
Voices of the Past

The Diary of Charles Perkins

Civil War

1862

The following excerpts are from the diaries of Private Charles C. Perkins, 1st Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, and cover the period from August 27 to September 3, 1862. During this time the 1st Massachusetts was engaged in the Battle of Manassas.

A transcribed copy of the complete diaries covering the period from May 24, 1861 to May 25 1864 is available in the USAHEC as part of the Civil War Times Illustrated collection. These transcriptions were completed by hand as the original diaries are in delicate condition and could not be photocopied. Some parts of the diaries are illegible; these spaces are marked with underlined blank spaces. The transcriptions below are taken from the copies in the USAHEC collection, and are presented unedited and as unchanged as possible. As with all transcripts of hand written documents, there are issues of legibility, which may lead to occasional errors.

Wednesday Aug 27 = Up at about Daylight. Heard Reveille beat at our Camp at about 4 o'clock. When we got into Camp Said they were ordered to be ready to march at 6 o'clock. Ate Breakfast Coffee + Salt Junk + pork Boiled Meat served out for the day Cooked dipper of Corn This morning very good pleasant morning. Heavy dew last night. Cannonading toward the East this morning. Started on March about 9 o'clock. Sick were left Back+ officers stuff. Co. K Started with apples Marched long parallel with Rail Road some 10 miles. Passed place where Rebels made a raid about a week ago. Warm Day. Sweat very much come into my Eyes + in Wiping almost blistered my Eyes Now feel sore could hardly see at times At the 32nd Mile Post line of Battle was formed + we marched in line across an open field, then through woods, then formed again + passed Short bridge about 25 feet long trunk. Then the ball was opened by few shells from Rebels. Our battery was brought up. Infantry formed + sent out skirmishers + the Battle commenced This was about 2 or 3 P.M. Are dinner on the march Hard Bread 1st Mass was the Reg't in Reserve. Some skirmishing by Sickles which was in front principally artillery fire. But the _____ have not _____. We drove them + passed Second _____ Bridge _____ burnt _____ destroyed _____ them up + supplies burned in various places 1st + 16th were in front. At about 5 o'clock when we crossed a Ford + wet us 1/2 way to knee Then recrossed + took position on hill near the long burnt Bridge There I cooked dipper of Chocolate. Keely + some of the men found a lot of freshly cooked lamb meat + liver + gravy which was tiptop We stayed here about 1/2 hour then Crossed again the ford followed the railroad some distance til we got a few shells the Enemy having taken a position one hill further towards Manassas. We then fell back (1st + 16th) + it now being about dark were both sent on picket. Detail of 5 from Each company four outposts + rest in reserve Turned in after Eating some of Kelly's meat + Rubber over me. Warm night + slept well. As we passed of the Battle ground saw good many dead Rebels Very few of ours Some of them limped by Wounded. 2 of the Rebels we passed horribly mangled, both lying side by side by a shell.

=Thursday Aug. 28= Up at Sunrise Cloudy + little rain Heard no firing in night light of large fire seen in direction of Manassas nearly all night. Read mail yesterday just before we broke camp letters from Mother Annie + Mrs. P One from James enclosed in mothers Three papers from home + Mrs. P. Breakfast dipper of chocolate (last of it.) Salt Junk + Crackers Heard 1 gun artillery off to right while Eating. Last night we had 10 men in all Reg't gave out on the march. We had Lieut. Carruth + Averill corpl Kelly, Whittemore McBarron Faller Downs Fitzgerald Randall McNally Perkins this morning. Frank Hutchins _____ We had _____ force _____ some boys Thayer Corpls. Robinson Everett Reid Wolfe George Good Raymond Pike + Chubbuck (all that started) Last eve There was a picket sent out five from Each Company Co. K did not send any because they were on picket night before This morning the pickets were relieved + 5 were sent from this Company. Reading papers + letters this morning. Another gun just now about 7 o'clock + a battery of them occasionally all day. Kelly Robinson Downs Randall Everett Raymond: names of men that did not arrive with the company at evening Camp Waited here all the forenoon until about 1 or 2 o'clock Some of the Boys went to one of the houses near the R.R. + got a lot of peanuts. Several Bags Fuller got one + we had plenty of them Roasted them Dinner Hard Bread + Salt Junk. + cup of coffee from Whit which used up the last of my sugar. Reading +c+ had a good map Marched at 1 or 2 parallel with R.R. past the Junction (Manassas) where we saw trains Several destroyed + now Smoking. Probably the Result of the light we saw last night. Rebels have done a big thing if they escape. But I think it is doubtful for Just as we came to Camp about Sunset we heard Cannonading pretty heavy + rapid off to the West. Whit says the guess is the Rebels were cut off. I hope so. We marched about 7 or 8 miles today 4 this side of Junction + I think along side of the Stream Bull Run as there is a bridge near us. Had a shower in P.M. + wet us all through. But Sun soon came out + dried us all but our feet. Walking was some better, water to drink is rather scarce. I tried to suck some through a tube from a puddle along side of Road but could not 'twas too thick with dirt. Col + other officers of staff had to march without horses + it comes rather hard on Col. Yesterday he gave out but came up + took command when he heard the guns. Feel pretty tired when we came to Camp but Kept up with Rest Not a Non Com arrived with Company. Pleasant after the rain. Rainbows +c Rec'd 2 days Rations this Eve. Coffee Sugar ham + crackers Eve supper Cracker + salt junk Turned in with Whit He was detailed to get Rations + we had to stay up late for them + then only the crackers came. Rest in morning. Slept well Broke my bayonet + scabbard off the End Rations were borrowed from some other division by Com. Austin.

=Friday Aug. 29= Up at about 1 or 2 I did not feel very well + only ate a cracker + some water for Breakfast Started on march across Bull run over the old road to Centreville. Passed the Same Battle ground where we fought the 18th + 21st July, 1861. Rather dark but we recognized the ground. Trees cut away + the ground considerably altered. Arrived at the corner at 3 o'clock Centreville at about 6-6½ Kearny ahead of us. Waited here some time hour or so firing to the left on Warrenton Road Artillery. Soon became lively at Intervals. Kearny Started ahead _ we waited some time longer then followed on the Warrenton Road to the Bull Run bridge this side was destroyed. Firing heavy + some musketry as we got nearer. We were shoved along right into it. I was pretty well played out but managed to keep up. We were sent to reinforce Seigel. We deployed to Support a line of Skirmishers in Woods 82nd Ohio + 2nd Virginia. Warm day. Skirmishing + artillery any quantity of it kept up pretty brisk firing rebels only had little artillery. Passed a battery of small brass howitzers taken by our folks One Horse concerns Also passed

680 of the prisoners taken by the Rebels + now paroled. At about 4 o'clock PM we (1st) were reinforced by the rest of the brigade + we were ordered to charge across the R.R. (Manassas Gap) where the Rebels lay. I thought my time had come now sure but was bound to go in did so fired number of Shots while the bullets whistled round me like hail Never was under so severe a fire before Men dropped + fell back wounded by the dozen The trouble was they were Ready for us + were under cover. We could not see them + so they drove us + we Skidaddled out of the woods double quick. I was so played out + tired I kept on to the Rear Helped a fellow by the name of Walton Co. I 11th Mass. Off to the Surgeons. He was wounded in the left breast + left arm which I tied a handkerchief around until he got to surgeons + had it dressed. He gave me a pistol to give to his Captain to have him send to his sister if he could. If not he told me to sell it Soon after leaving him I met Whit + Bill Cochran Co A + Wolfe + others + we went down by the brook washed us + built fire _ cooked coffee + had supper with Hard bread + some fried Ham. Awful Tired Firing of Artillery + Infantry very severe towards Sunset. After our Brigade came out they Skidaddled in all directions But some of them Rallied + went in again The there were two or three other Brigades went in Same woods + from this time there was constant artillery + Infantry firing going. Where we stopped was by a Stone hospital on the Right of the Warrenton Road coming this way. Trent Averill was wounded in Shoulder Shot through. Frank Hutchins in face pretty Bad. McNally probably killed. Chubbuck shot in Chin. Passed Charley Morgan Bugler formerly of Co B lately cook Wounded in foot or lower part of leg probably taken prisoner. Lieut Mandeville a very good officer + cheered on his men in good Style lately appointed from Co H. He was killed they Say Lieut. Roberts Co H wounded in both legs I believe Henry lately appointed Capt. Was wounded I saw them helping him off While we were staying by fire We had report that our Brigade was going to Centreville But it seems to me twas only a ruse to get the men together for they went off little ways + then Returned + went up behind the Battalion for Support I suppose. We boys did not move however. To much tired + played out While were ____ fire Corpl. Kelly Randall Baird Pike Fitzgerald joined us as also some of the boys from the other regiments Big Battle today Knocks Bull Run of July 21st 1861 McDowell came up with flying artillery about Sunset with White cap on sort of a hat Firing Still continues reinforcements arriving any quantity of them Go in to the field + up the hill double quick. Whit says McNally's left arm broke Shot off above the Elbow + leg shot also. Billy Manning our new Sergeant Major was wounded Centreville is fortified on the heights + quantity of Barracks put up _____ occupied by the Rebels during the Winter I suppose Also passed some on the Warrenton Road. Firing ceased about dark Entirely. Afterwards there were few volleys of Musketry But did not amount to much. I suppose, one by one man for frightened + so the next fired as it's the way it often happens We out on our things about dark + started for the Reg't. found it one side of hill a mere squad left Whit went + got some straw + we turned in at once, little cloudy, Some Stars. Warm Whit's woolen + my Rubber over us Frank + Frank Dains missing from this company gave the pistol Walton gave me to the Captain.

Saturday August 30: Up about Sunrise. No firing in night slept pretty well. Stiff this morning in joints _____ very well. Some few shots fired this morning primarily pickets + few artillery shots fired. Breakfast dipper of coffee hard bread + piece of fried Bacon Pleasant morning. One man was sent from Each company to look for missing men. Came back + reported on Skirmishers on this Edge of woods + could not get in. I counted 76 muskets in stacks this morn of this Reg't. Some had their guns with them. Probably there is 100 men left. Heard this morning that Mat Raymond of our Co. (K) also had Slight wound. Dried by blankets by sun. Occasionally hear a shot from our artillery. Those one horse howitzers I suppose were taken

from the Rebels it seems are also called Mountain Howitzers Drawn by mules. Our brigade were in only about 10 minutes of fighting yesterday. Had inspection this morning by Col. Before we cleaned our muskets. About 45 files told to clean our muskets in side get them in good shooting condition went + got some water + cleaned mine our two missing men turned up all right this A.M. Tom Neas + Everett are at the Hospital played out I hear. Met Mr. Evans a former boarder at Mrs. P's Sergeant Major of the 16th. Had a talk with him. Rather cloudy in A.M. going to rain I reckon. Just as we fixed Bayonets yesterday one of Co. I's men was accidentally wounded in the hand. Received rations of Hard Bread coffee + sugar soup for 2 days some raw pork from Lieut's officers ration Everette + Neas came from Hospital. Geo. Good still there. Westacott + Parkinson came up from Warrenton Junction. Orders to fall in about 12 + started Moved few rods + halted. We started with 18 men Lieut. C. Corpl. Robinson, Kelly, Chase (colors), Privates Whittemore, Westacott, Thayer, Neas, Parkinson, Pike, Everett, Fuller, Downs, Fitzgerald, Bird, Wolfe, Perkins, McBarron, Randall. We laid here until 3½ when the Artillery began Shelling pretty rapidly. Reported that the Rebels are skedaddling But I doubt it. Ate for dinner crackers + raw pork. Fresh meat Served out to other Brigades but Genl Grover would not let us have ours Said wanted to know where we were to haul up tonight first. He rides a new horse today His probably was shot little cloudy today Appointed lately Lieut Clark Co C was also wounded. Williams lost his bugles both brass + copper + all his things yesterday. Head the Report this morning 194 went in yesterday of 1st + thee was 70 wounded 9 killed + 9 missing total 88. Heavier than I thought. Charley Morgan Co. B was brought out in Evening about 9 I heard was wounded twice after I saw him Firing gets to be heavy about 4 Some Infantry fire now. Firing Continues very heavy to the left Enemy getting round on our flank I guess We started about 5 formed line behind some of the Batteries + The Enemy got a cross fire on us Shells flew thick + fast then we double quicked further to the left + lay some time (15 minute) in a gully then further to the left along in a valley by a run of water Shells still came thick + Infantry fire very heavy + rapid. Could see our regts come out + rally + go in again. Artillery falling back + taking new Positions 1st brigade formed line + went up hill at Double quick to Reinforce I had an awful griping pain in Bowels + could not keep up. I lay in valley as the Brigade went up hill Thought I could not Keep up if they had to fall Back (as I had no doubt they would) + so I took my time + went to the Rear. Came across a Dutchman that got separated from his Regt told me about the fight Said his Regt drove them + fell back 6 times That our men left a Battery + they took it again + sent 4 men to each gun to carry them to the rear. So that in case the Rebels got the ground (again) they would not get the guns. Well these men got the guns down in a valley + some of our Rear Artillery thinking them to be Rebels fired canister into them + cut them up awfully + the had to scatter 3 of the men's heads were knocked off. Awful! Awful! I kept on my way to the rear with a Wisconsin fellow of King's Division + was looking for a place to stop for the night little thinking that the Army would retreat but just at dark we came near the main road over Bull run at Stone Bridge where we found the Army was in full retreat. Bull Run No. 2 this makes just before this we met the Sickles Brigade I suppose the 1st were with them. They were formed in line in a valley to support our troops. King's division on the Hill they said. So I supposed they were going to over the retreat + I thought that I had better keep on as I could going very slowly Pains under my knees + hips Pretty well tired + played out. Can go but little distance without stopping to rest. Crossed Stone Bridge with the 14th Regulars + Gen Heintzelman with his Escort ____ at the Same time. Heard him ask where Hooker was + aid said they did not Know. Filled my canteen with Bull Run water + trudged on again. Kept along road, passed hospital at left of Road where there was a Well Any quantity of Wounded +

had to stop (from inability to go any further) just to the South of the Bridge that we passed that was destroyed now built up again. Turned in all alone near some Cavalry. Laid a Rubber Blanket + rolled up in a tent waked up two or three times Wagons + Artillery rattling over the Road all the time Passed several wagons capsized + Broken + their contents spilled But was soon disposed of by our men

=Sunday August 31st= Up at daylight Wagons + artillery + infantry still passing I packed up + started on Met some men of Hooker's Jersey's + they said they had stopped near the Bridge in the night went to fill his Canteen + when he got back they were gone Probably went to Centreville. So I kept on. Met Martin that I used to go to school with in Salem used to board with Christopher Martin Boot maker since seen him in Boston belongs to the 11th Mass he + I kept on together to Centreville together. We Stopped in one of the log houses the Rebels used as Barracks last winter Just before I got up it commenced raining I rolled up my tent + shirt + stockings together put my traps in + rubber blanket over all to keep off the Rain Rained pretty Hard Last Eve came across chunk of meat (fresh beef) + cut off a lot of it + put it in my haversack + this morning had some beefsteak for breakfast with crackers + coffee. Martin got a big piece of Salt Pork from one of the disabled wagons. Stayed here 2 hours or 3 while it rained when it held up went in search of Hooker's Division. Hunted all round over the heights But could find no one who knew until I met one of Some General's aides + he told me near the church by Saw mill This was about 10 o'clock Went direct + found the Reg't in Rebel barracks Co. K in nice room good roof + Chimney Big fire a going All present Except me Whit all right. He slept last night this side of same creek where I did other side Got some more crackers + Raw Salt pork Ate some Crackers dipper of coffee Raw pork for dinner Fine rain all day Stayed there until about 4 o'clock Water $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile off. Hunnkets + officer + Tom Neas Reported to doctor as not able to keep up Started with us Orders when we started to shoot Every man that went ahead or left the ranks + everyman if he could not keep up He must report to Com. of Co. After all we only marched about 100 rods + fussed around short time Then formed for camp for night Behind breastworks. Fine Rain. In the fight of day before yesterday Everett + Randall were not in. Just as we stopped Greer and Bob Good came up. Whit + I pitched tent + I cooked dipper of coffee crackers + raw pork for supper with flapjacks from Burditt + 2 fried crackers from Whit. Turned in after Supper Big fire by our tent. Lieut. Carruth stops with us tonight Put my Rubber Blanket on ground + Whit + I had his woolen over us + Lieut. His tent + Whit's Rubber. Chase of this Co Sick today. Went to Doctor cheeks all fell away looks bad. Looks like rain tonight Pain in bowels today. Diarrhea again owing to drinking coffee I suppose...

Rations Allowed Each Man per Day

12 oz. Pork

1lb 4oz Beef

1lb 2oz flour

.64 gill Beans

1.6 oz _____ + Coffee

.24 oz tea

2.4 sugar

.16 oz _____ Candles

.64 oz soap

.16 gill Salt

1.5oz Desiccated Potatoes

1oz mixed Vegetable

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War Memoranda {No. 6}

=Monday September 1st 1862=

Division encamped on Centreville Heights. Arrived here yesterday morning. Up this morning at about Sunrise cooked dipper of Coffee + had some hard Bread and Salt Pork for Breakfast. Finished my Memo No. 5. Yesterday. Blowy this morning few Drops of rain Finished letter to folks commenced at Warrenton June. Aug 26 + Sealed Package No. 61 to C.C.P. Burned Eunice letter Rec'd Aug 11th as she wished me to or send it to her But I could not the letter as I have not Paper to write her + I can not carry so much. There are Present this morning of this Company as follows. =viz.=

Lieut. Carruth x	McBarron
Corpl. Robinson x	Fuller x
“ Kelly x	Thayer x
Privates Whittenmore	Pike x
Westacott	Perkins x J
Everett	Fred Maple P _____
Randall	Corpl Chase on sick list x
Downes x	Neas on sick list x
Hooper	Leanard
Greer	Raymond x
Bird x	Crocker
Wolfe x	Sick { Geo Good
Fitzgerald x	
Bob Good	

The names marked with cross were in the fight on Friday Aug 29 + beside these there were present Averill McNally Hutchins Chubuck Raymond Averill in should Not Serious McNally Arm Shot off + left on field Whit tried to get him off + could not Hutchins mouth Bad ugly wound. Chubuck flesh wound in shin Raymond very slight. Randall was sick Everett went on Private Expedition on his own account just before we went in the _____ good many were left at Warrenton Sick without shoes +c. Rogers, Tom Brown Ed Kelly Cowin were left at Alexandria Probably on drunk Sent my letter to Parents and 61 to C.C.P. Sealed my Memo No. 5 But could not send it too heavy Dinner Crackers + some cold fried Pork from Whit. Gen Pope Rode by this morning Head down I Reckon He don't feel Pretty well Sun Came out Breezy + warm Reading +c today George Good came up this Morning + McBarron Also who gave out Sunday when we double quicked Reading +c in P.M. and at 2 o'clock orders to fall in Col. Cowdin comd'g Brigade + Capt. Baldwin Comd'g. Ret. Formed line + lay there until 5 o'clock When we followed Sickles Brigade which followed Kearney's Division on the Skedaddle on Road to Fairfax. Marched an hour or So during which it rained hard Thunder and Lightening very heavy many of the Boys get wet through But I put my Rubber Blanket over me and got along very well Feet all wet + pants fording two or three streams. Stopped on Road heard firing We formed line of Battle along side of road + Sent out Skirmishers 28th Mass. Engaged since 5 o'clock + Kearneys also. We waited here two or three hours then went ahead to the left through fields + formed in line in field. Stayed here I reckon until about 2 o'clock I turned in Rubber Blanket + Slept like a log although wet men divided into 3 Reliefs for guard in case of surprise.