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Civil War letters, 1862-1865. Wis Mss 75S [unpublished]

Richards, Robert, 1844-
[s.l.]: [s.n.], [unpublished]

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Civil War Letters of Robert Richards Jr.

Robert Richards was the eldest son of Robert and Mary Richards who were pioneers in Sauk City, Wis. Robert Senior was born in England and came to America about 1840. He came to Wisconsin with his bride, Mary Chase Richards and was an overseer for several years in land projects and Wisconsin river ferry service, largely associated with the Hungarian refugee, County Harazthy.

Robert Junior was born in 1844, having two brothers, Charles and Frederick, and a sister Caroline. Charles served in the Fourth Wisconsin Cavalry. The accompanying letters were written to the sister (mother of Elwood R. McIntyre, donor) and cover most of the period of his war duty--the ones sent to his Mother not being in existence. He was about 18 when he enlisted and his sister was born in 1848 and was therefore 4 years younger than he.

He enlisted from Adams county as a private in Co. E. He and his comrades were sent right into the battle of Shiloh without sufficient training, hence he was taken prisoner there and spent nearly a year in Confederate prisons in Tuscaloosa and Andersonville. None of the letters cover that period.

Later he was placed under parole and sent to Superior, Wis. to be interned according to the rules, waiting for an exchange. Enroute to the front again, he had a short furlough at home. At that time the family were living in some dilapidated buildings on the site of Ft. Winnebago, Portage.

Late in 1864 he was wounded in the knee cap near Huntsville, Alabama. He was taken to a Federal hospital at Jeffersonville, Indiana and later transferred to Jefferson Barracks, Saint Louis. It took him nearly six months to recuperate and his suffering and longing for home are told in some of the last letters written.

He lived to be a flour miller at Kilbourn City, Portage and other places and finally he moved to Chatfield, Minn. where he owned and operated Orion Mills, grinding buckwheat flour as a speciality.

Throughout his life he was troubled with his old wound and his leg never actually got straight and strong. His eldest son, Frederick, was manager of the Madison Gas & Electric Co. awhile in the early 1900's and Robert himself moved to Kansas to live with a son and died there about 1925.

Madison, Wis., October 21, 1955

Elwood R. McIntyre

SHERMAN'S CAMPAIGN OF '64.

(Air: *The Irish Volunteer*.)

On the second day of May, eighteen hundred and sixty-four,
When we commenced this great campaign with the 14th army corps,
We met the rebs at Tunnel Hill, and Rocky Face also;
And Hooker with his flanking corps did prove their overthrow.

CHORUS:—Hurrah for General Sherman's boys,
No dangers do they fear;
He starts them for the Johnnie's works,
They go it with a cheer.

They evacuated Buzzard Gap; they said they were determined,
For Johnston he had set a trap to bag old General Sherman;
But Sherman knew a thing or two, sent Hooker to the right,
Where the 20th corps fixed bayonets and put them all to flight.

CHORUS.

They faced about and traveled on, and halted at Resaca,
Where they asked our pickets if they would trade coffee for tobacco;
But Johnston saw it would not do, the Yanks were two to one,
And from behind his works withdrew and retreated further on.

CHORUS.

The Coosa River next they crossed, and also burned the bridge,
For Johnston swore he'd have revenge for the loss of Rocky Ridge.
At Dallas they thought 'twould be no harm, to stop they'd all conclude,
Although the weather being warm close behind them we pursued.

CHORUS.

One day said Johnston to his men, "On Kenesaw we'll stand,
And from that hill we'll never move till we loose every man."
Then fortifications were quickly made by fifty thousand strong,
When the roar of cannon told the Rebs the Yanks were coming on.

CHORUS.

When up within artillery range we fortified also,
And Hooker with his flanking corps straight to the flank did go:
The Johnnies sent us their respects, with cannon we replied;
The 16th corps being on the left, and Hooker on tother side.

CHORUS.

When the Chattahoochee Johnston crossed to Milledgeville he went,
Said he to Brown, Old Georgia's lost, there was no reinforcement sent;
Said Gov. Brown to Johnston, "Do you think it is too late
For us to make another stand, or shall we leave the State?"

CHORUS.

But Sherman thought to play a trick, to the river he fell back,
It took Old Hood a day or two before he found his track,
We started for the Railroad line to cut off their supplies;
It made the Johnnies think quite strange and open wide their eyes.

CHORUS.

On the first day of September, Old Cleborne for his spite,
He thought to have a little fun, the acorn boys he'd fight;
But Davis with the 14th corps, or "Old Pap Thomas's pets,"
Learned Old Cleborne a lesson he never will forget.

CHORUS.

Where are the commissaries, what have you been about?
Why don't you give us pork and beans and leave the blue beef out;
Just bring along your greenbacks now for this campaign is through
To pay off Sherman's army, for there is nearly eight months due.

CHORUS.

And yet you hear the cheering news, our Sherman is all right,
His army's around Savannah, and our flag waves there so bright;
He's going down to Charleston next to make the rebels clear,
And then from there to Richmond like a Veteran Volunteer.

CHORUS.

So long will be the day before this war will be forgotten
By the heroes of the North and West who have trod the land of cotton;
And from this generation down, and then forevermore,
Their names will be recorded in the history of this war.

CHORUS.

Composed by M. B. Nott, Co. E, 85th Ill. Vol. Inf.

Beware of Southern Prisons,

By W. F. WILDER, 18th Wisconsin Volunteers,

A PAROLED PRISONER.

Now soldiers your attention,

A story I'll relate,

About the Southern prisons

And of a prisoner's fate.

CHORUS—Now Jeff you'll surely pay for this,

And that before 'tis long,

Your neck get ready for the rope,

Old Abe is pressing on.

'T was on the sixth of April,

As very well you know,

Our force it was surrounded

And taken by the foe.

They marched us off to Corinth,

Through mud six inches deep,

And stowed us into freight cars

Full fifty in a heap.

And thus we rode to Memphis ;

The road was rough as sin,

And many oaths were uttered,

And many more kept in.

They thought to starve the Yankees

No grub did we receive,

Untill we got to Memphis,

And this was Tuesday eve.

They arrested Gen. Prentiss,

Because he made a speech,

And told them in plain English,

What Davis did'nt teach.

From here we went to Mobile,

Hoping there to stay,

But they shipped us up the river

At early dawn of day.

The boat was old and rotten,

The pumps they would'nt work,

The darkies they were lazy.

From labor they did shirk.

Three days and nights we suffered

On board this rotten craft,

And arrived at Tuscaloosa

With prisoners fore and aft.

They marched us up to prison,

Exulting loud and high,

They here had Lincoln's army,

The Union now must die.

They kept us here and starved us,

For thirty days or more,

They fed us all on mule meat

That well might walk on four.

The prison rules were rigid,

And each we must obey,

None could look from windows

Nor near the windows stay.

They shot two noble fellows

Who fought on Shiloh's field,

And many more were threatened.

And they through fear did yield.

The vermin gath' red round us,

In filth and dirt we lay,

And many fell the victims

Of grief and sore dismay.

Now soldiers in the army,

One word of kind advice,

Beware of Southern prisons—

Beware of Southern lice.

Don't let the rebels take you,

To the river don't you run,

But fight like gallant soldiers

Till victory you have won.

A SOLDIERS APPEAL.

BY W. F. WILDER.

Air.—*America.*

Let patriots now awake!
And each fresh courage take,
Resist the foe!
Our cause we must maintain,
Though millions more are slain;
Our hopes are not in vain,
Though blood shall flow.

Our fathers fought and bled,
On us rich blessings shed,
Ne'er let them fade!
But O, with heart and hand,
Preserve this glorious land;
In union let us stand
'Till peace is made.

Though traitor bands unite,
In treason take delight,
Firm let us stand!
Our cause we know is just,
In God we'll ever trust,
And fight, if fight we must,
On sea, or land.

With union for our prize,
We'll look with longing eyes
'Till peace return;
We'll sing of vict'ries won
When treason's race is run,
'Till then, with sire and son,
Let freedom burn.

Though Sumpter's wall displays
To traitors fiendish gaze,
The stars and bars;
The Union flag shall wave,
O'er treason's self made grave,
Though patriots blood shall bathe
Those stripes and stars.

H. D. LINDLEY, Printer.

..... The following is ingenious, as a specimen of two meanings in the same words, after the manner of the old revolutionary quibble, in which King George was at once denounced and applauded. The one sense is found in reading the two columns, the other in reading across as if there was but one:—

I always did intend
Single my life to spend,
It much delighteth me
To live from woman free,
It's sure a happy life
To live without a wife.
A female to my mind
I ne'er expect to find
A bachelor to live
My mind I freely give

To take to me a wife,
Would grieve my very life,
To think upon a bride,
I can't be satisfied.
'Tis woman is the thing
Such troubles on us bring
The joy I can't express
So great in singleness
I never could agreee
A married man to be.

Western Branches of the
U. S. C. COMMISSION.

CHICAGO: J. V. Farwell, Chairman,
B. F. Jacobs, Secretary.
MILWAUKEE: W. S. Carter, Chair-
man, D. W. Perkins, Secretary.
PEORIA: A. G. Tyng, Chairman,
Wm. Reynolds, Secretary.
ST. LOUIS: J. W. McIntyre, Chair-
man, J. H. Parsons, Corresponding
Secretary.



THE U.S. CHRISTIAN COMMISSION
Sends this as the soldier's messenger to his
home. Let it hasten to those who
wait for tidings.

U. S. Christian Commission Rooms.

Jefferson Barracks

April 20th 1865.

Dear Sister -

As it is five days since I wrote home I
suppose it is about time I wrote again although I was in hopes
of getting a letter before I wrote again - but being disappointed in getting
a letter this morning I have concluded to write now and again when
the letter comes - I have not got much news to write - In the first
place my wound has entirely healed up: so there is no more danger of
getting the gangrene unless it should take a notion to break out again.
and I don't think it will do that. as it never was a deep wound
I traveled around a good deal yesterday with only one crutch - but I find
it is not so easy a matter ~~to~~ walk on a crooked leg that you have not put
to the ground for four or five months - at first it did not hurt at all
but towards ~~noon~~ night I had to use both crutches - it did not seem to
hurt the wound but the pain was in my foot and knee - the pain in
my foot feels just like the pain does in an ankle that has been sprain^{ed}
pretty bad by stepping on the side of your foot - but I think it will soon
get over that - I am going to keep trying to walk on it and I think the
pain will finally leave - I have been thinking whether it is best to be
mustered out and go home or wait a spell to see if this ~~the~~ transfer comes
off - if I go home now I shall have to go with out a cent and shall not be
able to earn any thing in some time - and I suppose Mother has all she can
do to get along now. so that my coming home wold only make it worse
so I think I will wait a few days and see if that transfer does not
come off - if it don't ^I know but I had better do the other thing

I rec'd the two papers Mother sent day before yesterday
I wrote to Charley yesterday - I got some paper and envelopes of
the christian commission and by taking letters to the house where
the agent stops he will put stamps on them and mail them - so I
think after this I shall not leave any letters unanswered for the want
of writing material - if you get any Portage papers with a good deal of
state news I wish you would send me a few I dont want any full
of war news for we get that here before they ~~can~~ can get it at
Portage - a paper with something in it concerning Portage or any other
place in Wis suits me and the rest of the Wis boys better than war
news - every paper you send to me is read by every Wis. and Minn.
man in the ward - Well I can think of no more to write now so
good. I will write again next Sunday - I want you or
Mother to write as often as twice a week and I will do the

same

Robert. Richards

Benton Barracks St Louis

Sunday August 31th 1862

Dear Sister i received
your letter of the 26th this
morning and now taking my
pen in hand to write a few
lines to you i ^{am} glad to see
how well you write i think
you must have went to school
pretty steady and tried to learn
to have got along as well as you
have i hope you have got along
as well in arithmetic geography
and other things i wish you
would write a letter to me every
week for you and Fred always
write something interesting to me
it does me good to read any thing
that has happened at home among
the folks that i am acquainted with
if it happened last spring it is new
to me so i wish you would write

as often as you can and every thing
you can think of, Tell me if
Charley writes home how he gets
along and if he is coming home
i am going to write a letter to him
when i get this finished and try
and get him to come home so that
mother will not have so much to
see to, i should think it was
about time i had an answer to the
letter i wrote to him, if he got it
and mother seemed to think he
would when he got there
i wish Mrs Bannister would look
down here to Benton barracks and
see what she can see, when she
does that and tells just how things
look and what is going on i shall
believe she is a seer and not before
i have been in Tennessee and i
know it is a pretty long look
from Wis. to Tenn. and after you
get there you cant see a rod a head
of you for brush

Sunday night half past
eight o'clock

Dear Sister is again take up
my pen to try to finish
my letter. i was taken with
a chill about two o'clock and
had to stop writing, about six
o'clock the chill went off and
a fever came on and has not
quite left me yet i have got
to take some medicine at ten
and i thought i would get a
candle and finish writing
i hope mother wont pay Dan
a cent till after he fetches that
shave horse back and i would
not promise to them the three
shillings is worth more to mother
than the shave horse, i think
if mother could sell that sow
for more than two dollars she
had better payloyd but if she
cant she had better let him
have her for the money will be
worth more to her ^{than} the sow

i hope Andrew Pearsons will
write to me, i wish that some of
the rest of the neighbors would
write to me i thought Brown was
going to write but i haint heard
anything of him yet it costs a
good deal for paper and stamps
after all, i have got to buy
50 cents worth to put on the
things i am going to mail to
morrow, the likeness will take
25 cents worth, but i got the case
for 25 cents less than the price
so i thought i could afford to
buy stamps and send it in a
case Ed says it dont look
a bit like me and i dont
know but i will have it taken
over again in the morning if i
do you will know it by my bag
my watch in my shirt pocket
write as often as you can and
tell me all the news

Good bye. Robert. Richards

1865, Mar. 27

Song of the conscripts

When first I came to Memphis City and
walked around the ~~place~~ streets
I wondered what could be the matter with
some I there did meet

They looked so wild and dreadful frightened
and why I could not find

They would not stop but kept on running
with their coat tails straight behind
Chorus— Oh how they run Ha Ha. and dodge
the guards Ho. Ho.

But now I see they are conscripting and that's
what hurts them so

2^d The streets by soldiers are blockaded who
form a hollow square (to swear)
When the victims in he looks around and then begins
The guard says halt and asks for papers
which broad cloth fails to show

For which at length he has to forfeit a fifty spot or so

Chorus— Oh how they run Ha Ha

3

They rush in scores to be examined poor man
what numerous ails

They're deaf and dumb and have the colic there
eyesight often fails

They limp on one foot then the other they
puff and ~~blow~~ and wheeze and blow

The Doctors wits are oft times puzzled. their
true complaints to know

4 The guards creates the greatest terror as they
scour the city through

The Negroes they are always willing to wear the
Suit of Blue

The males and horses they are loyal the
Draft they never fear

The rendezvous around the commons and there
they volunteer

5 The conscripts meet to drill very often say twice
a week or more

They soon will do to drive gorrillas from the
Arkansas shore

The other night they heard the cannon
they thought their time had come

How nice they felt when some one told them the reds were on the run

6
Here I'll grant and that most willing in
closing up my song
Best loyal men of Memphis City should think
my motives wrong
That some there is that love their country
above all else besides
And hope that through the storm that raging
raging our "Bark" may safely ride
Chorus--
Jefferson Barracks. March 27th 1865

Written by Robert Richards at Jefferson
Barracks Mo. His time, three years, had
expired in Dec. 1864, but he did not
receive his discharge until July 1865--
Uncle of the donor, a Wis. soldier.

Tenor: E. R. McIntyre of Portage, Wis.
August 7, 1915

Jul 167

Benton Barracks 1862

St Louis Sept. 11



Dear sister i have
just received your
letter of the 4th and
mother too, and i

thought i would answer you
first I was glad to hear that
the indian panic has all blown
over i have been uneasy ever
since I got your last letter
for fear you might have
trouble but all such fears
have vanished since i read
your letter this Afternoon.
I expected to get a letter today
or two ago by mother saying
in her last that she was a
going to write again the next day
I should think Campbells
folks would feel rather cheap
for making such a fuss about
the indians

i am going to see about
getting my discharge tomorrow
the committee meet every day
at head quarters but there is
no use in my going there yet
awhile for there is about forty
ahead of me they have to go
there and get a ticket with
your number on it and when
your number is called you
can show your ticket and be
examined. they are not going
to give out any more tickets
till day after tomorrow
I am going to be on hand
then and get a ticket i am
going to do every thing i can
to get my discharge i know
i am entitled to it and am
going to have it if there
is any such thing.

I have been pretty well for
the last two or three days with
the exception of the pain in my
breast and side which has
troubled me some but not as
much as it did a few days ago
I am going to send a couple
of song books with these letters
and I want you to put them
away & keep them clean till
I get home, there is some of the
best songs in them I ever heard
I wish you would learn to sing
the red white and blue, the star
spangled banner, do they miss
me at home, the boys used to
sing these songs when we were in
prison at Tucaloosa and it seemed
to me they were the best songs
I ever heard, I hope mother wont
let my old fiddle go for if I

get home i should like to play
on it again, i dont see why
Charley dont write to me he
must have received one of my
letters and if he hadnt i should
think he would have wrote any
way when he found where i was
tell Fred i cant write to him
this time so you must make
this letter do for both of you
i hope you will write every
week and tell me all the news
there is no news here for me to
write only about myself and
that dont amount to much but
i will try and write some
thing when ever you write
Good bye for the present

Robert. Richard



Superior City Nov 28th 62

Dear sister

i received your

letter of the 5th last night
i was glad to hear that mother
got the money i sent her

i was glad that mother paid
Dean so there will be no ~~the~~
trouble wintering the cattle

i got a letter from Charley the
other day he wanted to know
what i thought about buying
the Lewis place i wrote to
him if mother thought it best
he had better buy it

but i think after all it is
best not to buy any land yet
i think if he wants to buy any
he had better buy young cattle
i think we shall be paid off
about the first of January the
Lieut told me the Capt was going
to start for Mackinac after the money

December
about the 22nd of

you need not be at all ~~at~~ troubled
about getting letter from me and
tell me for the mail comes in regular
three time a week and has not
missed but once in three years
i wish mother would send me
a few stamps i have not got but
a few and if i dont get some
i shall have to stop writing till
i am kind off, direct your letters
to superim City, i dont see what
made you send this to Bayfield
write as soon as you get this, i think
it is about time i had an answer
from the letter i wrote the day we
landed i have no more to write
at present and i want to wash & dry
skins to day so i must bid you
good bye

from your Brother

Robert Richards
Ed wants you to tell his folks he is
all right

Superior City Wis

Dec. 9th 1862

Dear Sister i received
a letter from you today
dated Nov. 26th it is the first
letter i ^{have} had since i got that
one you sent to Dryfield
i began to think i never
should get another letter from home
it seems by your letter you have
moved some where but you dont
tell where, i think there must
be some letters on the road
some where for it has been nearly
a month since wrote from here first
and it seems to me this cannot be
the first letter you have wrote
i have kept running to the post
Office till i got discouraged and i
swore i wouldnt write again till i
got a letter no good luck would
have it i got one today

i think Charley has had a
good offer and if thinks is so
easy to be a soldier and a prisoner
of war why let him try it i have^{en}
a word to say i guess by the time
he lives on grass a week or two
he wont like it so wellly & some folks
cant learn any thing unless they
learn it by experience i wish you
would write and let me know if
you hear any thing about the
parolled prisoner being exchanged
let me know where you live and
what Charley is going to do
Ed wants you to tell his folks
he is all right, i am well and
have been ever since i have been here
i am getting fat as a hog i weigh 162 lbs
it is so dark i shall have to stop
writing so good bye
from your Brother

Robert Richards

Superior City Dec. 11th/62

Dear Sister I received a letter
to day from you and one from
Charley and i' found out to day
where you had moved to, Charley
said in his letter that he was
going to see a man to make a bargain
with him to go as a substitute
& I dont think he will make out
much at that because the men that
are drafted are sound men and they
will not take him in the place of a
sound man, but i' dont think he
can do better than to go if he can
get one or two hundred dollars
if i' had my discharge i' would go
in a minute i' could stand it for
nine months easy enough
i' should like to have seen how
Abesbro looked when he was drafted

I am glad you have got back to
the Pepper mill again I think if
Charly stays to home you will get
a long a great deal better there than
you would in town for you will
have a good garden and if Charly
is a mind to be can raise a good deal
off of six acres I think 11 dollars
is plenty cheap enough if it wasent
for Bill Campbell's folks I would
as soon live there as any place I know
of we have been boarding at the tavern
till yesterday, the boys got dissatisfied
with there living at the tavern so they
drew there rations, seperately and have
hired there board at private houses
around I board ~~at~~ with a dutch
family I have to pay 50 cents a month
the same as I did at the tavern
some of the boys pay 50 cents a ^{week}
and have milk and butter to use
and get only two meals a day
when I get three which make up for
the milk and butter.

i am getting pretty hard up for
every thing i am out of tobacco and
out of stamps i am going to put the
last stamp on this letter, i have run
in debt for a hat i hated to wear that
old hat all winter that i wore when
i was to home they have not got any
caps large enough for me or i should
have drawn one, i ~~expect~~ expect i can
get tobacco there at the same store that
where i got my hat and he will wait
till pay day but i cant get stamps
the letter i got from you to day
went to Bayfield one of our boys was
down there and he brought it up here
answer this immediately and let me
know whethe Charly is going away and
i wrote to Charly to send me that gift
book i got of Bill Campbell if he cant
sent it i wish you would
remember and send your kin liknesses
as quick as you can

Robert Richards



Superior City Jan'y 1th 1863

Dear Sister

I received a letter from you today dated the 21st of Dec. it seems you have had quite exciting times around home I dont see why Brown didnt thrash Old Parker when he swore at him I expect Bill would have done it if it had not been for Mrs Brown

The Capt got a letter from Madison today Ordering us to report to Madison right away but it seem to be an order ~~from~~ indirectly from Col Beale of the 18th regt, but the Capt says he is not going to comply with it he says if they was foolish enough to send us up here with nine ~~or~~ ^{months} provisions he is just foolish enough to stay here and eat them up

I dont see how they expect we
are to get to Madison we could
not carry our clothes and rations
enough to last us to St Pauls
for there is no teams here we
could get to carry our things
but I dont think there is any
danger of our leaving here till
Spring, I do not feel very well
to day I had the awfulest head
ache yesterday I ever had in my
life I did not get to sleep till
about ten oclock last night
they are going to give the soldiers
a supper to night and we have
been to work to fix up a room
we have got it fixed up with flags
evergreens. red white and blue ribbons
and I dont know what not, the
citizens are fetching in dishes and
the eatables now and I expect we
shall have a pretty good supper
good bye Robert Richards

[Enclosure
R. Richards
C. Richards
NOTE]

Superior City Jan'y 8th / 63

Dear Sister

I rec'd a letter
from you last Tuesday
and to day I got one from
you and mother and Charby
likewise I think this one
looks exactly like him
I am going to send you
the one you sent to me first
I have not got stamps enough
to send the one I got today
I had to get a new crystal
put in my watch and that
took some of the money you
sent to me I hope we shall
have some money by and by
they are making out the pay
rolls and the Lieut is going
to start for Madison in
a few days I have just
wrote a letter to Charby

but I don't expect he will
get it, you want to know
what kind of a time we
had here Christmas we did
not have much of a time here
unless you call standing guard
over two or three drunken
men a good time, but we had
a good time here newyears
I told you about it when I
wrote to you last Saturday
I have no more to write now
write to me as often as you
can

from your brother

Robert Richards

[Enclosed in
R. Richards
To
C. Richards
1863, Jan 18]

Dear Harris — if you have
got a Geography I wish you
would send me a list of the names
of all the states with the square
miles and population of each
and the population of ten or 15
of the largest cities in the united
states. and the date of your
geography — get as late a one as you
can — Robert Richards

Superior January 22nd 1863

Dear Sister, I received your letter mailed the 15th today it is the best letter I have had in a good while and I wish you would send such a one every mail I am sorry you can not get along any better in arithmetic but you must have patience and find the rules of division when you get so you can do one sum, you can do all of them you want to know how I get along without any one to show me we have got two school teachers in the Company and one of them is as good a fellow as ever lived and he shows me how to do sums and sets copies for me you seem to think I can write pretty well I expect that letter was the last one I wrote before I spent my gold pen

since that I have not tried to write
with these old steel pens I sent to you
for that pen I give you if it was not
spilt as I have not heard ^{any} thing
about it I expect the letter is lost
I wish you would send it and send
that old fiddle book if it is not
all to pieces you want to know how
far I have got in arithmetic I have
got to fractions you want to know
which I would rather fight the indians
or the rebels I would rather fight the
indians for I shall not die till my
time comes whether I fight indians or
rebels and if I am up here I shall
not be sick and suffer as I should
if I was down south, I hope you
will not get your likeness taken
till you get one that is good
looking, write as soon as possible

Robert. Richardson

[7865] Lt

Superior City Feby 5th

Dear Sister

I recieved
your letter mailed the
28th Ed. got a letter
the other day from his
mother and she told him
that mother had gone to
Madison and that Charley
was sick I am sorry to
hear that Charley is sick
and that mother has gone
to madison for it must cost
a good deal but if he gets
the small pox I shall not
be sorry that she went
for it is very little care
any one gets in the hospital
this is the first letter I
have had since a week ago
last Tuesday I should have
written before but I did not
get any stamps till yesterday
and I thought I would wait till

the mail comes

I have sold my gold pen for
~~ten~~ ten shilling for I could not
write very well with it and I
thought it was as much as it
was worth, write as soon as possible

from your brother

Robert Richards

Superior City July 8th 1863

Dear Sister

in accordance
with my promise I must ^{write} to
day, as mother is not at
home I will have to write
to you I have nothing of
importance to write other
is nothing going on here
to keep up any excitement
it is almost as dull as
Oxford, we have Singing
Schools here and a Lyceum
and meeting Sundays and
that is all and that is
enough unless they are
better I expected to get a
letter from mother yesterday
but was disappointed I should
think she would write from
Madison and let me know how
Charley is getting along
write as soon as possible

Robert Richards

[863]
Superior City Feby 15th

Dear Sister

I recd a

letter from you last thursday
with a paper and a paper and
song book yesterday I have
not recd a letter from mother
since she went to Madison.

I sent you a copy of the
paper that is printed here a few
days ago I have no news to
write this time, we are going to
work at the stockade tomorrow
so as to be ready for the indians
if they attack us in the spring
the citizens are going to help us
so I think we shall be prepared
for they do not come till they are
going to, they say they are coming
when the grass gets big enough for
their horses to live on, all we know
about it is what the indians tell us
here and we cant tell whether there is
any truth in it or not but it is best to

then ready for them

I hope you will send me that other
paper if you have got one that I have
not read I like to study out the
puzzles in them I have found out the
puzzles in these i have got

I have no more to write at
present so good bye for this time

from your brother

Robert Richards

Superior City April Friday 19th
1863

Dear Sister it is some time
since I have written to you and
I have concluded to write to you today
I haven't much to write but a letter
is a letter if it has but two lines

Our Lyceum and Singing schools
have closed on account of the evening being
so short

I have not rec'd a letter from
mother since I wrote last.

the weather is getting very warm here now
the snow is all gone and the ice is going out
of the bay very fast the schooner that laid
over on the point all winter was brought
across the bay to the ware houses to be repaired
and loaded and I suppose it will start out
from here in a few days

I am going to send you some verses composed
by our poet they were sung at the last
Lyceum after a lecture on the cause of the rebellion
there were some more verses called the parting hymn
sung but I could not get a copy of them if I
can get a copy of them I will send them to you
write as often as you can and send me all
the papers you can get a good bye for now

R. Richards

Helena Arkansas

Sept. 24th /63.

Dear Carrie

I rec'd your letter with Freds likeness a week ago today, but as I had wrote the day before I thought I would wait till I got your likeness which you said you was going to send that week but as it did not come in yesterdays mail I have concluded to answer your last letter. I think Freds likeness is the best he has had taken he looks though as if he had been sick. I hope you will send yours and it will be as good a one as Freds. I have been on the sick list ever since I got your letter but I am getting better and shall go on duty tomorrow if nothing happens

when I wrote to you before we
were camped up above town
we are now about half a mile
below town on the bank of the
river they have given us tents
but we have nothing but one
rubber blanket a piece which
makes rather a poor bed, and
it is almost cold enough to
freeze here nights and hot
enough to roast a fellow day
times. it is very sickly here. there
is a great many of the boys
got the ague, the 25th regt is
here and have got about 800 men
in the regt and only 95 ~~fit~~
fit for duty.

Sept 25. I had to stop writing
yesterday for there was an order
come that we should strike our tents
which we did and they were sent up
white river to little Rock for the

soldiers there. and we had to go in
to the woods and get brush to
make sheds to keep the sun off
for it would almost kill any one
to lay in the hot sun here there
is not a tree or bush within a
mile. I do not feel as well today
as I did yesterday the report
is this morning that our things
have been sent for at Vicksburg
and when they get here are going
up the river either to Memphis
or to reinforce Rosecrans
and I don't care as long as
we keep going up the river
I hope you will write just as
often as if we were at Vicksburg
I shall get your letters if you
direct via Cairo. I don't expect
we shall be paid off till Oct.
but I hope you will try and
get along as well as you can

I hope it will not be many
months before I shall be out
of this and then I guess we shall
all of us get along a good deal
better so keep up good spirits
and get along as well as
you can and help mother get
along till that day comes.

this is the last sheet of paper
I have got here but I will try
and get enough to write
once a week till they come
good bye for now

Robert. Richardson

Huntsville Alabama
January 4th 1864

Dear Sister

I rec^d your
letter of the 21th with your likeness
this evening and take this opportunity
to answer it- your likeness looks
first-rate much better than
I expected- but there is one
thing would have improved your
looks a great deal- and that is
head dress of some kind- when
I get my pay again I will send
you the money for another and
when you have it taken I want
you to sit in the same position
you did for this one for I think it
looks as well as any way you
can have it taken those gloves
mother sent to me have not
come yet- I got the letter she
sent the same time new years ^{ear}
~~night~~

I am afraid they are lost some
where on the road for one of
our boys got a pair the night
I got the letter, and he got a letter
that was sent the same day the
gloves were sent - but I will
not give them up as lost yet awhile
for I have had papers come three
weeks behind the letter that was
sent with them

I am glad to hear
that mother has found that cow
at last although a cow is not
worth a great deal it is quite a
loss for us

There is a great excitement
here about enlisting in the veteran
service - we have had orders read to
us every evening on dress parade about
the bounty - pay - and the perquisites
that are to be granted to veterans
there five or six companies that
have nearly all gone in to the
veteran service

there is but two or three of our
Bo. going into it. but I would
not enlist again for three years
for all the money I could carry.
I think three years of a mans
life is enough to give to his
country if it is not at least it
is all he can afford to give
for it is actually throwing away
so much of his life, there is a
great many of the boys that are enlisting for
the sake of the furlough - but I do not
want a furlough of thirty days bad
enough to enlist for two years longer.

One year more and I shall get a
furlough for life to go where and
when I please and will not be obliged
to live on hard-ackers and stinking
bason - I hope Carrie you will keep
in good spirits till that time comes
and then I will get a better home for
you and mother and I think we can
live better than you could if you had the
veteran bounty to live on

I have no more to write now and
it is almost time for tattoo to beat
besides that I have got to go on guard
tomorrow so I will bid you good
night with the request that you will
answer this as soon as possible
from your Brother

Robert. Richards

To Eliza

Carlin Richards

Huntsville Ala Jan 20th 1864

Dear Sister

I rec'd your letter of the 10th of Jan. night before last together with four newspapers the gloves have not yet made their appearance and I had about given them up for good till last night one of our boys, got a pair of gloves from home that had been on the road six weeks - so I think mine may come yet, if they don't come pretty soon they may stay away for the cold weather will soon be over with and they will only add to the weight of my knapsack.

I rec'd some bodys likeness and I can guess who the original is not because the likeness looks any like ~~her~~ her but by what you said about it in your letter. I am going to write to Charley and I guess I will send it to him.

I rec'd the stamps you sent to me and
they came just in time too for I
was just out of stamps.

I see by the papers that you are
having some pretty cold weather up
in Wisconsin, the coldest day we
had here was newyears day I was
on guard that day and I thought
should freeze, every one thought
the mercury was 10 or 15 degrees
below zero but instead of that
it was 17 degrees above

wherever it was it dont seem to
me I ever suffered more with the
cold up north. I suppose the
reason is that our blood is in a
different state here in this warm
climate than it is up north
and another reason why we felt
the cold so much was the sudden
change - the day before newyears
the mercury was up to 70
which I suppose is warmer
than you have seen in some time

yesterday morning we got up and
found the ground covered with snow to the
depth of half an inch which is the deepest
snow we have had this winter and that
all disappeared before night, the weather
has not been very cold for the past few
days but the weather is so changeable
that you can make no calculations as it
one day it will be froze up tight as a drum
and the next to warm to wear a coat.
I have tried to draw an overcoat but have
not succeeded yet and if I don't get it
pretty soon I will not get any at all
for if I can't send home I shall have
to throw it away, if we have any
marching to do, I wish you could take a
walk through this town, and see some of
the gardens and walks in front of some
of the dwellings in this place. you never
read a description of any such thing that
can beat these gardens here. I don't
know the names of the trees and shrubbery
they are as green now as they are in summer

some gardens ^{have} got marble statues they are enclosed
with a handsome iron fence, inside is a
hedge as high as the fence, it is trimmed so
that it looks like a green wall about two
feet thick, the houses are not ^{as} good as
they are up north — there is quite a number
of citizens here more than I have seen in any
other town in the south, there are riggers here
with out number and they have a dance about
every night, the other ^{night} I was on guard and we
went to a dance to get some boys that were there
the black cusses had been dancing some time
and got pretty well warmed up and if they
didn't smell strong I am judge of skunks
the room smelt worse than our house did
in Jackson when I shot that skunk
I guess I have wrote enough for this
time so I will quite write up after
as you can

C

Robert Richards

Robert Richards

Co E 18th Regt W. V.
Alabama

1864
Huntsville Ala Jan. 27th

Dear Sister

I rec'd your letter of
the 15th last night. I came off
of guard this morning and will
not have to drill till this afternoon
and I improve the few leisure hours
by writing to you and Charley if
I have time and if I don't I must
take time as you say for I have
neither written to him or heard
from him since we have been
here. I am glad that mother is going
to get her state money, for there is
no show for our getting paid very
soon, the Veterans are getting
discouraged about getting home, they
don't seem to be any show for their
getting home till next summer
and I can see by the way they talk
that they are sorry they enlisted
and I don't blame them for I no
I should repent it if I had been

you want to know what I think
about your going to live at Congers
I will tell ^{you} I don't want you to do
any such thing, you and
mother need not trouble about
my reenlisting, I am as anxious
to get out as any one can be and I
intend to go out west and get me a
farm when I do get out and then I
think I can enjoy myself first
rate and you and mother could too
the rebs a hovering around us here
our cavalry scouts have had a few
skirmishes with them, the rebel
Gen. Roodley took a ^{town} called Athens
the other day, yesterday our cavalry went
out there captured 400 rebs and drove
the rest across the river, so I guess
now they will let us alone a little
while the rebs are deserting and coming
in here every day they take the oath
of allegiance and go north the
most of them live in Tennessee and
Kentucky and some in this state

we are having very fine weather here it
is almost as warm here now as it is
up north in the summer, we do not have
any fire in our room and it is so warm
to be comfortable then

We have ^{hardly} to live

on short rations since we have been
here but they have got the bridge finished
at Brownsboro and the cars are expected in
here today so I expect after this we shall
get the mail regular besides getting full
rations which is a matter of great importance
to soldiers I have finally come to the
conclusion that the gloves & mittens sent
to me are lost for have certainly had
time to get here if they were coming

I got the two newspapers and express,
night before last, that mother sent me

I have no spare to write now so good
bye write as soon as you can and
let me know how you are getting along

Robert. Richards

Whitesburg, Alabama
: Sunday June 12th
1864

Dear Sister

I rec'd your letter of the 5th night before last and yesterday morning I went on picket so I could not answer it untill today - I am very glad to hear that you are going to school which I hope you will continue to do every day this summer that it is possible for you to go - I am glad to see you improve in writing as you have since you wrote the letter before this - and if you are getting along as fast with your other studies you will soon have a good education

I have not rec'd a letter from Charles since he left home but I suppose he is waiting till they get into camp - We were paid the fourth of this month - I sent mother ten dollars that day, which she has rec'd by this time I suppose

The sixth I sent her another letter
with twenty dollars in it and the same
day I sent Sam Roberts five dollars
if mother gets the thirty dollars I sent
her and gets her state money it ought
make you comfortable for some time or
untill I get my pay again

Do you
remember where I was a year ago
today I'll tell you I found you
a year ago this morning at that God
forsaken old shanty partage if I
ever find you in an other such an old
shed I will burn the crased old
thing down. What a nice pleasant
day that was ~~that~~ that I got home
and here today it has been raining ever
since 5 O'clock. but that is nothing
strange for this country for it has
rained every day for the last two
weeks and it looks as if it would
rain six or eight weeks longer
We were on picket yesterday on the

bank R of the river and I and another
of us set a lot of fish hooks but
many fish did we catch but to make
up for it we caught four soft shelled
turtles and we cleaned one and fried
him for supper it tasted exactly
like fish - we got one a few days
before and boiled it and it tasted so
near like chicken that you could not
tell the difference - When I get
home I am going to catch every one
I can find and have you cook them.
you ought to see the prices of meat
squirm when you put them into a
pan and put salt on them.

but it is getting dark and I must
stop writing write as soon as you
can and let me know how you are
getting along at school and tell me too
how Fred is getting along at school

Good by for this time

From your brother
P. B. Richards

In Camp near Stevenson
June 29th 1864

Dear Sister

I rec'd your letter
of the 19th night before last - we did not
expect them to stay here longer than that night
but we are going to stay here till tonight
we are then going to Stevenson take the
cars and go to the front or as some
say (and I hope it is true) guard some
place on the rail road - I am glad you
are getting along so well at school I did not
suppose Fred was getting along so well
as she is in reading and arithmetic I
think as you do that the reason he does not
learn to write faster is because he is left
handed but I think he will soon get
over that - if he is obliged to leave school
you ought to set copies for him and
have him practice writing at home so
that he will not forget what little
he learns at school - I am glad mother
had that hay cut for it will go a little way
towards wintering the cattle next winter

you want to know what I say about
your going to take care of Mrs McGuffins
children I say let the young ones go to the
devil and take care of them selves and do you
go to school every day that you can

I got a postage paper with your letter dated
June 4th I think it must be the one
that was sent with a letter I got at
Whitesburg - I have wrote to mother since
we have been here and I think I shall
write to Charley today but I hardly know
where to direct to for they say our men
have left Baton Rouge - I hardly think
that report is true - the day before we left
Huntsville I went over where the 6th Wis
Battery was camped and found an old
friend there it was Bill Harrington
he belongs to that Battery and the Battery belongs
to our Brigade so we shall not be far apart where
ever we go - he came down here last fall and was
there at the court house lots of times to see
the boys and never happened to come across him
till just before we left Huntsville

and I shouldnt have found him there
if it hadent been for Ed Mc Dougall
they say there has been an order just issued to muster
out all nonveterans three years from date of enlist-^{ment}
so next new year you can calculate I am
making tracks for Wisconsin - six months
more - it looks a great way off and our going
to the front makes it look darker still but I
dont ^{know} but our prospects are as bright as the were
last fall when we were on the march for
Chittanooga we got through without the loss of a
man and we may this fall - there is one thing
sure the regt will go home this fall and we
shall have a good time for a couple of months
while they are gone and if we go home with
the regt (which a great many think we will)
we shall have a better time yet

I can think of no more to write now so
good bye write as soon as possible and direct
to Bridgeport or elsewhere

Robert Reichardt

Altamaha Creek Georgia
Saturday July 30/64

Dear Sister

As I have
not rec'd a letter from you or mother
in some time I have come to the
conclusion to write to you and
wake you up and see if I can't
get you to write a little oftener than
you have done lately. I wrote to
Mother about a week ago and have
rec'd no letter from home since
then. I rec'd a letter from Charles
day before yesterday, dated July 2^d

He says he ~~says~~ has got to be
Commissary Sergeant and is
having a first rate easy time and
I do not doubt it for he has got
a first rate position. for my part
I dont see how he has got promoted
so fast but here in the army such
fellows as he is will get promoted a
dozen times where more steady ones
won't get promoted once

A person to get promotion here
must have a good gift of gab
and Charley ~~has~~ is certainly not
lacking in that respect

I answered his letter yesterday
and directed to Baton Rouge but
I expect he is either at Vicksburg or
with that expedition that left N. Orleans
and was supposed to be going to Fort
Memphis. When he wrote they were
expecting to go to Vicksburg and I
think there is where he is now

We are still here guarding the rail road ^{bridge}
but they say our Co. is going back to
town to join the regt again I hope they
will let us stay here for I have
got well now and just begin to
enjoy myself out here in the woods
alone by ourselves but I suppose they
will move us for if they see any
one taking a little comfort they are sure
to put a stop to it if they can

If you see a paper with a full
account of how Gen. McPherson
was killed I wish you would send
it to me for all these cursed papers
say is that he was shot on such a
day through the lungs, our reg.
used to be in his Corps and the
boys think he was the best man
in the United States,

The veterans are in mighty good spirits
they have heard that the 20th ~~Mass~~
Missouri a veteran reg. was not sent
home till their old time was out and
now they are going to be mustered
out, and our veterans are in hopes
they will keep them till after their old
term is out so that they will be discharged
this winter, there aint one but would
give all he has got if they could get
out of the scrape, but they will find
they are not going to get out as easy as that
and since they have said so much to
me I hope they will have to come out
this fall time

Write as often as you can I have
no stamps and will have to get my
letters franked until you send me
some stamps or I get where I
can get stamps

I can think of no
more to write now so good
bye for the present

from your Brother

Robert Richards

To

Mrs. Caroline Richards

Altosma Creek Ga.
Monday Sept 12th/64

Dear Sister

I rec'd your letter of the 28th of last month last night also the postage paper and a letter from Charley mailed Aug 9th he said he had not rec'd a letter from me since he had been home. I don't see what the reason is for I have written three or four since we have been here.

It is a year today that we left Nicksburg for Helena how quick this summer has passed away but how it will be with the next four months I don't know New years seems a great way off and when I think of what we went through with last fall between the 12th of Sept. and new years it seems as if I never should get home

We heard yesterday that our division
was going to be relieved and was
going to Atlanta to join our corps
and it may be the luckiest thing
that could happen to us for I think
all the rebels will try to now here
in Georgia will be to destroy our
communications. and in that case I
would rather be with the main
army than to be guarding such a point
as this on the Rail Road.

and I think if we get to our corps
that the veterans will be sent home
and a great many think the new
veterans will be taken to the states
when the veterans go at the time
of a good many of them will expire
before the reg gets back but if we
dont go with the reg we will have
a first rate while they are gone
One hundred and nine days is not a great
while and if I dont run against ^a rebels bullet
I guess I can stand it


I am pretty lucky this fall
I am well and never felt better in
my life while nearly all the boys are
have a turn at the age - some times
you & are down with it at once
the last we heard of the reg. they had
received a reg. of 100 day men that were
stationed up near Newfreesboro

I can think of nothing more
to write now - write as soon
and often as possible and I
will do the same. I am going to
write to Charles now

from your Brother

Robert Richards

if you can get a postage paper with a
list of the drafted send it to me

 I will now tell you about the ~~poor~~ class of women some of which are so ignorant I don't believe they can tell their right hand from the left they are poorly dressed the most of them being barefooted. There was three old women stoped at our cook shanty one day to get a drink of coffee and something to eat one of them looked a good deal like aint Cindy and another a good deal like Mrs Hyat - one of them asked us if we were yankees we told them we were not. "Wal" said she "I didn't think you was cause you look just like we'ans" one of the boys then asked her what state she supposed the yankees came from "Wal" she said thars George Owens hes a yankee and we axed him whar they came from and he said they come from yankeem" she said george Owens owned a grist mill and they used to go there

to get flaws and that is all we know
about him. I guess I have said enough
about the warner down here so I will drop
them for there is not one in a dozen can read or
write or tell the differences between ten cents
and fifty in postage currency.

I said in my last letter to mother that
our reg. had gone to Chattanooga - we have
since heard that they left Chattanooga with
a force of about six thousand with 20 days
rations to go to Knoxville to clean out
old Wheeler who is in there tearing
up the rail road - we were very lucky once
in our lives in being here we have escaped
a long march and it may be a fight
there are some rebs around here yet but they
do not trouble us any - last Friday night
they fixed an iron on the track which
ran the train off killing four and wounding
thirteen - they began to fire into the train as
soon as it stopped but a lot of the 9th Ohio
cavalry lying on board with their seven shooters
the rebs soon got sick of that gun and left

My dear Mr. Stirling
I hope you are well and happy

I got the stamps you sent in your letter and the next day I got a sentinel and register - I have not had a letter from Charley in a long while I don't see what the reason is he don't write I want you to answer that as soon as you get it - and tell me all you can hear about the Richardsonets or any one else for it will be interesting to me although it may not seem so to you - I can't think for the life of me who ~~the~~^{his} Stirling is. there is a good many names Mother has mentioned in her letters that I do not know from a clow - I believe I have wrote about enough I guess I have lost my dinner now for I am at the picket post writing as it is quit here and shady - I heard them holler dinner but I thought I would finish writing now you write a long letter

Good bye your brother

Robert Richardson

191stona Ga Oct 27th 1864

Dear Sister—

I rec'd your letter mailed the fifteenth last night I expected before I opened the letter it was an answer to one I wrote since I was wounded but it seems you had heard nothing of it when it was written— you say that Mrs Roberts would not let Fred have the cattle if I do not come home on furlough I will write to her about it— and if I do come home why let her keep them till I get there and I will go and get them if she has to feed them any between now and then I shall not pay her any thing for it you say Desires has got married to Chamberlain of Briggsvills I think she made a great bargain when she got him

I never supposed she would
marry any such fellow as he is
if such fellows as he is can get
married I should think almost
any one can - I got a letter from
Ellen Roberts I think it was
dated Sept 1st she said she had
a secret to tell me that was if
nothing happened Desires was
going to be married to Chamber^{lain}
she did not want me to write home
any thing about it - and as she
had told me the secret I thought
it would ~~be~~ not be fair
if I did not keep it

We have been expecting to go to
Chettanovgo ever since I wrote
last yesterday morning we ~~at~~ ^{at} ~~int~~
had our breakfast and were ready
to start by six O'clock but Gen.
Smith telegraphed to the Dir. to
keep the sick and wounded till after
the road was completed

that may be in two or three
days and it may not be till next
week - our furloughs went to
Camp. I had quarters two or three
days ago and if they come back
approved we shall soon be on the
road home - I hope we shall stay
here till the furloughs get back
but if we dont we shall go to
Chattanooga and stay there till
they come - there may something
turn up that I cannot come home
so you must not calculate too much on
my coming home - but I dont
think there is much doubt but
I shall be at home sometime in
November - my wound is healing
up very fast and I dont know
but it will spoil my furlough yet
but if it does I dont care - I dont
think much of Mary Sandford
advice about voting - if I get a chance
I shall vote for Chas. A. B.

I have just read over your letter again
and found that you had heard there had
been a fight here and hoped I was not
in it I suppose you know by this
time that I was in it and did not
come out with a whole hide. as it
was it was the best thing for me
that I did not. I don't think
you had better write to me for
I may be on the road home before
a letter could get here

Good bye now till you hear
from me again I may drop
in some morning and then
I will take that cup of
coffee you spoke about

from your Brother

Robert Richards

[ENCLOSURE
sketch of
knee wound]

Jefferson Hospital Ward 10.
Sunday Jan. 1st 1865

Dear Sister

It has been a long time since I have written to you and I thought I would try and write you a letter today and let you know how I am getting along — I have left the gangrene ward and am in ward ten (10) where I want you to direct my letters after this the Dr in the gangrene ward is one of the best little fellows that ever lived he is from Michigan and his name is C. L. Randall — the gangrene has been out of my wound for three weeks but I had the chills and he would not let me go away for fear I would get into some ward that had a poor Dr — when I was the sickest I told him I wanted

him to cure me up for my time
was about out. says he "never you
fear I'll straighten you out old
fellow" and he has he has
knocked the chills higher than
a kite and is still giving me
medicine to keep them there

Dr Randall was appointed Dr for
ward 10 a few days ago so he had
me brought over hear where he
could look after me instead of
sending me back to ward 21

I recd your letter of the 21st and
another of the 25th last Thursday
or Friday but I had just wrote
a letter to Mother so I thought I
would not answer them right away
I was glad to get the money and
envelopes I wanted to buy a pencil
so I could ^{write} when I was a mind to
but I hadn't money enough till

the letters came I have got me
a pencil now and Mother says
she is going to write twice a week
and I will do the same if I can
get paper and envelopes
my wound is looking pretty
well I am gaining strength slowly
my appetite is pretty good and on the
gain. take it all around I think
I am doing about as well as I
could expect. Mother talks foolish
when she says she would come down
to see me and take me home if
Charley would only send that money
her coming here to see me would
not heal my wound any and as
for getting me she could get the
state of Indiana just as easy I
am in the service yet you must
remember - if Charley sends any
money I hope Mother will put

it to some better use than spending
it coming down here to get me for
it will be money thrown away

I have to write lying on my back
in bed with my paper on an old
book cover - I am going to take a

piece of paper and mark out the size
and shape of my wound so you can
see what the burning done while
I was in the gangrene ward when
I went there it was about as large
as a silver half dollar

the marks running towards the center
is to show how deep it is at the places
~~where the marks are made~~

I have no more to write so good
bye write as often as possible and
direct to ward 10

Yours your Brother

Robert Reichardt

the wound I think is nearly
one inch longer than I have
marked it but I have done as
well as I could
that double mark is to show
where it has cut in under
but I did not have room there
either it is cut in about twice
as far - that will give you
some idea of what I have got
to suffer with - it is one of the sorest
things ever was I believe it seems as
if it would kill me to touch it R R

[Enclosed in
R. Richards to
C. Richards -
1865, Jan. 1]

front

back side

Ames



"The U. S. CHRISTIAN COMMISSION
sends this sheet as a messenger between the soldier
and his home. Let it hasten to those who wait for
tidings."

Jefferson Hospital Jan 10th 1865

Dear Sister—

I rec^d your letter
and Mothers mailed the 6th last night
I expected to get a letter Saturday night
and sent to ward 21 to see if there was
one there for me but there none for me
so I had to wait till Monday night for
one as the mail does not come in Sunday
nights—when Monday night it brought your
letter— I have not been very well
since I wrote last day before yesterday
I had a pretty hard chill but no fever
yesterday I had quite a fever but no chill
to day I have had a little fever and it
has not quite gone yet but I wanted to write
to you today and as it is 4 O'clock P.M. I
thought I had better begin to write it if the
fever wasint quite off— my wound is healing
all around the edge pretty fast but in the
middle it does not look as well as I wishet
it did

when Dr Standall was here he had my
wound dressed with a weak solution
of Bromine and my wound looked
clean and nice but since the other Dr
has been here he has had it dressed
with simple cerate and since that has
been put on the matter will not wash out
clean in the middle of the wound
tho it has healed it pretty fast around
the edge- they dressed it this morning
with solution and I think tonight
when they dress it it will look a
good deal better- this Bromine (which
is pronounced Bromean) is the name of
the stuff they burn out the gangrene with
a few drops of it in a pint of water makes
the weak solution - I wrote to the
commander of the post the other day
to send for my descriptive roll
I got an answer the same evening
saying my descriptive roll was rec^d
at his office Dec^r 20th so I am all
right on that score and I think
I shall be paid off when pay day comes

I suppose that will come some time

After Supper

I have had my wash and dressed and had my supper and am now writing by gas light - the mail has come in and I got the book and paper and envelopes your letter spoke about it has been snowing all day as hard as I ever saw it. I snow in my life I suppose you would like to know how we live here - I have been on heavy diet since this Dr has been here - for breakfast I get coffee bread and either hash a peice of boiled beef or a little mush and molasses for dinner a bowl of beef soup bread a chunk of fat boiled pork that a well man could not eat - or boiled beef and mashed turnips - Fridays we get mackerel for dinner in stead of meat - for supper we get tea bread and two or three spoons full of apple sauce - sometime a chunk of Johnny cake and butter and a bowl of tea is our allowance

I believe I have written all I
can tonight for the light is
awful poor — I hope mother
will be able to send me
little more money for I am
out of tobacco and have to
beg what little I get now
good bye for now

From your Brother

Robert Richards

Jefferson Hospital Ward 10
Jeffersonville Ind. Jan. 24th/65

Dear Sister—

I rec'd a letter
from you last Friday evening
but did not answer it because
I had just written a letter to
Mother and I mentioned in the
letter that I had rec'd yours and I
thought that would do untill I
got time to write an answer.
you say you should think it would not
be long before I get home. I can not
tell you how soon I shall get home
but I don't expect to get home much
before spring. if I keep on gaining
as I have for the last week I shall
apply for a transfer in two or three
~~more~~ weeks—my getting home
then will depend on how long it
takes me to get my discharge at
madison—

I got the paper you mentioned
about sending and read that piece
about the murder up at La Crosse
I knew that Jacob H. Clear well
he belonged to Co. K. he was not
thought much of in the Co. he would
borrow money of every one that would
lend to him. at Huntsville to get
rid of paying his debts after he had
received his veteran bounty he pretended
some one stole his money one night
I got my pants yesterday and put them
on for the first time in seven weeks
I find on getting up that I am not
half as strong as I thought I was—
I cannot sit up more than two
hours at a time I have been sitting
up about two hours and I am getting
pretty tired—the nurses are bringing in
one bread and beef and soup for dinner
so I will quit writing for a little
while

My wound is healing up very fast. it almost seems as if a person could see it close up. Some of the boys say it is not more than half as large as it was when I came here. it looks considerable bigger to me. though than one half.

I rec^d a letter from Mother last night mailed the 19th with a sheet of paper and stamp. I was going to write a letter to Mother after I finished this but I guess I will write one to Charley and you and Mother must divide this letter between you. I can think of no more to write now after the mail comes in I will write a few lines more.

I have just written a letter to Charley and told him if it was possible for him to send Mother some money to do so by all means. I talked to him the best I knew how.

After Supper) The mail has come in and no letter for me and but two for the whole ward so I have nothing of any account to write unless I tell you about the funeral here today in this ward - ten men were taken to their graves today from this hospital - the funerals of two of them was held in this ward this is not much over the daily average of deaths at this hospital some mornings there is over 20 in the dead house - there is some thing the matter with the gas lights they have almost gone out so I will have to quit writing

Good Bye

From your Brother

Robert Richards

Jefferson Hospital

Feb. 6th 1865

Dear Sister—

It is two
O'clock in the morning or
in the night rather—I
awaked up about midnight
and as the nurse that is sitting
up is writing and I am not
sleepy I thought it would
be a good time to answer
your letter—I was going to
answer it yesterday but
when I got ready to write
one of my old chills come
on to me and that wound up
the writing for that day
the chill and fever together
lasted from 11 till 5 O'clock
I took some quinine this
evening and shall take more at
day light if it does as much good

as it used to I shall not
have a chill tomorrow
I did not know any one in
our reg. by the name of Grace
nor any one by the name of
James Halihane or what ever
his name is if they were in
the 18th they must have been
new recruits for I knew all
of the old ones - you say you
think it must be dreadful to
see so many soldiers dying
Well I suppose it would be to
you or any one else but a
soldier - It does not affect
them any more to see dead
men laying around than so
many dead dogs would
I got your letter of the 29th last
Friday I was very glad to get the
two stamps for I had borrowed
one so paid that back and have
got one to put on this letter

I did not get the writing
paper till yesterday I have
not got the postage paper yet
my tobacco give out yesterday
and I would have been out
before if one of the 1st Wis
cousins had not bought some
for me — my wound has
not done very well for the
last five or six days — it looked
at one time as if I should
be obliged to go back to the
gangrene ward — but I had
it dressed with solution of
bromine and that made it
look better but it does not look
as well now as it used to
I hope it will begin to do better
for I want to be on the road
to Wisconsin next week
this time — I have no more
to write now so I will bid
you good night Br. Richards

Jefferson Barracks
St Louis Mo
March 7th 1865

Dear Sister

As I have
just bought some paper and
envelopes and have nothing
to do I thought I would
write a few lines to you pass
some time. I wrote a letter to
Mother day before yesterday and
told her that I was going to
go and get a transfer to Madison
but the Dir told us yesterday
morning that the Meiers and his
men would be transferred to their
own states so thought before the
week was out so I concluded
to wait and go with the rest.
my wound is not looking quite
as well as it did on the boat
so it will be best for me to stay
here a week or so till it looks better.

I have got into a pretty
good hospital and I don't
know but I may as well stay
here a few days and give my
wound a chance to heal as to
go to Madison and stay there
my wound will do better here
than it will there for it is pretty
cold up there yet - and going out
into the cold is what has always
made my wound look bad

Every storm we have affects
it and I can tell every time
there is going to be a storm a day
or two before it comes - just as
plain as a person can that has
the Rheumatism - I have always
been in hopes that I would get
home early enough in the spring
to go to work on a farm if I
could not get a chance to work
in the Portage mill but I
don't think I shall be able

to work on a farm if I get
there in time to commence
for I cannot straighten my leg
and it may be some time after
it heals up before I have the
use of it enough to follow a
team - so I have made up my
mind to take things as cool as
I can and give my leg all the
chance I can to get well and
when it does get well and I get home
if I can't get work where I can
make pretty good wages, I will
take what money I have and
start out to Minnesota and get
me a farm - and I don't know
but I shall go out there anyway
for the quicker I go the better
chance I shall have for getting a
good farm - I think I can get
money from Charley so that we
can live the first year and after
that I have no fears but what we can

along

I dont know as I have any
thing more to write now I have
got two more stamps and will
write again in two or three days
ad good bye for this time

From your Brother

Robert Richardson

P.S. I dont suppose it will
be worth while for you to write
for I may go away from here the
first of next week. R. R.

WESTERN BRANCHES
OF THE

U. S. Christian Commission

CHICAGO: J. V. FARWELL, Chairman;
B. F. JACOBS, Secretary.
PEORIA: A. G. TYNG, Chairman;
WM. REYNOLDS, Secretary.
ST. LOUIS: J. W. MCINTYRE, Ch.;
J. H. PARSONS, Cor. Sec'y.



THE U. S. CHRISTIAN COMMISSION
Sends this as the soldier's messenger to his
home. Let it hasten to those who
wait for tidings.

U. S. Christian Commission Rooms,

Jefferson Barracks 1865.
Mar. 19th

Dear Sister

I rec'd your letter of the
16th this morning and I can assure you
I was very glad to hear from you and
that you were all alive yet.

Since I
wrote to you last I have been having
another hard old time with my
wound - it turned black when I first
came here and has been getting worse and
larger every since I have been here and all
they done for it seemed to do no good till
yesterday morning when he burnt it out
with Caustic and had a flax seed poultice
put on to it - when it was dressed last
night a lot of burnt flesh came off and
it still looked as black as ever and I tell
you I was about discouraged I could not sleep
till nearly midnight for I kept thinking
what a time I have had since I was
wounded

and another thing the poultice on my
wound seemed as if it would draw the bone
right out of my leg and I went to sleep
feeling about as bad as I have any time
since I was in the gangrene ward
when my wound was dressed this morning I
was almost afraid to look at it but when
I did I found that the black had all
disappeared and it looked just as nice as
I could have wished it too my spirits
began to revive right away and shortly after
I got your letter and after I read that I felt
about as well as the next fellow - I think
now the wound will begin to get better when I
came here there was a place about the size of this
mark I have made now it is more than
three times as big - one above and one below of
the old sore and quite as big - I have lain
in bed nearly all last week - I got up to write
this letter and I find that I am so nervous
that I can hardly write at all - as soon as
my wound begins to do well I shall get out
of bed for good - it was all I could do to stay
in bed last week but the wound dresser told me
if I wanted to get well I must keep still

they took the names for a transfer the 15th
but they would not take mine because I could not
walk to the depot but it was just as well
for those they did take have not been sent away
and I don't think they will till the next
transfer which will be the 1st of April and
then I shall be ready to go to and by that
time I think the river will be open and we
can go right to Prairie du Chemin on a boat
I am glad to hear you have all the milk and
butter you want and I want you to tell Fred
to take care of that calf for I want all the
cattle I can get to take out west when ever
I go - I was very glad to get that letter of
Charles I shall write to him this afternoon
or tomorrow - I see he likes to let it be known
what an important personage he is in the
4th Wis Cavalry. Well I hope he will
get to be somebody of importance some time
I want you to write as soon as you get this
for there is no danger of my going away very
soon Good Bye

Robert Richards



Atlanta Georgia
Monday Aug. 29th 1864

Dear Sister

I recd your letter of the sixteenth last Wednesday but as I had just written a letter to mother I thought I would wait a few days before answering yours - you wanted me not to forget the long letter I promised you and I am going to try and write now if I can think of ~~enough~~ enough to be called a long letter I told you in my last letter that I was going to write to Harriet but I have not done so yet but I think I will when I get this one finished - I don't know what to write next unless I write something about the women down south here - they come here in camp nearly every day some times you can see twenty in camp at once loaded down with apples peaches green corn a pig or two of butter milk once in a while a pint cup full of the poorest

hutter you ever saw—some times a
bag of potatoes— and cucumbers which
they sell at five cents a piece— they get
a great many tomatoes which they call
tomattuses— they always want to trade there
stuff for flour meat coffee sugar rice and
any thing that they can live on— the citizens
in this part of the country since our army
came here have lived on the over plus
rations the soldiers have had to sell
but what they will do now God only knows
for government is raising our wages out ~~off~~
down our rations so that we have but
very little more than we make use of our
selves and that little we are forbidden
by an order just issued to sell to citizens
except on certain days— the order has not been
put in force here at the bridge and since they
cannot go to town the women come here in
swarms— we have no way of weighing
groceries here so every thing is bought and
sold by measure and a pint cup is the

article used to decide the value of
what ever happens to be in market

| | | | | |
|---|-----------------|----------------------|-------------|---------|
| a | prist of butter | ^{is} called | pound worth | 50 cent |
| " | " | sugar | " | 25 " |
| " | " | coffee | half lb | 25 " |
| " | " | rice | " | 5 " |
| " | " | butter milk | " | 5 " |
| " | " | sweet milk | " | 10 " |
| " | " | bider | " | 5 " |

this will give you an idea of how we
deal down here in Dixie - this is the
greatest place for butter milk I ever
saw they bring in a barrel of butter
milk to sell to every pound of butter
and then the butter is about half milk
and as white as this paper
Some women that come in here are
educated well dressed well appearing as
you will see in any state and were before
the war independently rich at least a good
many of them say they were and I should
judge from their appearance and the costly

but what they say is true
some of them were
clothes

a young woman came here the other day
with some green corn to sell she was well
educated well dressed and was of a very mild
and quiet disposition she went all through
camp trying to sell her corn but without any
success - I could see by her looks it was
very humiliating to her to be peddling corn
to the Yankees - at last the officers cook
bought her corn out of pity for her and
he finally got into conversation with her
she said her folk were rich before the war
and that she had never done an hours
work in her life - she said the rebels left
her (and I think) her mother and sister
to live the best way they could - she said they
had nothing to live and nothing to get any
thing with and she said she believed they
would really have to starve - she felt
so bad that she cried like a child
so Harrie you can see what this war is doing
if the people of the north are seeing hard times
what are these poor people suffering not only
this one that I have mentioned but ^{many} every
family between here and Chattanooga is
in nearly the same situation that she is. Respect

[Part 1 of 3]

Transcribed items from the State of Wisconsin Historical Society. All original items handwritten, except as noted. Added comments and explanations in brackets and/or in red. Tildes (~) indicate each new item.

--transcribed by Rose Richards, great-great-grand daughter of Robert Richards Jr. in the Spring of 2000

[Typed donor letter accompanying the correspondence:]

Civil War Letters of Robert Richards

Robert Richards was the oldest son of Robert and Mary [Chase] Richards who were pioneers in Sauk City, Wis. Robert Senior was born in England and came to America about 1840. He came to Wisconsin with his bride, Mary Chase Richards and was an overseer for several years in land projects and Wisconsin river ferry service, largely associated with the Hungarian refugee, Count Harazthy. [Robert Richards Sr died in 1855.]

Robert Junior was born in 1844, having two brothers, Charles and Frederick, and a sister Caroline. Charles served in the Fourth Wisconsin Cavalry. The accompanying letters were written to the sister (mother of Elwood R. McIntyre, donor) and cover most of the period of his war duty--the ones sent to his Mother not being in existence. He was about 18 when he enlisted and his sister was born in 1848 and was therefore 4 years younger than he.

He enlisted from Adams county as a private in Co. E. He and his comrades were sent right into the battle of Shiloh without sufficient training, hence he was taken prisoner there and spent nearly a year in Confederate prisons in Tuscaloosa and Andersonville. None of the letters cover that period.

Later he was placed under parole and sent to Superior, Wis. to be interned according to the rules, waiting for an exchange. Enroute to the front again, he had a short furlough at home. At that time the family were living in some delapidated buildings on the site of Ft. Winnebago, Portage.

Late in 1864 he was wounded in the knee cap near Huntsville, Alabama. He was taken to a Federal hospital at Jeffersonville, Indiana and later transferred to Jefferson Barracks, Saint Louis. It took him nearly six months to recuperate and his sufferings and longing for home are told in some of the last letters written.

He lived to be a flour miller at Kilbourn City, Portage and other places and finally he moved to Chatfield, Minn. where he owned and operated Orion Mills, grinding buckwheat flour as a specialty.

Throughout his life he was troubled with his old wound and his leg never actually got straight and strong. His eldest son, Frederick, was manager of the Madison Gas & Electric Co. awhile in the early 1900's and Robert himself moved to Kansas to live with a son and died there along about 1925.

Madison, Wis., October 21, 1955

Elwood R. McIntyre [signature]

~

Benton Barracks, St Louis
Sunday, August 31st 1862

Dear Sister,

i received your letter of the 26th this morning and now take my pen in hand to write a few lines to you. i am glad to see how well you write. i think you must have went to school pretty steady and tried to learn to have got along as well as you have. i hope you have got along as well in arithmetic, geography and other things. i wish you would write a letter to me every week for you and Fred always write something interesting to me. it does me good to read anything that has happened at home among the folks that i am acquainted with. if it happened last spring it is new to me. so i wish you would write as often as you can and everything you can think of. tell me, if Charley writes home, how he gets along and if he is coming home. i am going to write a letter to him when i get this finished and try and get him to come home so that mother will not have so much to see to. i should think it was about time i had an answer to the letter i wrote to him, if he got it and mother seemed to think he would when hers got there. i wish Mrs. Bannister would look down here to Benton Barracks and and see what she can see, when she does that and tells just how things look and what is going on, i shall believe she is a seer and not before. i have been in Tennessee and i know it is a pretty long look from Wis. to Tenn. and after you get there you cant see a rod ahead of you for brush.

Sunday night, half past eight oclock

Dear Sister, i again take up my pen to try to finish my letter. i was taken with a chill about two oclock and had to stop writing about six oclock. the chill went off and a fever came on and has not quite left me yet. i have got to take some medicine at ten and i thought i would get a candle and finish writing. i hope mother wont pay [probably Enos] Dean a cent till after he fetches that share horse back and i would not promise to then. the three shillings is worth more to mother than the share horse. i think if mother could sell that sow for more than two dollars she had better pay loyd but if she cant she had better let him have her, for the money will be worth more to her than the sow.

i hope Andrew Pearsons [?] will write to me. i wish that some of the rest of the neighbors would write to me. i thought Brown was going to write but I havent heard anything of him yet. it costs a good deal for paper and stamps. after all, i have to buy 50 cents worth to put on the things i am going to mail to-morrow. the likness will take 25 cents worth, but i got the case for 25 cents less than the price, so i thought i could afford to buy stamps and send it in a case. [I understand that a private's pay was \$16 a month and that there was a stretch of at least four months when no pay was forthcoming.] Ed says it dont look a bit like me and i dont know but i will have it taken over again in the morning. if i do you will know it by my chain, my watch in my shirt pocket. write as often as you can and tell me all the news.

Good bye,
Robert Richards

~

Superior City
Nov 28th/62

Dear sister,

i recieved your letter of the 7th last night. i was glad to hear that mother got the money i sent her. i was glad that mother paid Dean so there will be no trouble wintering the cattle. i got a letter from Charley the other day. he wanted to know what i thought about buying the Lewis place, i wrote to him if mother thought it best he had better buy it. but i think after all it is best not to buy any land yet. i think if he wants to buy anything he had better buy young cattle. i think we shall be paid off about the first of January. the Lieut. told me the Capt. was going to start for Madison after the money about the 22 of December.

You need not be at all troubled about getting letters from me and too me for the mail comes in regular three times a week and has not missed but once in three years. i wish mother would send me a few stamps. i have not got but a few and if i dont get some i shall have to stop writing till i am paid off. direct your letters to superior City. i dont see what made you send this to Bayfield. write as soon as you get this. i think it is about time i had an answer from the letter i wrote the day we landed. i have no more to write at present and i want to wash 3 or 4 shirts today so i must bid you good bye.

from your Brother,
Robert Richards

Ed wants you to tell his folks he is all right.

~

[Stationery has emblem of a shield emblazoned with the stars and strips, sitting on a radiating five-pointed star with the words "NORTH," "SOUTH," "EAST," and "WEST" arranged like a compass.]

Benton Barracks, St Louis
Sept. 11th 1862

Dear sister,

i have just received your letter of the 4th and mothers too, and i thought i would answer you first. I was glad to hear that the indian panic has all blown over. i have been uneasy ever since i got your last letter for fear you might have trouble, but all such fears have vanished since i read your letter this afternoon. I expected to get a letter a day or two ago by mother saying in her last that she was going to write again the next day. I should think Campbell's folks would feel rather cheap for making such a fuss about the indians.

i am going to see about getting my discharge tomorrow. the committee meet every day at headquarters but there is no use in my going there yet awhile, for there is about forty ahead of me. they have to go there and get a ticket with your number on it and when your number is called, you can show your ticket and be examined. they are not going to give out any more tickets till day after tomorrow. I am going to be on hand then and get a ticket. i am going to do everything i can to get my discharge. i know i am entitled to it and am going to have it, if there is any such thing.

I have been pretty well for the last two or three days with the exception of the pain in my breast and side which has troubled me some, but not as much as it did a few days ago. i am going to send a couple of song books with these letters and i want you to put them away & keep them clean till I get home. there is some of the best songs in them i ever heard. i wish you would learn to sing the red white and blue, the star spangled banner. the boys used to sing these songs when we were in prison at Tuscaloosa and it seemed to me they were the best songs i ever heard. i hope mother wont let my old fiddle go, for if i get home i should like to play on it again. i dont see why Charley dont write to me. he must have received one of my letters and if he hadnt i should think he would have wrote any way when he found where i was. tell Fred i cant write to him this time so you must make this letter do for both of you. i hope you will write every week and tell me all the news there is. no news here for me to write only about myself and that dot amount to much, but i will try and write some thing when ever you write.

good bye for the present,
Robert Richards

~

Superior City Wis.
Dec. 9th 1862

Dear Sister, i received a letter from you today dated Nov. 26th. it is the first letter i have had since i got that one you sent to Bayfield. i began to think i never should get another letter from home. it seems by your letter you have moved some where but you dont tell where. i think there must be some letters on the road some where, for it has been nearly a month since wrote from here first and it seems to me this cannot be the first letter you have wrote. i have kept running to the post Office till i got discouraged and i swore i wouldn't write again till i got a letter. as good luck would have it, i got one today.

i think Charley has had a good offer and if [he] thinks [it] is so easy to be a soldier and a prisoner of war, why let him try it. i have one word to say. i guess by the time he lives on grass a week or two he wont like it so well. some folks cant learn anything unless they learn it by experience. wish you would write and let me know if you hear anything about the paroled prisoner being exchanged. let me know where you live and what Charley is going to do. Ed wants you to tell his folks he is all right. i am well and have been ever since i have been here. i am getting fat as a hog. i weigh 162 lb. it is so dark i shall have to stop writing, so good bye

from your Brother,
Robert Richards

~

Superior City Dec. 11th/62

Dear Sister, I received a letter today from you and one from Charley and i found out today where you had moved to. Charley said in his letter that he was going to see a man to make a bargain with him to go as a substitute. I dont think he will make out much at that because the men that are drafted are sound men and they will not take him in the place of a sound man. but i dont think he can do better than to go if he can get one or two hundred dollars. if i had my discharge i would go in a minute. i could stand it for nine months easy enough.

i should like to have seen how Chesebro [?] looked when he was drafted.

I am glad you have got back to the Pepper mill again. i think if Charley stays to home you will get along a great deal better there than you would in town, for you will have a good garden and if Charley is a mind to, he can raise a good deal off of six acres. i think 11 dollars is plenty cheap enough. if it wasn't for Bill Campbell's folks, i would as soon live there as any place i know of. we have been boarding at the tavern till yesterday. the boys got dissatisfied with there living at the tavern, so they drew there rations seperately and have hired there board at private houses around. i board with a dutch family. i have to pay 50 cents a month. the same as i did at the tavern. some of the boys pay 50 cents a week and have milk and butter to use and get only two meals a day, when i get three, which makes up for the milk and butter.

i am getting pretty hard up for every thing. i am out of tobacco and out of stamps. i am going to put the last stamp on this letter. i have run in debt for a hat. i hated to wear that old hat all winter that i wore when i was to home. they have not got any caps large enough for me or i should have drawn [requested] one. i expect i can get tobacco there at the same store where i got my hat and he will wait till pay day, but i cant get stamps. the letter i got from you today went to Bayfield. one of our boys was down there and he brought it up here. answer this immediately and let me know whether Charley is going away or not. i wrote to Charley to send me that fife book i got off Bill Campbell. if he hasnt sent it, i wish you would. remember and send your likenesses as quick as you can.

Robert Richards

~

Superior City, Janry 1st 1863

Dear Sister,

I received a letter from you today dated the 21st of Dec. it seems you have had quite exciting times around home. I dont see why Brown didnt thrash Old Parker when he swore at him. I expect Bill would have done it, if it had not been for Mrs. Brown.

The Capt. got a letter from Madison today Ordering us to report to Madison right away. it seem to be an order indirectly from Col. Beale of the 18th regt. but the Capt. says he is not going to comply with it. he says if they was fool enough to send us up here with nine months provisions, he is just fool enough to stay here and eat them up.

I dont see how they expect we are too get to Madison. we could not carry our clothes and rations enough to last us to St. Paul [?] for there is no team here we could get to carry our things, but I dont think there is any danger of our leaving here till Spring. I do not feel very well today. I had the awfulest head ache yesterday I ever had in my life. I did not get to sleep till about ten oclock last night. They are going to give the soldiers a supper tonight and we have been to work to fix up a room. we have got it fixed up with flags, evergreens, red white and blue ribbons and I dont know what not. the citizens are fetching in dishes and the eatables now and I expect we shall have a pretty good supper.

good bye,
Robert Richards

~

Superior City, Janry 8th/63

Dear Sister,

I rec'd a letter from you last Tuesday and today I got one from you and mother and Charleys likeness. I think this one looks exactly like him. I am going to send you the one you sent to me first. I have not got stamps enough to send the one i got today. I had to get a new crystal put in my watch and that took some of the money you sent to me. I hope we shall have some money by and by. They are making out the pay rolls and the Lieut. is going to start for Madison in a few days. I have just wrote a letter to Charley but I don't expect he will get it. you want to know what kind of a time we had there. Christmas we did not have much of a time here, unless you call standing guard over two or three drunken men a good time, but we had a grand time here new years. I told you about it when I wrote to you last saturday. I have no more to write now. write to me as often as you can.

from your brother,
Robert Richards

~

[Enclosure with letter of Jan. 8th 1863]

Dear Carrie--if you have got a Geography I wish you would send me a list of the names of all the states with the square miles and populations of each and the population of ten or 15 of the largest Cities in the united states. And the date of your geography--get as late a one as you can. --Robert Richards

~

Superior, January 22nd 1863

Dear Sister,

I received your letter mailed the 15th today. it is the best letter I have had in a good while and I wish you would send such a one every mail. I am sorry you can not get along any better in arithmetic, but you must have patience and find the rules of division. when you get so you can do and sum, you can do all of them. you want to know how I get along without any one to show me. we have got two school teachers in the Company and one of them is as good a fellow as ever lived and he shows me how to do sums and sets copies for me. you seem to think I can write pretty well. I expect that letter was the last one I wrote before I spoilt my gold pen. since that I have not tried to write with these old steel pens. I sent to you for that pen. I give you if it was not spoilt. as I have not heard anything about it, I expect the letter is lost. I wish you would send it and send that old fiddle book, if it is not all to peices. you want to know how far I have got in arithmetic. I have got to fractions. you want to know which I would rather fight the indians or the rebels. I would rather fight the indians for I shall not die till my time comes, whether I fight indians or rebels and if I am up hear, I shall not be sick and suffer as I should if I was down south. I hope you will not get your likeness taken till you get one that is good looking. write as soon as possible.

Robert Richards

~

Superior City, Feby 5th [1863]

Dear Sister,

I recieved your letter mailed the 28th. Ed got a letter the other day from his mother and she told him that mother had gone to Madison and that Charley was sick. I am sorry to hear that Charley is sick and that mother has gone to Madison for it must cost a good deal. but if he gets the small pox, I shall not be sorry that she went, for it is very little care any one gets in the hospitals. this is the first letter I have had since a week ago last tuesday. I should have written before but I did not get any stamps till yesterday and I thought I would wait till the mail came in today.

I have sold my gold pen for ten shilling for I could not write very well with it and I thought it was as much as it was worth. write as soon as possible.

from your brother,
Robert Richards

~

Superior City, Feby 8th/63

Dear Sister,

in accordance with my promise, I must write to day. as mother is not at home, I will have to write to you. I have nothing of importance to write. there is nothing going on here to keep up any excitement. it is almost as dull as Oxford. we have Singing Schools here and a Lyceum and meeting Sundays and that is all and that is enough unless they are better. I expected to get a letter from mother yesterday but was disappointed. I should think she would write from Madison and let me know how Charley is getting along. write as soon as possible.

Robert Richards

~

Superior City, Feby 15th [1863]

Dear Sister,

I rec'd a letter from you last thursday with a paper, and a paper and song book yesterday. I have not rec'd a letter from mother since she went to Madison. I sent you a copy of the paper that is printed here a few days ago. I have no news to write this time. we are going to work at the stockade tomorrow so as to be ready for the indians if they attack us in the spring. the citizens are going to help us, so I think we shall be prepared, for they do not come till they are going to. they say they are coming when the grass gets big enough for there horses to live on. all we know about it is what the indians tell us here and we cant tell whether there is any truth in it or not, but it is best to be ready for them.

I hope you will send me that other paper if you have got one that I have not read. I like to study out the puzzles in them. I have found out the puzzles in these i have got.

I have no more to write at present, so good bye for this time.

from your brother,
Robert Richards

~

Superior City, April
Sunday, 12th/63

Dear Sister,

it is some time since I have written to you and I have concluded to write to you today. I haven't much to write but a letter is a letter if it has but two lines.

Our Lyceum and Singing schools have closed on account of the evening being so short.

I have not rec'd a letter from mother since I wrote last.

the weather is getting very warm here now. the snow is all gone and the ice is going out of the bay very fast. the schooner that laid over on the point all winter was brought across the bay to the warehouse to be repaired and loaded and I suppose it will start out from her in a few days.

I am going to send you some verses composed by our poet. They were sung at the last lyceum after a

lecture on the cause of the rebellion. There were some more verses called the parting hymn sung, but I could not get a copy of them. if I can get a copy of them, I will send them to you.

write as often as you can and send me all the papers you can get.

good bye for now,
R. Richards

~

[Enclosure poem and Quibble]
[Printed poem, long and narrow, with ornate border.]

BEWARE OF SOUTHERN PRISONS
By W. F. WILDER, 18th Wisconsin Volunteers,
A PAROLED PRISONER

Now soldiers your attention,
A story I'll relate,
About the Southern prisons
And of a prisoner's fate.

CHORUS--Now Jeff you'll surely pay for this.
And that before 'tis long,
Your neck get ready for the rope,
Old Abe is pressing on.

'T was on the sixth of April,
As very well you know,
Our force it was surrounded
And taken by the foe.

They marched us off to Corinth,
Through mud six inches deep,
And stowed us into freight cars
Full fifty in a heap.

And thus we rode to Memphis;
The road was rough as sin,
And many oaths were uttered,
And many more kept in.

They thought to starve the Yankees
No grub did we receive,
Untill we got to Memphis,
And this was Tuesday eve.

They arrested Gen. Prentiss,
Because he made a speech,
And told them in plain English,
What Davis did'nt teach.

From here we went to Mobile,
Hoping there to stay,
But they shipped us up the river
At early dawn of day.

The boat was old and rotten,
The pumps they would'nt work.
The darkies they were lazy,
From labor they did shirk.

Three days and nights we suffered
On board this rotten craft,
And arrived at Tuscaloosa
With prisoners fore and aft.

They marched us up to prison,
Exulting loud and high,
They here had Lincoln's army,
The Union now must die.

They kept us here and starved us,
For thirty days or more,
They fed us all on mule meat
That well might walk on four.

The prison rules were rigid,
And each we must obey,
None could look from windows
Nor near the windows stay.

They shot two noble fellows
Who fought on Shiloh's field,
And many more were threatened,
And they through fear did yield.

The vermin gathered round us,
In filth and dirt we lay,
And many fell the victims
Of grief and sore dismay.

Now soldiers in the army,
One word of kind advice,
Beware of Southern prisons--
Beware of Southern lice.

Don't let the rebels take you,
To the river don't you run,
But fight like gallant soldiers
Till victory you have won.

~
Helena, Arkansas
Sept. 24th/63

Dear Carrie,

I rec'd your letter today, but as I had wrote the day before I thought I would wait till I got your likeness which you said you was going to send that week. but as it did not come in yesterdays mail, I have concluded to answer your last letter. I think Fred's likeness is the best he has had taken. he looks though as if he had been sick. I hope you will send yours and it will be as good a one as Fred's. I hae been on the sick list ever since I got your letter, but I am getting better and shall go on duty tomorrow if nothing happens.

when I wrote to you before, we were camped up above town. we are now about half a mile below town on the bank of the river. they have given us tents but we have nothing but one rubber blanket a peice which makes rather a poor bed, and it is almost cold enough to freeze here nights and hot enough to roast a fellow day times. it is very sickly here. there is a great many of the boys got the ague [fever and shivering chills]. The 25th Wis. is here and have got about 800 men in the regt. and only 95 fit for duty.

Sept. 25

I had to stop writing yesterday for there was an order come that we should strike our tents, which we did and they were sent up white river to Little Rock for the soldiers there. and we had to go in to the woods and get brush to make sheds to keep the sun off for it would almost kill any one to lay in the hot sun here. there is not a tree or bush within a mile. I do not feel as well today as I did yesterday. the report is this morning that our things have been sent for at Vicksburg and when they get here are going up the river either to Memphis or to reinforce Rosecrans and I dont care as long as we keep going up the river. I hope you will write just as often as if we were at Vicksburg. I shall get your letters if you direct via Cairo [Illinois]. I dont expect we shall be paid off till Oct. but I hope you will try and get along as well as you can.

~

[Enclosed in R. Richards to C. Richards 1863, April 12; printed lyrics]

A SOLDIERS APPEAL
BY W. F. WILDER
Air.-America

Let patriots now awake!
And each fresh courage take,
Resist the foe!

Our cause we must maintain,
Though millions more are slain;
Our hopes are not in vain,
Though blood shall flow.

Our fathers fought and bled,
On us rich blessings shed,
Ne'er let them fade!

In union let us stand
 'Till peace is made.

Though traitor bands unite,
In treason take delight,
 Firm let us stand!
Our cause we know is just,
In God we'll ever trust,
And fight, if fight we must,
 On sea, or land.

With union for our prize,
We'll look with longing eyes
 'Till peace return;
We'll sing of vict'ries won
When treason's race is run,
'Till then, with sire and son,
 Let freedom burn.

Though Sumpter's wall displays
To traitors fiendish gaze,
 The stars and bars;
The Union flag shall wave,
O'er treason's self made grave,
though patriots blood shall bathe
 Those strips and stars.

J. D. Lindley, Printer

[separate newspaper clipping "quibble"]

The following is ingenious, as a specimen of two meanings in the same words, after the manner of the old revolutionary quibble, in which King George was at once denounced and applauded. The one sense is found in reading the two columns, the other in reading across, as if there was but one:--

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| I always did intend | To take me a wife, |
| Single my life to spend, | Would grieve my very life, |
| It much delighteth me | To think upon a bride, |
| To live from woman free, | I can't be satisfied. |
| It's sure a happy life | 'Tis woman is the thing |
| To live without a wife. | Such troubles on us bring |
| A female to my mind | The joy I can't express |
| I ne'er expect to find | So great in singleness |
| A bachelor to live | I never could agree |
| My mind I freely give | A married man to be. |

[Civil War Letters of Robert Richards Jr, Part 2 of 3, 1864]

Transcribed items from the State of Wisconsin Historical Society. All original items handwritten, except as noted. Added comments and explanations in brackets and/or in red. Tildes (~) indicate each new item.

--transcribed by Rose Richards, great-great-grand daughter of Robert Richards Jr. in the Spring of 2000

~

Huntsville Alabama

January 4th 1864

Dear Sister,

I rec'd your letter of the 21st with your likeness this evening and take this opportunity to answer it--your likeness looks first-rate. much better than I expected, but there is one thing would have improved your looks a great deal and that is head dress of some kind. when I get my pay again, I will send you the money for another and when you have it taken, I want you to sit in the same position you did for this one for I think it looks as well as any you can ever have taken. those gloves mother sent to me have not come yet. I got the letter she sent the same time new years eve. I am afraid they are lost some where on the road for one of our boys got a pair the night I got the letter and he got a letter that was sent the same day the gloves were sent. but I will not give them up as lost yet awhile for I have had papers some three weeks behind the letters that was sent with them.

I am glad to hear that mother has found that can at last. although a can is not worth a great deal, it is quite a loss for me.

There is a great excitement here about enlisting in the veteran service. We have had orders read to us every evening on dress parade about the bounty pay and the furloughs that are to be granted to veterans. there [are] five or six companies that have nearly all gone into the veteran service. There is but two or three of our Co. going into it. for 1 - I would not enlist again for three years for all the money I could carry. I think three years of a man's life is enough to give his country. if it is not, at least it is all I can afford to give for it is actually throwing away so much of his life. there is a great many of the boys that are enlisting for the sake of the furlough, but I do not want a furlough of thirty days. bad enough to enlist for two years longer.

One year longer and I shall get a furlough for life to go where and when I please and will not be obliged to live on hard crackers and stinking beans. I hope, Carrie, you will keep in good spirits till that time comes and then I will get a better home for you and mother and I think we can live better than you could if you had the [___?___]

I have no more to write now and it is almost time for letters to be out. besides that I have got to go on guard tomorrow, so I will bid you good night with the request that you will answer this as soon as possible.

from your Brother,
Robert Richards

To Miss
Caroline Richards

~

Huntsville Ala Jan. 20th/64

Dear Sister,

I rec'd your letter of the 10th of Jan. night before last, together with four newspapers. the gloves have not yet made their appearance and I had about given them up for good till last night one of our boys got a pair of gloves from home that had been on the road six weeks. so I think mine may come yet. if they dont come pretty soon they may stay away, for the cold weather will soon be over with and they will only add to the weight of my knapsack.

I rec'd somebodys likeness and can guess who the original is, not because the likeness looks any like her, but by what you said about it in your letter. I am going to write to Charley and I guess I will send it to him.

I rec'd the stamps you sent to me and they came just in time too for I was just out of stamps.

I see by the papers that you are having some pretty cold weather up in Wisconsin. The coldest day we had here was new years day. I was on guard that day and I thought should freeze. every one thought the mercury was 10 or 15 degrees below zero, but instead of that, it was 17 degrees above. where ever it was, it about seem to me I ever suffered more with the cold up north. I suppose the reason is that our blood is in a different state here in this warm climate than it is up north. and another reason why we felt the cold so much was the sudden change. The day before new years the mercury was up to 70, which I suppose is warmer than you have seen in some time.

yesterday morning we got up and found the ground covered with snow to the depth of half an inch, which is the deepest snow we have had this winter and that all disappeared before night. the weather has not been very cold for the past few days, but the weather is so changeable that you can make no calculations on it. one day it will be froze up tight as a drum and the next to warm to wear a coat. I have tried to draw [requisition] an overcoat but have not succeeded yet, and if I dont get it pretty soon I will not get any at all for if I cant send [the coat] home, I shall have to throw it away if we have any marching to do. I wish you could take a walk through the town and see some of the gardens and walks in front of some of the dwellings in this place. you never read a description of any such things that can beat these gardens here. I dont know the names of the trees and shrubbery. they are green now as they are in summer. some gardens have got marble statues. they are enclosed with a handsome iron fence. inside is a hedge as high as the fence. it is trimmed so that it looks like a green wall about two feet thick. the houses are not as good as they are up north. there is quite a number of citizens here. more than I have seen in any other town in the south. there are niggers here without number and they have a dance about every night. the other night I was on guard and we went to a dance to get some boys that were there. the black cusses had been dancing some time and got pretty well warmed up and if they didnt smell strong. I can judge of skunk. the room smelt worse than our house did in Jackson when I shot that skunk. I guess I have wrote enough for this time, so I will quit. write often as you can.

Robert Richards

Robert Richards

Co. E 18th Regt. WV [Wisconsin Volunteers]

Alabama

~

Huntsville Ala

Jan. 27th 1864

Dear Sister,

I rec'd your letter of the 15th last night. I came off of guard this morning and will not have to drill till this afternoon and I improve the few leisure hours by writing to you and Charley if I have time. and if I dont I must take time, as you say, for I have neither written to him or heard from him since we have been here. I am glad that mother is going to get her state money for there is no show for our getting paid very soon. the Veterans are getting discouraged about getting home. there dont seem to be any show for there getting home till next summer and I can see by the way they talk that they are sorry they enlisted and I dont blame them, for I no I should regret of it if I had been such a fool.

You want to know what I think about your going to live at Congers [?]. I will tell you I dont want you to do any such thing. You and mother need not trouble about my reenlisting. I am as anxious to get out as any one can be and I intend to go out west and get me a farm when I do get out and then I think I can enjoy myself first rate and you and mother could too.

the rebs a hovering around us here. our cavelry scouts have had a few skirmishes with them. the rebel Gen Readdy took a town called Athens the other day. yesterday our cavelry went out there captured 400 rebs and drove the rest across the river, so I guess now they will let us alone a little while. the rebs are deserting and coming in here every day. they take the oath of alleigence and go north. the most of them live in Tennessee and Kentucky and some in this state.

We are having fine weather here. it is almost as warm here now as it is up north in the summer. We do not have any fire in our room and it is to warm to be comfortable then.

We have had to live on short rations since we have been here, but they have got the bridge finished at Brownsboro and the [railroad] cars are expected in here today, so I expect after this we shall get the mail regular besides getting full rations, which is a matter of great importance to soldiers. I have finally come to the conclusion that the gloves mother sent to me are lost, for have certainly had time to get here if they were coming.

I got the two newspapers and extra [edition] night before last, that mother sent me.

I have no more to write now, so good bye. write as soon as you can and let me know how you are getting along.

Robert Richards

~

Whitesburg Alabama
Sunday, June 12th 1864

Dear Sister,

I rec'd your letter of the 5th night before last and yesterday morning I went on picket, so I could not answer it untill today. I am very glad to hear that you are going to school, which I hope you will continue to do every day this summer that it is possible for you to go. I am glad to see you improve in writing as you have since you wrote the letter before this. and if you are getting along as fast with your other studies, you will soon have a good education.

I have not rec'd a letter from Charley since he left home but I suppose he is waiting till they get into camp. We were paid the fourth of this month. I sent mother ten dollars that day, which she has rec'd by this time I

suppose. The sixth I sent her another letter with twenty dollars in it and the same day I sent Jim Roberts five dollars. if mother gets the thirty dollars I sent her and gets her state money, it might make you comfortable for some time or untill I get my pay again.

Do you remember where I was a year ago today. I'll tell you. I found you a year ago this morning at that God forsaken old shanty [in] Portage. if I ever find you in another such an old shed I will burn the cussed old thing down. What a nice pleasant day that was that I got home and here today it has been raining ever since 5 o'clock. but that is nothing strange for this country, for it has rained every day for the last two weeks and it looks as if it would rain six or eight weeks longer.

We were on picket yesterday on the bank of the river and I and another of Co. E set a lot of fish hooks, but nary fish did we catch, but to make up for it we caught four soft shelled turtles and we cleaned one and fixed him for supper. it tasted exactly like fish. we got one a few days before and boiled it and it tasted so near like chicken that you could not tell the difference. When I get home I am going to catch every one I can find and have you cook them. you ought to see the peices of meat squirm when you put them into a pan and put salt on them. but it is getting dark and I must stop writing. write as soon as you can and let me know how you are getting along at school and tell me too how Fred is getting along at school.

Good bye for this time,
from your brother,
R. Richards

~

In Camp near Stevenson
June 29th 1864

Dear Sister,

I rec'd your letter of the 19th night before last. We did not expect to stay here longer than that night, but we are going to stay here till tonight. We are then going to Stevenson, take the [rail] cars and go to the front--or as some say (and I hope it is true) guard some place on the railroad. I am glad you are getting along so well at school. I did not suppose Fred was getting along so well as he is in reading and arithmetic. I think as you do, that the reason he does not learn to write faster is because he is left-handed, but I think he will soon get over that. if he is obliged to leave school, you might to set copies for him and have him practice writing at home so that he will not forget what little he learns at school. I am glad mother had that hay cut, for it will go a little way towards wintering the cattle next winter.

you want to know what I say about your going to take care Mrs. Magppins [?] children. I say let the young ones go to the devil and take care of themselves and you go to school every day that you can. I got a portage paper with your letter dated June 4th. I think it must be the one that was sent with a letter I got at Whitesburg. I have wrote to mother since we have been here and I think I shall write to Charley today, but I hardly know where to direct it to for they say our men have left Baton Rouge. I hardly think that report is true. the day before we left Huntsville I went over where the 6th Wis. Battery was camped and found an old friend there. it was Bill Harrington. he belongs to that Battery and the Battery belongs to our Brigade, so we shall not be far apart where ever we go. he came down here last Jan. and was there at the court house lots of times to see the boys and I never happened to come across him till just before we left Huntsville and I shouldnt have found him then if it hadnt been for Ed McDougal. they say there has been an order just issued to muster out all non-veterans three years from date of enlistment. so next new year you can calculate I am making tracks for Wisconsin. six months more. it looks a great way off and our going to the front makes it look darker still, but I dont know but our prospects are as bright as they were last fall when

we were on the march for Chattanooga. we got through without the loss of a man and we may this fall. there is one thing sure--the reg't will go home this fall and we shall have a good time for a couple of months while they are gone and if we go home with the reg't (which a great many think we will), we shall have a better time yet.

I can think of no more to write now, so good bye. write as soon as possible and direct to Bridgeport or elsewhere.

Robert Richards

~

Altona Creek, Georgia
Saturday, July 30/64

Dear Sister,

As I have not rec'd a letter from you or Mother in some time, I have come to the conclusion to write to you and wake you up and see if I cant get you to write a little oftener than you have done lately. I wrote to Mother about a week ago and have rec'd no letter from home since then. I rec'd a letter from Charley day before yesterday dated July 2nd. He says he got to be Commissary Sergeant and is having a first rate easy time and I do not doubt it for he has got a first rate position. for my part, I dont see how he has got promoted so fast, but here in the army such fellows as he is will get promoted a dozen times where more steady ones wont get promoted once. A person to get promotion here must have a good gift of gab and Charley is certainly not lacking in that respect.

I answered his letter yesterday and directed to Baton Rouge but I expect he is either at Vicksburg or with that expedition that left N. Orleans and was supposed to be going to fortress Monroe. when he wrote they were expecting to go to Vicksburg and I think there is where he is now.

We are still here guarding the railroad bridge but they say our Co. is going back to town to join the reg't again. I hope they will let us stay here for I have got well now and just begin to enjoy myself out here in the woods alone by ourselves, but I suppose they will move us. for if they see any one taking a little comfort, they are sure to put a stop to it if they can.

If you see a paper with a full account of how Gen. McPherson was killed, I wish you would send it to me for all these cussed papers say is that he was shot on such a day through the lungs. Our reg't used to be in his Corps and the boys think he was the best man in the United states.

the veterans are in mighty good spirits. they have heard that the 26th Missouri, veterans reg., was not sent home till their old time was out and now they are going to be mustered out. and our veterans are in hopes they will keep them till after their old term is out so that they will be discharged this winter. there aint one but would give all he has got if they could get out of the scrape. but they will find they are not going to get out as easy as that and since they have said so much to me, I hope they will have to serve out there full time.

write as often as you can. I have no stamps and will have to get my letters franked until you send me some stamps or I get where I can get stamps.

I can think of no more to write now, so bye for the present.

from your Brother,
Robert Richards

To
Miss Caroline Richards

~

Altoona Georgia
Monday, Aug. 29th 1864

Dear Sister,

I rec'd your letter of the sixteenth last Wednesday, but as I had just written a letter to mother, I thought I would wait a few days before answering yours. you wanted me not to forget the long letter I promised you and I am going to try and write now if I can think of enough to be called a long letter. I told you in my last letter that I was going to write to Harriet, but I have not done so yet, but I think I will when I get this one finished. I dont know what to write next unless I write something about the women down south here. they come here in camp nearly every day. some times you can see twenty at once loaded down with apples, peaches, green corn, a jug or two of buttermilk, once in a while a pint cup full of the poorest butter you ever saw, some times a bag of potatoes. and cucumbers which they sell at five cents a peice. they fetch a great many tomatoes which they call tomattuses. they always want to trade there stuff for flour, meat, coffee, sugar, rice and anything that they can live on. the citizens in this part of the country, since our army came here, have lived on the over plus [surplus] rations the soldiers have had to sell, but what they will do now, God only knows. for the government is raising our wages, cut down our rations so that we have but very little more than we make use of our selves and that little we are forbidden, by an order just issued, to sell to citizens except on certain days. the order has not been put in force here at the bridge and since they cannot go to town, the women come here in swarms. we have no way of weighing groceries here, so every thing is bought and sold by measure and a pint cup is the article used to decide the value of whatever happens to be in market.

a pint of butter is calculated a pound worth 50 cent

| | | | | | |
|-----|------------|---|----------|---|------|
| a " | " sugar | " | " | " | 25 " |
| " " | " coffee | " | half lb. | " | 5 " |
| " " | " rice | " | " | " | 5 " |
| " " | buttermilk | " | " | " | 5 " |
| " " | sweet milk | " | " | " | 10 " |
| " " | Cider | " | | | 5 " |

this will give you an idea of how we deal down here in dixie. this is the greatest place for buttermilk I ever saw. they bring in a barrel of butter milk to sell to every pound of butter and then the butter is about half milk and as white as this paper. some women that come in here are as well educated, well dressed, well appearing as you will see in any state and were, before the war, independently rich, at least a great many of them say they were. and I should judge from their appearance and the costly clothes some of them wear that what they say is true.

a young woman came here the other day with some green corn to sell. she was well educated, well dressed and was of a very mild and quiet disposition. she went all through camp trying to sell her corn, but without any success. I could see by her looks it was very humiliating to her to be peddling corn to the yankees. at last, the officers cook bought her corn out of pity for her and he finally got into conversation with her. she said her folk were rich before the war and that she had never done an hours work in her life. she said the

rebels left her (and I think) her mother and sister to live the best way they could. she said they had nothing to live [on] and nothing to get any thing with, and she said she believed they would really have to starve. she felt so bad that she cried like a child. so, Carrie, you can see what this war is doing. if the people of the north are seeing hard times, what are these poor people suffering. not only this one that I have mentioned, but nearly every family between here and Chattanooga is nearly the same situation that she is.

Robert

~

[No date or place, may be another page enclosed with last letter.]

I will now tell you about the poor class of women, some of which are so ignorant I dont believe they can tell their right hand from the left. they are poorly dressed. the most of them being barefooted. there was three old women stopped at our cook shanty one day to get a drink of coffee and something to eat. one of them looked a good deal like aunt Cindy and another a good deal like Mrs. Hyat. one of them asked us if we were yankees. we told them we were not. "Wal," said she. "I didnt think you was cause you look just like we 'ans." One of the boys then asked her what state she supposed the yankees came from. "Wal," she said. "thars George Owens, he's a yankee, and we axed him whar they came from and he said they came from yankum." she said George Owens owned a grist mill and they used to go there to get flour and that is all we know about him. I guess I have said enough about the women down here, so I will drop them for there is not one in a dozen can read or write or tell the difference between ten cents and fifty in postage [?] currency.

I said in my last letter to Mother that our reg. had gone to Chattanooga. we have since heard that they left Chattanooga with a force of about six thousand with 20 days ration to go to Knoxville to clean out old Wheeler who is in there tearing up the railroad. we were very lucky once in our lives. in being here, we escaped a long march and it may be a fight. there are some rebs around here yet but they do not trouble us any. last Friday night they fixed an iron on the track which ran the trains off, killing four and wounding thirteen. they began to fire into the trains as soon as it stopped, but a lot of the 9th Ohio cavelry being on board with their seven shooters, the rebs soon got sick of that fun and left.

I got the stamps you sent in your letter and the next day I got a sentinel and register [newspapers]. I have not had a letter from Charley in a long while. I dont see what the reason is he dont write. I want you to answer this as soon as you get it--and tell me all you can hear about the Richardses or any one else, for it will be interesting to me although it may not seem so to you. I cant think for the life of me who lib stirling is. there is a good many names mother has mentioned in her letters that I do not know from adam. I believe I have wrote about enough. I guess I have lost my dinner now for I am at the picket post writing, as it is quiet here and shady. I heard them holler dinner, but I thought I would finish writing. Now you write a long letter.

Good bye, your brother,
Robert Richards

~

Altoona Creek Ga.
Monday, Sept. 12th/64

Dear Sister,

I rec'd your letter of the 28th of last month last night, also the portage paper and a letter from Charley mailed Aug. 9th. he said he had not rec'd a letter from me since he had been home. I dont see what the reason is, for I have written three or four since we have been here.

It is a year today that we left Vicksburg for Helena. how quick this summer has passed away, but how it will be with the next four month[s] I dont know. New Years seems a great way off and when I think of what we went through with last fall between the 12th of Sept. and New Years, it seems as if I never should get home.

We heard yesterday that our division was going to be relieved and was going to Atlanta to join our Corps and it may be the luckiest thing that could happen to us, for I think all the rebels will try [to] do now here in Georgia will be to destroy our communications and, in that case, I would rather be with the main army than to be guarding such a post as this on the Rail Road. And I think if we get to our corps that the veterans will be sent home and a great many think the non veterans will be taken to the state [where they are from] when the veterans go, as the time of a good many of them will expire before the reg. gets back. but if we dont go with the reg. we will have a first rate while they are gone. One hundred and nine days is not a great while and if I dont run against a rebs bullet, I guess I can stand it.

I am pretty lucky this fall. I am well and never felt better in my life, while nearly all the boys are have a turn at the ague--some times 7 or 8 are down with it at once. the last we heard of the reg. they had relieved a reg. of 100 day men that were stationed up near Murfreesboro.

I can think of nothing more to write now. Write as soon and often as possible and I will do the same. I am going to write to Charley now.

from your Brother,
Robert Richards

if you can get a portage paper with a list of the drafted, send it to me

~

Altoona Ga.
Oct. 27th 1864

Dear Sister,

I rec'd your letter mailed the fifteenth last night. I expected before I opened the letter it was an answer to one I wrote since I was wounded [October 5], but it seems you had heard nothing of it when it was written. You say that Mrs. Roberts would not let Fred have the cattle. if I do not come home on furlough, I will write to her about it. and if I do come home, why let her keep them till I get there and I will go get them. if she has [fed?] them any between now and then I shall not pay her anything for it.

You say Desire [Dean] has got married to Chamberlain at Briggsville. I think she made a great bargain when she got him. I never expected she was to marry any such fellow as he is. if such a fellow as he is can get married, I should think almost any one can. [Robert Richards Jr later marries Desire's sister, Esthma Ida Dean.] I got a letter from Hellen Roberts. I think it was dated Sept. 1st. She said she had a secret to tell me, that was if nothing happened Desire was going to be married to Chamberlain. she did not want me to write home any thing about it and, as she had told me the secret, I thought it would not be fair if I did not keep it.

We have been expecting to go to Chattanooga ever since I wrote last yesterday morning. We sat up, had our breakfast and were ready to start by six O'clock, but Gen. Smith telegraphed to the Dr. to keep the sick and wounded till after the road was completed.

That may be in two or three days and it may not be till next week. our furloughs went to Corps Headquarters two or three days ago and if they come back approved we shall soon be on the road home. I hope we shall stay here till the furloughs get back, but if we dont we shall go to Chattanooga and stay there till they come. there may something turn up that I cannot come home, so you must not calculate to much on my coming home. but I dont think there is much doubt but I shall be at home sometime in November. My wound is healing up very fast and I dont know but it will spoil my furlough yet but if it does I dont care. I dont think much of Mary Sandfords advice about voting. if I get a chance, I shall vote for Old Abe.

I have just read over your letter again and found that you had heard there had been a fight here and hoped I was not in it. I suppose you know by this time that I was in it and did not come out with a whole hide. as it was, it was the best thing for me that I didnt. I dont think you had better write to me for I may be on the road home before a letter could get here.

Good bye now till you here from me again. I may drop in some morning and then I will take that cup of coffee you spoke about.

from your Brother,
Robert Richards

[Civil War Letters of Robert Richards Jr, Part 3 of 3, 1865]

Transcribed items from the State of Wisconsin Historical Society. All original items handwritten, except as noted. Added comments and explanations in brackets and/or in red. Tildes (~) indicate each new item.

--transcribed by Rose Richards, great-great-grand daughter of Robert Richards Jr. in the Spring of 2000

Jefferson Hospital, Ward 10

Sunday, Jan. 1st 1865

Dear Sister,

It has been a long time since I have written to you and I thought I should try and write you a letter today and let you know how I am getting along. I have left the gangrene ward and am in ward ten (10) where I want you to direct my letters after this. The Dr. in the gangrene ward is one of the best little fellows that ever lived. he is from Michigan and his name is C. L. Randall. the gangrene has been out of my wound for three weeks, but I had the chills and he would not let me go away for fear I would get into some ward that had a poor Dr. when I was the sickest I told him I wanted him to cure me for my time was about out. says he "never you fear, I'll straighten you out old fellow" and he has. he has knocked the chills higher than a kite and is still giving me medicine to keep them there. Dr. Randall was appointed Dr. for ward 10 a few days ago, so he had me brought over hear where he could look after me instead of sending me back to ward 21. I rec'd your letter of the 21st and Mothers of the 25th last Thursday or Friday, but I had just wrote a letter to Mother so I thought I should not answer them right away. I was glad to get the money and envelopes. I wanted to buy a pencil so I could write when I was a mind to, but I hadnt money enough till the letters came. I have got me a pencil now and Mother says she is going to write twice a week and I will do the same if I can get paper and envelopes.

My wound is looking pretty well. I am gaining strength slowly. My appetite is pretty good and on the gain. Take it all around, I think I am doing about as well as I could expect. Mother talks foolish when she says she would come down to see me and take me home if Charley would only send money. her coming hear to see me would not heal my wound any and, as for getting me, she could get the state of Indiana just as easy. I am in the service yet, you must remember. if Charley sends any money, I hope Mother will put it to some better use than spending it coming down here to get me, for it will be money thrown away.

I have to write lying on my back in bed with my paper on an old book cover. I am going to take a peice of paper and mark out the size and shape of my wound so you can see what the burning done while I was in the gangrene ward. when I went there it was about as large as a silver half dollar. the marks running towards the center is to show how deep it is. at the place where the marks are made.

I have no more to write, so good bye. write as often as possible and direct to ward 10.

From your Brother,
Robert Richards

~

[enclosure note with sketch of knee wound]

the wound I think is nearly one inch longer than I have marked it, but I have done as well as I could. that double mark is to show where it has eat in under. but I did not have room there either. it is eat in about twice as far. that will give you some idea of what I have got to suffer with. it is one of the sorest things ever was, I believe. it seems as if it would kill me to touch it.

--R. R.

[drawing is an oval approximately 3 1/2" x 5" with occasional lines radiating inward 1/4" to 1/2" long; an extra arched curve indicates eaten area approximately 3/8" x 2 3/4"]

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[Stationery with printed image of pigeon carrying a letter and
"The U. S. CHRISTIAN COMMISSION
sends this sheet as a messenger between the soldier
and his home. Let it hasten to those who wait for tidings."]

Jefferson Hospital, Jan. 10th 1865

Dear Sister,

I rec'd your letter and Mothers mailed the 6th last night. I expected to get a letter Saturday night and sent to ward 21 to see if there was one there for me, but there [was] none for me, so I had to wait till Monday night for one, as the mail does not come in Sunday nights. When Monday night came it brought your letter. I have not been very well since I wrote last. Day before yesterday I had a pretty hard chill, but no fever. Yesterday I had quite a fever, but no chill. Today I have had a little fever and it has not quite gone yet, but I wanted to write to you today and, as it is 4 O'clock P.M., I thought I had better begin to write it if the fever wasn't quite off. My wound is healing all around the edge pretty fast, but in the middle it does not look as well as I wished it did.

When Dr. Randall was here he had my wound dressed with a weak Solution of Bromine and my wound looked clean and nice, but since the other Dr. has been here he has had it dressed with simple caustic. and since that has been put on, the matter will not wash out clean in the middle of the wound, tho it has healed it pretty fast around the edge. They dressed it this morning with solution and I think tonight when they dress it it will look a good deal better. This Bromine (which is pronounced Bromean) is the name of the stuff they burn out the gangrene with. A few drops of it in a pint of water makes the weak Solution. I wrote to the commander of the post the other day to send for my description roll. I got an answer the same evening saying my description roll was rec'd at his office Dec. 6th, so I am all right on that score and I think I shall be paid off when pay day comes. I suppose that will come some time.

After Supper

I have had my wound dressed and had my supper and am now writing by gas light. The mail has come in and I got the book and paper and envelopes your letter spoke about. It has been snowing all day as hard as I ever saw it snow in my life. I suppose you would like to know how we live here. I have been on heavy diet since this Dr. has been here. For breakfast I get coffee, bread and either hash, a peice of boiled beef or a little mush and molasses. For dinner a bowl of beef soup, bread, a chunk of fat boiled pork that a well man could not eat--or boiled beef and mashed turnips. Fridays we get macarel for dinner instead of meat. For supper we get tea, bread and two or three spoons full of apple sauce. Sometime a chunk of Johnny cake and butter and a bowl of tea is our allowance.

I believe I have written all I can tonight for the light is awful poor. I hope Mother will be able to send me a little more money for I am out of tobacco and have to beg what little I get now.

good bye for now.

From your Brother,
Robert Richards

~
Jefferson Hospital Ward 10
Jeffersonville Ind. Jan 24th/65

Dear Sister,

I rec'd a letter from you last friday evening, but did not answer it because I had just written a letter to Mother and I mentioned in the letter that I had rec'd yours and I thought that would do untill I got time to write an answer. you say you should think it would not be long before I get home. I cannot tell you how soon I shall get home, but I dont expect to get home much before Spring. if I keep on gaining as I have for the last week I shall apply for a transfer in two or three more weeks. my getting home then will depend on how long it takes me to get my discharge at Madison.

I got the paper you mentioned about sending and read that peice about the murder up at LaCrosse. I knew that Jacob H. Clearwell. he belonged to Co. K. he was not thought much of in the Co. he would borrow money of every one that would lend to him. at Huntsville, to get rid of paying his debts after he had rec'd his veteran bounty, he pretended some one stole his money one night. I got my pants yesterday and put them on for the first time in seven weeks. I find on getting up that I am not half as strong as I thought I was. I cannot set up more than two hours at a time. I have been sitting up about two hours and I am getting pretty tired. the nurses are bringing in our bread and beef and soup for dinner, so I will quit writing for a little while.

My wound is healing up very fast. it almost seems so if a person could see it close up. some of the boys say it is not more than half as large as it was when I came here. it looks considerable bigger to me though one half.

I rec'd a letter from Mother last night mailed the 19th with a sheet of paper and stamp. I was going to write a letter to Mother after I finished this, but I guess I will write one to Charley and you and Mother must divide this letter between you. I can think of no more to write now. after the mail comes in I will write a few lines more.

I have just written a letter to Charley and told him if it was possible for him to send Mother some money, to do so by all means. I talked to him the best I knew how.

After Supper) The mail has come in and no letter for me and but two for the whole ward. so I have nothing of any account to write unless I tell you about the funeral here today in this ward. Ten men were taken to their graves today from this hospital. The funerals of two of them was held in this ward. This is not much over the daily average of deaths at this hospital. some mornings there is over 20 in the dead house. There is some thing the matter with the gas lights. They have almost gone out, so I will have to quit writing.

Good Bye
From your Brother,
Robert Richards

~
Jefferson Hospital
Feb. 6th, 1865

Dear Sister,

It is two Oclock in the morning or in the night rather. I waked up about midnight and, as the nurse that is sitting up is writing and I am not sleepy, I thought it would be a good time to answer your letter. I was going to answer it yesterday, but when I got ready to write one of my old chills came on to me and that wound up the writing for that day. The chill and fever together lasted from 11 till 5 Oclock. I took some quinine this evening and shall take more at day light. if it does as much good as it used to, I shall not have a chill Tomorrow.

I did not know any one in our reg. by the name of Grace nor any one by the name of Jame Halihan or whatever his name is. if they were in the 18th, they must have been new recruits, for I knew all of the old ones. you say you think it must be dreadful to see so many soldiers dying. Well, I suppose it would be to you or any one else but a soldier. it does not affect them any more to see dead men laying around than so many dead dogs would.

I got your letter of the 29th last friday. I was very glad to get the two stamps for I had borrowed one, so paid that back and have got one to put on this letter. I did not get the writing paper till yesterday. I have not got the Portage paper yet. My tobacco give out yesterday and I would have been out before if one of the 1st Wis. Cavelry had not bought some for me. My wound has not done very well for the last five or six days. it looks at one time as if I should be obliged to go back to the gangrene ward, but I had it dressed with solution of bromine and that made it look better, but it does not look as well now as it used to. I hope it will begin to do better for I want to be on the road to Wisconsin next week this time. I have no more to write now, so I will bid you good night.

R. Richards

~

Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis MO
March 7th 1865

Dear Sister,

As I have just bought some paper and envelopes and have nothing to do, I thought I would write a few lines to you [and] pass away time. I wrote a letter to Mother day before yesterday and told her that I was going to try and get a transfer to Madison, but the Dr. told us yesterday morning that the Minn. and Wis. men would be transferred to their own states, he thought, before the week was out. so I concluded to wait and go with the rest. My wound is not looking quite as well as it did on the boat, so it will be best for me to stay here a week or so till it looks better.

I have got into a pretty good hospital and I dont know but I may as well stay here a few days and give my wound a chance to heal as to go to Madison and stay there. My wound will do better here than it will there for it is pretty cold up there yet--and going out into the cold is what has always made my wound look bad. Every storm we have affects it and I can tell every time there is going to be a storm a day or two before it comes. Just as plain as a person can that has the Rheumatism. I have always been in hopes that I would get home early enough in the spring to go to work on a farm, if I could not get a chance to work in the Portage mill, but I dont think I shall be able to work on a farm if I get there in time to commence, for I cannot straighten my leg and it may be some time after it heals up before I have the use of it enough to follow a team. so I have made up my mind to take things as cool as I can and give my leg all the chance I can to get well and when it does get well and I get home, if I cant get work where I can make pretty good wages, I will take what money I have and start out to Minnesota and get me a farm and I dont know but I shall go

out there any way, for the quicker I go, the better chance I shall have for getting a good farm. I think I can get money from Charley so that we can live the first year and after that I have no fears but what we can get along.

I dont know as I have anything more to write now. I have got two more stamps and will write again in two or three days. so good bye for this time.

From your Brother,
Robert Richards

P.S. I dont suppose it will be worth while for you to write for I may go away from here the first of next week.
R.R.

~

[Printed stationery--left side:
WESTERN BRANCHES of the U.S. CHRISTIAN COMMISSION

CHICAGO: J. V. Farwell, Chairman; B.F. Jacobs, Secretary.
PEORIA: A. G. Tyng, Chairman; Wm. Reynolds, Secretary.
ST. LOUIS: J. W. McIntyre Ch.; J. H. Parsons, Cor. Sec'y.

--right side:
Image of pigeon carrying a letter and
"The U. S. CHRISTIAN COMMISSION
sends this sheet as a messenger between the soldier
and his home. Let it hasten to those who wait for tidings."

U.S. CHRISTIAN COMMISSION ROOMS]

Jefferson Barracks
Mar. 19th 1865

Dear Sister,

I rec'd your letter of the 16th this morning and I can assure you I was very glad to hear from you and that you were all alive yet.

Since I wrote to you last I have been having another hard old time with my wound. it turned black when I first came here and has been getting worse and larger every since I have been here and all they done for it seemed to do no good till yesterday morning when he burnt it out with Costic [caustic] and had a flax seed poultice put on to it. when it was dressed last night a lot of burnt flesh came off and it still looked as black as ever and I tell you I was about discouraged. I could not sleep till nearly midnight for I kept thinking what a time I have had since I was wounded. and another thing, the poultice on my wound seemed as if it would draw the bone right out of my leg and I went to sleep feeling about as bad as I have any time since I was in the gangrene ward. When my wound was drest this morning I was almost afraid to look at it, but when I did, I found that the black had all disappeared and it looked just as nice as I could have wished it too. My spirits began to revive right away and shortly after I got your letter and after I read that, I felt about as well as the next fellow. I think now the wound will begin to get better. when I came here there was a place about the size of this mark I have made [oval approximately 1" x 3/4"]. now it is more than

three times as big--one above and one below of the old sore and quite as big. I have laid abed nearly all last week. I got up to write this letter and I find that I am so nervous that I can hardly write at all. as soon as my wound begins to do well I shall get out of bed for good. it was all I could do to stay in bed last week but the wound dresser told me if I wanted to get well I must keep still.

They took the names for a transfer the 15th but they would not take mine because I could not walk to the depot, but it was just as well for those they did take have not been sent away and I dont think they will till the next transfer which will be the 1st of April and then I shall be ready to go to. and by that time I think the river will be open and we can go right to Prairie du Chein on a boat. I am glad to hear you have all the milk and butter you want. and I want you to tell Fred to take care of that calf, for I want all the cattle I can get to take out west whenever I go. I was very glad to get this letter of Charleys. I shall write to him this afternoon or tomorrow. I see he likes to let it be known what an important personage he is in the 4th Wis. Cavelry. Well I hope he will get to be somebody of importance some time. I want you to write as soon as you get this, for there is no danger of my going away very soon.

Good Bye,
Robert Richards

~

[added hand-written notes--

Donor: E. R. McIntyre of Portage, Wisc. August 7 1915

Written by Robert Richards at Jefferson Barracks Mo. His time, three years, had expired in Dec. 1864, but he did not receive his discharge until July 1865. Uncle of the donor, a Wis. soldier]

March 27, 1865

Song of the Conscripts [draftees]

When first I came to Memphis City and walked around the streets,
I wondered what could be the matter with some I there did meet.
They looked so wild and dreadful frighened and why I could not find.
They would not stop but kept on running with their coat tails straight behind.

Chorus--Oh how they run Ha Ha and dodge the guards Ho Ho.
But now I see they are conscripting and that's what hurts them so.

2nd
The streets by soldiers are blockaded who form a hollow square.
When the victim in he looks around and then begins to swear.
The guard says halt and asks for papers which broad cloth [civilian] fails to show,
For which at length he has to forfeit a fifty spot or so.

3
They rush in scores to be examined, poor man what numerous ails.
They're deaf and dumb and have the colic, there eyesight often fails.
They limp on one foot then the other, they huff and wheeze and blow.
The Doctors wits are oft times puzzled, their true complaints to know.

4
The guards create the greatest terror as they scour the city through.
The Negroes they are always willing to wear the Suit of Blue.

The mules and horses they are loyal; the Draft they never fear
The rendezvous around the commons and there they volunteer.

5

The conscripts meet to drill very often, say twice a week or more.
They soon will do to drive guerrillas from the Arkansas shore.
The other night they heard the cannon; they thought their time had come.
How nice they felt when someone told them the rebels were on the run.

6

Here I'll grant and that most willing in closing up my song
Lest loyal men of Memphis City should think my motives wrong
That some there is that love their country above all else besides
And hope that through the storm that raging our Bark may safely ride.

Chorus--

Jefferson Barracks
March 27th, 1865

~

[Printed stationery--left side:

WESTERN BRANCHES of the U.S. CHRISTIAN COMMISSION

CHICAGO: J. V. Farwell, Chairman; B.F. Jacobs, Secretary.

PEORIA: A. G. Tyng, Chairman; Wm. Reynolds, Secretary.

ST. LOUIS: J. W. McIntyre Ch.; J. H. Parsons, Cor. Sec'y.

--right side:

Image of pigeon carrying a letter and

"The U. S. CHRISTIAN COMMISSION

sends this sheet as a messenger between the soldier
and his home. Let it hasten to those who wait for tidings."

U.S. CHRISTIAN COMMISSION ROOMS]

Jefferson Barracks
April 20th 1865

[Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox April 9; Lincoln was shot April 14]

Dear Sister,

As it is five days since I wrote home, I suppose it is about time I wrote again although I was in hopes of getting a letter before I wrote again. but being disappointed in getting a letter this morning, I have concluded to write now and again when the letter comes. I have not got much now to write. In the first place my wound has entirely healed up: so there is no more danger of getting the gangrene unless it should take a notion to break out again, and I don't think it will do that, as it never was a deep wound.

I traveled around a good deal yesterday with only one crutch, but I find it is not so easy a matter to walk on a crooked leg that you have not put to the ground for four or five months. At first it did not hurt at all, but

towards night I had to use both crutches. it did not seem to hurt the wound but the pain was in my foot and knee. the pain in my foot feels just like the pain does in an ankle that has been sprained pretty bad by stepping on the side of your foot. but I think it will soon get over that. I am going to keep trying to walk on it and I think the pain will finally leave. I have been thinking whether it is best to be mustered out and go home or wait a spell to see if this transfer comes off. if I go home now I shall have to go without a cent and shall not be able to earn any thing in some time, and I suppose Mother has all she can do to get along now. so that my coming home would only make it worse, so I think I will wait a few days and see if that transfer does not come off. if it dont I know but I had better do the other thing.

I rec'd the two papers Mother sent day before yesterday. I wrote to Charley yesterday. I got some paper and envelopes of the Christian Commission and by taking letters to the house where the agent stops, he will put stamps on them and mail them, so I think after this I shall not leave any letters unanswered for the want of writing material. if you get any Portage papers with a good deal of state news I wish you would send me a few. I dont want any full of war news for we get that here before they can get it at Portage. a paper with something in it concerning Portage or any other place in Wis. suits me and the rest of the Wis. boys better than war news. every paper you send to me is read by every Wis. and Minn. man in the ward. Well, I can think of no more to write now, so good [bye]. I will write again next Sunday. I want you or Mother to write as often as twice a week and I will do the same.

Robert Richards

[Enclosure with no date; printed sheet.]

SHERMAN'S CAMPAIGN OF '64 (Air: The Irish Volunteer.)

On the second day of May, eighteen hundred and sixty-four,
When we commenced this great campaign with the 14th army corp,
We met the rebs at Tunnel Hill, and Rocky Face also;
And Hooker with his flanking corps did prove their overthrow.

Chorus--

Hurrah for General Sherman's boys,
No dangers do they fear;
He starts them for the Johnnie's works,
They go it with a cheer.

They evacuated Buzzard Gap; they said they were determined,
For Johnston he had set a trap to get old General Sherman;
But Sherman knew a thing or two, sent Hooker to the right,
Where the 20th corps fixed bayonets and put them all to flight.
Chorus.

They faced about and traveled on, and halted at Resaca,
Where they asked our pickets if they would trade coffee for tobacco;
But Johnston saw it would not do, the Yanks were two to one,
And from behind his works withdrew and retreated further on.
Chorus.

The Coosa River next they crossed, and also burned the bridge,
For Johnston swore he'd have revenge for the loss of Rocky Ridge.
At Dallas they thought 'twould be no harm, to stop they'd all conclude,
Although the weather being warm close behind them we pursued.
Chorus.

One day said Johnston to his men, "On Kenesaw we'll stand,
And from that hill we'll never move till we loose every man."
Then fortifications were quickly made by fifty thousand strong,
When the roar of cannon told the Rebs the Yanks were coming on.
Chorus.

When up within artillery range we fortified also,
And Hooker with his flanking corps straight to the flank did go:
The Johnnies sent us their respects, with cannon we replied;
The 16th corps being on the left, and Hooker on tother side.
Chorus.

When the Chatahoochee Johnston crossed to Milledgeville he went,
Said he to Brown, Old Georgia's lost, there was no reinforcement sent;
Said Gov. Brown to Johnston, "Do you think it is too late
For us to make another stand, or shall we leave the State?"
Chorus.

On the first day of September, Old Cleborne for his spite,
He thought to have a little fun, the acorn boys he'd fight;
But Davis with the 14th corp, or "Old Pap Thomas's pets,"
Learned Old Cleborne a lesson he never will forget.
Chorus.

Where are the commissaries, what have you been about?
Why don't you give us pork and beans and leave the blue beef out;
Just bring along your greenbacks now for this campaign is through
To pay off Sherman's army, for there is nearly eight months due.
Chorus.

And yet you hear the cheering news, our Sherman is all right,
His army's around Savannah, and our flag waves there so bright;
He's going down to Charleston next to make the rebels clear,
And then from there to Richmond like a Veteran Volunteer.
Chorus.

So long will be the day before this war will be forgotten
By the heroes of the North and West who have trod the land of cotton;
And from this generation down, and then forevermore,
Their names will be recorded in the history of this war.
Chorus.

Composed by M. B. Nott, Co. E, 85th Ill. Vol. Inf.

[Private Robert Richards mustered out of Co. E July 12 1865]