



A portrait of Thomas Winton Fisher by Terry Lawrence, from a tintype ca. 1870.

Part II: Thomas Winton Fisher, Confederate Soldier and 19th Century Pilgrim

Darlene Brown Simpson

Editors' Note:

In the last issue of *The Smithfield Review*, we published the first half of a collection of letters by Thomas Winton Fisher, a farmer from Wythe County, Virginia, describing his experiences in the Civil War during the year following his 1862 enlistment in the Confederate Army. During this period, Fisher had not only to adjust to his unwanted new life as a soldier, but he also had to endure the death from diphtheria of his young wife and one child. The following letters, which conclude the series, continue his vivid reports on the intensifying hardship and horrors of the war in 1863–65 while expressing his deep concerns for his family back home. Fisher had a talent for providing insights into his innermost thoughts and graphic descriptions of the momentous events that surrounded him — including several battles in which he participated.

Following a short sojourn into Tennessee, Thomas and fellow soldiers rejoiced as they returned to their beloved Virginia in the final letter in Volume III (dated June 29, 1863).

V. Moving Toward the Heat of Battle

Early in July, 1863, orders were received to march with Wharton's Brigade to the Shenandoah Valley.

Staunton, Augusta, Co., Va.

July 13, 1863

Dear Father, Mother and Family:—

I address you all and hope this may find you all as it leaves me, in good health. I suppose you have received the letter I wrote to Sis which I finished last Friday morning just before we reached Glade Springs⁴⁰ and which I brought to the Wytheville Depot and gave to Eva. I kept it in my hand from Mt. Airy⁴¹ to Wytheville thinking

perhaps Sis or Sallie might accidentally be over at the railroad and I would throw it off but I saw nothing of them. I will give you a sketch of our trip this far if I have time before I leave here again and I think I will for it is raining very hard this morning. We rolled out of Glade Springs Depot about 9 o'clock Friday morning having cooked 3 days rations, but nothing new or interesting occurred till we got to Wytheville. Here we saw many of our old friends and relatives. Eva, Sallie and Lizzie were at the depot, but goodbye must be said, as it were, in the same breath with howdy do and we were off again. At Dublin we found Col. Clark's Battalion which came on with us. And by the way you can tell Robert Fry's wife if you should see her that I saw him and he is well and hearty. We got to Central Depot about sundown where I saw Col. Whorton⁴² kiss his fair lady and bid her farewell. Shortly after we left Central I went to sleep and knew nothing more till day light where I awoke at Forrest Depot 10 miles from Lynchburg.

After waiting for the trains (mail and freight) to come up from Lynchburg we came on to that place. I never was much more surprised than I was when I got to Lynchburg. I had formed an opinion of what sort of a place it was. I thought it was a beautiful place, nice County and a desirable place anyway. But the truth of the matter is, it is one of the roughest places I have ever seen (home not excepted.) The city is on a hill which is equally as high and rough as the one there at home. And nothing can be seen from where I was but rugged river bluffs covered with small shrubs mostly pine. Regardless of its roughness there are a great many fine buildings and extensive manufacturing establishments there. Here we exchanged cars and moved our baggage from the Va., and Tenn., cars to the Orange and Alexandria cars. We then traveled a Northeast course till we got to Charlottesville a distance of 60 miles. We got to see the canal boats running on the James river at this place. We left Lynchburg about eleven o'clock Saturday morning and came through the two counties of Nelson and Amherst or rather Amherst and Nelson. They are the poorest counties I ever saw, the railroad is nothing but a cut and a fill all the way through these two counties. The timber is small and mostly pine thicket. But of all the dew berries I ever saw, the fields were black with them and when the train would stop to get water or wood we boys bounced off and eat berries and when the bell would ring to start, such scrambling to get on you never saw. Albemarle is a good county and crops looked well. We arrived at Charlottesville about 10 o'clock Sunday morning, it is the handsomest place I have seen yet.

The first thing that comes into view as you near the City is the dome of the University of Va. I was on top of the cars when I got there and I thought it the most sublime scenery I have ever witnessed. Here we changed cars again from the Orange and Alexandria Railroad to the Covington and Ohio Railroad. The country is very fine when you first leave Charlottesville coming this way, but its not long till you come in sight of the Blue Ridge. A vast tunnel through this nearly a mile long. It is a magnificent structure and the largest in Va. As soon as you get out of the mountains you come to a beautiful little village called Waynesboro. It is about as large as Marion, Va. The next station was Fishersville, but we did not stop here. We are on our way now to Winchester, 92 miles distance from here and we will take it afoot. From there we think we will go to Gen. Lee's Army in Md.

Suffer no uneasiness about me. I will try to be prepared for any emergencies. I have no more news of importance. You can hear as much there as here. We are all well and in a fine country now, and in good spirits. We are expecting soon to be in a fight with the Yankees. Write to me as soon as you get this and direct as follows:

Thomas W. Fisher.
Care of Capt. Yonce, Co. C
51st Regt., Staunton, Va.⁴³

Rockingham County Va.

Saturday evening July 18, 1863

Dear Father being encamped near (or I might say at) a post office I thought I would write you a few lines to let you know where I am and what we are doing. We are on the march for Staunton to Winchester. We left the former place last Thursday morning and came on the mcadimised⁴⁴ road we only marched 13 miles that day and passed a little village called Mt. Sidney a pretty place but small. Next day which was yesterday we marched 14 miles I seen a good deal it was a very exciting day with us we passed through a small town or village called Crawford in this Co. and shortly after passing through the town we met 500 yankees I tell you they were a set of rough looking coustomers. It is no use for people to talk to me about our men being ragged for those Yankees were as ragged as any of our men I ever saw and a great many of them barefooted. There was a string of them near a mile long they were apart of what Gen Lee captured at Gettysburg Pa. About 5 or 6 miles further we came to Harisonburg county seat of this county it is a very old but handsome town and some larger than Wytheville. The people seemed to fancy our Regt.

very much and especially the band which played as we passed through. I heard such remarks as these, "that's a splendid band." Thats the largest Regt. I ever saw." It marches beautifully." It's the first I ever saw march in two ranks" Wonder if they were ever in a fight." There is more Hospitality and kindness among these people here in the valley of Va. than any where I have been since I joined the army. Well we camped last night 3 or 4 miles this side of town and from there we came here this morning only marching 10 miles today. We are now 37 miles from Staunton 55 from Winchester. We are camped 4 miles from the line between this and Shenandoah Co. The names of these places caused me to think of Grandpa Fisher⁴⁵ is this Rockinham and Shenandoah Co the same as he used to talk of. There is a little town 8 miles from here called New Market he used to talk about. My sheet is most full. I must close. This leaves me well and ready to sit down to help devour a "big dew berry pie" which we made. Hope this will find you all well and hearty.

I remain as ever your devoted son.

Thos. W. Fisher.⁴⁶

Camp Fishers Hill,
Shenandoah County, Va.

July 29th, 1863.

Dear Sister:

This leaves me well but I get lonesome some times. So you have been asking me to write about my early school days and as I have time now I will do so.

In the year 1846 or 47 a Mr. James B. Johnson of North Carolina came into the neighborhood and made up a school to be taught in an old house on Cripple Creek on the Ewing place. I was then 9 or 10 years old. Father subscribed for me to go to school. It was some 3 miles to the school house from where we lived and I was a sort of coward and did not like to go by myself so father made arrangements for cousin Judith Seagle to board at our house and go with me to school. Well by and by the day came on which the school was to commence and father went with us the first day to show us the way. He took a hatchet and marked some trees through the woods a nearer way. When we got to the school house father stayed with us awhile but I being young and foolish I took a crying spell when he left. Mr. Johnson petted me up and I soon became very much attached to

him. After I became acquainted with the boys and my teacher I got along fine and learned fast. I liked them all. Sidney Painter and Robert Gleaves were the largest boys that went to school. Cousin Juda went with me awhile. She then went home and cousin Henry came to go with me. I reckon while life lasts I will remember him. We were great chums. It was almost impossible to make him cry. We used to play (blackman) at school and I have seen the large boys run over him, throw him down but he would never cry a bit but up he would go again. I went that session with cousin Henry and went several other sessions to the same teacher afterwards but by myself. In the winter of 1848 while I was going to school to Mr. Johnson, two men by the name of Odell and Marrel came into the neighborhood and made a great spread about a geography singing school and how fast their pupils could learn — they could make them perfect in 20 days. So they succeeded in getting a school for 10 days and father sent me. I went every day and paid the strictest attention and learned fast “but alas”, the thing was as easy forgotten as learned. I think the Christmas before the geography school commenced, anyhow Johnson was teaching and some of the boys took a notion they would turn him out and make him give us a Christmas treat, some of the boys and myself would not agree to go into it. So when he went to dinner those that were in favor of it penned themselves up in the school house and fastened the door and the rest of us sat down in the yard and when the teacher came from his dinner he asked us what was the matter. We told him the circumstance. He stepped to the door and tried to get in but could not. He then went to the window and inquired what they were acting in that way for. When Frank Gullion (who seemed to be their mouthpiece – the rest of us were scared) told him they wanted a treat of a bushel of apples and a week’s holiday and they would let him in. He finally agreed. So that evening after the close of school he took us all up to his house and gave us all the apples we could eat. The year after he was married to the widow Ewing. The next winter he got the school again and I went but his wife got sick and it was finally the cause of suspending the school. She lingered awhile and died and the school was never recommenced. So we bid each other farewell as teacher and pupil. The memory of my beloved old teacher leaves my heart tender and my eyes damp with a tear. I hope to meet him above.

Thomas W. Fisher⁴⁷

Camp Early,
Shenandoah Co., Va.
July 30, 1863.

My dear parents:—

I am now on picket and I thought I would write to you one time more and see if I could ever hear from home. I have written two letters since I came back and yet I have not had a scratch of a pen since I left Glade Springs Depot. I wrote once at Staunton and once on the road between that place and Winchester. In those two letters I gave you sort of a history of our march and as I commenced I will finish. Saturday 18th, we started out bright and early and marched 14 miles and camped near a little town formerly called Mt. Pleasant, but now Mt. Jackson. I forgot to say that we came through New Market. Monday we layed by and rested which we ought to have done on Sunday. On Tuesday we marched about 19 miles, passed through Woodstock, the county seat of this Co. It is hardly as large as Wytheville and not near as nice a place. On Wednesday we marched again and passed out of Shenandoah through the corner of Warren and into Frederick Co. Next day we went to Winchester which was a very beautiful town about three times as large as Wytheville and no mistake. Here at Winchester, I saw some of the Wythe Greys as they passed through. Lee's army was then coming back out of Maryland and Pennsylvania. There were about twenty Regiments passed through while we were here, which belonged to General Ewls⁴⁸ Corps, besides about 100 pieces of artillery and some ten or twelve thousand Cavalry. Winchester was a boisterous place while I was there. On Friday we fell back to this place which is 20 miles from Winchester and only 2 miles from Strasburg. Our force here is about 4,000 and I think we will give the enemy battle here when they come and I don't think it will be very many days, for we learned there was about 5,000 Yankees at Winchester now. We have 12 or 15 pieces of artillery here and a splendid position, that is why we fell back here, we will not be so easily flanked. I never have wished to be in a fight, but do wish I could have been in that fight at Wytheville. A great many people are very much discouraged and say we had just as well give up for we will be overrun and subjugated anyhow, and I acknowledge the prospects looks more gloomy than it has for some time passed. But if we would gain our independence we must persevere and endure some hardships. We need not expect to be victorious all the while. For my part, I think we had better wait awhile before we give up. We are a ruined people if we give it up now. And if we should hold on 12 months and

then are overrun we will just be the same. But I am not yet very uneasy and still able to fight. I am enjoying good health and doing pretty well on beef and bread. The rest of the boys are well with a few exceptions. I forgot whether I told you Wythe Fisher⁴⁹ was left in the hospital at Staunton sick. I have not heard from him since. I heard with sorrow yesterday of the death of uncle Pete Spangler. I hope this will find you all well. Give my respects to all my friends and neighbors. I have no idea when I will see you all, perhaps never, but let us keep this blessed promise in view that if we are faithful until death we will have a crown of life. I want you all to write sure.

Direct this way:
Thomas W. Fisher,
C-f of Capt Yonce,
Co. (C) 51st Va. Infantry
Staunton, Va.⁵⁰

(Undated, but after mother's letter of August 4, 1863)

Camp on Rapidan River
Orange Co., Va.

My Dear Mother:—

It has not been but a few days since I wrote to you, but as I had not then had a letter from home since I left Glade Springs, I feel it my duty to write to you again and let you know that I have received two letters from you in the last few days, one dated July 18th and the other August 4th. I was truly glad to hear that you were all well. You spoke of sending me some apples by Jas. Harrel but he has not come yet. Levi Kincer brought the letter. We can get a few apples occasionally by paying 50 cents per dozen for them, a little larger than a hens egg. Onions are \$2.00 per dozen eggs the same price. Potatoes at from \$5.00 to \$8.00 per bushel. Our mess bought a ½ bushel today for \$2.50. I would like to eat a few pies or cakes from home, these down here taste too strong of money. But it is not worth while for me to indulge in such wishes for we are too far off, though the trip can be made in 36 hours. You can start from Wytheville in the morning and get here next evening. If it did not cost so much money, I would ask father to come but as it is, I will not unless I get sick or wounded which I hope will not be the case. We drew our money a few days ago and if I had a chance I would like to send a little home. I want you when ever you write me again to tell me whether you get my letters and of what date. I have written 4 letters since I left Glade Springs

besides the one at Staunton the 13th of July. This one you acknowledged having received and one other, so I do not know if it was the one I wrote from Rockingham Co. or the one at Camp Early dated the 30th or 31st. Well, you ask is it true that Gen. Lee has resigned and who will take his place. I answer it is not true, hence nobody will take his place. But you go on to ask what I think of the war and say it has gotten to be the opinion of nearly everybody that we are gone up the "spout". Well I acknowledge that our prospects do look more gloomy than they have for some time. But it will not do for us to give the thing up at what it is. We must put our trust in a power above that of man. We must trust in God to deliver our country from ruin. The Yankees must not be let come in there and destroy the railroads. And if they should get in and destroy it they must be repaired and go at it again. It takes perseverance to accomplish anything. But if it is contrary to the will of God let the worst come as soon as possible. I must now close. Write soon and often. Do not put any confidence in any flying rumors that you may hear. We have not been in any fight and are not expecting any shortly.

Respectfully your son,

Thomas W. Fisher⁵¹

Camp Near Liberty Mills,
Orange County, Va.
August 20, 1863

Dear Sister—⁵²

In my last letter I spoke of my school days and in the wind up, bid farewell to my dear teacher (James B. Johnson). But before leaving him altogether I will remark that he still lives. The last I knew of him he was living in Hillsville, Carroll County. After that session I did not go any more except in the winter 2 or 3 months at a time, but from my earliest recollection I went to Sabbath school every summer which was taught at the (Gleaves meeting house.) At the commencement of the school, Major Gleaves offered a nice pocket bible as a reward to the scholar would commit to memory the greatest number of verses in the testament. I concluded I would join in the race. An account was kept for each scholar and at the end of the school, Miss Lydia E. Davis took the prize, having beat me a few verses. Father said I should not loose my reward, so he bought me a bible which I have with me today. In process of time, a school house was built near where father then lived and Sabbath schools were kept up after that at Slate Springs,

for that was the name given the new school house. In March (I think) 1850 or 1851, cousin Henry Seagle of whom I have spoken before paid me a visit. He came on Saturday and as usual we were glad to see each other and passed away the time very pleasantly together. As I said before we were great cronies. Thus, then, happy land and peaceful land of ours, may be deluged in blood, yea drenched with human gore, it may be overrun and pillaged by the enemy, every vintage of resemblance of my boyhood days may be swept away, but as long as my memory is left me unsurpassed, I will remember that cousin and playmate, and especially that last visit. As I said before he came on Saturday. On Sunday morning he went to Slate Springs⁵³ to meeting and perhaps while there he began to complain of a pain in his head, but said little about it and was as lively as usual. After meeting was over we went to Groseclose's to see a place where there was Black Lead as my cousin wanted to see the place. In the evening as we were returning home he complained a good deal, and until we had gotten home he was very dull and had but little to say. This was very uncommon, as he was very noisy and full of fun. He intended going home that evening but father and mother would not let him go until morning and he was still worse, so father made me get on a horse and go home with him. When he got home he went to bed. I left him and on Wednesday I was at Hines' Mills, as I came back by I stopped to see him but he was unconscious and did not know me. That was the last time I saw him alive. On Thursday morning his spirit took its flight to another world. I know nothing about his preparation to meet his God, but I hope in the great day of accounts to see him among that blood washed throng on the right hand of the Father. I went to his burial and saw his remains layed in the cold silent tomb, there to remain until Gabriel's awful trump shall sound, and wake the nations underground. I have often thought of him since this war began. He is free from all the troubles of camp and soldier life in this bloody contest. But he is gone, his soul has been in the spirit world several years.

Oblivion has almost swept away every incident connected with his life. Death is a solemn thought and its pangs last throughout the ceaseless ages of Eternity. Would to God we could all think of it more seriously.

Write me often.
Your brother till death,
Thomas W. Fisher⁵⁴

Camp Near Liberty Mills Orange Co Va
August 23, 1863

Dear Parents.

Having just passed around the encampment I seat myself to write you a short letter. In walking around the camp I was verry much struck with the conduct of some of my fellow soldiers. To think that any, are so far lost to a sence of respect to both God & their fellow men, as to desecrate The Holy Sabbath by puting up their money, & playing cards for it, is trully a disagreeable thought! But such is the case.

Last Friday, was a day set apart by President Davis, for fasting & prayer. That our people might as far as possible dispence with their military duties of the camp &c; & humble themselves before God. Some had respect enough for the President to obey the call even though they were not Religious. But many (I noticed) paid no attention to it, & I heard them swairing, & saw them gambling as on other days.

But Jefferson Davis is only a man, a mortal man, as we are: Surely if the Lord would appoint a day to ceace from these things, & humble ourselves they would obey it. Well to-day is the Holy Sabbath. God has apointed it for this verry purpose. Do they obey his voice? No! Alas! It seems that they have no more respect for their God than for the President. O that they may see their condition before it is forever too late! Your Welcome letter of the 19th has been received. I was sorry the children had caught the Whooping Cough. But I hope it will be light.

I still enjoy good health. I know not how to express my gratitude to God for his blessing, continued upon me.

There is a good deal of sickness (mostly feaver,) in this Regt. now. We have three cases in our Company. The worst case is Morgan T. Newman,⁵⁵ he was taken to the Hospital this morning. The others though, not so bad, are bad enough. They are Wm. H. Neighbors, & Wm. D. Epperson.

There was a man (George Dehart,) of Co. (D) snakebitten last night, lying in his tent. The bite is on his right hand. This morning his hand and arm were swollen almost as much as the skin could contain. He was verry sick & I fear will die! The serpent escaped unseen in the darkness, but they think it was a Mockason. I believe I have no other news of importance to write. There is no indications of a fight here at present. I have seen the Iveys, Little John Wolf, and is fat & gaily, as I ever saw him. I heard from Guss Johnson yesterday.

He was well. The Health of most of the troops that have been down here all the time is good.

Gusses Regt. is camped about 15 miles from here.

They have commenced giving furloughs here. They give 15 days to Virginians at the rate of 2 for every one hundred men present for duty.

Two are gone home from our company now. Rufus A. Garnett, & Isacc M. Umbarger. Their furloughs are out the 3 of Sept. If I live I hope to get home sometime this fall myself.

Will there be Camp meeting at "Cripple Creek." this fall? If so when will it be?

----t my sheet admonishes me that I must close. Write soon & often. May God's richest blessing, ever rest upon you all.

Your Son
Thos. W. Fisher⁵⁶

Warm Springs
Bath County Va.,
September 3, 1863

Dear Father and Mother.—

I presume you have gotten some what uneasy about me as I have not written for 10 or 12 days. The reason of this is, we have been on the march for upwards of a week. I have had no time to write and even now, I am writing a few hurried lines after arriving at (or rather taking up) camp. Last Tuesday morning today one week ago, we left camp at Liberty Mills in Orange County and started in the direction of Charlottesville. We arrived there Wednesday evening having marched (in the two days) 20 miles. There we remained till Friday morning. Then we took the train and came on as far as Hillboro in this county. That was about 80 miles There we drew four days rations of crackers and bacon put them in our haversacks and started after the Yankees. You have no doubt heard of them trying to make a raid through here. We arrived at this place Saturday evening and have been scouting about through the country ever since. The Yankees are all gone but not without destroying the greater portion of the crop of small grain through here. The Warm Springs are the greatest curiosity I have seen yet. The water boils up out of the earth, and if any difference, a little warmer than milk just from a cow. There are 3 bathing houses, one for the gentlemen, one for the ladies and one for the children. I went in the bath myself.

It is about 25 feet in diameter and about chin deep. When I first

went in I could scarcely bear the water. It felt like there certainly must have been fire about it. All the Springs together afford nearly as much water as "Stophles run." We will pass Hot Springs tomorrow, I expect. I am anxious to see them. We are now on our way to Lewisburg or some where in that portion of the country. We are now about 125 miles from where we were when I wrote you before and I think we will get back nearer home in a month or so. I hope we will winter at the Narrows again. When you write me again direct my letter to Dublin. I will stop now as it is getting nearly dark.

Greenbriar Co. Va.
Sept. 4th.

I will now write a few more lines and finish my letter. Yesterday we made a very hard march and I did not have time to finish my letter after we got to camp. We camped last night in Alleghany county. Tonight we are camping on the battle ground where part of General Jones⁵⁷ men fought the Yankee cavalry a few days ago. From the marks on the timber, fences and buildings it was a pretty hot little fight. Cannon balls and minnies⁵⁸ have riddled the timber pretty smartly. This battle ground is ½ mile from White Sulphur Springs. We marched 40 miles yesterday and today. We are ordered to the Red Sulphur Springs in Monroe Co. We have a three days march yet of 15 miles per day and then the Col. says we will get to rest awhile if nothing happens. I forgot to tell you we had a considerable frost in Bath Co. Saturday and Sunday nights. The corn blades were smartly bitten. Was there any frost in Wythe. I must now close I want you to write as soon as you get this and direct to Dublin, care of the Capt. Co., and Regiment as before. I am very anxious to hear from the children⁵⁹. How have they gotten with whooping cough. This leaves me well and I hope it finds you all the same.

I remain as ever,
Your devoted son,
Thomas W. Fisher⁶⁰

VI. Returning to Western Virginia

During this period Thomas found a way to return home for a visit (to which he refers in his next letter of October 6). In late September, 1863, Gen. Samuel Jones was assigned command of the Departments of East Tennessee and Western Virginia. In order to protect the salt works and have ready access to the railroad, Wharton's Brigade stayed near Abingdon. On Sept. 24, the 51st Virginia marched to Jonesboro, Ten-

nessee, to verify Burnside's withdrawal. At this point the men were plagued by intense fatigue and were exhausted by the four months of hot-weather marching, leaving but one-third of the infantry with wearable shoes; uniforms were in shreds. They had not seen significant battle activity for nearly a year.

On the 12th of October, 1863, the Regiment supported Gen. William E. Jones' cavalry at Zollicoffer. The entire Confederate force was ordered to return to Abingdon after three days of minor action. It was painfully clear to the officers that the 960 men of Wharton's Brigade, the 51st Virginia included, were not in condition for launching an offensive campaign.

Gen. George Ransom assumed command of the Departments of East Tennessee and Western Virginia late in the fall of 1863. Wharton's Brigade was ordered to support Gen. James Longstreet's army, then preparing the defense of Knoxville.

An important part of the soldier's life was the regular sermons delivered in camp. Brother Boring, the preacher referred to in several letters, is thought to be Capt. William Bourn, of Company I. A Captain Boring is reported in an August 1864 letter listing battle casualties.

After the siege of Knoxville, Longstreet was privy to a communication from Gen. Grant that revealed his plan to send men via the Cumberland Gap to strengthen Federal forces at Knoxville.

Longstreet moved his army and ordered Ransom to march his forces to the vicinity to reinforce the Confederates there. During December, Federal troops took an unexpected route, avoiding the expected conflict. The temperature was near zero degrees, and warm clothing and supplies were scarce. The Confederate Army was forced to separate and seek winter quarters. Those winter quarters were in Eastern Tennessee, near Blountville. In addition to very cold weather, the men were worn out, and the 51st joined Longstreet's forces to attempt an entrapment of Gen. Gordon Granger's Federals near Dandridge, Tennessee (thirty miles from Knoxville). This endeavor called forth all that the hungry, freezing, poorly clad Confederates could stand. Many of the men were marching over frozen ground without shoes, with feet bleeding onto the snow. Granger's forces were left uncontested.

In February the Regiment was dispatched to Bull's Gap to protect the Department of East Tennessee and Western Virginia headquarters. Here the men repaired roads or were assigned to picket duty. While at

the camp they resided in tents with chimneys attached. Boredom was widespread.⁶¹

Camp near Glade Springs,
Washington Co., Va.
Oct. 6th, 1863.

Dear Father and Mother:—

For some cause, I cannot tell what, I have not received a letter from any of you since I was at home, which has been very near a month ago. Though I have written to you twice in that time. I cannot command language to express my feelings this morning as I seat myself to try to write you a few lines in my simple way to let you know that I am yet alive and well. I have taken my seat in the warm sun beneath the boughs of an oak, out of site of the camp. And while I have been sitting here I have been retrospecting the past twelve months. This is the day if I mistake not on which brother James died. Three other sad anniversaries⁶² follow in quick succession. And these are what render the season unhappy in one sence. Though viewed in another light, it brings joy to my heart. While I have been exposed to danger and death and I have suffered and endured many hardships and privations and had to contend with many sore trials and temptations for the past year and have many times strayed from the path of duty. These four dear ones (as I believe) have been basking in the sunshine of God's love and have been drinking of the pure river of the water of life, beyond the waves of the tempestuous sea of life and secure from the ravages of him who "goeth about like roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." This with the hope of meeting them ere long and enjoying their company with God's presence throughout eternity is what brings that joy to my heart. The poet in the following lines very truthfully and solely speaks of the swiftness of time. They are so to the point that I cannot help penning them down.

"The moments fly — a minutes gone!
The minutes fly — an hour is run!
The day is fled — the night is here!
Thus flees a week! a month! a year!
A year, alas! — how soon it's past!
Who knows but that this may be my last!
A few short years – How soon they've fled!
And we are numbered with the dead!
Yes, moments, minutes, days and years!

Pass quickly in this vale of tears,
But from that vale God's saints ascend
And live in joys that never end!
Yes! Days, months and years must have an end!
But Eternity has none!
Twill always have as long to spend
As when it first begun.

Well I will tell you a little about where we have been and then close. I suppose you got the letter I wrote from Carter Station, Tenn. From there we went down to Jonesboro⁶³ and lay in the brush all night. The night it rained so we had no tents. I tell you it was a rough time. We then came around by Blountville to Bristol and got aboard the train and came to this place. We are camped 2 miles down the R. R. from the depot near the tank. Perhaps father you would as soon come up and see us as not. And bring me a pair of socks and a piece of soap as we can't get any to wash our clothes. Also a little something to eat. Times have been pretty tight with us for rations for a few days. I don't insist, use your own pleasure about coming, for perhaps you may be too busy.

Yours as ever,
Thos. W. Fisher⁶⁴

Abingdon, Va.,
Oct. 25, 1863

My Dear Mother:—

I received your letter of November the 20th this morning and was glad that you were all well. But how did you all down home get away over in November. It is only the 25th of October here. It will soon be Christmas with you all. I wanted to write you yesterday or day before but was not able. I have been very sick for 3 or 4 days and scarcely able to be up at all. I was fearful that I would have to go to the hospital but I feel so much better today that I think I will be all well in a few days. The boys are all well but several of them are about barefooted and in need of clothes, but we hear there is plenty of clothing here and we will draw some in a few days. My good news is that they are going to begin giving furloughs at the rate of 4 per cent, that is 4 for every hundred men present. This will allow 4 men to go from our company at a time. I am going to try to be one of the second four. I am glad you have some applebutter made. I wish I had a smather⁶⁵ as the boys say. I think it would go fine. It may be that I can get a pass

in a few days, if I can I will come home some morning before breakfast. I want to come bad enough and all I want is a good chance.

Father, If I don't come home and you feel like coming out you will only have 12 miles further to come than if we were at Glade Springs⁶⁶, that is not much on railroad. You did not say how much molasses you made, when you write again tell me whether you have dug the potatoes yet and how they turned out and all about matters and things at home. I believe I have nothing more worth your attention. I will close and write Sallie a few lines on the other side of the page.

Write again soon.
I remain as ever your son,
Thomas W. Fisher.⁶⁷

Camp near Blountville,
Sullivan Co., Tenn.
Nov. 9th, 1863

Dear father and mother:—

I am seated for the purpose of writing in answer to yours of the first inst. which I received a few days ago. I cannot say I am exactly well at present but I am able to perform the duties of a soldier. I have a very bad cold. The rest of the boys are all well. I was sorry to hear Jason⁶⁸ was not healthy, you had better give him some medicine. Mother, I found some of your relatives out here. Raders, Calvin (Peter's son), he lives at the old homestead of his father. He is a man of a family, although his wife is dead. She died about five or six weeks ago. She was frightened to death by horse thieves who tried to call him out one night. They had been knocking men in the head and taking their horses or what ever else they wanted, and she being a very weakly woman took fright and died next day. Your aunt is still living and lives with Calvin. She is very old. I think she told me she was 81. I could tell you a great deal more, but this will suffice for the present. I had the pleasure yesterday of hearing Bro. Boring⁶⁹. He was here and preached for our Regt. His text was a portion of the 30th verse of the 12th chapter of St. Matthew, "He that is not with me is against me." He arranged the two vast armies before the congregation, Satan and his followers on his left and the army of Christ on his right. There was no middle ground. First he noticed the leaders of the two armies. In the second place he noticed the banners or flags of the two armies. That upon the left, a dark banner without a bright spot or white thread about it to represent one ray of light or star of hope through

vast unending eternity. But upon the right how different. The banner there was of pure white. Never shall that glorious banner trail in the dust or fall at half mast in token of defeat. Next he noticed the soldiers of the two armies, lastly the pay of the soldiers. I tell you it was an interesting discourse, and I don't think there was a man but what was pleased and tears rolled down the cheeks of some of the hardest sinners. I cannot tell when we will get back to Virginia again, but I think the weather will get so rough that we will have to get back to some point on the R.R. When ever we do get back to the railroad I will get a pass to come home. This trip has knocked furloughing in the head. There has been none given yet. I wrote you a letter about a week ago and told you where we were and what we were doing. I presume you have received it by this time. I have to go to preparing some dinner as it is near 11 o'clock. So I must close for the present hoping this will find you all well. Write soon don't delay. I haven't time to look over this letter, if anything is left out supply its place. Correct all mistakes and excuse bad writing and spelling.

I remain as ever your affectionate son,
 Thomas W. Fisher.⁷⁰

Camp Near Bulls Gap, Greene Co., Tenn.
 February 8th, 1864

Dear Parents:

I embrace the present opportunity of writing you a few lines to let you know that I am well and other things. I hope these lines will find you all enjoying good health. In the first place I will give you a history of your kin folks and my visits among them. I am speaking mostly to mother now. Well shortly after I wrote you before Cousin George Repass and I went to hunt up some of the Raders⁷¹ our connection. We proceeded about a mile south of camp and met a boy.

"Good morning, little man."

"How are you gentlemen?"

"Well, little man, is there any one living out this way by the name of Rader," said I.

"Well yeth their."

"How far is it?"

"About three quarters of a mile. The first houth you gits too."

"Good bye, little man," and on we went. We came to a house and talked with an old lady that looked to be about 90 and said her

father's name was Peter and said she had heard him speak often of your brother Conrad Rader. But enough of this.

Well this month they have been giving furloughs. I think we are good to stay here with General Longstreet if we are not called to Virginia in a very short time. Gen. Sam Jones has been relieved of his command in Southwestern Virginia and Gen. Breckenridge is to take command of that department and if Breckenridge does not call us back to our old command then I think we are gone up for Longstreet's army. My opinion is that right here in this country will be the next fighting in the spring. I think the campaign will open early in the spring about Knoxville unless we can force the enemy to evacuate East Tennessee this winter. I hope and believe that with the end of 1864 will come the end of this unholy war.

I have written enough for the present. You need not write me any more till you hear from me again for if anything happens that I don't get to come home I will write and if I do come I will be there before your letter could reach me unless you get this very soon. Give all the neighbors my respects. I close hoping ever to have your prayers for my safety and success through life and after death to enjoy the blessedness of heaven.

Your Son,
Thos. W. Fisher.⁷²

VII. Taking the Offensive

In April the Regiment returned to their former Abingdon camp, marching on railroad tracks (the very worst of marching conditions) from Greeneville, Tennessee to Abingdon, Virginia. Continual bad weather, including April blizzard conditions, made travel nearly impossible. The hardships were almost unbearable, diminishing the joy of returning to their beloved Virginia.

In late spring of 1864, Gen. Breckenridge moved his main force to face the Federals in the Shenandoah Valley, leaving a small cavalry detachment at Dublin. On May 6, the 51st Virginia marched to Jackson River Depot, departing on a short train ride to Staunton and marching down the Valley Pike in the direction of the enemy forces. Six days later, Breckenridge's brigades under Generals Wharton and Echols stopped their march to New Market two miles from town. A Confederate cavalry unit scattered the enemy scouts and forced the Federals to slow their advance. VMI cadets joined Breckenridge's forces nearby in torrents of

rain, that turned the roads into muddy passageways. At 9 a.m. on May 15, Breckenridge ordered the advance of his troops. Under the leadership of Lt. Col. John P. Wolfe, the 51st formed part of the first battle line, with Echol's Brigade behind and the VMI cadets serving as reserves. Losses to the Regiment were heavy; 103 men were wounded or killed.

While Thomas was with his company during the conflict at Coal Harbor on June 3 and 4, illness kept him separated from them during the sojourn into Maryland during early to mid-July.

Gen. Philip Sheridan was newly appointed Federal commander in August, 1864. Upon entering Winchester, Confederates were attacked, but Federals were forced to withdraw. The Regiment headed toward Harper's Ferry during the next three days. On August 25 the 51st joined cavalry in a skirmish at Leestown.

At the end of September, Col. Augustus Forsberg's Brigade (the 51st Virginia, 45th Regiment, and 30th Battalion), consisted of a mere 417 men. These men were distinguished by an excellent performance at Kernstown and for turning back Sheridan's cavalry (called Sheridan's "fast flying horsemen") at Winchester on September 25. Seventy-eight of the 51st were captured, greatly reducing the already small Brigade.

Winter quarters were established at Fishersville in the Shenandoah Valley. It was a winter of harsh winds and snow. Supplies were scarce, and morale in the South was at its lowest thus far.⁷³

Camp Near New Market
Shenandoah Co.
May 16, 1864 Va.

Dear Parents and all at home,

Knowing that a thousand rumors are afloat in our country and that you are anxious to know about us I now take my pen in hand to give you a true statment of affairs. We have for a short season been cut off from each other by the Yankees and I have been very anxious to hear from home as I have not heard since I was at Abingdon. I was fearful that our communication would be cut off for some time but I am now informed that the way is now clear. Well I will now attempt to tell you of what I witnessed yesterday. Though I will nesarilly fall short of giving you a minute picture of the scene.

We had a very hard fight yesterday Wharton's Brigade was in the hottest of the fight during the whole of the day. And most nobly did the General⁷⁴ sustain his reputation as a brave man. He has ever been

loved by his command but his conduct yesterday will win for him their most ardent affections. Lieut. Col. Wolf⁷⁵ commanding our Regt. also behaved himself most nobly also Major Yonce⁷⁶ and all our officers both field and company officers acted a noble part.

It would be doing a great injustice not to say that the men also acted their part as heroes and won for themselves and officers the praise of the commanding officer Gen. Breckenridge. I will now give you a list of the killed and wounded of our Co. However none of the Co. were killed dead Sergt. William H. Thompson mortally through the left breast, Corpl. Wm. A— Lindamood very severely in left leg above the knee. Nathan L. Brown leg shot below the knee, I suppose his leg will have to be amputated. David Lindamond supposed mortally in back Morgan T. Newman flesh wound in both legs. John N. Myers severely in groin. Wm. Everett Miller slight in right thigh, John K. Jackson slightly in head, Fleming Shelton in left knee, Chas. H. Gough slightly in side, Robt. M. McDonald slightly in hand, James W. Chapman very slightly in back, Dick Bowles slightly in leg, John W. Crigger very slightly in hand, F. M. Waddle very slightly in arm, E. A. Neff slightly in wrist Wiley Grubb slightly in breast. Some four or five others were touched but not hurt enough to mention. We had 94 killed and wounded in our Regt. Capt. Tate of Co. B was killed, Capt. Price of Co. H badly wounded. I will only mention one more Major Otey who was badly wounded in the arm. The fight commenced at New Market about ten o'clock and lasted till dark closed the work. At dark we had driven them about six miles. It rained the whole day and the mud was almost knee deep in some fields over which we charged and made it very disagreeable. Almost the whole fight was on open fields, you can form an idea of the ground if you think of the country about John King's, only the valley is wider and more level.

We took seven pieces of artillery and about two hundred prisoners.

The Yankees could not stand a charge as soon as our boys would raise a yell and start the Yanks would break.

The loss on their side was 160 killed and buried by our men. I do not know how many were wounded as they hauled them off when we did not push them too close. But a goodly number were left on some parts of the field. Their loss was very heavy.

I forgot to tell you a grape⁷⁷ passed through Lieut. Jake Fisher's⁷⁸ hat just grazing the skin. One inch lower would have killed him .

I am writing on the train now. We are going to Richmond or to Lee's Army. We are now below Gordonsville. We got on the train at Staunton at ten o'clock today.

I hope you will not be uneasy about me because I am down here. God has ever taken care of me through dangers, toil and troubles and I feel safe in his hands and willing to trust him in the future. I desire an interest in the prayers of all at home and hope you will ever be mindful of me at a rich throne of grace. I can from my heart use that phrase in the Lords prayer (Thy will be done). I have tried to feel willing to suffer what ever he sees fit in his wisdom to put upon me, I am resigned to his will. So if I should fall in battle you will not sorrow as those that have no hope.

Yours till death
Thos. W. Fisher
Capt. Umbarger Co.(C) 51st
Wharton's Brigade, Breckenridges Div.
Richmond Va.⁷⁹

Staunton, Augusta County. Virginia
June 28th 1864.

SALLIE & SIS.

DEAR SISTER'S.

I have not written home for about a month. Neither have I heard from home by letter for a longer period of time. The reason why I have not written is, I have not had an oppertunity, and we were not where we could send out mail; on account of the rail road being torn up & etc & I suppose the same is the reason, I have not received news from home.

I have enjoyed first rate health since I wrote to Mother (I believe on the 5th) and have been on the march ever since. The next night after I wrote home we left the fortifications below Richmond, and came to the city, about daylight. We remained there some three hours, which gave me an oppertunity of looking about a while. If, I, had time I might entertain you a while with a narration of the curiosities, & seens of City life; but it would take too long & too much paper, & time, but I will tell you something of the Publick squair, and leave the rest for verbal conversation when I see you again, if I am so fortunate as to get home again & find you all living.

Well, to proceed: the Publick squair is situated near the Center of the city: it is traversed in every direction by nice roadway & deckorated with shrubery on either hand perfumed by flowers of various hews and the whole (except the walks) completed with the verdant carpet of nature. But the greatest curiosity of the place is the Washington Monument upon the summit of which is the Statue of

Washington mounted upon a large charger, and pointing with his right hand toward the south. All is as compleet as nature almost. Also the statues of Henry Clay, Patrick Henry, Thos Jefferson, & Mason are standing in the attitude of orators, so natural that you almost imagine that you hear the voice of the speaker poring forth in eloquence upon the political topics of the day. But while beholding with astonishment, & admiration, the skill of the architect, thoughts like these; involentarily came into my mind: Why is all this folly? (I cant call it anything but folly.) Why this great expenditure for nought? Did we not & are we not as a nation, seting up and worshipping images? These were great men and should be remembered with gratitude by every American heart, but why extol and worship (or almost so) an image?

Enough on this subject for the present. About 9 Oclock we got on the cars (Va C, R.R.) & set out for Staunton. The Yankees were then here. We arrived, and stoped at Waynesboro, in the mien time the Yankees moved on, by way of Lexington toward Lynchburg. Our command also marched in the direction of Lynchburg, and just got there one day before the yanks would have got there: They attacked us and found that they were going to get a good flogging so that night they skedaddled toward Salem, burning all the bridges on the Va & Tenn R.R. up to that place.

At Salem they took the road to Fincastle⁸⁰. Our cavalry got in ahead of them & captured & destroyed 12 pieces of Art,^y⁸¹ about 50 Wagons, captured about 400 horses & 150 prisoners. We did not follow them further than Salem but turned off & came by way of Lexington to this place. The whole march from the time we got off the cars at Waynesboro till we arrived here yesterday evening is about 225 miles, and from what I can geather we will start in the morning on a long march again; one which I dont like, viz to make a raid on the yankees. I fear it will not pay. We are in a fair way of defeating Grant at Richmond, and now mark my prediction; if we attempt to go into Md. & Pa. the fat is turned into the fire. In the first place, our men, & stock are not fit for a raid, from the effects of long hard marching; and in the second place, it never has paid either party to raid, and if we attempt it I should not be surprised if half of us are captured. We have a pretty large force though, and will be hard to stop. We have about 25:000 men Viz Breckenridges Division & Ewels Corps. You have heard before this of the 45th being up to it. Jace⁸² was captured (not hurt) so was Fred Atkins—Joe & Mell got out safe. I reckon Jace is siting up with his head leant to one side, chewing his tobacco

in Yankeedom. I got your letter sent by Jim Stephens a couple of weeks ago. It was old but quite interesting. can't send you that mucilaginous spit, for I have no bottle, but I reckon Guss'es & Steve's spit is sweet enough to stick a letter. You can use theirs as it is always handy. Tell Peg that Jim Stephens got the letter wet, and I reckon her respect must have leaked out. There was a little piece of paper folded up in the letter but there was nothing in it, but it tasted sweet like there had been something in it. Tell her I wish her a long life, and a happy one; a good man and a pretty one.

Well, gals, I tell you I have lived fine for the last two weeks. When on the march I would get off the road, and get cherries & something to eat. The people were verry cleaver, and I got cherries, milk, butter, bread & etc. and they would not have a cent of pay. I stoped at a place the other evening and got something to eat where there was a girl. (a right handsome one too,) I noticed she kept her eye on me all the time, every time she passed through the room she would take a sly glance at me and just about as I was leaving she handed me a nice bisquett though of course I was polite and thanked her pretty near half to death and left, but I hope I will get back there again.

Well I must begin to close write and direct to Staunton, care of Capt., Co, Brigade & Division as before — Give me all the news of the neighborhood news & etc. I have clothes plenty except socks. I have but one pair. I have a good pair of legs I wish was at home. You need not expect to hear from me again til we get back from our raid.

Remember my love to all the friends and neighbors and accept my most zealous love at home.



Your devoted Brother.

Thomas. W. Fisher⁸³

I have no stamps

Camp Near Martinsburg, Berkley Co. Va

July the 28th 1864

Dear Father & Mother,

I am glad that I, (this morning) enjoy the privelige, and opportunity, to write you a few lines which will inform you that I am well and I sincerely hope that this epistle may go safely through, and find you enjoying God's richest blessings.

I will necessarily have to be brief this time, as it is verry uncertain how long I will have to write as the long roll may beat at any time. My letter will be lengthy enough too, but in comparison to the resources

X 3
 Dear Mother & Father
 I am glad that this morning you
 have the privilege & opportunity to write me a few lines
 which will inform me that I am well & and desire
 hope that this epistle may go safely through, and find
 all enjoying Gods richest blessings
 I will necessarily be taking leave this time as it is very
 uncertain how long I will have to winter the long and may be
 at any time you letter will be lengthy enough to put in
 comparison to the present from which to do so rather it may
 be short & shall be done with pleasure because I must
 be first place tell you that I have not received a
 letter from you since I received one at Camp Harbinger
 among men in Maryland I was not with them and an letter
 came to the company for me but before I got to them it
 was lost. I do not know whether it was from home or not
 I wrote home from Staunton a month ago yesterday the last
 time I hope you will excuse me for it is seldom we have
 an opportunity to write The reason I was not with the
 in a body I was small and got behind the army, and when
 I got to ^{Wingchester} ~~the~~ days after the army had passed through
 they would not let me pass for fear of being bushwhacked
 so I stayed there until they came out again
 I wish hereafter you would please write at least once a fortnight
 whether you get a letter from me or not. I will write as
 often as I can.

Letter from camp near Martinsburg, Berkley County, Virginia, written by Thomas Winton Fisher to his parents on July 28, 1864.

from which to draw matter, it will be short. — Well to leave off preliminary remarks, I must, in the first place tell you that I have not received a letter from home of later date than the 7th of June which was received at “Coal Harbour” below Richmond. While the army was in Maryland I was not with them, and a letter came to the company for me but before I got to them it was lost. I do not know whether it was from home or not. I wrote home from Staunton a month ago yesterday the last time. I hope you will excuse me, for it is so seldom we have an opportunity to write. The reason I was not with the army in Md. I was unwell and got behind the army, and when I got to Winchester 2 days after the army had passed through they would not let me pass, for fear of being bushwhacked. So I stayed there until they came out again.

I wish hereafter you would please write at least once a fortnight whether you get a letter from me or not. I will write as often as I can.

Our army went into Md. and went within 3 miles of Washington City which is closer than the yanks have been to Richmond this year. — Our men brought out a fine lot of horses & cattle, destroyed many miles, of Rail Road, bursted up the Chesipeak, & Ohio Canal, besides capturing, and destroying vast quantities of army store & etc. This will ballance off with them for the Dublin & Lynchburg raids.

Breckenridges Division was in no fight until they got back within 12 miles of Winchester, to Snigersons ford. Here they turned on the Yanks that were following them and give them a gentell thrashing & drove them back, but we lost some men in the fight. In our company we lost George W. Chandler, killed. Corp Wm. H. Rose, dangerously wounded in thigh (broken) Wm. A Daugherty severely in foot. John Cassell supposed mortally in bowels. John L. Kincer slightly in breast. When the army got to New town I got with them. We then fell back to Strasburg in Shenandoah County, and took a position to fight the Yankees, but they would not come up, they came 7 miles above Winchester and there halted. Gen. Earley waited on them a few days, and finding they would not attack him He marched on, and attacked them on Sunday the 24th— The fight commenced about 10 oclock. I was in that fight, and as the country was verry level I saw more of that fight than any I ever was in; about 1 oclock Breckenridges old Division Comanded by Gen. Whorton, was moved to the right, and came up on the enimies left flank. When all things were ready, the Rebble yell was raised all around the lines and we charged upon them; Gordens Division, in their front and —ers on their left flank. I was in the front Rank, and had a fair view of the whole field. Nothing could

be more grand (of that kind) the Rebble ranks moved up steadily, without wavering accross fields over fences, & Ditches & c. The Yankees stood for a while but as our line moved up, I observed their ranks began to waver soon they began to scatter, and brake accross the fields. Their Officers tried to keep them together, and in the mean time a yankee Officer came galloping accross the field in front of, & toward our regt. and kept beckoning with his sword for us to halt — but narry halt — when he got within 75 yds we let off at him and killed his horse under him and wounded him. About a hundred yds further, and a regt of Averills⁸⁵ noted cavalry made a charge upon the head of our Regt. and the 45th. This looked somewhat scarry to see horsemen in full speed with drawn sabres comeing right at us. There was a little confusion in the 45th caused by some one hollering fall back. Some started and some stood, but soon all was rallied again as for my part I determined that I would not give back an inch for if we got confused and runn I knew the cavalry would capture us, and if captured, I was going to be captured right there.

— But so it was when they got within 20 yards of us we poured a heavy volley into them, and you just ought to have been there to see men & horses fall. They just fell in every Directon. They came with such force that 3 or 4 horses ran through our line. From this we got them in full retreat. We runn them through Winchester. They threw away guns blankets oilcloths knapsacks havresacks canteens hats and every thing that would impied their progress — our boys just loaded themselves with the spoils.

We followed them to this place but they would not fight us any more.

The Baltimore & Ohio Rail Road passes here and we have been amusing ourselves taring it up for the yanks since we have been here. We have burned several bridges, and tore up 10 or 12 miles of rail road, and burned it since we came here. I reckon the yanks thinks by this time that they have not all the fun of raiding to themselves. In the fight Sunday we had 3 men wounded in our company. King Austin Kincer in leg not verry badly. Jeff Lindamoode through the palm of the hand, and Ephraim A Ganter, son of Matthias Ganter, in breast slightly. I was not touched except by a spent ball which hit my havresack, and dropped down by my side.

Cameron is well and sends his respects to you all. The rest of the boys are well except Capt Umbarger he has lost his speach and gone to the Hospital.

Joseph Hilten⁸⁶ got hurt a little in the fight. A spent ball hit him on the leg, and made a blue place. Joe says he-ll show them “whosh te mashter”.

I have quit cooking for the officers, since Capt. Yonce⁸⁷ was promoted. I wont be a negro for men that are so hard to please — I tell you there are few such men as Major Yonce.

Before I went into that fight I committed myself to him who is able to take care of us in the hour of danger. I desire an interest in all your prayers. That I may be one of the happy ones that shall return home after this storm of war has blown over.

Write soon & Direct to Staunton, Care of Co Regt & Division as before—



Hastily Your Son
Thos. W. Fisher⁸⁸

I have no stamps, and will have
To frank⁸⁹ my letter.

Near Bunkerhill, Frederick County Virginia
August the 28th 1864

Dear Parents & Friends,

I have not received an answer to the last letter I wrote to you, though I am looking for one every day — But knowing the reports that will ere long reach you from our Regt. I have concluded to write to you and give you a true statement of facts.

Last Thursday the 25th was an eventful day in the history of the 51st Regt. And will carry sorrow and grief to the hearts of many who have sons, brothers, and husbands in this Regt. Since the war began I have never been placed in so perilous a condition as I was that day.

We had marched some 9 or 10 miles that morning, and having reached the Shepherdstown road at Leestown moved ----- a short distance, on that road (in the direction of Shepherdstown) til we came to where some of our cavalry were skirmishing with the Enemy. They reported only a small force there, and our Brigade being in front that day, the 51st Regiment was deployed and sent out to skirmish with the Yankees and drive them from their picket post. But unfortunately they had a much larger force than was expected -- and as we had advanced at least a mile from the rest of our forces; and they having 5 or 6 to our one, they soon flanked us, both on the right and left. Thus having an enfilading fire on us from both flanks we were compelled to fall back, under a very heavy fire, and it was then that we lost some of our best officers, and men. The pusillanimous

Yankees will not fight us with equal numbers, and come up fairly and squarely; but just let them get the advantage of a small force, and the dastardly wretches how they will use it. They were a hundred yards past me on my left before I knew it. I did not like the Idea of us falling back (for I did not know that we were so badly flanked) and every time I came to a place where an officer was trying to rally the men I would stop, and wait til I found there was no chance to Rally, thus I was among the last getting out. When I found out that we had to get out sure enough I thought I would go out along the edge of a field, the way I had went in, and I ran up to the fence, and was going to get over when to my astonishment there just inside of the field, were the Yankees, not more than 5 steps from me, but fortunately for me they did not see me, so I took to the right down through the woods, and ran about 150 yds and came to a fence where I had to take the open field for it, as soon as we jumped over the fence the Yankees saw us and the way they cut up the dirt around us was not slow I tell you. We had to run about 400 yards in open ground exposed all the way to a severe fire. I think there were at least 20 balls that came within a foot of me and one struck the corner of my knapsack, another passed through the right sleeve of my roundabout. It went through the lining and through the shirt sleeve but did not break the skin. Thus you can form an Idea of the situation we were in. The men were falling all around me as I came out. And I render unto God all the thanks for my escape for I can attribute it to nothing else but his mercy that I came out unhurt. My heart was uplifted to him at the time and I cannot say that I was much more alarmed than I am at this moment. I believed I would get out safe, not withstanding the peril.

But I am sorry to inform you that our Lieut Col. John P. Woolf was killed, also Lieut. Akers of Co. (D) Lieut. Roberts of Co (E) & Lieut Burnett of Co (D) were killed. Captain Allison of Co (B) Capt Boring⁹⁰ of Co (I) Lieut Gilley of Co (A) Lieut Powers of Co (E) all badly wounded and Captain Henley of Co (G) captured. I cannot tell you all the men that were killed & wounded, and will only give you the casualties in our company, and such as I think, you may know in Co (B) Grayhouse old company.

In our company we had none killed — Asher Bailey was badly wounded in the thigh. John Crigger & James Crocket both in thigh severely Sandy Beville severely in foot. Wm. Umburger, slightly in thigh. Alfred Jonce slight in head. Benson Murray & James Cassell were verry slightly wounded. Henry Hurt and John Hollingsworth

son of George Hollingsworth of Co (B) were killed & Joe Keesling & several others wounded.

The affair however did not stop at this, for we drove the Yankees that day to Harpers Ferry. I must not forget to tell you that Gen Wharton had a hole shot through his clothes that day. — On the 17th we had a fight at Winchester in which we lost two of our company wounded, Dick Bowles (poor fellow) lost one of his legs, and James Brown was severely wounded, and in a slight skirmish on the 21st Daniel Umbarger was slightly wounded in the cheek. Cameron is out safe, and sends his respects to the family, and especially to his Aunt Juda & Uncl Abb.

I have heard with profound sorrow of the death of Alfred Fisher⁹¹. Many have been the pleasant moments we have spent together — But he is now gone from the toils and sorrows of this troublesome world, and from the tone of his letters which I have received since he has been in the army, I am made to believe that he is gone to rest. A tear steels down my cheek as I think of fond associations. Dear Frances⁹², Monroe⁹³, and Alfred, have passed in quick succession to the spirit world! But thank God, I “sorrow not as those that have no hope” as I trust they are this day in a bliss where by the Grace of God I hope to meet them when I am called upon to leave this lower world.

May God bless the widows, and orphan Children of the deceased, having felt the dart of bereavement which has pierced their hearts, I know how to sympathise with them.

As the drum has sounded for worship I will close and go to meeting — I hope you will ever remember us in your prayers, and if I live to get through this unholy war to God will I render all the prais and thanks for my preservation. & God being my helper I will serve him the remainder of my days.

As ever Your Affectionate Son T. W. Fisher⁹⁴

Sept. 10th, 1864, Frederick Co. Va.
Six miles below Winchester

My dear parents.

I am seated to answer your letter of the 22nd August which came to hand a few days ago finding me well and glad to hear from home. I sent you a few lines by Sargent C. W. Umberger which I hope you received. Then I wrote another letter after we had the fight on the 25. I presume you have also received that so it is unnecessary for me to say anything more about that affair only to correct a mistake I made or rather an error. I told you (among other) that Lieut. Burnett

was killed this was incorrect he is unhurt. But Lieut. Hall of Co. (H) was captured. You remember that I told you that a ball hit my knapsack. I did not know it at the time that it had penetrated but thought it was spent ball. On opening my knapsack several days after the fight I found the ball in there and found that it had made some dozen or fifteen holes in a shirt that I had folded up in it. I have the ball in my pocket now it is a pistol ball.

You wanted to know how I am off for cloths I have a good pr. of pants two tolerable shirts with the exception of bullet holes in them. A good pr. of shoes and a tolerable jump jacket but as for socks I am entirely destitute of them. I hope if you got the few lines I sent by Sarg. Umberger I hope when he comes back I will get a pr. or two of socks. If you did not get that in time to send them by Wm. Peck or John Walters. They are going home on furlough in a few days as soon as Charley gets back. Peck lives in town at the old man Pattisons. About us going to Maryland we did cross the Potomac over into Maryland but we only stayed there one night and I did not hardly think it worth talking about. That's the reason I did not mention it. It was done to let McCosland⁹⁵ out of Pennsylvania.

I was sorry to hear of the death of Jacob Baumgardner and I also heard with deep sorrow of the death of Alfred Fisher⁹⁶ while I am on this subject I will tell you of a sad occurrence which took place yesterday morning Mr. William Mallory of Co. (B) fell dead in camp. He was as lively and gay that morning as he ever was up to the time he fell. He had just been skuffling with one of his comrades and had got up and was laughing and talking when the summons came. Imagine our feeling as we stood gazing upon the lifeless form of him who but a few moments ago was gay and playful. The extreme uncertainty of human life was there most forcibly illustrated. It was another warning to the living to prepare for death.

The drum has sounded for preaching and I want to go I will finish my letter when I come back. I will now resume my writing. I have just listened to a good sermon delivered by Rev. Robertson chaplain of Clark battalion on divinity of Christ.

I am glad you have such nice sugar cane I hope to help you eat some of the molasses. Is there plenty of apples on the trees if so make a good kettle of apple butter. Did those little peach trees bear this year. You wanted to know what we get to eat. We get plenty of flour and beef and there is plenty of apples in the country and we make stewed apples fly. We also have had roasting ears plenty.

Lastly you wanted to know whether there is any talk of peace

and what I think of it. There is a great deal of talk of peace almost every body thinks that there will be a treaty of peace agreed upon this winter.

Father if you want me to come home you must try and get me a recruit and send him up to the Co. They give a thirty day furlough if he gets a recruit to this Co. I will give any one thirty dollars that will come to this Co. as a recruit for me. Everett Miller and Wm. H. Thomson have come up. They both tell me they saw you at Camp meeting and that you were all well. George Saunders is here with the 45th Regt. he expects to get a detail to return home in a few days to collect. Tell Mr. Hiltens folks that Joe is well he got a letter from Andy a day or two ago. We suffered in the flesh last night it just poured down rain. I would have done fine but the water run under me and routed me out. During the summer it has been very dry in the valley but for the past 10 or 12 days it has rained half the time.

There is nothing stirring of interest at present the sound of the cannon has been silent for the last two or three days. It has been so familiar that it is no more headed than if it were thundering so common it is that we almost forget we are soldiers or that the war is going on if we do not hear it every day.

I have written all that is necessary at this time so will close for the present. I commit myself into the hands of God for protection until I have another opportunity to write. May he guard guide and protect us all and ere long bring about some means that we may see each others faces in health and vigor, and also bring about and restore to our land peace once more.

Cameron says he will put his fist upon a peace of paper and send it to you next time I write he has no paper now. Nor I have none to lend him.

Write soon to your devoted son.
Thomas W. Fisher⁹⁷

Fishers Hill, Shenandoah County, Va.
Sept 22nd, 64

My Dear Father & Mother,

When Wm Peck started home Sunday night I wrote a few lines at the bottom of the letter I sent by him stating that the probabilities were verry good for a fight and that if I escaped I would write. I felt that night just as sencibly as I ever felt anything in my life; that we were going to have a fight and that a hard one; and I asked my God that has so often brought me out of Danger, to be with me and if

constant with his will to bring me through safe again. Thanks be his name he answered my prayer. We had the hardest fight that day (Monday) I ever saw. I have never before since we have been in the Valley seen all our forces engaged at once: every Division Brigade & Regiment were engaged and not to make a short story longer I will just say at once that we got pretty badly whipped & even routed somewhat.

Although I am out unhurt, there were two periods during the day that I had no Idea of getting out. I was almost sure that I would be captured. The Yankees were all around us it looked to me like. I might look which way I would, and I could see the Yankees & I had a great notion to sit down and surrender for I had had the Bowel complaint a day or two, and was so weak I could not even march. If ever I get into another such a place I intend to get into a gully or sink some place, and wait for the Yanks to get me. Gen. Early acted very foolish in fighting them there at Winchester I think. If he had fallen back at first we could have held this position, but now I fear it is doubtful for we did loose less than 3000 or 3500 prisoners besides killed, and wounded but the Yankee loss we killed & wounded must be double that of ours. Our division lost much heavier in prisoners than any other. I think rather more than half of it is taken. Out of our company Capt Umbarger⁹⁸ was severely wounded in the shoulder, Private Jack Heldrith⁹⁹ killed Lieut. Repass¹⁰⁰ George Walters, Fletcher Lloyd captured. Col. Forsberg is wounded in hand and Major Yonce¹⁰¹ is Mortally wounded. Cameron and Jake Fisher & Joe are out unhurt but Mell is wounded, though not verry badly. Since I have commenced writing there has pretty heavy skirmishing commenced. If they attack us here they will have a lively time before they get us. We are pretty strongly fortified, but there are so many of us men that have no guns but if they wait til tomorrow (and it is now late in the day) we will all have guns. If I do not get to send this out to day I will put in a few more lines in the morning. Pray for me that my life may still be spaired to see you all that we may finally all get home to Heaven.

Your Devoted Son, T W Fisher Write soon¹⁰²

Camp Near New Market, Va.
Nov. 9, 1864

Dear Sis:

Before me lies a letter dated October 27, with the signature of E. R. Fisher¹⁰³ at the bottom. It is so seldom that I see that name of late

it is almost a stranger but I am going to answer this letter, hoping the signature will make its appearance again. The best news I have to write you is that we are all well and have had a good long rest. We have been camped here upwards of two weeks and have rested and recruited up considerably and you can tell mother that I drew a good blanket and a pair of shoes and pair of cotton socks the other day. Well Sis I don't know what to write hardly for there is no news here, all is as quiet as home. Some people begin to think the campaign is over and fighting will not be resumed until next spring. Well I will tell you what I have been doing since I have been at this camp. I was out of money when I came here and spent my last for a canteen of molasses at the rate of \$20.00 per gallon — you and mother would fill it cheaper than that, wouldn't you? To make myself a little money I have been speculating in fruit and cleared a little. Well the first is your apology for not writing me sooner then in the second place you acknowledge the receipt of my letter containing one from A.R.H. Then you say you went to Hiltens you and cousin Peggie and you took a notion to go to Snavelys and you stayed so long mother had to send after you. That was funny. While I think of it I will tell you that cousin Mary Fisher (in Ashe Co.) is married to a man by the name of Dickson and from what I can learn he is in tolerable affluent circumstances. I have just heard that Jacob Jonas and Barbara Rosenbaum are married. One thing more and I am done for the present: Blad and myself want you to send us the ballad of "Gentle Fannie Ray". It was a tune brother Jimmie used to sing so much. I will now close hoping these few lines will find you all enjoying good health.

Cameron wishes to be kindly remembered by you and all the rest of the family.

Write soon to your brother.
Thomas W. Fisher¹⁰⁴

Camp Fishersville. Augusta Co. Va.
Tuesday Jan. 24th. 1865

Dear Parents.

I seat myself this morning to drop you a few lines in answer to the one received in the box of provision. It found me and all the rest of the company well and still we enjoy the same blessing and hope these few lines will find you all enjoying the same blessing.

It would have done you good to see us smather Sausage and buck wheat cakes & butter and other things. This will give us a start in rations that will last us 2 or 3 weeks. I would like to know what you

meant by saying what you did about _____ Davis. I expect he has been writing something home about me. When he first came here to the company we took him into our mess. But he was so abominable selfish that we turned him out to shift for him self. And I expect he has written home about it. I'll tell you how he done. — When any of us got anything to eat we would devide with the mess And one evening he got some meat and he took it off to an other mess and cooked it. For fear if he cooked at our fire some of us would get some of it. That with many such tricks before that — made us a little po-----uted and we excommunicated him from the mess.

My mess is – Puss & Blad, Rufus W. Beel & Robert G. Bell. 4 verry handsome and intelligent gentlemen.

I am going to send this letter by Mr. James A. Harrell he is going home in the morning. His time will be out the 14 of Feb. and he says he will bring any thing you wish to send me. If you don't hear of us leaving here before he comes back you may send me another small box if you want to and that will do me so long as I am going to stay in the army.

I am in better hopes of the war ending sooner than I have ever had.

We are whiped and our head men know it and I think they will wind it up. Before they will be driven into it by force.

It is possible that the war may last 8 or 9 months longer, but it is quite improbable.

I think I will get a furlough in about 5 or 6 weeks if it was not for that I would not stay here 10 days longer.

That soap you sent me just came in good time my clothes were all dirty and I had no soap. I often regreted that I had forgotten to write to you to send me a piece in that box. Well I must close.

Write soon and give me all the news. Yours with Regards,

Wint¹⁰⁵

Thus concludes the known Thomas Winton Fisher letters. The 51st Virginia proceeded to move. On early March 2 , through snow and sleet, the Regiment pushed on to Waynesboro. While preparing to cross the Shenandoah River, they were met by Gen. George Custer's cavalry, striking hard on the left flank and causing confusion among the Rebels. The Federals closed in on them, and on March 10, the Valley of Virginia was lost to the enemy. Gen. Wharton, looking back on the disastrous defeat, recalled his small force of 800 facing 7,500 "splendidly equipped cav-

alry". The Confederates had no chance in the freezing March weather; the majority of the 51st Virginia surrendered, becoming prisoners of war. Thomas Winton Fisher was among the 393 taken captive. They were marched to Staunton in mud up to the knees. At Staunton, food for the prisoners was taken from the Western State Hospital (the asylum) stores, and sympathetic ladies in the town shared food with the captives.

On the way to Winchester, an attempt to free the prisoners occurred at Mt. Jackson when Gen. Rosser's cavalry attacked the Federal guard, the 1st New Hampshire Cavalry. Afterward, the prisoners were marched on to Harper's Ferry. From there Thomas was moved to Pea Patch Island at Ft. Delaware, Delaware, where he endured the three months before his release on June 20, 1865, after signing the Oath of Allegiance. A line to a song the prisoners reportedly sang was "the most unlucky devil is the prisoner of war."¹⁰⁶ Though Thomas left no written or oral history of this period of his life, it was assuredly a memory best repressed.

VIII. Home — At Last

The 51st Virginia fought the "forgotten war", far from Lee's famous army of Northern Virginia. After their release from northern prisons, they quietly plodded to their homes and waiting loved ones. Thomas anxiously returned to his two young sons and the home and hearth of his parents.

James S. Davis, in his Regimental history of Virginia's 51st Infantry, states in his epilogue:

No cheering crowds or clanging bands greeted the survivors of the 51st Virginia as they returned home. Broken fences and weed-covered fields marked once-prosperous farms. Most men desired not to talk about the war, yet none would ever forget the bitter winters in the Kanawha Valley, or engagements at Fort Donelson, New Market, Cold Harbor, Winchester, Leetown, Cedar Creek and Waynesboro. Some remembered only the victories, just as others painfully recalled fleeing from the enemy on several occasions in the Shenandoah Valley."¹⁰⁷

After a time of loneliness Thomas married Lenora Louisa Spraker, ten years younger, on January 1, 1866, with his father officiating. Born to

this union were five daughters and a son: Ellen Porter (b. Jan. 9, 1870), Laura Caroline (b. Mar. 30, 1872), Medora Kieffer (b. Sept 5, 1874), Frances Leticia Summers (b. Mar. 16, 1878), George E. Munsey (b. June 29, 1881), and Willie Sawyer (b. Jan 28, 1884).¹⁰⁸

In daughter Ellen's memoirs, she recalls her father

always held family prayer and took us to church and Sunday School. Often we attended two Sunday Schools....Father was Superintendent and a steward at Mt. Ephraim....When we children were too small to walk our dear old father got on an old grey horse we named Mollie and took two or three of us on her and we went to Sunday School and church. Then as we grew older we walked and it was about 2½ miles from our house and we went and was scarcely ever absent.¹⁰⁹

Life continued on the farm and there was regular work as a carpenter and builder of homes, business establishments, and barns.¹¹⁰ Most notable of the buildings he designed and helped build was the second church building of Mt. Ephraim Methodist Church (after the original burned), where he served many years as a deacon and trustee. The dedication took place September 24, 1876. About this time Thomas built himself a storehouse, and his children took chickens, eggs, and other products raised on the farm to the store for sale.

Thomas' father, Absalom, died June 3, 1877¹¹¹, and afterward his mother lived with her son and family until her own death 10 years later.¹¹² The 1880 census found Thomas W. Fisher in the Blacklick District of Wythe County, Va. His occupation was listed as farmer, living with wife, Louisa S, 32, Jason A, 19, Reuben P, 18, 4 daughters ages 2-10 and Judith O., 69, mother.

A few months before this census was taken, Thomas had some problems with his younger teen-aged son, Paul. He had left home, and his father had written a letter to this somewhat rebellious son, in a loving but firm tone. It is included here for it curiously sounds as if recently authored, rather than a hundred years ago, and it completes the character study of this man, who here exemplifies his parental concern for his son at age 17.

At home, Sunday evening Feb 1st 1880

Dear Son.

I wrote you a short note in Jaces¹¹³ letter & promised to write more at length soon Which promise I now propose to comply with.

You have been informed in Lenore's¹¹⁴ letter that we are all well. The weather is somewhat colder now than it has been and as tomorrow is ground hog day I reckon we will learn through his hogship what is to be the result of the winter yet to come.

Our meeting closed to night a week ago and resulted in bountiful conversions & 16 or 17 accessions to the church. There were some to orate penitents when the meeting closed.

In this letter I want to rectify an error that you seem to have fallen into respecting what I wrote to you in my first letter. You say in a few lines to "Granny"¹¹⁵: "that from the way Pa writes he don't want me to come home &c." This is what I said. "If you can come home and behave and be an obedient son" come on home, but if not then stay away: So that from what you wrote to Mother I suppose you thought you could not comply with the requirement and therefore you will not come: and now I want to say further so that you may know on whom & on what to depend, and as there may be no misunderstanding here after. . and what I want to say is this. — As you have thought it proper and right and honorable to take three years of time which properly and legally belong to your parents and have left home, to "handle your own way" I say if you suggest this is justice I hope you will be satisfied with your own bargains and when I come to close up my affairs in this world. If I have any thing to leave behind I hope you will not think I acted unjustly if I give it to those who stay with me and take an interest in my welfare and leave those out who care only for self and nothing for me.

I dont know exactly what you meant by going to the clerks office and examining my deed. Whether you would have taken it from me and turned us out doors I dont know. Or who was advising you in this matter I don't know. But I think I have an Idea. Now all these things are sore to my heart, and my mind will have to undergo a great change if you stay away and use your 3 years time, if I can help you any more. So that you can easily see from what I have written that if you waste your time running over the country from place to place, spending what you make at one place traveling to an other and at the time you come of age have no more than you have now which ten chances to one will be the case. It is you that have done it not me.

Do not expect to get help from me. Now if you are satisfied and intend to be satisfied with the time from now till you are of age, take it and make the best use of it you can, but If you now prefer to come home be as wise son shall be, I will do by you as by the ballance. Now I have set life and death before you. "Choose you this day whom you

will serve."¹¹⁶ I will just add one more sentence and then dismiss this subject from my pen hereafter. That sentence is this. Read, Ponder and reflect and then act for your self.

I have but little Idea that you are doing as well as Jace think you are. I fear when you come to settle up board washing shop rent & lumber bills & other material there will be but little left for Paul. You need not be uneasy about me writing to any one that you run off. If you are determined to be on your own I wish you may do well but I fear you will not find it half as easy to get along in this world as you have fancied it was and before you reach my age & experience you will say Pa told the truth.

I have written enough for the present, and will now close. Let us hear from you again.

With a sincere prayer for your welfare I am your

Affectionate Father

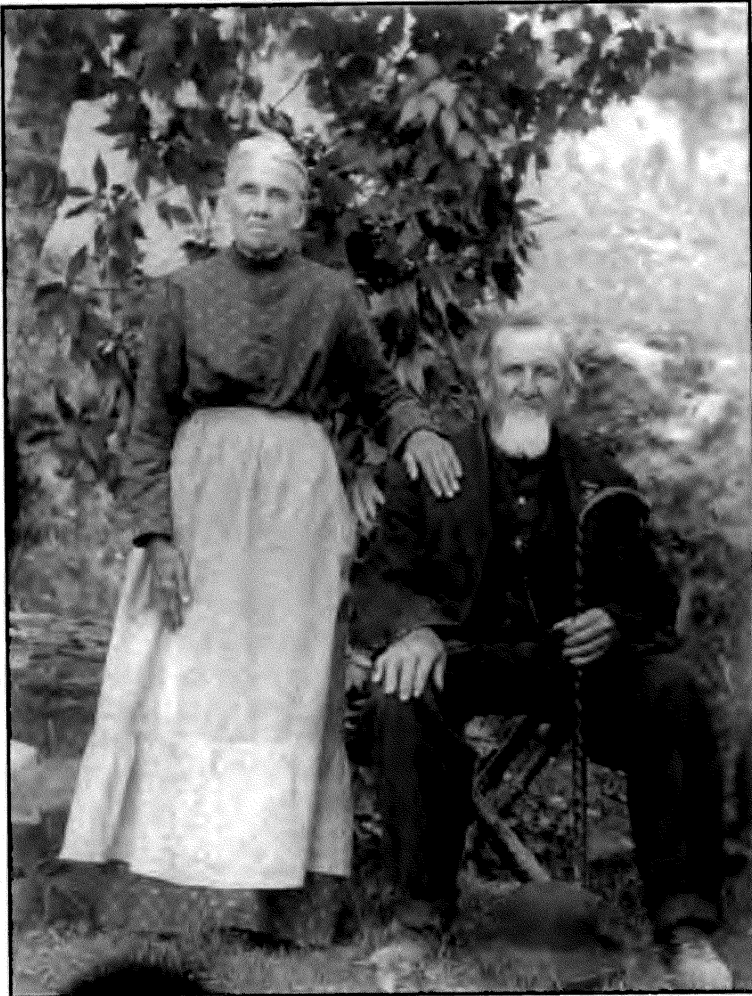
Thos. W. Fisher¹¹⁷

It is of particular interest to note that Paul was at home according to the June, 1880, census.

In later years this same son followed in his father's footsteps and became an excellent carpenter and architect. And, when the third Mt. Ephraim Church was built, the designer was Reuben Paul Fisher. This church building was dedicated October 26, 1914. Paul was also a rural



*Mt. Ephraim Methodist Church, Crockett, Va.,
designed by Reuben Paul Fisher. Dedicated October 26, 1914.*



Thomas Winton Fisher and "Sis", Elizabeth Rachel Fisher Simmerman.

mail carrier in the Crockett area of Wythe County, making his deliveries in horse and carriage. For his own amusement Paul wrote articles for the Pulaski, Virginia, newspaper using the pseudonym Silas Frogg. Thomas' elder son, Jason Alfred, was a Methodist preacher in southwest Virginia.

In his later years, Thomas is remembered by his great granddaughter, Mildred Riggle Brown, as a man who spent most of his time sitting in his front yard or porch reading his Bible, with Lenora frequently by his side. When a young girl, Mildred and her parents lived for a while with this maternal grandfather. She fondly remembers sitting on his knee as

he read and sang to her, often pulling out a piece of hard candy from his shirt pocket — with a bit of lint attached!

Thomas Winton Fisher died November 2, 1921¹¹⁸, one year after Lenora's passing. He ended his earthly sojourn at the age of eighty-four (84) years, rejoining his beloved family once again with rejoicing in heaven. His earthly remains are buried in the Mt. Ephraim Church Cemetery in Crockett, Va. His pilgrimage was ended.

Author's note: This paper is written in tribute to Thomas Winton Fisher, my great-great grandfather (descending through Reuben Paul, Nettle Fisher Riggle, and Mildred Riggle Brown). In all the letters uncovered and studied and other research completed, no disparaging word was found. In my eyes he was a great man, a man to be honored and respected for his war-time bravery and his unwavering faith in God, even when the days were darkest. He left behind a legacy of faith.

Every effort has been made to accurately transcribe the original letters with spelling left as it appeared. Some original letters are in poor condition, and a few words are undecipherable due to torn paper, burns, or scotch-tape repairs. Apparently, some spelling corrections and changes were made to those letters that appeared in the newspaper; if originals were not available for comparison, the reader may note some inconsistencies.

Special thanks to: Bobbie Irvin Jones, who organized her Grandmother's newspaper clippings of some of the TWF letters; Merle Neece Hash for typing those TWF letters and forwarding them to Professor Robertson's Civil War files; Dianne McGinley Gardener and Mildred Riggle Brown for providing photographs which help to make the words come alive; Dianne for her Fisher genealogy; Thomas W. Fisher's grandson, Garland C. Irvin, for providing helpful insights to the real person; James I. Robertson for making his files available; the Wytheville newspaper for publishing many of the TWF war letters in 1933; and author James A. Davis for his detailed history, *51st Virginia Infantry*.

In the interim since Part I was published, two additional letters have been discovered (August 23, 1863 and September 22, 1864) due to the efforts of another of Thomas' descendants, Naomi Kincer Suthers. To her, and to John M. Wolford, the author is grateful. The search continues. . . .

Endnotes, Part II

40. In Washington County, near Abingdon.
41. North Carolina.
42. Col. Gabriel Wharton.
43. Printed in *Southwest Virginia Enterprise*, October, 1933.
44. Macadamized: "paved by laying and rolling layers of broken stone".
45. David Fisher, father of Absalom Fisher.
46. Printed in *Southwest Virginia Enterprise*, October, 1933.
47. Ibid.
48. General Richard Stoddard Ewell.
49. George Wythe Fisher, a cousin, died at Staunton Hospital of typhoid fever July 27, 1863 (J.S. Davis).
50. Printed in *Southwest Virginia Enterprise*, October, 1933.
51. Ibid.
52. Elizabeth Rachel Fisher
53. Methodist Church, Wythe Co. On March 13, 1855, David Fisher deeded to Absalom Fisher, his son, and Reuben Fisher, Frances' father, and other trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1 acre of land and the Slate Springs Church on Walkers Branch.
54. Printed in *Southwest Virginia Enterprise*, October, 1933.
55. Died of typhoid fever in Charlottesville Hospital on September 20, 1863 (J.S. Davis).
56. Original: John M. Wolford, Bristol, Va.
57. General Samuel Jones.
58. Mini-balls.
59. Sons, Jason Alfred, age 3, and Reuben Paulett, age 1½ yrs.
60. Printed in *Southwest Virginia Enterprise*, October 24, 1933.
61. James A. Davis, *51st Virginia Infantry* (Lynchburg, Va.: H. E. Howard Co., 1984), pp. 191-21.
62. Sister Nancy, age 19, died Oct., 16, 1862; son John Cooper Fisher, age 3, died Nov. 9, 1862; and wife Frances Ann Fisher, age 22, died Nov. 10, 1862 — all of diphtheria.
63. Tennessee.
64. Printed in *Southwest Virginia Enterprise*, October, 1933.
65. "A taste of".
66. Camp near Abingdon, Washington County.
67. Printed in *Southwest Virginia Enterprise*, October, 1933.
68. Son, Jason Alfred Fisher, age 3 yrs.
69. Thought to be a misspelling of Captain William C. Bourn, Co. I., 51st Regt.
70. Printed in *Southwest Virginia Enterprise*, October, 1933.
71. Rader is mother's maiden name.
72. Printed in *Southwest Virginia Enterprise*, October, 1933.
73. Davis, *51st Virginia Infantry*, pp. 21-23, 32-36.
74. General Gabriel Wharton.
75. Lieut. Colonel John P. Wolf.
76. Major William Yonce.

77. "Grape shot": gunpowder, wadding of cloth or paper, and scrap metal when put into cannon and fired upon infantry sprays out shrapnel.
78. 2 Lieut. Jacob Foster Fisher, Co. F, 51st Regt., a cousin and also wife's uncle.
79. Printed in *Southwest Virginia Enterprise*, October, 1933.
80. Battle of Hanging Rock, near Salem.
81. Artillery.
82. Jason Lee Fisher, wife's brother.
83. Original: Ronald Harris, Waynesboro, Va.
84. Symbol used in period newspaper classified advertisements to draw attention.
85. General William W. Averell.
86. Joseph G. Hilten, Co. D, 45th Regt., friend.
87. Captain William Yonce.
88. Original: Darlene Brown Simpson, Blacksburg, Va.
89. To send by public conveyance free of expense.
90. Thought to be a misspelling of Captain William C. Bourn.
91. Alfred Bronson Fisher, wife's brother.
92. Deceased wife, died November 10, 1862.
93. Greenville Monroe ("Mon") Fisher, wife's brother.
94. Original: Darlene Brown Simpson.
95. Brig. General John McCausland.
96. Alfred Bronson Fisher, wife's brother.
97. Printed in *Southwest Virginia Enterprise*, October, 1933.
98. Jehid F. Umbarger
99. Andrew J. Hildreth, J.S. Davis reports death at Winchester.
100. Newton H. Repass, J.S. Davis reports captured at Winchester.
101. Major William A. Yonce, J. S. Davis reports death at Charlottesville Hospital on Sept. 27, 1864, "where and when wounded unknown".
102. Original: John M. Wolford, Bristol, Va.
103. Elizabeth Rachel Fisher, his only living sibling.
104. Printed in *Southwest Virginia Enterprise*, October, 1933.
105. Original: John M. Wolford.
106. J. S. Davis, *51st Virginia Infantry*, pp. 39-40.
107. *Ibid*, p. 44.
108. Thomas Winton Fisher Family Bible.
109. Ellen Fisher Wolford Memoirs, 1948. (Courtesy of Naomi Kincer Struthers, great-granddaughter).
110. Thomas W. Fisher Diary, 1874. (Courtesy of Bobbie Irvin Jones, great-granddaughter).
111. T. W. Fisher Family Bible.
112. *Ibid*.
113. Jason Alfred Fisher, Paul's brother.
114. Paul's stepmother.
115. Paul's grandmother, Judith O. Rader Fisher.
116. Biblical reference (Joshua 24:15).
117. Original: Darlene Brown Simpson.
118. T. W. Fisher Family Bible.