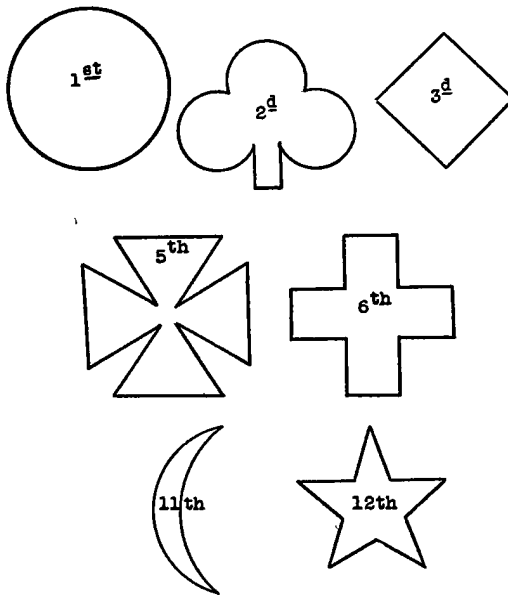
Wed. [June] 3. Fine day. Co. & Bat'ion drill as usual. Gen. David

⁸⁴ This commission of twelve members was set up late in 1861 by the Young Men's Christian Association. It worked with local army committees "to promote the spiritual and temporal welfare" of soldiers, distributed contributions, and made efforts to obtain quarters for religious activities. Lemuel Moss, *Annals of the United States Christian Commission*, 100-114, 376 (Philadelphia, 1868).

Hunter's letter to Jeff Davis threatening retaliation in case Negro soldiers of "Department of the South" ar[e] executed, is quite a spicy affair.⁸⁵

Thur. [June] 4. Warm fair day. The body of a Rebel Lieut. is taken across the river under flag of truce. Our brigade ordered under arms at 3 A.M. I write to Mrs. S. F. W. Branch.

Fri. [June] 5. Cloudy. Co. & Bat. drill. At 5 P.M. cannonading commences a short distance down river & continues an hour or more. Report says Sedgwick is crossing at the same place where he crossed before.⁸⁶ We have dress parade during the cannonade. I am sent out of the ranks for not having my cap on it being packed in my knapsack ready for a march. We are ordered to be ready to march with three day's rations.



Badges of the different infantry Corps of the Army of the Potomac. The 1st, 2^d, & 3^d Divisions of each Corps are distinguished by the colors

⁸⁵ The complete text of Hunter's letter is in *Official Records*, series 1, vol. 14, p. 448.

⁸⁶ Hooker ordered Sedgwick's corps to cross the Rappahannock in an effort to stop Lee in his invasion of the North, which began on June 3. Swinton, *Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac*, 309-312; *History of the First Minnesota*, 304.

red, white and blue. The 2^d Louisiana Regt. (colored) are reported to have behaved with great gallantry in the attack on Port Hudson on the 27th. ult., losing one half of their number in killed & wounded.

Sat. [June] 6. Fair day. Thunder showers towards night. On picket near Lacy House Rebel pickets a few rods farther from the river than usual. A portion of 6th. Corps still across the river below. We can see their line of battle from the Lacy House Our heavy battery (32 Pdrs.) sends an occasional shell over the river.

Sun. [June] 7. Just cloudy enough to make it pleasant. Relieved at 9 A.M. I take a walk down the river to where Sedgwick crossed night before last. I find [Albion] Howe's Div. across and the rest of the 6th. Corps encamped on this side. At 3 P.M. I attend Sunday School at Lacy House Each one read a verse of the 14th. Chap. of John & then Mrs. Harris proposed questions which were discussed. There were three ladies & one small girl present. I attend meeting at "Lacy House" this evening & witness the administration of the "Lords Supper." All who [" "] love the Lord" whether connected with any church or not, are invited. A Lieut. assists in passing the bread & wine. There are three lady communicants, Mrs. Harris, Mrs. Beck & Miss Brown

Mon. [June] 8. Fine day. I send Miss E.E.L. a "flower from the banks of the Rappahannock." Wilber F. Tomlinson, Co. I, 34th N.Y.V. takes supper with us. Our "repast" consists of tripe, soda crackers, mince pie, coffee and English walnuts. The 34th. start for home tomorrow This evening the officers of 2^d N.Y.S[tate] M[ilitia] (82^d Vols.) entertain the officers of the 34th. with "good things" to eat and drink. On my return from meeting this evening I hear them advocating "short speeches and big drinks."

Tues. [June] 9. Fair day. 1st Minn. forms in line this morning and presents arms & three cheers to the 34th. as they march past on their way to the depot. We then "break ranks," go down to the depot & give them some "lusty" parting cheers. The 34th. N.Y.V. joined our brigade at Camp Stone Md. in the autumn of 1861. They are *fighting men* & go home with the reputation of *good* soldiers. Two or three wagon loads of contrabands of all ages arrive at the depot this morning. They are a portion of those captured by [Hugh J.] Kilpatrick's cavalry on their return from Gloucester.³⁷ The Rebels throw a few shells at Sedg-

³⁷ The story of Kilpatrick's cavalry is related in James Moore, *Kilpatrick and Our Cavalry* (New York, 1865).

wicks troops and our batteries on this side the river. We have dress parade during the cannonade. We hear artillery firing up river.

Wed. [June] 10. Fine day. On picket. Finish reading Pollok's "Course of Time." We hear that a brisk cavalry fight took place yesterday at Rappahannock Station⁸⁸ A number of prisoners (Reb. Cav.) and wounded arrive this P.M. from up river. We hear considerable firing between the pickets on the other side the river. Attend meeting at Lacy House this evening. Doble detailed at Corps HQ's

Gen. [William] Harrow from the "Army of the Cumberland" assumed command of our Brig

Thurs. [June] 11. Relieved at 9 A.M. Warm day. Co. L. of our Regt. went across the river yesterday to pay their respects to the Rebel sharp-shooters who annoy Sedgwick's pickets. Two of them were wounded but they succeeded in "drying up" the picket firing except between the sharp-shooters

This evening we get orders to be ready to march at a moments notice. Gen. Couch is assigned to the command of a Department with Hd. Q'rs at Chambersburg, Pa. Gen. Hancock now commands the 2^d Corps.

Fri. [June] 12. Warm day. Studying Botany. Rebs throw a few shells at our balloon above Falmouth this morning causing it to seek the earth in "double-quick" time.

I go down river to get a view of things generally. Our troops are throwing up quite formidable earth works across the river & mounting a "pocket-piece" on this side. The Rebs show a strong front along the foot of the bluff and their out posts extend some distance into the plain. Rifles "pop" & big guns growl occasionally.

I learn that Mrs. Beck who leads the singing at the Lacy House meetings is a daughter of Associate Justice [Robert C.] Grier of the U.S. Supreme Court. Attend church at L H. to night. This evening the good people of Prairie City are having a "Grand Soiree" at the Academy.

Sat. [June] 13. Quite pleasant — some clouds — thunder shower at sunset. I am on reserve in day time, studying botany. The general packing up that is going on indicates that we shall not stay here a great while. A little cannonading below the city. The 100 P'dr is dismounted by the recoil at the first fire. I am one of a party sent to Falmouth this evening to ascertain if the enemy are signaling across the

⁸⁸ The details of the cavalry engagement of June 9 are to be found in Swinton, *Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac*, 312.

river. The suspicious lights prove not to be signals. Quite dark this evening.

Sun. [June] 14. Relieved at 9 A.M. & return to camp where I find every thing packed up ready for a move.³⁹ Heavy guns (32s) & Gov. stores all gone. I get [James O.] Richardson of Co. K. 1st Minn. to transport my Botany & Geology in a baggage wagon so as to lighten my knapsack. Sedgwick's troops recrossed the river last night. Cloudy.

Mon. [June] 15. As soon as it was dark last night we formed in line & marched N. Easterly on the "old telegraph road" leading to Alexandria. After marching a few miles we about face march back to the river and reestablish the picket line as formerly. Just before daylight we set out again on the "old telegraph road." At daylight we meet the 8 Pa. Cavalry. About 9 A.M. we arrive at Stafford Court House. After resting & taking a lunch we resume our march & at 2 P.M. cross Aquia Creek and encamp about a mile or two beyond.⁴⁰ It has been very warm & many cases of "sun-stroke" occur. I don't recollect of ever seeing so many "sun-struck" and "fagged out" on a march. I stand the march "first rate" Among those "fagged out" are many officers. Sedgwick's Corps is reported at Dumfries

Tues. [June] 16. Resume our march at 3 A.M. Ambulances crowded with the fruits of yesterday's march Arrive at Dumfries at 7 A.M. where we take breakfast and remain about three hours. The following is part of the inscription upon an old broken tombstone at this place erected to the memory of —— Blackburn who was born in 1731 & died 1752.

"This Sad Catastrophe His Death was attended by Many others who were whirled out of a Pleasure Boat into Potowmack River near the mouth of Quantico Creek and perished in the merciless waves."

Arrive at Occoquan River at 6-15 P.M. & go into camp on left bank. Forts & rifle pits here. We bathe in the river this evening. Report says [Robert H.] "Milroy is surrounded at Winchester. Harper's Ferry is invested & 30000 Rebels at Haggerstown, Md."⁴¹ I hope Lee will visit

³⁹ Hooker broke up his camps along the Rappahannock and began to move toward Washington on June 13, following and covering the Orange and Alexandria Railroad as he went. At the time Lee's line of battle extended for a hundred miles from Fredericksburg to the mouth of the Shenandoah. Swinton, *Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac*, 314-317.

⁴⁰ The route followed on the northward march of the First Minnesota to Gettysburg can be traced on maps in Adams, *Atlas of American History*, 123, 125, 128. See also Swinton, *Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac*, 325.

⁴¹ Milroy, who had charge of Union positions in the Shenandoah Valley, used Winchester as an advance post for the observation of Confederate movements and for guard-

those Pa. chaps that "resist the draft" The loss of our Corps yesterday from the effects of heat is reported at 180 men.

Upon the tombstone of W^m Dunlap, son of Alexander Dunlap is the following: "Dyed Dec. the 21st 1737." Dumfries can boast of 8 or ten old houses. A couple of small earth-works here.

Wed. [June] 17 Leave Occoquan at 8 A.M. At 0-30 P.M. arrive at Sangster's Station on the Orange & Alexandria R.R., cross the R.R. & camp in line of battle facing southward. This P.M. we hear firing in the direction of Aldie. Very warm day Ed. Lowell & Corpl. Staples are "sunstruck." Rebels are reported to be at Carlisle Pa. advancing on Harrisburg. Our destination is said to be Harper's Ferry. I hope Gen. Hooker will be able to make the rebels feel the *united* strength of the army of the Potomac. We draw fresh beef to night. Very warm day.

Thur. [June] 18. Very warm. Thunder shower towards night. I send my Geology & Botany to C. C. Cogswell Washington, D.C.

Fri. [June] 19. Rained considerably last night Cloudy day — raining this evening Break camp at 3-20 P.M. Arrive at Centerville (6 miles) at 6-30 P.M. Here we find [Alexander] Hays' Brig of Abercrombie's Div. of Heintzelman's (22^d) Corps.⁴² We witness the dress parade of 111 N.Y. They are rigged up in fancy style with dress coats & white gloves. Four ladies visit our camp to see the "sogers" cook supper

Sat. [June] 20 Cloudy in A.M. Rains some in P.M. 2^d Corps breaks camp at 12 M. & moves out on the Warrenton turnpike. Our Regt. having to march in rear of the wagon train, does not leave Centerville till 4 P.M. We cross Bull Run and the old battle ground and at eleven P.M. reach Gainesville on the Manassas Gap R.R. & bivouac for the night

Centerville is a little cluster of dilapidated houses on the crest of a long ridge either side of which is protected by small forts connected by rifle pits. Bull Run, at our point of crossing, is about 30 ft. wide. Gainesville is "a few old houses." This A.M. a crowd of 2^d Corps boys "rally" on the sutler of the 9th. Mass. battery at Centerville. Two or

ing the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. He was forced to evacuate on June 14, just as the Union garrison at Harpers Ferry withdrew to Maryland Heights. The Confederate forces then crossed the Potomac at Shepherdstown and Williamsport above Harpers Ferry and took a course directly north through Hagerstown. *Official Records*, series 1, vol. 27, pt. 1, p. 41-52, 766; *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 3: 246, 249.

⁴²Hays commanded a brigade of Silas Casey's Division, not of John Abercrombie's. *Official Records*, series 1, vol. 25, pt. 2, p. 30.

three companies of inf'ry and a section of artillery is ordered out to "quash" the affair. The boys "charge" on one piece & drag it down hill and then disperse.

Sun. [June] 21. Leave Gainesville at 7 A.M., pass through Haymarket & at 9-15 A.M. arrive at Thorofare Gap in the Bull Run Mountains. Haymarket was once a small town but is now almost a "pile without inhabitants." It was burned by our forces in Nov. last.⁴³ At 3 P.M. go on picket in rear of our forces. Capt. Muller has com'd of the detail of 100 men from 1st Minn. During the day we hear considerable cannonading beyond the Mts. We hear that the Rebel cavalry captured one company (34 men) of 8th Pa Cav. near Haymarket since we passed through that place.

Cloudy & some rain — clears off about 3 P.M.

Dis. from Gainesville to Tho'fare Gap is about 5 miles.

Mon. [June] 22. Fair day. Relieved about noon. This P.M. I "reconnoitre" about Thorofare Gap & find two old grist mills, a few dwelling houses, Broad Run, highly inclined strata, tortuous lamina, joints, cleavage planes, igneous rocks, bold "crags & peaks" & much magnificent scenery.

If I were a free man I should enjoy a whole day's ramble in this vicinity, but in these "exciting times" a soldier does not venture very far from camp for fear that something may turn up that requires his presence.

Tues. [June] 23. Fair day. A detail of about 200 men from 1st Minn. and 15th Mass. guard the supply train to Gainsville & return. Forage & provisions come as far as Gainesville by R.R. While at G. a portion of Gen. [Julius] Stahl's cavalry Div. arrive from the direction of New Baltimore.

1st Brig. ([Joseph T.] Copeland's) 5th. 6th. & 7th Mich.

2^d " 1st Mich. 2^d & 18th Pa.

In the 18th. Pa. I observed several *colored* troopers fully armed & equipped.

Wed. [June] 24. Pleasant — cloudy in P.M. We remain in camp.

Thurs [June] 25. Some skirmishing between our cavalry pickets &

⁴³ On November 4 and 5, 1862, federal troops under General Adolph von Steinwehr burned Haymarket. The action evidently was pure vandalism, since Von Steinwehr was stationed at Carter's Switch, two miles west of Haymarket, primarily in order to help protect McClellan on his return from the Maryland campaign. Virginia Writers' Program, *Prince William: The Story of Its People and Its Places*, 176 (*American Guide Series*—Manassas, Virginia, 1941); *Official Records*, series 1, vol. 19, pt. 2, p. 547.

Secesh cavalry this morning. Some infantry sent out to look after the Secesh troops who show themselves in a field at the base of the mountains. 1st Minn. ordered under arms at 5-45 A.M. At 9 A.M. our column forms along the south side Haymarket road & flankers are thrown out. After waiting an hour & a half for the wagon train to get under way we move on towards Haymarket covering the train.

At 12 M. as we approach Haymarket some cavalry appear on a bluff south of us & while the boys are earnestly arguing the question 'Are they our men'?, a white puff of smoke and the unearthly screech of a shell closes the debate & a unanimous decision is rendered in the Neg. Shells fly about our ears pretty lively for a short time but our batteries soon get into position & succeed in quelling the disturbance.

Several of our Div. are wounded & one of the 19th. Maine is killed by our own artillery & buried by the roadside We take the road leading directly north from Haymarket for several miles, thence easterly to Sudl[e]y Springs thence N. to Gum Spring where we arrive about 9 P.M. & bivouac for the night We are obliged to halt frequently to allow the train time to get out of the way. Our march today has been through a beautiful plain with gently undulating surface It seems to be better cultivated & better supplied with apple & peach orchards than most parts of Va. through which we have passed The prevailing timber is oak Cloudy all day & considerable rain in P.M.

Col Colville's horse shot from under him.

Fri. [June] 26. Leave Gum. Spring about 6 A.M. At 7-45 A.M. we halt at Mount Hope Church & rest about thirty minutes Here I talk with Isaac Wortman, a man 80 years of age who was born & raised in Loudon County Va. & is an old soldier of 1812. He was drafted & served eight months in the vicinity of Norfolk & [*blank in MS*] Mount Hope Ch. is nine miles from Leesburg. Between 11 & 12 o'clock we come in sight of the "old, familiar hills" of "My Maryland" & soon after halt on the brow of a hill overlooking Edward's Ferry & wait for troops & trains to cross. There are two pontoon bridges across the river, one above & the other below Goose Creek. Upper bridge is 1360 feet long & has 64 pontoons. Lower bridge, 66 pontoons.

At 10 P.M. we cross the lower bridge & at 11 P.M. bivouac a few miles from the Ferry. Gen. Lee's main force is reported to be in Md. & Pa. We shall probably pay our respects to him one of these days. Lowery drizzly day.

Sat. [June] 27. Leave camp about 4 P.M. Reach Poolville at 5-45 P.M., pass through Barnesville & at 11 P.M. halt for the night at the foot of Sugar Loaf Mt. Just as we get fairly asleep we are roused up to go on picket. The *mild* expressions that fall from the lips of the weary soldiers of the "veteran 1st" show that they are in no very amiable mood. The picket detail from 1st Minn. is 160 men.

Gov. [Andrew G.] Curtin of Pa has called for sixty thousand militia to repel invasion. Cloudy & drizzly

Sun. [June] 28. At 7-15 pickets are withdrawn & we move to the main road & wait for the Regt. to come up. 2^d Div. in rear of the Corps to day. Reach Urbana at 2-15 P.M. & at 4 P.M. encamp on the left bank of the Monocacy in view of the city of Frederick. This beautiful valley filled with troops, wagon trains & campfires presents a scene that may certainly be called picturesque.

The intelligence that "Fighting Joe" is superceded by Gen. Meade falls on us "like a wet blanket"⁴⁴

Mon. [June] 29. Leave camp at 7-45, cross & recross the Monocacy & at 2-20 P.M. reach the town of Liberty where we take a forty minutes rest. We pass through Johnsville, Muttontown &c & at 9 P.M. encamp at Uniontown. 2^d Div. forms the advance of the corps to day. We have marched thirty miles to day & find ourselves weary & foot-sore to night. Col. Colville is put under arrest for allowing his men to cross a creek on a log instead of fording.⁴⁵

The Union sentiment of "My Maryland" shines forth all along the road & shows itself in the shape of bread, butter, milk, pies cherries & smiles. We hear that a skirmish occur[r]ed at Westminster to day. W. is 7 miles from our present camp. Lowery & a little drizzling rain

Tues. [June] 30. Light showers & sunshine alternate Mustered for pay in A.M. In P.M. I go "out arround" to farm houses & get bread, butter, milk, eggs &c. A good Union lady gives me a quart of apple butter We live on the "top shelf" to day The boys are enthusiastic in

⁴⁴ When Meade took command, the Union forces had advanced to a point of concentration about Frederick, Maryland, and Confederate forces had reached Chambersburg, York, and Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Although Lee was planning to strike at Harrisburg to the north, the two armies met south of the Confederate lines at Gettysburg after Meade ordered his left wing projected toward that place. *Official Records*, series 1, vol. 27, pt. 2, p. 6; Swinton, *Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac*, 324-328; *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 3:270-272.

⁴⁵ The story of Colvill's arrest and of his restoration to his command just before the battle of Gettysburg is presented in the *History of the First Minnesota*, 349.

their admiration of Maryland generally & the nice bread and nice girls in particular.

Gen. Hancock issues an order complimenting us for our "vigorous exertions" in marching "full thirty miles" yesterday & saying that such a march was required "by the Maj. Gen. Com'g" on account of "urgent necessity." Brig. Gen. Harrow issues an order reprimanding chaplains, field officers & surgeons for stragling

Wed. [July] 1st The news that Gen. Meade has superceeded Gen. Hooker is confirmed I shall hope for the best but I don't like the idea of changing commanders on the eve of a battle Fowler says that "Hooker's kingdom has been divided & given to the Medes & Persians"

Leave camp at 7-35 A.M.

Pass through Smithville (on Big Pipe Creek) at 9-20 A.M. & at 11-15 A.M. halt near Taney Town. This is a small town named after Chief Justice Taney of the U.S. Supreme Court. Resume march at 3 P.M., pass through Taneytown & Harneytown & at 5-30 P.M just after passing through the latter place, a citizen tells us we are in Pa. At Taneytown we hear there has been fighting at Gettysburg to day At 8-45 P.M. we halt within a few miles of Gettysburg & bivouac for the night.

Thur. [July] 2^d Arroused at 3 A.M. & ordered to pack up & at 4 A.M. move towards the battle field where we arrive at 5-40 A.M. Order from Gen. Gibbon read to us in which he says this is to be the great battle of the war & that any soldier leaving the ranks without leave will be instantly put to death.

July 4th 1863 The owner of this Diary was killed by a shell about sunset July 2^d 1863 — his face was toward the enemy.⁴⁶ He is buried 350 paces W. of the road which passes N. & South by the houses of Jacob Hummelbaugh & John Fisher (colored) & about equal distance from each & a mile South of Gettysburg, Penn.⁴⁷ The following is inscribed on a board at his head:

⁴⁶ Isaac was killed in the famous charge of the First Minnesota late on July 2, when Hancock sacrificed Colvill's regiment in order to save time. Of the 262 officers and men who took part in the charge, 215 were killed or wounded. Among those wounded was Colvill. His removal from the field was supervised by Henry Taylor, who also led the retreat of the few survivors, according to the *Cass County Democrat* of December 26, 1907. For a dramatic account of the charge of the First Minnesota and a map of the Gettysburg battlefield, see Folwell, *Minnesota*, 2:308-311.

⁴⁷ Isaac's grave was in the vicinity of the present Utilities Building of the National Park Service. Since his remains have never been identified, he must be among the more than sixteen hundred unknown dead buried on the Gettysburg battlefield. The Hummelbaugh house is still standing. Carl M. Taute, superintendent of the Gettysburg National Cemetery, to the writer, January 8, 1943.



"I. L. TAYLOR
1st Minn. Vols."

Buried at 10 o'clock A.M. of July 3^d 1863.

By his brother

SERG^t P. H. TAYLOR
Co. "E" 1st Min. Vols.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ The clover leaf above Isaac's name was the insignia of the Second Corps, to which the First Minnesota belonged. See *ante*, p. 352. This record of the diarist's death and burial was evidently written by Henry. On the next page of the diary the following entry appears:

"Thurs [July] 2^d Aroused at 3. A.M. Fall in and move off at 4 A.M. (ie our Div.) Halt and order read at 5-40

"Skirmishing commences about 8 A.M. At 9-30 H. and I take a cup of coffe. At 3-15 P.M. our artillery opens on the left 3-40 our infantry advance across plain. Rebel battery opens at 4 P.M."

Since the handwriting is quite unlike Henry's, it seems likely that another survivor of the charge made this record in an effort to reconstruct the events of the fatal day for the Taylor family. On the last page of this diary volume, only about half of which was used, Isaac listed nineteen relatives and friends who were serving with the Union forces.



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