

William D. Hynes Letters 22nd Illinois Infantry

Letter William Hynes to parents January 15, 1863

Wm. Hynes

22nd Ill.

(Robert's Brig.) 22nd Ill

Wm. Hynes

On picket, six miles S.E. From Murfreesboro

Jan. 15th, 1863 or

Dear Parents,

Yours of Dec 27th was received yesterday. I had been looking for a letter from you every mail for a long time, and had almost concluded that if you had written the letter had been lost. And it appears that such [sic] was the case with part of the letters from each way. I last wrote to L. to Alice just before our advance to Murfreesboro. We started the day after Christmas. Since then much [sic] has transpired. The last week of 1862 will long be remembered by the "Army of the Cumberland." The last day of the year especially by the 22nd and many other regiments. You will probably have arts. Of the Battle of "Stone River" through the paper some time before you receive this.

There was hand fighting on different portions of the line for four days, the 30 & 31 of Dec. 1862, and the 1 & 2nd of Jan. 1863. The general attack was made on the 31st except skirmishing. We skirmished on the 30th & 1st.

We went into the fight on the 31st with 341 men (bearing guns) & stacked arms that night with only one hundred (100 guns, 33 came in during the 3 or 4 following days. Part of these men were properly absent taking care of wounded etc. but a part I am ashamed to say were in a large crowd of skedadlers [sic] at one time numbering several thousands. Trying to make their way to Nashville as fast as weary limbs impelled by fear would carry them: under the impression that our army was defeated. And part of them actually did that night succeed in reaching the city a distance of 30 m. but the majority were either turned back by our own men or captured by the rebel cavalry who were making a raid in our rear.

This skeddaddle occurred about 2 ½ on the 31 & was caused by our wing (the right) being driven back some distance. Our division (Sheridans) was the left center, of the right wing (McCooks Corp): composed of four divisions commencing on the right with Johnsons division; then Davis; ours next & Negley's on the left. The left wing was

Critendens Corp, Thomas' Corp being in reserve, as I have been informed this I think is a correct statement of our position though it is hard to learn in so large an army & I have seen no official statement.

The enemy maped [sic] nearly the whole of their force on our wing and attacked Johnson on our extreme right at day break surprising him & capturing most of his artillery while the men were absent watering their horses which they had to go some distance to do. Johnson gave way before their spirited attack all most with out resistance. They then fell on Davis & drove him back & then onto us. Our division by their stubborn [sic] resistance is said to have saved the day. And it is said (how truly I don't know) that Sheridan gives our brigade the most credit for checking their advance. I do know that we fought them stubbornly at great odds till we were nearly surrounded, but finally had to fall back a short distance (to prevent being cut off) to a new line which was then formed. By this time the engagement had become general along our whole line the left wing was not driven back, but drove the enemy. Our win(g) [sic] swung back so that the right of it was one or two miles farther back than at the commencement of the engagement. I don't think that Rosecrans expected a general engagement that day the rebels made the attack. And I think a large portion of our force was still back some distance. In the three last days fighting the rebels – got decidedly the worst of it. Their position was very stran [sic] & could have been defended to great advantage. Our Co. with the exception of three or four; the reg't [sic] stood to their duty manfully & fought with coolnep [sic] & courage. A few of our company as well as of others showed "the while feather". I will not now mention names but if they should ever after returning home presume to attempt to place themselves on the same footing as true soldiers, who did their duty for their country in the hour of her need. I shall then have the satisfaction of showing them offin (often) their true coulors [sic]. Only two of our Co. were found dead & buried. Anson D. Abbott & Abner Petijohn (G. Pettijohn), the latter a recruit. Both soldiers good and true who died a soldiers death; fighting manfully [sic] at their post. Col..... T.P.C. White (Theodore) 2nd Sergt has since died (Jan. 10, 1863) from a wound in the head; it was at first thought he would get well. Wm. Elam has not been heard from supposed to have been taken prisoner. Joseph Armstrong and McCollum (Nelson) have been heard from as taken prisoner. Neither of them were wounded. Our wounded 10 in no. are said to all be doing well. Alvah (G.) Stephens has had his leg amputated below the knee, but when last heard from was doing well. (died of wounds Jan. 16, 1863) [sic] John Alexander was shot through the side & probably touching the lungs but was doing well Jan 18th. As you will see from the heading of this it was commenced the 16th on pickett [sic]. The weather changed that after noon and a cold rain set in so that I was unable to finish that evening. The rain continued through that night and the next day till noon it then turned to sleet & snow. The weather was quite cold, cold stormy till yesterday it began to moderate. In the mean time, things have been in souch (sic) a bad fix for writing that I haven't (sic) attempted to finish this letter. Everything which we have both on, in our tents, was completely wet. The weather was cold & our tents smoke so badly when I have to light a fire that we can bearly [sic] stay in them it is impossible to stand up in them at any time & when the state of the atmosphere is souch [sic] as to

prevent the smoke from rising freely we can only stay in them when we have a fire by lying down. We are now camped [sic] about 2 ½ m south of Murfreesboro on the Shelbyville Pike; have been here ever since the 2nd day after the rebels evacuated M' -- - it seems likely that we will remain here several weeks yet. The 29th Ind. Uncle Daves regt. belongs to Johnsons Division Pinner Dunn is 1st Lieut in Co. E of that regt. I haven't seen any one belonging to the regt. haven't [sic] been able to get to them I saw a man who belongs to that division who said the Col. of the 29th was taken prisoner on the 31st. the Louisville Journal has Parmer's name among the list of the wounded. I suppose from what I can learn that Mack Dunn (Uncle Ianis son) was killed in a skirmish near "Triune" on our road out here. He was in a Co. of the 3rd Ind. Cav. of which there are two here he was also in Johnson Division. In trying to find the 29th one day I came across [sic] one of the 3rd Ind. Cav. he told me that Mack belonged to the other company & was killed in that skirmish. He said he was shot in three places. I suppose it is true, but I doubt the story about Uncle Dave. I will hunt up the 29th the first opportunity & learn the truth. You will probably wonder why I haven't written sooner I would have written [sic] as soon as the fight was over but I had nothing on which to write & no stamps envelopes and since have been some what sick from exposure. Several persons had written [sic] and I know that you would that I was safe. John has a cold and like the most of us is not feeling very well in consequence. Learned of Grandma's death from uncle Al's letter yet it has been almost impossible to write of late. Tell him I will do so as soon as possible. Aunt Jennis do I haven't [sic] received but one letter from the boys since they left home. I look for a letter from them every day. I learn from some of the boys that Geo. Wood belonged to that co. & died not long ago of typhoid fever. Some new regt [sic] have come from Louisville lately and I have some idea that Jim Skean may be here but it is very hard to get from one division to another for some reason they are very strict and will not grant any papers. Our field officers are all wounded except the adjutant. Our Col. and Major formerly Capt. Abbott, haven't [sic] been fit for duty in the field since Belmont. Lt. Col. Swanwick (Lt. Col. P. 22nd Ill) (formerly major) has been in command since the death of Lt. Col. Hart/Col. S. (Harrison Co. E.) (sic) was wounded & taken prisoner in the late fight. He had his left arm shattered badly. Lt. Galloway was wounded slightly in the leg. I have mentioned the most seriously already [sic] & will now give the names of the rest as I have plenty of room. They are Sergt. Joel D. Parsly arm, Henry File shoulder, Robt Reams body, M Hanly leg, Hale Scratch taken prisoner & paroled Col. ...seven flesh w'd [sic] in the leg, Col. Dougherty is in command at Paducah and our officers are making efforts to have the regt [sic] sent there, Capt. Jackson has gone to Nashville to day to see Gov. Yates who is said to be there to have him use his influence to have us sent to P I think it is very doubtful [sic] by them to get to go. If we should there might be a little chance of getting home on a furlough. If I should have the chills again I will try the Walnut [sic] bark remedy, but hope to have no occasion. Tell Charlie & Ella I hope they had a nice time Christmas and New Years than I did. If they didn't they hadn't [sic] mouch [sic] to brag on. But I must close.

With love to all I remain

Your Dutifull [sic] Son

William

Letter from William Hynes to his father February 16, 1863 Murfreesboro, TN

Camp in Field five miles from Murfreesboro, Tenn Fe'y [sic] 16th, 1863

Dear Pa,

I suppose that by this time you have received my letter written last Mo. unless it has met with the fate of some others and never treaded the "labyrnth [sic] of 'Uncle Sam's' mail bags." I seem to be especially unfortunate in my correspondence; but hence for fear that my letter to Uncle Al may never reach its destination I will state that yours of 19th & 30th Jan. was received a week ago. That is the only letter that I have received this year. I have written to you & ma, the Boys, Alice & Uncle Al & Co.

Our brigade is now on advance picket post around M. (Murfreesboro) [sic] we are stationed here for five days & will then probably be relieved by some other, we dont [sic] anticipate any danger here as our troops are at Franklin & 30 miles beyond. Still small squads of cavalry occasionally show themselves within a few miles of camp. Several days ago a Squad of Paymasters arrived from Nashville since then we have been waiting expectantly for our pay. there are only lacking 12 days of six months pay being due to us but we shall feel very well satisfied if we get 4 mo's or indeed if it is any benefit to our "Uncle Sam" the most of us will be very well satisfied with one or even or even none. We are not so anxious about pay as to see our cause prospering [sic].

Yet I am afraid there are many by whom the cause alone would be rejected; as a bare bone neither having worth or merit; souch [sic] is the nature of this selfish world. (or at least so it seems to me with my little experience) that high principles & policies will be neglected & wrong upheld by the majority of men if the former; are dis advantageous & the latter advantageous to their individual selfish interests. So you must not appeal to the crowd if you wish to gain their aprobaton [sic] with plea that a policy in the conduct of this war is right ("mighty right?") but rather that it is to our interest & will pay. And I sometimes think when noticing this great lacking in want of love for right & true principles whether it will not yet for a while; prevent the salvation of our country & whether it will not be given up yet for a while longer to war. "which cleans is as by fire" that it may be purified. These are thoughts which I have not expressed before; and hardly know whether they are correct enough to be worthy of expression now. But I wish to know your opinion of these things & naturaly [sic] to gain it express mine. I would like to know especialy [sic] what you think will be the result of that strong opposition & disloyalty to the government which has of late showed itself in souch [sic] a marked manner at the North, John received a letter from ma & also Willso Blant & James Waffen within the last few days. John & Scott are both enjoying their usual

health. They have both been promoted from corporals to sargeants [sic] to fill vacancies occurring since the late fight. My health is all together better than it was for several previous months, though for several previous months, though for several weeks I have had the camp diahihoia [sic], but cant [sic] see that it affects me mouch [sic].

For fear that Uncle Al's letter may not reach him I will state that I saw Lt. Gibson about the debt which he owes & he said he was looking for pay every day & as soon as we were paid off he would send the money to old man Grump, his father (step) to pay that & other debts.

When we are paid of I wish to send you some. the am't will depend on how mouch [sic] we receive. I will send all I can spare & wish I was able to make it more, but I am forced to spend a goodealy [sic] for something to make my diet so that I can keep my health not that we dont [sic] get enough [sic] but because it is of a kind that does not agree with me. Our ration is now confined to crackers pork & at times plenty of poor beef, sugar & coffee. We get no vegetables or fruit of any kinds & I find I must have them at times to preserve my health & prevent scurvey [sic] & other diseases. I mentioned receiving the \$5 which you sent me at Louisville before but you didn't probably receive the letter.

I cannot now write more but will not wait long before writing again. Write soon & tell all the home news. With respect to all enquiring (sick) friends & love to all at home. I remain your affectionate Son. William -

Letter from William Hynes to his father March 29, 1863 Murfreesboro, TN

Camp near Murfreesboro Tenn
March 29th 1863

Dear Pa,

Captain McAdams starts for home this morning on a 15 day furlough. He says he will be glad to take any letters which I wish to send. So I have concluded to send you a few lines. We just came off pickett this morning & have not mouch [sic] time to write.

Capt Hubbard started home the 25th inst. I sent by him to you fifty dollars (\$50) I didn't send any letters by him. When Scott sent you that \$100 00/100 he borrowed \$20 of me. He has now paid me principal & interest. So that the note for the 100 is entirely his, and suppose it has been drawn up. Affairs here are assuming a more lively aspect. our army has made several reconoisances [sic]. one to Columbia our division was engaged in. Our reg't [sic] didn't have any fighting to do. The rebs [sic] in retaliation have within the last 8 or 10 days made several cavalry dashes on our lines. We (our brigade) are now encamped about 2 miles outside of the lines as an out post so if there are any dashes made we will be apt to have some of the fighting to do, we are camped on the Salem pike.

I was very agreeably surprised several days ago. I was unwell & lay down & went to sleep when I was suddenly wakened up by the boys shouting (Hynes! Parson! & c. so earnestly that I thought something serious had happened) Looking up I saw a pleasant faced rather elderly looking man looking down upon me I jumped up half waked, he reached out his hand & asked if I didn't know him I took his hand & looking foolish told him, I didn't know as I did. Will Dunn then stepped [sic] up & said he guessed I knew him, which was true, he then told me the gentleman was Uncle Will Dunn from Frankfort, as soon as he mentioned his name I remembered having seen him at Indianapolis.

I then learned for the first time that Uncle Will had been lately been appointed surgeon of the 40th Ind. & Cousin Will (Uncle John's son) was 2nd Lieut. of Co. L (?) 40th. A few days afterward I went over to the 40th & spent a very pleasant day. It is a great treat to meet with relatives down in the almost foreign land & especially one so kind as Uncle Will. He is not yet certain that he will remain long. He fears the climate will not agree with him.

My health has been all along delicate & variable sometimes feeling for a few days pretty well, but more than half here the time, unwell. But I believe that it has been gradually getting better all the time & I now feel sounder & stouter (sic) than I have for some time & believe if not exposed toto mouch [sic] hardships this summer it will continue to improve. Captain McAdams has gone so I have mised [sic] the opportunity of sending this by him. But it will go manly as soon by mail I suppose. There will probably be a chance for one or two out of the Co. to go home soon but I dont [sic] think I will have any chance. I learn from letters rec'd here that the 130th was about starting for Vicksburgh [sic]. Have not heard from the boys since I wrote. Write soon with love to all I remain as ever.

Your aff' [sic] son
William D. Hynes