

Civil War Letters of Edward F. Hall

The Museum of New Hampshire History's outreach program *Document Detectives* helps students understand how historians and museum professionals learn from objects and documents of the past. From the sources used in the program, students are encouraged to make reasonable generalizations about the nature of people's lives in the 1800s. Along the way, it is hoped, students learn that we develop knowledge of our past, ultimately, from primary sources—the writings and artifacts of the people who lived at the time.

If you wish to pursue this line of investigation with your students, you will certainly enjoy having them read these selected letters written by Edward F. Hall, a private in the 3rd N.H. Volunteers. Hall served during the Civil War and wrote the letters to his wife, Susan, between 1861 and 1864.

In addition to the many artifacts maintained by its Museum of New Hampshire History, the New Hampshire Historical Society possesses original papers, letters, photographs, broadsides, and ephemera spanning the state's history. These primary source materials are available to students and to members of the Society free of charge. (For a modest fee, they are available to others as well.)



**VOLUNTEERS
WANTED!**

In pursuance of a Proclamation by
the President of the U. States, and by order of the Gov. of N. H. the
Third Regiment of Volunteers
within the State of New-Hampshire, will be enlisted for three years,
unless sooner discharged by proper authority, to be held in readiness for service when
called for.

In accordance with the above, and acting under the orders of the
Governor of this State, I have opened a
RECRUITING OFFICE
AT
UNION-HALL BUILDING, COR. MARKET & HANOVER STS.
PORTSMOUTH,
for the enlistment for three years, of able-bodied men. None will be received who are
under the age of eighteen, or over the age of forty-five. All under 21 will be required to
bring a written consent from their Parents or Guardians.

Volunteers who shall be accepted will be uniformed, armed and equipped, when
mustered into the service, at the expense of the State, and their pay will be the same as
that of the corresponding rank in the Army of the United States, to commence at the
date of enlistment.

GEORGE W. TOWLE, Recruiting Officer.
PORTSMOUTH, N. H. July 22, 1861.

Background

Born in Epping in 1824, Hall later lived in Exeter with his wife Susan and a son, Edward, who was born in 1847. The eight selected letters range from August 1861 to September 1864 and take us from Concord to Port Royal to Hilton Head to Beaufort to Portsmouth (Virginia).

There is an interesting discrepancy between official records and the contents of one of Hall's letters: military records list Hall as a deserter in February 1864; Hall's letters in March of that year refer to a furlough in New York. On August 16, 1864, Hall was wounded at Deep Bottom, Virginia, and later lost his right arm. The soldier was discharged in October 1864. While no death date is listed for Hall, a pension award is listed for his widow in 1903.

Objectives

- To allow students to identify a historical period with the experiences and observations of a participant;
- To show how historians and museums use documents as sources to learn about the past;
- To encourage critical thinking and give students a chance to reach conclusions based on their own observations.

Suggested Procedure

You may wish to begin with a full-class discussion of what sorts of information students might learn from personal correspondence. Ask for example...

- Do any of you keep letters you receive?
- Do any of you maintain correspondence with someone else? (Do you send letters or e-mail?)
- What kinds of things might a historian 200 years from now learn about you from what you write?

Field a variety of answers and use them to establish that letters and other kinds of personal documents provide a window onto people's everyday lives.

You may wish to divide your class into several groups and distribute copies of different selections to each group. For example, one group might read through the letters from 1861 and 1862; another group could read the letters from 1863 through March 1864; and the third group could read the letters of September 1864. When the groups have read and discussed their excerpts, bring them back together to report their findings to the whole class.

Also, you may wish to investigate the extensive lesson prepared by Marcia C. Spencer. "New Hampshire and the Civil War—The Edward F. Hall Letters: Politics and Self-Expression" can be found in the *New Hampshire History Curriculum, Book 2*, pp. 133-146. (This book may be purchased by calling the museum store at 603/856-0610.)

For another activity that uses personal correspondence as a doorway into history, look at "[Samuel Lane's Almanacks](#)," also available on the New Hampshire Historical Society Web site as well as on its CD-ROM. The "almanacks" are diary entries that Lane kept through much of the 1700s, affording us a view of everyday life in colonial New Hampshire.

Recommended Reading for Teachers

Ayling, Augustus. *Revised Register of the Soldiers and Sailors of N.H. in the War of the Rebellion, 1861–1866*. Concord, N.H.: Ira C. Evans, 1895.

Bolster, W. Jeffrey, and Hilary Anderson.

[*Soldiers, Sailors, Slaves, and Ships: The Civil War Photographs of Henry P. Moore*](#). Concord, N.H.: New Hampshire Historical Society, 1999.

Hall, Edward F. *Letters of Edward F. Hall, a Soldier in the 3rd New Hampshire Volunteers, to His Wife Susan and Son Ned in Exeter*. Concord, NH: New Hampshire Historical Society Manuscripts. 1861–1865.

Moyer, Judith, et al. *The New Hampshire History Curriculum, Book 2 (Grades 7–12)*. Concord, N.H.: New Hampshire Historical Society, 1999.

“Samuel Lane’s Almanacks.” World-wide Web.

<http://www.nhhistory.org/edu/support/nhpeople/lanediary.pdf>. April 4, 2004. Accessed April 15, 2004.

Selected Letters of Edward F. Hall

[August 13, 1861](#)

Summary: In his tent, Hall writes to his wife on a day with “rain falling in torrents.” Some of the soldier’s blue mood is probably attributable to his regiment’s surprise removal from its camp in Exeter (Hall’s home town) to Concord and to the fact that the soldiers “have not had much to do.” Maybe most important, Hall tells his wife “how unlikely it is that we shall ever meet again” and how sad that makes him. The transcript includes a sample written in Hall’s own hand.

[March 9, 1862](#)

Summary: A rather more upbeat Edward Hall writes from Hilton Head, S.C., extolling the superiority of “Yankee industry” over “the shiftlessness of southern Chivalry.” What Southerners want, according to Hall, is “Yankee energy and thrift, and a little less aristocratic pride.” The transcript includes a sample written in Hall’s own hand.

[December 2, 1862](#)

Summary: Writing from Hilton Head, S.C., Hall recounts witnessing the execution of a soldier accused of desertion. He apparently enjoys the successes of Democrats over Republicans in the 1862 elections insofar as their victories represent a victory over abolitionists. He doubts, however, that Democrats will be any more successful than Republicans in reuniting the North and the South, except through war. The transcript includes a news report of the execution from the December 25 issue of the *Manchester Democrat and American*.

[July 13, 1863](#)

Summary: Hall writes Susan that he has “taken sick with dysentery”—an illness that lays him up for months. Sent to the regimental hospital, Hall apparently missed “scenes of excitement and danger” in which his regiment engaged. “Some of the poor fellows are sent to their long homes,” Hall tells his wife. Interestingly, Hall makes no mention of the Battle of Gettysburg fought just a week and a half earlier.

[January 17, 1864](#)

Summary: Hall writes that he is homesick as he sees others transported to northern hospitals. Hospitalized at Beaufort, S.C., Hall claims that he is “gaining flesh and strength slowly” from the dysentery he reported in his letter of July 13, 1863. This transcript contains a Henry P. Moore photograph of a group from company H of the 3rd N.H. Regiment.

[March 25, 1864](#)

Summary: Hall writes from Beaufort, S.C., of his return from New York City, where he was on furlough—according to him. Military records list him as a deserter in February. Hall also makes reference to the serious illness from which he has been recovering. (See earlier letters.) This transcript contains a Henry P. Moore photograph of a group from company A of the 3rd N.H. Regiment.

[September 6, 1864](#)

Summary: This letter from Balfour Hospital in Portsmouth, Va., reveals to us Hall’s loss of an arm because of wounds received at Deep Bottom, Va. He complains of phantom pain in the missing fingers and hand. He expresses concern for his son, who wonders if he will be allowed to remain in school. Hall believes that young Ned will have to earn a living sooner than planned, for he feels uncertain what he himself is “to do with one arm to get an honest living.” Mention is also made of Hall’s brother Sam.

[September 22, 1864](#)

Summary: Writing from Balfour Hospital in Portsmouth, Va., Hall discusses the delays in his getting discharged. He also alludes to the current presidential election, hoping that whatever the outcome, “our bleeding country [can] be once more restored to peace and prosperity.” (Hall was, in fact, discharged in October.) The transcript includes a sample written in Hall’s own hand.

August 13, 1861

Concord, N.H.
Aug 13th, 1861

Dear Susan here I sit in a tent the rain falling in torrents, wet to the skin shivering with cold caused by standing guard four hours last night. when I wrote before we did not expect to leave Exeter for some time, but last wednesday, the order came to start for the camp the next day.

accordingly thursday morning we took the cars and arrived here at one o'clock. there are three companies here now

and we expect 3 or 4 more this week. how soon the regiment will

be filled up and

organized I don't

know. there is some

grumbling among the

men about the living,

and some have named

it Camp Hungry, and it

is tough for anyone

coming from a good

home or boarding

house. we have not had

much to do yet except

cooking our rations and

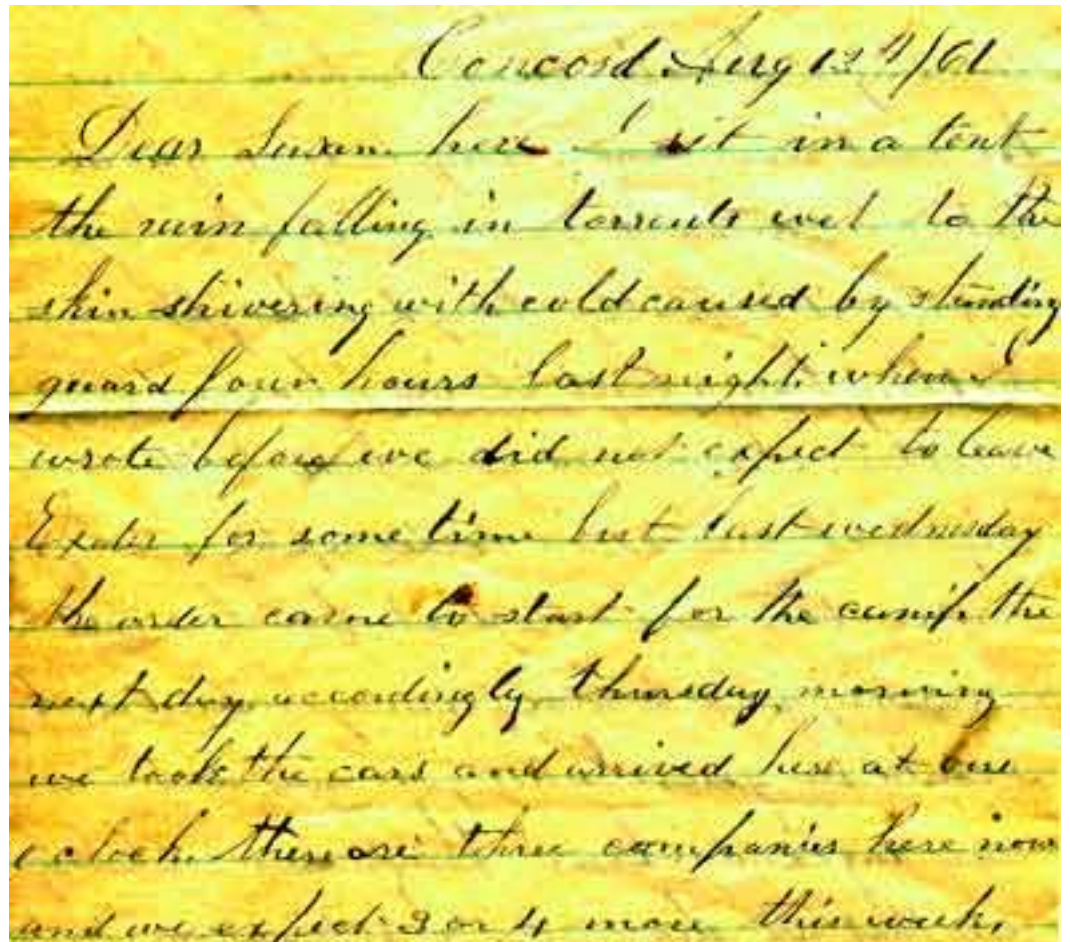
standing guard. ten

men are taken from

each company every day, each ten standing 2 hours in turn, making 8 hours for each man every

day he is on guard duty, and when it rains as it did last night it is pretty tough, though there is

nothing bad about it in pleasant weather. I received your ~~last~~ letter last night. it arrived in exeter



Concord Aug 13th 1861
Dear Susan here I sit in a tent
the rain falling in torrents wet to the
skin shivering with cold caused by standing
guard four hours last night when I
wrote before we did not expect to leave
Exeter for some time but last wednesday
the order came to start for the camp the
next day accordingly thursday morning
we took the cars and arrived here at one
o'clock there are three companies here now
and we expect 3 or 4 more this week

after we left, and mother remailed it for Concord. I was very glad to hear from you and wish I could see you. I miss you more and more every day, and when I think how unlikely it is that we shall ever meet again it makes me sad, and Eddie, too I want to see him very much. Give my love to him and tell him to write often, be a good boy, and remember his Father. it is doutfull if I will get a furlough long enough to come and see you. direct your next letter to Concord (care of captain John E Wilbur). Good by till I hear from you again. Ed F Hall

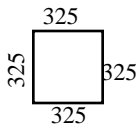
Source: NHHS: Edward F. Hall Letters, Box 1, Folder 1, 1

March 9, 1862

Port Royal S.C. Sunday, March 9th, 1862

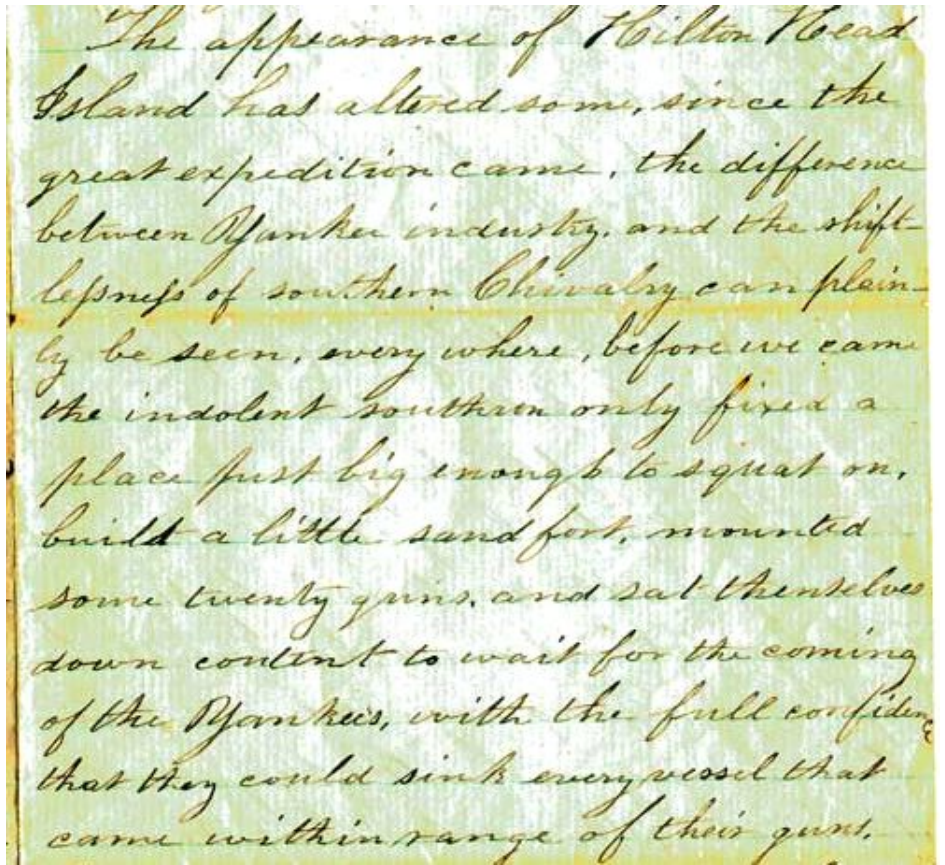
My dear Susan,

The appearance of Hilton Head Island has altered some, since the great expedition came. the difference between Yankee industry, and the shiftlessness of southern Chivalry can plainly be seen, everywhere. before we came, the indolent southerner only fixed a place first big enough to signal on, built a little sandfort, mounted some twenty guns, and sat themselves down content to wait for the coming of the Yankees, with the full confidence that they could sink every vessel that came within range of their guns. how they were woefully deceived, when the fleet came, is published to the world no sooner had the hardy and industrious northerner effected a landing than they went to work, clearing up large fields, for camping grounds, smoothing off large spaces for drilling grounds, building large store Houses, for the storage of provisions and ammunition, large stables for the horses, a long wharf for the unloading of vessels. it is 1500 feet long from the Bank to the end, with a cross across the end 350 feet long, same as you would cross a T. it is built by driving spikes 20 feet into the bottom of the river and fraiming and planking on the top



ends, the timber is being cut in the woods nearby, and the work done by the army. a large entrenchment has been thrown up, 60 or 70 guns mounted on it, four or five magazines built at regular distances along the works, to keep the ammunition in. a large general Hospital has been built, or nearly so, capable of accommodating one thousand sick and disabled soldiers. it is built one story high, in the form of a hollow square 325 feet on each side or front and a piazza all around it, about an acre of land inside the square, which is to be made into an ornamental garden. traders have come and put up little stores which can be taken down again in parts and packed up and transported to some other place when necessary. two or three long blocks for Barracks for the negro's have been put up. a large bakery has been built, where good soft Bread is baked for the army, and a Steam saw mill is being built, close to a heavy growth of hard pine timber. in fact industry has taken the place of indolence in everything to be seen. it is likely to be quite a town here some day I think. it looks like quite a town now in the vicinity of the Fort. it is an excellent harbour here and would be a good place for a Navy yard and a City which might rival Charleston, and perhaps will some day. labor, work, industry, has done all this, and in this lies the superiority of northerners over southerners. this

labor is what the southerner is too proud to do himself, and too aristocratic even to be a Boss Carpenter, or mason, or to oversee his farm or plantation as they call it here. There are some splendid plantations on this Island, but the buildings are poor affairs, no large barns and store houses to keep their crops in, as in New England, and their Houses to live in are old, small, and ill contrived and not so good as are built in NE for the mechanic to live in. they dont need very warm Houses, but I should think they would want them more tastey and neat looking. I suppose they are in their towns and cities. what they want is Yankee energy and thrift, and a little less aristocratic pride. I see by the papers, that the cotton sent from here has sold as high as 63 cts per pound, some of, at least, in NY. I will send this in my next letter to you.

A snippet of a handwritten letter in cursive script on aged, yellowed paper. The text describes the appearance of Hilton Head Island and contrasts the 'Yankee industry' with the 'southern Chivalry'. It mentions that the indolent southerners built small sand forts and waited for the Yankees to sink their vessels.

The appearance of Hilton Head Island has altered some, since the great expedition came, the difference between Yankee industry, and the shiftlessness of southern Chivalry can plainly be seen, every where, before we came the indolent southern only fixed a place just big enough to squat on, built a little sand fort, mounted some twenty guns, and sat themselves down content to wait for the coming of the Yankees, with the full confidence that they could sink every vessel that came within range of their guns.

E F Hall

Source: NHHS: Edward F. Hall Letters, Box 1, Folder 1, 1

December 2, 1862

Hilton Head
Dec 2^d, 1862

Dear wife and son

Your letter of the 23rd nov I recd yesterday, and was very glad to hear that you were both well glad also to learn that you had got the \$15 on the allotment. we all were somewhat anxious about that because we were so long in hearing from it—

I hope Eddie will enjoy his new clothes and skates. it is a good thing to have good warm clothes in the cold winter coming—I suppose things to live on are high, but hope you will not suffer on that account—

Yesterday we all went out to see the deserter shot. he was a large good looking man and met his doom without flinching. 9 bullets went through his breast and cut his back bone completely off, and he was dead before the surgeons could reach him, and they stood only a few feet from him when he was shot—if you see the Papers, you will see a much better account of the sad affair than I can give you. he said to the last that he was innocent of the crime of desertion, he was on Picket, and went into the rebel lines after a woman, according to his story—and a good many think it was so, but of course we have no means of knowing. he got out off the wagon, pulled off his overcoat, and dress boots, without any help, and knelt on his Coffin, as coolly as if nothing serious was to happen—all the soldiers on the Island were there to witness the execution, except those on other duty, and the sick—he was only 21 years of age, and it was a sad sight to see so young a man die in such a manner. he made a few remarks, but I wasn't near enough to hear them. I shall always remember the sight—

I have nothing more to write now, and will bring my letter to a close. I wrote you on Sunday, can't tell anything about when this will go. as you say, letters are a good while going, and coming, nowadays. your last one however was not long on the way—and I hope this will go as quick.

I see by the papers that the Democrats are rejoicing very much over their recent victories, and so far as it is a condemnation of of [sic] the abolitionists, I can rejoice with them, but I don't see

how they are to settle with the rebels any better than the party in power—as I understand it, the rebels will not accept any terms short of a separation from the North—and if we give up that we give up all we are contending for—so I don't see as we are any nearer peace than we were before. besides, those democrats who are elected to Congress are not to take seats in that body for a year to come—if they could have a chance to put a stop to the corruptions, and abolition schemes, of the administration party, I should be glad, but I can't see as they will have a chance, if they have the disposition. hoping things will come out right, I remain your absent Husband and Father—E F Hall

Source: NHHS: Edward F. Hall Letters, Box 1, Folder 1, 8

MILITARY EXECUTION.—Albert W. Lunt, a private in the 9th Maine regiment, was shot for desertion on Monday, Dec. 1, at Hilton Head. He died instantly, eight balls passing entirely through his body. Rev. Mr. Hill of this city, chaplain of the 3d N. H. was in attendance upon the condemned soldier at the execution.

This brief mention of the execution witnessed by Edward Hall appeared in the December 25, 1862, issue of the Manchester weekly paper *The Democrat and American* (XXI, 36, 1).

July 13, 1863

Folly Island
Monday July 13th, 63

Dear Susan—

I now seat myself to let you know what has happened to me and the rest of us in the last two weeks. Two weeks ago tomorrow I was taken sick with dysentery. Friday night, July 3^d, we got very sudden orders to break up camp & go on board a steamer bound for Folly Island, and at it we went, and on the morning of the 4th, we had put everything on the vessel got on ourselves and laid out in the stream ready to sail and before noon we were on the way, and sometime in the night, we landed on Folly Island. I was sick all this time, but managed by having my things carried on the trams to come along with the rest myself, but it was pretty hard, and when I got here I was about used up. we came up the beach about 2 miles on Sunday and pitched our camp. Just at night Capt Jackson came to me and said he had got permission from the Surgeon to put me in the Hospital, so in I went for the first time—in the regimental hospital I mean. and I have been there ever since. Just a week last night, after 3 or 4 days I began to get better and now my bowels are very nearly well. it has been the severest sickness I ever had I think and has weakened me considerable. but I am in hopes now I shall soon be all right again. While I have been sick the regt has been through scenes of excitement and danger, and some of the poor fellows are sent to their long homes, while others are suffering from wounds. It appears that the rebels had made up their minds that we were to do nothing here this summer and had drawn off nearly all their troops to other points, leaving barely enough to garrison the forts and batteries all around Charleston. Our Generals had spies out and discovered this state of things and concluded this was the time to strike. accordingly on the 10th our brigade consisting of the 48th NY, 76th Penn, 7th Conn, 9th Maine and 3rd N H, and led by Gen Strong, made a strike on Morris Island, while another brigade went on James Island our regt, with the 7th Conn charged on a battery and took it, had captured some prisoners and chased the others up towards the upper end of the island, where they took refuge in the famous Cummings Point Battery [Fort Wagner] of which

we have all heard and read so much. This is a very strong work, and was the chief battery that helped take Fort Sumter from Maj. Anderson. we have got all the rest of the Island except that, and it is thought that in a few days we shall have that. the 76th Penns, 7th Conn and 9th Maine made a charge on it one day, but were repulsed with great loss. The 76th lost over 200, the 7th Conn lost their Col and 7 out of 11 officers dont know how many men. they had to charge through a creek up to their necks in water. it is said now that the commanders have concluded it can't be taken in that way, at least without too great a loss of life, and have gone at work building batteries to see if they can't take it with artillery in connection with the gun boats. The loss of the 3^d NH was eight killed and six wounded. Company B's loss was one killed and 22 wounded. no Exeter men were hurt except Warren Dearborn. he got a slight bruise on the abdomen by a piece of shell. it is pretty sore, but not dangerous. the one who was killed was James J Locke one of those who went home on furlough. our regt lays within reach of the enemies guns now, and this morning a story comes that two more of Com B's men were wounded by a shell last night. can't learn their names. a few sick ones are here in camp, some 6 or 7 miles from the scene of action, and some of the slightly wounded, those who were able to walk, have come down and are here, to. It has been an exciting time to us here in camp all sorts of stories coming to us of what had been and was to be done, some of them the wildest kind. It is said no mail will be allowed to leave here for the north until Morris Island is ours. I thought I would have a letter ready to go to you with the first news that goes north, so you might not have a long time of suspense and anxiety in regard to me. With much love I will now close.

Edward F. Hall

Source: NHHS: Edward F. Hall Letters, Box 1, Folder 1, 10

January 17, 1864

Beaufort S.C.
Jan 17, 1864

My dear wife and son—

I recd the letter written by both of you on the 5 Jan last evening just before going to bed. Glad to hear you say you both are well. It does seem odd to write 1864, but we shall soon get used to it. true this is the year we have looked forward to so long, and we expect to meet again before its close. I hope nothing will occur to prevent it. Month after month are passing away, & soon it will be summer again & the month of August will soon be along. till then I must stay in SC, I suppose. There is no particular change in the state of my health since I wrote last it continue about the same. I am gaining flesh and strength slowly, full as fast though as I can expect after so long and severe a sickness—Probably shall be well enough in the spring to go to my regt.



Group of Co. H, 3rd N.H. Volunteers at Hilton Head, 1862. Henry P. Moore Photograph (NHHS Collections).

Thursday morning Jan. 21.

Last evening about eight o'clock, 5 men from the hospital went on to steamer Cosmopolitan, bound for N. Y. one man is discharged, the other 4 are to go into some northern hospital, so the Dr says. one man of the 4th NH regt was selected to go along with the rest, but the night before he was taken worse, and last night he was too bad to be moved, so he was left behind, and this morning he appears to be about gone. Singular he should be taken so much worse just as he was on the point of leaving for some where near home. It made me a little homesick when I saw them going and I could not. however, I did not much expect to be one of the number—A mail arrived yesterday but brought nothing for me. I have nothing more in particular to write now. In regard to money matters, I suppose if what you draw for Ned is stopped this month you will need something more than what you draw for yourself alone. If so you must draw from my little bank enough to make you both comfortable. I think you had best keep the boy at school till I get home.

My health remains about the same no perceptible alteration.

Hoping this will find you both well and happy, I will now close.

Edward F. Hall

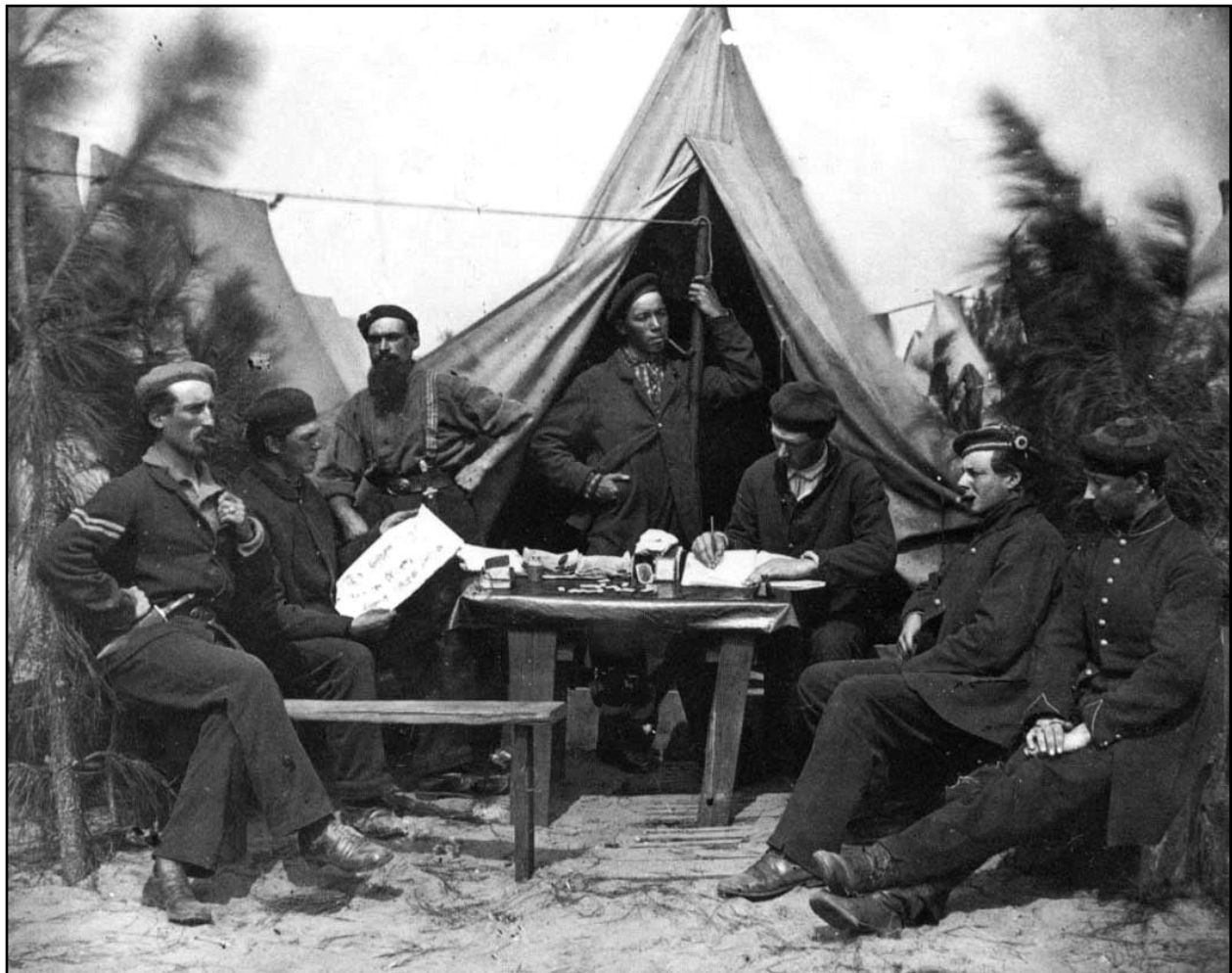
Source: NHHS: Edward F. Hall Letters, Box 1, Folder 1, 15

March 25, 1864

Beaufort S.C. March 25 [1864]

Dear Susan

I have arrived at the hospital all safe and will now write you a few words, Left N.Y. last Sunday morning about 10 o'clock. It was a cold windy day and continued so till we arrived here. It was a rough passage. We had a schooner in tow loaded with cattle. Tuesday about noon the wind blew



Group of Co. A, 3rd N.H., 1862. Henry P. Moore photograph (NHHS Collections). Two of the soldiers in this group died in the war, and three others were seriously wounded. (W. Jeffrey Bolster and Hilary Anderson, *Soldiers, Sailors, Slaves, and Ships: The Civil War Photographs of Henry P. Moore*. Concord, N.H.: N.H. Historical Society, 1999.)

so hard and the sea ran so high that the hawser broke and the schooner went adrift. We tried till dark to get a line to it again when we had to give it up. The next morning the schooner was no where to be seen. Tuesday and Tuesday night the waves broke over the steamer every little while, and it was hard to keep myself in the bunk. We arrived at the entrance to Port Royal harbor a little after dark Wednesday night and had to lay there till morning when we came up to the dock, landed at 10 o'clock, making 4 days from N.Y. If I had arrived in N.Y. one day sooner I would have come by the Arago. She sailed Friday, and I got there on Saturday. As it was I had to stay in N.Y. eight days. I stopped at the N.E. rooms, and it was a very good place to stop at. N.Y. is a great town, it is enough to make a man crazy to hear the noise on Broadway. I saw the Astor House, the St. Nicholas, the Metropolitan and lots of other hotels of less note. Went up Broadway as far as the Central Park. That I should think would be a splendid place in summer when everything is green. I have not got rid of my cold yet. I was cold all the way down. My head aches bad today, and my appetite is all gone. The Dr thinks I look better than when I left. It is warm and pleasant today and I guess the warm weather will take the cold out of me. Last night when I arrived here I found six letters waiting for me. Two from you and Eddie, one from Sam, one from Helen, and one from a man who used to be in this hospital and went to N.Y. among those sick ones that went on the Cosmopolitan. One of yours was dated Jan. 21st and contained one from Eddie. The other one was from yourself and dated Jan. 31st—Sam says his health is very fair now and his hand is getting stronger. Two of the furlough men from this hospital came by the Arago, one beside me came by the Fulton. There are two more who have not come yet, and the Dr says if they don't come by the next boat he shall report them as deserters. The hospital is filled up with the wounded from the Florida fight. Some of them are wounded bad, others little flesh wounds that don't amount to much.

I dont think of anything more to write and will close.

write soon

From your affectionate husband

Edward F. Hall

Source: NHHS: Edward F. Hall Letters, Box 1, Folder 1, 15

September 6, 1864

Balfour Hospital, Sept – 6 – 64
Ward 10, Portsmouth Va

Dear wife — Your last letter I received yesterday. The \$2 and four stamps were all safe. Now I will try and write you a few lines to let you know how I am getting along My general health is very good. My appetite is good. I have not lost much flesh yet, and my strength is not much reduced. My arm so they all say is doing nicely, it looks well certainly, but pains me a good deal yet, and cheats me out of a good deal of sleep. A good deal of the pain seems to be in the fingers and other parts of the hand that is gone. Of course I can't expect to get along without considerable pain, and probably I don't have more than I ought to expect. I am living on what is called "Full Diet"—A pint of coffee and two slices of Bread and Butter for Breakfast — a piece of Roast Beef, two or three Potatos, a small quantity of Tomato's one slice of Bread and a pint of coffee for dinner. For supper I get two slices of Bread with Butter, some Peaches cut-up and a little Sugar put on them, and a cup of Tea. This is not bad living, but there isn't much variety in it. it is the same every day. I sometimes think I would like a change However, I can get along very well with it. How soon I shall get home it is impossible to say. The Dr don't say anything to me about it to me [sic] —I have not been able to learn who was killed or wounded in Com B or the regs I saw a partial list in a N.Y. paper one day, but it was so incomplete that I couldn't tell much about it—It seems the discharged men didn't get home till nearly a week after their time was out —

If it hadn't been for this broken wing of mine, I would have been there, too—wish it could have been so, but never mind, it may be all for the best. Hope so. What troubles me most now is thinking about what I am to do with one arm to get an honest living. It is rather a blue look. Ed wants to know if I can afford to keep him at School another term. It is hard telling what I can afford now. He will have to depend on his own labor for his living soon, certainly. Perhaps one more term will make but little difference. But I will leave it for you and him to decide the question whether he shall attend school another term or go to work — Sam's being sent to his regt is something new to me. I supposed he would be at home before this. I was thinking of it the

other day, and rather expected when your letter came to hear he had got home. Perhaps he may be as unlucky as I was and get wounded just as his time is out. I hope not, though—it would be bad for him with his family. It has been very warm most of the time since I was hurt, but the last few days have been quite cool and comfortable—it is a good deal better for the wounds I believe I have written about all I can think of just now, so I will close Remember me to all the rest and accept much love from your absent and afflicted husband

Edward F. Hall
Balfour Hospital Ward 10
Portsmouth Va

Source: NHHS: Edward F. Hall Letters, Box 1, Folder 1, 16

September 22, 1864

Thursday Sept 22^d 164

Dear Wife

Your short letter I recd yesterday P.M. and this being a rainy day and I can't go out, I will, to occupy a part of the time, write you a few words in reply—

You seem to have made up your mind from what I have written you before that I was coming home immediately, and say you will expect me the latter part of this week. You must not jump to conclusions so suddenly. I am very sorry to disappoint you, and am as sorry as you can be that I can not come this week, and it is as impossible for me to say when I can start as it was a week ago. The Dr is waiting he says for a string that ties an Artery to come away there were two of them and one of them came away over a week ago, and the Dr says when the other comes out I will be all right to go home. So you see I can't tell when I am to leave untill the strings come away. A man belonging to the 10th Conn whose time was out day before yesterday, went to see the Surgeon in charge of the whole Balfour Hospital, all these 10 wards, to find out about his discharge and was told that he couldn't be discharged here, but would be sent home to his own state and get his discharge there, and in case a mans discriptive [sic] list wasn't here he would have to be sent to his regt and get it there. His discriptive list being here they would send him to Conn. Mine is not here and unless they send to my co commander and get it I will have to go to the regt before I can come home. The Dr in charge of this ward don't seem to understand anything about the military forms of doing business He is what is called a contract Surgeon, and is a citizen, and don't seem to be posted at all so I can get no information from him— When that string comes away probably something will be done towards my discharge untill then I shall have to wait patiently as possible. What the string has to do with it I can only guess. Perhaps he thinks that there is some danger of the artery that is tied by the string may break open and bleed, and he wants to wait and see the result of strings coming away. I can account for the importance given to the event in no other way. Nothing has been done to the arm since it was amputated except to clean it with cold water and do it up with a rag and lint and keep it wet with cold water, and if there was no danger of its breaking open again, all that could be done as well at home as here— I think I have said enough about it now so you can understand the matter as well as I. We

are expecting this ward to be broken up this week. if so, probably I shall be transfered to some other ward. I suppose the Presidential campaign begins to engage the attention of men at home now that the nominations are made and the candidates are in the field— and no doubt as much interest will be felt in that for some time to come as in the campaigns of Grant and Sherman — There will no doubt be a good deal of bitterness of feeling between the contending parties and a good deal of calling each other hard names etc. I hope however all will come out well and our bleeding country be once more restored to peace and prosperity — I confess I don't see the way to peace at present, whichever candidate may be elected, and I can find no one who can tell me how it can be brought about. We are all ~~are~~ anxious for peace, the rebels included, but I apprehend it will be difficult to agree on the terms. And I think whoever is elected President will feel himself obliged to carry on the war.

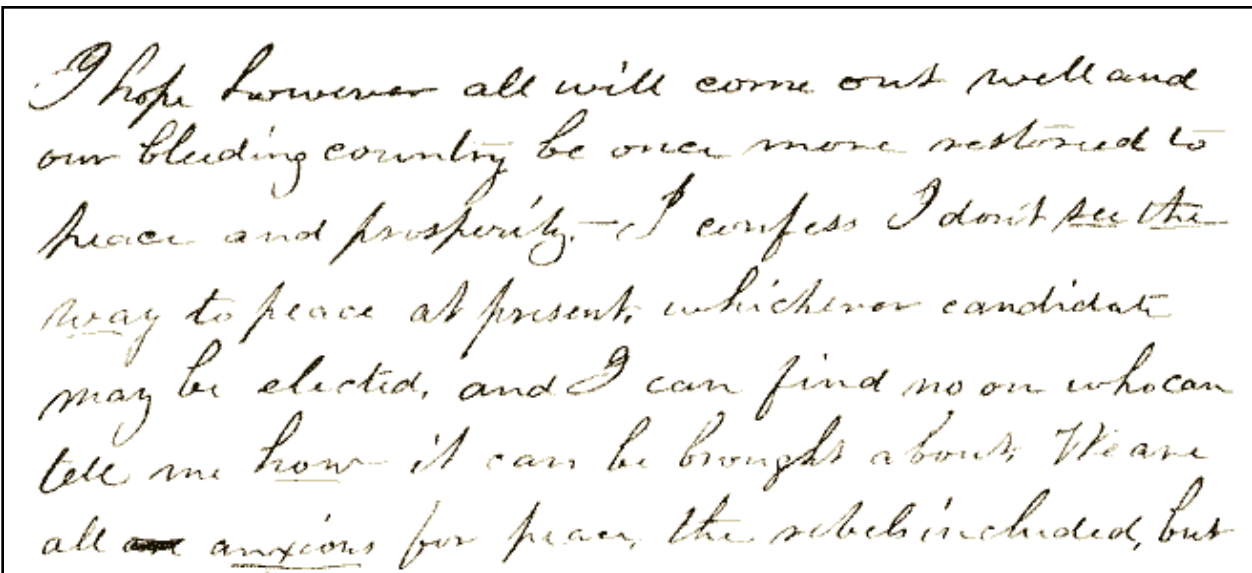
Pleas remember me to all who may take interest enough in me to inquire how I am geting along.

O I should like very much to see you all, and hope I may soon —

From your husband

Edward F Hall

Source: NHHS: Edward F. Hall Letters, Box 1, Folder 1, 16



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