

JOSIAH FARRINGTON'S CIVIL WAR DIARY AND LETTERS

By Myron Bradley

(NORTHWEST OHIO QUARTERLY, Summer, 1977, Volume XLIX, No. 3, The Maumee Valley Historical Society. Scanned and OCR March 2005 from an original in my possession, John T. Nicholson)

Introduction

Josiah Farrington, born in 1827, moved from Vermont to Whitehouse, Ohio, in the early 1850's accompanied by his wife Araadna Goodwin Farrington. He farmed and became a Justice of the Peace. According to his nephew and namesake, Albert Josiah (A.J.) Bradley, he also "ran the one and only store in town and in partnership with Alex Walp ran the first stone quarry there." Araadna died in September, 1860, leaving him with their two children, daughter Addie and son Ambrose ("Bose").

The next July he enlisted for a three-year period in Captain James McCabe's Company, 14th Regiment of the Ohio Infantry for Civil War duty. He left his two children and his mother, Almira Hall Farrington, with his younger sister Cynthia Pike Farrington Bradley, and her husband Eber. It is to Cynthia, Eber, his mother, and his two children that his letters are addressed.

The diary does not appear to be in Farrington's handwriting; presumably it was copied by some interested member of the family from the original journal. The spelling and punctuation have largely been retained as found in the documents. Asterisks are used to show deletions of sentences and paragraphs of little general interest.

Josiah Farrington, "Si" to his friends, appears to have been somewhat of a natural leader, rather good looking if we judge from photographs, and a tall man for his generation at two inches over six feet.

The diary and letters along with other family papers were given to the author in 1932 or 1933 by his grandfather ,A. J. Bradley.

Camp Chase, Columbus, Ohio, July 27, 1861

Dear Mother, Brother & Sister & Children I have arrived in Camp and am well and hearty and also well suited with my position and my prayer is tonight that this may find you all enjoying the same blessings of providence. **We number about 4000 men now in Camp and arriving every day. 30.00 have left for Virginia within the last 3 days. Lots of 3 months men are coming back from the battle field. We have some 20 seceshers as the boys call them in camp as prisoners of war. Some of the boys bring back mules, some clothes, some negros, guns &C that they have captured.**

Camp Dick Robinson, K. Y., Oct. 6; 1861

Absent But Not Forgotten Relatives **You will see by the heading of this that I have got into old Kentuck. We have been at this place 4 days but exspect to go into Tennsee before long. **We expected to have met General Zollicoffer near this place but it is reported that he has fell back so that we shall have to make some long marches before we see the gentlemen. Our Company are well with the exception of some that are or have been left back sick on the road, one at Toledo and seven at Lexington, K.Y. We have one poor boy that was caught asleep on Guard. I am afraid he will have to be shot. He will be court marshaled tomorrow I think. I sen this with postage unpaid for the reason that we have no stamps and it is the order from the Col that the soldiers should send their letters free on acct of scarcity of money and it is not proper for us to pay money to the letter carriers for the reason they can endorse the letter and buy beer with the cash. **Our forces and this Command will probably exceed twenty thousand in a few days. The Ohio troops are coming in fast. We have quite a number of Teneseans here & some Kentuckeyans.**

Camp Calvert, Kentucky, Nov. 3d, 1861

Absent Friends: **I am well & enjoying myself first rate. We have had one battle since I wrote you last and have been in dayly expectation of another. **It is rumored that the Enemy are within six miles of us. We are situated near a town called London. The inhabitants of the Town are moveing their families back into the country. They are very much alarmed. Capt. McCabe has regained his health and joined his Company.**

You have undoubtedly heard of the particulars of our battle at Camp Wild Cat before this. I will say upon the 14th Ohio Regt rest the honor of saving the Federal forces from destruction. We arrived just in time to save the camp from total destruction by the enemy and also to send them, especially those that were not killed, back from whence they came. **We are informed that they have been reinforced and are returning for the purpose of giving us another trial but we feel perfectly secure thinking we can whip them. We have seven thousand infantry, twelve peices of canon and one hundred cavalry all very well situated and prepared to receive an attack. Our battle at Camp Wild Cat took place on a Monday. **The day after I went to the Battle Field. It was curious to see the Teneseans come along to a dead body turn it over and call it by name and sometimes by the appellation of Father or Brother. We found a number of bodies that were not buried but we buried them on a Tuesday afternoon. ** While the Enemy were in the country and where ever he came across a dwelling & farm there was total destruction in many instances and wherever the Enemy camped over night the ground was literally covered with the half eaten carcasses of cattle taken by the Enemy from the inhabitants without money or price and killed. But there was one thing I can hardly account for all along the road we would find a new made grave and every time I saw one I seemed to rejoice within myself with a feeling I always thought that I should never have that is so. But it has come to this I have enlisted to fight against the Enemys of our Country and every one that I see fall or that I know has fell fighting against our Flag & Country that there is one more the less to wipe out. I never thought that I should have such feelings but is so. You may think me blood thirsty but I think I can be civilized when I get back among the sand hills & praries. **At 9 o'clock in the eve we retire in peace and at 12 o'clock we are aroused by the long roll of the drum and the cry to fall in the Enemy are comeing. Today

we ate our breakfast discussing the subject that we should not have any more fighting this winter and before dinner was ready we were told to prepare for battle thus and so.

Camp Kentucky, Dec 29 1861

Dear and Beloved It is Sunday night. I have just returned from the Companys grounds. I have been distributing cartridges and expect to see them distributed among the Enemy within a short time. **The prospects are that we are a going to have a fight but we may not after all the fuss.

I merely write tonight to let you see what a variety of business [torn] I have dont you thing I am [torn] at one hour drilling a lot of men, the next attending devine service, next detailing a lot of men for this or for that. Next comes the order See that your men are provided with 40 rounds of amunition each. We have fifty men shelling corn tonight. Tatum is beating now I must attend roll call for the orders are that one Commissioned Officer at each roll call. We have three per day. As I am the only officer in Company I that pretends to be fit for duty I have to fly around like an old women with a large family with two at the breast. I have returned from roll call and am now trying to assist the Capt in distributing canteens & haversacks.

Camp of 14th, Russell County Ky, Jan 12th 1861 [1862]

Brother Eber & Family It is Sunday Evening and I found today that we should Reach a Post Route in a day or two. ""We march [ed] from 4 o'clock AM until 12 M today and then struck our tents. **We are within ten miles of the Enemies Force tonight. We expect some to have a small Fight unless he retreats. There will be a Force of about Eighteen thousand on the side of the union and according to Report some Fifteen thousand of the Enemies.

**We have Been Traveling over Country for thiree or four days that Resembles the Openings very much. Good deal of the Road the Bottom has Fallen out apparently. It is hard work for the teams to keep up with us and we Stop and work out our Poll Tax every few miles. It is a world of Wilderness only now and then a Squatters Habitation. **Capt McCabe has Been Well But tonight he Complains some. I fear the Campaign mite Prove too hard for his Old age. We have left several of our men at Lebanon in the Hospital. We have two or three that are sick now taken within the last day or two. I do not [know] what will be'done with them. Here we are in an Enemys Country and nearly Wilderness at that, it is very bad to be sick. *If we have to fight Old England I guess you had Better stay at home. If I live I will Be ready for them on my part and yours too.

J. Farrington 's Diary, Feby 18th [1862]

The Bugle was sounded at 4 A.M. At five we were on the move. During the day we made 18 miles Passing through the town of Perrysville, a small Pleasant village situated on the Road from Danville to Lebanon. **On the 19th Reveillee was sounded at 5 o'clock a.m. We arose and Found it Raining a perfect Torrent. Immediately Received orders to strike tents and Form a line which was amediately Obeyed. We were soon on the move. After marching in a continual Rain storm For six Hours, Forging 4 creeks &c we halted one mile from Lebanon and the Beardtown Road. Every man was wet to the skin and it

Rained in Perfect Torrents at that time. Our tents were Pitched. Those that had stoves were the lucky ones that night. But there was many a soldier that suffered for the want of fire and a dry Piece of Ground to sleep on. I for one was Oblidge[d] to acknowldge a long visit from an old inhabitant of the Maumee Valey the Ague. But was comfortably situated in Comparison to many others. Haveing a Good Fire & Blankets to Protect myself from the Storm and what was still Better all of those Comforts were Provided by a Soldier Friend by the name of Foster who cared and made my tea all through the Long and weary march. God Grant that he may [be] blessed with as Good a friend in time of need is the daily Prayer of the writer.

** [0] ordinary business untill the 23d of Feby when Orders were Issued for the Regt to make Preparations to move at 3 o'clock A.M. on the Following morning. At this My Health was very Poor. Capt McCabe Haveing Regained His Health Came foreward and took Comd of His Company And I resolved to stop in Town and Recruit My Health.

Feby 24th at 3 o'clock the Regt started towards Beardstown K.Y. Myself in Company with Friend Foster Started for town. After ariving in town we Learnt that the Regt was Going direct to Louisville & then down the Ohio River.

Lebanon, K. Y., March 12th, 1862

My Dear People of the Oak Openings ** I am well or a good deal better than I was when I wrote you last. I am waiting now to meet a special friend before I leave for the Regt. **I wait with a degree of impatience hoping that I may be able to join my Command in a few days.

J. Farrington 's Diary

At Lebanon I Found a large number sick. Some 16 Hundred soldiers were in the different Hospitals at the time and there were a Great many deaths for the first two [torn] I stoped there. There was on an average of 50 deaths per week. **Getting some Better on the 17th of March I started for the Regt. Took Charge of a squad of sixty men of diferent Regtns and Reported at Louisville K. Y. on the 18th. Went aboard the Boat Called the Moderator Bound for Nashville Tenesee. **We had a very Pleasant voyage Passing down the Ohio to the mouth of the Cumberland and then up that River to Nashville. Nothing of importance takeing Place during the voyage more than Landing and visiting Ford Donalson &c. **On the 22d at night we landed at Nashville. I was Pretty near wore out. I could of Reported Sick Concienciously. On the 23rd I learned that the 14th Ohio Regt were some 30 miles from town on the Columbia Turnpike. I procured a passage on the first Train of Cars that Had Run on the Chatanouga R. Road since the Enemy Had Left the City. Went as far as Franklyn By Rail & then some ten miles By Private Conveyence to Spring Hill where I found the Regt on the 24th of March. I Found them all in Good spirits and Pleasantly situated in a Beatifull Country. After staying with them a few days I nearly Regained my usual Health and Reported for duty.

Camp Near Spring Hill Tenn March 27th 1862

Dear Relatives **Our Army are encamped on a widow ladys farm containing seventeen hundred acres all in one body all good plow land. I have just come in from a walk in the

fields where I have seen seven teams of three mules each that were ploughing. There were four females hold of the plow. I could not see but what they done as well as the males (all Slaves). I understand that this noted widow lady is a strong secesh and has fled South with a large portion other moveable effects &c Leaving an overseer and slaves sufficient to work her lands.

Also today I hear by Mr. Rakestraws letter the death of Mr. Osborns children. It is quite a loss to them. I also learned by a letter to the Capt & others that Mr. Foster has got home. Glad to hear of the old gentlemen's good luck. The inhabitants call this a backward spring. I have seen a number planting potatoes &C. Peach trees are in bloom, grass is green. Our men are playing ball bare footed opposite my tent.**

J. Farrington 's Diary

April 2d 1862. Received Orders to Be Ready to move at 10 o'clock A.M. At that time our tents were struck and our whole Brigade moved towards Columbia, Tenn., Major General Thomas Comdy our Division and Brigadier General Fry our Brigade. We passed through Columbia at 2 o'clock. A very good appearing town but seemed to be deficient of inhabitants. Encamped at night near a Beautiful! creek in a field of clover. On the 3d struck tents at 7 A.M. Beautifull day, Good Roads, Pleasent Country. Passed the Homesteads of Bishop Polk and General Pillor. Pitched tents at night at Foot of a Mountain near a Creek. On the 4th struck tents at 7 A. M. Had a long hill to climb. It soon began to Rain. It continued to Rain Hard for one Hour.**

April 5th. Started at 7 o'clock A. M. Poor Roads and Poor Country. Worked hard all day and advanced only five miles. On the 6th we started at daybreak and took up our Line of March towards Savannah Tenn. During the day our Ears were Greeted by the Booming of Cannon Every now and then which seemed to Give new life to our Limbs. Encamped at night near Waynsburgs an old dilapidated Looking town inhabited by a few white women and a score or two of Blacks.

April 7th. **Made a march of 18 miles. Heard the Report of Guns at Pitsburge Landing [Shiloh] all day. Halted at 4 P.M. 14 miles from Savanah. Stacked our Arms and waited for our teams to come up. They came about dark. We then Received orders to Furnish ourselves with two days cooked Rations in our Haversacks and Be Ready to Fall in at any moment.

April 8th. At one o'clock A. M. the General was sounded for the Brigade to Fall in. It was very dark and Rained very hard. Our Regt was soon in line and commenced to move over a strange Road in a thick wood. Raining and so dark that a man could Hardly follow his own nose Letting alone his File Leader. Our Regt moved some two miles and then Halted untill day Light. Here we were wet completely through and still Raining Hard. Oblidged to stand over slice in mud waiting for day Light to appear with the consolation of Haveing to march 12 Long miles through mud nearly knee deep in many Places before we could get any Rest. Those are the trying time for a soldier. Going into Battle is no comparison. Well at day Break we started. The Road was very Poor and Completely Filled with Trains and Artillery. We Reached Savanah at 4 P. M. haveing to cross one

Large stream of water upon a Log where only one man could cross at a time. We were marched aboard of boats and immediately started for Pittsburg Landing arriving there about 9 o'clock P. M. On the morning of the 9th we went ashore, the Battle Being over, the Enemy Having Retreated. We drew rations and moved about one mile from the Landing and Halted. Commenced to Built Large Log Fires for it was very Cold and wet. We were Oblidge to Lay there without Tents or Blankets untill the 16th, the Teams Being unable to Get along Before on account of the Bad State of the Roads and the Great Many of trains ahead of them.

Pittsburg Landing, Tenn. April 14, 1862

Dear Friends **We -are encamped on the ground or a portion of it where the Battle of the 6 & 7 was fought. That was a desperate Battle and we expect another in a few days. We the 14th was not in the Battle of the 6 & 7. But was up the River into Ala. Returned this morning. Where we burnt 4 bridges across the R. R. leading to Charleston S. C. Killed 4 Secesh, took some prisoners, and captured lots of cotton. **We have been on the march all the time during the month. We have had no tents nor change of clothes in that time. We expect our teams in a few days.

I have not time to tell you the particulars of the Battle only would say that it was on ground very much like the openings about your farm and the line of Battle extended for 16 miles in length. I saw 168 dead bodies throwed into one grave, 60 horses in one pile or line and thirty in another.

J. Farrington 's Diary

At Early Candle Light [April 13, 1862] we Received orders to Fall in immediately. In one Half Hour our Brigade was on the move towards the Landing. At 12 o'clock at midnight we Got aboard the Steamer Tecumseh and in Company of two Gun Boats and the Flying Cloud we Proceeded up the Tennessee River. On the 14th we Landed at a small town called Chickasaw in Alabama. After landing 150 Cavalry and some Reconicence the Brigade with General Fry and staff started into the Country, the 14 Regt having the Riglit of the Brigade. We Proceeded ten miles Back from the River, the Enemys Pickets Fleeing Before our Cavalry until they came to a Bridge Crossing Bear Creek. Here they Burnt tlie Bridge. As we arived at the Bridge, it was nearly consumed. 5 Companies of the 14 were detailed and Proceeded down the Creek 4 miles to a Large Bridge on the Memphis & Charleston Rail Road. They Here made a Capture alry men several Contrabands [slaves] and one Hundred Bales of Cotton. Major General Sherman the Commander of the Expedition Gave us the credit of Performing a piece [of] work of Great Importance, this Rail Road leading Direct to Corrinth where the Enemy are now, or were then, Fortified. He also stating that this was the third attempt to distroy that Bridge, the Forces Haveing Failed to Get to it twice before this. On the 15 at day Light we found ourselves at Pittsburg Landing.

Camp Shiloh, Pittsburg Tennes. April 19th 1862

Dear Mother **As to my maner of liveing it is sometimes very scant and tedious, at others I have all that a soldier could ask for. **Our present mess consist of Capt McCabe, Dr. Cronise, Dr. Nellis lately come to the Army from Marietta, Ohio and Lt. Bigelow. J.

E. Wildy as cook and myself with a yellow boy as waiter that I picked up by the way side who I call "George Washington." We all eat at one table at the Captain's tent, he furnishing the provision and we pay Wildey 10 dollars a month for cooking. At the end of the month each one shares equal the exspence & C the boy getting his board and clothes for his labor with now and then a piece of money as present.

Our sleeping thus Lieut B and self have a tent by our selves, Capt the two Drs with the cook sleep in his, George Washington usuly sleeps with a brother in Company C on our left. We usuly sleep on the ground. We have plenty of blankets. For instance tonight while we were at supper the darky has made up my bed very nice, laying down three thick Government blankets to lie on, then spreading my coverlid that I brought from house to spread over us with other blankets makes a nice bed.

Our board today was good. Ham & eggs, potatoes, mustard, soft bread, green apple sauce, cheese & butter with sugar & coffee.

We stayed here one week without tents to cover us or a single utencil to cook with and not any thing to cook but hard bread and salt pork. I laid three nights on three billets of wood to keep me up out of the mud and off of the damp ground. I had neither blanket or overcoat to cover myself. Thus you can see the changes that a soldier is subject to in active service.

**We are on the North Shore of the Tenn River in a timbered country something like you country there at home only more broken and rolling. Now say if you could see the country from Maumees to Swanton and then around to Providence to the River covered with horses, waggons, tents, men, guns and materials of war, you would see things very much as we do here. Each morning at the hour of reveille a stranger would think that Bedlam had broke loose and the inhabitants had all taken to beating drums & blowing bugles.

J. Farrington 's Diary

On the 24th [of April 1862] the Regt was Paid off in the Forenoon. One of the

Pleasant and agreeable times of the soldiers [life] is when he Gets Pay for his services.

Camp of the 14th Near Corrinth Miss, April 25th 1862

Absent But Not Forgotten **We are not within about five miles from the Enemys advanced lines. **As we came along yesterday we met a reconoitering party of ours consisting of four Regts of infantry & one thousand of cavalry together with some artillery. They reported of haveing fallen in with some four Regts of Missisipi infantry near their front lines, which took to their heels upon our party s approach leaving their tents and camp fixtures which our party distroyed by fire and otherwise. They probably thought that our entire force were advancing upon them. Our forces concentrated have become a vast Army. I do not know the number nor am I able to give an estimate. We are located now four miles from the Tenn River on the western shore. There lays directly

between us and the river thirty thousand men and that is but a mere speck compared to the number on our right &C.

The air where we were encamping had become very impure there being so many dead bodies so slightly buried lying near. By moving we avoid all of this having got outside of where the battle of the 6th & 7th [Shiloh] was fought. On our march yesterday we passed several places where many a man and horse fell on those days. The smell was hardly endurable.

J. Farnington 's Diary

[May 4, 1862] We sloped at night within 7 miles of the Enemy's Entrenchments. **It Rained nearly all night. On the 5th could be seen about Four thousand men standing around Piles of Rails trying to coax the Fires to Burn, their Clothing wet through and through, and still it Rained so Hard that it was almost impossible for a fire to burn. But they all seemed to Be in Good spirits. Each one of us Had to Relate How we Enjoyed the night &C. [May 17, 1862] Our army Had Graduly drove the Enemys Pickets Back into a thick Low Swamp Near their Entrenchments at Corinth, Miss. Our Lines were all completed, Extending nearly two-thirds of the way around them. **They Commenced to Fire upon us Briskly at day Light in the Morning. **Two of Co. I were wounded. One of them was of your schoolmates, Wm. Grant [?]. Was Hit By What we term a Spent Ball in the Forehead. It was a very narrow Escape. Rather a severe wound.

The Buternuts as our men term the Enemy, Resort to all manner of means to deceive our men so as to Get the advantage of them such as wareing Bells, Hallowing like some Bird or Beast. At one time as Company I was on the outpost Mr. Smith Jenkins was standing at a post on the opposite side of a wheat Field from the Enemy. He had Exchanged shots across the Field several times during the Evening. Also his Comrads on his Right and Left were Fireing smartly. He Heard a small Bell sounding as though there were sheep in the Wheatfield. He Being aware of the many deceptions of the Enemy He discharged his Gun in the direction of the sound of the Bell. There was instantly a volley of Balls flying about his Ears. It was imadiately answered By His Comrads and the Bell was silent the after Part of the night. One of our men By the name of Thomas Johnson was Laying down with His Canteen by his Head. A Ball Passed through it makeing a very Large Rupture. He was Furnished another Free of Charges in the morning.

We were in the best of spirits. We seemingly wanted nothing But a Chance to Fight and Better water. That was poor and sometimes scarce. The waters of Swan Creek at its Lowest stages would Be Preferable to any we could Get there.

But on the 30th of May, Early in the morning, there was singular Reports of Explosions in the direction of Corrinth. We Had noticed that the cars [railroad] were Busily Engaged nearly all night and Sky Rockets were seen in the air towards morning. All these signs Combined started a Report that the Enemy Had Evacuated Corrinth. **In a short time the Report was confirmed, then there was a General order to Fall in. The 14th arived inside of their Breastworks about 9 o'clock.**

At Corrinth, a new made town situated at the Junction of the Memphis & Charleston and Mobile & Ohio Rail Roads, was Found several Large Buildings nearly Consumed by Fire together with a Lot of Provisions, Shell, and amunition which accounted for the singular Reports we Heard hi the morning &c. The Stars & Stripes were Flying in all directions.**

Our Brigade soon Received orders to Return to Camp and pack Rations and Prepare to Pursue the Enemy south. We arrived in Camp at 2 P. M. At 4 P. M. we were on the move. Passed through Farmington at dusk. We marched untill 3 o'clock A. M. on the 31st, then Halted and sat By the Road side to Rest. **We were out on this Pursuit until the 10th. **From Place to Place without tents [torn] utencils not Even a Chapge of Clothes. We arrived here at 5 o'clock P. M. [June 12] and Encamped in a Pleasent wood one mile from the Town of Corrinth.**

Report if true is that our old division Commander, Major General Thomas Has Been appointed Military Governor of Miss. and our Division is to Be His Provost Guard. Since the 1st of May we Have Been under the Command of Brigadier General T. W. Sherman, acting Mj. General, a man that was not like by any of our Officers.

[Farrington's resignation due to "long continued ill health," date September 3, 1862, was addressed to "George P. Este, Lt. Col. Comdy. 14th Regt. Ohio Vols" and approved by Brigd. Genl. Speed S. Fry and Geo. P. Este. He was discharged at Gallatin, Tenn., on October 14, 1862, but apparently the papers went astray as we see from this urgent letter.]

Galletin Ten. Nov. 13/62

Dear Brother B Today I leam that my discharge papers have been sent to White House. I wish you to see mat they are sent back to me amediately. **Pleas to attend to this amediately and oblidge. All well. In haste. [Two months later, Farrington invited his brother-in-law, Eber Bradley and family to attend his wedding to Miss Frances Burnett.]

Whitehouse Jany. 17, 1863

Brother Eber Your company with Cynthas Mothers and the Childrens is solicited at J. F. C. Burnetts near Swan Creek, on Tuesday Jany. 20th, 1863, at 11 o'clock a.m. I write thinking that I may not see you before that time. I trust you will be present without fail. Yours, J. Farrington.

POSTSCRIPT:

Farrington became a widower for the second time with the death of Frances ("Fannie") Burnett Farrington at the age of 25 in May of 1866. In April of the next year, he married her sister, Sarah Louise Burnett who was usually known by her middle name.

Within a year or two the family moved from Whitehouse to Norborne, Carroll County, in western Missouri, in a "covered wagon" as his daughter Addie described it in A. J. Bradley's 1937 "Early Whitehouse History." According to a Carroll County history published in 1882, Farrington served two terms as Justice of the County Court and was also a successful merchant. Several children were born to the Farringtons in Missouri.

In the National Archives' Pension Record on Farrington, there is evidence that his health became steadily worse over the years. In addition, a deposition by a Norborne, Missouri, doctor stated that the Civil War veteran "once had considerable money, but he went security and paid debts of that character and died a poor man." Josiah Farrington died at sixty-seven, on February 22, 1895, of complications arising from his age and the hardships he underwent during the War.