

The Diary of A Confederate Soldier: JAMES E. HALL

Edited by RUTH WOODS DAYTON

According to the James E. Hall diary's editor, Ruth Woods Dayton, granddaughter of author, Hall grew up on his father's farm on Elk Creek, Barbour County, near Philippi. He later attended school in Morgantown at the Monongalia Academy; what would later become West Virginia University. At the outbreak of hostilities, he returned home, where he joined the newly organized local militia company called The Barbour Greys. This company was mustered into the Confederate Army as Company H of the 31st Virginia Infantry, on 14 May 1861, and on this date, with the rank of Fourth Corporal, James E. Hall began his four years of war service.

The published version of Hall's diary which is cited here concludes on 28 April 1865; the selected entries that follow, however, only range from 10 September 1861 to 10 May 1862. These entries chronicle the regiments engagements at Cheat Mountain, Greenbrier River, Allegheny Mountain, and McDowell as well as dramatize the plight of the soldiers stationed in the mountainous western frontier of the Confederacy. As a unit in the ill-fated Army of the Northwest the the 31st Virginia Infantry Regiment served under a number of commanders. The Army of the Northwest was initially, if only briefly commanded by Richard S. Garnett. After Garnett's death it was led by Major General W.W. Loring with the 31st as unit in Henry R. Jackson's brigade; in November Jackson resigned and, then Colonel, and later Brigadier General Edward Johnson took the helm. In February 1862, partially as a result of the Jackson-Loring Incident the Army of the Northwest was formally disbanded. Johnson's forces which were stationed in the upper Shenandoah then became known as the Army of the Northwest; they were also refered to as the Army of the Allegheny. It was with these troops that Johnson would unite with "Stonewall" Jackson at McDowell to give Jackson his first victory in his famous Valley Campaign. With that victory, however, the Army of the Northwest ceased to exist as it was absorbed into Jackson's Army of the Valley when Johnson was wounded and could no longer command; it is with the Battle of McDowell these selected entries from Hall's diary conclude.

The Diary begins in May 1861 with that all too familiar tone:

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I have volunteered in the Confederate Army. Having just returned from a distant school, and the bright anticipations of a brilliant future,

I can not fully visualize the stern realities of war. Hardships, heretofore and even now unknown, will evidently follow every camp occupant, and scenes of carnage and death await a soldier's soliloquy. Be it so. We will go farther, and consider our lives as a small offering for our native land! May God avert the danger which now so innocently threatens her.

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Early this morning our commander Capt. A.G. Reger, informed us to leave at 12 the same day. When we left we knew we were bound for Beverly, to meet at that place a train of ammunition, arms, etc. and guard them from thence to Philippi. Our reception in Beverly was very cordial. Bouquets were thrown before us by fairy hands, and aged citizens came to welcome us. Next morning a command of 700 men came from eastern counties and were bound for Grafton, Va. Our company joined the same command and started for Philippi. ...

This naive and noble attitude begin to sour with the Cheat Mountain fiasco.

Sept. 10 ... We have no news from our men who left us yesterday. They are however on Cheat Mountain a few miles south of the Pass. Our artillery, comprising about 8 guns, with one rifle piece, have orders to march this evening with the remainder of Col Johnson's command. We do not know where they are going, but we can form I think, very correct opinions.

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Sept. 12, 1861. The detachment that left here yesterday with our artillery, went as we supposed to the mountains. We were momentarily expecting to hear the roar of guns. We have already heard a few shots, probably from some picket post of the enemy. What should we do if we should sustain a defeat! I have no fears however, for our success.

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Sept. 13. Friday. The detachment under Col. Rust returned this evening. Their provisions were exhausted. They brought in several prisoners, and had obtained the road in the rear of the enemy-- cutting off all communication. Heavy firing was heard from Gen. Lee's command.

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Sept. 14 ... The expedition under Col. Rust that returned last night, stated that the Pass on the mountain that is occupied by the Yankees, is almost impregnable. They were prepared for our flanking party-- having barricaded their entire encampment. Our men captured 3 wagons, 6 horses, 7 prisoners, together with one poor devil they killed. The men were entirely exhausted. The road can not be described, but is known to all mountaineers. This command is ordered out tomorrow morning, having provisions for four days. We have no idea where they are destined to operate.

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Sept. 15 ... Nothing of interest occurred today. A detachment of a few thousand men left this evening,--for, we suppose--Lee's command. They took their tents and provisions for 5 days.

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Sept. 16 ... The command which left here yesterday, returned today. They marched about 12 miles in the direction of Gen. Lee's command, and on receiving orders there from him, came back. The mud was excessively deep, and troops are much dejected and discouraged. This is a great place for the blues, at least with myself.

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Sept. 17 ... Nothing of importance has transpired. The Lee party left here for Petersburg this evening, and a few Regts. are going to start for the same place tomorrow. I have been on picket guard all day. The post is in a dense pine wood, so much so that the rays of the sun can hardly penetrate through the heavy foliage. I have been more discouraged today than I have since I have been in the army. I have given up the hope of getting home this winter. I also, had good health and a good constitution before joining the army, but now I begin to feel the effects of so much exposure.... I have the blues terribly ... undoubtedly there is enough reason for me to feel melancholy. All my friends are at home--among the Yankees (Note: Philippi had been occupied by Federal troops since the battle there, June 3) excepting my brother, sixteen years old, who left the army some time ago, and who is staying among an aristocratic people, and is a stranger to them all. Shall we ever meet again in the quiet halls of home?

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Sept. 18 ... No men arriving today.

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Sept. 19 ... We are now going through the same regular routine of drills and camp labor as heretofore. A few days before the expedition against the enemy, everything of the sort was stopped,--evidently eclipsed by the magnitude of the enterprise. Its proving a failure has had a very discouraging effect upon the troops. We, however have lost nothing, as we maintain our former position. True, we lost about 50 men by sickness, occasioned by the extreme exposure.--An instance of their exposure on the mountain--One young man became so chilled as to be rendered wholly insensible, and was with much difficulty revived.

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Sept. 21 ... We are yet going through the same regular routine of drills that we have heretofore.

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Monday, Sept. 23 ... Affairs still remain as cool as a cucumber ... we are however, acting on the defensive. Throwing up breast works.

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Tuesday, Sept. 24 ... Today we heard that Gens. Floyd and Wise obtained a great and signal victory over the Federal forces in the south west. (W. Va.) It is only a rumor. We are busily engaged in throwing up entrenchments, and evidently are acting on the defensive. It is possible that we may be attacked, but we think it hardly probable.

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Wednesday, Sept. 25 ... Nothing new has transpired today. I am anxiously expecting a letter from home.

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Thursday, Sept. 26 ... I have the blues terribly. A little hope arrived a few days since, caused by the movement of Gen. Lee's army.

I would, above all considerations like to winter in Western Virginia. It appears to me, that all a man would wish for, or for which he could desire, are concentrated in the pleasure of a quiet home. Surely, if during the revolutions of human affairs we may successfully unite ourselves in the old halls of home, I will never leave again. Could I ever again desire the exciting scenes of war? I have had enough now. I heard today that the enemy had shamefully treated some of the citizens of my County, respecting private property and personal violence. May the God of truth and justice forever curse them with His rod, for such infernal enactments.

The cooking department is again beginning to be a subject of much controversy. We are all getting tired of biscuit, beef and coffee without any change.

Butter demands  
Cheese  
Eggs  
Chickens (cooked)  
Turkeys (small)  
Corn Bread  
Apple Butter  
Potatoes

.25 cents per lb.  
" "  
" " per doz.  
.50 cents  
\$2.00  
.10 cents per lb.  
.20 cents per pt.  
\$1.50 per bu.

All the above are very scarce at those rates, but everyone purchases at any price. Sometimes we give them a cursing and march them out of camp at double quick--and then half starve for the fun!

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Friday, Sept. 27

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... It has been raining since early yesterday morning. A perfect

storm has been raging today, so much so that it sometimes required our united exertions to keep our tent from being blown away. The large hospital tent of our Regt. was blown down while it was full of sick. They, however were immediately removed, but not until they were completely drenched. Oh, how much do those sick men need a lady's hand to press their fevered brows. How cheerfully it would be done by their mothers and sisters at home. So common has death become, that when a man dies, he is as soon forgotten. Yesterday I passed by the graveyard of our Regt., it being in a line of the timber which we were felling as a blockade. A few tall hemlock pines were left around them, in respect for the dead. They lie far from the road, in a secluded spot. This may possibly be our fighting ground. The din and clangor of battle may sweep over them, as opposing squadrons meet in terrible combat. But they will sleep on. In that bright sphere their pure souls shall forever stand unmoved during the wreck of time, and crush of worlds.

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Saturday, Sept. 28 ... The air has been extremely cool today, so much so that fire was absolutely indispensable.

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Sept. 29 ... Last night was the coolest of any we have had at this place. The frost was near ankle deep in various places. Blankets were very comfortable, but as Mike and Draper were both sick, we had to defer much more to them. This is the Sabbath. I did not know it, however, until quite late in the morning. It is the most serene and beautiful day I have seen for some time. How different it is to the day I spent just one year ago. We have preaching this evening by the Rev.--fighting parson--Crooks. He is 1st Lieut. in Co. I.

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Sept. 30 ... Nothing new today. I wrote a letter this evening to Julia, by Mr. S. There was a skirmish with the pickets today. The nights are extremely cool. I ate some blackberries today.

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Oct. 3 ... I was detailed for grand guard last night. There were a few posts between mine and the enemy. About daylight the farthest pickets commenced firing. A tremendous body of the enemy, drove us all within a mile of camp. We there formed and awaited his approach.

He soon came. We were engaged in a brisk fire, when Col. Ramsey of 1st Georgia Regt. came and ... (Illegible) ... large body of ... got between us and the camp ... we immediately took up the mountain. And now I am sitting beside a log. Am tired of the fight. What with the turn of affairs, now shall I ever write any more in my diary?

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Oct. 4 ... The fight is over. But several of our men are killed. One from our company and two from Capt. Sturms', and about ten killed and missing from our Regt. Nearly all of our loss occurred when checking the advances of the enemy on picket guard. We received the applause of the entire encampment. Some of the officers said that they had never seen more gallantry in pickets--not even in the Mexican war. We were very pleased with their compliments. I did not know that we were in as heavy a fire as we were. The smoke utterly obscured the fight from us. But our friends in camp told us that the clouds of smoke rolled up from the valley like a city was on fire. We kept the whole force of the enemy in check for one hour and a half. Some of our pieces of artillery fired some 93 rounds. Hundreds of our tents are shot through and through with cannon balls. Several horses were shot. Only one man was killed with the cannon shot--he having his head shot off. An Englishman, belonging to our Regt. and was in the French army at the taking of Sebastopol in the Crimean war, was shot while on picket yesterday. He was shot with a large minie rifle ball, directly through the head--the ball entering his face by the side of his nose. I never saw such a corpse.

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Saturday, Oct. 5 ... On picket guard again: Extremely heavy duties have to be performed now. We are on guard every other night. Mr. James Campbell and I are on a post, and neither of us are allowed to sit down or sleep. The penalty for disobeying this martial law is death. We however, sit down, but dare not close our eyes until sent to camp in the morning. So much exposure and loss of sleep I now sensibly feel, not minding its effect in after life, if I should survive the perils of this warfare. After the fight on Thursday some of our men went over to the ground occupied by the Yankees. The ground was literally plowed up with our cannon shot. Much blood was seen. Several arms and bones were found along the edge of the field where they had drawn up their infantry. Many canteens and blankets were found. I have a spring socket bayonet. We found several dead. Among others was a young man who more particularly took attention. He was lying by the edge of the forest--having been struck by a cannon

ball. His name was Abbott, from an Indiana Regt. In his portmanteau we found three twists of nicely braided hair, from his sisters. He had a furlough for several days. He had written a letter to his sisters saying he would not start home as soon as he expected, as the army was going down the mountain to whip the rebels, and he was going to accompany it so he could tell them about it when he came home. Poor fellow. His furlough was exchanged into a fur-long. I have the blues very badly today. Oh how I long to see my friends.

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Monday, Oct. 7 ... This is a gloomy evening. The clouds are hanging around the summits of the distant mountains, and the previous drizzling rain has now changed into torrents. How truly gloomy! Would that I could hope. It is the beautiful tomorrow that may never come. What a life, what a condition for any human being! Often heretofore have I tried to delineate the terrible realities of war, but to one who: experiences its manifold terrors, the pen falls from our grasp, and we can only express ourselves to those who like us, have experienced I the same. War is surely the results of man s ambitions. How clearly it shows the folly of the human heart. Can we still hope for success? Our country, I fear, is lost, forever is lost to me. Can we still be encouraged to fight for a much loved, but now ruined country?

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Tuesday, Oct. 8 ... On picket guard again. It is going to be intensely cold tonight, especially as I have no blanket, having lost it in the fight. Col. Ramsey offered me one, but I wouldn't accept it.

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Sunday, Oct. 13 ... I have been detailed to assist in the post office for the last few days. I was truly glad of it, for I was tired of so much military duty. We have some famous batteries now. I was informed by our officer Lt. G.T. Thompson, that I would have to go on picket duty again tomorrow, that I was not regularly detailed for the post office duty. They have treated me very badly since I have been in the company. I remember well every insult. A day will surely come when they will rue everything they have done against me. I will be regularly detailed if I can.

I feel extremely lonely this evening. I commenced a letter to Emma a few minutes ago but the hopelessness of its ever being received



caused me to desist. I know she has much trouble concerning me--far more than I have about myself.

Oh be this warfare of the world accursed.  
The son now weeps not over his father's bier,--  
But gray-haired,--for nature is reversed--  
Drops over his boy's grave an icy tear.

I must quit for tonight. The nights are extremely cold for one who has no blanket or overcoat. I lost mine in the picket skirmish.

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Oct. 16 ... I am now sitting in the office waiting for the mail. I didn't go on picket the other day. I merely paid Mirt Johnson \$1 to take my place. But this evening I am detailed again. I don't intend to go if money will hire a substitute. Our P.M. has been sick, and has been at home all day. We mail daily near 800 letters.

A considerable alarm was raised this morning. Our pickets commenced firing--but as it was found out--at our own men, who were just returning from a scout. None were hurt. Our scouts killed three of the enemy. It was a very daring act to go so close to the enemy's camp as to kill some of their pickets, when it was expected they would advance upon our position. I am getting tired of so much foolery. If we have to fight, I wish they would attack us again, and not have so much "bushwacking".

I have formed some very interesting acquaintances since I have been in the post office. It is surprising to see how many intelligent and accomplished young men belong to the Southern Army, and merely privates in the ranks. I am going to visit the South when the war is over.

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Oct. 17 ... I have an invitation to dine out tomorrow. Col. Ramsey of the 1st. Georgia Regt. sent an invitation to me to come and see him. It has commenced raining this evening like fury. It is not necessary to say anything about having the blues. I heard today we will winter here. If they attempt that, I will leave sure as fate. The weather is most disagreeable here--damp and cold all the time. Couldn't I enjoy the luxuries of home now! How I would like to go to bed at home on such a rainy evening as this, knowing that I could sleep soundly and be perfectly dry until morning. The most disagreeable thing I can now

think of, is to be rained upon at night, when you are very tired and sleepy. I have heard of swearing as being characteristic of a soldier,--and he would very apt to do it then.

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Oct. 24 ... I am sitting in the Post Office after the mail has come and gone. I was regularly detailed for this business for a period of five days--except this evening. Capt. Bradford came to our company on the 21st. We have an occasional alarm.

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Oct. 26 ... Nothing of importance has transpired in the last few days. I am still in the P.O. Our Regt. is expressing much interest as to the location of winter quarters. I think we should be about due to go back, as no Regt. in the service has undergone more fatigue and labor. We have been in every fuss in the north western part of the state, and when there was any rough work to be done, we did it. I think we will get to comfortable quarters, as our Col. Wm. L. Jackson is doing much for its accomplishment. I received a letter from cousin Betty Butcher last night They are in New Market, Va.

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Oct. 29 ... I am sitting in the P.O., having been posting bills. Our company has been much more agreeable since our Capt. has returned. He is disposed to accommodate us as much as he can. I hardly know what to say or think, anymore. I even yet, can scarcely realize my circumstances. What have I now to live for? The most flattering anticipations of a bright future, and a successful career in a business life are forever gone. I am wasting my most precious time. I only have one hope or desire to live--on account of my cherished friends at home. For them I only wish to survive, but if I should not ever again meet them, I hope they may think of me only as giving myself for them, and that I glory in it. May the young men hereafter, in the North, think of the responsibilities of making war upon an innocent people who never did them harm, before they embark in such an enterprise again. Is conscience dead? Is reason dumb?

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Nov. 6 ... This is a very disagreeable day. The mountains in the distance are covered with snow. I expect we will have to winter here. If they do keep our Regt. here they will never get another Western

Va. volunteer. We have been badly treated. I will have various scores to settle after the war is over.

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Nov. 13 ... I feel like never writing any more. I have quit hoping to ever see our subjugated county as it was once. I feel more like throwing down my gun and cursing the hour I was born to witness such a condition of affairs, than of doing anything else. Unless there is some action soon, I will answer to my name--at a distance! I have a strong idea of getting drunk tonight. I would sure, if it was to be had this side of Yankeedom. Will and Mike are off somewhere on the sick list. I feel somewhat indisposed myself--every time there is a fight on hand! But I have not gone yet! Bud and I console ourselves over a large two- gallon bottle we keep on hand, but which is empty nearly all the time. I wonder if they at home ever think about us. But I wonder more, what they would think if they were to see me with my large vial filled with whiskey!

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Nov. 18 ... Whew! How cold it is this morning! ... It is now night. We have received marching orders. Our destination is undoubtedly fixed for the top of Allegheny Mountain. Not to save the life of Gen. Loring, and all the sons of bitches in the Confederate Army, would I volunteer again! Not many know where we are going, but I--being a high private, find out many things. Bud and I are going to back out in the morning--but not until we get our large bottle filled!

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Nov. 19 ... Bud and I did not leave this morning. The whole of the command is going to leave on the 21st. We sent our baggage this morning. Everything appears the same as when we retreated from Laurel Hill. I dread this winter sure. I expect we will stay on the mountain, unless driven out, ie. our Regt., the 37th, 25th and Hansbrough's battalion. I do not like the place where we will winter. We will have to keep up a strong picket guard all winter. The 44th Va. Regt.--the grandest cowards in the army, are going back over the mountain. Affairs will be different next spring. If ever I again, see J.E. Hall in a muster roll, I will be tite when it is put there. A man dies every now and then in our Regt. I felt extremely sorry for one poor fellow who was lying in a tent without any fire. He had the fever, but was suffering greatly from the extreme cold. Sickness is more to be dreaded by far in the army, than the bullets. No bravery

can achieve anything against it. The soldier may sicken and die, without receiving any attention but from the rough hands of his fellow soldiers. When buried he is as soon forgotten. Not a stone is raised to tell his living name, age or race. But many a bitter tear is shed over his melancholy fate by kind friends far away. A lady from Ga. came with her husband to see their son in this army. He had died before they came. When I saw her she was weeping bitterly. They planted a white rose over his grave, the only crown of glory received. He lies in a dense pine woods, and the sad melody of the wind as it continually blows through the branches, seems to sing a requiem full of dark forebodings.

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Nov. 20 ... Everything indicates another retreat. The Quarter Master told me that thousands of dollars worth of property--both private and public--would be destroyed. To make things appear a little worse than otherwise would be, I am detailed as one to bring up the rear guard of the army. I expect nothing more than to have a fight of it. Draper and I buried our memento--a cannon ball--of the battle of the 3rd of Oct. We buried it just N. 85° 32" E; dis. 3 yds. 9- in. from a certain chestnut stump, and about 2 rods east of another certain pine tree. We, or either of us will get it during a calmer reign of human affairs. Good night, Dixie. God only knows how we will make our fight tomorrow, if it should be a nasty one.

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Nov. 25 ... We had no fight. If you only knew the discouraging circumstances in which we are placed this morning, I know you would never expect to see us again. We had a most awful march up here through the mud and cold. When we came here we had to lie on the frozen ground without any fire. We have now built a fireplace in our tent, but we have no straw, and a continual vapor is rising from the frozen but now thawing, ground. We have suffered much with the cold. I hope I may stand up against the rigors of the coming winter.

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Nov. 27 ... This is my birthday (21). How differently I am placed now compared with the day last year. Then I was in school in Morgantown-- never thinking that such changes could ever have transpired in the history of one's life. I sometimes think I will again enjoy such times, although when I think upon the hardships I have undergone, and the prospect of still harder to come, hope almost dies. Never once

did I suppose that in a country like this, a soldier would be so much exposed. Many times the mud has been shoe-top deep in and out of our tents. I was surely reared for a better destiny than this. It is evidently a condition in which God never intended any human being to be placed. One year of my life has passed away--one that could have been of infinite importance to me. At my age, one year is worth three in after life. But instead of being usefully spent, it is in a manner idled away. This is an extremely unpleasant day. The sleet and rain are falling incessantly. I am detailed to help load wagons out in the mountains. We are drawing logs for huts. The huts are not for us--but for the 12th Ga. Regt. How would you like such work?

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Nov. 28 ... Today was tolerably pleasant, but this evening great gusts of sleet and rain are falling. We will have a gay time of it tonight. I was assisting in loading logs on a wagon out in the mountains. I had to be walking about in the snow over my shoe tops, and was nearly frozen from handling the logs. I stood it for an hour or so, and then I told the Lieut. that I would see him in hell a mile, before I would stay any longer. So I came away. I expect he will report me. I was going to ask for a furlough tomorrow to go out to Monterey. I now have some doubts as to my getting it!

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Dec. 1 ... I got the furlough, but did not go. I am going to ask for one in a short time, to go home. Nothing more than usual has transpired in the last three days. The cooking department is beginning to lag again. I don't like to eat nothing but beef! Sometimes we have eaten it after holding it before the fire with a stick, and then eat off it as it cooked--having it mixed with plenty of blood. It takes a month's wages to buy anything now. I will give some prices:

Cheese  
Butter  
Apples  
Apple butter  
Cabbage  
Chicken  
Potatoes  
Whiskey

75 cents per lb.

35-40

50 per doz. or \$5 per bu.

25 per pt.

25 per head

50

\$4 per bu

\$20.00 per gal.

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Dec. 14 ... Yesterday we had another heavy fight. (Note: Battle of Camp Allegheny, Federals defeated with loss of 137 killed and wounded.) Early yesterday morning--4 o'clock--Lieut. G.T. Thompson roused us up and formed the company. After a few minutes we were marched out on the hill with the remainder of the Regt. We almost froze while standing in the piercing wind. About sunrise a flanking party commenced firing on our rear. We immediately deployed to the right, and engaged the enemy, who were stationed in the edge of the woods. We suffered much--the enemy having decidedly the advantage, being in the woods,--with us in the open field, and having the sun shining full in our faces. Our men fought under these disadvantages for near 3« hours. Some of our best men fell--some for whom I had the strongest regard. Our Regt. was at last nearly surrounded, and had to retreat. Most of the Regt. fell back to the battery and trenches. The fight still continued for several hours. Capt. P.B. Anderson, the hero of 50 battles, was slain. The enemy at last retreated. We found a great many of the enemy lying on the field after the fight. I cannot exult over our victory. Such work is a shock to human nature. We lost too many brave men to rejoice over our victory.

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Dec. 15 ... Affairs are tolerably quiet. Some of our wounded men are dying occasionally. This is the Sabbath. On this day twelve months ago I arrived home from Morgantown. How little did I think my condition would be so changed--I have seen enough of war. O my God, how forcibly it illustrates the folly and depravity of the human heart. Many of our men died. Many were groaning from extreme pain, with the cold, clammy sweat of death upon their brows. I hope never to witness such scenes again. I was particularly distressed with the sad fate of my esteemed friend John Nutter, 1st Sgt. in Co. C. Early in the battle I saw him raise his hands and fall. I hurried to his side, but saw he must soon die. I spoke to him, but he could only raise his eyes and smile a faint recognition. He asked very faintly for water, but I could not tarry longer with him. We hurried over

here in the wild excitement of the hour, and left him there to die alone. When I saw him again he was dead. The vital current had ceased to flow, and a hitherto warm and faithful heart was forever cold and still.

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Dec. 18 ... We are expecting another attack. I have been working on some batteries today. We have to sleep with our arms and accouterments fixed. I do hope Heaven may stop the further effusion of blood.

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Dec. 25 ... 1861. This is Christmas, and as is common there must be some amusement and festivities going on. We are amusing ourselves hovering around a fire in our tent, which smokes us nearly to death. Though last night was Christmas Eve, I did not sleighride much! Instead of that, we were marched out with the Regt. on the mountain, to guard the batteries and artillery. We spent our Christmas Eve very gaily, sure. We are still living in our tents, but we make them tolerably comfortable by constructing rude fireplaces to them. At night we do not fare so well. Some mornings when we awaken our blankets are wet with frost, and the inside of our tent lined with hoar frost. Many times our hair is frozen stiff by congealed respiration, and our floor is covered with snow. This is a pleasant life, sure. I was at home this time one year ago.

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Dec. 27 ... I was on camp duty last night. The night was quite cold. I will spend my holidays differently next year. I am going to bake some pies today. Our commanders are getting to be tolerably good to us now. The reason is that during next month we will be asked to reenlist again. We will get \$50 and 60 days furlough if we enlist again. I may do it, but, I expect to serve out my time, and then I will be sure of a furlough.

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Dec. 29 ... I have come to the conclusion not to volunteer again. Our officers have not given us any encouragement to do so. We have had but one continual scene of hardship compared with other troops. We have had duties to perform which no other regiment in this brigade has performed. I am resolved never to be enrolled again. Ever since

Sept. every Co. in the Regt. has assisted in building cabins, but they are all now occupied by others, and we are still in our tents. As far as cooking utensils are concerned, we have not been furnished with anything but one bucket. I am so extremely tired of camp life. I long so much to enjoy the pleasures of society. Here, nothing but a collected mass of human beings are assembled, who have lost all of those finer feelings which makes a man a man, caused by the recklessness of life, and the continual connection with the immediate scenes of death. It is horrible to anyone not used to it, to hear the blasphemies of the soldiers. I know there is an apparent special Providence directing the affairs of our country, and over every battle field. His care seems to be doubly manifest, but I could not wonder if He should turn against us-- seeing so much wickedness.

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Dec. 31 ... "The old year has gone, and with it many a thought of happy dreams." It has also closed the scenes of many of the darkest periods of history. What great events may transpire in the coming year! A nation will doubtless realize a name and status among other nations of the earth. The United States will rank with the mighty dead--numbered with the fallen greatness of Troy, Greece and Rome. She will then have ceased to exist, but has merely followed the examples of all overthrown Governments. Future ages may read of her greatness and grandeur, but the glory of her arms, and the magnificence of her institutions will forever live in song.

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Jan. 3, 1862 ... I was on picket last night. The air snowed frost all night. An alarm was given last night, and we were told to prepare ourselves to fight near 10,000 of the enemy, who were advancing upon us, and were only about 8 or 9 miles off.

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Sunday, Jan. 5 ... This is one of the most peculiar days I ever saw, We are in the midst of the clouds, and frost has been falling all day. It must be about two inches deep. The trees are covered with it, and the small tendrils are wonderfully magnified. Nice times for men to live in tents.

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Jan. 7 ... Winter is now coming in earnest. I never experienced



colder weather. We are still living in our tents. The fireplaces we have constructed do tolerably well while the fire lasts, but at night we suffer considerably, until the snow blows over us enough to cover us, when we sleep quite well. We retire about ten o'clock at night, and get at from 11 to 1 next day. Nothing of interest has transpired of late in the army. We still have an occasional alarm.

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Jan. 14 ... This is an extremely wintry morning. We are still in tents, but some of the company are going to move into huts today. We only have 2 cabins, and there will be 18 in each. Cousin Will, Mike, Draper and I, respectfully declined going into one. Four months from today and we will be out of this accursed war. If they never retake Western Virginia, I will say goodbye to Dixie forever.

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Jan. 22 ... I have heard bad news from home--that uncle James had died on the 31st of Dec. '61. Oh what has befallen our once quiet and peaceful community! Will our country ever be freed from the curses of such a war. If I volunteer again, I will never join the North Western Army, but will operate on the Eastern or Southern Coast.

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Jan. 27 ... I received three letters from home this morning. I was truly glad to hear from them, but a peculiar sadness seems to fill me tonight. Oh, is our country forever lost? Shall our friends forever be in a land of such oppression! What changes have transpired in our history! Truly man is a creature of change. From the earliest dawn of his existence down to the hour of dissolution, mutation is linked with his destiny.

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Feb. 5 ... We have gone into the pie business of late. We bake about one dozen a day, which we sell at \$3.25 a piece.

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Feb. 7 ... Nothing of interest has transpired of late. We daily go through with the same routine of passing away time. We have to get up every morning at daylight to roll call. We have to attend, regardless of the most disagreeable weather. The pie business is still

flourishing. I have been commencing a diary of a letter home.

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Feb. 12 ... A considerable snowstorm has been blowing over the mountain last night and today. The air is about as cold as they make it. All things are quiet. We heard that our forces were defeated again, now at Roanoke Island. I hope however it is not as bad as reported. An opportunity was presented today for us to re-enlist. I did not accept.

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Feb. 13 ... Nothing new today. A detachment of men are going down on Greenbrier tonight on a scout.

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Feb. 14 ... On the 14th of next May I will be out of the army-- only three months. I am on camp guard today.

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Feb 17 ... Nothing new has transpired in the last few days. The same old duties of getting wood, etc. to be performed every day. I am getting most darn tired of this infernal war.

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Feb. 27, midnight ... We were marched to the ditches tonight about 7 o'clock, and remained until eleven. The trenches had lots of snow in them, the ground frozen perfectly hard, and the wind singing like minie balls. After we learned no enemy was coming we marched back to our quarters almost chilled to death.

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Feb. 28 ... Today was our muster day,--it being the last day of the winter campaign. We all had our muskets shining very brightly indeed. We will soon receive our pay for four months' service.

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March 1 ... Nothing of importance has transpired today. A very nice and pleasant day.

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March 2 ... Snowing, sleeting, raining and blowing all day; the Sabbath. I have forgotten all about "resting one day in seven".

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March 4 ... In a cabin in 44th Regt. Va.

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March 5 ... At Mr. Simmons on the South Branch. Jap and I stayed here one night before on the memorable retreat from Laurel Hill.

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March 16, Sunday ... This is surely a most gloomy time. The Confederacy is in much danger. We are rather expecting a march from this place--also expecting another battle. A very disagreeable day. Sleeting, snow, ground very muddy.

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March 22 ... On camp guard last night. Nothing new. Some few discharges of artillery were heard this morning at some far off camp. We are looking for some busy times here now in a few days. Going home next May if there is no danger of the enemy capturing me.

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March 23 . . . Affairs are still quiet. Got a letter from Will today. Still sick. No news.

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March 24 ... All right today. I received two letters from Barbour this evening--from two of my lady friends.

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March 26 ... Affairs are quiet yet. Some think we will have to fall farther back and abandon our present position. I do hope we will not.

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March 28 ... Many gloomy apprehensions are entertained about our evacuating this post. We were reinforced today by the Highland and Pocahontas Militia.

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March 30, Sunday ... On picket guard today--away down a ravine on the side of the mountain next to the enemy. Everything indicates a backward movement of this command.

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April 1 ... We have struck our tents and loaded our baggage for a march. Two days rations cooked.

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April 2 ... We commenced to march this morning at about ten o'clock. We marched to Monterey--16 miles A very disagreeable march.

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April 3 ... Left Monterey this morning and marched to McDowell, a distance of 10 miles. We are camped in a beautiful valley. All the soldiers are in good spirits, but Western Virginians think it looks but little like getting home. Mike lost his pocketbook containing \$70 this morning.

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April 4 ... We are still encamped at McDowell. Drilled some today.

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May 18 ... (My diary is continued from Book I) Many eventful scenes have transpired since anything was written in my former book. A detailed narrative is sufficient to illustrate everything. We left our encampment at McDowell early on the morning of the 5th of April, and marched about 12 miles to the eastern side of the Shenandoah mountain, where we encamped.

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April 6 ... Still remaining at Shenandoah.

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April 8 ... A very disagreeable day. The snow was about 4 inches deep.

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April 9 ... A very miserable time indeed. It appears as if winter were just commencing. We had to either freeze or smoke ourselves nearly to death around our log fires out in the snow, rain and sleet. Heard of a fight in Corinth, Miss.

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April 10 ... Nothing new today.

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April 13 ... On camp guard. Nothing of importance has happened in the last 3 days.

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April 14 ... It is now one month from the time we have thought we would be out of this delightful war. How anxiously we looked for that much wished for period. A change, however, came over the spirit of my dreams.

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April 15 ... All quiet today.

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April 16 ... We received tolerably doleful news. Our company was paraded and every man mustered into service for the war. No difference whether we reenlisted or not. A considerable damper on our future prospects and expectations. We grumbled about the government doing us injustice, and will continue to do so.

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April 17 ... Somewhat cast down today on account of the affairs which transpired yesterday. There was an alarm about noon, and we were all marched off to the mountain, but returned when it was ascertained no

enemy was coming.

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April 19 ... We received marching orders and started at 2 o'clock. Camped about midnight on the western base of Calf Mountain.

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April 20, Easter ... marched within 6 miles of Staunton. Awful marching. Almost died this evening.

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April 21 ... Still encamped at Valley.... Rain all day. No tents nor much to eat.

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April 25 ... Nothing but rain and snow for several days. Oh what dismal times. How gloomy.

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April 27, The Sabbath. Went to church. The first time an opportunity has presented itself since last fall. A beautiful day.

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May 2 ... Left our camp early to go on a scout. Went to the western side of Buffalo Mountain. Saw none of the enemy. Returned to Buffalo Gap and remained all night. Relieved next morning by 3 companies of the 44th Va Regt.

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May 3 ... Returned to camp near 12 o'clock. Had a brigade dress parade. Rumor afloat of a move on hand.

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May 6 ... Nothing new ... Expect to leave here soon and go somewhere- to what point, God only knows. Heard today of the death of my friends Col. Parsons and his daughter Miss Kate. They were driven from home by our common enemy the Federals. We started from our camp today

about 12 o'clock. Marched to the summit of Buffalo Mountain.

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May 7 ... Started early this morning and marched to the western side of Shenandoah Mountain. The enemy held the top of the Mountain, but fled without any resistance. A considerable picket fight occurred as we approached the mountain. The enemy lost two men killed, two prisoners, and 3 horses. We lost none. As we approached the ravines on the western side of the mountain, the enemy opened up on us with a 12 pounder rifle cannon. They did no execution more than to arrest our advance until morning.

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May 8 ... Started at an early hour. Col. Baldwin's Brigade in front today. Ours next (Col. Conner's). We then ascertained several more Regts. had come to assist us. The whole force was as follows: Va. Regts. 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 10th, 20th, 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th, 31st, 33rd, 37th, 42nd, 44th, 48th, 52nd, 58th, and the 12th Ga. Regt. One Regt. of cavalry, and near 40 pieces of artillery. We soon found that the enemy was stationed at McDowell. As we ascended Bull Mountain, the heavy sound of artillery told us only too plainly that the enemy was going to give us battle. We halted on top of the mountain, and expected to remain there all night, and then attack the enemy next morning. Six or seven men were sent from each company down the mountain to cook for the remainder. I was among the number that was sent. About sunset that evening, to our surprise, the heavy and incessant roll of musketry told us the battle had actually begun. In a few moments the wounded were coming in ambulances in great numbers. What few houses were there, were soon filled, and tents were pitched for the accommodation of others. It was a sorrowful sight to hear the groans of these poor men. Among many others of my acquaintance that were seriously wounded was my cousin Doctor Armstrong, Assistant Surgeon of the 25th Va. Regt. I got permission of my Capt. to stay and wait on him until he should leave for a hospital. Our troops were victorious, and early the next morning started in pursuit of the fleeing enemy. Much baggage and commissary stores were taken. Much commissary goods the enemy burned.

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May 10 ... Dr. A. started to Staunton today, and I therefore went to join my Regt. I crossed the battlefield as I went. The ground was literally torn up by the balls, and in some places not even a twig of

the bushes was untouched. I next visited the camp of the enemy. Heaps of tents and cooking utensils lay all around. Soon after I left there I came to a large caisson in the pike. Nearly all the shot had been removed. A few spherical case and conical shells still remained. Stayed all night within 5 miles of the army after a hard walk.

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Dayton, Ruth Woods, editor, *The Diary of a Confederate Soldier: James E. Hall* (n.p., 1961), 5-6, 11-12, 19-55.