



The Civil War

ARTIFACTS FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE MUSCATINE ART CENTER

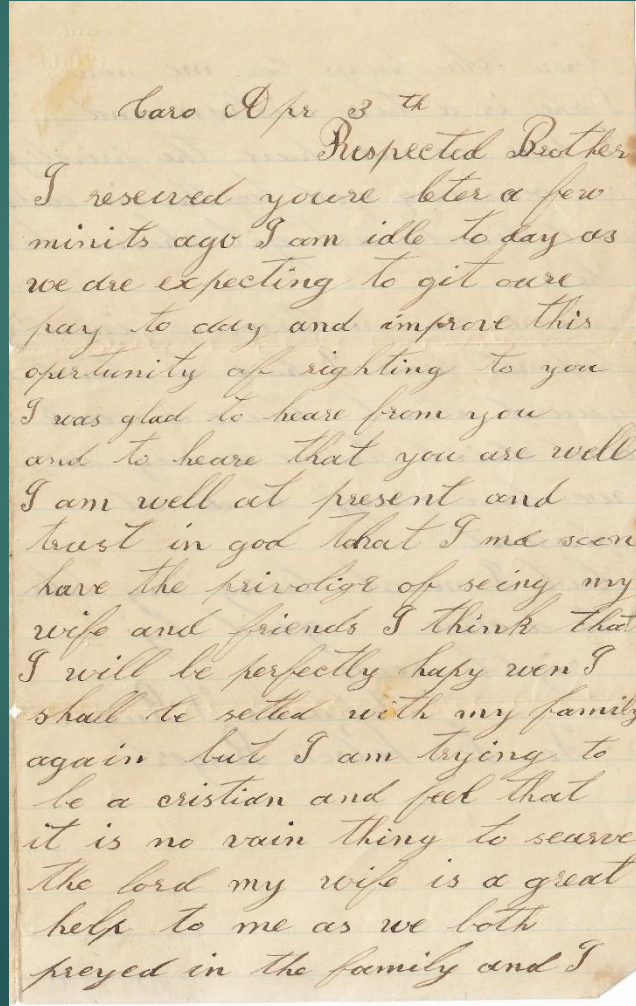
Iowa and the Civil War

- In April 1861 The War Department issued a call for volunteers and asked for one regiment from Iowa, but enough men enlisted to form ten. By the end of the war, Iowa had the highest percentage of volunteer enlistments of any state, North or South.
- In total, Iowa furnished 48 infantry regiments, 9 cavalry regiments and 4 batteries of artillery.
- The youngest Iowan to serve in the war may have been Cyrus Lichty of Cedar Falls. Lichty was only twelve when he enlisted as a drummer boy in 1861. He survived until 1940.
- 18 year old Shelby Norman of Muscatine was the first Iowan to be killed on a Civil War battlefield. Norman died on August 10, 1861 at the Battle of Wilson's Creek, just four months after enlisting.
- African-Americans from Iowa also served the Union cause by forming the 1st Iowa African Infantry which was later reorganized by the U.S. Army as the 60th Regiment U.S. Colored Troops. Considering that Iowa's total black population in 1861 was no more than 1,000, this was a significant contribution to the Union war effort.
- Iowa Statistics – 76,534 Iowans served in the Union Army. 3,450 died of wounds; 8,498 died of disease; 706 died of other causes; total deaths – 13,169; 8500 returned home wounded.

Letter Writing

When he wasn't marching, fighting, or setting up camp, the Civil War soldier might take a few moments to write to his loved ones at home. These letters often described life in camp, homesickness, battles, and general news. This was their only link to home.

- ▶ The average soldier had no more than a 4th grade education. Usually the spelling is phonetic and there is a general lack of punctuation (see letter).
- ▶ Sutlers (salesmen that traveled with the troops) sold stationary and decorative envelopes to the soldiers.
- ▶ Mail service followed the troops so they could mail their letters. The U.S. Mail Service allowed Union soldiers to send letters marked "Soldier's Letter" without postage.
- ▶ As a way to isolate the South, the Union put blockades in place, resulting in a shortage of paper, stamps, and writing utensils, so it was more difficult for the Confederates to write home.



Caro Apr 3rd
Respected Brother
I reseived your lter a few
minits ago I am idle to day as
we are expecting to git our
pay to day and improve this
oportunity of righting to you
I was glad to heare from you
and to heare that you are well
I am well at present and
trust in god that I ma soon
have the privolige of seing my
wife and friends I think that
I will be perfectly hapy wen I
shall be settled with my family
again but I am trying to
be a cristian and feel that
it is no vain thing to searve
the lord my wife is a great
help to me as we both
preyed in the family and I

"Respected Brother I **reseived**
youre lter a few **minits** ago I
am idle **to day** as we are
expecting to **git our** pay **to**
day and improve this **oportunity**
of **righting** to you I was glad to
heare from you and to **heare**
that you are well I am well at
present and trust in god that I
ma soon have the **privolige** of
seing my wife and friends...."

Excerpt from a letter written by Charles
T. Ruger to his brother Nelson Ruger

Camp 11th Iowa June 22nd 1863
Dear wife and relatives

I again set down and attempt to write you a few lines to let you know that I am well. since I last wrote we have advanced our lines about two miles. and for the last three days there has been dreadful hard fighting on the wings of our army but the center has only had skirmishing. and we are near the center. but still we are exposed to their shells. they have thrown several shells into our camp to day but I have not heard of any bodys getting hurt by them to day. There is various reports about the success of our army but you will get that in the papers in better shape than I can give it to you so I will say nothing about it. but one thing is certain there has been hard fighting and it is still going on and when that is the case some body is in danger of getting hurt. and still they continue to shell our camp I am afraid that they will hurt some body yet. if they do not stop soon. but that is what we have to expect from them and they have got to look out for themselves for we generally throw two shells to their one. they have chosen a very strong place to fight

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Excerpt from a letter written by Daniel J. Parvin to his wife Sarah while fighting in Vicksburg, MS, June 22nd, 1863

Siege of Vicksburg



In May and June of 1863, Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's armies converged on Vicksburg, investing the city and entrapping a Confederate army under Lt. Gen. John Pemberton. On July 4, Vicksburg surrendered after prolonged siege operations. This was the culmination of one of the most brilliant military campaigns of the war. With the loss of Pemberton's army and this vital stronghold on the Mississippi, the Confederacy was effectively split in half.

SIEGE OF VICKSBURG

Vicksburg Miss. Dec. 31st 1863

Dear wife and relatives

I again set down and attempt to write to you. things about Vicksburg are about as usual. the last letter that I wrote to you was on Christmas eve. and that evening we had orders to get ready to march at eleven o'clock with two days rations in our haversacks our destination was red bone. a distance of about twelve miles. we heard that our troops stationed there were a going to be attacked so we went out there to help them. But when we got there we found out that they were in no danger and the next day or on Christmas the officers got on a spree disgracing themselves and us. we got out there about three o'clock in the morning. and the soldiers on their side were not looking for us. and when we got into their camp our boys raised the yell and you had ought to of seen ^{them} coming out of their tents in their shirttails loading their guns. but they soon found out that we were friends. and they put up their guns and so of them went to bed again and others staid and talked with us. and we moved two or three hundred yards beyond their camp and laid down until daylight. and we staid there Christmas night and started for our camp next day

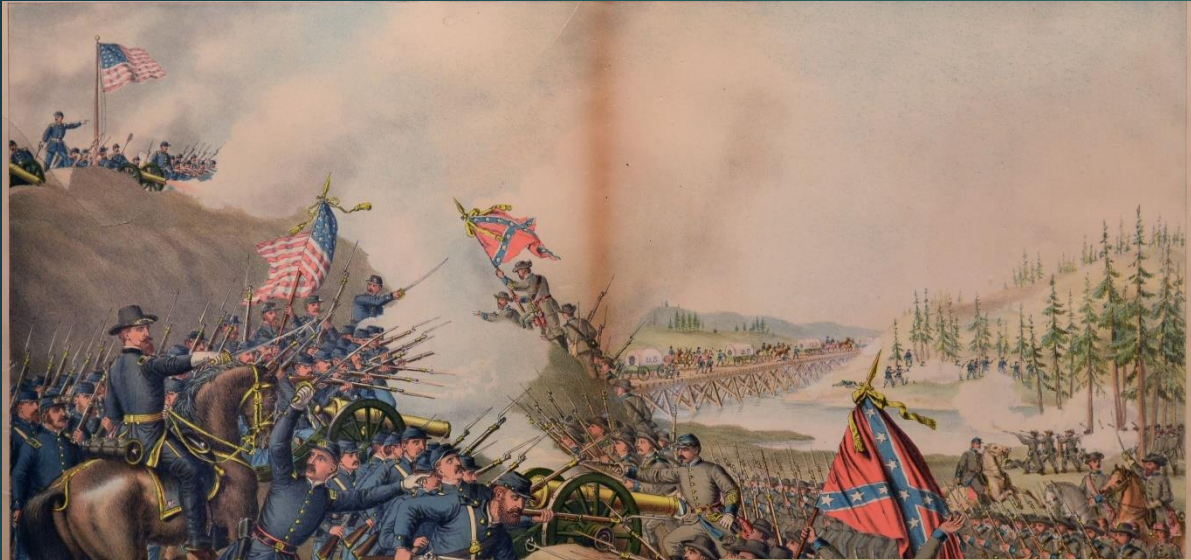
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Excerpt from a letter from a letter written by Daniel J. Parvin to his wife Sarah while he was camped in Vicksburg, MS, December 31st, 1863

Battle of Nashville



BATTLE OF FRANKLIN

Battles of Franklin and Fort Donelson. These, along with the Battle of Fort Henry, were victorious for the Union, and ultimately led them to secure Nashville.



BATTLE OF FORT DONELSON

At the Battle of Nashville, which took place from December 15 to December 16, 1864, the once powerful Confederate Army of Tennessee was nearly destroyed when a Union army commanded by General George Thomas swarmed over the Rebel trenches around Nashville. The battle marked the end of major Confederate offensives in the Western campaign. It has been called the only perfectly fought battle of the war because it unfolded in greater accordance with the victor's battle plan than any other clash of that conflict.

(See handwritten accounts by two Muscatine men on the battle and the death of Col. S.G. Hill.)

Guns – Infantry

U.S. Armories- Springfield, MA & Harper's Ferry, VA (now WVA)

- ▶ Rifles were preferred for their long range and accuracy, but the basic weapon of an infantry soldier was the single-shot, muzzle (front)-loading percussion musket. The most popular of these was the Springfield, mainly manufactured at the U.S. Armory in Springfield, Massachusetts, and were generically referred to as "Springfields" by the troops.
- ▶ A close competitor to the Springfield, and the best of the foreign-made weapons, was the British Enfield. These were imported by both North and South. The Enfield fired bullets the same distance as a Springfield, and the ammunition was interchangeable between the two.



1853 Enfield rifled musket

1842 Harper's Ferry smoothbore percussion musket





1842 Springfield smoothbore musket



1855 Enfield rifled musket



1858 Tower smoothbore musket (English)



1861 Norfolk rifled musket

Guns – Cavalry

Men who fought on horseback could not properly carry, load, or fire the full-sized guns used by infantry, and instead used small guns and sabers (swords).

- ▶ The principal weapon of the cavalry was a short-barreled carbine. These were effective out to 200 yards.
- ▶ One main gun of the cavalry on both sides was the Sharps (type of pistol). Even though a single-shot, its breech (back)-loading mechanism allowed a soldier to shoot up to 5 shots per minute, against possibly 3 shots from a muzzle (front)-loading musket. Another highly used gun was the Henry Rifle. Carrying 16 shots, it too put a Confederate opponent at a severe disadvantage.



Carbines (do not belong to MAC)



Pistols (do not belong to MAC)

Ammunition



Iron bullets recovered from the battlefield at Vicksburg.



Iron bullets and minie balls from the battlefield of Stones River Murfreesboro, Tennessee.



Iron bullet, minie ball, and large buck shot. Recovered from the battlefield at Antietam, Maryland.

Lead-tipped bullets in wooden box. One bullet has paper and cartridge. Property of Thomas B. Snowden, killed in the Battle of Corinth, Mississippi.



Swords & Bayonets

Both infantry and cavalry soldiers had swords. Cavalry typically had a specially curved sword called a saber, but pistols and carbines were easier to use on horse back. Infantry soldiers armed with muskets or rifles also had bayonets that they could affix to the ends of their guns if they were fighting in close-range combat.



1860 "Nouveau" Pattern Cavalry sword and scabbard



1840 Pattern



Bayonet and sheath

Artillery Shells

These shells were shot from large cannons placed behind the infantry line.

Round projectile shot with hole in bottom. Hole would be filled with powder and threads on edge to thread a fuse.



"James"- Bullet-shaped shell. Grooved and cut out from middle to bottom of shell. Gases and lead made shell rotate. Weighs 9.5 lbs.



Bullet shaped shell. The projectile is for a 3 1/2" rifle canon with an opening for a fuse.

"Parrot"- Bullet shaped shell with flat sides and a hole at the top (the nose) for a fuse. Used with a 3" rifled canon. Designed to spin upon exit. Weighs 8.5 lbs.

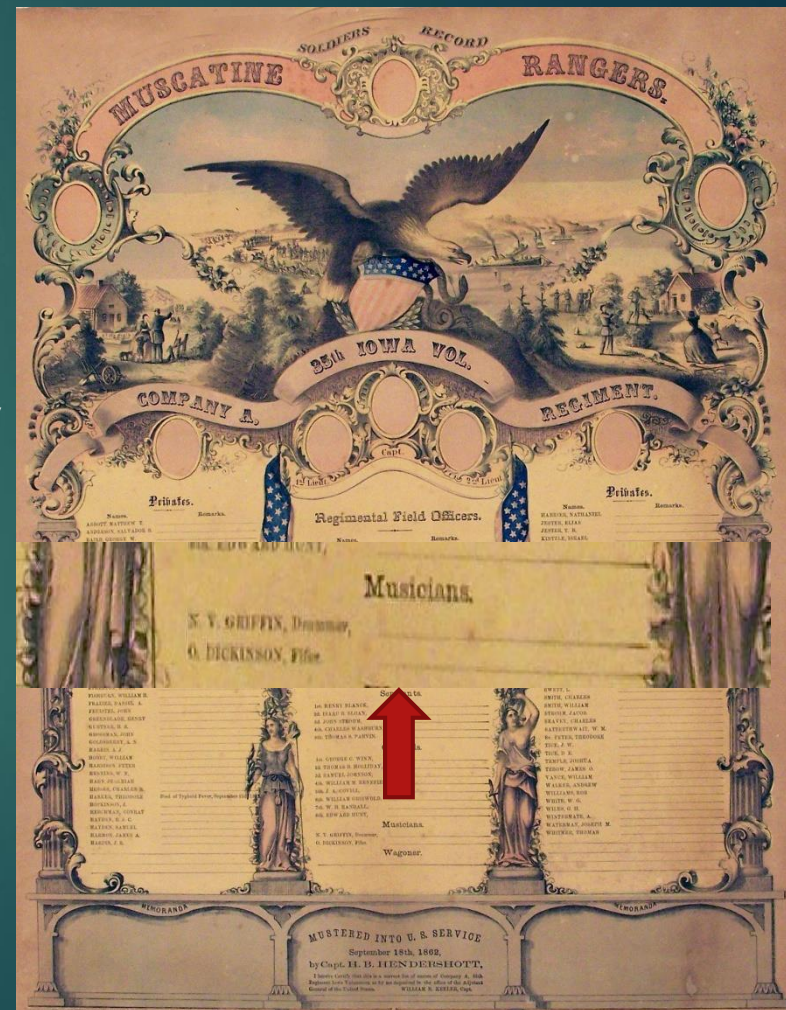


Music

Music was used extensively during the Civil War. Not only a form of entertainment, music sounded the soldiers' daily activities, led them into battle and laid them to rest.

- ▶ Singing was one of the soldiers' favorite ways to pass time. Many songs were inspirational marching tunes meant to keep morale high, while others were sad, sentimental songs whose lyrics reminded the men of loved ones and home.
- ▶ Soldiers on both sides would frequently borrow songs they had heard the enemy singing and rewrite the lyrics; for this reason many Civil War songs have at least two versions. One such tune was "Dixie". Though the song was created before the Civil War, it gained in popularity during this time. "The Battle Cry of Freedom" and "Home Sweet Home" also featured both Union and Confederate versions. "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" and "The Southern Cross", were poems that were later set to music.

Rosters such as the one shown for the 35th Iowa Volunteer Regiment, would not only list the soldiers fighting with the company, but also include the musicians in the regiment.



Thomas Cummins
1st Iowa Inf., Co. A



- ▶ Each company in an infantry regiment had a drummer who would play patriotic songs to boost moral going into each battle. Commanders relied on them to communicate orders and signal troops to move and change formations. Not all musicians were allowed to go into battle, and were often ordered to the rear to assist surgeons and care for the wounded.
- ▶ During camp, drummers signaled wake-up calls, lights-out orders, and all other daily activities in between.



Belonged to George B. Hill, chief musician of the 35th Reg. Iowa Volunteer Infantry (died Aug 15, 1863)



- ▶ Drummers were often accompanied by fifers, who played along with the drumbeats both on and off the battlefield.



Conrad Brown (Braun)- 35th IA fife player



Charles Knoblauch-
35th IA, Co. C bugle
player

- ▶ Cavalry brigades did not use drums and fifes, but instead relied solely on bugles to carry out the same duties.

