

Dear Sally,

Winter camp and drill has about ended and with the comin of summer cometh the secesh. Our ranks has bin growin thanks to brother Stanley's recruitin efforts. Many a new recruit should first see the pirate-saddled elephant soon enuf.

We had our last company drill on the banks of Dresang Run. To keep the lads lively, Capt'n Doug had a contest on loadin and firin. Pa of course, upon heaing such, issued Stuart a quaker gun so as not to hurt hisself or anyone else; we all remember the shot herd round Greenbush!!

Capt'n had us fire three rounds per trial. The three trial winners were of course yours truly, private Charles and brother Stanley. The third trial I had to borrow rounds from brother Stosh, and knew rit off trouble was pendin. Knowin Stosh doesn't fire much, his powder was aged and fermented. Bein Pa's first-born, you can imagin my confusion with fermentation in me moath and not indulgin. Of the three trial winners, brother Stanley had the fastest time, Hurrah!! It was a proud moment for the family, especially Pa; look out Mr. Jameson!

There was a parade in Dshkosh that some of us marched in. One word may best describe it: biblical. Knowin how well versed and lerned you are in the good book with the story of Noah, you need no further explainin. I mit add that the injun socks you knit me are quite heavy when water-logged.

Me banjo playin is comin along, at least the lads are no longer rushin off to volunteer for sink diggin detail when I pick it up. I have started playin Irish drinkin songs with a lad named Basil from Company K. He is a rit nice fella and lerned to. He uses fine elegant words as he says that Irish drinkin songs is redondent use of language. I spect when ma says that pa and jameson is back on speakin terms is redondent to.

Well Sally, rumors has bin spreadin through camp that the johnnies are havin a go at Escanaba agin. If this be so we surly will be called forward to battle. May providence be kind toward pa and his boys. Rit back as soon as you can bouts home and family.

Your loving brother,
Stephan

Dear Sally,

Hostilities have agin begun as I has bin in Escanaba tentin in gale force winds. While cuzin Basil and I braved the elements, Stosh and Stuart were hold up in a lovely publick house. Stanley was away on leave and was spected back on the morrow. Pa, that hardy old man, endured the winds as did I. However on the morrow, some would contend he was in the comforting embrace of a midnight maiden.

The following morn Basil was tendin the fire with no beloved camp cookie present or accounted for. Breakfast was hardtack, jerky and coffee; I shur misst Stanley rit off. When pa arose from his tent, there in the entry way was an empty bottle of jameson and some French trolup's fancy underdrawers. A course gossip spred like jameson marmalade that pa was makin time with a tawdry tart. The truth bekknown however was that the French linens belonged to private Mad Dog. The truth came to light later when like delicates were discovered in the private's tent during inspection.

The remainder of the day we partaked in drill, pastrys and stew. We did have a minor skirmish with a few rebs. We attacked and drove them from a fence-line capturing a cannon. After the skirmish my leave was granted and I obliged with a fare thee well. Sally, the remainder of this letter I did not witness personal like, but rather the accounts are taken from the gospels of Saints Stosh, Stanley and Basil.

After my departure, a rowh and rupshun soon began, as Basil so elegantly spake it. Stosh called Stanley an "Irish frog", upon which true testament of our Irish ancestry swiftly ensued. With a lepracon-like prance, Stanley pounced upon Stosh's rear and flank. As from experience, Stuart began takin odds and wagers but before riches could be had, pa broke up the donny-brook. Ma then assailed Stanley with a tongue lashin; aye fierce but a trifle to the whackin spoon. Basil then overheard Ma tell both Stanley and Stosh; "why can't you two be more like Stephan, a gentleman with no guile or vices!"

Captn Doug had another contest of loadin and firin from which a new top gun was named; Cpl Big Jim. Captn then challenged Big Jim and to the company's amazement Captn Doug won. Captn may as well put away his parlor pistol and take up the rifle like bonnie lads do.

The remainder of the eve was festive and I hear tell there was another pirate siten. Mad Dog claimed to have seen the aperishun much to Cpl Ed's exultin. Knowin however that Mad Dog owns, pray tell dons French trolup underdrawers and that Cpl Ed has bin known to drink an entire confederate regiment into submisshun, the story lacks some merit.

The rebels returned the following day and the ensuing battle caused quite a stir within our family. Stosh was agin captured, but his reputashun as the young Johnny abuser of Coon Valley, granted him good riddance from his rebel abductors. Stanley rec'd a head wound and at the surgeon's tent he claims an angel named Mildred tenderly caressed him back to health. Cuzin Basil says he went hand to hand with a reb and was knocked silly, aye but a wee stroll for Basil. Pa and Stuart must have dun rit brave work as the rebs sledaddled.

Before the company broke camp to pursue the rebs, a magical event happened best told poetically.

With a song of Erin in his heart
And Irish limericks to impart
He had a brogue so rich and true
The bonnie lad named Basil McHugh

He strove bout camp with gifts to bestow
Aye St. Patrick he be, the tale betold
The ole harp of Erin blazoned his chest
Shone bright as pa's eyes at a whisky fest

He danced a fine jig with fairy light feet
Passin out gifts, Irish music so sweet
"Praise be me lads, fare thee well and adeau."
Ne'er shall we forget St Basil McHugh.

Well Sally me pencil is but a nubbin so I shall say my adeau. This be two letters that I have sent with nary a response from you.

Sincerely your brother,
Stephan
