

**DIARY: FIFTH BOOK  
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WESTMORELAND  
ONEIDA  
N.Y.**

Sunday 28th December 1862

I have just finished my 4th book. The paymaster has got sober so that he thinks he can pay us off. We got paid off about noon. I got \$45.55. I also collected in about \$60.00 today. All the boys have paid me off. Ed Jacobs and Silas Cotherel went off yesterday to get some things to a sutler. As the boys had got almost home the Patrol guard came upon them and took them up to Gen. Wilcox's headquarters. Kept them until this afternoon when an orderly came down to report them to our officers, then Lt. Norton came and brought them to the battery. They got here just in time to get their pay. The boys are having good times with them about their being on the General's staff. There is considerable cannonading in the direction of Catlett's Station. It is reported that the Rebs are there, and General Slocum is engaged with them. The paymaster stays with our officers tonight.

Monday 29th December 1862

The Paymaster left this morning. I have been at work this morning whittling laurel roots. I went over to Battery L to get more medicine for Nate Ames. They have got a very nice place for their camp, on a high hill with plenty of good water close by. They made me stay to dinner, had things cooked up real nice. When I got back I found that we had orders to go out on inspection at 3 o'clock. We were inspected at the old drill ground by Gen. Whipple. Did not get back to camp until nearly dark. I sent \$100.00 to Uncle Wm. S. Merrell & Co. today, sent it along with Albert's . . .

[pages missing, December 30th, 31st 1862]

[Wednesday 31st December 1862]

...we practiced with our sabers today as usual. Grover and Conner[?] went up with us, they are going to learn with us.

Thursday 1st January 1863

A very nice warm day. Considerable going on about camp. I went over to one of the N.Y. Regiments and saw a sack race, a monkey show, and greased pole and a mule race. There was a large number of soldiers there to witness the fun. General Hooker and several other Generals were there. We drilled with the saber as usual.

Friday 2nd January 1863

Not much going on this forenoon. We drilled this afternoon, went up by Gen. Stoneman's headquarters. Drilled there about an hour and then returned to camp.

Saturday 3rd January 1863

Dwight Faring died this morning just at daybreak. There was no one that knew that he was dying until he was almost gone. He had the typhoid fever and got over it and then took a cold which brought on a relapse. They have telegraphed his father. He lives near Marietta, Ohio. Wm. A. Ewing went down to Aquia Creek and got a coffin for him. He has been thought a good deal of in the Battery. He was one of the last recruits, belongs to Detachment D.

Sunday 4th January 1863

As soon as I got up the Orderly came and wanted me to get my police Guard and go and dig a grave for D. Faring, so after breakfast I got the Guard out and went and dug the grave. I had just got it done as the procession . . .

[There is one photocopied page here, presumably the continuation of the January 4th entry, that is illegible].

...ground (it was about a mile). I marched them over there and found a Lieutenant there who set me at work digging down some ridges that were in the way for review. We are to be reviewed by Gen. Burnside tomorrow, and they want a good deal of room. I got back at camp just before supper. I think that I have done a very good day's work, for Sunday. I have not been so tired before in a long time. I wrote a letter to B.A.

Monday 5th January 1863

We had to get ready for review at ten o'clock, had everything in perfect order and went out at the time mentioned. We were reviewed by General Burnside, did not get in until three o'clock p.m. When we were coming in one of the other batteries that was ahead of us started up on a trot and the wheel of the caisson ran over a mole[?] and throwed one of the cannoneers off. He struck on his back and it came very near killing him. I went up to see Nate Ames. He looks very bad. I think that he is falling away very ...

[next page or pages missing, Jan. 5 continuation-Jan. 9th beginning].

[Friday 9th January 1863]

. . . remainder of the night. He was falling away very fast when I left him and at 4 o'clock this afternoon he departed this life. I went up and helped lay him out. He was reduced to nothing but skin and bones. We carried his remains up to the hospital tent. We sent up word to his brother who came right down here to see him. He is going to get a furlough and take the corpse home. We had Company drill this forenoon. Captain drilled us on foot drill nearly all the time. I do not feel very well this afternoon.

Saturday 10th January 1863

I did not get up at roll call this morning, do not feel any better than I did last night. It began to rain just before night and kept it up all day. I feel much better this afternoon than I did this morning. Boys are all in the tent sitting around the fire. The tent leaks very bad in places.

Sunday 11th January 1863

Had inspection as usual this morning. I rec'd a letter from Thos. and answered it this afternoon. I feel much better than I did yesterday. It has been quite cold all day.

Monday 12th January 1863

Everything is going as usual with the exception of our burying Nathan Ames. I was detailed to take a squad of men and bury him. They did not bury him as they did Faring. I presume it was because he was not quite so popular. I took only 6 men and buried him in the same grave that we dug for Faring.

Tuesday 13th January 1863

Everything seems to go off after the same old sort. We had a good drill this afternoon. Lt. Ewing drilled us in the foot drill for a little while, made it go off very well. I drilled with the saber quite a little while this afternoon.

Wednesday 14th January 1863

I am Corporal of the Guard today. The balloon has been up several times today. Things are getting dull about camp. I spent part of the day in making laurel cigar holders to send home to Frank. The boys are all at work cleaning up the camp for inspection.

Thursday 15th January 1863

I have a good deal of policing to do today cleaning up about the officer's tents. At night I had to go and pitch a hospital tent down by the depot for our sick boys. They have to be taken away as we expect to move in a day or two. The pontoon bridges are passing here and going up the river. I rec'd a letter from Mate.

Friday 16th January 1863

I rec'd 3 letters from M.E.B., E.E.B., Harlow and Adela Merrell. I wrote one to Mollie. Not much going on of importance today. We have orders to be ready to move tomorrow.

Saturday 17th January 1863

The orders were countermanded about our moving. I had to go down to Aquia Creek to get some things for the Captain. I got him a Sibley tent, sent my money to Wm. S. Merrell & Co. I sent it down by Lt. Ewing several days ago but he forgot to express it. I got back at 8 o'clock, found all the boys just going to bed.

Sunday 18th January 1863

I had to go down to the depot this morning and get the Captain's tent. It is very cold, has not been colder this winter. I wrote a letter to Harlow today, rec'd one from Brigham. We have orders to be ready to move tomorrow at 1 o'clock p.m.

Monday 19th January 1863

It continues as cold as ever, everything is as dull as usual about camp. Do not move today, orders are countermanded. I wrote a letter to Brigham.

Tuesday 20th January 1863

Orders to move at 11 o'clock a.m. We all packed up and started at the time mentioned. We never had such a time on a march before. We were all day in going six miles. We are on our way up the river. We passed by General Hooker who was coming back. He stopped and talked a spell with Capt., wanted to know if this was one of the Batteries that was detailed for extra duty. It seems that there are 20 Batteries picked out of Hooker's Corps for extra duty and that we are among the number. We marched on until after dark when we halted and got supper, then waited until 9 o'clock when we had orders to unharness. It is now raining very hard. We all set around the fire and got wet through, then we went and got under a tarpaulin, laid there until we came very near drowning, when we started and went over to the woods a few rods distance, and built up a fire and stayed around it the remainder of the night. Never suffered so before in my life. Could not get warm at all, but just sit around the fire and shivered all night. I wrote a letter to Coz. Adela Merrell this morning just before we started.

Wednesday 21st January 1863

Orders to march on just after daylight. We waddled on through the mud until we came to the river, then our section went off to the right and took position and the rest of the battery turned off to the left and took position in the woods. It is now about noon and we are in camp all night. The first thing is to start a fire and get dinner. A little grub goes very well as we have had nothing to eat before today. After dinner we went to work and built us a shelter to sleep under. We had to use our ponchos as we had no tents with us. Harris and I fixed ours up together. I took a tramp around by the river, saw several rebs, then I returned, got some supper and went to bed. Never enjoyed sleep so before in my life. I am Corporal of the Guard, but I did not go out but left the guard relieve themselves. Had only one on at a time.

Thursday 22nd January 1863

Got up this morning a little after 8 o'clock and had breakfast. I heard several of the Rebs' guns during the night. Suppose them to be signals. It has stopped raining but is cloudy yet. I have fixed up my shanty so that it is very comfortable. I went out again to see the rebels, could not see but a few of them. Everything appears to be quiet on the other side of the river. All the drivers have to go back to fetch up forage and rations. They got back at 9 o'clock tonight, all very tired.

Friday 23rd January 1863

We were woke up at daylight and ordered to move back to our old camp. We got a little coffee and pork and started. Such roads I never saw before in my life, but we got along very well, did not get stuck at all. Passed by several teams that were in the mud almost out of sight. Saw General Hooker, he passed us twice. We got into camp at 7 o'clock at night, all very tired. We pitched our tent as soon as we could and got supper and went to bed. The infantry have burned all our firewood up so that we had no fire in our tent.

Saturday 24th January 1863

Quite pleasant this morning. We had a good old time drying our blankets, then I went and got a load of wood with three of the other boys. When I came back I went around to see Grover who is at the hospital tent up near the railroad. Grover is very sick with the typhoid fever. I rec'd a letter from Neal Warner.

Sunday 25th January 1863

All quiet about camp today. Inspection at 11 o'clock. I am Corporal of the Guard today. I went up to see Grover, took up his -----tice[?] list for him. He is no better today. I wrote four letters to M.W., M.H., M.E.B., & Mollie.

Monday 26th January 1863

We had to police nearly all day today in front of our tents. Have got it fixed up so that it looks very respectfully once more. I saw a very fine damsel ride by on horseback today. There was two officers riding with her, trying to put on considerable style, but I couldn't see it where the style comes in.

Tuesday 27th January 1863

It rained the most of today so that we all sat around in the tent. I wrote a letter to E.E.B. but could not think of much new to write. I bought me a gold pen, think that it will write good.

Wednesday 28th January 1863

It has rained and rained all day. Rec'd a letter from Mate. Hooker has taken command of this army. Phi Norton is quite sick with a fever. Grover is getting better, the fever is broke.

Thursday 29th January 1863

Woke up this morning and found the snow some six inches deep. I stayed in the tent most all day, built a door for the tent which makes it much more pleasant getting in and out of the tent. Wrote a letter to Mate.

Friday 30th January 1863

I took a horse and went a hunting after Colonel Girard's Regiment. I finally found it just before night in Sykes' Division. Found Eugene Matteson, Will Roberts, Geo. Smith, Ellis & James Quinn. Jas. Rhodenhurst has got a leave of absence and has gone home. I took supper with Eugene, had a very nice [word omitted]. He belongs to the 146th Regiment. Quinn is in the hospital sick but is getting better now.

Saturday 31st January 1863

I went after mail today for the tent. Frank Richard has been promoted to Lieutenant in this Battery and Luke Cass[?] is put in Sergeant in his stead. M.B. Ewing has gone home on leave of absence of 15 days.

Sunday 1st February 1863

I went over to see Eugene, found him well. I wrote a letter to Mate. We had Bible class at seven o'clock this evening in Phy's tent.

Monday 2nd February 1863

Quite cold today. I rec'd a letter from Uncle Ashble Merrell, it was a good long letter.

Tuesday 3rd February 1863

This is the coldest day that we have had yet since we have been here. We stayed in the tent nearly all day trying to keep warm, which was all that one wanted to do. I went down to Falmouth to get some bread for Phi Norton who is no better yet. I could see the rebel pickets very plain across the river from Falmouth. They all looked as though they were about froze out.

Wednesday 4th February 1863

It continues as cold as ever. I have been in Phi's tent most all day. He is much better than he was two or three days ago.

Thursday 5th February 1863

I wrote a letter to Brigham today. I am Corporal of the Guard today. Not very much going on today. It has rained nearly all day. Hopkins has gone home on furlough for ten days.

Friday 6th February 1863

I went down to Stoneman's Ride along with Chas. Conner after soft bread. We got 800 loaves, all that one team wanted to haul. It is the first that we have had for a long time. Boys all seem to be much pleased with it.

Saturday 7th February 1863

We had inspection this forenoon by Captain Randall. He was very particular about everything about the guns, had quite a number of questions to ask us. This afternoon we have all been at work building a fireplace in the side of our tent. It took us all the afternoon but we have got a very nice one and it goes off well. I rec'd a letter from B. Skinner, he is at Fortress Monroe yet. I am some tired tonight as I have been working very hard all day.

Sunday 8th February 1863

We do not have any Sunday inspection as we usually do as we were inspected yesterday. It has been a very nice day. All is quiet about camp. We had Bible class at the usual hour, it was very interesting.

Monday 9th February 1863

Boys are all very busy about camp today. I went and got a load of wood, stopped and saw Grover when I came back. He is getting some better but looks very bad yet. When I returned I done my washing, spent this evening in Philenzo Norton's tent. Phi is getting along very well. He was out around camp considerable today.

Tuesday 10th February 1863

Very warm and pleasant this morning. One of the nicest days that we have had in a long time. I went off to our old camp and got two loads of wood. It was some that the 9th Army Corps have left. The whole of the 9th Corps are leaving this grand army and embarking for Fortress Monroe. Do not know where they go to from there but it is thought they will go to Suffolk, Va. I wrote a letter to Rob Skinner who is still at Fortress Monroe. I am somewhat tired tonight as I have been on the go nearly all day.

Wednesday 11th February 1863

I have been in the tent all day today reading a book titled Mill on the Floss. I like it very much. I also read McClelland's Spy which is a very interesting story. It began to rain just before noon and has kept it up all this afternoon.

Thursday 12th February 1863

There is nothing more than usual going on today. It looks very much as though we might have a rain storm ere many days as the wind is blowing very hard. It has rained a little this afternoon but not to amount to much. I took supper with Corlett and Phi, had one of the best meals that I have ate in quite a while. After supper we had a fine chat, then I went into my tent and Will went to water his horse. I had not been in my tent long ere I heard that Will's horse had thrown him off and broke his leg. I got up and went out immediately to see him and help take care of him but they had just taken him up to the Doctor's tent, so I went up there and sure enough I found him there with his leg broken just above his knee. It pained him a good deal and when the Dr. began to set it, it seemed as though it would take his life. We managed to get it set, but I do not think that it is set right for I am sure that it is contracted somewhat, and it will doubtless have to be set over again in the morning. Geo. Conner & I set up with him this night. I stayed up until about 2 o'clock when I woke up George and I went to bed. Will was very restless most of the fore part of the night, did not sleep but very little.

Friday 13th February 1863

I did not wake up this morning until long after . . .

[pages missing, entries for February 13th & 14th]

[Saturday 14th February 1863]

. . . this afternoon. I have not seen him today.

Sunday 15th February 1863

It commenced to rain this morning and rained all this forenoon. Stopped about noon but has been very cloudy all the time. I wrote a letter to Mollie. I also wrote one for Holloway. I have not been out of the tent but a short time today. I rec'd a letter from Wm. Mann tonight, it was very short though.

Monday 16th February 1863

I am Corporal of the Guard today. The boys have all been at work today making stables for the horses, but did not finish it. It has been a very nice day today.

Tuesday 17th February 1863

I woke up this morning and found it snowing quite hard. It has snowed all day steady. The boys have finished the stable today. It breaks off the wind considerable from the horses.

Wednesday 18th February 1863

It has snowed all day today quite hard. I went over to see Eugene, found him well. I stopped at the hospital. The boys are getting along very well. I wrote three letters, one to B.A., A.C., Sergt. Mann. I rec'd a letter from Mollie. It is raining quite hard tonight.

Thursday 19th February 1863

I wrote a letter to Mollie today. It rained nearly all this forenoon, then cleared off. Not much going on today. Lt. Ewing & Hopkins returned today. Albert has rec'd notice that he is Lt. in this Regiment, but does not know what Battery he will be assigned to yet.

Friday 20th February 1863

Very pleasant today. Chip & Harris have sworn off using tobacco for a month. Chip is very uneasy about it, does not know hardly what to do with himself. I read a letter from E.E. Brewer, also one from M.E.B. I went after a load of wood today, had to go about 5 miles up the river to get it.

Saturday 21st February 1863

All quiet about camp today. I have been in the tent all day today nearly reading Sam[?] Slick[?]. Wrote a letter to Uncle Ashbel Merrell.

Sunday 22nd February 1863

Woke up this morning and found our blankets all covered with snow. It continues to snow all this forenoon. The Captain has gone home on a furlough this morning. It is awful cold this morning. I wrote a letter to M.E.B. and one to Adella. Stayed in the tent all day. There were several salutes fired today as it is Washington's birthday.

Monday 23rd February 1863

I went after a load of wood today. It is very nice and warm today. I wrote a letter to E.E. Brewer. We were somewhat surprised this evening by seeing Bengy Mills and Wilson walk into our tent. We were all very glad to see them. They went up and stayed with Lt. Norton.

Tuesday 24th February 1863

Quite warm and pleasant today. I went to the woods today and got a load of poles to make bunks with. Had a good visit with Bengy Mills and Wilson. They went down to the river and saw some Rebs, quite a curiosity for them as they were the first that they ever saw.

Wednesday 25th February 1863

We have been at work all day today making bunks to lay on. We also fixed us up a nice fireplace which heats up the tent first rate. Everything is in good order now about the tent. I rec'd a letter tonight from Melinda Brigham. I am very tired tonight, worked awful hard all day.

Thursday 26th February 1863

When I woke up this morning found it raining very hard. Our friends started for home at eight o'clock this morning, had a very rainy time of it. I am Corporal of the Guard today. Stayed in the tent nearly all day. It stopped raining just after dinner but was very cloudy all this afternoon. McCord returned this evening and brought . . .

[Pages missing, from the end of Thursday February 26th, through the beginning of Sunday March 1st].

[Sunday 1st March 1863]

. . . furlough in last night.

Monday 2nd March 1863

I went and got more wood today, had a tip top time. I stopped at the hospital to see the boys when I came back. They are all getting along well. It has been very warm and pleasant all day. The non-commissioned officers went up to Head Quarters tonight and recited a lesson to M.B. Ewing in artillery - he did not ask but a few questions.

Tuesday 3rd March 1863

The wind has blown hard all day. It has rained some little by spells. I have been in the tent nearly all day. I made me a ----bark[?] ring tonight. I got a can of oysters and had a good supper. It is reported here today that Vicksburg is taken and 50,000 prisoners with it. All very anxious to see the papers but there has none been around today. It is reported that Vicksburg is in our possession.

Wednesday 4th March 1863

Burney's Division are leaving for a new camp down the river where there is more wood. We have been drawing wood from their old camp all day, got enough to last us a long time. Holloway rec'd a letter from the person that I wrote to for him. It was a tip top (#1) letter that he rec'd and I think that I shall have a looking[?] at[?] it.

[Missing are March 5th 1863 through March 7th 1863].

SONG  
THE MOONRISE SERENADE

1st Verse

I have been in the land where the flowers are in bloom  
Where the nightingale & lark sing by night & noon  
Where the roe & the fawn are asleep on the plain  
I have mounted my steed, Lilla dear, to meet thee again.

Chorus

O Lilly meet me soon, meet me soon  
By the silver lighted moon  
And bring thy harp with thee again, again  
To make that gentle[?] gentle strain.

2nd Verse

I have a cottage in the woodland so airy and so free  
And the birds in the hedges[?] sing merrily to me  
Then come to the bower those hands have turned for thee  
And stand on the banks of the ----- with me.

Chorus

O Lilly sleep no more but listen to my strain  
Will you come o'er the mountains, the valley & the plain  
To the prairie so green where the flowers are in bloom  
And we will dance in the grass by the light of the moon.

END FIFTH BOOK, JOHN H. MERRELL DIARY