The Letters of Samuel James Reader,
1861-1863

Pioneer of Soldier Township, Shawnee County
(Coneluded)

[To His Half-Sister Mary Ellen (Ella) Reader]

[March 14, 1862.]

D[EAR]. S[ISTER]. ELLA,

“Old Bachelor” was highly delighted on receiving yours of Feb
26 and Mates [Martha’s] of 27th on the 7th instant; but implore you

to be merciful to me by not sending your petition to our Legisla. as
it will if it should be granted place me in a predicament. Do not
suppose that I think writing to you school girls an irksome task for
it is the reverse; but were I to write 2 letters to your one I am afraid
I should not hear from you often enough and my letters would be
neither punctual nor interesting. The other horn of the dilemma
you wish to create I see is marriage. Well it is truly formidable
indeed and I will certainly have to cry for quarter if I am to be
driven to this extremity (?) Not because I am an enemy to this
institution but because young Ladies are as scarce here as K. timber
or to use a more forcible expression “hen teeth.” I hope you do not
wish me to get an Indian lady? They are plenty enough a few miles
West—but some how I do not get fascinated by these noble daugh-
ters of the forest (or prairie rather) Perhaps you have formed a
very high opinion of this race. If you have I pray you to suspend
your judgment until you have seen as much of them as I have
Quite a number of white men of this neighborhood have married
Pott[awatomic]. Halfbreed girls but there is no danger of my imi-
tating them in this particular. Many of these Indian girls are quite
good looking but their education is generally very deficient, with the
exception of a few who have attended the C[atholic]. Mission 20 mi.
from here, and although they are gradually adopting the manners
of the Whites, still their mode of living customs and dress differ
considerably from them. Well I have plead my cause to the best of
my ability, and now throw myself on your generosity— If this will
not suffice I will have to resort to the pencil and send you a repre-
sentation of my doleful countenance in this awful fix and see if it
will not melt your obdurate heart. The Dr & family returned the
4 inst. from Ill. The little girl brought the measles with her and
Leon has taken them from her, but both are now out of danger. My Cousins F[rances], & E[tugene], we suppose are infected but the disease has not yet shown its self. . . . They say that times are very hard in Ill as well as in K. The friends were generally well there, last winter but U[ncle] S[amuel]'s children were taking the measles as they left. I received a letter from F[rank], on the 18 of Feb and answered it the next day. I suppose by this time he is moving S—ward as we heard a rumor the other day that Manassas has been evacuated by the Rebels. By all means send me Franks next communications to the newspapers. If our political sentiments be a little different it does not lessen my pleasure in reading his views politically considered. You ask me how I like our new Secy of War. Well at first I felt angry when I heard of the removal of Cameron because I thought it was owing to his abolition sentiments but when the full particulars came I felt satisfied. Mr. Stanton is a very suitable man for the position. There can be no doubt of that and I am now very glad that the change in the War Department was made. In my last Tribune I saw Gen. Fremonts defence. How I wish him now in command of our victorious troops in Tenn. Slaves would no longer be driven from camp or delivered over to the tender mercies of their masters. You want to know how I spent the 22 of Feb. Well not in a suitable manner I fear. By looking at my journal I find that I drew wood all day. Yes Ella as you say we can hold ourselves in readiness to celebrate victories almost every day. The war for us is going on in fine style. We heard last night that Gen Price had been defeated in Ark by the U. troops. Their loss 1000. Ours: 600. No details yet. The most we have to fear is the fever during the summer months in the S states, to my mind I think it would be a capital idea for you to learn to be a surveyor and then, come to K. and sectionize our unsurveyed land. You could then have your choice of the best claims. We hear that the Pott[awatamie]. Indian 2 m[ile]s. W[est] of us intend to sell their reserve of 30 ms. square to U. S. It is not yet surveyed and I think this will be a fine chance for you to begin with. Thereby showing that the gentler sex are capable of taking care of themselves. I am emphatically in favor of "Woman's Rights," for the present as it is the best policy for an old bachelor like me to follow. I have had the words and air of John Brown song for several months and would send it, but I saw it in the N. Y. T. a week ago and suppose you have got it from that source. It is to the air of "Say brother will you meet us," slightly modified. Give my warmest thanks to sister Mat for the
“Star S[pangled] Banner,” which I duly read. She also gave me a very interesting extract from Franks letter. If there be any other tunes you wish to see, name them for it may be I have them. We have 7 books about the house containing the notes of many well known songs and I have copied all the tunes that suit my fancy in my flute book. I have a violin and an instructor for that instrument and I now and then try to saw off a tune. I can do the best with the “L [Fisher’s?] Hornpipe” and “The Campbells are coming” but I make slow progress. No more &c.

[To His Half-Brother Frank]

[March 20, 1862.]

D[ear]. B[rother]. F[rank].

Your long and interesting letter of March 5 was read with much pleasure on the 19 inst. We are all well excepting the Drs children. They are just recovering from the measles which they brought from Ill. My Cousins Fanny [or Frances] & Eugene have probably been infected but the disease has not yet shown itself. The Dr & family returned from Ill on the 4th of March. They say times are as hard there as here. The weather has been tolerably pleasant for some time but it is snowing to day but not freezing. I was pleased to hear of the excellent health of your Reg. Disease is said to be more destructive to an army than the sword and your precautions in keeping your quarters clean cannot be too highly commended. When I returned from Nebraska the time I went there with the Topeka boys I did not present a very fine appearance. I had started without any change of clothes and although I had washed or tried to wash my shirt in the Nimchaw [Nemaha], still I was about as dirty and tired looking as you could possibly imagine a person to be when I reached home, we having travelled by forced marches 75 or 85 ms under a hot Aug sun, often suffering dreadfully from thirst and some times from hunger. I never exactly knew what hunger was till one day when our baggage wagon got lost from us and we had to fast for 24 h after a hard days march. I declare I was so ravenous I could have eaten any thing. I had seen one of our men a few days before eating a piece of raw fat pork which appeared very disgusting to me at the time but now I would have been very glad to have followed his example had I only possessed the meat. Once we marched 10 or 12 ms. without water having but 3 or 4 canteens in our Co. At last we came to a hog wallow full of muddy water covered with

30. Samuel Reader joined the Topeka company sent to Nebraska to guard Lane’s emigrant train into Kansas territory. See Footnote 11 (February, 1849, Quarterly).
a green scum and as warm as dish water & I suppose about as palatable. I drank more than a pint of this stuff. During the 2 weeks I was out on this jaunt I did not sleep under cover of any kind and had only a small blanket to roll myself in. My short experience is I suppose often the daily life of many of the soldiers now in the field. I see you use some pretty sharp expressions against "hold Hingland" Why F, what will our father say were he to hear you speak so hard of his native Land? When I was from 5 to 10 ys old my Grandfather used to tell me a great deal about the sneaking Tories and rascally "Redcoats" and from this I formed a very unfavorable opinion of the whole English nation and it was a matter of surprise to me why we should still call our language "English" a name which sounded hateful to my ears. But I have since come to the conclusion that they like the Father of Lies, have been painted blacker than they really are. The Rulers are many of them very mean and roguish no doubt especially in oppressing the weak and it must be that our S[outhern], slave holders have inherited this disposition from them. Still they have many "good streaks" about them. All the E[nglish], people with whom I have been acquainted appear to be good honest men only a little too strongly tinctured with pride and (here I condemn myself) obstinacy. In short, the E[nglish], taking all things into consideration are a fine upright people, far ahead of the other European nations in their form of Gov. but vastly inferior to us in this particular. I read with interest your further remarks about emancipation but like you I do not wish to begin an argument in regard to it because I might come out at the little end of the horn were I to commence a "paper war" with you. I heartily endorse nearly all that you have added in your last letter. When I wrote my last letter to you I felt quite despondent about the Slavery question, but now it appears as if a cloud had been lifted from my mind; a presentment as it were that all will come out right in the end If I be wrong in my peculiar views remember that the best of us are sometimes in error. You inquire of me if there be any Gov. land here. This land upon which we live was called the "Delaware Trust Lands" and was sold in 1857, by U. S. to the highest bidder; the "squatter" having the privilege of taking one qr. sec. at the appraised value provided he should prove himself to be a bona fide resident of the same.31 It was valued in this

31. By order of the Interior Department, sale of the Delaware trust lands "was advertised to begin at Fort Leavenworth November 17, 1854, to be limited at first to the land lying east of ranges 18 and 19, and to continue until December 15, 1856. The land west of these two ranges was sold at Osawatomie in the summer of 1857."—Anna Heloise Abel, "Indian Reservations in Kansas and the Extinguishment of Their Title," Kansas Historical Collections, v. VIII, p. 89.
T[ownship]. from $1.50 to $2.50 per acre. The non resident land were put up and sold to the highest bidder, mostly to speculators. For the last year or 2 the price of land was fallen in a remarkable degree; and men who have asked $20 pr acre formerly would now sell for $10. A man 3 m[ile]s N[orth] of town sold a farm of 280 with perhaps 80 acres of timber and quite a field, of say 50 or 60 acres for $1200 a few weeks ago. He was in debt and had to sell.

My brother in law told me today that a qr. is offered for sale a few m[ile]s. N E for $300 but it is all prairie. Do not think you will find any difficulty in getting prairie. I believe 9/10ths of the land here is of that description. As I received your letter late last night and it is storming to day I have not had a chance to make inquiries.

The Pott Indians are to send agents to Washington next Mond and it is said the Ind. will sell all of their Reserve of 30 ms square, reserving from 160 to 80 a for each Ind. This Reserve is 2 m[ile]s W of Ind[janola]. and is fine land. I think you might find a good tract there should they sell to the R R. Co. if they have not done so already. I am not posted in regard to land as I have enough and do not wish to buy. In my next I will be better informed depend upon it for nothing would give me more pleasure than to see you a Kansas citizen. Have you a land warrant or do you expect to get one from the Gov.? Everything that I can do for you in this matter I will do with the greatest pleasure. Well I cant go on as my letter is full.

Your very affectionate brother.

Saml. Reader.

[To His Half-Brother Frank]

[April 26, 1862.]

D[ear] Bro.

After a long silence I rec'd on the 24th a welcome letter from you dated Monterey [Va.], Apr 8, giving me a pleasing a/c. of your journey, Rebel fortifications &c. It must have an inspiring effect upon you soldiers to make another step towards the enemy and of course towards the termination of the war for it is now very obvious to my mind that the Pro S. traitors will be "cleaned out" in a very short time judging from our recent victories. I suppose you are

32. On November 15, 1861, the United States made a treaty with the three bands of Pottawatomie Indians that had settled in the eastern part of the Kansas reserve. One band received eleven square miles as its share. The other two bands were allotted land in severalty. The residue was offered to the Leavenworth, Pawnee and Western Railroad Co. The treaty was amended by resolution of the senate, April 16, 1862.—A Compilation of All the Treaties Between the United States and the Indian Tribes (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1879), pp. 688-690. See, also, Kansas Historical Collections, v. VIII, p. 192.

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under command of Gen. Fremont now? 33 I have been and will still continue looking with great interest for all and any news from your Department as you are the only relative I have in the army so far as I know. We are all well. Your little nephew Frank Reader Campdoras, also. Our Spring has been very backward and no farming yet. 3 Reg.’s have passed through Indianola for Ft. Riley a few days ago, making quite a stir in our quiet little town. Our Secesh friends were all strong Union men. Now about that land business. I heard day before yesterday that the Treaty has been made whereby the Pott. Indians turn over most of their lands to the R R Co. The Indians are not allowed to sell that reserved to themselves within a certain number of years (5 I believe). I suppose an order to give the R. R. Co. a chance to sell theirs without competition, as Indians when in need of money will sell for almost any price. I have not yet heard what the Co. will sell for per acre, but it cannot be priced high; as land is very cheap throughout Kan. 34 The Dr. [Campdoras] says that a patient of his, informed him the other day that land on the Waukarusa [Wakarusa] (a stream) 7 m[ile]s S E of Lawrence, good land some of it half timber can be bought for $2.50 per acre if paid down in cash. A Mr. Allen was here a few days ago and said that there is plenty of very good land on the Cottonwood creek (about 100 m[ile]s S W of here) but it is mostly prairie. This land is surveyed and open to pre-emption or private entry at $1.25 per acre. I once took a claim on this stream and I considered this locality a fine one as I had ever seen in Kan. Land can now be bought at extremely low prices here in Kan, provided the owners be paid “cash up, and no grumbling.” So come along as soon as you can, and see how you like our State. (I am sure you will), and buy. I will close. You must excuse this brief letter as I have never had more work before me than now, as the man who worked my field last year is now in the Army. I am at present enlarging my Aunts field. I have not yet heard from my sisters since I wrote to Ella on the 14 of March. Two things I am afraid will make you dissatisfied with our State, viz: Chills and fever and the scarcity of young ladies. No more. Your brother Samuel J. Reader.

33. On March 11, 1862, a new department west of the Department of the Potomac and east of the Department of the Ohio was created and General Fremont was put in command. — The Kansas State Journal, Lawrence, March 20, 1862.

34. The Leavenworth, Pawnee and Western Railroad Co. was given the privilege of buying the remainder of the Potawatomie lands at $1.25 an acre, but the treaty did not specify the number of years the Indians should hold their land before they sold it. — A Compilation of All the Treaties Between the United States and the Indian Tribes . . . . , p. 616.
Dear Sister Martha,

Ellas very interesting letter of Apr. 9 & 18 came to hand a few days ago and I improve the present opportunity to write one to you. We are all tolerably well. My cousins did not take the measles Aunt E has had a few (as she thinks) light chills. The Dr. [Campedoras] & family are all well, but Leon is not very strong. He is quite subject to the fever and ague. The Dr. is very busy now in his professional duties, being seldom allowed to remain at home for a whole day at a time. Perhaps it will sound strange when I tell you that Frank Reader [Campedoras] has just come in as I am writing. This is a puzzle for you to find out by the time I write to you again. Our Spring has been very backward. No planting done yet. I am so busy now that I can hardly "turn around," as farming help is so scarce; So many having gone to the war. Our latest good news is that N[e]w O[leans], has been taken by U. S., but nothing has pleased me more than Old Abes Emancipation Message and the abolition of Slavery in the Dist. of Columbia. I have not yet got my daguerreotype for you. A Connecticut Yankee has been taking pictures for a while in town, but they are very inferior indeed. I send you a likeness of myself taken from the looking glass. The position in which I sat threw rather a dark shade on the hair and eyes but not enough to hurt it any. It is not well executed; The color is not smooth enough on the face on account of my not having the proper kind of brushes. Still it is said to look like me in feature. In painting I have to learn everything from actual experiment which is a very slow way causing me many mistakes and much trouble. I must try and get a book of instruction on painting in water colors and good painting and drawing materials as I delight in nothing more than making pictures. While I was living in Wellsburg Va. Father gave me a slate and on this I made my first attempt at drawing. In La Harpe [Ill.] I had a perfect passion for picture making and rec'd many reprimands at sch. when the teacher would find my slate covered with them instead of figures. I have always desired to take lessons in drawing and painting but never had an opportunity. This picture I send you is quite correct in out line and expression and the persons to whom I have shown it do not fail to recognize it; By the way you must not be surprised if I have made this likeness better

36. Slavery was abolished April 16, 1862, in the District of Columbia.—Ibid., p. 82.
looking than the original I send you a lock of my hair so you can see the true color I will also give you a few items of my personal appearance. I stand six feet 2 & ½ in or a trifle over, in common shoes. Am rather slender for my height; not in the least corpulent. As is usual with persons taking much out door exercise and performing out door labor, my face is somewhat bronzed by the sun and my movements are perhaps more energetic than graceful. I weigh at present 177 lbs so I am about the average height and weight of the men composing the Queen of England's Life Guard. I will try and send you more specimens of my drawing, also my miniature if I can have a good one taken. I was much pleased to learn in Ella's last letter that F[rank] was studying Latin and short hand when he last wrote. It certainly argues a great thirst for knowledge to see him amidst the bustle and excitement of camp life pursue his usual studies. I am afraid the same cannot be said of any who left this neighborhood for the camp. It appears from what I have learned from some of "the boys" who came up on furlough that they all have had a jolly time generally; many of them, Lieut. R—(first capt. of F[remont]. G[uards],) especially spending all or nearly all of their pay. Whisky drinking and gambling were two of the prominent vices. If the short hand F is studying is Longleys Phon. perhaps we can after awhile correspond in it. I took lessons in it in '/55 but am now rusty. F[ran]k tells me he intends to buy land in K. and I need not tell you the pleasure it gives me for he will never consent to farm the hills of Penn after seeing our rich and fertile valleys. You know Horace Greely said K. farmers could get rich, if they would keep out of debt, and not hunt office. My conscience is clear on the first and although not an office seeker still I was guilty of filing my bond and taking the oath of office as T[ownship]. T[rustee], for S[oldier]. T[own]ship, a few weeks ago. Perhaps our Father will laugh at me but I am not without excuse, as I gave a reluctant consent to be a candidate only after I learned that it would not much interfere with my business. I rec'd 69 of the 72 votes cast the Dem.'s making no opposition. I rec'd a letter from Frank on the 24 of Apr. and answered it on the 25. Tell Ella that the Pott. Treaty has been ratified and the lands are to be surveyed this Summer perhaps. What a pleasure to see her coming over the prairie with compass & chain. But she says that cannot be. My gizzard (heart I meant to have said) is "as full as a tick" with gratitude for her clemency. May I never have a harsher judge. I will close.

Affec'te your

S. J. R.
Strictly private and confidential to Ella.
Dr. S[ister].

In your letter you gave me a description of a young lady a Miss M E. which has greatly interested me. Like the shy crusty old bachelor that I am I have never been struck by the shafts of that mythical little "shaver" carrying a bow and arrows and going around trying to shoot some body. Therefore your letter has made much impression on my mind. You ask how I like the description. I cant say I have any preference for any colored eyes or hair but believe when I think of it that I do prefer black eyes and hair. Please use your influence in my favor and I shall be forever grateful. Will you not send your cousin’s name in full? I must of necessity close for want of room

Your brother
S. J. Reader.

[To Peter McVicar, County Superintendent]
[June 4, 1862.]

Dear Sir
Enclosed I send you a list of the names of persons in favor of having a sch. dist. organized and also of those opposed to the design as you requested me to do the other day. I have seen at least one member of nearly every family in your proposed district and they have all with a few exceptions expressed their willingness to give their hearty support to the movement. Even a number of those who have no children wish to co-operate in advancing Public Instruction. A number of ladies entitled to vote at District meetings put their names down in favor of the Dist. I have marked their names with a cross. You can send your notices to me and I will see that they are posted; and if there be anything else in which I can assist you I shall do it with pleasure.

Resp'y yours

S. J. R.

[To His Half-Sister Ella]
[July 7, 1862.]

D[ea]r S. E.

Last week Matties [Martha's] welcome letter came to hand containing many items of interest but with the melancholy intelligence of our Father's severe illness a short time ago. His picture was safely rec'd and is highly prized. My Aunt thinks it looks more natural than the one you sent some years ago. We are all tolerably

37. On the margin of his diary Reader noted in 1911 that this was the beginning of School District No. 43 in Shawnee county.
well only I have not felt entirely well for some time. Leon had something like a congestive chill last week but is now out of danger. Eliza was frightened some as the Dr is now in the U.S. Army. She called in a Dr. living in Ind[ianola]. who set Leon “all right” in a day or two. Aunt E and my cousins are well. Dade (the little girl) is lively. My nephew F[rank]. R[ead]. C[ampdoras]. has excellent health; He was 3 mos old the 20nd of this mo. About the middle of May Col R of the 20nd Reg. of Indian H[ome]. G[uards]. offered my brother in law a situation as surgeon in the Reg. which the Dr. [Campdoras] accepted. The regiment is to move Southward immediately. They were at Humboldt Kan. when the Dr wrote last. He dont like camp life very well. Got homesick in a few days &c. But is mostly disturbed for fear Leon may be taken sick. Our weather is now dry and hot. Corn is suffering from the drought. Wheat is splendid and has been fit to cut for the last two weeks. I have cradled more grain this year than I have since I left Illinois. The 8 Reg. K[ansas]. V[olunteer]. I[nfantry]. is now in Tenn. The boys from this section did not like the idea of leaving the State, as they enlisted, as they supposed, as H[ome]. G[uard].s. Martha informed me that Frank has seen a battle, but I have not yet received a letter from him. His last was dated Apr 8th and I was getting very uneasy at his long silence. I supposed from newspaper reports that he had participated in the battle of Cross Keys as I saw Gen. Milroy’s command mentioned. It must have been a terrific battle from what I hear. I am very anxious to get a detailed account of the engagement from Frank; and if he has sent any communications to the papers in regard to it, please forward the paper on to me. I sincerely hope this dreadful war may be brought to a speedy termination, but I fear we are not half through yet. We heard of McClellans defeat the other day. I inquired the news of lawyer T. (who is a traitor at heart,) as from his gay and cheerful countenance I supposed “something was up.” He looked around and seeing who I was drew on a long face and replied that the news was “most disastrous for us.” (?). We also hear that Gen. Curtis is surrounded and in danger of capture and that the President has called for 200,000 more men. If this last be true I suppose drafting will be resorted to in some localities. I think it would be a famous idea for Uncle Sam to draft 15 or 20 of our Secesh friends here. I was much pleased to hear the reception my likeness rec’d.

38. Union troops under Gen. George McClellan were in sight of Richmond during the Peninsula campaign but were withdrawn.—Burgess, op. cit., v. II, pp. 24-40.
39. On July 1, 1862, President Lincoln issued a call for 200,000 new troops.—Ibid., p. 65.
music in their cartridge boxes would be the most useful on a battle field like Cross Keys. How did you and the men generally like Gen. Fremont? I always considered him a very good Gen. and first rate on the negro question. The retrograde movement of McClellans army imparted a very cheerful expression to the faces of many of our Indiana friends. The Dr. is Surgeon in Col. Ritchies Reg. of Indian Home Guards They are now, I suppose, in the Indn Terr. The Dr dont like camp life as well as he expected, but as he facetiously expresses him self “Feels his patriotism excited in the palms of his hands,” on account of the liberal pay. He was home a few weeks ago on a furlough. He said he was home sick the first day after he reached camp which is rather singular, when we consider that he was in the F[rence] Naval service for a number of years. We are all pretty well. Weather too dry and corn suffers some. Wheat very good Everything is quiet here now. I am engaged in the peaceful vocation of farming, as usual. A great deal of land is lying idle this season. My field over the cr[eek], most of the Drs & part of my Aunts, with the rest. I should like very much to see some of the Va. scenery which you mentioned in your letter. The face of the country where we live (on the river bottom) has nothing picturesque about it. The land is level bordered on nearly all sides by scanty timber. It resembles Ill. too much to suit me. But off the bottom the land is rolling and beautiful with timber only in the ravines and along the numerous water courses. As the Homestead Bill has passed you need not lay out a dollar for land excepting the trifle required for surveys &c. and I suppose when you get your discharge you will pay Kan. a visit as you promised. Vacant lands are at present in out of the way places, but this of course will not always remain so. The Dr writes that there is splendid land on the Southern border of this State; in the Shawnee Reserve, also. The place he admired the most is called Eudora. The Indians of this nation have come in as citizens and the land can be sold. The Dr with the mercurial temperament of a true Frenchman thinks we ought to try and all sell out here, and move to this newly found Paradise. My Aunt who some times “builds castles in the air” is some what taken by the idea, but my judgment is against. The most of us are too old to begin life anew on the frontier. Well Frank I will say no more about land now; We will have plenty of time to discuss the matter here after.

I think we can understand each others phonetic. I studied from

40. In Douglas county.
from you. I have another picture nearly finished, which I intend to send you in my next letter. I shall not tell you what it is but leave you the pleasure of the surprise when you receive it.

(To be continued.)

[July 8, 1862.]

The locusts were very numerous some time ago but have now disappeared. A few weeks ago we had some of the largest hail I ever saw. I picked up one that upon comparison was one third larger than a hens egg. I had before that supposed the stories of such large hail stones exaggerations to say the least. A great many farms are not cultivated in this section for want of working men; mine among the rest. I am farming part of my Aunt’s land as it is more convenient to me than my own. The Dr. [Campdoras] has only about 1/3 of his improved land, cropped. So you can see we are feeling the effects of the war already. It would be a great blessing if more darkies would understand their rights and come to our aid. Give my compliments to Miss Gregg. I have no more to write.

Your brother
S. J. R.

[To His Half-Brother Frank]

[July 13, 1862.]

Dr. Bro.

Your long expected and intensely interesting letter date June [omission] came to hand on the 10 inst. giving us as you may well imagine a pleasure we have not experienced for a long time. It seems you have at last seen and experienced one of those most wonderful and terrific scenes which mortal man is allowed to witness on this Earth. It is a thing which notwithstanding its being accompanied by destruction, has a strange fascination over our minds; and if we cannot see for ourselves every item from those who have is received with the greatest avidity. We were startled to hear of your very narrow escape from that mischievous shell. They must be the most fearful instruments of warfare. One of my brother in laws books entitled “Places d’armes a feu” which I read last winter, states that only one ball in from 200 to 500 kills or wounds a man. If this be so, the air must seem alive with harmless bullets. How many rounds did you shoot at Secesh? I suppose not enough to have put one of the traitors “Hors du combat,” according to this theory. Did the Band to which you are attached go into action with their musical instruments, or with muskets? My private opinion is that the
a book called the “American Manual of Phonography,” by Longley, and I presume it is about the same as Pittman’s. Now I propose that we write each other a few lines in each letter in short hand for the purpose of improving ourselves in this art. I would suggest that we write but a little at first as I know that I am “rusty” having hardly looked in my book since the winter of 55 & 56 at which time I took lessons. My Journal has been frequently interspersed with phonetic characters and this I suppose has kept me from forgetting it altogether. I used to know most of the word signs, but can hardly command the quarter of them now. If I send you any word or words which you cannot understand copy it or them and send them back for explanation. Or if I send you any in which you detect errors, point them out to me. I shall also criticise and search for errors in your phonographic communications; and in this manner I think we can progress considerably. Do you agree to this? When you write again, if you shall have been in another battle please detail to us all the minutiae or better still send a communication to the newspapers and your sisters will send it on to me. No more.

Yours affectionately
Samuel J. Reader.

[To E. D. Rose and Others, Company E, Eighth Kansas Volunteer Infantry] [July 27, 1862.]

E. D. Rose & others
Highly honored and respected friends:

It was with a pleasure that I think you can well imagine that I rec’d the much prized picture of yourselves the other day which vividly brought to mind our military exploits on the hills at the R. Sch. house. Also mingled with regret that so wide a distance separates us preventing for the present at least the friendly intercourse which as we supporters of the Union, was so pleasant to us all. After you boys left us it seemed that you had taken about all the military spirit with you. The F[remont], G[uard]s. have not met to drill since. But had a meeting last spring to divide the Co. powder &c. We are consequently without any military organization and our Pro

41. Elisha D. Rose and a number of other Indiana boys enlisted in Company E, Eighth regiment, Volunteer infantry, on September 13, 1861. On May 28, 1862, Company E, along with other companies of the Eighth, embarked on a Missouri river steamer to report at Corktown, Mass.—Andreas, History of Kansas, p. 189; Adjutant General’s Report, Kansas, 1861-1865.

S[avery]. friends have failed to coöperate with us in this matter as I supposed they would, when they could not secure all the highest offices. The chances of my enlisting are small, as I have 2 families to look after now Dr. C[ampdoras]. being in the army. He is Surgeon in the 20nd Indian Reg. Col. R. of T[opek]a. He dont like his situation very well. Our local news is not important. Mr. Roswell Rose and Mr Pucket returned yesterday, from Iowa. I believe they have dissolved partnership with Mr. O. T. Angell with whom they were engaged in showing "War pictures." Rev. A. R. Button has been taking ambrotyp[e]s for the last month or two; but money is too scarce to make it pay very well. Squire, our old friend Kasson wrote to the Dr. not long ago informing him that he (Kn) belonged to the 18th Wis Reg. He was near Pittsburg Landing at the time of the terrible battle, but was too sick to take part in it. If his reg. is in your neighborhood you have doubtless seen him. The flag which you left flying in town was taken down sometime in the Fall and this summer the pole was chopped down by some body, so we are without an emblem to show our loyalty this year. Our Fourth of July passed without any particular celebration excepting a drunken row or knock down of some kind in the evening. I heard that somebody tried to choke F— and Jim T but do not know whether it is true or not. Indianola looks just as it did when you left with the exception of Mesrs. Ts new Billiard saloon on the corner opposite Puckett’s store. Dr. A[shmore]. is installed in the Drug Store, and has about all the practice. Mr. Davison was appointed J. P. by the Gov. to fill the vacancy caused by Dr. G[abbey]’s leaving town. James K. on promise of good behavior has come back to Kan. A man named L— and some others at T[opek]a threatened to hang Jim on the Fourth and handled him pretty roughly. There is a rumor that he will take the P. O. at Indianola. How will that suit you Jayhawkers? Mr Clinton has not been complained of yet, as a P. M. I suppose that you have heard that your comrade [C. C.] Leonard has been married to Miss M. Marple. I think this is about all the news that can be of any interest to you from this quarter. Our weather has been rather too dry this season. Crops are generally good.

(Continued.)

43. The official "Census of 1860," Kansas, v. IX, p. 84, shows a Rosewald Rose, age 27, as a laborer. He was born in Indiana. Henry Pukett, 36, a merchant, was born in Kentucky (p. 86).

44. C. C. Leonard and M. Marple were married June 21, 1862.—Reader’s diary.
[July 28, 1862.]

The Indianola Jayhawkers as I call your picture has been examined by a number of persons already, and but very few have failed to recognize their acquaintances in it, at first sight, especially Messrs: Bryan, Rose and Hunter. I perceive that you are now armed with Minie rifles. Your sabre bayonets certainly present a formidable aspect, and look as if they would be exceedingly unhealthy for Secesh. As you say, I hope I may some day have the pleasure of seeing you all, and of hearing your adventures in camp & field, which if the war continues we may reasonably suppose will be interspersed with a/c's of many a bloody engagement and should any of my friends who have sent me their pictures perish from the influence of climate or on the field of battle, it will be a mournful consolation for me to know that I still retain their images. I do not know how I can adequately return thanks for the unexpected pleasure you have given me. I must say however that I consider myself under heavy obligations to you all. If it would not be asking too much I should like very much for some of my friends to correspond with me; occasionally at least. I must close wishing you success and safety against the blind and wicked enemies of our Gov. and health to withstand the southern climate. Truly your friend

Respects to all;

Samuel J. Reader.

[To His Half-Brother Frank]

[August 18, 1862.]

D[ear]. B[rother].

I read your letter of Aug 3d day before yesterday with great pleasure on learning from its contents of your good health and spirits; and you may well suppose my pleasure was not diminished when I read your opinion on the slave question. I heartily endorse all of your sentiments on this subject, but would rather see the slaves armed now than to wait until we are forced into this measure. Old Abe seems opposed to this policy and it dont make me feel very friendly towards him. Now Jim Lane came home a few weeks ago with the understanding that he could arm the negroes and has already enlisted quite a number of them; but we hear that the Pres't will not allow it.\footnote{In August, 1862, Lane reported that he had authority from Washington to enroll Negro troops, but the War Department denied that such authority had been granted or that the troops would be received if offered.—Manhattan Express, September 23, 1862.} I cannot understand why negro volunteers are refused while whites are to be drafted. I consider myself a phi-
lanthropist in regard to African Slaves, still I do not carry this so far as to wish to see men of my own Race dragged from home and business which urgently requires their presence, when these same slaves ought & are willing to fight for their freedom. I wish to see this, the last resort as it is considered, adopted immediately. I shall say no more or you will consider me a confirmed fault finder. You must take care or you will be an ultra abolitionist before you are aware of it! I must acknowledge Frank, that an abolitionized Dem. to my mind will do more damage to the Rebels than one of the “dyed in the wool fanatics,” because of the greater influence they will have over the minds of the Conservative masses at the North. For example: Your arguments on this subject would have three or four times the weight on our Father’s mind, than mine would, as he doubtless considers me infatuated with a dangerous and senseless chimera, as regards Slavery.

You must write me what effect your soundings on the “nigger” question will have on him. We are all well as usual. I was poisoned while gathering grapes on the Kaw River a week or two ago but it is more annoying than dangerous. Eliza got a letter from the Dr. [Campdoras] last week He was at Humboldt Kan. but they were under marching orders for the Indian Ter. He is still somewhat dissatisfied with his situation partly on a/e of ill health caused by drinking bad water . . . Our corn crop will be light on a/e of the drouth. Weather dry but pleasant But little excitement and but little volunteering. Our Secesh friends will likely feel the draft and squirm under it. I cannot make out one word in your phonetic, viz. “Gen. Pope was no [?] to citizens” &c. You placed the word sign in on the line; it should be above. I have nothing more of interest to write at present. Your very affectionate brother

Samuel J. Reader.

[To William Wendel, Company E, Eighth Kansas Volunteer Infantry]

F’ed Wendel [August 24, 1862.]

D[ear]. S[ir].

I rec’d your interesting letter of Aug. 1 last week with great pleasure and hasten at the first opportunity to answer it. Crops &c. But little military spirit seems infused into the people in this locality B. T. Burnett and Mr. Hurd of Silver Lake are the only ones who have volunteered so far as I can learn. They say drafting will be resorted to in Kan. If that should be the case it will make some of
our semi-secessionists squirm. Mr. Higg got the situation of ass’t. P. M. probably to escape the draft but they say it will not save him. I will bet half the men here will claim to be exempt. I saw our friend Jack T escorted over the prairie between two dragoons with drawn revolvers about 3 weeks ago. He was arrested by U. Sam on a charge of trying to organize a Rebel Co. in this neighborhood, but was released in about a week. We had some exciting news from Mo. a few days ago but it appears the Union men are getting the upper hand again. If I should be drafted of which there is some chance, I shall try to be placed in your Co. as a recruit providing your Co. is not full. The worst of it is you are or must be so well disciplined by this time that I should make a very awkward appearance in the ranks at first. How do you boys feel on the “Nigger question”? I am for freeing and arming every slave capable of bearing arms, so you see I am not exactly with the Administration on this subject. I wish to see this policy adopted immediately. I am an abolitionist as you well know, still I do not carry my sympathies for the negro so far as to rather see Whites slaughtered in support of the Union while the Blacks are exempted from such danger, through a blind and foolish prejudice. I say let the traitors be hurt and if a negro insurrection should have that effect encourage the darkies to ride.46 I am glad to hear that you have the benefit of the traitors hogs and fruit at last. I have nothing more of interest to write. Write frequently to me and give me all the details of your proceedings. Give my best wishes to all my friends and acquaintances in your Co. and accept a large portion for yourself. With respect I remain your friend.

P.S. Your picture (The “Jayhawkers”) still excites much curiosity among the people here and are easily recognized by nearly all.

S. J. R.

[To His Half-Sister Martha]

[August 31, 1862.]

D[ear]. S[ister]. Mat [Martha]

I rec’d Ellas welcome letter of Aug. 9. over 1 week ago and I certainly owe you an apology for not answering you “Sch. girls” sooner. One reason is that the spare moments usually devoted to letter writing have been lately employed by me in arranging our Township business with the C[ounty]. Treasy, Road Overseer &c. Another is that I have been very busy as a farmer lately and a fine

46. In 1911 Samuel Reader made this insertion in the copy of the letter written in his diary: “Wrong! Yes, very wrong and inhuman.”
shower of rain today has induced me to write at last or I might have delayed longer. We are all in good health. The weather has been very dry and today we have had our first good rain. Corn is very light, potatoes the same. Grass almost as short as it was in /60 I read a letter from Frank and answered it on the 17 inst. I also got the "Pittsburg [Pa.] Post" last night containing a letter from "A member of the 20nd Va. Reg" which I concluded is from Frank judging from the style. This letter I have read and reread with the greatest interest. I am happy to hear that he enjoys himself so well in the army and still happier to hear of the exemplary life he leads, surrounded as he must be by the many demoralizing influences of Camp life, Still I feel uneasy at hearing of every movement of Gen Popes Army. I read the other day that Gen Sigel has had an encounter with the Rebels. The Dr [Campdoras] is in the Indian Terry. He is still very much dissatisfied with Camp life such as he leads. In his last letter he says he is in daily dread of his reg[iment], getting into a fight, as he has not yet got any surgical instruments and not a great deal of medicine. He says if he were in the Navy he would be satisfied. Not many recruits from this locality. Only one from this Township (Soldier) under the last call. We are all looking for the draft. If I should be drafted I intend to try and take it as best I can although I shall lose by it pecuniarily. My Aunt & Sister dread it immensely, as I am now their only protector. This does not speak well for their patriotism but such is the fact. I hardly stand on the same ground with the Administration yet, (on the "negro question") but I believe all will come out right soon. I heard Jim Lane speak at T[opek]a last Tuesday evening. He expressed my views exactly. He said: We have a great many men who sympathize so strongly with the negroes that they wish to keep them in a Band box away from the war while white men are to be killed by thousands &c. Hurrah for Lane! if he is an abolitionist! I send you the picture I promised, and as your expectations are raised with the idea of getting the pictures of Eliza and the children I know you will be much disappointed when you will receive instead the drawing of our little one horse "Whisky-town." I commenced this picture long ago for fear the Weed army might occupy our devoted town again this Summer; but I have been agreeably disappointed for either relying on the expectations of making a combined attack next year or thinking us sufficiently punished, Gens. Gympson and Cocklebur have not marshalled their hosts. This view of Indianola I took from the top of my Aunts
house situated half a mile in a S E[aste]rly direction. Her field joins the Southern boundary line of the town site. Soldier Cr. runs a few hundred yds N[orth] of the buildings and is in the midst of the brush and timber. In the back ground beyond the Cr. the land is bluffy. My qr. S[ee] lies just a little North of the Western end of the picture. The location of the town was very unfortunate in the first place. Instead of laying it out on the prairie the Mo. proprietors laid it out mostly in the timber and bushes. I think Indianola will never be a city. Allow me now to introduce you to the inhabitants and you will have a very good idea what Indianola is.

I shall begin at the W[erner] end: The log house with two doors was the first house built in the town. It is inhabited by Sam Bonem & wife, a Union man to me, Pro Slavery to the Secesh sympathizers and a very strong Temperance man when out of cash. The two story building this side is a grocery kept by Messrs Brown & Cummins. The former with a family. Both Secesh at heart. We will pass the next edifice (a stable,) to the house with windows on both sides of the door. The widow Brown (No relation to the other B.) and family, genuine Unionists live here. She had 2 sons in the Federal Army. The dark complexioned house with one door is a blacksmith shop. The next object is a corn crib. The large building with the end this way is our principal dry goods store kept by the Secesh C. W. H—, deputy or Ass’t P. M. to escape the draft. The building this side another blacksmith shop but the man who belonged to it “went up” a short time ago from hard drinking. He frequently had “snakes in his boots.” The next house is vacant. It was a drinking saloon last winter. The next with a window over the door was formerly owned by Dr. C[ampa]ndoras. It was a drinking & gambling saloon last year but is now shut up. The house with one door and one window is occupied by Jim T. and family. Strong Secesh. The building beyond showing a door and window is Mr. Puckett’s store and whiskey den. He has been often fined for selling the “critter” without license and is Secesh. The dirty colored house is an ice house which comes next. The house with the closed end this way is the aforesaid Jim T’s billiard saloon and of course men can’t play with out liquor in the same room. His brother, Lawyer Jack, was arrested for trying to raise a Rebel Co. here but is now at large. The next building is the pride of the I[ndianola]ites. It is our hotel P. O. favorite billiard saloon; and the best drinkables in town are kept here. Wm. Clinton is proprietor. He is a R. I. secessionist. Is 27 ys old and has a wife who can swear like a pirate;
aged about 60. The house is about 60 ft. square, L. shaped. The
next 2 concerns are stables. The next log pen 200 yds this side is
vacant. The next also vacant. The white 2 story house is a drug
store kept by Dr. A. a secesh and hard drinker. The flag and pole
were there last summer but are now both gone. We had an ex-
traordinary large calico flag which soon tore to pieces. The next
house is occupied by Mr. Ogee a moderate U. man ¼ Indian. Next,
Ogee’s stable. Three or 4 other houses are not visible on a/c of the
brush. Dond you want to live in Indianola??
Your affectionate brother
Samuel J. Reader.

P. S. Two Union Germans, Messrs [Wm.] Pruisset & [Geo.?]
Fiederling live in town but their houses are hidden from view in
this direction.

S. J. R.

[To Eugene Cayé (or Cagi), Company E, Eighth Kansas
Volunteer Infantry]

[September 12, 1862.]

Rec’d letter &c. . . . Several days ago your uncle started
for the war very suddenly. I advised him to stay at home but he
would go Dr. &c. We have had a regular uproar in Indianola
last week among the women. Une fille de mauvais vie nommé Jane
J— était une locataire avec Billy P— le cordonnier et dix ou douze
hommes de Ind. etais ses mineurs. Ils promander avec elle a les
buissons &c. toujours presque nuit et jour. The ladies of Ind. viz
Mrs. B, B, O, F, S, a girl, and Jim T’s wife went to B—’s about a
week ago to advise this Jane to go away and not bring disgrace on
the people of the town; but she refused positively, whereupon the
ladies seized her, et dechirer tout ses vêtements de son corps ex-
cepté sa chemise. A Dutchman named H— took the girls part, and
Dr. A also took the field and swung his fists defiantly so near some
of the ladies heads that they could feel the wind of his chivalrous
paws. The girl was wrapped in a blanket and taken away till morn-
ing by some of her defenders. Jim T. during the fracas declared
that C— kept a worse house than Billy was keeping which saying
casted Dr. A. to fire his pistol at Jim but luckily did not hit him
Jack T. caused all these ladies to be arrested for an assault and
taken before Sqr. D. Jack let Mrs. S. & girl off and Mrs. T. plead
guilty. The rest of the parties took a change of venue and were tried
at T[opek]a avant hier and were most unjustly I think fined $1. and
costs of 40 or $50. Ind. is still buzzing like a stoned hornets nest
and I don't know how it will end. They say there will be no drafting in K. No more. Very Respy yours

P. S. My best respects to Squire Rose, Wm. Wendel and all the rest of the boys from this place

(The Battle of Ind. From our special artist 1/2 m. from the field.)

[To His Half-Brother Frank]

[October 5, 1862.]

[Dear, Brother].

Your anxiously looked for letter came to hand the other day relieving us all from much trouble of mind for fear you had been killed or taken prisoner during the terrible battles near Bulls Run; we seeing by the papers that your Division and Brigade had taken a very active part in the engagements. Your peril is very great still, but as you have escaped so many dangers so far we can reasonably hope that your good luck will still attend you. We are in tolerable health only. My Aunt has been sick with the bilious fever for some weeks but is now mending. Leon had a rather severe attack of the chills . . . not long ago and is still unwell. I don't feel very well myself having taken a bad cold while attending a meeting late at night not long ago for the purpose of suppressing horse stealing.

We hear from the Dr. [Campdoras] about once a week. In his last letter he said he came very near being taken prisoner while on his way in an ambulance from Headquarters to his camp. Col. R. is now at T[opeka]a. and will probably be court martialed for arresting Col. Judson of the K. 6th. . . . Our weather has been quite wet for some time which interferes with having some what. The Seceh Dem. and quasi-loyalists of this Township held a primary meeting yesterday with the Rep. to send 4 Delegates to the Co. Convention (Rep.) After considerable bickering it was found we could not amalgamate. The Dem. will hold a meeting tomorrow. Indianola has had several disturbances lately. In one case 7 ladies of the town went to a little Dutch shoemaker's and drove a young woman of very questionable reputation from his premises. A number of the girls male sympathizers belonging to a certain and almost the only class in Indianola had these ladies arrested for assault and battery. They took a change of venue and were tried at Topeka and were (unjustly I think) fined $1. My hopes for the amendment of Ind-a are less & less every day. I am afraid it will never rise from the sink of corruption in which it is now wallowing. I can think of nothing more to write. Your affectionate brother

11—3504

Samuel J. Reader.
[To William Wendel, Company E]

W[m]. W[endel].

[October 8, 1862.]

Dr. Fd.

I reed yours of the 30 of Sep with great pleasure and was much interested with your a/c. of your hard marching and operations against the Rebel Bragg. From your a/c and from what I have heard from others a soldier must lead a very hard life; and it must be much worse when the soldiers as in your case have no confidence in their Com'g Gen'l. It is a pity that our Gov[ernment]. has to try so many experiments with Gen. officers, so as to find out the good ones. My brother is luckily well off in this particular. He belongs to the 2ndd Va. Reg. in Milroys Brigade and Sigels Division. Both these Generals are considered “tip top” especially the latter who is known in the 2d Va. as “The Flying Dutchman”. My brother has been in a number of hard battles; The last one at Bull Run where he was in 5 days fight. He said he didn’t expect to get out alive. We were much surprised to hear that H— D— has deserted. I saw his father today; He said he would rather H— had remained even if he had died than to have had him desert. It is likely that H—’s Seesheh relations at Bowling Green persuaded him to leave the Union Army. We have not much news. Ed De Wolf Blondel and Jim Bryan enlisted about one month ago. I thank you for your advice, and will think twice before I join the army, even if I were situated so I could join without damage to our business; not because I do not sympathize with the war, but for fear I might cause a panic when we should come to a fight; as you know that I am naturally adapted for “retreating in good (dis)order.” On the evening of the 4th of Sept. last a most terrible battle was fought in Indiana. I was fortunately not in town at the time but I have heard from others who were there, as well as from the official reports. So I think my account may be tolerably reliable and I shall try to give it so a military man like yourself can understand it. It appears that a fancy young lady, to use no harsher term, named Jane J— established her headquarters in Billy P—’s shoemakers shop and deeming her intrenchments secure and knowing she had a force of sympathizing friends within striking distance, she boldly bid defiance to all moral restraint and to the respectable ladies of Ind’a in particular. Mrs. B. B. F. O. and T. (Jims wife) after holding a council of war determined on a vigorous policy, and forthwith set out for little

47. Henry W. Wendel was colonel of the Eighth regiment, Kansas volunteers, until November 1, 1862, when John A. Martin became colonel.—Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Kansas, 1861-1865, p. 237.
Billy's house. Billy can hardly be a true German, for he fled at their approach and took refuge in the Clinton house. The attacking force filed through the gate and by a skillful manoeuvre gained possession of the back door without the loss of a man (or woman rather) Having Jane in their power the ladies offered her terms to the effect that she should march out of town with her baggage and equipage, on condition of never returning. A "Big wholesouled Dutchman" named H— endowed with a truly Teutonic courage, now came on the ground, and Jane being thus reinforced refused the terms of capitulation. To fight or to retreat was now the only alternative, and the former was resolved upon. The ladies seized Jane by the dress and in the scuffle she lost nearly all of her clothing, some of them say by her dress catching on the bed post. She fought like a lion and throwing her arms around H—'s neck defended herself mule-fashion with her feet. The battle was raging at its greatest fury when Dr. A— came charging among them, with the greatest gallantry yet shown by any of the combatants The happy coming of this son of Chivalry turned the tide of battle in Janes favor which was scarcely counter balanced by a reinforcement on the other side consisting of Mrs. S— and Miss D— a girl living with Mrs S'-t. H— put a blanket around Jane and escorted her out of danger to the rear, as she was rather badly "Cut up." The ladies now evacuated the contested field neither defeated nor as victors It was a drawn fight. The following is a list of the casualties: Killed—Half the men in town morally and politically. Wounded:—Mrs. F. severely in the arm from the blow of a bottle in the hands of Jan J. H—: Several contusions, not dangerous. Missing—Wm P—; during the engagement. The next day all seven of these ladies were arrested by the "harpies of the law," and four of them were fined $1. and costs. I tell you well it was a terrible engagement and throws any of Mrs. Clinton's "fowts" into the shade. I glory in the ladies' spunk— Our weather has been quite wet for some time past. Money is rather scarce. [Henry] Puckett and Geo. Young have issued shinplasters. Cy. Higg[inbotham], and Miss Button were married Sep 15. E. Plummer and Miss Bowker were married the next Sunday after. We got a letter from Dr C[ampdoras]. yesterday He is on the way to Carthage Mo. He says the Indians are unmanageable. Col. R— is under arrest for some misdemeanor. Mr. Barnard & wife and family came here about a month ago. There is some dispute among the people whether one of the men in the
front rank of the "Jayhawkers" is or is not Richard Russel. Please
send me a list of all of your names in your next. To be continued.

Oct. 9, 1862.

A number of horse thieves took 7 or 8 horses from this neighborhood last Monday night—No more at present

Respy

PS Please give the enclosed note to Mr. Cayé if he has returned from the hospital—My best wishes to squire Rose and all the rest of my friends and acquaintances in your regiment

S. J. Reader.

[To His Half-Sister Ella]

[November 9, 1862.]

D[ear] S[lister] E[lla]:

I read Martha's letter of Oct. 22, about a week ago containing the interesting a/e of Franks visit to [reenfield, Pa.] Nothing pleases me more than to hear of his strict morality. More praise is due him in this particular than for his gallant bearing in battle. Well, etc. Weather. Crops. Dr. I weigh more than I ever did before. I am glad you were pleased with the picture of Indianola. It kept up its "good name" last Tues (E[lection]n day); Two men getting broken heads in a drunken brawl. One a Mr. G. from the "Emerald Isle" was slung-shotted by our friend Jim Thompson His head was badly cut. Lawyer Jack T. was struck with a big rock on the side of his head and nearly killed. Being the T. Trustee it was my duty to act as "Inspector of Election," and I consequently saw but little of the "fun." It was after dark while we were counting the votes that the fracas began. I never heard such yelling before, and as we (the Board) were in a sort of a shanty, we concluded discretion was the better part of valor and retreated into a store with thick log walls so no stray bullets might "pollute the ballot-box" or worse still, some of our heads. The chivalrous Dr. A. threw off his coat and drew 2 revolvers, swearing he would shoot the 2 T-s, and was with difficulty prevented from doing something desperate. When rum-sellers fall out honest men may get justice. If Frank sends any more communications to the papers please send me a copy. No more Excuse hasty & short letter &c &c

P. S. I shall send a picture soon &c.
[To His Half-Brother Frank]

[November 24, 1862.]

Health. Dr. Crops. Election & row. It was not a political fight but had its origin as usual in whisky &c. Bully for Ind[ian-ol]a. How do you like the removal of Gen. McC’n 48 For my part I have nothing to say about it. I suppose the Pres’t. knows what is best, and since his late Proc. of Emancipation, I have a very high opinion of his ability as a strategist, compared with McC’n. I am looking forward for the 1st of Jan’y with much interest as we shall then see how Emancip’n will work as a war measure. For my part I feel no great anxiety in its efficacy, as I cannot believe the negroes will reject the boon of liberty for the sake of their beloved masters. . . .

S. J. Reader.

[To William Wendel, Company E]

[November 30, 1862.]

D[ear]. F[riend].

I rec’d your welcome and interesting letter of the 10 inst several days ago and now take the first opportunity to answer it. Every body is well around here, I believe— The weather has been dry and pleasant Corn is light. Times are about as usual. At our election for State & Co offices this Township gave a Rep. maj. for Gov. Congressman &c. M. Parrott got but one vote at this precinct and Dr Teft who ran for State Sen. got “nary” vote. Benj. Kistler was elected Co. Com’r over Albert Pliley. After dark on election day we had another pleasant little fight in town. The men took the lead this time, led on by a little too much of the ardent, of which they had been drinking freely. The list of casualties of this fight can be summed up as follows: Two broken heads. Nobody missing; every body present within hearing. The row first began in a scuffle between Lieut Fulton and Mike Green. Then Jim T. struck Green a blow from a slungshot on his head and cut it badly. He then wanted to strike Wm Morgan with it. About this time an unknown person supposed by T-s to be Cyrus K. struck Jack T. on the side of his head with a big rock which laid him up in bed for several days. Dr A[shmore]. drew 2 revolvers and wanted to kill Jim T. and pull down his billiard saloon. The noise was terrific for awhile. Dr. A has good lungs and made noise enough for a dozen

48. On November 7, 1862, McClellan was relieved of the command of the army. Gen. A. E. Burnside succeeded him.—Burgess, op. cit., v. II. pp. 163, 164.
men. I read in the L[eavenworth]. C[onservative]. the other day that your reg. is called the “Grey-hounds” on a/c of your extensive marching I did not wish to know if R. Russell was a jayhawker but if he is on the picture sent to me and called by Sg. Rose “The Ind[ianola]. Jayhawkers” A great many persons disagree as to who the man is kneeling in the front rank between you and Lewis Bryan. Most of people say it is D[ick]. R[ussell]. but some say it is too full in the face for him and resembles J. McNutt. Please explain in your next. Lieut Rooks of your Co was around here a few months ago, I have been told. Was he discharged from service? Dr. C[ampdoras] is now in Ark. His reg. has been in several fights. Mr. Stamp & Mrs. John Marple were married a short time ago. Ezekiel Marple is to go the same way soon. No more of importance Truly your friend

S. J. Reader.

P S My best wishes to all the boys

[To His Half-Brother Frank]

[December 15, 1862.]

On the 15 inst. I rec’d a letter from you which on opening I found to my surprise to be entirely phonetic. It took me aback, I suppose as much as the rebels were when Gen. Burnside shelled the CORN- federates at Petersburg. I must say my pleasure equalled my surprise in seeing the proficiency you have already made in your new study.

I am very glad you intend to write hereafter in phonography, &c &c. Correct my phonography & I will do the same with yours. I keep a copy of my letters so when you find a word misspelled or wrong in any way (particular) copy it with the word before it & then point out the error.

I am very well & am gaining in flesh. I now weigh 187 lbs. which is the most I ever weighed before.

We have not heard from the Dr. for several weeks. By last ac-

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49. Samuel Reader while revising his diary in 1911 wrote as follows: “On Monday Nov. 16, 1865, I called on Comrade Samuel Ashmore and saw him for the last time. (He died Tues., Jan. 19, 1908.) He was alone. I asked: ‘Doc, do you remember the election at Indiana Tuesday, Nov. 4, 1862, when Jim Thompson slungshot Green and you wanted to pull down the ‘shanty’ as you called it, and Lieut. Fulton tried to capture you, but you backed off, swinging your revolver in front of you, and crying out: “Don’t you come near me! Don’t you dare touch me. You, nor no other C- d- d man shall put his hand on me!?” and Fulton had to give it up. You remember, Doctor?’

‘His black eyes flashed with the fires of 46 years ago, and he laughed aloud at the recalling of that episode. His early life was stormy, the latter quiet and peaceful.

‘Wed. Jan. 20, 1909 I assisted with Blue Post 350, G. A. R. at his funeral, thus fulfilling a promise made Wednesday Nov. 29, 1862, to him, after he had fired a pistol in my face to show me that it was loaded, as he cried: ‘You can bet $8 that it’s loaded!’ (Requiescat in pace.)”
counts his command (Blunt's command) has had a splendid battle. We are anxious to hear from him. Our weather delightful. Our town has been quiet for a few days. Horse stealing has also died out to some extent. I belong to a vigilance committee which looks after the last named gentry. We have already driven two bad characters from this part, & expect to drive more of them off soon or do worse. It is a shame your reg.t is not better supported against the enemy. The Dr being with a large army cant complain of this. I see your love for the union has made you as radical an abolitionist as I could ask. I am also looking with as much interest as you for the first of Jan. 1863. I do not doubt what the result will be. Please explain the following words in your letter: etc etc. I must close for this is the hardest letter I ever tried to write.

Your aff. bro.

Samuel James Reader

[To Dr. M. A. Campdoras, Second Indian Regiment]

[December 21, 1862.]

I read your very welcome and interesting letter dated Nov. 29 with great pleasure as we were getting uneasy at your long silence. We all had a good laugh at your s/e. of your expedition under Jewell. I think as you do that we must depend a great deal on the negroes. Abolitionists are making very fast now among the Dem's. My brother is now a very rabid one, and hopes for slave insurrection among the Rebels. Eliza also rec'd a letter from you which came with mine giving an a/c. of your adventures at the battle of Cane Hill. We do not feel very well satisfied in knowing that you run such perilous risks in the Army, although it may be a good remedy for the chills. I had flattered myself that you would not be in the least danger but shall hereafter be uneasy lest "horses & excitement" will cause your name to appear on some of the frightful lists of casualties, which we too often see in the Army Reports. If I may be permitted I would suggest you get a horse like our old Fox & then we can have no fears of you in a cavalry charge. I do not think I can be very patriotic for I have not the least desire to enlist at present but may feel more like it after the 1st of Jan. The other day we heard of the disastrous defeat of Burnside at F[redericksbur]g. It may cause the Army to go into Winter quarters. We are all in first rate health.

. . . Taxes. Weather &c. Our news not very important. Mr H— got a divorce at the last Court. His mill was burned down by

50. On December 7, 1862, Gen. James G. Blunt won a victory over the confederate forces at the battle of Prairie Grove near Fayetteville, Ark.—Wilders Annals of Kansas.
accident some time ago. He is in hot pursuit of another wife without devoting any time at all to mourning. Mr. Cummings was run over by a log wagon and had his leg broken a few weeks ago. Mrs. Bl. thinks son marl is dead. She heard him rapping at her inside door the other night. Eliza however sees no more chairs rocking themselves or we might get up a spiritual meeting. In my last letter I wrote to you a few weeks date, Nov. 23 I informed you of the marriage of Old man Stamp to Mrs. John Marple but forgot to tell you that he also joins the M. Church which may cause him to repudiate his debts, like some other Christians.

Yours truly

Samuel J. Reader.

[To Albert A. Piley]

Albert A. Piley Esqr. December Last A D 1862.
D. S.

Will you be kind enough to come to the R[ochester]. Sch. H. on Sat evening the 3 day of Jan 63 and see what we can do about getting up a singing sch? I saw Mr. W[ite] last Sund. and he has promised to be at the Sch. H. at the appointed time and will probably consent to lead us as he appears to have a very good understanding of vocal music (?) I have seen Mr Higg[botham] and several other musical people and they all seem to take great interest in the movement. Please inform all in your neighborhood whom you think will come especially Charles and Geo. C[arpenter]. and families; and B[en]. K[istler].; and if you should see Dr J[enner]. or Mr. Bowker tell them also. We shall have splendid moonlight if the weather prove favorable and I hope we will have a good time generally. I shall try and be at the Sch. H. at an early hour and have a good fire made. Bring the Hallelujah or any other sacred music.

Resp'tfully

S. J. R.

[To Wm. Wendel, Company E]

[January 4, 1863.]

D F'd.

I rec'd your interesting letter dated Dec 9./62. sometime ago and for want of anything interesting to write to you have delayed, till &c. I saw your brother and 2 sisters at Singing sch. last night; well of course but forgot to inquire of your father and mother as I didn't then know I should write to you today. I suppose they are all well.
No more battles in Ind[ianola]. Dr A. gets “tight” now and then and swears he will “clean T.s shanty out”; “bet $8 I will” &c. He carries 8 revolvers. U S tax &c. Dr. C[ampdoras]. is still in Ark. He is well. At the battle of Cane Hill he got excited and took part in a cavalry charge. He received two loads of buckshot through his coat and a Rebel struck him on the back of his head and knocked him off his horse, bruising him badly. He managed to crawl to a fence and escaped being run over but his horse was captured by the Seesheh. Maybe he will not try the experiment again. Doctors you know should kill with physic and not with arms. Singing &c. Cummings. Religion. Close.

[To Ferdinand Wendel, Company E]  
[January 4, 1863.]

Dear F

Reed. How do you like old Abe’s proc: for freeing the slaves in the Reb. states? For my part I think it the best move that has been made during the war. You doubtless know I am a dyed in the wool Ab. of the most ultra kind and I consider it a grand step made in behalf of humanity as well as a good war measure. I want to see the day when not a Slave can be found in our Country. If there be such a thing as Divine retribution our nation is receiving its punishment for so long upholding the atrocious system of Human Slavery. These are my sentiments Ferdinand and you must not be offended if we happen to disagree on this subject. As I am a civilian perhaps I have no right to say how the war ought to be carried on. From present appearances Mo. is bound to be a free State soon through gradual emancipation and if our armies can crush the Rebels the Cotton states will be made free through the workings of “sudden emancipation.” From last accounts I trust old Abe will keep his back bone straight. Weather &c.

Yours truly

S. J. Reader.

P S Please give the enclosed note to your brother William “The F. G.” have “gone up the spout.” No military spirit nor flag, exhibited since you left.

Sam Reader.
[To His Half-Brother Frank]

[January 11, 1863.]

All well as usual. . . . Had letter from the Dr. At the battle of Cane Hill he & his horse got excited (he said,) and took part in a cavalry charge made by our men on a rebel battery. He got in advance of our column & among the rebels, one of whom struck him on the back of the head & knocked him from his horse, bruising him severely. He rec'd two loads of buck shot thro' his coat & lost his horse.51 I suppose he thot't himself again in some revolutionary campaign in France. Very warm. As I am writing the doors are open & I am in my shirt sleeves. My book is called: "The American Manual of Phonography" by Longley & Bro's., Cincinnati, Ohio. I wrote the word "confederates (being shelled,)" as a pun. If Burnside shelled them I think the rascals of rebels got all the meal. I have great hopes in the slaves giving Uncle Sam a helping hand. A negro Reg't in Kansas has been mustered in.52 They say the Indians are splendid on a scout. In the 2'd reg't they are in good part Cherokee. Their language is written in character of their own invention & I believe this is the only Indian so written. The Dr [Campdoras]. is Assistant Surgeon. The Col. . . . is still under arrest for arresting his superior officer.

I suppose you will be about as tired reading this, as I am writing it, so I'll close, etc.

51. Doctor Campdoras' letter describing the battle was also copied in the Reader diary. It follows:

"I have had a kind of battle; not much of it; enough to have something to relate when people are tired with the eternal Campaign du Var. A little by chance, and some by the will of my ci-devant horse, I found myself leading a charge of Cavalry to try to take a battery. Just one of our soldiers ahead of me, and Secesh 'mighty' thick around; So near that I took hold of the gun of one who was going to shoot me, and made him prisoner; when I was struck on the back of the head by another one and knocked off my horse. The road was narrow, between the high bank of a creek and a fence, and a great many of Rebels coming, pushed by our soldiers I succeeded to crawl under the horses (&) to get near the fence without any harm but some contusions, where I rested between two Secesh; one dead, and another dying. — I have lost my horse (which) ran with them. It was a regular stampede. Never I saw men so scared. Plenty fun, and no harm but to my clothes I got two loads of buck-shot in my coat. The fight took place on the road S. of Cane Hill. We followed the enemy for seven or eight miles; quite an exciting race. We lost about 7 or 8 men killed and perhaps 50 wounded. The enemy lost a little more. A good deal of ammunition used without effect. I came back to camp to day. The fight took place day before yesterday, etc. etc.—M. A. Campdoras."

52. The colored regiment was mustered into service January 12, 1863.—Wilder's Annals of Kansas.
[To His Half-Sister Martha]

[January 17, 1863.]


I reced Ellas long and pleasing letter this week and now attempt an answer to my sch. girl sisters We are all well as usual. I got a phonographic letter from Frank last week dated Jan 1 which I answered immediately. I think he is making fine progress in his new study of shorthand; at any rate he is improving faster than I am, although Camp must be a poor place for study from what I hear.

I hear that many of the boys from this place who have enlisted are learning and becoming adept in things not quite so creditable as short hand and Latin. A large number drink and gamble and some of them have become “light fingered.” It is my opinion that these vices are not so prevalent in the Eastern army, but suppose they exist to some extent. “Old King Alcohol” doubtless causes all of this depravity by one means or another and I think should by all means be excluded from the army—etc etc.

Our weather has been delightful nearly all this winter. A few days ago some of our farmers were plowing. The ther. being 60° or 70°, but a few days ago we had a sudden change the ther. running down to 5° I was caught out in this cold spell of weather and had my ears nose and lips slightly touched by the frost. I think I never suffered more from the cold than on those two days I was out. I had to face a N. E snow storm driven by a very hard wind, which carried the snow and sleet in a nearly horizontal direction. You can have no idea of the piercing nature of our Kansas winds in the Winter, especially on the high prairies where no obstacle presents itself for miles. To day the weather has moderated and it may continue so for a long time. “All quiet along Soldier creek.” Our pugnacious friends of Indianola have not shed any blood for a long time. Half a dozen revolvers were however drawn at a Ball at the Clinton house, two weeks ago, but resulted in no casualties. King Alcohol as usual was the instigator. I never go to any of the many Balls, Hops, Pandangoes or whatever you have a mind to call them in this neighborhood. I have no conscientious scruples against dancing but cannot “shake the fantastic toe” myself. I never tried to dance but a few times and am now too old to learn. I took my cousin Fannie [Cole] to several surprise parties this Winter at which we sung (I of course through my flute); played chess and amused ourselves as best we could. The young folks talk of making a de-
scent in force upon the Doctor's house some of these evenings. We
have had a singing school for several weeks. I for the first time try
to sing base. I succeed indifferently well, my voice is not quite so
harsh and cracked as I had supposed. We have not heard from the
Dr. for 3 weeks. He is Assistant Surgeon of the 20nd Indian Reg't.
1st Division o. the Army of the Frontier, Gen. Blunt commanding.
He likes the service very well now He was rash enough to take
part in a cavalry charge at Cane Hill. . . . We hope the Dr.
will take better care of himself in the future. Some of our neighbors
who are in Blunts army wrote that the Dr. was wild with excitement
at the battle. He took off his hat and swinging it around his head,
shouted: "Hurray boys! let us clean them out!" and spurred to the
front of the attacking column.

Please send the enclosed note to brother Frank. I will allow you
to read it as a return for the favor. Ella wishes to know whom
F[rank]. R[reader]. C[ampdoras]. resembles. He is not so much
like his father as Leon in personal appearance. Just fancy a child
just able to sit alone with intensely black eyes dark hair and a
good natured expression when satisfied and you have him. I never
have anything to do with him as he is so young. I am afraid I
might drop him were I to take him up. Besides they all laugh at
my awkward manner of holding a little one, and that also deters me.
It is rather late. I will close. Love & respects to all

Your aff. bro.

S. J. R.

P. S. Will you be kind enough to present my compliments to Miss
G. Be sure you do not fail, if you please, and you will greatly
oblige, your bro.

[To E. D. Rose, Company E]

Squire R. [January 19, 1863.]

D. F.

As it is snowing today I improve the opportunity &c. Well ex-
cepting Mrs. De W[olf]. Mrs. Bollote is in the neighborhood "All
quiet along Soldier" &c (See Mats letter) It appears that Kaw
Charley got drunk and was abused by big Alec Nadox [Nadeau],
Lew Ogee Cy. Higg[inbotham], and some others took Charley's
part and came near having a big row. Otherwise the Ball is said
to have been a splendid affair; about 30 couples present. The old
Lady [Clinton] towards morning made the discovery that "Her
Wm" was missing. She immediately commenced a vigilant search
fearing (rightly, perhaps) his affections were being bestowed on some object other than herself. After exhausting all her strategy in vain she gave up the search and as she could not enjoy the Ball herself, she determined no one else should; so after turning off the lamps and sprinkling a little oil over the ladies dresses, she succeeded. I was not there, as I do not dance. Dr. A[shmore]. & Jim T. are now "as thick as 3 in a bed" A few weeks ago the Doc. threatened to shoot Jim and pull down the "shanty" every time he got tight. I don't know how long the peace will last. Here is another item of news: Our respected friend J. M. H.— was married to Mrs. (widow) Wm. M.— 8 or 9 days ago. He got his divorce last Nov. The old man spent no time in mourning. Wm E B[ower]. rec'd a Captains com. from Washington a week or two ago without his knowledge, To serve in 4 Indian Reg. & to start to L[eavenworth]. C[ity]. yesterday. Weather &c. We have not heard from the Dr. Campdoras (See Mats letter & Drs) I remain as ever truly your friend.

P.S. One word about H— D—. His father told me not long ago that H— did not desert. That he stopped with his friends at B[own]. G[reen]. and staid all night. That when he went to camp the next morning he found it impossible to join it as it had started at 3 o'clock. A short time afterwards he was caught by Rebel scouts and has been paroled. He also said H— had written to his Co. several times but could get no answer. Did any of his letters reach your camp? It is the general opinion here that he deserted but D— denies it. I should like to hear from you often.

S. J. R. &c.

[To His Half-Brother Frank]

[February 13, 1863.]

The Dr. [Campdoras] is in Arkansas. He said he intended to stay in the army till the end of the war, if possible as he says we are fighting for a Principle. But he says our battles in Ark. have been greatly exaggerated by our correspondents, etc.

The Legislature is doing little or nothing. Taxes are very high & the price of land is low. The premium on gold is now truly alarming. It looks like financial ruin may overtake us. . . .

Our whisky friends of Indianola are all noisy for peace by any and all means. Conway of Kansas does not represent the people here as our spokesman. He is the first Abolitionist that has asked for the recognition of the Southern Confederacy, in Congress. . . .
[To His Half-Brother Frank]                  [March 19, 1863.]

. . . I have written my Journal all in phonography since I wrote to you last. I like it very much, now. I can read & write it better every day. B. & Bob here for dinner. P. M. Bob left. . . . I can get a position as Lieutenant if I wish, he says. (But he advised me to stay home.)

[To His Half-Brother Frank]                  [March 22, 1863.]

Some of the Copperheads say they will not be peaceably drafted, as they didn't bring on the war etc. . . . A Copperhead organ called The Enquirer was cleaned out in L[eavenworth]. City one mo. ago. Free Kansas would not permit treason in any shape to rear its head. I am sorry father still clings to the Dem. party; but as in every thing else, there is a possibility of our being wrong, & he in the right. But I hope he does not endorse the sentiments of such men as Vallandigham. I think if you can't convert him, it would be useless for me to try as I suppose he looks upon me as a hot-headed fanatic. Try your best Frank (etc. etc.) Tell Father if slavery receives its death blow in this war, I will most likely join the Dem. party, &c. . . .