3rd WI Inf

K14 October 10, 1977

Mr. Brice K. Meeker
3124 Adrian Place
Falls Church, VA 22044

Dear Mr. Meeker:

We received your letter October 1, 1977. The time and effort you expended on the background of your grandfather, Edwin Irvin Meeker, and the extracts from his diary are greatly appreciated. This information is invaluable to our collection, and greatly assists us with our historical research.

The young lady you mentioned was Mrs. Bettie Cook, and she remembers talking to you and your exact quotation from the diary. Mrs. Cook asked me to personally thank you for sending the information.

We would like to thank you for your compliments of Stones River National Battlefield. Your interest and comments will assist us in future preservation and management of what we also feel is an important battlefield and National Park. We hope that we will continue to live up to the excellent compliments you have bestowed upon us.

Thank you for your interest in Stones River National Battlefield, and the National Park Service.

Sincerely yours,

James A. Sanders
Superintendent

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STONES RIVER NAT'L
BATTLEFIELD
M'BORO, TN 37130
SUPT. JHS 10/3
I&RM
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OTHER
Respond By: 10/7

September 28, 1977

Superintendent
Stones River National Battlefield & Cemetery
Route 2, Old Nashville Highway
Murfreesboro, Tenn. 37130

Dear Sir,

I recently visited the Stones River battlefield and I must compliment you and your staff for the extremely courteous and friendly treatment.

I would like to add that the 28 minute slide show was very well conceived. Having visited most of the Civil war battlefields, I realize that the Park Service, in many cases, blends a slide show giving the background of a campaign with electrical maps, of one type or another, showing the actual tactics employed in an engagement. The Stones River presentation blended the two aspects together and was quite effective in giving the background and the battle tactics in one show.

The tape of the battlefield tour stops was innovative, informative, and, I must add, emotionally moving.

While at the visitor's center, I mentioned to the young lady on duty that my grandfather had fought at Stones River and that he had kept a diary of his Civil War experiences. (I regret and am at fault that I did not ask the young woman's name.) She asked me if I would send my grandfather's diary comments about the battle to you as a matter of historical interest and I said that I would.

When I returned to Washington, D.C., and looked at the extract from my grandfather's diary for December 31, 1862, I found the extremely laconic statement:

"Dec. 31: The fight came off today. Was under fire 11 hours. Terrible. Ran many narrow escapes."

However, I am sending to you extracts from his diary starting on September 1, 1862, through January 16, 1863, which essentially covers Bragg's Kentucky Campaign, Stones River, and the immediate sequel.

I shall give you, for context, a background of this particular Civil War participant.

Edwin Irvin Meeker was born October 4, 1839, at Blue River, Iowa County, Wisconsin. He died December 1, 1902, Birch Tree, Missouri. He enrolled in Company F, 3rd Regiment, Wisconsin Infantry on April 18, 1861. On May 28, 1862, he was elected Second Lt., Second Company, Grantler Union Guards, Company H (same regiment). This

Reigment left for the east and arrived in Hagerstown, Maryland, on July 18, 1861, and marched to Harper's Ferry arriving July 20, 1861. On Agusut 27, 1861, Lt. Meeker was detailed for signal duty with the U.S. Army Signal Corps.

After signal training through the autumn of 1861, he was sent to Louisville, Kentucky, where he was an instructor for Signal Corps officers in the western armies through January, 1862. In May, 1862, he requested transfer back to the 3rd Wisconsin since they had a captaincy for him in that regiment. The Signal Corps in Washington recommended his release. However, his commanding officer in Tennessee who rated him a very valuable officer, refused to release him on the ground that he had no replacement for him. (I do not know who this commanding officer was and have not researched this point in O & R.)

On August 26, 1864, he was mustered out of the service and re-enlisted as a Captain in the Signal Corps of the U.S. Army and was Brevetted Major in that service. He was honorably discharged December 8, 1865, at Fort Leaven worth, Kansas. In short, he was nominally on the rolls of the 3rd Wisconsin, although detached, until his entry into the U.S. Army in the late summer of 1864.

Under army commanders in the west he served successively under Buell, Rosecrans, and Thomas. He was attached to Hooker's Corps at Lookout Mountain and whatever the faults of that commander, and they were many, his diary makes clear (July 27, 1864) that when Hooker "leaves us", there was "great consternation among the troops".

The diary, although kept throughout the war, is noteable for its brevity, vide his comment on December 31, 1862, at Stones River. Mostly it concerns itself with the miles covered per day, remittances of his pay back to his family in Wisconsin, and bad days of rain, snow, heat, short rations or water, and events where he had exceptional good meals or went sightseeing. (The Hermitage out of Nashville, Mammoth Caves, etc.). Many dates are missing either through lack of something that he thought was worth recording or, perhaps, missing pages in the small pocket journal in which he kept his notes.

In short, the diary is from the viewpoint of an active Civil War participant who did not know at the time the larger stragetic, or tactical objectives of army commanders. Although he was engaged at Stones River, Chickamuga, Lookout Mountain, Kennasaw Mountain, Atlanta and later, Westport (just outside of Kansas City), the things that show up in his diary, as far as actual fighting is concerned, are the constant skirmishing the armies engaged in between major battles. This is particularly evident in his terse diary entries during the campaign (110 days) for Atlanta. To the private in the ranks or a signal corps officer it made, apparently, little difference whether you were killed in a major engagement or in a brief and minor fire-fight between maneuvering armies. Either one, when it happened it was for real.

I have, perhaps, gone on too long to place in context the diary entries of my grandfather that relate to the Perryville and Stones River battles.

Letme say again that though I have been on most of the fields of major engagements of the Civil War, that I found Stones River remarkedly well preserved and your staff most courteous, most pleasant, and helpful.

In regard to the preservation of the battlefield, I hope it can be kept that way. For example, Missionary Ridge has been built over until it is a mess and Gettysberg has that awful and obscene commerical tower.

The latter is more of an affront to ones sensibilities. The former, I suppose, a natural growth before preservation of the major battlefields of our great national crisis became a matter of particular concern.

Yours sincerely,

Brice K. Meeker

Brice K. Meeker
3124 Adrian Place
Falls Church, Va. 22044

CIVIL WAR JOURNAL OF CAPTAIN EDWIN I. MEEKER (CONTINUED)

1862

June

13 Commenced the March towards Tuscumbia. Made 25 miles and Camped.

14 Resumed the March. Made 25 miles and bivouacked.

15 Marched 10 miles and struck Tenn River, opposite Florence, Ala.

22 Opened a station from Genl Buell to Genl McCook.

23 Discharged Fluetle Annis a private of Signal Corps who has been with me for about nine months.

23 Gave Annis the sum of $20.

26 Struck tents and commenced marching. 4 hours consumed in crossing Tenn River. Made 18 miles.

27 Made 25 miles today and camped at Athens Ga.

28 Still marching.

29 Arrived at Huntsville this morning. Distance from Athens 25 miles.

Augt

21 Took cars at 10 A M and traveled to Bridgeport. Talked with enys' pickets.

22 Rode to Decherd Tenn and camped.

31 Commenced marching at 4 P M. Travelled until midnight and bivouacked at Hillsboro 19 miles from Decherd. We are now on our way to Ky.

Sept

1 Started this morning made 10 miles and camped at Manchester.

2 Lay here today.

3 Made 11 miles.

4 Resumed the march and after making 20 miles camped at Murfreesboro.

5 Marched 30 miles over a hard pike and camped within four miles of Nashville. Suffered this day from great heat and want of water.

11 Left Nashville today after a good deal of trouble in getting started. Travelled 22 miles and camped at Tyber Springs.

12 Took up our line of march this morning and had a very tedious day. Did not get to camp until 8 P M. distance 18 miles

CIVIL WAR JOURNAL OF CAPTAIN EDWIN I. MEEKER (CONTINUED)

1862

Sept

13 Another hard days march made 15 miles.

14 This morning we started 12.30 (A M) (?) and reached Bowling Green 10 A M. Made 14 miles.

17 Marched all day at intervals. From 5 P M we had a blinding rain. Camped at 9PM Distance 15 miles.

18 Commenced moving at 4 PM. Marched until 9 P M. Troops begin to get excited owing to the near approach to the enemy. Good many Rebs being caught and brought into camp. Expect a fight tomorrow. Distance today 14 miles.

21 For the last four or five days we have caught a great many prisoners. Today we expected a battle but Bragg has given us the slip. Men greatly discouraged. As soon as the news came in I rode forward and reached Mumfordsville a distance ofll miles just as the little affair was closing. Saw a few dead and wounded Rebels.

22 Left Mumfordsville this PM reached Bacon Creek, our camping ground at 10 PM. Distance 9 miles.

23 Got an early start this morning and before sundown we reached Elizabethtown. A good deal of enthusiasm shown by the citizens at seeing us. We are following the enemy up North and expect a fight soon. Distance today 20 miles.

24 Left Camp at daylight and after making a march of25 miles we reached West Point on the Ohio River. Today we are on Free soil the first for a long time. At sight of the bluffs on the Ind shore the whole Army gave some lusty shouts! It was a welcome sight.

25 Broke Camp this morning at 2 o'clock and arrived in Louisville before 10 A M making a march of25 miles. People mighty glad to see Buell's Army. We receive a hearty welcome from everybody.

28 Mailed to my Father a receipt for $150 - sent by Adams Express Co.

Oct

2 After having a very 'hearty' time, and after the manner of soldiers spending foolishly, a great deal of money, we left Louisville and marched 15 miles in the direction of Bardstown and after the Reb army.

3 Made 9 miles today.

4... Today is my birthday. We marched about 8 miles skirmishing constantly and several times drawn up in line of battle.

5 Made 8 miles which brot us to Bardstown and Compro. Was asked to dine with a very pretty young lady. Of course the invitation was accepted.

CIVIL WAR JOURNAL OF CAPTAIN EDWIN I. MEEKER (CONTINUED)

1862

Oct.

6 Marched to Springfield a distance of 24 miles. Had a very tedious day.

7 Marched to within 3½ miles of Perrysville. Distance today 14 miles.

8 After waiting so long we have had a battle. The first regular engagement I was ever in. Our loss estimated at about 2000. We took a great deal of ordnance and some ammunition and some prisoners. Rebels ran so we had to attend to their wounded. Spent most of my time working signals.

10 March up towards Harrodsburgh a distance of 4 miles. Enemy are said to be in strong force at that point. We suffer horribly for lack of water.

11 Lay in Camp.

12 8 miles today brought us to Harrodsburgh which the Rebs had evacuated twelve hours before we got here. Took in about 1500 prisoners.

13 Nine miles marching and we found ourselves in Danville. We are briskly following the enemy.

14 Left Danville about 3 P M and marched 11 miles. Camped about one mile beyond Stanford.

15 Made 15 miles today and was in quite a skirmish. Camped between Crab Orchard and Mt. Vernon.

16 Marched toward London turned back and camped at old place. Distance 12 miles. Pursuit of enemy abandoned.

18 Although we have cold nights last night we had our first frost.

21 Marched from this place to Danville a distance of 28 miles. Taking the back track.

22 Marched to Lebanon making 28 miles. Very hard trip.

25 First snow of the season. It came three inches deep.

26 Again marching. Weather very cold. Made 24 miles and camped near Summerville.

27 Made 20 miles and camped five miles from Mumfordsville. Troops getting demoralized.

28 5 miles today and we are once more in Mumfordsville.

31 Started for Mammoth Cave. Spent all the night in going through. walked twenty miles.

Nov.

1 Slept two hours and then rode 10 miles to our camp Was in camp one hour and then joined a party to visit the Dome Cort. Had a splendid time. Had the 4th Cor band in a large dome where they treated us to fine music.

CIVIL WAR JOURNAL OF CAPTAIN EDWIN I. MEEKER (CONTINUED)

1862

Nov

2 Marched 21 miles and camped at Bowling Green.

3 Rec'd my commission as 1st Lt. to date from August 13, 1862.

9 Marched 28 miles and camped at Mitchelville.

10 Made 25 miles camping at Goodletsville, Tenn.
11 12 miles this A M and we are again in Nashville.

Dec

12 Took command of Signal Detachment Center 14 Army Corps and marched the detachment across the Cumberland and camped.

13 Marched to Gallatin 26 miles and reported to Genl Thomas.

22 Moved to within two miles beyond Nashville. Distance 28 long miles.

25 Marched 7½ miles south and camped.

27 Made 9 miles and camped a little south of Nashville.

28 Sunday. Travelled over a very rough road which connects the Nolensville Pike and the Murfreesboro Pike. Made 15 miles and camped at Stewartsboro very near to the enemy.

29 Skirmishing all day. Was shot at by the enemy's pickets.

30 Moved up 7 miles to the enemy's front. Heavy Skirmishing.

31 The fight came off today. Was under fire 11 hours. Terrible. Ran many narrow escapes

1 8 6 3

1863

Jany

1 New Years opens on us cold and bleak. Was up all night on duty watching and fighting.

2 Waited all day for enemy to attack us. Nothing done until 4 P M. When they opened on our left with great force. Enemy finally repulsed with a loss of one flag and two batteries. the success had a splendid effect on our men. Cheer after cheer rang out from the whole Army. This evenings work decides who are masters and gives us the victory.

3 This evening at dark I left the battlefield for Nashville in an ambulance on the advice of all of my friends and the surgeon, as I was suffering somewhat from bruises and had taken the fever. Arrived at the St. Cloud Hotel at 10 P M.

CIVIL WAR JOURNAL OF CAPTAIN EDWIN I. MEEKER (CONTINUED)

1863

Jany

7 Feel so much better that I shall join my comd. Rode in an ambulance and camped with an Inf. Regt.

8 Walked 7 miles to my own camp. Found everything all right.

19 Opened line of Signals to Picket line.

26 Was released from duty with Genl Minor and ordered to report to Merrits.

Feby

23 Recd a Leave of absence and started for home.

24 Left Nashville and started for Louisville.

28 Reached home and recd a very warm welcome.

Mar

2 Rode to Plattsville. Had a"bully"time."

4 Returned to Meekers Grove.

6 Left for Galena and took the Cars this evening.

7 Arrived at LaFayette, Ind and called on her.

9 Started for Louisville and landed 11 P.M.

11 Run to Nashville.

12 Reached home and reported.

May

10 Sent home 1000

12 do do 10.00

19 Do Do 5.00

Do Do 5.00

June

24 Moved south from Murfreesboro. Considerable skirmishing. Raining constantly. Made 8 miles and camped at Big Spring Creek.

24 Made 8 miles and camped at Bush Grove. Terrible heavy rain.

27 Moved into Manchester 14 miles.

July

1 Marched 15 miles over the most terrible of roads. Wagons not up. Camped in Tullahoma.