

March 23- 1863-- My Dear Wife- I received your most welcome letter to-
nite. You do not know how glad I am that you have taken the courage you
have about being a Christian. You will know what church to join and when
to join it. I am sure the Lord will help you and that you will not turn
back but go on- for what is there to turn back to?

It seems in the Volunteer armies then they more or less elected their
officers and of course they had troubles then with their leaders just
as we do now- In April 1863 he writes- I want to go to the caucus to-
night just to keep myself posted- Oh, it is funny to see them election-
eering for office. Some little whelps that is not fit for privates want-
ing to be officers.

I am sorry to hear that Mac let Fly get so thin. Fly was their horse-
That is the way it goes when we are in the army, our patriotic friends
at home use up what we left there. I want you if you can to send the
children to school this summer and you must buy them some books and not
send them to school without books.

Dec. 16th 1863- There was a meeting Sunday in the school house. I went
over- most of the congregation was Co. F.- The minister was an Episco-
paleon. They have rather a queer way of worshiping but it is better than
no way. Every one that takes part in it has a little book. The Chaplain
got a box of the books for the Co. and we all have one if we want it.

In April 1864 he writes-I guess we are pretty sure to cross the plains
this summer to fight the Indians. I would like to ride but it is not
settled yet whether we will be mounted or not. That is we don't know.
I suppose General Sibley knows. We are not supposed to know any more than
the horses or mules so we have no trouble. Tell each of the boys and
little ~~Emma~~ Alice to be good children and I will buy them each a ~~Y/Y/Y~~
book when I get home. Address direct to James H. Payton, Co. F. Minn.
volunteers to follow Indian Expedition.

There several very descriptive and rather plaintive letters describing
the summer of '64 as they crossed the plains. His younger brother Ed of
whom he speaks many times died of typhoid fever some where along the way.

On July 1st, camped near the Missouri river he wrote-I quit cooking-
the boys would growl and find fault so I got my dander up and quit. I
would like to have the money but I am too ill to be jawed out about noth-
ing. He speaks of seeing buffalo and antelope but they were not allowed
to shoot them. A letter from Ft. Rice written Sept 10th is the last one
we found before he was sent south. He did say several times that some
of the boys were doing a lot of whining about being sent ~~South~~ but as
for him if they were sent they had to go and that was all there was to it.

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Sometime during the fall of 1864 his company was sent to Murpheesboro,
Tenn. In the few letters from there he describes the hardships of actual
combat- hearing the roar of cannons every day, the realization of death
but he says- if I live thru all this, all the better but if it should
be my lot to fall in battle I will have to fill a soldiers grave where I
fall. Now I don't think it best to worry or talk any more about these
things. Again he writes that his candle is burned low but he wanted to
send the children something for Christmas "I am sending fifty cents to
get them something and I think some apples would be nice.

Often in his letters he spoke of Captain Aldrich and the fine Capt. he was