

The Civil War Diary of Alfred W. Shollenberger

Access: Open to research.

Accession: The diary was donated to Wilkes University by Sara Hummel Rynkiewicz of Kingston PA, sometime before her death in 1971.

Provenance: Gift of Sara Hummel Rynkiewicz of Kingston PA, sometime prior to her death in 1971.

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Processed and Transcribed by: William Billingsley, Archives Work-Study, Fall 2020-Spring 2021, Ryan Mercer, Archives Work-Study, Summer 2021, supervised by Suzanna Calev, Archivist, Fall 2020-Summer 2021.

Biographical Sketch of donor, Sara Hummel Rynkiewicz:

Sara Victoria Hummel Rynkiewicz was born in Cressona, Pennsylvania sometime in 1885 to her parents, Levi and Barbara Hummel. She had six siblings, two of whom died when they were children. She married Dr Stanley Henry Rynkiewicz sometime in 1904. They were married for 64 years, until Sara's tragic death in 1971. On August 1, 1971, she was unfortunately killed in a traffic accident in Kingston, Pennsylvania. Her husband Stanley also met a tragic end three years later, when he was brutally murdered in his medical office. Alfred W. Shollenberger's Civil War Diary was donated to Wilkes College's Eugene S. Farley Library sometime between 1947 and 1971, prior to her death. It is unknown how exactly Sara came into possession of Alfred's diary, however it is likely that it was passed down through Alfred's descendants, as Sara was the sister-

in-law of Alfred's youngest son, Leroy Charles Shollenberger. Please see attached family genealogy chart provided by Laura Wuyts, a descendant of the Shollenberger family lineage.

Biographical Sketch of creator, Alfred W. Shollenberger:

Alfred W. Shollenberger was born in Hamburg, Bucks County, Pennsylvania in 1839 to Joseph Shollenberger and Sarah Wolff. He had three sisters. Alfred was a carpenter by trade, according to the 1880 US Census. There is not a consensus, or solid evidence of, exactly which regiment Alfred was a part of. One possibility is the Pennsylvania 19th Infantry, which is what is listed on his headstone (this is strange, as that unit was mustered out in 1861). Another is that Alfred was a member of the United States Military Railroad Construction Corps, however there are no official records of their rosters available. Alfred also mentions that he has comrades in the PA 102nd infantry, although his name is not listed in the records for that unit. Based on the contents of his journal he was not personally involved in direct battle conflict, rather he primarily did engineering and construction work to build and/or destroy infrastructure like railway bridges. Alfred was married to Mary Ann Holton sometime in 1863, prior to his deployment. After he returned from his deployment they had six children. Alfred passed away on November 26, 1915, aged 76.

Scope and Context:

Alfred's journal spans from March 31, 1864 to December 19, 1864. In it, Alfred details his period of service as a Union Engineer. He frequently highlights the events of his day, news he has received of the ongoing conflict, as well as recording the weather conditions almost every day. Alfred spent time mostly in Virginia, parts of what is today West Virginia, Washington DC,

and Philadelphia. He was involved in some of the most pivotal events of the war with his engineering work, such as in the Shenandoah Valley region during the Valley Campaigns in 1864 and in Washington DC during Jubal Early's 1864 attack on the capital. Furthermore, while he was not involved in other events directly, Alfred often mentioned them in his entries. He often accurately reported the major news of the war very soon after the events took place. For example, he recorded information about the Fall of Atlanta in September of 1864¹, the activities of the guerilla group Mosby's Rangers in Northern Virginia², and the failed Union strategy at the Battle of the Crater³. He also frequently mentioned many now famous Union Generals and politicians, such as Ambrose Burnside⁴, David Hunter⁵, Phillip Sheridan⁶, Ulysses S Grant⁷, Secretary of War Stanton⁸, and even President Lincoln⁹ himself. Although he did not participate in the gruesome battles that the conflict is most known for, the engineering work of Alfred and others like him was crucial to the success of the Union. Engineers and laborers helped facilitate troop transport, supply chains, and even helped turn the tide of some battles. Almost all entries are mostly legible, with a few indecipherable words/phrases every so often. A few entries, especially in November and December are missing, too faded to read, erased, or crossed out.

Note to Researchers: This is an edited version of the original transcription of Alfred W. Schollenberger's diary. Punctuation, grammar, and spelling have been edited to aid researchers in accessing the historical content presented in Alfred's diary entries. For an

¹ See the September 5 entry.

² See the October 14 entry.

³ See the September 19 entry.

⁴ See the April 25 and September 19 entries.

⁵ See the July 15 and August 9-10 entries.

⁶ See the August 9-10, August 21, September 21, October 15, and October 20 entries.

⁷ See the May 12, May 14, August 1, and August 6 entries.

⁸ See the July 11 entry.

⁹ See the July 11 entry.

original transcription of the diary please see the digital file

CivilWarDiaryAlfredWShollenberger_originaltranscript.pdf

Transcription:

Thursday March 31 1864¹⁰

George K Seaman Gr.

By = percentage on wage days at 15 cents per day.

3.75 3.75

June 2. Geo K Seaman.

By Cash 12.0 \$30

Friday April 1 1864¹¹

275 15 2720 2175

290 2145

14

July 3 J04 K Seam 100

By Cash 10.00 10.00

By Cash 9.00 10.00

By 14 flour 19.00 1.45

¹⁰ This entry seems to contain mathematical equations, likely used by Alfred to calculate his pay. It appears to have been added later, likely not on the date of the entry.

¹¹ The formatting for the dates in this diary have been altered to assist researchers in locating specific date entries. To see the original formatting, please see the original transcript file [Original Transcript](#)

Saturday, April 2 1864¹²

19.00	90	\$21.75
17.00	10	
36	80	900
	25	115.40
	940	2175
	360	2365
	1540	9175
		4540

Sunday April 3 1864.¹³

1.18
1.40
50
75
3.83

Monday, April 4 1864

\$1863

¹² This entry seems to contain mathematical equations, likely used by Alfred to calculate his pay. It appears to have been added later, likely not on the date of the entry. The formatting is how it appears in the original journal.

¹³ This entry seems to contain mathematical equations, likely used by Alfred to calculate his pay. It appears to have been added later, likely not on the date of the entry. The formatting is how it appears in the original journal.

Tuesday, April 5 1864

We started for Virginia and arrived at Philadelphia at half past one. We went to the Bald Eagle Hotel and when we arrived there we found Benj. Kline Wallace, Shollenberger and Gheo. Zweizig. There, accompanied by A. Seidel, we concluded to go to the theatre.

Wednesday, April 6 1864

From the theatre we took the street cars to the Washington Depot and left at 12:30 this morning. We arrived at Washington at 8:30p.m. then visited the Capital, where we had several drinks and stews. Then we went to the peons for a pass. Then we started for Alexandria.

Thursday, April 7 1864

Commenced working at the plank platform between the machine shop and the blacksmith shops. The weather is beautiful after the snow and rain of the 5th and 6th.

Friday April 8 1864

I worked at a shanty between the engine house and the stageid¹⁴ and worked until tonight.

Saturday April 9 1864

It was drizzling all day a little with rain, we did not work much so I came to the conclusion to make a clothes and tool bone which I did with "Bony" Riegel.

¹⁴ This is most likely a misspelling or slang, however what he is referring to is unknown.

Sunday, April 10 1864

The water of the Potomac is very high, it swept away several bridges on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad. We received orders to go down the road and we plodded up the bank that was washed away. We finished at 6.00am and then returned.

Monday, April 11 1864

We went up the road towards Washington and when we arrived there we found the Potomac so high that the Railroad was washed away. That meant there was no transportation all day. When the tide went down we got the road fixed at 9am. The river was higher than ever known.

Tuesday April 12 1864

We went to work between Washington and Alexandria, we put up a Crib¹⁵ Wall to keep the water from washing away the Railroad bank. Worked in the well pretty near all day. The weather was clear and we saw wild ducks in abundance on the river.

Wednesday, April 13 1864

We went to work on the long bridge¹⁶ clearing away rubbish caused by the high water. The day was clear and windy. Charles Leuberg received a dispatch to come home. I was laboring under the pains from a headache this afternoon.

¹⁵ A cribbing or box crib refers to a wooden structure used to support heavy objects during construction. More information: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Box_crib

¹⁶ Here Alfred is referring to the "Long Bridge" over the Potomac, in Washington DC. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Long_Bridge_\(Potomac_River\)#Civil_War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Long_Bridge_(Potomac_River)#Civil_War)

Thursday, April 14 1864

We went to work on the cribbing between Alexandria and Washington. We worked until one o'clock when the timber was all used up. Then we loafed for the rest of the day. Went to the fishery and got a good string of catfish.

Friday, April 15 1864

We went to work at the cribbing between Washington and Alexandria. There was no timber until dinner so we went home and loafed until 4:30. Then we built cars¹⁷ for the cattle until ten o'clock. It was raining a little today.

Saturday, April 16 1864

It was raining all day, one squad was out at the long bridge and we were loafing. I finished my chest, washed and shaved, then laid about in my bunk while others amused themselves by playing checkers and cards

Sunday, April 17 1864

We did not work today so we loafed all day. In the afternoon we went to visit the boys of the 7th P.A.V from whom we got several chaff bags. They received marching orders to leave tomorrow.

Monday, April 18 1864

¹⁷ When Alfred writes "cars", he is referring to train cars.

We went to work building a shanty above the depot. After supper we went to the theater and saw The Days of 16 and other plays. After the theater we had a couple glasses of ale and then retired.

Tuesday, April 19 1864

We worked at the shanty until 2:30 am then loafed until 5am. Then we carried boards until six o'clock, the 7th PAV boys left this morning. There were a great many soldiers going up the road today.

Wednesday, April 20 1864

We worked on the floor boards today. Nothing happened of any consequence during the day except that Charles Seaman came from Tennessee today and stayed with us for the night.

Thursday, April 21 1864.

We worked at the shanty above the depot today. The weather is fine. No news today. Joseph Reber received a letter to come home, he will leave tomorrow.

Friday, April 22 1864

We worked at another shanty and unloaded stuff for another. The weather is fair. Nothing new today, Joseph Reber left for home this morning.

Saturday, April 23 1864

We worked at another shanty up at the commissary depot, moved one from its place, and put up shelves for a bread house. The weather is fine. No news. I received a letter from home.

Sunday, April 24 1864

No work today so I walked about and saw the large gun throw a 470 ft ball. In the afternoon I visited the camp of the 11th regulars and heard the band play. A large crowd of ladies and gents was assembled on the parade.

Monday, April 25 1864

I worked at the old iron and separated it. The weather in the morning was rainy but it cleared up beautifully in the afternoon. Burnside's¹⁸ soldiers came in pretty thick today.

Tuesday, April 26 1864

I worked at the old iron and weighed it. The day was beautiful. Nothing new of any importance.

Wednesday, April 27 1864

I worked at the old iron, the weather was favourable. Nothing new of any importance.

Thursday, April 28 1864

I worked at the old iron as usual, nothing new. The weather is beautiful. The soldiers are going out fast.

¹⁸ Here Alfred is likely referring to soldiers under the command of General Ambrose Burnside.

Friday, April 29 1864

I worked at the old iron until dinner, then was detailed for opening oysters for a supper for the boss for the rest of the day. We opened 36. There was a deserter shot today and a dog shot by a detective.

Saturday, April 30 1864

I worked on the old iron, nothing new of any importance.

Sunday, May 1 1864

Worked at the old iron as usual. The weather was cloudy in the morning but cleared off without rain. Two trains of coloured soldiers went to the front. In the evening I went to church.

Monday, May 2 1864

I worked at the old iron at the wharf, nothing new. The weather is fine, in the morning a heavy storm with rain. The boys had to move their beds on account of the rain.

Tuesday, May 3 1864.

I worked on the wharf at the old iron as usual, worked pretty hard and was driven still harder.

The weather is beautiful.

Wednesday, May 4 1864

I worked at the old iron on the wharf, nothing new. The weather is beautiful. The army moved and they brought in forage.

Thursday, May 5 1864

I worked at the old iron as usual, nothing new of any importance. The weather is beautiful.

Friday, May 6 1864

I worked at the old iron as usual. The weather was beautiful, nothing new as usual. We were in the river bathing after supper.

Saturday, May 7 1864

I worked at the old iron as usual, the day was very warm. Mr Lamda was hurt when a bar fell on his foot. Nothing new of any importance. Our army is on their way to Richmond and have been successful so far.

Sunday, May 8 1864

I did not work today but received orders not to leave the shanty on account of the wounded soldiers coming in. The report is that ten thousand rebs¹⁹ were wounded on the field and 3 thousand were killed²⁰.

Monday, May 9 1864

¹⁹ Alfred always uses the term "rebs" to refer to the Confederates.

²⁰ Here Alfred is likely referring to the aftermath of the Battle of The Wilderness.
<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/civil-war/battles/wilderness>

I worked at the old iron on the wharf, nothing new but it is reported our army was successful and Robert E. Lee is retreating towards Richmond. The weather is warm. Two gangs were ordered to the field.

Tuesday, May 10 1864

I worked at the old iron at the wharf and then went out to the stockade and weighed old wheels until night. No news of any account, the weather is fine. We had a little rain last night which cooled off considerably.

Wednesday, May 11 1864

I worked at the old iron until three pm and then rested the remainder of the day as the iron was all until tomorrow. The weather is fine with a shower this evening, nothing new. I wrote a letter to my wife this evening.

Thursday, May 12 1864

I worked at the wharf unloading the train of iron and weighing it. The weather is disagreeable today, short showers all day. Nothing new of any account, only the report is that Grant expects to take possession of Richmond one of these days²¹.

²¹ Sherman's advance was halted at the Battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse, still ongoing on this date. <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/civil-war/battles/spotsylvania-court-house>

Friday, May 13 1864

I worked at the old iron then gathered the iron and took it up the road to Fish Town, it is awful dirty work. Nothing new, only accounts from the papers of a capture of 40 guns and 5000 prisoners, everything looks favourable. The weather today is rainy but this afternoon it stopped.

Saturday, May 14 1864

I worked at the old iron for a while then gathered leaden pipes and weighed them. Nothing new, the weather is fine after the rain. No news of any account but information from the paper is that Grant is in hot pursuit of the rebs.

Sunday, May 15 1864

I was not at work today, little news. This morning I took a walk to the graveyard accompanied by H.G. Plen. Then this afternoon I went to King's Wharf and saw a steamer come up with prisoners. The weather is rainy with thunderstorms.

Monday, May 16 1864

I worked at the old iron, finished up, and put the scales in the office at 4:30 pm. Then went to the shanty and loafed, nothing new. The weather is fine. Epler started work today.

Tuesday, May 17 1864

I went down to the wharf to go fishing, while down there I received orders to move so I got my things aboard and left Alexandria at 6:15. We are now passing Fort Washington, the walls are loaded with guns. At a house above a lady waved a flag at us. Arrived at Aquia Creek at 11:30 at night. The night is beautiful.

Wednesday, May 18 1864

I got up at 4 o'clock and went to work at the dock as it was all destroyed by fire. We repaired it so the train could be landed. After the train landed we loaded our things and got to Brookes Station. There we pitched our tents then unloaded the lumber at the bridge. The men are afraid of guerillas²².

Thursday, May 19 1864

This morning we commenced work at the Bridge and finished it at 3pm. Then we stuck²³ tents and loaded our traps and went to the Potomac Creek Bridge. There we pitched our tents and unloaded lumber until 8 o'clock then sloped²⁴ off till the morning. I was sick this morning so I did not work until the afternoon.

Friday, May 20 1864

²² Alfred is either referring to Confederate soldiers, or an unofficial Confederate raiding group like Mosby's Rangers, who he mentions later.

²³ Alfred uses "stuck" and "loaded our traps" to refer to packing up their tents and campsite.

²⁴ Sloping off refers to leaving quietly.

We started to work at the Potomac Creek this morning at 4am and worked pretty fast. We worked until 7:45pm. We got the lower bend all up to the second pier, five on the second tier, and one in the third. Then I took supper and after a good wash received a letter.

Saturday, May 21 1864

I got up at 4am and went to work at the Potomac Creek Bridge, putting on the braces. The bridge will be finished tomorrow I think. The weather today was fine, no news.

Sunday, May 22 1864

I got up at four o'clock and went to work at the bridge. We got it finished at four oclock in the afternoon. The engine E.L. Wenty was the first engine to cross the bridge. Nothing new, the weather is fine with a shower today.

Monday, May 23 1864

I rose this morning at sunrise. We struck our tents and loaded our traps with the intention of going to Fredericksburg, but were sadly disappointed and came to Aquia Creek again. There we pitched our tents and put our tools onboard the barge. Then we loafed.

Tuesday, May 24 1864

We got up this morning and struck our tents loaded our traps, and then stayed and helped to unload the wounded and give them water. In the last train I found one of the Hamburg Boys, Augustus Miller. We gave him something to eat and drink then took him aboard the barge. Then we went aboard our car which was on the barge. There was a heavy storm.

Wednesday, May 25 1864

Left Aquia Creek last night at 10:30. It was raining and storming. I fixed my bed in the boat and rose in the morning as we landed at Alexandria. We unloaded our things and dug a cellar for our things and then loafed. The weather is fine, nothing new of any importance.

Thursday, May 26 1864

It rained this morning and this afternoon, so I worked awhile and made a box for tools. Nothing new of any importance.

Friday, May 27 1864

The weather was fair, nothing new of any importance. No work today. I was making a valise²⁵ this evening and we went downtown to get coal and hinges. Then we went to have lager.

Saturday, May 28 1864

The weather has been fine. No work today, the boys are loafing about the shanty. I finished covering my valise. Nothing new of any importance. Several gangs were ordered to the White House²⁶ in the morning.

Sunday, May 29 1864

²⁵ A valise refers to a small travelling bag / suitcase.

²⁶ Here Alfred is referring to White House Landing, a supply depot on the Pamunkey River.

I worked at the wharf at Alexandria and put tracks on the barges. The weather is fine, nothing new. Five gangs left Alexandria for the White House on the peninsula.

Monday, May 30 1864.

I worked at the wharf fixing up the boats and laying track. Nothing new, the weather is beautiful. I earned my April pay today which was 55 dollars.

Tuesday, May 31 1864

I worked at the barges at the Alexandria wharf until 10 o'clock in the morning, then went to the shanty and loafed the rest of the day. The weather is fine, nothing new.²⁷

Wednesday, June 1 1864

There was no work today, we laid about the shanty and awaited orders. The day was very warm. Nothing new. Some of the boys and myself were down at the river fishing but our luck was bad.

Thursday, June 2 1864

I laid about, no work today.²⁸

Friday, June 3 1864

²⁷ The last 2 lines of this entry have been erased and are thus indecipherable.

²⁸ The rest of this entry has been crossed out and is thus indecipherable.

We laid about the shanty until after dinner, then some of us went out to build scow²⁹ boats. We worked until six o'clock then went back to the shanty. The weather today was cloudy with a little rain. Nothing new of any importance.

Saturday, June 4 1864

We worked at H. Air³⁰ light boats and finished them tonight. Nothing new, the weather is fine. Dr Miller called to see us last night, he is in the soldiers rest.

Sunday, June 5 1864

No work today, the weather is fine. The boys are all enjoying themselves as they please. I went fishing but had bad luck. After supper I went to the graveyard, no news of any importance.

Monday, June 6 1864

No work today. We were loafing about the shanty all day. The weather is very warm and there was a heavy thunderstorm in the evening which cooled off the air beautifully. No news of any importance.

Tuesday, June 7 1864

No work today, we are awaiting orders. The weather today is cold, nothing new today. This evening we went out fishing, on my first throw I got a bite and hauled out a large perch but it broke the line.

²⁹ Scow refers to a flat bottomed barge used for transportation in shallow waters.

³⁰ This is likely a slang phrase, the meaning of which is unknown.

Wednesday, June 8 1864

No work today, we are awaiting orders. The day was fine, no news. We went out fishing tonight and caught a pike. Mays had better luck than usual.

Thursday, June 9 1864

No work today, the boys are all enjoying themselves however they think best. Nothing new of any importance. The weather was warm today until the evening then a heavy rain storm came in.

Friday, June 10 1864

We put up a culvert today between Washington and Alexandria on the Railroad. The weather today was fine, no news of any importance. We have spent the evening thus far singing.

Saturday, June 11 1864

We went to work between Washington and Alexandria to put up a culvert and two bends at a small bridge. Nothing new, the weather today was rather cooler then usual. Mr. Shivers got his foot caught and hurt it pretty bad.

Sunday, June 12 1864

No work today, for amusement we took a walk to the river where we found colored people bathing in it. In the afternoon I took a walk to the graveyard. The weather is fine, no news.

Monday, June 13 1864

No work today. The boys all amused themselves at one thing or another, some of them were throwing quoits³¹. Joe Reber and myself took a walk to see the New World, the largest steamer ever, which came to Alexandria. The government is using her for a hospital. She is 375 feet long and 4 stories tall.

Tuesday, June 14 1864

No work today. We were fishing all day but had bad luck. The weather is rather cooler than usual. Nothing new of any importance.

Wednesday, June 15 1864

No work today, the weather today is fine. Nothing new of any importance. Chase's three gangs came from the White House this evening.

Thursday, June 16 1864

No work today, nothing new. The weather today is fine.

Friday, June 17 1864

We worked at Wharf No. 5 and put an extension on it. Nothing new of any importance, the weather today is fine. This evening I went fishing after supper and caught a catfish³², it was 16 ½ inches long.

³¹ Quoits is a traditional game that involves throwing a metal ring over a distance to land on a spike. It is similar to horseshoes.

³² In his journal Alfred writes "cad fish" which could be referring to either cod or catfish.

Saturday, June 18 1864

We worked on dock No. 5 at Alexandria. No news of any importance, only the capture of Petersburg³³. The weather is beautiful. I was fishing this evening, we had pretty good luck.

Sunday, June 19 1864

No work today, the weather is fine. Nothing new of any importance. We were out fishing tonight and had pretty good luck. I sent a letter to my sister Emma today

Monday, June 20 1864

We worked at Wharf No. 5 and got finished tonight, nothing new. The weather today was fine. This evening we went fishing for amusement and caught a fine string of catfish.

Tuesday, June 21 1864

We were ordered to load lumber and after we loaded it we got orders to go to Washington so we struck our tents, loaded our things, and reached Washington at 2 o'clock. We pitched our tents and after supper we went to the chambers of Congress, the question before the houses was about the California Railroad.

Wednesday, June 22 1864

³³ Here Alfred is referring to the Siege of Petersburg: <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/civil-war/battles/petersburg>.

We worked at the Sixth St. Wharf at Washington. Nothing new of any importance, the weather today was fine. The river is beautiful with the ____ below us. Target practice today.

Thursday, June 23 1864

We worked at the wharf in Washington, nothing new of any importance. The weather today was very warm.

Friday, June 24 1864

We worked at the wharf in Washington. The weather today was so warm that I almost gave out. No news of any importance.

Saturday, June 25 1864

Worked at the wharf in Washington. The weather was very warm. Nothing new of any importance. We went to the Columbia Garden and had some lager and cheese. William Fesig came up from the White House, I saw him at the wharf.

Sunday, June 26 1864

No work today. The weather today was very warm until the evening when we had a heavy thunder storm. We passed our time today on a flat under the wharf, there was a fine breeze. No news of any importance today.

Monday, June 27 1864

We worked at the wharf in Washington. The weather today was very warm though this evening we had a heavy thunder storm but only a little rain. This evening we were at Grover's Theatre³⁴, the act was Magoppe³⁵ which had beautiful scenery.

Tuesday, June 28 1864

We worked at the wharf in Washington. The weather today was fine, no news. The steamer Connecticut arrived with 500 wounded soldiers, of which 10 were dead.

Wednesday, June 29 1864

We worked at the wharf in Washington, nothing new of any importance. The weather was not quite as warm as it was yesterday. Joseph Ginder and William Fesig came to see us today, they are camped here in Washington.

Thursday, June 30 1864

We worked on the wharf in Washington, nothing new of any importance. The weather is fine. While we were working Dr Miller came to the wharf, he was waiting on the boat to go to Alexandria. A little rain towards evening .

Friday, July 1 1864

³⁴ President Lincoln frequently attended plays at Grover's Theatre.

³⁵ Magoppe is what is written by Alfred, but it is either a misspelling or slang, of what is unknown.

We worked at the wharf in Washington until 2 o'clock. Then we received orders to strike camp and go to the long bridge on the Virginia side. There we pitched our camp and went to bed, the mosquitos are very troublesome. Nothing new, got paid today.

Saturday, July 2 1864

We worked at the long bridge in Washington. Nothing new of any importance, the weather was very warm until the afternoon when we had a heavy storm.

Sunday, July 3 1864

We worked at the long bridge in Washington putting in a butment under the bridge. The weather is fine, nothing new. This evening I was sitting on the bridge fishing and the fireworks seemed to be going off. I received a letter from C.H. Ballen today.

Monday, July 4 1864

We worked at the long bridge across the Potomac. Nothing new of any importance. In the evening we went into the city to enjoy a little of the fourth. The weather is fine.

Tuesday, July 5 1864

Struck tents this morning and loaded on to the cars to move to South Street in Washington. We arrived there before dinner, pitched our tents, and rested for the day. Then I went to the wharf and saw the confiscated steam ship. No news, the Alabama³⁶ was sunk.

Wednesday, July 6 1864

³⁶ The CSS Alabama was sunk off the coast of France in one of only two Civil War naval battles in foreign waters. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Cherry_Bomb (1864).

We went out on the wharf to work. We sawed off one spike and then laid over for the day. The weather is pretty warm, the thermometer reads 102 degrees in our tent. The news that has been reported is that the rebs are going to Pennsylvania³⁷ again. It is hoped that they will meet with a warm reception.

Thursday, July 7 1864

We worked at Sixth Wharf in Washington, nothing new. The weather today was very warm. I received a letter from my sister Emma today.

Friday, July 8 1864

We worked at the Sixth Wharf in Washington, this morning while we were working the steamer John Brooks landed which had on board the body of Henry Deward³⁸ who was embalmed. No other news but of the raid into Pennsylvania.

Saturday, July 9 1864

We worked at Sixth Street Wharf in Washington. The weather was very warm today. Nothing new, but it is reported that the rebs are going to evacuate Harper's Ferry. I wrote a letter to my

³⁷ Here Alfred is referring to the raids into Pennsylvania by the Confederate Army during the summer of 1864.

³⁸ Alfred clearly writes "Deward" though there is no record of any prominent figure with that name. There is a possibility it is a misspelling of Seward, however Henry Seward was still alive at this time.

wife tonight. The rebs are destroying the Railroad and cutting all command off from Washington.

Sunday, July 10 1864

No work today, the weather is fine. The quartermaster's men were all armed today and ordered to stand guard on account of the raid. I was sick all day with a tooth and headache. I received two letters today with ³⁹

Monday, July 11 1864

We worked at the wharf at Washington until dinner then went up to the Philadelphia depot and put in a stringer⁴⁰. Today there is great excitement as Lincoln⁴¹ and Stanton paid a visit to the wharf to see the soldiers come in.

Tuesday, July 12 1864

No work today on account of the soldiers coming to the rescue of Washington. The 6 came here today. Amongst them were the Hamburg Boys of the 96th PA unit. Great excitement created in town as the rebs threatened Fort Lincoln and destroyed the Railroad between there and Philadelphia.

Wednesday, July 13 1864

³⁹ The last line of this entry is too small and faded to make out.

⁴⁰ A "stringer" or "stinger" refers to a cross support in floor or ceiling construction.

⁴¹ In the original text Alfred refers to the President as "Old Abraham". Lincoln was at Fort Stevens when the Union army prevented the advance of the Confederates towards Washington.

We received orders to pack and go to Alexandria so we did and arrived at Alexandria at 11 o'clock. We unloaded our things and thought we were about at home, but orders came to pack up again. So we packed our things and loaded our tools while we waited for orders. The rebs were driven 7 miles from Washington today.

Thursday, July 14 1864

We had orders yesterday to pack up but not to leave. No work today but we are still awaiting marching orders. Today the rebs were driven back several miles, I think they will meet with a warm reception. They have stolen several thousand heads of cattle but I hope they will be recaptured.

Friday, July 15 1864

No work today but everything is ready for when we receive marching orders. The weather today is fine. The news today is favorable, the rebs are reported to be retreating towards Richmond again. General Hunter⁴² is in hot pursuit.

Saturday, July 16 1864

We left Alexandria at one o'clock for Manocgey Bridge on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. On the road up we met William Fesig and arrived at the Realy House at 10 o'clock. We spread our blankets on top of the car and slept on our way to the bridge, which is 56 miles from here.

Sunday, July 17, 1864

⁴² In the original text Alfred refers to General David Hunter as simply "Hunter".

We arrived here at the Manocgey Bridge this morning at 3 o'clock. We had breakfast and went to work at the bridge. It is an iron bridge but was pretty well shattered from cannon balls. We braced it up and finished at 3 o'clock, then started for Harpers Ferry. We arrived here at 6 o'clock this evening and unloaded lumber.

Monday, July 18 1864

This morning we went to work at the bridge in Harpers Ferry, it is part iron and part wood. The latter was burned by our own men to keep the rebels from enjoying a birds eye view of Harpers Ferry. It reminds me very much of Port Clinton. The report is that a fight is going on at negro Gab⁴³ about 18 miles from us.

Tuesday, July 19 1864.

We worked at the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Bridge at Harpers Ferry. We got all the bends up and ready for bracing. The soldiers are thick here. Their batteries are planted on top of the mountain. No news.

Wednesday, July 20 1864

We got up at four o'clock and had breakfast and then went to work at the Harpers Ferry bridge. We put up braces today. No news of any importance. The weather today was very warm with a shower this afternoon.

⁴³ Alfred clearly writes "negro Gab", the meaning of this is unknown.

Thursday, July 21 1864.

We worked at the bridge at Harpers Ferry, no news of any importance. The first train crossed over the bridge at 2 o'clock. The weather today is fine.

Friday, July 22 1864

We moved from Sandy Hook to Harpers Ferry and camped on the other side of the bridge, which is now finished. So we will go to work at the Wagon Road Bridge tomorrow. Today a train of wounded came in and 14 prisoners from ⁴⁴ No news of any importance.

Saturday, July 23 1864

We worked at the Wagon Road Bridge at Harpers Ferry. Nothing new has transpired today. The weather is fine. We ran out of rations and must live on Hard Tack, we also broke our stove to Adams⁴⁵ so we must do the best we can.

Sunday, July 24 1864

No work today so we took a walk out in the country. There is fighting going on at Martinsburg today, the report is that the Rebs were on their way to Harpers Ferry again. The weather today is fine.

⁴⁴ The end of this line is too faded to be read.

⁴⁵ This is most likely a slang expression from the period, "Adams" is written clearly.

Monday, July 25 1864

It rained hard all last night and this morning so we did not work until the afternoon at the Wagon Road Bridge. Great excitement prevails amongst our soldiers and citizens as it is reported that the rebs were on their way to this place. They are shipping things all day and the passing train was ordered to come back.

Tuesday, July 26 1864

We went to work at the bridge at Harpers Ferry and worked until dinner. Then we received orders to undo as much work as we could and pack our things and leave. The rebs are coming towards this place, the report is that they are only 4 miles off. The citizens shipped all our things off then we got aboard the cars and left at 5 o'clock. They ordered us to cut the bridge that we just put up.

Wednesday, July 27 1864

We rode all last night on the cars and arrived at the Relay House at 9 o'clock this morning on our skedaddle from Harpers Ferry. We left the Relay House at 12 o'clock and arrived at Washington at 4 o'clock. There we laid over until 7 o'clock in the evening then started for Alexandria and arrived there at 8 o'clock this evening.

Thursday, July 28 1864

No work today, we are loafing at the shanty in Alexandria. No news of any importance, only it is reported that they are fighting in the Shenandoah Valley. The weather today was fine

Friday, July 29 1864

No work today so we loafed at the shanty. The weather was very warm today. No news.⁴⁶

Saturday, July 30 1864

No work today, we are loafing at the shanty and awaiting orders. The report is that the Confederate raiders are marching through Pennsylvania again, they were at Chambersburg⁴⁷ this morning and are going on towards Harrisburg. The weather is fine.

Sunday, July 31 1864

No work today so we loafed at the shanty and wherever we could make ourselves comfortable. The weather today was very warm. The news is that the rebels at Chambersburg burned 250 buildings and then left.

Monday, August 1 1864

We loafed at the shanty until dinner. Then we went to the wharf and built a raft of timber for Washington Wharf at 9th St. Then we got ready to leave for Washington in the morning. The weather today is fine. There are reports of General Grant blowing up the earth works⁴⁸.

Tuesday, August 2 1864

We got up at half past four. We had breakfast, then got on the cars and went to the wharf where we loaded our traps on board of a schooner. Then, we left for Washington and arrived at 10

⁴⁶ Some math that is too faded to read appears at the end of this entry.

⁴⁷ Here Alfred is referring to Confederate General Jubal Early's burning of Chambersburg, PA following a victory in the Shenandoah Valley.

⁴⁸ Alfred is likely referring to the ongoing siege of Petersburg. Two days earlier, after months of digging, Union forces blew up a mine under a Confederate fort. The following charge was mishandled and the lines remained unchanged at Petersburg.

o'clock. We pitched our tents and then unloaded the schooner of some planks. We had rain towards evening.

Wednesday, August 3 1864

We worked at 9th Street Wharf in Washington, no news of any importance. The weather today is fine, we have heard nothing about the raiders.

Thursday, August 4 1864

We worked at 9th Street Wharf and put on stringers and planks. The weather today was cooler than normal. We did work this Thanksgiving⁴⁹ day. The colored people had a picnic. This evening I was at the wharf and got a watermelon, it was pretty expensive.

Friday, August 5 1864

We worked on the 9th Street Wharf today. No news of any importance. The weather today was rather warm. This afternoon, while Rast⁵⁰ and myself went to the wharf to buy a watermelon, an old man and his son started fighting. The son hit his father with a club, then the man went into the bag and got a knife and stabbed him, his own son.

Saturday, August 6 1864

⁴⁹ Alfred clearly writes "Thanksgiving Day", this is very strange as it is still early August.

⁵⁰ Alfred is most likely referring to one of his comrades by a nickname.

I worked at 9th Street Wharf in Washington today. The report today is that Lee and his main army were on their way to Pennsylvania but Grant and his army were 12 hours ahead of Lee. It is also reported that the rebs have hoisted the black flag. The weather today is fine.

Sunday, August 7 1864

We struck our tents and went to Alexandria to get rations and tools, then returned to Washington immediately on our way to Harpers Ferry. We left Washington at 8 o'clock this evening and arrived at the Relay House at 11 o'clock where we stopped till morning. The weather is warm.

Monday, August 8 1864

We left the Relay House on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad this morning on our way to Harpers Ferry, for the purpose of putting up bridges. We went through a valley the whole way until we arrived at Harpers Ferry at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Then we pitched our tents and made ourselves at home.

Tuesday, August 9 1864

We commenced work at the Wagon Road Bridge this morning. General Sheridan⁵¹ was on the bridge today and General Hunter⁵² left for Washington. Cavalry were crossing the river all day.

Wednesday, August 10 1864

⁵¹ Here Alfred is referring to General Philip Sheridan, referred to in the original text simply as "Sheredan".

⁵² Here Alfred is referring to General David Hunter, referred to in the original text simply as "Hunter".

We worked at the Harpers Ferry Bridge today. Nothing new of any importance. The weather today was rather warm. The soldiers seem to like General Sheridan better than Hunter.

Thursday, August 11 1864

No work today on account of the lumber being all used up. No news of any importance. More cavalry arrived here today. The weather today was pretty warm.

Friday, August 12 1864

I worked at the Harpers Ferry bridge today laying planks. No news of much importance, but a sad accident occurred with one of our hands named John Buckley, who had the misfortune of losing his arm at the expedition in City Point. The weather today was warmer than usual.

Saturday, August 13 1864

I worked at the bridge at Harpers Ferry. Joe Farrins' Gang came up this morning and went up the road towards Hall Town. A sad accident occurred today, while two cars were waiting on the siding an engine came up going full speed and two men were killed and one wounded.

Sunday, August 14 1864

We finished the Wagon Road Bridge at Harpers Ferry today. No news of any importance. The car that was run off yesterday was put on the track again. The weather was very warm today.

Monday, August 15 1864

We got up at five o'clock and went to work at another railroad bridge at Harpers Ferry. We have now connected three bridges. This iron bridge will be the last. Nothing new of any importance, the weather today was very warm and we got a pretty good shower.

Tuesday, August 16 1864

We went to work at half past five this morning at the Railroad Bridge putting up trestles. In the afternoon we got reinforcements as Joe Farrins' men helped. Nothing occurred today of any importance. It was cloudy all day.

Wednesday, August 17 1864

We worked at the bridge at Harpers Ferry just about finished it. Farrins' men were up the road about 3 miles, towards Winchester, cutting trees when the guerillas got after them and robbed them of all they had. They took 10 negros along with them and shot one in the arm.

Thursday, August 18 1864

We went up the Winchester Road to put up a water tank. We had put one side up when we got orders to pack up and leave for Alexandria. Farrins' men packed up and we went down to the station but then the orders were countermanded⁵³ so we pitched tents again. There was rain this morning.

⁵³ Revoked.

Friday, August 19 1864

We camped up the Winchester Railroad and then went up the road and tore up the old track and put down a new one. We got as far as Hall Town. We got a map of Greene County as we came back. The colored men are afraid of the guerillas. It was raining all day, no news.

Saturday, August 20 1864

We went up the road up towards Hall Town and took up the rails. In the afternoon we went to work on a bridge below our camp. We put on stringers then fetched a load of planks and our rations of beef and brought them along to the camp. It was raining nearly all day.

Sunday, August 21 1864

We worked at the bridge and track. There was an attack⁵⁴ on Sheridan's men above Charleston from dinner time until late this evening. The report is that our men are falling back. The fight is about 9 miles off, cannonadry was heard plainly.

Monday, August 22 1864

I got up and had breakfast then we received orders to pack up and leave for Washington. We left Harpers Ferry at 8 o'clock and arrived at the Relay House at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. We left there at 12 o'clock at night and arrived in Washington the next morning. There was rain today.

⁵⁴ This is likely a skirmish leading up to the Third Battle of Winchester.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_Battle_of_Winchester

Tuesday, August 23 1864

We arrived in Washington this morning and pitched our tents on Maryland Avenue then went to work at the trough. A steam boat came in and broke it while it was closed. Charles Leuberg was struck with a brace while working. No news of any importance.

Wednesday, August 24 1864

I got up this morning at 4 o'clock and went to work at the trough and the long bridge in Washington. We finished it this evening. Nothing new of any importance, the weather today was warm.

Thursday, August 25 1864

We worked at the long bridge in Washington. Nothing new of any importance, the weather today was rather warm.

Friday, August 26 1864

We worked at the long bridge until dinner. Then we went to work at the 8th Street Wharf in Washington. Nothing new of any importance. The weather today was moderate. I received a letter from my wife today.

Saturday, August 27 1864

We worked at the 8th Street Wharf in Washington unloading a barge of lumber. One of the new men was unlucky and he fell in and cut his lower lip from his chin clean up. No news of any importance.

Sunday, August 28 1864

We camped at the Long Bridge on Maryland Avenue. No work today so we loafed about camp and walked around. No news. The weather is quite pleasant today. I wrote a letter to my sister today.

Monday, August 29 1864.

We worked at the 8th Street Wharf in Washington getting out stringers and putting them down. The weather is quite pleasant today, no news.

Tuesday, August 30 1864

We worked at the 8th Street Wharf in Washington until dinner, then got orders to pack our traps and go to Alexandria. We arrived in Alexandria and went to the wharf to go to City Point. We put our things on the dock and at 8 o'clock loaded them onto the steamer John Warner then left at about 9 o'clock this evening.

Wednesday, August 31 1864

Slept first rate⁵⁵ on the boat last night and woke up at sunrise just opposite Point Lookout. At noon we passed Fortress Monroe and by 10 o'clock in the evening landed at City Point. We unloaded our things and loaded them on the cars to go down the road 5 miles in the morning.

⁵⁵ "First Rate" refers to the highest class of quarters on a ship, similar to first class on a plane.

Thursday, September 1 1864

We slept in the cars last night at City Point then got up and went down the road about 3 miles from Petersburg. Our goal was to build a road⁵⁶ from the road to Petersburg to the Weldon Road. We pitched camp and then went out to cut ties for the road.

Friday, September 2 1864

We went out on the new road and cut ties until dinner, then put up a chipping over a ravine. The rebs and our men have had a brush everyday, we are within their reach.

Saturday, September 3 1864

We built a cribbing on the road from the City Point Road to the Weldon Road. We worked until dark opposite Petersburg, about one mile off. We are getting done pretty fast. Cannonading every night and tonight we watched the shells.

Sunday, September 4 1864

We got up and packed our traps and moved with teams out towards the Weldon Road about 5 miles from where we camped. We are close to our front, the fortifications are about a half mile off. This afternoon we put up a bridge across a ravine.

⁵⁶ Alfred usually uses the term road to refer to both pedestrian/horse paths as well as railroad tracks, which can make some entries confusing.

Monday, September 5 1864

The report is that Atlanta was taken⁵⁷. We worked at the bridge across the ravine opposite our tents and finished at dinner, then cleared the road. Today the ties got to one of our forts until night where the road seemed close by. The weather is fine. Heavy shelling last night, the boys were all frightened as they watched the shells.

Tuesday, September 6 1864

Went down the road to fill up and tamp. The engine ran up to our camp this evening. The rebs had great joy last night as they got the news that they took Washington.⁵⁸ Firing going on all the time, and a heavy thunderstorm last night with rain all day

Wednesday, September 7 1864

We worked on the road beyond our camp filling up track. An engine was fired upon today by the rebs, four shots, on the new road. The rebs seem to be taking the fact that Atlanta was taken very hard. The weather today was fine.

Thursday, September 8 1864

We worked at the Railroad tamping and filling up. We are about 2 miles from the Weldon Road.

There is cannonading in the front. The weather today was fine with rain towards evening.

⁵⁷ Here Alfred is referring to the capture of Atlanta by Union forces.

⁵⁸ While the Confederate Army did not actually take Washington, the forces under General Jubal Early had a false sense of excitement due to perceived cowardice of Union General Sheridan in attacking their position. <https://www.nps.gov/cebe/learn/news/upload/Washington-Attacked-Sentinel-FINAL.pdf>.

Friday, September 9 1864

We filled up the track at the new road from City Point Road to the Weldon Road. Heavy cannonading and musketry was heard today. The train is fired upon every time it goes up the road but it has not been struck yet. It struck a soldier and took his head off today with one of the cannon balls.

Saturday, September 10 1864

We worked on the new road from the City Point Road to Weldon Road. We cleared the brush and stumps then reached Weldon Road this evening at the place they call the Yellow House.⁵⁹ came to see us, they are camped here.

Sunday, September 11 1864

We filled up the track of the new road out near Weldon Road. Charles Williamson is camped right alongside the road. I went over and found him asleep. I saw General Warren yesterday. Our men took the Rebs front picket line and there was firing all last night. Today is quiet and pleasant.

Monday, September 12 1864

We filled up the track of the new road from City Point to Weldon Road. Nothing new of any importance. There are pickets and artillery firing constantly. Our men put up the rifle pit just last night where they captured the other day. I got paid for June and July.

⁵⁹ Alfred lists numerous names in this entry, but they are written too near one another to be read.

Tuesday, September 13 1864

We worked on the new Railroad filling up. Pickets and cannons firing all day. The rebs fire at the train every day. Jeremiah Minder was here to see us today. After supper we were taken out to throw up breastworks⁶⁰ to support the trains. The whole construction corps was working on it.

Wednesday, September 14 1864

I worked all last night digging brestworks to keep the rebs from firing on the train, which is about a half mile long. We worked all night but were not shelled. We laid over today to take a rest so I went to see the ruins of that exploded fort, which is about 10 miles below our camp. I saw the enemy's forts.

Thursday, September 15 1864

We worked all last night throwing up breastworks on the new road to keep the rebs from firing on the train, then rested this morning until dinner. We went out in the afternoon to fill up the road. A fight is expected tomorrow or the next day, the weather is fine.

Friday, September 16 1864

I worked at the breastworks on the new road. There was heavy cannonading this afternoon, the shells burst near our breastworks. Today the rebs attempted a charge on the Weldon Road but were driven back with heavy losses. The weather today was fine.

⁶⁰ Breastwork refers to a temporary defensive structure used to protect a target.

Saturday, September 17 1864

We worked at the breastworks until dinner. I have not been feeling well for some time, as such I did not work in the afternoon. Part of the army is constantly moving and the pickets are firing all the time day and night. The cannonballs of the rebs have been flying through our camp pretty thick. One of Farrins' men was wounded in the shoulder last night while he was sleeping.

Sunday, September 18 1864

I was sick today, all the boys that feel well are at work but there are a great many sick. I took a walk out to Weldon Road and saw all the Hamburg Boys⁶¹. We had a fine time, we got 2 canteens of whiskey and drank together until 2 o'clock then I went home.

Monday, September 19 1864

I went to work at the breastworks as usual, opposite the fort which General Burnside's blew up⁶². The shells were bursting pretty freely opposite us about 3 squares. Nothing new, the weather today was fine.

Tuesday, September 20 1864

⁶¹ Alfred writes a list of names in this entry, but they are unable to be read.

⁶² This is most likely a reference to the Battle of the Crater.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Crater.

We worked at the breastworks as usual, the shells were flying pretty fast below us and one landed quite near us. No news of any consequence. The weather today was fine.

Wednesday September 21 1864

Worked at the breastworks until dinner, then went down the road to Reams Station to fill up the track. I went home at five o'clock. There was heavy firing this morning, the whole lines fired a salute on account of General Sheridan's victory⁶³ in the Shenandoah Valley.

Thursday, September 22 1864

We worked on the road tamping up towards Reams Station. No news of any consequence. The day was cloudy with rain last night.

Friday, September 23 1864

We worked on the track filling up, nothing new of any importance. The weather today was fine. Jake Friterhoh has gone to City Point as he is sick. James Francis is here with us tonight. C. Williamson was also here today.

Saturday, September 24 1864

On the James River.

⁶³ The Valley Campaigns of 1864 were taking place throughout the year, in the Shenandoah Valley near where Alfred was stationed at this time.

Sunday, September 25 1864

In the mouth of the Rappahannock.

We left City Point at 11am and arrived at Fort Monroe by dusk. There was a heavy gail so we anchored until this morning then started up the bay for Alexandria. The storm being too heavy we ran into the Rappahannock. We are now following a gunboat back to the lighthouse to anchor for the night, it is now 3 o'clock. Friederich is very sick today.

Monday, September 26 1864.

Alexandria, Virginia.

We left the Rappahannock at about 5pm yesterday. The storm was pretty much over so we headed for the Chesapeake Bay. We sailed all night and this morning we landed safe at Alexandria. There we loaded our traps aboard the cars and are awaiting orders to go out the Manassas Road. The weather is fine.

Tuesday, September 27 1864

⁶⁴ This entry is unable to be deciphered.

We loafed about the shanty, still awaiting orders. In the afternoon we went to the wharf and loaded cars with logs. No news of any account. Rober Friederich Bierrman and C. Seaman went home yesterday. The weather is fine.

Wednesday, September 28 1864

We went to work framing water tanks until about 4pm, then I got paid off for August. We then loaded our things and started out on the Orange & Alexandria Railroad. We went out about six miles. The grap⁶⁵ being on the track so the engine could not pull the train further, therefore we went back to Alexandria again and stopped until morning. We slept on top of the cars.

Thursday, September 29 1864

Took 3 engines and tried the trip over, got to Accotink Creek Bridge and put that up. Then went to Popes Head Run Number 1 and put that up. Then we went to Number 2 and put that up. Then we took a rest for the night in the rain on top of the cars. Our beds are all wet and we are down to only two meals a day. It is pretty rough.

Friday, September 30 1864

⁶⁵ Alfred clearly writes "grap", which is likely slang. The meaning of which is unknown.

We started for Popes Head Run Number 3 and put that up, then took breakfast at 11am. Then we started for Number 4 and put that up, and then went up to Bull Run and had supper. Then we went to rest on our wet beds again, on top of and under the cars. It has been raining all day and night. It is pretty hard on the natives.

Saturday, October 1 1864

Went to work at the Bull Run Bridge took breakfast at 9 am and then went to work again.

Finished the Bridge till 1 pm and run down to Broad Run and put that up till dark. Then took our supper in the rain and mud, no shelter got a car to sleep in tonight

Sunday, October 2 1864

Started from Broad Run to Kettle Run put that up till 10 AM and then took breakfast. Then went down the Road to the Rappahannock River. Then run back to Warrington Junction till 10 pm and took supper then run to Manassas Junction and laid over for the night

Monday, October 3 1864

We had breakfast and started out on the Manassas Road. We cleared the road of grap, about 1 mile out, then walked back to the junction again and ate supper. I have been very hungry at only 2 meals a day. The boys all help themselves to hogs, calves, and chickens.

Tuesday, October 4 1864

We started out on the road with the construction train. We went up the road about 25 miles then stopped in the woods overnight. We are plundering everything as we go along, pigs, chickens, calves and grapes are abundant around us.

Wednesday, October 5 1864

We started out after breakfast and changed cars. We got sleeping cars and kitchen cars, so we are living comfortably for now. We stopped at Salem and found the depot burning as we arrived. The guerillas set it on fire this morning. There are guerillas all around. There was a battle today.

Thursday, October 6 1864

We stopped at Beidmont last evening and put up a bridge. We were stopped all night as the guerillas were getting worse. We even had a little fight last evening with them. We were called up last night to build rifle pits to defend ourselves and the train. There was heavy cannonading last evening down the road a bit. The guerillas have now surrounded us and they have turned 4 pieces of artillery towards us and begun firing away.

Friday, October 7 1864

There is a great panic as the rebs have surrounded us entirely and burned the bridges behind us and ahead. They are within a rifle shot from us. They placed their artillery in range to take the

train but this morning they moved it to ⁶⁶. Our men charged at them and drove them off last night. We built rifle pits all last night and left that place on a retreat at 11 pm today.

Saturday, October 8 1864

On our retreat yesterday the rebs burned our bridge and tore up the track wherever they had a good position. They were after us and firing at us all the time. At Salem our men had the height advantage so they checked them. We reached White Plains by dusk yesterday. Today we cut wood for the engine and loafed till further orders.

Sunday, October 9 1864

White Plains, Virginia.

We received reinforcements last night and this morning we started out the road again. At Joes Bridge we severed the little ones and got as far as Bictmont⁶⁷. Then we ran back to Recterton to stop overnight. We had no trouble with the rebs today. There was heavy frost today.

Monday, October 10 1864

⁶⁶ The location Alfred mentions here is too small to be read.

⁶⁷ Alfred writes "Bictmont" as if it is the name of a place, but it may be slang as there is no reference to anywhere in Virginia with that name.

We went up the road today to Beidmont⁶⁸ and part of the gang put up a small bridge and others cut wood for the engines. I was out foraging and got 3 bags of apples, 1 pig and 1 young heifer. Then I started butchering and got all the meat butchered by nightfall. Today the rebs took up rails from the track and smashed up a whole train engine.

Tuesday, October 11 1864

Beidmont, Virginia.

We put up a frame for a water tank then went down the road below Salem to where the wreck of the train was. Our intention is to put up a stockade where the pickets stand. There are two engines all smashed and the whole train is destroyed. The names of the engines were Union and Minot.

Wednesday, October 12 1864

Beidmont, Virginia.

We put up a small bridge about a half mile above the bridge then laid track until night. The soldiers are busy butchering as they have plenty of fowl and beef. No news of any importance. The cavalry had a pretty good fight at White Plains where they fought hand to hand⁶⁹.

Thursday, October 13 1864

⁶⁸ Alfred writes "Beidmont", which is possibly a misspelling of Piedmont, in reference to the West Virginia town.

⁶⁹ This is likely referring to the Battle of Tom's Brook.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Tom%27s_Brook.

We left Beidmont at about 10 in the morning when orders came to stop work on the bridge and load our tools. We came to Rectortown and cleared away brush and trees from the side of the track so that the pickets have full view of the rebs.

Friday, October 14 1864

Rectortown, Virginia.

I cut wood for the engines until dinner, then dug a foundation for a turntable a piece above the village. The report today is that the cavalry has captured Mosby's⁷⁰ Artillery, 4 pieces, harnesses and casings. All 9 prisoners are on the mountain

Saturday, October 15 1864

We worked at the turntable a little way above Rectortown. The report from yesterday that Mosby's artillery was captured is true, they captured 4 pieces, harnesses, casings and 9 prisoners. They brought them down today to take Alexandria. Gen. Sheridan came to this place to pay a visit to Gen. Augur⁷¹.

Sunday, October 16 1864

⁷⁰ When Alfred writes "Mosby", he is likely referring to Mosby's Rangers, an unofficial Confederate raiding party.

⁷¹ Here Alfred is referring to Christopher C Augur, one of the lesser known Union commanders.

We worked at the turntable today and got it pretty near finished. It turned two engines today, the last turned was W.H. Whiton and Spast. Nothing new of any importance, the weather today was fine.

Monday, October 17 1864

Rectortown, Virginia

We worked out in the woods along the Railroad felling trees and clearing brush. Nothing new today of any importance. I butchered a sheep today.

Tuesday, October 18 1864

Rectortown, Virginia

We cut down the woods along the Railroad between Rectorton and Salem, no news of any importance. The boys have killed two steers⁷² today.

Wednesday, October 19 1864

Rectortown, Virginia

We cut down the woods along the Railroad between Rectortown and Salem. No news, only there has been heavy cannonading up in Manassas all day. The boys have been out raiding for apples.

Thursday, October 20 1864

Rectortown, Virginia

⁷² A steer is a young cow raised for meat.

We cut timber along the Railroad between Rectortown and Salem. The report came that Sheridan captured 40 guns and 2000 prisoners yesterday at Manassas. We recieved orders this evening to pack up and go to Alexandria tonight. The weather is fine.

Friday, October 21 1864

Alexandria, Virginia

Left Rectortown last evening for Alexandria and arrived here at about 1 o'clock last night. We put our things in the shanty today, then went out to Aquiank Bridge on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad and put up a bend 12 miles from Alexandria.

Saturday, October 22 1864

We went to work building a skiff today. While the other boys are training trestles. No news of any importance, the weather is fine.

Sunday, October 23 1864

A day of rest at last. Today we are not at work so I went to walk and ⁷³

Monday, October, 24 1864

Alexandria, Virginia

I went to work at a skiff while the rest of the boys are framing timber. No news of any importance today. A few guerillas were brought in. The weather today was fine.

Tuesday, October 25 1864

⁷³ Part of this entry is too faded to read.

Alexandria, Virginia

I worked at the skiff as before. The news today is that the rebs were badly beaten in Kansas and entirely routed. No further news of any importance. I received an advently letter from my sister, the weather was fine today.

Wednesday, October 26 1864

I worked building the skiff today as usual, and finished the carpenter work for it. No news. Got a letter from my wife today from Philadelphia. The weather is beautiful.

Thursday, October 27 1864

I worked at the skiff, I corked, pitched, and painted it. I got it finished by nighttime. No news of any consequence, the weather is cloudy.

Friday, October 28 1864

I went to work framing timber with the rest of the boys. No news of any importance. The weather is clear today, we had rain last night.

Saturday, October 29 1864

I worked in the bridge shed and commenced work on another skiff. No news of any importance, the weather is fine.

Sunday, October 30 1864

No work today so I am packing up my box to go home. Orders came at dinner for the gang to go to Harpers Ferry while the 102 concluded to go home. I packed my things to start in the morning while the rest packed theirs on the cars bound for Harpers Ferry.

Monday, October 31 1864

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

I sent my chest down to the express office. I had breakfast in the market house then started for Washington. I left Washington at 11 am for Philadelphia and arrived there at about 6 pm. Then I took the streetcars up to 15th Street in Callowhill then walked to my sister's house.

Tuesday, November 1 1864

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

I walked around Philadelphia drinking lager and enjoying myself as best as I could. I went to see Seidel and we made plans to go to the theater.

Wednesday, November 2 1864

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

I walked around Philadelphia and had a glass of beer. In the evening I went to the Chestnut Theater accompanied by my wife and Seidel and ⁷⁴. East Lynne was the play this evening.

⁷⁴ The name Alfred writes here is too faded to be read.

Thursday, November 3 1864

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

I took care of the children in the morning while my wife and sister went out shopping. In the afternoon I went to see my aunt and cousin with my wife and sister. We had supper then returned home.

Friday, November 4 1864

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

We walked around Oyster Wharf until dinner then went back to my sister's house and got ready to start for Birdsboro. I left Philadelphia in the afternoon and arrived in Birdsboro at dusk and stopped overnight. The weather was cloudy with rain today.

Saturday, November 5 1864

75

Sunday, November 6 1864

76

Monday, November 7 1864

Geo K Seaman for Lo 1 day labor at tryons house 1.85 ⁷⁷

⁷⁵ This entry has been scribbled out and covered up with mathematical equations.

⁷⁶ This entry has been scribbled out and covered up with mathematical equations.

⁷⁷ Most of this entry has been scribbled out and covered up with mathematical equations.

The entries for November 8 - 13 are missing.

The entries for November 14 - 19 are used for math equations and tracking of pay for April and May of 1864.

The entries for November 20 - December 13 are missing.

The entries for December 14 - 19 are used for math and are mostly scribbled out or erased.

The first 2 of 4 Memoranda entries are used for math or scribbled out / erased.

Memoranda. **(Final Page, Front)**

Alexandria, Virginia. June 12, 1864.

Today while walking around town we came to Christ Church and found the grave of Sarah Pearce. Daughter of William and Mary Pearce of Hart County who departed her life on October 13th 1794 aged 118 years.

Memoranda **(Final Page, Back)**

Alexandria, Virginia. June 7th, 1864

The following I copied from a tombstone as I have come across while taking a walk.

To the memory of a Female Stranger

Whose mental sufferings terminated on the 4th day of October 1816

Aged 23 years and 8 months

This stone was placed here by her disconsolate Husband in whose arms she sighed out her latest
breath and who under god did his utmost even to sooth the cold dead ear of death.

How loved how valued once avails thee not

To whom related or by whom begot

A heap of dust alone remains of thee

Tis all thou art! And all the proud shall be

To him gave all the prophets witness that through his name whosoever believes in him shall
receive remission of sins

Acts, 10th chapter, 43rd verse

Alfred W. Shollenberger

Hamburg, Berks County, Pennsylvania.