

# The Chatham Historical Journal

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## The Hadley Civil War Letters

Rose Hill, N.C.--  
Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup>/61

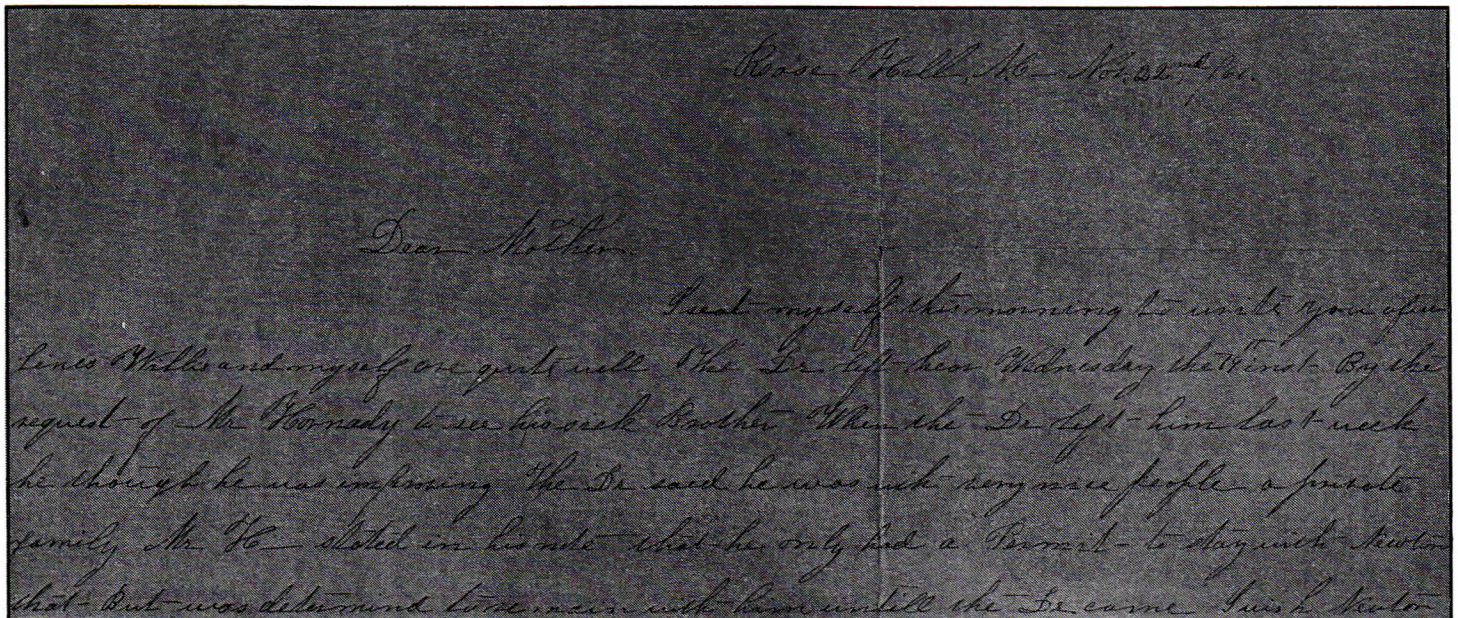
[In February 1995 Wade Hampton Hadley, Jr. presented a collection of letters to the Chatham County Historical Association. These nineteen letters were written between 10 October 1861 and 28 March 1865 by four brothers while with the Confederate Army, and by the wife of one of them. Jacob M. Hadley, the eldest, had graduated from medical school in 1860, married, and started his practice of medicine before the start of the war. William Cicero Hadley was operating his own farm and was married before enlisting in July 1862. John Wesley Hadley and Oliver Newton Hadley were living at home at Hadley's Mill on Landrum Creek. Neither of the two younger sons survived the war: John was killed in battle, and Newton died of typhoid fever. Sallie, referred to in Lizzie's letter to her mother-in-law, was the Hadley brothers' 19-year-old sister.

The full set of letters is housed in the Chatham Historical Museum in the courthouse, Pittsboro. The letters are fragile and remain in storage except for infrequent exhibits; however, they may be read in transcriptions made by Robert Wiesner. The museum is open on Fridays between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

The transcriptions below preserve the original spelling, punctuation, and inadvertent errors. The dash [-] was frequently used in place of comma or period.]

Dear Mother,

I seat myself this morning to write you a few lines Willis and myself are quite well The Dr. left hear Wednesday the 19<sup>th</sup> inst By the request of Mr Hornady to see his sick Brother When the Dr left him last week he though he was improving The Dr said he was with very nice people a private family Mr H- stated in his note that he only had a Permit to stay with Newton that But was determined to remain with him untill the Dr came I wish Newton was at home I know you would be much better satisfied If I was houskeeping I would have him brought to Rose Hill if he was able to be moved I would do all that I could for him. The Dr said he would be well taken care of where he is Dear Mother I sympathize with you. Know one knows a Mother's love Oh! it is inexpressible I received the letter Father wrote to the Dr after he left I learn you are all well except Minter I was very sorry to hear of his misfortune. I am under ten thousand obligation to you for sending my fruit to the Depot



As we will need it soon We cant get anything down here at a reasonable price Salt is worth 15 dollars by the sack Coffee can't be bought at any price Pa has not sent my furniture down yet I have written to him to send it immediately Mother I am very anxious to get to houskeeping It tisent very pleasant boarding with a Baby I am looking for the Dr back to-morrow though it is very unsertain about his coming He said he would not leave Newton untill he was better He has been attening to Mrs Biddle very closely for the last three month Dr is getting a very good practice at this time I must bring my letter to a close as Willis is fretting You must send Sallie down to spend some time with me I am so lonely The Dr is gone all the time I get the blues as soon as he is gone You must write soon and let me hear from you all Nothing more but remain your affectionate daughter

Lizzie-

Please excuse all mistakes as I am in great haste

Dear Mother

As I was disappointed in sending my letter Friday I will write a few lines more The Dr returned last evening with a sad heart bringing me the news of his Dear Brothers departure. Oh! its hard to part with one so near I would close as the Boy is ready to start I will write again soon Tell Sallie please write to as soon as she get this letter as I am very anxious to hear from her

Lizzie

Goldsboro, N.C.  
Aug 31<sup>st</sup> 1862

Dear Father,

We arrived here last evening found all right in regard to our Company. found a portion of Major Eavens Bitallion in camp here, drew our rations for men &, horses: 1/2 lb. bacon & 1 lb flour per day rice sugar candle &c in addition, 12 lbs corn & 14 lbs fodder for our horses per day. The health of the Company is good at this time, & we have drawn 22 very good tents for the use of our Co. There is no news of any interest about this place, at

The Chatham Historical Journal is an occasional publication of the Chatham County Historical Association. Its purpose is to disseminate items of historical interest about Chatham County. To be considered for publication, articles or photographs should be previously unpublished, of reasonable length, and include detailed sources of information.

Back issues, beginning in 1988, are available while they last. Correspondence should be addressed to the Secretary, CCHA, Box 913, Pittsboro, N.C. 27312.

present. I enclose one hundred dollars & I want you to satisfy yourself out of it for your horse boy &c and creadit my note with the remainder also the ballance on leather etc. account. If you have an opportunity to send old Fannie to Emma I hope you will do it; I will write to her when she will be at your house I saw J. Campbell & Perry at Pittsboro they told me they got only 5 stands of peaches out of my orchard & they thought it would make about 30 gallons of brandy in all. I want you to get & take care of 3/5 of it for me. J. Elmore told me the people in the neighborhood got & carried of about as much fruit is Perry did. that is the way soldiers are treated,

my hogs &c may stay at my place until you hear from me again,  
yours &c  
W. C. Hadley

Write soon address Goldsboro N.C.

John is well & well satisfide

Send the bill of horse & boy to me so that I may settle with the mess also pay Joshua Johnson \$2.00 for the use of his wagon,  
W C H

Camp near "Guinea Station"  
December 24<sup>th</sup> 1862

Dear Father

This is the 3rd or 4th line that I have written to you since I came to this army and not the first line have I rec'd in response. I need not tell you of our many toilsome & hard marches - cold & dreary Camps - nights of sleeping in Battle array - of all this you have doubtless heard something but might I not tell you something of real war - The historical descriptions of battles are are truly exciting & highly interesting but to see tens of thousands of veteran Troops in the open fields in Battle array - to hear with ones own ears the sharp crack of the skirmisher's Rifle - to see the flash and hear the tumultuous crash of artillery - to hear the the peculiar Whiz of a Shell falling near your head - by no means the most musical sounds in nature and these I have both seen and heard in the Battle of Fredericksburg. It was indeed melancholy to see men Bleed and die but oh how exhilarating to see our cause Triumph & to hear the shouts of our victorious Troops. I was indeed in better health and spirits during and since the fight than I have been in since I came into the army. We had legs, arms, and fingers to amputate. . . .

Your Affectionate Son  
J M Hadley

Camp: 4th Reg: NC S Troops  
9 o'clock Sunday night Feb. 15<sup>th</sup> 1863

Dear Mother- The time since I left your roof seems very long & I assure you that I have passed

through many dangers both seen & unseen-- since we met--yet through the interventions of Divine Providence in answer to the Prayers of Devoted & Pious Parents I am still spared-- amid friends & with the best of health. Blessings for which I owe the deepest gratitude of my heart-- I am truly grateful too for the fine health of my little Homeless family. I am under especial obligations to you & Father-- sister & all for your many kind offices in rendering them comfortable & happy whilst I am compelled to be absent serving my country in the cause of Liberty & Independence. I often think how very fortunate I am in having kind Parents where I could seek shelter when driven by the vandals from home. . . . I am still in Camp in the very spot where Father spent the night with me-- we have [been] having abundance of Snowey & Rainy weather & the roads are now in an almost impassable condition. Indeed so very muddy that the Forage masters cannot supply us with anything but a little musty corn for our horses. . . . Quite a No. of our Officers & men are absent on furlough; several are Resigning on the plea of ill health. Great many of our men who were wounded at Seven Pines are retiring, many of them mamed for life, I am having quite a No. Transferred to Hospital duty & discharged. I am still tenting with Lieut Hofflin our Commissary. Dr. Lawson, who has been with me since the 20th Jany is now absent on furlough. . . . His absence leaves me in charge both of the Regi & Brigade Hospital, which keeps me vy busy though the health of the Men is vy good & the Brigade tolrable. . .

From your affectionate son,  
J.M.H.

Camp Gordons Brigade Dec 30<sup>th</sup> 63  
Near Guinea Station, Va

Dear Father,

I received your kind and interesting letter of the 21<sup>st</sup> in<sup>st</sup> was glad to hear that all was well &c. Since the death of my esteemed Brother- John; I am more anxious than formerly to hear from home and kind relatives & friends there. Never do I expect to find another such friend or Brother, while I remain in the Army. Many times while on long and fatiguing marches we used to divide the last cracker or bite of meat with each other; it made no difference how small or mean his rations was he would never eat it without being satisfide I had some. And I always

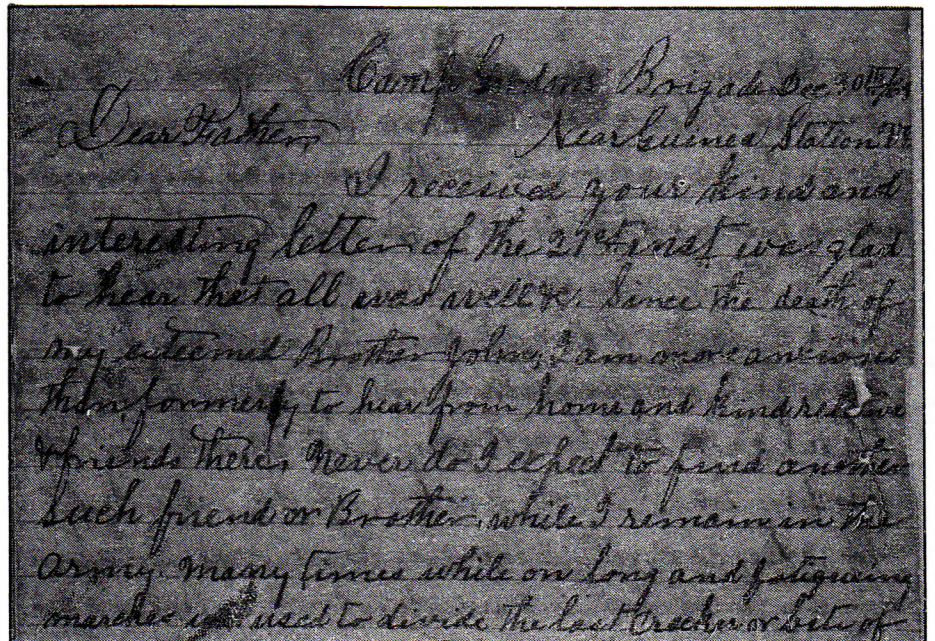
divided with him. I miss him very much, but I know it is useless to wish him back again. he was kind generous and agreeable to all who knew him, and was universally loved by his company and acquaintances in the Army. He remarked only a few days before he was killed "that he felt like it was time for him to be wounded or killed; as he had been in so many engagements & never received any wound."

I cheerfully join you in "thankfullness to God for my preservation from bodily harm. in many engagements. while many of my cumrades have fell upon the feild of carnage, while contesting with the enemy in defince of our homes friends and Liberty.

. . . .  
I have heard nothing from J M Hadley since I last wrote to you. he was then near Mortons Ford with his Regt. that is about thirty miles from here. I would like to see him but we are not allowed to pass more than five miles from Camp. We certainly do have very hard Masters in the Army. they equal or exceed the taskmasters of the Israelites But I hope there is a time not far distant when men will again be upon equality.

I sent by Mr. May John's Pistol overcoat & several other little tricks. which I suppose you have rec'd ere this.

I presume you recollect that I wrote to you about 2 months before he was killed that I had bought his horse for \$300.00 and paid him that amount. he kept the money a few days and handed it back to me to keep for him until he got his detail. I had it when he was killed and have it yet (subject to your orders). His detail came approved a few days after he was killed. but: alas, too late for him to enjoy it. I asked the privelige of going home on it but was



denied on account of being an officer. Gen Gordon gave it to one of his couriers. and he went home after a horse on it. When old Rock fell down in the charge at Middlesburg, Va and crippled himself John proposed to swap with me for a sorrel mair that I had captured, which I agreed to. that he might be mounted and go on to Pennsylvania with us. But Before we reached Gettysburg, Pa she lost some shoes & got lame by marching so far on Turnpike roads. When he captured the Bay horse, I bought, he turned the mare loose & left her there, & told me to keep her or sell old Rock in her stead, which I have done for \$2,50.00

I desire that you hold my grain and brandy until you see or hear from me again. You need not dispose of any of it unless Mr. B. Carter calls on you. if he does please furnish him.

I still hope to get home soon but can't name any time when I expect to be there. This leave me very well no news of interest all quiet about here.

Your ob<sup>t</sup> Son  
W<sup>m</sup> C. Hadley

(Please write soon)

[Pencil notes added to margins:] We have had rather a dull Christmas some have enjoyed themselves very well. I have better than I expected too. Give my love to the family.

Please excuse my changeable ink I have to [keep it ? ] to make it black all the good goes to the bottom. Good Bye

Cis

Outpost 6 miles West of Petersburg, Va  
Thursday, Oct 6<sup>th</sup> 1864

My Dear Emma

I have been on picket here for two days past, we are in sight of the Yankee lines, but they have been very quiet since I have been here. have not made any advance or attempt to capture our men on outpost. I wrote you two days ago giving some of the particulars of the late assault, and repulse of the enemy before our breastwork's, many of the vandals were killed & captured. Our infantry lost many men killed & wounded, loss in our cavalry very slight. But our duty has been very heavy on account of keeping up such a long line of pickets to prevent a flank movement by the enemy. We have not had any rest for more than a week. The enemy are fortifying west of Reams Station: wherever they gain any ground they stop and go under ground. they have heavy force about the Brick House &

Reams Station. I have not seen any paper since I have been on picket consequently I can't give you the news from any other quarter. Hoping to hear from you soon I will close and cook me some grub. Give my love to the family & Maggie.

Your Devoted Husband,  
W<sup>m</sup> C. Hadley

Camp near Stoney Creek Depo, Va  
Mar. 28<sup>th</sup>/65

Dear Father

I drop this note to inform you of my whereabouts & safety. On Thursday night this Division was ordered to Burgess Mills near Petersburg. Started about 1 o'clock A.M. But when we arrived there the enemy had been repulsed & driven back by our infantry. enemy lost about 700 prisoners & about same number killed & wounded. our loss reported not so heavy They allowed our troops to take Battery No. 5 & a portion of their breast works on each side of it. But the yankees reinforced and soon drove them back to our former lines. Ransoms, Lewises & Cooks Brigades were engaged. But I did not learn who were killed or wounded.

Usual quietude prevailed yesterday morning & we returned to Camp, last evening. I regret to hear that Genl. Wheelers Cavalry are committing many depredations on good & loyal citizens in Chatham & other Countys— We have nothing late from Sherman. Hoping to hear from you soon I close.

Your Son  
W.C.Hadley

P.S. Emma & Maggie were well on 20th inst we are getting same amount of rations for men & horses that have been issued during the last year. W.C.H.

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