
Introduction
Rachel Ward and David Walters married on Dec. 16, 1860—families had migrated from Ohio to northwestern Indiana; four Walters brothers enlisted from Cass County; sees David motivated by patriotism; David was somewhat unusual as a married man who served from this part of the country; political conflict between Morton and the legislature; great conflict caused by the draft; Isaac, 20th Indiana Infantry; David, 5th Indiana Cavalry; briefly describes service of each brother’s unit; John Wesley Walters served with 46th Indiana regiment; sometimes omitted battle details in letters;
Rachel received letters from the brothers and shared the news; --affection for husband, Christianity; young Willard one year old when father David joined the army; sought to promote Christian morality in the family; notes care in delivering and later preserving the letters—the editors very much interested in significance and meaning Civil War correspondence; letters divided almost equally between Rachel and two of the brothers; Importance of the postal network—good discussion of antebellum postal changes and use of stamps; soldiers could send letters without stamps but then the recipient had to pay; notes various colored inks; notes conditions of letter=writing, p. 16 Reactions to sketchy and delayed correspondence

Chapter Two 1861-1862—good contextual introductions to each section of letters Isaac Walter enlisted first, Co. F, 20th Indiana, July 22, 1861 John Wesley Walters enlisted on November 20, 1861, Co. I, 46th Indiana August 1862==Eli Walters enlisted in same company as Isaac August 1862 David Walters enlisted in Co. I, 5th Indiana Cavalry—Rachel did not want him to join the regulars Discussion of how new troops were brought into the army, p. 25
Would be better to have the notes with the letters rather than as chapter endnotes; notes keep track of the military context Fort Hatteras—Outer Banks of N.C., fever, 26 Regiment very sickly, one officer said they had the worst place in the world, 26 Isaac would like to have shot a captured rebel brought into Fort Monroe, 27 Zollicoffer’s death, gone to his just reward, 27 Newport News, 28 Pickets on both sides in full view of each other, 28 Isaac’s pictures shows soldiering agrees with him, 28 Isaac longs to see his brother and sister, 29
General Mansfield, troop review, 29 Arkansas, Fort Pillow battle, 33 Confederate prisoners say the war can’t last long, 33 Capture of Norfolk by Federals, fast moving developments, Isaac describes this 35 Tired of a war not conduct as it should be, 36 Description of wounded from the Seven Days, nor properly cared for, 36 Would rather die than be treated as the wounded are treated here, not enough surgeons, 36-37
Does not understand these movements by McClellan, but officers express great confidence in him—this all from Isaac 37
Want to do everything possible to take Richmond, laying under protection of gunboats, 37
David on train ride and about to be mustered in, 39
Tells wife to take good care of son and dog, 39
Cavalry, horses and arms, 41
Expecting furlough tells Rachel to do the best she can, 41
Describes a sick soldier, 41
David wants Rachel to move in with his father, 41
Longs to come home for her embraces and kisses, 42
Sending money home, 43
Describes Oliver Morton as a fine looking gentleman, 43
Wives coming to camp in Indianapolis, 43
Brief hurried note about a soldier in hospital and plans to come home, 45
Rachel writes with news of son cutting teeth, 46
Rachel writes of news of people at home and mentions draft, 46
Rachel writes that she does not want him to join the regulars, badly wants him to come home, 48
Rachel tells of corn and hogs and the help she received, 48
She will knit him mittens, 48
Little son can “hurrah for Lincoln” and play a children’s game, 48
Isaac writes of illness and getting better, 48
Isaac thinks David should have stayed home with Rachel rather than enlisting, should have taken care of his family rather than joining the army, 50
Isaac would just leave stay in Falmouth for the winter (December 1, 1862) had already been in enough battles, this right before Fredericksburg, 50
Favors a compromise because war will not be settled by force of arms, 50
Christmas, 52
Rising Sun, Indiana, 5th Cavalry camp, citizens bring in things for the sick, 52
Home guard, 52
Chapter 3 1863
Eli returned home on medical discharge—rheumatism
Rachel recounts details of illness and family news, 64
Introductions provide synopsis of events affecting the Walters and highlights from the letters
Much context for 1863—64-69
Isaac talks about soldier health but does not give details of the battle of Fredericksburg in January 6, 1863 because assumes she has already received them but brags about the brigade in the battle, 70
David begins letter in prayerful tone and hopes war will soon be over, 72
Visit of quartermaster-clothes, 72
No pay yet, 72
Could hardly make out her letter on such thin paper, 73
He is frustrated that he sends money and she does not pick it up, 73
Glasgow, Kentucky camp, no place for a good woman, 73
Rather contemptuous of backwoods Kentuckians, 73
Solder knows little about a general’s movements, these letters offer little comment on military movements, 74
Rachel, excuse for not answering his letter sooner, 75
She is having trouble getting the money he sent, 75
Tells him move about the death of his mother—collapsed from apoplexy, 75
Buried quickly, 75-76
Hope to meet her in heaven, 76
Wishes she was with David at his guard post, 76
Religious meeting, two joined the church, 77
Rumor that Wesley was badly wounded at Vicksburg and likely dead, 77
Comments on miniatures of David that she received, 77
Wesley reports on Vicksburg campaign, many details, wounded and in Memphis hospital, 78-79
Rachel rejoices at David’s religious efforts, 80
Promises to do better to get the money he sends, 80
News of Wesley’s wounding, 81
Rachel reports on draft, and says there are many secesh in Fulton County, 81
Rachel thinks more of David then ever before and wants him to grow in grace, 82
Meigs County, Ohio, Fighting with John Hunt Morgan, thinks Confederates are played out, 84
David says he is still trying to lead a Christian life, 84
Exchanging horses in Louisville, 87
David frustrated by orders to move that were then countermanded, 88
David thinks the war will not last much longer and he will come home to stay, 88
Proud of his work going after Morgan, 88
A number of buildings burned in Lebanon, Kentucky, 88
Three Confederate citizens hanged after Morgan passed through, 88
David has marched 1000 miles, 89
Isaac writes an entire long first paragraph on letter received or sent or not, 90
Isaac wishes Morgan would have been killed rather than captured, 90
Army is a poor place for a sick man, 90
Good health of cavalry regiment, David is driving a team, 93
John Wesley Walters, in Memphis guarding trains, 95
David does not care to answer his letters, 95
Satisfied in Memphis and with the captain, 95
Brandy Station, could get no paper or ink, 97
Rappahannock station, brisk fight, regiment was lucky, 98-99
Marching orders, countermanded when it rained, 98
Isaac always feels good when his stomach is full, 98
Longs to be among friends and family again, 98
Has stood army service for two years and can stand it for a few months longer, never asked for a furlough, 98
Not enough timber for army in winter and will have to move, near Brandy Station, 99
Rachel, long without word from David, 101
Excitement about the draft at home, bounty, 101
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David in the cavalry is doing infantry duty, has been in 25 engagements but has escaped so far, 117
Rachel reports weighing 130 pounds, son has been ill, 118
Tells of a woman trying to do what is right, comes to religious meeting and does not dance, 118
Brief letter from Cumberland Gap, 119
Rachel does not want David to reenlist the way Isaac did, 120
School teaching, 120
Got miniature taken of herself and son Willie, 120
Badly misses her husband and hopes that he may grow in grace, 121
David ordered to Nashville soon to be active service, 122
Wishes her success with her school, 122—many one sentence comments on many things
Needs a coat, 123
Feels sorry for widow Phebe, 123
Rachel received ring from David but can only wear it on little finger, 124—might be more interesting for reading than research, this set of letters
Bad roads, school not very full, 125-26
Would like teaching school but hates to be away from son Willie, 126
Writing while in scout, Winchester, Kentucky, enforcing draft, 127
Talks of a tract, 128
Still would like her school fuller, 128
More details about his overcoat, 128
She has got a new cloak and hat and tells him the price, reluctant to wear them because soldier's wives had reputation for spending all that their husbands send them, 128
Tells of a man remarrying when his wife was only dead three months, 129
David writes about photo of Rachel and their son Willie, 130
David tells her to “Clothe yourself well and not listen to every shit ass,” 130
Her picture suggest that she is not well and worrying too much, 131
Rachel could not stand it if she did not receive his letters, 132
Pulaski County, Indiana, mud has dried so she can get about, does not want to spend much money on clothing, 132
Teaching and getting more students, 132, 134
Call for 21,000 men from Indiana for 100 days, 133
Helping “pap” with corn, 134
Willie says that Pa is down in Dixie fighting rebels, 134
Isaac in hospital in Washington with pneumonia, 134
Praises his “manly” photograph, 135
Favorable war news, war cannot last much longer, May 1864, 135
David Walters captured at battle of Resaca, letter from a sergeant in his company, praises David as a “good and brave soldier,” 136-37
Rachel writes at some length about wanting to see and praying that his life may be spared, 138
Her school not very full because children are kept at home tending to the corn, 138
She asks about his stamp supply, 138-39
Three weeks since she has heard from him, 140
Boarding at various places while teaching school, 140
Every time she goes home, Willie has a new song to sing, 140
Isaac has trouble writing to everyone and seeing everyone when he was home, 141
Camp near Cold Harbor; more night than day fighting, 141
Notes some soldier death in Overland Campaign, 141
Isaac talks about death of brother John Wesley Walters, died in Indiana, 142
Fighting almost every day, Isaac, heavy losses in regiment, 143
Digging for water, 143
Siege of Petersburg, 143
Sorry that Rachel has not heard from David, a prisoner, 144
Isaac has been sick with a severe cough but opposes taking medicine in the army, 145
November 1864, Rachel still hears nothing from prisoner husband, David, 145
Tells her to bear it with “Christian fortitude,” 145
War will soon be over; many Confederate desertions, 145
Indiana draft, Copperheads drafted, 147
Thinks conscripts will desert, 147
Copperheads probably mad about election results, 147
Raid on Weldon railroad, destroying corn, 148
Glorious news of capture of Savannah, 148
Late war and postwar letters, 157ff
Interesting material on missing soldiers office, 161
Rachel died in 1868 shortly after receiving a widow’s pension, 161
Isaac sick for two weeks with fever, 163
Still no word from David, January 1865, 163
Gloomy New Years in the mud, 163
Isaac, finally heard from David, February 1865, 165
Thinks of poor prisoners suffering and death might be preferable, 165-66
Man had five bullet wounds from raid on Weldon railroad but is getting well, guerrillas, 165
Isaac appreciates having his life spared during the war, 166
Terrible news about David’s death while a prisoner, 166
Hope he is in heaven and we will meet again, 166
Terrrible news of Lincoln assassination, 166-67
Isaac still grieving over David’s death, 168
Hard march to Washington, some died along the way, 168
Wishes Rachel was there to witness the final troop review, 168
John S. Louderback reports that David died in a Rebel prison about February 5, 172
David had changed was trying to lead a Christian life, she should get a pension, 172
Rachel asks about the pension and back pay, 173
Rachel’s sister in despair as well, 179
A member of Co. I reported see David Walters dead near prison gate in Florence SC, 181
Information from Clara Barton that only confirms the wounding, 182
Date of death at Florence, February 5, 1865, 184
Challenges of determining why and when David Walters died, 196
Thinks David likely buried near prison camp at Florence, 197