

Original KDB CC - Gilda Batta 7/17

July 12, 1995

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Stones River National Battlefield
3501 Old Nashville Hwy.
Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37129

RECEIVED
STONES RIVER
NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD

JUL 17 '95

Attention: Regina Forsythe
REF. K14

Sept. Aug 7/17
Chief Ranger
X Staff Ranger BC

Dear Ms. Forsythe:

ENPCOMA
Adm. Off.
Adm. Clerk
Librarian
Remarks:

Thank you so much for the copies of the missing pages from the 44th Indiana history and copies of your brochures.

I think I may have mentioned to you that I found the original book, written by John H. Rerick, M.D., who was the assistant surgeon with the 44th. It was in a used book store in Elkhart, In. in the "rare book section." They wanted \$225 for it, which I felt we couldn't afford.

After writing you for the brochures, Father's Day came and my son got it for me! I'm enclosing copies of a picture of Col Hugh B. Reed who commanded the Regiment and a picture of John H. Rerick who wrote the book. Also, pages 78 through 84 relating to Stones River. Maybe you will find these helpful?

I'm also enclosing copies of Daniel W. Thompson's letter home after he enlisted (Dec. 9, 1861), his April 13 or 15, 1862 letter following Shiloh, his Nov. 10, 1863 letter describing life in Chattanooga following the battle at Chickamauga. His Jan. 6, 1864 letter written during the 44th Indiana duties at Chattanooga mentions he has a furlough coming and then his Nov. 22, 1864 letter indicates he didn't get it "because of his political sentiment." The state of Indiana didn't provide for absentee ballots and those soldiers who would vote Republican were sent home to "swell" the Republican votes. Apparently, he was a Democrat!

There is to be a Thompson reunion in August and I am anxious to see if there are other letters that I am unaware of, especially those that might relate to battles such as Stones River. If I find any, I'll send you copies. I have now found the cemetery he was buried in, his wife's parents stone, and the stone marker still legible for his mother, Catharine Thompson -- all in the same cemetery.

I've tried to copy in my writing, the letters he wrote so you'll find both enclosed. I'm putting together an album of all this for my son. May I bore you further with a few comments regarding the trip my wife and I made following the battles in which he participated?

At Ft. Donelson, the Park had an original of the same book that my son got me. So the only three I know of at this time are in the library at Ft. Wayne, In., at Ft. Donelson, and mine. Maybe you know of another? We took pictures of the "Surrender House" and near this location the 44th Indiana was one of the first Regiments to accept the Confederate stacked arms. Col. Reed mentions that General Grant rode by and motioned him to follow. He wasn't sure he or the whole Regiment was to follow, so they all went.

At Shiloh, we were able to "follow" Daniel Thompson through the Peach Orchard, at the left of the famous "Hornets Nest", and the point near the "Bloody Pond" where the 44th charged the Confederates late on the first day. Here, Confederate General Albert Sydney Johnston was killed. During the charge, Official Records indicate that as many as 7 men in the 44th took up the Regimental Flag as the holder was hit. The flag is in the Indiana State Library in Indianapolis, and hopefully I will be able to see and photograph it next Monday, to add to the Album.

At Chickamauga we again "followed" his action at various spots along the Lafayette Road, including Brotherton Field -- where on the second day, the Confederate breakthrough came. Then, the 44th was one of the Regiments that gathered on Snodgrass hill and stood off repeated charges until night fell. It was this action that saved Chattanooga from falling to the Confederacy and where General Thomas earned the title of "The Rock of Chickamauga." We walked along the ridge following the 44th markers and at sunset, saw our first meadowlark -- sitting on the 44th marker and singing. There was no one around and the beauty and serenity of the moment - in contrast to what Daniel Thompson experienced -- was very emotional for me.

We were able to follow the action at Shiloh and Chickamauga in detail because I luckily found large old maps drawn by Engineers and showing positions of the Union/Confederate Regiments and Brigades at various hours of the action. I think it was drawn up about 1900 after consultation with those who were at these two battles. And, in a used book store in Chattanooga I found "War of the Rebellion, Official Reports of the Union and Confederate Armies" with all the battle reports made by commanders of the Regiments, Brigades, Divisions, and Corps. It was published in 1880, and I got it for just \$25. It covered the action at Shiloh and through the siege of Corinth. How I wish I could get a copy covering the other battles he was in, including Stones River. You can follow the individual actions from both the North/South view.

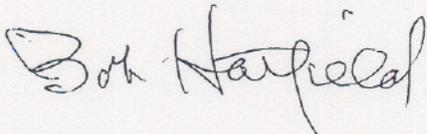
Well, I've bored you enough. But I figure anyone who would work at a National Battlefield would be a fellow "bore-er"! Again, thanks for spending time with us. I hope to come again as I now have maps and a better perspective of Stones River. For example, Pyffe's Brigade, including Daniel W. Thompson in the 44th, was part of the Division driven from the east side of Stones River back to the west side and then participated in the pursuit of the Confederates after they were pounded by Mendenhall's massed cannon. It was virtually

the last action of the battle. I took photos of the marker reading "ARTILLERY SAVES THE DAY" - near McFadden's Ford -- as well as the large monument on the hill, and didn't realize at the time that the 44th was there!

Regina, note in his first letter after enlisting he considered his first duty to God, second to country, and third to parents. His parents may have been pacifists and apparently taught him "the values" that so many politicians today are talking about. The soldier friend from another company who died at Camp Balis in Evansville was most likely "David Wert" in Company E, as surgeon Rerick describes this in the 44th history stating that "he died strong in the Christian faith" and gives his name. It makes sense, then, why they became friends because they undoubtedly shared the same values. I don't remember my Grandmother Hatfield, whose father was Daniel W. Thompson, ever speaking about him. How I wish I could talk to her now and ask questions! It was Grandmother Hatfield who gave me his original letter and the original envelope.

Hope you are having a good summer and making progress on the data base.

Sincerely,



Robert T. Hatfield
1827 E. McKinley
Mishawaka, In. 46545