

THE TOTOKET HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Civil War Letters of Julius H. Newton
1863-1864

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The Civil War Letters of Julius Newton

We are fortunate to have in our files the Civil War letters of Julius Newton, copies of which were donated to the society by Robert Newton, grandson of Julius. There are ten letters in all, covering the period from February 1863 to May 1864. They were all written to his friend "Dwight" back home in Bethany, Connecticut.

Julius Newton was a private in the 20th Conn Volunteer Infantry regiment. The letters are important historically because the 20th CV was one of the few regiments to serve both with the Army of the Potomac in the east where they fought at Fredricksburg, Chancellorsville and Gettysburg and then with the Army of the Cumberland during the battle of Chattanooga. After Chattanooga they marched with Sherman to Atlanta and then to the sea.

On a more personal level, they are interesting because they were written to a close friend and so were more outspoken and frank than the typical letter written to parents which tended to minimize the unpleasant and dangerous aspects of the war. He records the usual gripes about bad food, low pay and the rough living conditions. Her describes the battle of Gettysburg in some detail including his role as a sniper.

Our curator, Gene MacMullan, will discuss the letters and Newton's Civil War record at our annual meeting on May xx. He plans to read excerpts from the letters especially his description of Gettysburg. Civil War buffs should find it interesting.

Introduction:

Following are transcriptions of ten letters written by Private Julius H. Newton of the 20th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry to "Friend Dwight" probably of Bethany. The letters cover the period from February 26, 1863 until April 18, 1864. These letters were made available to the Totoket Historical Society through the generosity of Mr. Robert Newton, grandson of Julius H. Newton.

The letters are important historically because the 20th C V was one of the few regiments that participated in several major campaigns in the east as part of the Army of the Potomac and was then transferred West as part of the Army of the Cumberland where they were engaged in all the decisive battles from Chattanooga to the final surrender of the Confederacy.

On a more personal level they are interesting because they reveal many details of the private soldier's life often missing from official histories. Written as they were to a close friend, Newton's letters are unusually outspoken and frank. Most Civil War letters were written to parents or wives and tended to minimize the unpleasant aspects of Army life. Newton also had the breezy style of a born story teller. His description of his role as a sniper at Gettysburg is particularly interesting.

Physically, the letters were mostly written on a single sheet of paper folded down the middle. Twice he used two sheets. In all cases he filled every inch of each page. Frequently he went back to the heading area and wrote a few more comments upside down in the open space. The letters are marked by the almost complete absence of punctuation and paragraph breaks. His spelling, as was typical of the times, was phonetic and a bit idiosyncratic. For example he consistently spelled two as tow. The writing is quite clear and there is little difficulty in reading them.

In transcribing the letters, I have retained the original spelling and lack of punctuation. However I have shown where I think a period would normally be used by additional spacing. I have also added paragraph breaks where they seemed logical. In a few cases I have added obviously missing words in brackets. Doubtful words are followed by question marks.

I would like to express the appreciation of the Totoket Historical Society to Mr. Robert Newton for giving us the opportunity to transcribe these letters so as to make them available to a wider audience.

The Editor

Historical Note:

Julius H Newton, of Bethany was one of 980 enlisted men mustered into the 20th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry Regiment at New Haven on Aug 15, 1862. He was assigned to Company H commanded by Capt Charles Abbot. The Regiment was originally commanded by Lt. Col. Ross. The 20th was assigned to the Army of the Potomac and participated in the battles of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. They suffered heavily at Chancellorsville, losing 27 killed, 63 wounded, among them Col Ross and 108 captured, including Col. Wooster who had replaced Ross. The prisoners were all exchanged two weeks later and most rejoined the Regiment.

When Lee marched north into Pennsylvania the Army of the Potomac followed. After a hard march of 400 miles the 20th was among the first to arrive at Gettysburg. By then the Regiment was down to 326 effective men and was commanded again by Lt.Col Wooster. They were brigaded with the 5th Conn under Col Arch McDougal. They were part of the First Division of Gen Slocum's 12th Corp.

At Gettysburg they were first sent to Culp's Hill, which they strongly fortified to resist Ewell's attack. On the second day they were sent temporarily to Little Round Top to help repel Longstreet's attack. That done they were sent back to Culp's Hill and found that the Confederates had occupied their breastworks. On the third day they successfully attacked and took back their original defensive line.

In the three days of battle the 20th suffered 8 killed and 28 wounded. After the battle they pursued Lee back to Virginia where Julius Newton wrote the Gettysburg letter. Many of the elements of this letter are confirmed by the Regimental history.

After the Union defeat at Chickamauga in Sept 1863 the Regiment was transferred to the Army of the Cumberland to bolster the defense of Chattanooga, Tennessee. Co H was initially assigned to protect the Nashville and Chattanooga railroad at Cowan's Station, 20 miles northwest of Chattanooga. Later the regiment participated in the campaign against Atlanta. They marched to the sea with Sherman and up into North Carolina where they fought in the battle of Bentonville, the last major battle in the East. Newton's last letter was written just after the battle for Chattanooga. I suppose there was little opportunity to write while marching with Sherman.

They participated in the Grand Review of the Army at Washington after Lee and Johnston had surrendered. They returned to New Haven and were mustered out June 15, 1865. Julius Newton remained a private throughout the war and was one of only 21 of the original 103 in Co H who returned with the regiment. Of the remainder, 26 died, 24 were discharged and 11 deserted.

Chronology of the Civil War Letters of Julius H.
Newton Shown in Relation to Major Battles:

1. Camp Near Stafford Spring Court House, Feb 26,
1863
2. Camp Near Stafford Court House, Mar 6,
1863 Chancellorsville, April 1863
Gettysburg, July 1-3, 1863
3. On Picket on the North Side of the Rappahannock, July 8th, 1863
???? 4. Camp in the Woods Somewhere in Virginia, Sept 19th, 1863
Chickamauga, Sept 1863
5. Camp at Cowan Station, Oct 13th,
1863 Chattanooga, Nov, 1863
6. Tantan [?] Tenn Jan 25, 1864
7. Cowan, Tenn Feb 16th 1864
8. Camp of the 20th CV, Cowan Station, Tenn Mar 8,
1864
9. (Fragment, no date ,no place) c. Mar, 1864
10. Camp of the 20th CV, Cowan Station, Tenn Apr
18, 1864 Start of Atlanta Campaign, May, 1864

Camp near Stafford Spring Court House Va Feb 26/'63

Friend Dwight

I have had the luck today to get hold of some writing paper I will send you a few lines and give you a little description of soldiers life here it is a hard one I tell you for we have all sorts of wheather it will be clear and warm in the morning and before night cloud up and rain all night it snowed all day last teusday the snow was from 8 to 10 inches deep it was a damp snow and it did not make depth very fast at night it turned to rain and it came down to as if to drowned us out of our huts but it did not make it out at our house for it stood the racket good our huts is made of logs 8 ft long and 6 wide we lock in the ends and our shelter tents and rubber blankets the roof our fire place in front and it is made of logs plastered over with Va mortar which we have got a plenty of down here that is mud and when it gets baked it is as hard as stone and it will stick to anything in most any place we have plastered up the holes on the outside of our (hut?) and by backing wood we can keep warm which is some ways but the worst trouble is to get an ax to cut it with I have sent for my ax to be sent to me I want to see if it will stand to cut Va white oak

The boys make saveage work in a piece of wood and make a hole in it so that day light can shine through it in a few days it would make you farmers of Ct grunt hard to have us on your farm for a week for down this way it (is?) all one lot you may go 20 miles and not see a length of fence and wo be to horned cattel sheep hogs hens geese turkeys etc that comes in the boys way for they have to come down if they are to near camp to send a bullet after them we let leg bail after them and we do not use head ropes ether for tow of us will anchor on and if we get hold they have to stop and the head of an ax will settle the matter and out comes the jack nifes off comes the hide divide the spoils shoulder it and march into camp and we live like pigs in clover a few days You would not blame us if you could see the rations we have to eat some times I could eat mine in one meal that was meant for three meals but we must not blame the commissary now for the roads is nothing but a mire hole

I was out on picket last night and it was a hard one to we could get no ax and had to pick up what we could to burn and did not have the best place to stay ether it was on a side hill and the mud and water was from tow to four inches deep all around the post we are posted three on a post or place one stand for an hour and then one of the others take his turn and we are gone 24 hours from camp I stood up as long as I could and then got some long feathers as the boys call them lade them as near the fire as would do and stretched myself on them and the mud and water was deep enough to I see in the morning for I had got the deepest place there was in ten feet around the fire but I did not care as long as I had a good nap for tow hours and did not catch cold but I was not very goable in the walking apparatus in the morning

We are building a codroy road from the landing to cart our provisions on and we get all we want to picket guard on the road and when in camp drills for 6 to 8 hours per day and the boys show it, the mud will everidge 6 inches deep as far as I have been on the road and that is about four miles from camp we had a picket line here 11 miles long that our division had to furnish men for it made a string when they was in tow ranks

My paper is full please write soon for I want to know what they are about in old B(ethany?)

Yours

Julius H Newton

Soldiers feathers is pine brush you will know when you read
this Direct as before CO,H, 20th Regt
Hqs Washington DC

Camp near Stafford Court House Va Mar 6 1863

Friend Dwight

I received you letter the 8th and it found me a little of the hooks for I am on duty every other day my hip troubles me and am a little lame now and shall be as long as we have such weather as we have had for a month we have all sorts of weather in the morning it will be clear and warm and like as not before night the wind will blow a gale and before morning cloud up and rain whole water and end of in a squall of snow and the mud is not yet all dried up yet they will be skedadling when it does

They say you want to know how many would reenlist if they should be discharge in thirty days my opinion is that there would not be enough to guard our camp and that takes 24 men and if all the Ct boys sing the same tune as those that I have seen and could be discharge in thirty days and ofer \$20,00 bounty they could not get men enough to enlist to make a full Regt= without putting some of the officers into the ranks and that would make them squirm I wish they would cut them down to privates pay and rations and then when an officer enlisted we would know that we had got one who would stand by us they do not care a cuss about a privates life

For before Henry died we was sent to Harpers Ferry Va and their the doctors told us our that our bounty money was worth more than our bodies was and it was well for his life that my rifel was not loaded for I was never so mad in my life and it be just like me to sent the bullet through him I even raised my rifel off the ground and he saw me to but said nothing and they came very near starving me (to) death there and to Camp Distribution but I stuck it through and got to the Regt= and was glad to see the boys once more and some of them was to see me I have not got but one true friend now in the Regt= and we are bound to stick together through thick and thin and he is a Bethany boy

I am on camp guard today and it most my time to go on I must lay this one side until tomorrow and then I will write how they do us when they draw fresh meat for us we are allowed one pound and a quarter fresh meat per day twice a week there is about 25 line officers and they have to board themselves and where do they get it I can tell you they rob the quarter master sells them the best pieces of the stake and our rations come short and our company draws for 64 men and we have three line officers they get or use to about three lbs a piece now take the Regt= through we have bought one half our rations we have had to eat since we came out now we have got a Brigade commissary and they can get all they want there but some of is to lazy to go ¼ of a mile and they live on our rations but they do it in a sly way I would like to know where the money goes it does not benefit the private my mind is that it gets into some ones pocket and stops there I have got one more thing to say and do not care who it hits black or white and it is this war is nothing but a money making concern to the officres and head men of the Army and specutators of the Army you may think it big talk but I have got enough here to back every word of it

It is a warm and pleasant day but look out for we will get pay for it tomorrow Please write soon

Yours etc

Julius H Newton

July 8th 1863
On picket on the north side of the Rappahannock River, Va

Friend Dwight,

I have not heard anything from you in some weeks I took it into my head to write you a few lines to pass away time we have had some very hard marching since we left Stafford the 26th of June we have marched over 400 miles fought one hard battle and whipped the rebels at every front and our cavalry has had several skirmishes since The cannonading at the battle of Gettersburgh was terrible the shells from one of our guns hurt the 20th boys more than the rebels did for the ammunition was some that had been taken from the rebels and it fell short Only one of our Co= was wounded Jacob Still from Seymour. They had come as near me as I ever want it to come again We covered a revine in the woods we got only one volley at them A brigade made a charge at Gearies men across a open space The 5th Ct boys left oblike at the rebs in a piece of brush and we on the left flank and there was not a shot fired until they got about halfway across the clearing and then Geary's men let them have the 5th then rose up and give them another dose and they broke and run then came our turn to give them an invitation that they was not wanted around there and they got one that made them get up and get out of there they left and in half an hour we was in our breastworks that we had left the night before to reinforce the right wing for the rebels were driving our boys and we went about two miles in a hurry The brigade that led our division took a battery that had done some damage to us that ground was taken and retaken four times in one day so you can see that they tride there best to break through our line of battle but found it a hard nut to crack then we went back to our breastworks but the rebels was in and we had to drive them out the next morning we did it to with not a very heavy loss of life

Gearies men fought like tigers and I wish we had as good Division commander as he is with his men on the march or in a fight It would have done you good to of heard them cheer him when he rode along the line and it was a cheer to for it could be heard above the roar of the muskets our division commander was not seen at all up to the breastworks I was the first one of our Co that was in the breastworks after the rebels had left them that I know of and went and reported to Capt Smith that they was all clear and then came to order to forward march and we have the prais of taking the breastworks then we was relieved to go and get some grub but had not more than got some water to make our coffee with before we had an order for every one to have 60 rounds of ammunition and go back we then was formed in a line of battle and held as a reserve we had a position for we was behind a stone wall but the sharpshooters kept a popping at our officers and they killed one of the 3rd Ind captains then they sent out one man from each company of our regt to see if any of them could get a crack at him Capt Berbank sent me for one but I told him that I did not think I was the best marksman in our Co and he asked me if was afraid to go and I told him no but I wanted to be put on equal terms with any man if my life is at stake if it can be done for the rebel sharpshooters has got rifles that can kill a man most twice as far off as or Springfield muskets Col Wooster had a sporting rifle one of Sharp's and Capt Burbank had it and I told him I would like to take that and he did so off I went down along the wall and about every rod some one sing down with your head or look out for the ensses(?) Etc. but on I went until I got to our breastworks and soon had a chances enough to try the rifle but I wanted to get and get a crack at the one that fired at our officers but I was too late So I took the next place where one kept a throwing his blue pills at us they are a----- about showing themselves very

much I had a good place to look over the breastworks for a white oak stood the other side of me right in the range of me and it stood close up so I could put my hand on it I did not see anything for some minutes so I played grey squirrel with him a little put a stone on the breastworks and put my cap on it and told one of them in the breastworks to take a stick and rais it up and down and the rest of them told him not to but he did and the way the rest of them hugged the dirt was as close as if they was washing black ducks I did that to draw his fire and did but it came very near costing my life for one of them hit my game leg and nothing will fetch me down much quicker than hit which knocks me sideways first as he was about to fire at my cap and he let fire at me but I was to quick for him or he was to slow to hit me the ball brushed my hair or the wind I do not know which it struck a rock about 15 ft from me now I know where he was by the smoke from his gun and kept my eyes peeled for him and did not have to wait long for I saw something grey rise from behind a noll on the ground I drew a bead on it and pulled and that put a stop of any more lead coming from that quarter

The next morning we began to bury the dead so I went over the breastwork to take a look of a battlefield but I never want to see another I saw 17 dead rebels on a piece of ground not over 20 feet square I shood think that a shell must of burst in among them and besides to stand to crossfires I went to see if I had hurt anyone the night before and a dead rebel lay there I went more to get his rifle than anything els but someone els had got a head of me I do not know whether the bullet that I sent at him did the mischief or not and it is no odds with me for I was a little high when I went away

How does the crops turn out this year and if it is as hot as it is here all you would want to do to hay would be to cut it off you can bet high it is hot some days yesterday was a hot one and we was very glad we did not have to march you would laugh to see us in or under our tents nothing but our pants on and I never sweat so much in any day a mowing as I did there doing nothing There was not a leaf stirring as I could see and we by the side of the river to I see by the paper that you are drafted but I never will see you down here with a nap sack on your back I have got me to carrying one now but I do not carry a very big load it will be tough on those that comes out to carry a nap sack and three days rations 60 rounds of ammuniton and a musket at first but if every town votes to give every man that passes examination \$300 they be many that come out I think I wish now we could winde it up for good and I do not know but they are as fast as it can be done

D. Carrington I suppose is digging as usual What is Marsh Perry about George Sperry now owns his father place I hear my paper is not very clean but it is such as I have got and I do not know when I shall be where I can get anymore When we passed through Md and Penn we could get most anything from the in habitants that was good to eat I had one good supper in Penn that cost me 25cts but it need not anything but they had given away so much they was about eat out of everything

I do not care about many seeing this letter for there has been some ----- wrote and ben read and then someone would write back to someone else and then they would throw it in his face some of has stretched a little but I can take my oath on anything I have wrote

Please write

yours etc.

(direct as before)

(direct as before)

Julius H Newton

Camp in the woods somewhere in Va Sept 19th 1863

Friend Dwight

I received your letter this morning and tow other letters and was glad to get them we are now somewhere near the Rapadan river we crossed the Raphanock river at Hellies Ford last Wednesday morning three divisions of cavalry crossed two days before one in sight of our camp one above and another below and drove in the rebel pickets when they started they was in the shape of a wedge and then put it through the point met the log(?) or rebels at Racoon Ford and then they hammerd at them with their bull dogs we could hear them the rebes did not have any force this side of the Rapadan and they let leg bail for the other side there artillery got swamped in the river and the drivers cut loos the horses and left the guns in our cavalry hands or that is the report we had

One Regt= goes out on picket at a time now we only marched part of two days working around in the woods to keep out of sight on the first night four of our comps went out on picket and Co= H was one of them in the morning we went where we had left the Regt= in the morning but they had ben gone a bout tow hours some of our teamsters told us and we had to do some tall marching to catch up with them which we did a bout noon they had come to a halt in the woods

I never come so near to giving out as I did then for I have ben lame for most tow months my left hip is not as good as it use to be before the Brindel steer run over me and his mate stomped on me hard shod when I was a braking them some of the boys hollow (holler?) him how him etc but if they knew as much as the steer did they would know enough to keep their mouths shet

What did Carles Downs get exempt on he is as sound as I am a number of our conscripts has deserted tow of our Co= has one had ben in the Co= a week before Capt Burbank promoted him to Sergant and when we got marching orders skedadel now how are you big bounty men as the troops told us when we first came out but we stuck to the wreck foder or no foder and that is more than some of the conscripts done some of them is deserters and some tow year men that there time was out last May and some was in the New York riot take them all they are a hard set of men and they know the ropes better than we do a deserter was shot yesterday he belonged to the 3rd Ind Regt= in our brigade and the report is that 17 was shot yesterday in the Army of the Potomac the rebels shot 10 out of one Regt= of there deserters so you see this is on both sides

Our Capt tride to get me detaled to drive a team on this march but was to late Col Wooster has got a pet Co= and they get all the favors but I shall go it as long as I can and then stop

I have not got but one letter from David Carrington since we came out just give him my respects and tell him that I am well only a little lame and when he gets time write me a few lines as far as the Hotchkiss girls I would like to hear from them and Julia would look quite quear with a pare of specs on I would like to get a squint at her and someone els to or they would me as for Mark I have nothing to say Aunt Hannah takes her tea yet only makes it pretty strong as usal but she has got use to or it is time she had

I must close now for it is most time for the mail to go out this makes three letters I
have wrote today write soon

From a soldier boy

JHNewton

I had heard that you was drafted and hired a man we have got a drafted chaplain
from Ansonia

I have sent home \$125,00 since we left N H of my wages

Camp at Cowan Station Tenn Oct 13 /63

Friend Dwight

As I was looking over my portfolio the other day I found a letter directed to you when I wrote it we had to get up and get as the boys say and I forgot all about until now so I will send another sheet with it we have had a ride in the cars of about 2000 (miles?) packed 40 in a car and that is about as close as they stow cattle in we only change cars 3 times we fetch up at Bridgeport Alabama close to the Tennessee river we had to get out of there and come here staid overnight took the cars with an Ohio battery and went about 20 miles up the road we had to ride on the top of the cars we got off at some station I have forgotten for I have lost my merrandum so I have to go by memory that night or the rest of it we had the good luck to sleep under shingels in an old store but was up an off at 4 in the morning leaving our nap sacks behind us and went in light marching order we all made up our minds that we was a going to see some sport we had 4 ten lb bulldogs with us we went as far as duck river and eat our breakfast at 11 O clock and did not have a chance to get no more until after dark we was never put over the roads as we was that day and part of the night we went out to whip or scare a lot of rebels that had burnt three railroad bridges between here and Merfreesboro but got there to late for the cavalry and a Co= of ours made a dash at them when they was a ransacking a town and took 6 pieces of artillery and 800 prisoners we went near enough to hear the guns it took us tow days to come back to where we had left our napsacks my feet was sore and I was not alone there we took the cars and came to Dicker station and marched here yesterday and now we think we will have an easy time

We are to guard the railroad and I do not think Col Ross will let a squad of 400 rebels drive him off as the Col did up at duck river bridge he had tow Regts= under him and he let them destroy the bridge without firing a gun this tow of a Ohio Regt= told me who was one of the Regts= there

It done me good to see how we was welcomed on the road we did not hardly pass a house but we could see a handkerchief waved to us and the way the boys cheared the Stars and Stripes was a caution I saw a lady that I knew at Zenith Ohio and had quite a chat with her and she said there was another one that I knew only a few minutes walk but I did not go to see her this one was giving or selling cakes and fries to the boys as they saw fit to pay or not she gave me all that I could eat and tow dozen besides and as many apples Capt Pardee came where we stood and tride to make me get a board of the cars but I did not and she made him pay for his cakes and he left we was having quite a chat when the whistle blew for all to get a board I bid her goodbye and did so we gave them three cheers and was out of sight At Centerville Ohio we got all we could eat for nothing they was mostly young ladies to our train (it) was the 16th they had fed and it done me good to see peopel once more We stopped there one hour when we left we formed in Co=s in front of our cars and gave them three rousing cheers by Co= rotation and when we left our Co= gave one to a lady with a blue dress on we would like to get hold of some of the cake now we only have half rations write soon yours etc

Julius H Newton

Direct as before and I will
oblige My hip is the same

Our conscripts will not do us much good for they have most all of them deserted we had 16 and only 4 of them is here one Co= has got but one left

Tantaton, Tenn Jan 25, 1864

Friend Dwight,

As I have not heard from you in some time I thought that I would send you a few lines and let you know I am among the living yet but I am off the hooks today for we are building a stockade so if we are attacked we can have something to protect us if we get into it in time we have to cut the logs on a steep side hill and then take a mule and draw them down to the river and then it takes a pair of mules to draw them the rest of the way yesterday I hitched the chain to the logs for the driver had to ride the near mule or get wet I was in the water most of the time but did not get my feet wet and last night and today I am getting my pay for it for I cant hardly stir for the rheumaties has got a good hold of my back and hip

I am detailed at Head Quarters now as a pioneer and have not been with my Co= in most five weeks and do not know as I want to be there for as long as I can be here I will stay they tried to get me to shoeing mules and horses but I told them if they wanted to kill me shoot me and not murder me for I cant stand what I could once Chatfield the wagon master tried to get me to drive a 6 mule team but the Ajetant would not detale me for I was on one detale now I will try that if they will give me a chance to but I had rather the mules wore harness but it does not make much difference to me where I am for my best friend in the Regt= is no more that was the hardest blow for me of any since I came out I hope it was all for the best I was with him when it was done and stood near enough so the flash of his gun burnt my face some thought it was me that shot him by the way that I jumped but I am very thankful that it was not we was always together only when we was on duty we went through one hard fight Side by Side and went where some would not go (if I do say it)

Our Regt= is stationed along the Nashville and Chattanooga railroad in companies I am about 10 miles from my Co= we have no captain now our fourth one has resined and gone home and how (who?) next I do not know Co= B is up to Tracy city they had a squad of rebel bushwackers surprise them the other day they burnt an old building that use to be a depot they killed one of B men and wounded Capt Upton pretty bad who was in command of post they think now he will live the rebs had surround them at all points the rebel Major come in with a flag of truce one of the 5th Conn boys told Lieut Jepson if he would give him a pair of revolvers he would go out and meet him and they was given him he put them into his pockets and ties a white cloth on a stick and meets it is against the rules to shoot at a white flag but the rebs do not seem to care about that so they fired at him as he come up to the rebel he foldes up his flag and presents a 6 shooter at his head and told him if he did not stop his men from firing at him he would put a ball through his head and he stopped it for he had no weapons of any kind he demaned a surrender of everything but they could not see that they held our boys to bay for they had took ten of them prisoners and told them if they fired onthem they would shoot every one that they took on the spot they got word down to Cowan and they came up with the 2nd Mass boys and the rebs took to their heels and left the 5th had been stationed there and a Co= of Tenn cavalry as scouts and the day before the scouts was ordered to Tulahoma and most of the 5th boys had reinlisted and gone home and it did not leave but a hand full of men and the rebels took advantage of it but now if they try to come they will find a hornets nest to work at and a bull dog to bark at them and will bite some way off

We are encamped in one of the worst holes that I ever saw a camp in since I have been out we are between tow mountains and a river on one side the sun does not rise until about 9 O clock or we cant see it until about that time We get about all we want to eat now and that is as good as we can expect to get only I would like a piece of stake out of one of your fat steers now and again we do not get good meat now it is very poor and yonge cattle at that I saw a train of beef cattle for the army last week and there was not one you would say was fit to eat

I have had an 80 lb box from father and my wife and I have lived tow weeks they sent to baked chickens pail of butter doughnuts cheese tobacco and some other things yes a pair of boots that I can take \$15 for when I say the word they only cost \$5 at home a barrel of apples cost \$40 here and is sold to the boys for 25cts a small one and 50cts for a large one and that is hard on a soldier but there is a class of men who does not care for us only as long as we have got money and when it is gone clear out for you are in my way I tell you Dwight you do not begin to know how the soldier is cheated on their things that they have to draw and on our rations to and by our own men at that or belongs to the Regt= our cloths have gone up from \$22,00 a suit through out to \$30,00 and we are allowed only \$2,00 more than last year an our coat costs \$9,00 and when we came out only cost \$7,00 then we could not draw any overcoats until the first of January and then I would not draw one to throwaway in the spring as I did last I got tow good thick shirts from home so I weare tow and when it is cold have tow jackets I can wear the citizens is not more than half humane here we can sell all of our coffee that we do not use to them for 50cts per lb

Now I will close write soon as conbenient

From a soldier J H Newton

Axes that weigh 9lbs helve and all will sell here for \$2,00 or \$2,60 a piece quick as punk I had one sent from home and I can get \$3,00 for it but do not sell it let me know what D. Carrington is about and the rest direct to me Co= H 20th Regt= 12th Army Corps Army of the Cumberland via Nashville Tenn

Note: The friend reported killed in this letter was almost certainly Burton J. Downs of Bethany of Co H who was reported as killed on Dec 2, 1863 by the accidental discharge of his own gun.

Cowan Tenn Feb 16th 1864

Friend Dwight

I received your letter this morning and was glad to hear from you once more I am now running a blacksmith forge and have got 36 mules and a number of horses to keep shod in good shape and I think it is enough for one to do I did not want to take hold of it but the Quartermaster got me detaled and I could not get rid of it so I told him I would try it a week or so my back is not good enough to rastel with a ugly horse or a mule and the drivers say there is a few mules that can shake a fellow up so to settle his dinner but they say they will help me shoe them and I think I can get along with them

The report is here tonight that the rebes is in Winchester about 10 miles from here but I do not think there is much of a force of them

I think you have got a pretty good steer pleas tell me how much he weigh dressed when you have him killed I had a pretty shot at three wild deer the other day on the mountain down to Tantalton the other day but my gun miss fired the cap was not a good one I tride it twice but no go I put on another and stepped on to a log and took a running fire at one of them gave a bound into the air and went about 15 rods off me and come to a halt and threw their noses into the air and began to snuff I put in another charge and as I was returning my ram rod they was off and I after them but I did not get another sight of them the next day I went out again and came onto a flock of wild turkeys before I saw any signs of them they was in the rocks and I got close on to them up they and I thought I could not let them go without giving them a compliment of lead so I drew bead on one and let it go and the way the feathers flew was not slow and if it has not stoped an kept on the same gate as it did when it went out of my sight it has got into Conneticut before this time I would like to (have) had my old doubel barrel gun and some No 4 shot and I think I could stop one on the wing but do not know but I have forgot how to do it now for the last 18 months I was at home I shot a gun oftener than I have the 18 months past

There is no news here as I know of only I think there will be a big move some where this coming spring for they are transporting any quantity of provisions mule wagons army utensils and some artillery to the front the 20th keeps moving to the rear every time we move I think the war will close up now in less than a year but it may not but I hope it will for I have got tired of it Col Ross has made application for the 20th to reenlist next June but if the boys think then as they do now they will not get many out of the 20th to reenlist

Give my respects to all of my old friends espely to D Carington

Write soon direct as before

From a soldier Friend J H Newton

My brother John died the 12th of Feb he was not sick but 6 days he was in Venona Ms
it was very sudden to me I received a letter from him 10 days ago

"
(Fragment, no date, no place)

Gen Grant has moved forward as far as Ringold or hold that place and
Knoxville Sherman if he has good luck will do a big thing

You get more news than we do for all we get is from home mostly and is old to
you but fresh to us I have not seen a New Haven paper in a long time we only get the
Nashville papers and there is not much in them

This is the greatest country for dogs that I ever saw there is a bout a hundred
round our camp and the way they howl nights is a caution I saw a citizen drive a team
through here last week and he had 15 following him they look as if they was half wolf
some will run and yell like torment if you throw any thing at them

Is Charles Downs staying at Macks now

I will close

Yours etc

J H Newton

Note: While this fragment of a letter is not dated, from the contents it must have
been written after the battle of Chattanooga, Nov 25, 1863 and before General Grants
appointment as General-in-Chief on March 10, 1864.

Camp of the 20th C V
Cowan Station Tenn Mar 8 1864

Friend Dwight

I received your letter this morning and it found me a kicking yet it rained last night and thunderd and lightend pretty sharp to it was dark as anyone would want to be out in

I have quit black smithing for I could not stand it I have ben the worst off that I ever was in my life for tow weeks past but now am on the gain I have lost 10 lbs in three weeks but I think 160 lbs will do for me yet the doctors will not do anything for me and when I go to see them they are as short as pie crust to me and I have made up my mind to keep away from them and keep a going as long as I can I have not done much for tow weeks

I had a letter from Herbert c Baldwin of the 13th CV this morning and I think they must be home by this time he was from Pine Bridge

I think you got a round price for your fat cattle some of the boys think it must of ben a large ox to have got nearly \$300 for it and some will not believe it but they canm do as they like I think some of the beef that is killed at home would look about the same as our cattle does here they are very poor and small a good many tow year olds are among them I would like to get home and swing a sheepskin or see if I could but I would not use it on a four footed animal but some other kind mite feel it if I had one when I come across them

We had an order to give 5 men out of 100 furlough but it was not a good one I applied for one but none got one Capt Smith thinks we will go out with Gen Burnside on his expedition if Col Ross can get a chance Ross does not hitch well with Corps Officers and they want to get rid of him but not the Regt=

Some of the boys is getting wifes in the 5th and they are welcome to all for me some gets married for three years or during the war or sooner if discharged I have not seen a female that can hold a candel to our Ct women since I have ben in this part of the country they all smoke and chew tobacco and are not afraid to ask a soldier for a chew if they never saw him before and how they get a living is more than I know

Some of our boys is drilling light artillery to man toe 10 lb guns in the fort here so we can talk to Mr Reb when he tries to come in but I do not tiling they will try it

Postage stamps is very scarce here I have sent a number of letters without one and have not heard from them yet and do not much think I will I like to get a letter from an old friend and to know what is going on at home I hear that Robert Toth has sold out I hope he will not forget me on one thing but if he does all right

Our officers have a dance here now and again they had one last week and had some Tracy City ladies down and kept it up until 5 o'clock in the morning I did not go for it was no place for me some few of the boys went Col Wooster got up a good supper as could be got with money here and by the tell it must of cost up in the big figures but he can afford it

I wrote to D Carington last week but do not expect to get an answer but he can do as he likes I would like to know if he got it or not he will dig for money as long as he lives you can tell him I am kicking yet and what I wrote if you like or not

Now I will close write soon as

convenient Direct

as before

From a Soldier friend Julius H

Newton

Camp of the 20th CV
Cowan Station Tenn Apr 18 1864

Friend Dwight

I received your letter today and it found me in good health and spirits for the warm weather suits me now but do not know how longe it will last

Col Ross and wife has go to make Gen Hooker a visit he is to Schorchas Valley Geo he is working for a higher office and we think he will get it for he and Old Joe is old friends

We guard the railroad yet they have ben running all the emty up trains on the Charleston and Memphis road as far as Huntsville and yesterday the rebels captured a train and burnt it and tore up the tracks and now the trains all go and come this way

I had heard that F Hotchkiss house was burnt and Days factory but did not know C Woosters grist mill was burnt I think there must be some one that know about some of the fires

I received a box from home one week ago today and I have lived this week but it is about all gone I had tow appels in it that the sutler offered me 25 cts a piece but I could not see it to let him sell them and make anything on them for he makes enough now out of the boys

We have got tow good officers for our company Capt Beardsley from Birmingham Ct and Leieut Jepson he came out as a private and jumped to seargent and then to 2nd Leieut and now 1st Leieut of Company H and the boys all like him he and Burton was great friends
one of our seargents is promoted to 2nd Leieut we have not got but three Captains that came out with us from New Haven only one has gotten any higher and that is Capt Pardee he is Major now and Buckingham is Leieut Col and some thinks he will be Col in a short time if Col Ross gets a promotion and then look out boys for strict orders etc the boys do not think very much of him he was in command of the Regt= at Stafford Va and he kept us on a drill and duty all the time and we was all glad when Col Ross came back to us and took command of the Regt= some of the officers think we have a good chance to guard the rail road this summer

They have cut us down on rations and fresh meat is plaid out but fat bacon has not last week we did not get any fresh meet only bacon and I will defy anyone to eat it without he is in a starving condition but we have made out in some ways but some of the boys growl but I tell them that I cant cook what I have not got it is rather hot work to cook some days but the boys think I have the easiest time of it but I tell them anyone may have the job and well come to it but Seargent Root says that I had better keep on as I have I can now have another job of cooking if I was not at it now but I do not fancy it

I saw a man plowing last January

Now I will close direct as before and pleas write

Yours etc

J H Newton

I thank you for the stamp for [what?] I get comes from home)