

INTRODUCTION

engineer, as if to point up the changed situation in the family, had been a "paying guest" in the Houghs' modest home in Juliustown before the move to Philadelphia, and the son of this marriage, the oldest grandchild, became a wholesale grocer in the city. Thus did the break begin in Alfred's generation.

John, the elder brother, also entered the wholesale grocery business, married, and went back to the Quaker fold, even stricter than before, and ever desirous of recovering the family lands. Alfred and his mother moved to a new and cheap section of town (north of Market Street), which meant no social pretensions. A year or two at an "Academy" and frequent visits to the Newbolds and to Uncle Darlington (William Darlington, the noted botanist, husband of Jane Lacey Hough's sister) exposed Alfred to a more liberal and intellectual atmosphere than ever would have befallen him even if more favorable circumstance had attended his father's charcoal speculations. Such was his education, molded largely by Laceys and Darlingtons and by acquaintance with a library which no Jersey Hough would have had. Day by day he was won over to the ways of the city.

Alfred began as a clerk in Parrish's Apothecary shop, intending to become a dispensing chemist, but a kindly Providence had given him a too fine sense of smell which the chemicals displeased; he hated clerking and had now a good excuse to change. Again with a Parrish, he became a commission agent for a paper manufacturing house and eventually won the position of a partner. Tempted somewhat by the lure of the Mexican War, whether from patriotism or opportunity cannot now be said, he was detained by maternal tears. His leisure time was turned rather to the allurements of city life, a Schuylkill boating society, some political

clubs (Whig), dining and theaters; before he was thirty he became, in a modest way, something of a man about town. More important for his later career, he joined the Washington Grays, a home militia organization with social pretensions and gay uniforms. An end to Quakerdom could not be more finely foreshadowed. Handsome in his uniform, and possibly a political asset for Harrisburg, he found himself appointed a "Colonel" on the staff of Governor Pollock. Among the not so arduous duties of this "office" was attendance upon the Governor at some official function in Harrisburg where he met a Miss Mary Jane Merrill, whose antecedents and background were not only very different from his but were destined strongly to influence the ex-Quaker who still retained a serious and somber temperament. Scarcely had he married Miss Merrill when the crash of 1857 wiped out Parrish & Hough, if not as thoroughly as Jonathan had been, at least enough to send Alfred into another living connected with a Mr. Jackson, then a well-known lumber, coal, and iron speculator, from which no more than a modest income was obtainable. Unspectacularly the new family, increased shortly by two sons, Charles and Lacey, lived together with the still inconsolable and irreconciled Jane Lacey Hough. Her death in the same year left Alfred now entirely free of Hough and Lacey traditions, and ready for the new influence of the Merrills.

Mary Jane Merrill was a singularly attractive young woman, full of joy and even a little inclined to the frivolous, enjoying in the prosperous home of her father in New Berlin, Pennsylvania, a social position untrammelled by serious financial considerations, and without doubt the object of attention from more than one eligible young bachelor. But this was only the out-

ward appear:
the Governo
woman of tw
had experien
James Merri
lawyer, had
mother long
three years o
stepmothers
though not a
whom she ad
exhibited cer
self to restri
taneously sh
younger half
been engage
were not enc
which James
original Me
with no un
damnation.
struggled wi
alert and ch
win it was bu
façade of c
Presbyteriar
paradoxical
and somber
struggled wi
had so clouc

If this
could never
deep and en
ally unable

years were long and the separation hard, did either of them waver in the firm conviction that he was doing the right thing, by his country and his, or her, God. The dependence on her confirmation of his judgment, seen repeatedly in his letters whenever an important decision affecting them both had to be made, is perhaps evidence of his recognition that her decision might be arrived at by a different chain of thought from his, but the agreement between the two, though he was far from young by military standards (thirty-five), married, and had two children, was absolute and final. If hardship had to be endured, it was no new experience to her, and to him a sacred duty. Typically, his brother John, now forty-one and excusable on religious grounds, did not go.

The sense of satisfaction with which the soldier did his duty, even when distasteful or when seeming to promise no promotion, needs no comment beyond his letters themselves. That his wife played her part to the utmost is equally apparent from hers. No public urging such as we have recently experienced, could have produced any more domestically detailed epistles than hers; quotations of long conversation of the children, details of friends and home, chitchat and local gossip, patiently retold in full, as well as serious discussions, questions, and expressions of opinion on the state of the war and of the Union, all gave to the absent Captain the only substitute for the companionship he had won, and lost. One of the finest tributes to Mrs. Hough's cheer and spirit is the comment of Captain Hough's clerk quoted by him in a letter. If a letter can reveal her character through her husband's facial expression while reading it, she had done a magnificent job indeed.

"Crazy Hough" they called him on Market Street, for he had long prophesied the war as the only means of settling the slavery question. This appellation he won from his business associates, especially the "Constitutional dry goods" men, who sold goods to the South and voted for Bell and Everett in 1860. But such was his conviction, and now he embraced it as the fulfillment of his prophecy, the proof of his sanity, and the opportunity, if one were further needed, to leave Burlington County and even Philadelphia behind spiritually as well as physically. The end of Quakerdom and of the country squire had come.

His convictions concerning the war during his service are clear enough from his letters. There is no change in the spirit, well-nigh that of a Crusader, which he constantly exhibits. As strong language as he ever uses is bestowed upon the iniquity of the "hell-begotten conspiracy" of the South, and as violent anger as he ever permitted himself to show is unleashed against the \$300 draft dodgers in Pennsylvania. He fervently wishes that his two sons were old enough to serve their country too, and he feels that the issue of the war will determine for generations whether he and his children are to live in anarchy or in happy homes. His faith never wavered, even in the disappointment of failing to achieve promotion, or in the gloom of the financial outlook. Once, and only once, toward the end, he began to wonder if he might not owe it to his family to provide a better living by retirement from the Army because the government simply was not providing for its servants in uniform and the thought of the bounties infuriated him. But he did not retire, and the belief in the principles if not in the rewards of what he was fighting for did not change. Rewards would be won in the satis-

faction of service faithfully done, and for the lonely hard-hit family left at home the rewards would be those which Providence grants to the faithful and the long-suffering. Such beliefs could not be either strange or meaningless to the ex-Quaker Captain or to his Calvinistic wife.

Yet with the war's end they alone would hardly have been enough to tip the balance in favor of remaining permanently in the Army. Another, and as it turned out a lifelong, influence had developed during the latter years of the war. Chance had thrown the Captain into an association with General George H. Thomas, and before the end of the war he was serving on his staff. Though this association was slow to develop, as shown by his repeated efforts after Chickamauga to obtain a different position and to remain with General Negley, the affection for "Pop" Thomas gradually became the dominant force in Captain Hough's life and certainly in his military career. This was no exception to the power which General Thomas had to attract and retain the devoted loyalty of men. When the opportunity came to return to civil life, though strong attractions were offered by his former business associates in the paper industry, the prospect of remaining in the official family of the man he loved and admired as "a model soldier" was an even stronger force. That it meant never recovering the financial independence or the social position which Mary Merrill had given up in New Berlin and which they might have achieved together by a return to civil life in Philadelphia, must have been the subject of many long evening conversations in Nashville, after his family had joined him in the spring of '65; but no record of them is available save the comment penned ten years later: "Although I have not

repented of my decision, for I have been happy in the service, I must confess that had I foreseen that the army would be reduced, and my promotion so long delayed, I should have decided otherwise." Thus did he pay for the unexplained disappearance of his name from the Commission list in 1861, and its restoration only by political influence of Simon Cameron and at the end of the order of promotion.

The subsequent life of Captain Hough was that of any Officer in the American West of the seventies and eighties. Remaining with General Thomas till the latter's death in 1870, he saw service from Nashville to Alaska. Thereafter at various posts in the Indian West, in Texas, and in New York harbor, his military service typifies the Army career of those years. Letters (extant from various periods during which he was absent from his wife) and the autobiographical record which he began in 1875 and kept current till his retirement, show ever broadening experience of military and national affairs. He was widely acquainted among military men and had a considerable correspondence, especially in connection with the various controversies which raged around the memory of General Thomas, both concerning the battle of Nashville and his alleged refusal of a commission in the Confederate Army. From his notes at the time is taken the account of General Thomas' death at San Francisco in Thomas B. Van Horne's *The Life of General George H. Thomas*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1882. The publication of this book gave (then) Lt. Col. Hough great satisfaction in the manner of presentation of the General's character and military ability.

Colonel Hough was retired in 1890, after twenty-nine years of service in the United States Army. Four

years later his wife died, after which he made his home first with his son, then a lawyer in New York, and later with his daughter, Mrs. W. R. Hall, in Princeton, New Jersey. The death of his brother John in 1896 left him the sole survivor of his generation, and having the good fortune to live well past the maturity of his own two surviving children, he found in them the companionship he had lost in the death of his wife. It is to the intimacy with his son, now U. S. Judge Charles Merrill Hough, o'erleaping the barrier of years and filial relationship, to which Judge Hough's knowledge of his father's character and experiences was owed. Life in the frontier posts where his father had been stationed had begotten the usual boyhood impressions, but the association of maturer years gave the Judge a much clearer insight into the mélange of circumstances which had produced the relative simplicity of the Hough tradition and the complexity of the Merrill, and between them developed the character and personality of Colonel Hough.

In 1908 the veteran of army life died. He was then a Brigadier General (Retired) although he never used the rank, which had been conferred in 1904. It is therefore not upon personal acquaintance that this account of his life is based, but upon conversation with my father, Judge Hough, before his death in 1927, with his sister, Mrs. W. R. Hall, who lived until 1946, and from the memoirs which Judge Hough composed concerning the family background and his own life.

JOHN NEWBOLD HOUGH

University of Colorado

* * * * *

ON THE TENTH DAY of January, 1875, the commanding officer of Fort Brady, Michigan, sat down and commenced a task which he had long put off. Major Alfred Lacey Hough, 22nd United States Infantry, now began to write his memoirs and commenced by saying, "As part of my life has been somewhat eventful, and some of my experiences novel to the many, I have thought a brief narrative of important incidents would be interesting to my children, more especially those relating to the War of the Rebellion; that great historical period."

After looking back over the events of those busy years he decided that 1860 was his logical point of departure, and he began to write. "The election of Abraham Lincoln to the Presidency of the United States was the direct cause of wonderful and marked changes in the lives of millions of people, and among them my own. In 1860 I was leading a quiet uneventful life in Philadelphia, Pa., doing a mercantile business as a Commission Agent of Manufacturers of paper. Soon after the election it was evident to me that a great struggle was about to take place between the Government and the Southern States, and it [omission?] on

* * * * *

WHILE Sergeant Hough was amusing himself at Poolesville by writing letters home that described the garb of the colored ladies, the relative degree of loyalty among the citizens, and one-horse qualities of the town, events were happening in Washington which were to change his entire life. As he described it in his Autobiography, some of his friends of influence had made application for his appointment as Captain in the Regular Army and their efforts had been successful. Hough's subsequent description of the business of getting a commission was much more complete than what he had to say in his letters home to his wife.

"I arrived in Washington on the 25th day of June and proceeded in accordance with the advice I had received to the Adjutant General of the Army, Col. Lorenzo Thomas, and reported myself to accept the position of Captain in the U. S. Army. I was in Sergeants uniform, somewhat shabby from wear; the Colonel was polite but rather austere in his manner, as he looked at me as though I was an impostor, and told me there was no such an appointment made. I was annoyed, of course, and hurried out to my friend, the Hon. Wm. D. Kelley M. C. [Representative from Pennsylvania]

record among my comrades that I believed war not improbable. I was at that time an Honorary member of the 'Artillery Corps of Washington Grays' one of the leading companies of Volunteer Militia of Philadelphia, having served my seven years as *active* service in the corps to entitle me to Honorary membership. Believing war was possible and if it occurred my company would offer its services, I went again on the active list and made all arrangements to cast my lot with it. When, after the fall of Sumpter [*sic*], the call for troops came, I was prepared and ready to go. As I had anticipated, the Company did offer its services and was accepted, and I was mustered into the U.S. Service as a sergeant of one of the companies ('F') of which the Washington Grays made two of the 17th Regiment Penna. Vols., Colonel Frank Patterson comdg."

After a careful explanation of his ardent patriotic feelings and his belief in an adherence to the wishes of the majority of the electorate, as balanced off against his personal reluctance to leave his family, the writer described the departure of the Washington Grays for war.

"On the 8th day of May 1861 our regiment left Philadelphia for the south, we had in our ranks the very flower of the youth of Phila; there were but few men of my age, the great majority were just at manhood, and from the solid families of the City. We marched to the Baltimore R R Depot through a mass of our friends and relatives who cheered us on while their tears could not be held back. I will mention here that all but one man of our Regiment returned in safety from this expedition, but not finally from the war. I cannot speak for others than the two Washington Gray

Companies A & F but of these more than three fourths subsequently served as officers in the war and a large number of these fell before the enemy or by disease.

"We arrived in Washington about 2 A.M. on the 10th but as this journey was my first experience in the war, and it being a remarkable one from the fact that our command comprised the first troops that passed through Baltimore after the citizens of that place had attacked passing troops and blocked the way for them [?], I will give a detailed account from my first letter from Washington."

It was not in his first, but his second letter from the nation's capital that Hough related his experiences in Baltimore and began his series of home letters which he continued faithfully until the end of the conflict when he could be with his family again. His initial letter, typical of men away from home, simply states that he has arrived safely at his destination.

Capitol of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington City, May 9, 1861
Camp Cadwalader

My Dear Wife:

On my own authority I suppose you will think you have a right to be worried now, as I told you you need not be while we remained here. But my own dear wife you must not be, although we move from here tomorrow. Where to I do not know, but we are to move. We have orders within the last hour to have everything packed and ready. The Quarter-Master is packing up the stores and our baggage wagons are on the way to Camp. From the preparations, in my military judgment

who advised me of my appointment. Upon finding him, he was as much astonished as myself, he said the Sect. of War Genl. [Simon] Cameron had told him that I was appointed, and returned with me to the Adjutant General and asked him if he was not mistaken. The books were looked over and the same reply was made, 'no such name on the books.' My friend then arranged for me to meet the Sect. of War personally that evening at Willards Hotel which I did. He expressed himself as much astonished that I was not appointed, as he distinctly recollected sending my name in for appointment. He closed the interview by handing me his card and telling me to present that the next morning at 10 o'clock at his private office. The next mornings experience I shall never forget. Promptly at 10 o'clock I presented myself in the corridor of the War Dept. before the door leading to the Secretarys office. I was in sergeants uniform, both it and myself being rather the worse for wear, at least in appearance. Around me were some twenty or thirty officers brilliant in their new uniforms, with gilt and brass resplendent, all waiting for the Sect. of War, the negro looked at me from head to foot and answered severely, as if I, a common soldier could have no business with so great a man. 'The Secretary is engaged you can't see him.' I took out the card, handed it to him, and told him to give that to the Secretary; he took it, looked at it, then looked at me, closed the door and disappeared. In a few moments he returned, opened the door, peered among the crowd till he saw me, and in the most humble and polite manner exclaimed, 'Captain, the Secretary says wait here and he will be out in a moment.' I shall never forget the looks of the surrounding officers, heretofore they had been inclined to look upon me as an intruder, now I was an object of curios-

ity. In a few moments the door opened and General Cameron came out accompanied by a gentleman whom I afterwards learned to be Senator Phelps of Vt. The General looked around, recognized me, came up to me, took my arm saying 'Come along with me' and we three marched into the Adjutant Generals office, leaving the officers dancing attendance on the front of the door. A few moments in the Adjutant Generals room accomplished the business. Genl Cameron told Col. Thomas I had been appointed some days before. The Col. said he had never received the notice, the General said it was very strange and aided the matter by directing my appointment to be made out at once, and in a few minutes I left the War Dept. with my appointment as Captain 19th Infy in my pocket. This was on the 29th day of June 1861."

That same day—the 29th—the newly appointed captain wrote home, telling his wife of his change of status. His letter expresses concern over his future domestic situation, rather than any elaboration of details on his recent promotion.

Washington, D. C., June 29, 1861

My Dearest Wife:

At the last moment I expected to be here I received my appointment of Captain in 19th Regt of Infantry with orders to report in person at headquarters. Indianapolis. It of course stopped my going to camp at once. I reflected upon it last night, and finally concluded to accept it, which I did to-day. I have now to go back to Poolesville where I shall be detained a few days. I shall then get home as fast as possible where I hope to be by Saturday next at farthest. I shall then get ready and go to Indianapolis to report. If I find I shall be there any

* * * * *

HOUGH'S LETTER HOME, on July 16, was the last one written until April of the following year. After reporting for duty at Indianapolis he moved on to Terre Haute where he was placed on recruiting duty. His family now joined him and the occasion for letter writing ceased. "My life at Terre Haute was tiresome," the newly commissioned officer wrote, "and I longed to be in the field. I interested myself however by organizing a Home Guard, the Union Rifles, composed of the young businessmen of the place, these I instructed and was the means of preparing a number of young men for Officers of Volunteers which they subsequently became." During April, 1862, orders were issued which placed Hough in command of Company F, 1st Battalion, 19th Infantry. This particular command was of a temporary nature since a Captain Mulligan, then on detached service, was the actual commander of the group. Hough's company was yet to be organized. On April 22, Company F, Captain Hough commanding, left Indianapolis aboard the transport *B. Q. Adams* and after a river trip of five days, arrived at Pittsburg Landing, three weeks after the bitter battle of Shiloh. His war letters are resumed with a brief note written aboard the south-bound transport on April 24, 1862.

On Board Transport B. Q. Adams,
50 Miles below Louisville,
Apl. 24th, 1862, 8 A.M.

My Dearest Wife:

I wrote you from Louisville last night saying we should get off to-day, but we got off last night and expect to be at Pittsburg Landing on Sunday night. We are all well and in good condition so far. I have about 200 men and 6 officers besides my own company all under my command with directions to report to Genl. Halleck.¹ I am very busy of course. Shall write again the first opportunity; in the meantime you write and direct to Capt. A. L. Hough, 19th U. S. Infy Rousseaus Brigade,² McCook's³ Division, Army of the Ohio, and leave it with Col. [Edward A.] King, who will forward it first opportunity. . . .

Alfred

On Board Transport B. Q. Adams,
Apl 26th 1862 2 P.M.

My Dearest Mary:

We are now about 100 miles from Pittsburg Landing and all safe and in good condition. (The boat shakes so I cannot write). This is the first leisure moment I have had from active business, but am now all prepared to leave and march as soon as I report. We shall be there in the night and I shall report tomorrow. The regiment is some 10 miles from the landing and I expect to be with it on Monday night. . . . I have to re-

¹ Major General Henry W. Halleck, commanding the Department of the Mississippi.

² Brigadier General Lovell H. Rousseau, commanding the Fourth Brigade, Army of the Ohio.

³ Brigadier General Alexander McDowell McCook, United States Army, commanding the Second Division, Army of the Ohio.

port to Headquarters and get rid of my extra command and get transportation for my own. I have been thankful that I have been so busy and felt such a responsibility for it has kept me occupied, and made me feel that I am doing something by serving my country that warrants me in making such a sacrifice of personal feeling as I do in leaving all that is dear to me in this world. . . .

My men have behaved well and I have good assistance in Mr. [Lt. Howard E.] Stansbury; I have them organized for comfort, have selected two good cooks (old sailors), and the boys are delighted with their new captain. They say they have not had such good grub since they have enlisted. They are well now, but I came very near losing one of them. They will drink (some of them) if they can get liquor; I have kept a strong watch to prevent any coming aboard, but in spite of me some was smuggled aboard by newsboys and apple boys in small vials; one of them at Evansville [Indiana] sold one of my men a vial of something that he drank, and in 15 minutes he was seized with most violent illness with every symptom of poison. I was sent for and my medical knowledge was called into service. I have great assistance also in Mr. Stansbury, who is quite a doctor. We vomited him; he was also purged violently; then had cramps, and was cold, very near death. We then put hot applications and brought him to. We nursed him faithfully till we came to Mt. Vernon [Indiana] some hours after in the night, sent for a doctor who said the man had been poisoned with something very like arsenic, and that we had treated him perfectly correct, and he would be well in a day or two. I had him brought upstairs and put on my cot, he is now going about and tomorrow will be well. It has one good effect; I am not

afraid of the men drinking any more smuggled liquor. We get a doctor on board at Paducah so I feel better satisfied. . . . I have no other incident that would interest you; we hear no news and do not know what is going on in the world; we are not crowded and are very comfortable in the boat, she is very fast and we pass everything which makes some excitement. This is a beautiful river, and to-day is a beautiful day, and after finishing this I am going on deck to enjoy for the first time for 10 days a little leisure. Troops are coming here from all directions. . . .

Your faithful and affectionate husband

Alfred

On Board B. Q. Adams,
Pittsburg Landing,
Monday Apl 28th 1862

My Dearest Wife:

It would take me hours to tell you all my adventures during the last 36 hours. I cannot do it in this letter but will make a short abstract of it. Arrived at Pittsburg Landing Saturday night at 8 o'clock, went ashore, waded through mud to Halleck's quarters [?] 3 miles got orders and back again about 10. Boat went to upper Landing, 2 miles, went ashore next morning at 5, and through mud again to Buell's⁴ quarters, then McCook's, then Maj. [omitted] about 4 miles, got a horse and back to boat. Water had risen so much could not land troops, and use new lock to Pittsburg Landing, will be off in about an hour, and march to camp will be there before night. *All well.* . . .

Alfred

⁴ Major General Don Carlos Buell, United States Army, commanding the Army of the Ohio.