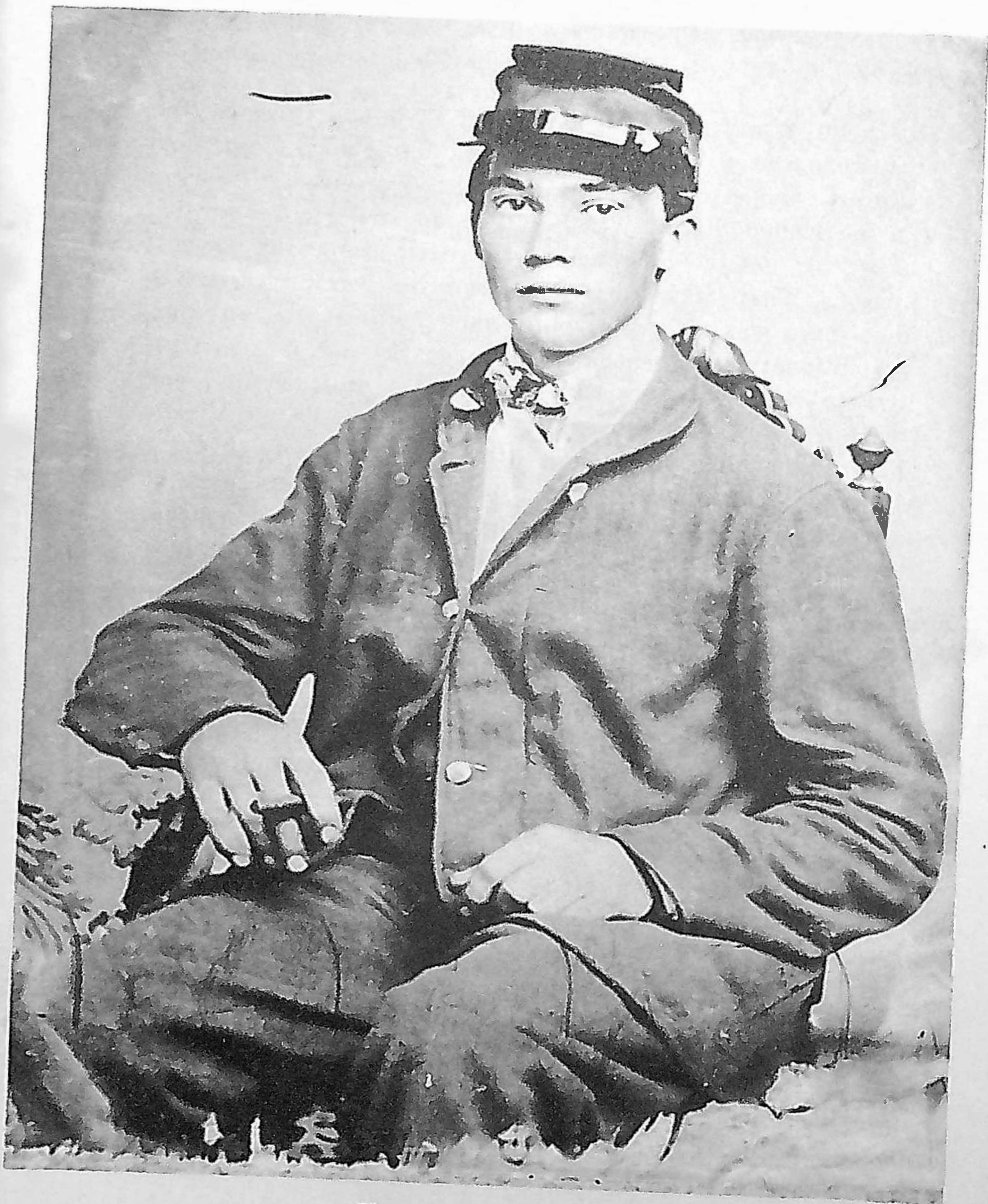


An Immigrant Goes to War: The Correspondence of Herman and Adeline Weiss

Herman Weiss, born in 1844 in Giessen, Germany, came to Mount Vernon, New York, in 1858 and joined there two older brothers who were carpenters by trade and who conducted a sash and blind business. On July 3, 1862, in the New York County Court of Common Pleas Herman was admitted to be a citizen of the United States. On August 14, 1862, authority to raise a regiment in Putnam, Rockland, and Westchester counties for service in the Union Army was received by Col. William H. Morris. Eight days later at Yonkers, New York, Herman Weiss volunteered and was enrolled in the regiment which was organized as the 135th Infantry Regiment and later, on October 6, 1862, was designated the 6th Regiment of New York Heavy Artillery. While he was proud to be in a heavy artillery regiment, he passed most of the war as an infantry soldier. He was appointed corporal on December 29, 1862, sergeant on September 20, 1864, and was discharged on June 28, 1865, at Petersburg, Virginia. He was then twenty September 5, 1862, ten companies of the regiment



Herman Weiss in 1862.

left New York and joined the Railroad Division of the 8th Corps, Middle Department. Herman Weiss remained behind, and while it is not entirely clear why, it is a fact that on November 3, 1862, he married Adeline Clary. She was a native of New York City, one of thirteen children—twelve of whom were girls—and she moved with her family to Mount Vernon in 1852, when she was nine years old.

What follows are selections from the war correspondence of Herman and Adeline Weiss. Lack of space prohibits including many of Adeline's letters. They read like *The Perils of Pauline*: how, after the death of her mother, she and her twin sister Caroline were driven out of the house by her father who, if rumor is to be believed, had his eye on a new wife; how she and Caroline were driven out of a sister's house, where they had sought refuge, by the sister's husband; and how she and Caroline made their way to Vermont to live with still another sister whose husband was a deserter and was working there in a lumber camp. Herman by nature was a worrier, and my guess is that his wife's experiences on the home front, to say nothing of his own, provided him with ample cause.

No attempt has been made to alter, or improve upon the language, spelling, and punctuation used in the letters. Where appropriate, head notes have been provided.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS

L Company left Yonkers on November 29, 1862, ferried to Amboy, and there entrained for Fort McHenry. The train remained in Philadelphia over night and moved on to Baltimore the following morning.

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Fort McHenry, December 9, 1862.

... You want to know all about ... what positions the boys hold. ... There was 4 companys went away from Yonkers to New York all under orders to come to fort McHenry.... This regiment wants to have 1800 men in it and if all the companys was full there would be enough but there is none of them full so they went to work and dividet all the new men in the old companys ... all the boys lost theyr appointments and are all privates for the present. I am with our first lieutenant and I guess I will do very well as soon as every thing is settled. ... They talk about swearing us in and paying us off and I cant see the reason why they dont do it we are here now long enough to be sworn in if they want us at all ... we have very cold weather here I am sure it cannot be any colder in Mt Vernon it is worse here than it was at Jonkers for we are surroundet by water. It fell to our company to day to furnish 20 men for picket duty on long bridge and if we had been sworn in I should have went along with the greatest pleasure. however I went over this afternoon after the mail came in and took Bill with me. the captain seems to like me and he give me the privilege of going over there every day for ten days to take provisions and the mail over to the boys. It is about 3 miles across Tapscow Bay and on the turnpike to Washington they have to do guard duty there to keep the rebels from burning the bridge. ...

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss. Fort McHenry, December 13, 1862.

... We have been sworn in the day before jesterday and I expect we will get our new uniforms very soon and then I will have my picture taken as soon as we are paid off and send it to you. I expect we will look gay with red trimmed jakets and a big 6 over two cannons on our hats we shall look so strange that you will not know us any more when we get home. Bill is gone to try very hard for us to go home after we are paid off and there is some hopes of his succeeding if he continues in the colonels favor and he knows just how to come around him and talk sweet to him. We have finally succeedet in getting large tents there is 12 men in our tent and we have a little camp stove into it so that we can manage to make ourselfs comfortable enough. I had to pay 25 cents for straw enough to fill one of them beds that we had at Jonkers and I was glad I could get it for that price it saves me from sleeping on the bare floor while we are here at least. . . . we have some very green fellows here and I will tell you of two of them that was excused from guard duty for being so awful dumm one of them was on guard in the night about 12 oclock when the grand rounds came round he halted them and asked who comes there the answer was the grand rounds he charged bayonets on them and said there is no damned man with that name in this camp and they had to retreat and get the corporal to relieve him so as to put another man in his place that was less dangerous. the other one when he had halted them and got the answer the ground rounds said to hell with the grand rounds I thought it was the relief. You see my dear there is some fun here occasionally. . . .

In January 1863 the 6th Regiment moved from Fort McHenry to Harper's Ferry and became part of the defenses of the Upper Potomac, serving in the 2nd Brigade, 1st Division, 8th Corps from March 27, 1863, to June 1863 and with the 1st Brigade, 1st Division, 8th Corps from June 1863 to July 10, 1863.

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss. Harpers Ferry, January 9, 1863.

... Last monday afternoon we got orders to be ready to go to harpers ferry at 9 oclock on tuesday morning ... we are here now and got the shenandoa valley on one side of us the maryland hight on the other and Bollivar hight in our rear there is about 30,000 men scattered round here and there is not a house here but what can show some signs of was it is a desolate place indeed I expect we shall go either on Maryland or Bollivar hight as soon as they get all our big guns mounted. Our company has rather a bad point in line of battle we are the color company and I am generally about the third or fourth man from the flag but if we work the cannons I am gunner and have nothing to do but to sight the gun and give the order to fire. every thing is quit round here now the rebels is about 12 miles from here and we are strongly fortified here. we are only 9 miles from the battle field of Antietam and we can see where some of the men have been buried with their feet and hands stiking out of the ground our boys found a rebel officer leaning against a tree the other day and when they came up to take him prisoner they found that he was dead. we are encamped on the same ground where Col. Miles surrenderd harpers ferry to the rebels the last time.

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Fort Dunkon, February 13, 1863.

... there is hope that this war may soon be stopped for as it is going now it cannot go a great while the greatest

disatisfaction is prevailing throughout the army about 2/3rd of our regiment has made up theyr mind to go home by the first of the month to keep theyr families from starving and I have seen a letter to day wich come from a lawyer to one of the men here that the government cannot keep us if they do not pay up every 2 months and that if we can only get home any court martial would have to protect us for if they dont fulfill their contract we need not fulfill ours but the only difficulty is in getting away. Bill and myself will stand it as long as we can before we go home but if we dont see very soon where our money is gone to come from we shall do as all the rest of the men is gone to do and I pity the man that will try to stop us on our way home but perhaps something may turn up that we shall not be obliged to take such steps. . . . there is certainly something of great importance going on in the regiment and the only thing that will save it is to pay off the men immidiatly if they dont do that the men will go home and leave the officers behind them to do theyr duty they can stand it well enough they get theyr pay regular and dont do any thing else but eat and drink and live high. . . . I come near forgetting to tell you that we have moved again we seem to get in a worse place every time we move. . . . on sunday morning (inspite of Lincolns order that the sabbath shoud be observed in the army) we got orders to pack up and 2 hours afterwards was on our way to this place. . . .

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss. Camp Haight, March 28, 1863.

. . . on sunday afternoon the signal gun was fired off and I jumped up and run to our 20 pounder in a hurry we touched the fire to it and 5 minutes afterwards we heard the next station reply to it on the potomac so it went down to sandy hook about 1/2 hour after that a despatch came in and the long roll beat, it is a dreadful noise and confusion every one trying to get their musket loadet and fall in the ranks as quick as possible we got 3 days rations and took only our

overcoat and plasket in our knapsack and marched out of camp an hour after the gun was fired we marched down to the potomac and was put acrossed it in the pontoon boats then we made a forced march of 15 miles and stoped in a field in Virginia at 1 oclock at night at day brake the main body of the regiment moved on and our company was left behind to do picket duty on the railroad and the road leading from Hagerstown to Winchester it is the same place where Stonewall Jackson escaped from McClellan after the battle of Antietam and if McClellan had been smart enough he would have certainly caught him there. We was in the most dangerous place on monday night we stationed our pickets after dark and the lieutenant with half the men moved about 2 miles below us and left the orderly seargt and me in comand all we had was 10 men reserve in case that any thing should happen we had orders to retreat on the main body of the company. Every thing was quite untill about 11 oclock when we two made the rounds to visit the pickets wich is a dangerous business for you run the risk of being shot by your own men and the first post we come to our men did not see us untill we got close to them they jumped up and if I had not spoken to them they would have surely shot us for they said that they was just gone to pull the trigger well we give them the necessary instructions and left for the next post on the railroad it was awful dark we went acrossed the field proceeding very slow so as not to make any noise when we got about half the way we heard our pickets halt somebody and imidiatly after a musket was discharged and such yelling I never heard before we stood perfectly still and listened and strained our eyes to the utmost but we could not see any thing we then come to an understanding how to act in case we come acrossed any of them and it was just about time too for when I looked around me again I saw 3 men coming right on to us they came very slow and careful and I could just see their forms I showed my companion where they was and we dropped on the ground without making any noise he moved

off on his belly according to agreement and I remained motionless on the ground some time when they thought they heard a noise they would drop down like lightning at last I had to change my position to be able to use my musket this made some noise my bayonet sheath striking against a small stone they dropped to the ground and in that position we remained for an hour and a half without moving I tell you during that time I thought about nothing but you I had your pictures in my breast pocket and the case almost crushed my ribs in but I suppose it wanted to come as close to my heart as possible just as I had made up my mind to move on a little so as to see them plainer I put my ear to the ground and I heard them stir I moved on without stoping to think and I soon come so close that I could plainly see what they was about. I saw that they was moving towards the woods I suppose they must have suspected that they was most to close so we kept up the chase moving on the ground like mud turtles when we got to within 20 yards of the woods I made a flank movement to reach the first trees before they should have a chance to get there but when I got there my musket struck against a stone just as I was getting up to step behind a tree they heard it jumped up and run for the woods in the oposite direction a half a dozen jumps brought them out of my sight and I thought it would be more prudent to keep my musket loadet than to fire it off at random but they was destined to have another fright for my comrade had acted on the same principle that I acted on and when he heard them running towards him he thought that I was chasing them so when they come within 12 paces of him he halted them of course they turned right for the woods again he cocked his gun and pulled the trigger two or three times but it would not go off the guerillas when they heard him daming his gun turned and chased him and I chased them till they came to near our pickets again when they was halted again by 2 or three at once and I suppose thought it advisable to retreat

at once they turned to the right and run like every thing we chased them for a little while till we lost sight of them and being pretty well wore out we went back to our rendezvous satisfied that we had quite an adventure we found our ten men all in a heap and almost frightened to death and thinking that we had surely been captured and with a lot of such adventures as this one we passed away the time almost starving to death from sunday afternoon till friday when we got orders to go back to camp I dont believe I slept 12 hours during that time.

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Camp Haight, April 4, 1863.

... Things here is undergoing a great change our Colonel has been made a brigadier general and our regiment belongs to his brigade so we belong now to the 8th army corps middle department of the upper potomac defenses of Harpers ferry 2nd division. . . . I have had quite a good deal of fun last night with an irishman that I have in my tent trying to get it into his head what brigade and division he belongs to but I did not succeed his head is too thick and I gave up the attempt after we had laughed enough. . . . he made me promise that both of us would come and see him in Haverstraw if we ever got home alive so you can make up your mind to go on an irish visit when I get home I am sure we shall have fun for you cant help laughing when you look at the man alone he looks more like a monkey than a human being. . . . most of these irish cant read or write and they keep me busy reading letters for them and writing answers and if you was to reade some of those letters you would kill yourself laughing. . . .

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Camp Haight, April 26, 1863.

... I have waited for a letter from you now since one week ago jesterday but I see . . . that you are not to blame as I have no doubt that you thought I would get that letter wich

you gave to Bill but neither Bill nor the letter have got here and Bill is reported a deserter I have never been so deceived in any body as I have been in him and I cant hardly believe it jet that he has deserted he always used to be so much down on any body that would not come back in time on a furlough and through him the whole company will have to suffer for it will be hard work to get a furlough now if they cant trust such men as him they wont trust any body else. If he was sick or any thing happened to him on the road he might have wrote a letter or sent a tellegraf dispatch to the captain and he would have been all right but now even if he does come back he will loose his pay and be punished besides. If he intendet to desert before he left here it was a very mean piece of business of him he borrowed money to go home with and a pair of boots and a shirt. You say in your letter that he said he would be home again soon and me with him I guess he had reference to the end of the war for he like a good many others imagine that the war will be settled this sumer but it is my opinion that we will have to serve out our time if we live long enough but we might have had a chance to go home on a furlough if he had not acted so mean nothing short of death can excuse him now for he had plenty of time to inform the captain of his whereabouts of course if he is dead he is excused. . . .

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Camp Barry, May 12, 1863.

. . . I will have to tell you in the beginning that I am not able to write a great deal to night for I am completely worn out. Yesterday afternoon a woman came in from Virginia and stated that there was about 100 rebel guerrillas encamped about 20 miles from here in the mountains comitting all kinds of depratations and taking the men off by force to put them in the rebel army. Of course there was no other troops round here that could perform such a desparate

march on a dark night so they called on the big 6 and our company and Comp C being the largest and best companies got orders at half past four yesterday afternoon to march at 5 o'clock with only 2 meals rations and 40 round of cartridges. Yesterday and today was the two hottest days we have had this summer. I had my hands full dealing out the provisions to the very last moment then I ran to my tent put your daguaretype in my pocket and put on my accoutrements and joined my company just as they were marching out. The water ran right off the men and we had one man sun struck before we got to Harpers Ferry before we crossed the Shenandoah bridge we were joined by 30 cavalry and a guide and just as soon as it was dark we started up the mountains and so we stumbled and pitched along up the hill and down hill over rocks and through swamps sometimes up to our knees in mud and water we marched on at that rate for about 18 miles when we halted to rest a few minutes and send some spies ahead as soon as the men touched the ground the most of them was fast asleep we stopped there about 15 minutes when the order was given to fall in and we proceeded once more when we got to the place where we expected to find them they were gone. . . .

Adeline Weiss to Herman Weiss, Mount Vernon, June 4, 1863.

. . . about three weeks ago that cartridge factory in Harlem blew up or rather one night somebody set it on fire, so the firm has hired that factory on 6th Ave and they have brought their Machinery up and had it all fixed up there. they are going to bring one hundred girls up from New York. they will employ about three hundred girls and about fifty men. most of the girls in Mt Vernon is going to work there. Carrie is going to leave the flags and go to work at the cartridges. Lizzie and Carrie is going to work Monday.

Carrie has the idea she will like it much better than she does the flags. . . .

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Camp Barry, June 9, 1863.

. . . I am sorry to see that Carrie has taken a notion to work in that Cartridge Factory it is a very dangerous and unhealthy bussines and then for her to be among such a lot of girls of all carracters especially from New York City of course it is not for me to say what she shall do but if she would take my advice she would keep to work on her flags and leave that old Factory alone. I care most to much for Carrie to see her in such a place as that. Mount Vernon will be quit a lively place after they get fairly started. Underhills wife arrived here jesterday she looks as natural as ever and seems to like it out here very well. she was the first woman I shook hands with since I left home I think she will stay here altogether she is in a tent with annother woman that belongs to Comp I so there is 2 family in one tent I went to see her last night they have everything fixed very nice they have 2 beds a table a looking glass and a stove in that tent and have blankets on the floor wich do very well in the place of carpet. Bill says that if we go to some other place where we will be likely to stay for some time he is gone to have his wife come out and stay a month and he wanted me to promise him to let you come the same time so that we could get a tent together but I wont promise for I rather think that you would soon get tired of such a live although the women have it very nice in this camp all the married men have their tents together in one row a little ways from the camp and the most of the officers have their wifes and children here. I believe we have about 50 of the fair sex in the regiment they get up balls and parties and seem to enjoy themselves better than if they was home . . . kiss Carrie for me and tell her to stop making cartridges for we got more now than we want to use in this war I

for my part dont want to see any more used than has been used already I am like the boy that had lost his way to all enquiries he give only one answer and that was: I want to go home. . . .

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Camp Barry, June 26, 1863.
 . . . I am well, indeed we have no time now to think about being sick as we have worked day and night and the men is getting so that they actually wish for the rebels to come so as to put a stop to this everlasting excitement and work but I think they will come quit soon enough for a good many of us and according to the state of affairs here now there is no doubt but that we shall have to play the most important part in the unavoidable battles wich must be fought and wich I think will be the bloodiest ever fought in the rebellion. Troops and cannons are constantly coming in and as each regiment comes in they go right to work fortifying themselves. We belong now to Hookers grand army of the Potomac and constitute his extreme right wing. Gen. French is in command here and I think that with what men we have here now we will be able to hold in check any force wich the rebels could possibly bring to bear against us but I dont think that they intend to attack us here they would like to draw us out of here but for the present we only act on the defensive. It is my opinion that this will end again on the well known battle grounds of Antietam and South Mountain and if my supposition is correct and we have no traitors in our army I think that this is about the best move the rebs could have made to help settle the war for it must result in the utter destruction of their army as Hooker will be in the rear of them wich will stop them from recrossing the potomac and the only crossing place they will have will be by way of this place and I can assure you that they will get enough to do to fight us alone how much less an enemy in their rear.

The Union Army under General Hooker had been defeated at Chancellorsville, and Lee was invading Pennsylvania. General Meade replaced Hooker in command of the Army of the Potomac, and the Harper's Ferry garrison was placed at his pleasure. The Battle of Gettysburg had been won, and on July 10, 1863, the 6th Regiment of New York Heavy Artillery joined the 1st Brigade, 3rd Division, 3rd Corps in pursuit of Lee. On July 13 Lee escaped across the Potomac and returned to Virginia. Meade followed, and in this period of maneuver the 6th Regiment participated in the engagement at Manassas Gap on July 23 and the Mine Run Campaign from November 26 through December 2, 1863.

Adeline Weiss to Herman Weiss, Mount Vernon, July 16, 1863.

... Oh Herman you have no idea the trouble their has been here in New York this week they commenced the draft monday. and the irish all turned out and mobbed the different officers where they were making out the enrollment papers, and burnt them to the ground, and almost killed the men. every nigger they met they would kill and they burnt a great many large houses and Hotel, and they would not allow a fireman to touch a engine to play on the fire. it is said of all the riots ever was in New York this beats all. they tore up the New Haven tracks so that no troops could come through, and cut the telegraph so that we could get no news from the east. yesterday their was no mail come in. the first train come in to day about five oclock. I heard to day that the governor has stopped the draft so that cooled the men down some and they succeeded in laying the track and got the cars running again. it is reported that their is a mob coming from Tuckehoo to night they have threatened to burn several houses in Mount Vernon, among which is Hoole's, Atkinson, Furger-son and two or three others. father has just come from the depot and he says the mob has not come as yet wether they

will come or not he dont know. . . . The village has been quiet all night so I dont think that mob could have got here. . . .

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Warrinton, Va., July 28, 1863.

. . . I received 2 letters of you dated the 28th and the 29th of June just as we was drawn up in line of battle at Williamsport, and I can tell you I was glad to see your hand writing at that time. We have since been in an engagement with Lees forces at Manasses Gap and I can tell you that we are pretty nearly used up. If you was to see me now I am sure you would not know me for I am nothing but skin and bones our clothes are dirty and torn and all we have is what we have on our body. I have not had a fresh shirt to put on in 30 days and I suppose I will have to keep it on till it falls off and then go without one altogether. The army of the Potomac has never suffered as much as they have since Lee entered Maryland and Pensilvania. We have marched over 300 miles in 25 days and was drawn up in line of battle 3 times we live on raw pork and crackers that is full of worms and jet the government dont seem to be satisfied with all that but they must cheat us out of 25 dollars or 30 dollars for the 2nd day we was out we was ordered to throw away our knapsacks and carry nothing except what we had on and a blanket or an overcoat and now it is near the end of the first year they are gone to charge us with all the things we had to throw away so we wont get no money at all this time. . . .

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Rappahannock Station, November 16, 1863.

. . . I feel very well and have a good appetite but we dont get rations enough to satisfy it and we suffer awfully for clothes we are actually ragged and bare footed you will get an idea how poorly we are off for clothes when I tell you that I have worn one and the same shirt for 5 weeks and there is no telling how much longer I will have to

wear it . . . we are now guarding an amunition train of about 200 waggons and I dont think that we will be relieved from this duty very soon of course we are in as much danger as if we belonged to another corps for the rebs want amunition and then they try to capture a train when they are on the march and it is but seldom that we lay still as long as we have been at present we are generally always on the go to supply the light battery in front with amunition and just as soon as we hear cannonading we pack up either to go ahead or to retreat. . . .

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Brandy Station, February 7, 1864.

. . . I write to day because we may get orders to march before to morrow and then I might not have a chance to write. Yesterday for the first time since we lay here we heard cannonading and it was near by too for towards night we could plainly hear the musketry and that is something you cant hear unless it is near by a despatch wich came in last night late said that our army had orders to cross the Rapidan in 3 different places and keep Lee employed while Butler was moving up the Peninsula for the purpose of taking Richmond and cutting Lee off entirely from Richmond and placing him between our two armies. The musketry we heard was occasioned by a rebel division trying to flank us but they fell back during the night and when the cannonading opened again this morning it was a good deal further off wich is a sign that our troops have crossed the river without much resistance if Lee retreats we will have to chase him up and bring on an engagement so that he cant interfere with Butler. I shall be very sorry if we have to move after getting everything fixed up comfortably and I dont see how we will move our train and heavy guns for you have no idea how deep the mud is down here, it has rained all day jesterday and last night but there is signs of its clearing up now. Our camp is acknowledged to

be the best winter quarters ever put up in the army of the Potomac it would be too bad to exchange comfortable bunks for the cold and muddy ground when we made calculations of staying here at least till the latter part of April. I think that the spring campagne will end the war for the rebs is getting hard up for food, clothing and forage it is rather tough to live on mule meat and they only get that twice a week they are deserting and coming in our lines by whole regiments some 300 of them come over the other day and said that the government would not muster them out so they had done it themselves their term of enlistment having expired. They dare not send a North Carolina regiment on picket unless they send some other regiment along with them to watch them and I tell you they must be in a pretty fix when they have to watch their own men and us too. Our regiment is fast filling up with new recruits we will soon have 1800 men and then they cant hold us in the field. . . .

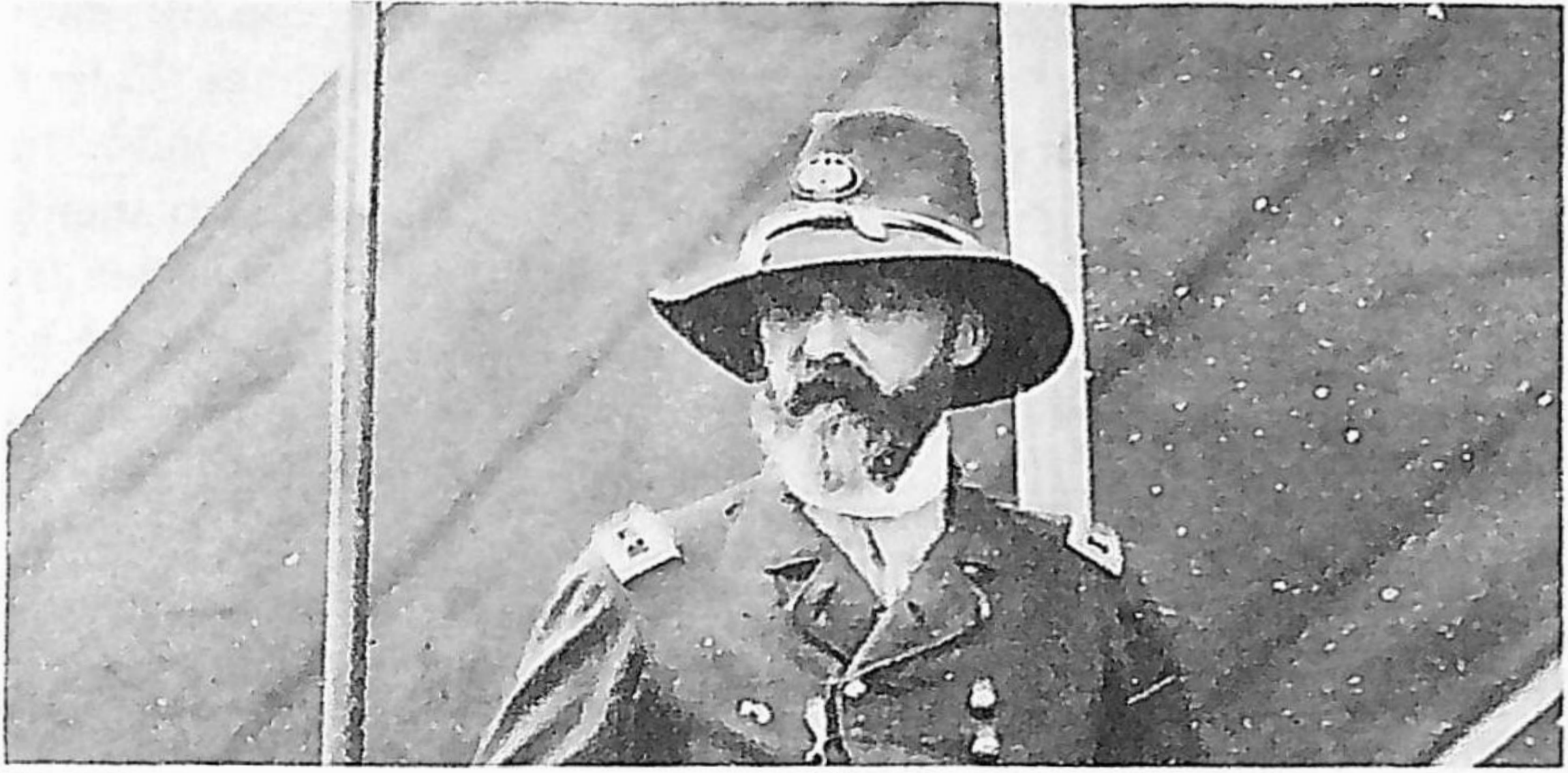
Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Brandy Station, March 31, 1864.

. . . We expect to have a grand review here in a few days by the President and Gen. Grant there is great preparations being made for it. Our whole regiment got new muskets last week they are the newest Springfield patent. We had a great fight here last week not with the rebs but among ourselves we had a very deep snow and the boys of the left wing being in good spirits challenged us of the right wing to fight them a square and open fight the officers and all included, we accepted the challenge and formed in companies and every captain took command of his own company and the Colonel took command of the right wing and the lieutenant Colonel took command of the left wing and I tell you we had it hot and heavy but we drove the left wing after fighting them for about 2½ hours and took 3 of their officers prisoners the blood flowed and a good many feel the effects of it jet. . . .

On March 10, 1864, General Grant assumed command of the Union armies. The 6th Regiment of New York Heavy Artillery served in the 1st Brigade, Reserve Artillery, Army of the Potomac, from April 1, 1864, to May 13, 1864; in the Heavy Artillery Brigade, 5th Corps, from May 13, 1864; in the 3rd Division, 5th Corps, from May 30, 1864; in the 3d Brigade, 2d Division, 5th Corps, from June 2, 1864 to July 1864. The regiment participated in the following engagements: Wilderness May 5-7; Spotsylvania Court House May 8-21 and, more particularly, the Salient on May 12 and Harris House on May 19; North Anna, May 22-26; Totopotomoy, May 27-31; Cold Harbor, June 1-12; the siege of Petersburg, June 15-July, 1864; and the assault of Petersburg, June 17-19.

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Brandy Station, April 15, 1864.

... we are all ready for a start, they have taken away from us our overcoats and other clothing so that we have nothing but a blanket a shirt and a pair of drawers besides what we have on us that is the way they do first they compells us to draw the clothing and charge it to us and then they take it away and when the time comes that we want more we have to draw more and sign our name for it. You must not expect much of a letter from me to night for my head is ready to split. . . . The whole army is moving round that is it is being reorganized and the different regiments go to the different corps they are assigned to. Our regiment musters over two thousand men and the 15th N.Y. 2400 these two regiments make the first brigade of the Artillery Reserve, our Colonel is the brigade general. Our regiment is dividet in 3 batalions each to muster 800 men wich is the minimum number of an infantry regiment and the 15th is dividet the same way so our two regiments are as large as 6 infantry regiments would be. I suppose that little Colonel



Major General George Gordon Meade (1815-1872), commander of the Army of the Potomac from just before Gettysburg to the end of the war. (*Bettmann Archive.*)

of ours will try his best to get us in a fight if he possibly can if he does it will be the last one he will ever go into for he has too many friends in our regiment. I expect our first move will be to Culpepper and if we advance from there we will either pepper the rebs or be peppered ourselves wich I think will be very likely as they hold the best positions naturally fortified but I expect we shall see soon enough and I think too that whoever lives through this summer will see Richmond fall....

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Spotsylvania, May 21, 1864.

... I received your most welcome letter ... jesterday and it gives me great pleasure to see that you enjoy good health jet and I thank God that I enjoy the same blessing where so many thousands have been hurried into eternity.... we moved about 4 oclock on the morning of the 4th and crossed the Rapidan at Elys ford on a pontoon and since that time we have done nothing but march and counter-march build breast works and fight and have but little

time to eat or sleep we have been through the 12 days fight but the day before yesterday we was in the hottest of it our brigade that is the 15th and 6th Arty held the the rebels best corps in check for 2 hours till reinforcements arrived it was old Stonewall Jacksons corps comandet by Gen Ewel the fight commenced at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 4 in the afternoon and lasted till near midnight our boys went right in for it indeed I had no idea they would stand so well and yesterday afternoon Gen Meade sent an order thanking us and praising us highly for our good conduct since that we have seen nothing of the rebs. The Mt Vernon boys I believe are all safe some may have a scratch but I know none of them is killed. I went out safe without getting touched although quite a good many fell round me our lieutenant fell alongside of me the bullets come so thick that a man could hear or see nothing it was one continuous roar and the smoke was sufficating. . . .

Adeline Weiss to Herman Weiss, Gowanus, June 12, 1864.

. . . Your . . . letters . . . reached me yesterday morning and I can assure you that words cannot express my feelings when I received them. I was so pleased that I did not know wether I was on my head or my heels (for I was afraid I should never hear from you again) for it was reported around the village that you was killed. at first I did not believe it, but in a few days it seemed to be in every body's mouth and where ever I went I could hear it. A week ago last monday I see a young friend of mine and the first thing she said when she meet me was Oh Addie is it true that Herman was killed. I told her I did not believe it nor I would not untill I see it in the paper, she says why Addie it was in the paper. I then asked her what paper it was in she said that she could not tell me, then I went home and I believed that their was some truth in it for I did not think that any person would tell me such a thing unless their was some truth in it when I got home I gave up. I thought I



Herman Weiss in 1864.

would go crazy. I declare I was almost wild. I felt as though I did not have a friend in the world if you was gone. My dear I never knew how much I thought of you till then. I really wished to die when I heard of it and again last week I heard that you was not killed but badly wounded lying in the hospital so you can imagine how pleased I was when I received those letter from you stating that you were alive and well. I never was so happy in all my life. . . .

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Petersburg, June 21, 1864.

. . . You must not believe any rumor no matter where it comes from if anything happens to me you will here it from Underhill or Bill for it is not likely that the 3 of us will be killed at once but I hope and pray that I may live to see you again it is my only wish that I may get home once more to enjoy a few years of peace and happiness with you for you have no idea what a soldiers live is we have no rest day or night cant wash nor eat and if we would we would have nothing to eat half the time they talk about the rebs not having anything to eat and wear I can assure you they have more than we do. . . . I do not think that such awful fighting can last a great deal longer if it does there will be no men left. We had about 1800 good fighting men in our regiment and now after a campaign of hardly 7 weeks we have not 800 of them left and other regiments is worse than ours besides the campaign is not over jet nor likely to be very soon. We are now about one miles from Petersbourgh and that is about 25 miles from Richmond we have been to within 6 miles of Richmond but that was on the other side of the James river we crossed the James river on the 18th and that was the first time since I have been cut that I saw something like civilization it looked like the north river with all the steamboats on it since that time it has been one continual fight we are now laying in breastworks only 500 yards from the rebs and when we

are out on picket we could very handy speak together but as soon as a man stands up there is about 50 bullets whistling round him how we will take these works is hard telling wether by flanking or digging but enough of this one thing is sure we are all tired of the war and none of us would care how it is settled if it was only settled some way for the whole of it is more politics after all than humanity....

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Petersburg, June 30, 1864.

... You say it is very hot at home but I think if you was down here you would thing it was hotter than hot it is so hot here that the sweat runs off me in little streams in the coolest place and then you must further take in consideration that we lay in breastworks where the sun pours right down on us and most of the time we dare not move for sticking your head above the works is taking your life in your hands we loose more or less every day but I think we inflict as much damage as we receive. It is dreadful to be woundet now for it mortifys so quick this hot weather.... We come to the front again in the night before last they gave us 3 days rest and that was only long enough to get clean once more....

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Petersburg, July 3, 1864.

... You say that you are sick and tired of the war. There is not a soldier here both union and confederate but what would be willing to stop fighting right away it is only politicians, contractors and the officers that keep it agoing of course we are sworn to obey orders for as long as we have enlisted for and after that we can go home if we live a good deal wiser than we come out. To show you that the men on both sides are tired of fighting I will tell you what happened about an hour ago. It seems that the rebs had seen from there breastworks that the mail and papers had come in to

us and they wanted to get some of ours for some of theirs so they got a half a dozen pieces of shelter tents stuck them on sticks and begin to wave them when our boys seen them they waved some of the papers and both parties jumped over the breastworks without arms and met about half way shook hands exchanged papers had a talk together and made up that the pickets should not fire at each other as long as they kept within their own lines and then both parties went back satisfied with the result and since that I have not heard a shot fired right in our front you can see by that they would like to have the war over as well as we of course they fight desparately when we attack them but that is only natural they dont want to have it said that they are a poor set of men no more than we would. I . . . hope that it will soon be over. . . . the thing is to whip their army and that is something we have not done jet. . . .

Adeline Weiss to Herman Weiss, New York City, July 24, 1864.

. . . you speak of not having rain, why we are in as bad a fix as you are. we have not had any rain of any consequence in over two months and it dont look anything like rain yet. Everything is being parched up with the dry weather, if it dont rain soon I am afraid we will have no crops, and I dont know what poor folks will do for of course it will make everything higher than what they are now. I will give you the prices of a few articles. Butter is 50 cents a pound sugar from 30 to 40 cents a pound, eggs 3 and 4 a shilling and Beef from 30 to 40 cents a pound. Carrie was telling me that she was looking in yesterday's paper and she see that coal is \$12.50 a ton. I dont know for my part what the poorer class of people will do this winter for every thing seems to get dearer every day. . . .

In July 1864 the 6th Regiment of New York Heavy Artillery became part of the 1st Brigade, Harden's Division, 22d Corps, and went into reserve at Fort Reno in the defenses of Washington. From September 27, 1864, to December 1864 they served in the 1st Brigade, Kitching's Provisional Division, Army of the Shenandoah, and took part in the engagement of Cedar Creek on October 19, 1864.

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Martinsburg, October 9, 1864.

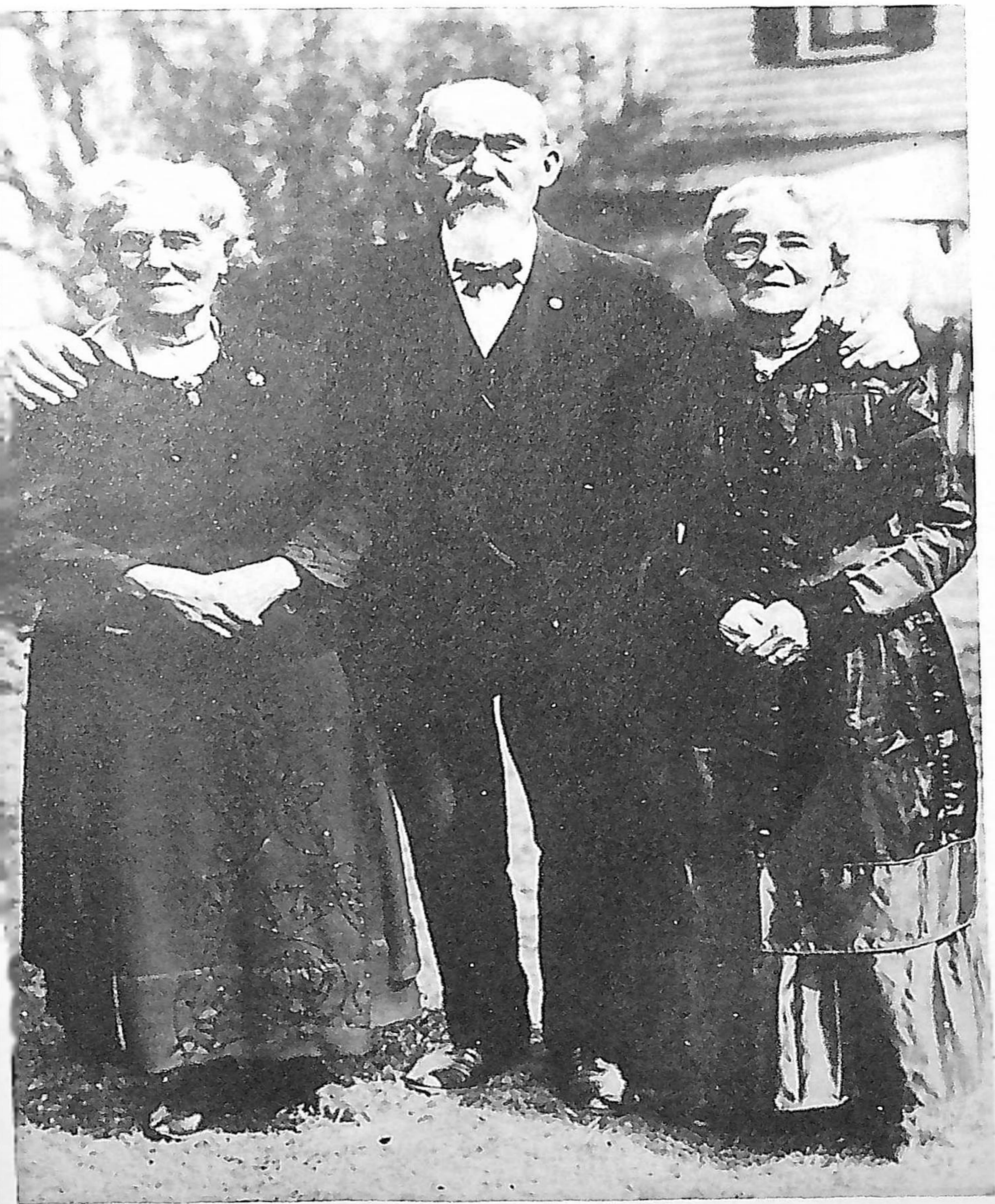
... No doubt you are anxious to hear from me but I have had no chance to write since we left Harpers Ferry.... We was called away from Washington very unexpectedly to guard a large train to the front and I can tell you we have had hard times of it we have never done harder marching then we did on this march we made 120 miles in 4 days then we rested one day and come all the way back again. The train we guarded was 6 miles long and about 900 wag-gons coming back we brought sick and wounded from the front, we had several skirmishes with the guerillas on the road, the valley is full of them, we got here jesterday and it is so cold that we had to set up all night by the fires....

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Middletown, Va., October 21, 1864.

... I have not heard from you since we left Washington wich is over 4 weeks now ... We have seen some very hard times.... I will ... tell you the worst that happened to us and that was the day before jesterday. Gen. Sheridan had gone to Washington on some business and left Gen. Wright of the 6th corps in command everything had been quiet for about 2 weeks and nobody expected an attack we was all encamped our brigade laying on the extreme left about 4 oclock in the morning. I got up and I heard our pickets fire a shot every now and then I made up my mind that the rebs was trying to flank us, a little while after that



Adeline (left) and Herman Weiss and Adeline's twin Caroline
in 1862...



...and in 1923.

when most of the men was in their tents asleep a whole volley of musketry was poured right into our camp no doubt thinking they would capture us all but they was mistaken the men all turned out promptly and a hand to hand fight took place in wich we repulsed them our next move was to advance skirmishes and form in line of battle behind them but the rebs came up before we had accomplished that and charged on us in 2 lines of battle and even here we would have got the best of them but a new regiment on our right broke and run leaving our regiment completely cut off from the rest of course we had to fall back wich we done in good order and fighting for over 2 miles this gave our whole line a chance to fall back and form again we charged several times retaking some of the cannon that they had taken from us but things went against us and we had to fall back again so that by 12 oclock they had drove us about 5 miles when Gen Sheridan dashed along the road with his staff he had his hat in one hand and his sword in the other the men give one tremendous cheer he saluted on all sides and pointing to the front he cried so loud that we could all hear him above the roar of cannon and musketry. Boys follow me every regiment shall be in their old camp by night and my headquarters at the old place and with this he dashed forward and every man followed up with the greatest confidence we charged all along the line broke through their centre and turned their flank they gave way and fled in the greatest confusion so great was their terror that they throwed away everything our cavalry broke through them now on the road and dashed right on never stopping till they had dashed through Strasbourgh and to Fishers hill when they formed in line and drove the rebs back on to us again these was all captured besides we retook all our prisoners and cannon besides 45 pieces of artillery in fact we took all we lost and all the rebels had and we all encamped or rather rested in the places where our camps had been and Sheridan established his headquarters at the old place we lost a good many men but the rebs was cut up worse....

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Martinsburg, October 28, 1864.

... We lost everything on the 19th it was as hard a fight as ever we was into the rebels was in our camp before we knowed it and we had a regular hand to hand fight in wich we repulsed the rebs first off this gave us time to fall back but they soon came up in force and drove us and took 22 cannon from us. At last when it looked as though they was actually going to drive us back as far as Winchester about 40 of us and a captain ... of our regiment at that time planted our two regimental flags in the ground alongside of a cannon and resolved to hold that position and we did hold it 3 times did the rebels charge on us and take that cannon and 3 times we charged back and retook it again the troops on our right gave way but seeing that we was determined to stop there they regained their ground and now things turned in our favor we got fresh artillery and we made it so hot for the rebs they thought it was time to leave and they run back a great deal faster than they came and we was not slow in helping them along we retook all our cannon and 56 of theirs and run them back over 20 miles the prisoners we took all say that they have never been routed so before they all think we fell back on purpose in the morning so as to get them into a trap. I dont hardly think there will be much more fighting in the valley this fall and I shall be glad when we get into winter quarters...

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Winchester, Va., November 6, 1864.

... I have a cold but I cant expect anything else after the exposure we have gone through. You want to know if I had long to wait before I could get more clothing...we have had to wait from the 19th till now and have not got anything jet ... there is no telling when we will get it. I can tell you it is rather hard to be without a tent and warm clothing when it freezes $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch of ice every night and jesterday it snowed for the first time but all that we might get used to if it was not for getting full of lice of wich we

cant get clear till we have a change of under clothing but never mind what is the use of talking about this there is a better time coming and I am in hopes before long. I expect that the army will go into winter quarters after election and I hear our regiment will winter around Baltimore. . . . We have great excitement here about election from what I can see I think that old Abe will be reelected what goes against McClellan most in the army is that the rebs all like him so well. . . .

In December 1864 the 6th Regiment of New York Heavy Artillery joined the 2d Brigade, Ferrero's Division, Army of the James, at Bermuda Hundred where they remained until the end of the war.

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Dutch Gap, January 1, 1865.

. . . What this place is called I dont know all I know is that it is the defenses of Bermuda hundred and that we are very near Dutch gap where they are digging that canal. we have good works here but they are very thinly manned the rebels works is about a mile in front of us and seem to be very strong our pickets is about 50 yards apart and talk together they do not shoot at each other now the only thing we hear is the continual cannonading at Dutch gap. It is a very lonely place here I dont like it as much as I did our old position in front of Petersborough but I suppose we got to take it as it comes all I ask of them is that I may not get shot the next 8 months to come if I dont I think I can get through all the rest. There my dear you have now got my whole history up to this first day of 1865.

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Bermuda Front, January 30, 1865.

. . . A week ago jesterday old Lee thought he would astonish the world so he told his men that all they would have to do

would be just to talk over here and take possession for we was only Pennsylvania hundred days men so about 9 oclock at night after we had gone to bed they come out and advanced on our picket line where they got such a warm reception that after a very short time they turned and ran with a heavy loss their officers tried to make them charge the second time but the men took the butts of their muskets to them and hurt some of them so bad that they have since died so the deserters report. Of course we was in the breastworks all night and it was very cold. On monday night they tried the same thing on a larger scale they fetched 2 rams and some gun boats down the river and had some 5000 troops on transports to land them between our picket line and breastworks they made the attack about the same time as they did the night before it was very dark and cold but for all that we was on the look out for them and our pickets let them come up very close and before they opened on them yelled out to them: "right this way Jonny here is where you will find Pennsylvania 100 days men with plenty of overcoats, plankets and well filled haversacks wich they are ready to give to you and the receipt for them right away" well they charged twice but could not make it go so they give that up. In the mean time the gun boats had engaged our batteries with the intention of silencing them and land their troops so that we would be flanked and then they could run down to city point and cut off our comuncations and shell us out of here in a very short time but things did not work right one of their gun boats was blowed up by one of our batteries and every man on board perished they had 56 men aboard and their 2 rams got aground and could not get off till the next afternoon and that brought on a terrible artillery duel our batteries trying to sink them and the rebel land batteries playing on our batteries so as to draw their attention from the boats so was late on Tuesday night before this fight stopped and old Lee did not make out to astonish the world but he did manage to keep us out doors for several nights laying on

the cold ground instead of laying in our bunks and that gave me a bad cold again so that I dont feel any to well at present. . . .

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Bermuda Front, February 5, 1865.

. . . The papers is full of peace accounts but I dont think it will amount to much after all a few days ago the rebel vice president and two others came across our line and proceedet to fortress Monroe on a peace mission but they are not authorized and go there in the same way that Blair went to Richmond. . . .

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Bermuda Front, Feburary 20, 1865.

. . . Before the rebel peace commissioners went to Fort Monroe there used to be a good many deserters come in our line but while they had any hopes of peace the deserting stopped altogether and not a man came over till after the commis-sioners had gone back to Richmond it commenced again and since that time they come in at the rate of from 25 to 50 every night between these two rivers alone a distance of about 3 miles our regiment gets about 9 or 10 every night this of course is very pleasant for every reb wich comes in is one less to fight but it makes it very dangerous for our men on the picket line as well as in camp for the rebel pickets have to fire on their deserters and of course we have to lay low till they get cooled down but very often these deserters make it up with their friends on the picket line to give them time enough to get into our lines before they open on them and when they make such an arrange-ment the rebel pickets dont shoot untill we throw a cartridge in the fire wich is the signal that their friends got in safe then one of them will hallow halt and fire his musket of course that gives the alarm and the firing runs all along the line and everytime there is any firing we have to turn out and get in the breastworks for the bullets come over and strike in our camp so that it is not safe to stay in it. Last Thursday night I was on picket and I had five deserters

come along my line the boys give them something to eat and then I took them to my post and talked with them till one oclock before I sent them in to headquarters one of them give me a piece of tobacco and the other one a ring wich I will send to you I had hardly send them off when the rebels opened on us and made a charge but it was of short duration the fire of our men was so terrible and destructive that they turned back and run for their breast-works some of them never got there about 9 of them were killed and a lot woundet and not one of our men was hurt. 7 of them laid down on the ground close to our pits and when the affair was over they came in and we learned from them that they had made the charge with the intention of driving us out of the woods and straightening their own picket line they had 600 picket men 200 of them had picks and shovels to digg rifle pits as soon as we should be drove out of ours but they did not succeed although some of them came close enough. one of our corporals put the muzzle of his gun against the breast of one of them and shot him dead. The deserters say that they got orders to take that part of our line if it costs them a whole division so I suppose we shall have more or less fighting here all the time. . . .

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Bermuda Front, March 16, 1865.

. . . the rain drives right through our canvas roof and wets my paper however I must tell you something very romantic before I close. We had a very good looking corporal in our regiment he belonged to Comp K, he was on picket the other day and did not feel well so he asked the officer if he could go to camp and as it was in the day when non-commissioned officers are not much needed in the line the officer in command gave him permission to go to camp and nobody thought anything of it but what was our surprise when coming into camp we heard that the corporal had been taken very sick so that the doctor had send him right off to the division hospital and that then and there

this same good looking corporal had been relieved of a nice little boy and that the corporal and the boy was doing first rate there now what do you think of that dear? Dont you think the big 6 is a remarkable regiment at all events I think it is most time the regiment went home for fear some of us good looking Seargt might be delivered. . . .

Adeline Weiss to Herman Weiss, Vermont, March 22, 1865.

. . . I think it was quite a grand thing about that corporal what a woman she must have been. I cant contrive how she hid it. I should think her tent mates would have known it. . . . how long has she been in the service? The idea of her being on picket when she was taken sick. She must have been more than the common run of woman or she could never stood soldiering especially in her condition. Now dear what was your motive in not telling me that you was a Seargt before I dont see what reason you had for it but I suppose you had one or you would have told me before. I have always thought and told the folks that would ask me what you were that you was a corporal. . . . little Danny Horton is home. I suppose you know that rebels has had him prisoner for I should think something like a year. he got home saturday. he was paroled. Lizzie says he is dreadful thin. he lived on nothing but a pint of meal a day. he says they starved him (that is the rebels) to join their army. he said he would die first. Lizzie says he can scarcely walk he is so weak, poor little fellow, I feel sorry for him. before we came out here his mother said she never expected to hear from him again. she had given him up for dead she must have been somewhat surprised when she see him. I hope and pray that you may never fall in the Rebs hands. Their is a man out here that enlisted last summer as soon as he went down south he was taken prisoner they kept him about five months then he was paroled when he came home he was nothing but a skeleton. he only weighed seventy pounds. he said they only gave him enough meal to keep life in their bodies. he said he could not have stood it much longer when they let him go

he could not walk alone without assistance. he is getting to look first rate now he is gaining fast. . . .

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Bermuda Front, March 28, 1865.

. . . You ask how long that woman was in our regt. she was in it pretty near from the time it came out and it is no wonder at all that her tent mates did not know that she was a woman for you must know that we never undress to go to bed on the contrary we dress up we go to bed with boots overcoat and all on and she could find chances enough when she would be in the tent alone to change her clothes and as for hiding her appearance was easy enough for you know there is a great many woman that dont show much anyway and then soldier clothes dont fit very snug to the body the only remarkable thing is that she could stand it so to the very last day but I suppose she was tough of course no one in the regiment suspected a woman to be among us and that made her more secure from detection but I think she has heard some awful talk some times for of course when men is alone together they will talk just the same as when a lot of girls or woman get together it would be hard now for a woman to be in this regiment for the boys is having fun running after the corporals and catching them for the purpose of seeing wether they are boys or girls and I can tell you they dont show them much mercy till they have satisfied themselves. . . .

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Bermuda Front, March 30, 1865.

. . . I went to bed last night about 9 oclock and after thinking of you and home for a while (I do every night get asleep that way) I got about two thirds asleep when all at once I thought it was thundering very heavy and I laid there wondering how quick that shower had come up but I was not to wonder a great while for very soon the noises became one general roar and my bunk fairly shook I was wide awake and out of doors in a minute when we all

stood on the top of the breastwork and listened to the awfullest cannonading that ever we heard. It was as near as I can judge about the same place that we used to lay in front of Petersburg last summer I can say that much that I was present last summer when Burnside's mine was exploded and I also heard the cannonading at Gettysburgh and was along through the whole of Grant's campaign through the wilderness where perhaps more cannonading and musketry was heard than ever before in any country but if I had to give a description of the noise last night I should say put all this cannonading together and in a space about 5 miles in length and you will not think it any worse than last night. It was kept up all night but the first two hours was the hottest. after 12 o'clock it commenced to rain very hard but that did not stop them any in their work of destruction they have kept it up nearly all day but to night or rather for the last half hour I have not heard a gun and hope I won't hear any more to night the rain has ceased too and the young moon is shining brightly. We have not yet heard what occasioned this awful engagement all we know is that the rebels was the attacking party and must have suffered terrible loss in butting their heads against such a wall of iron. I think Lee is getting desperate, he wants to get out but he will not find it very easy work, he has already staid longer than he ought to have done.

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Bermuda Front, April 3, 1865.

I must write a few lines to notify you that we are going to move in the morning. The rebels evacuated here last night or rather early this morning. . . . Petersburg and Richmond are captured with thousands of prisoners and all the cannon and I think Lee will not get out as easy as he thought he would for our army is all round him and his army if indeed he has any more is completely demoralized. The fighting has been terrible for about a week

and it is very little sleep we have had in that time therefore my dear you must excuse me for not writing any more at present I must lay down and get some rest for I dont know how far I shall have to march to morrow.

When the fighting ended the 6th Regiment of New York Heavy Artillery was involved in provost duties until it was honorably discharged and mustered out of the service on August 24, 1865.

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Petersburg, April 24, 1865.

... we are now in town again doing provost duty and that is the miserablest duty a soldier can do in a place like this besides the duty is very hard. for instance now we have only about 3 or 4 men in the barracks out of the whole company and they came off this morning and will be out again to night. I expect I shall be out to night with a squad of man patrolling the streets wich job I dont like at all for we have to go to every bad house and see that no officers or soldiers are there and most of the time you can find them full we have to arrest them all and bring them to the provost marshels office and I can tell you it is not very pleasant business to go into such houses and pull men out of bed especially when they are our superiors in rank but when I am on such expeditions I make short work of it. I dont only take the men but I take the women too then they are kept under guard till day light and that saves me the trouble of going to their houses twice in one night. I shall not be sorry when we get relieved from this kind of work.

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Petersburg, May 2, 1865.

... our duty here is very hard at present. I am on duty every other day wich is pretty near as much as a man can possibly do. it would not be quit so hard but the men get

drunk every chance they get and consequently they got to be watched very close and that makes more work for the Seargt. I do not care how quick we move from here and I dont think that we will have to stay here a great deal longer indeed there is a very good chance for us to be mustered out in this month for everything goes to show that the government intends to discharge the biggest part of the army by the first of June.

... Our mustering out papers have come and I am in hopes they will go right to work at them for I can assure you I feel very anxious to get home. I can hardly realize it that the war is over and that we are to be discharged nothing else is talked about now but going home indeed sometimes I think it is all a dream and I try to wake myself up but in whatever directions a man may turn he hears soldiers talking about going home and I have finally come to the conclusion that what everybody says must be true but oh dear me what awful long days these are why it seems to me a day now is as long as a week used to be. . . .

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Petersburg, May 8, 1865.

... My company is doing duty at the depot and when on duty I get to stand 24 hours on the door examining passes and papers and I tell you it is no small job, you can get an idea of it when you see a crowd in a New York depot just before a train is going out with the disadvantage here that instead of getting tickets and paying for them everybody has to have a pass and there you stand with two three hundred people citizens soldiers niggers and all packing papers at you and everybody trying to have his or her pass examined first some will say please sir others will swear but I stand there working as lively as a man possibly can giving all manner of explanations hearing a dozen talk to me at once and answering them all in the most polite way without changing even a muscle in my face even if I should be mad enough at some of them to eat them up for a great many unable to get passes will play all kinds of games to get

through and therefore it is necessary that a man has a quick eye for as they are passing in some will hold out old passes that is good for nothing or counterfeit. . . . I have a good deal of fun with the niggers they are like the irish they talk round for a half hour before they will tell you what they actually came for and if one of them comes and begins to talk about his grandmother or some other of his numerous relations I give him the good advise to go to the provost martial and get a pass that generally has the desired effect for if he has one he will then tell you so and search in his forty eleven pockets for it. The ladies or rather a good many of them carry their passes in their stocking round here and many a nice foot and leg have I seen both white and colored when the dear little creature (she can smoke her pipe and chew tobacco) puts her foot down and searches in her stocking generally the left one for her pass of course I cant help seeing this dear Addie for it is in my natural line of sight and I got to stand there and wait till the lady gets through her performance but you must not think that I am any the worse for it on the contrary I can but pity the poor creatures for such an utter want of delicacy. I have now given you a pretty good account of what I do here and that I have a good right to say that I am tired out after 24 hours of such duties but I dont think it will last a great while longer for the government of the city will soon be turned over to the civil authorities and than our duty will become less. . . .

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Petersburg, May 20, 1865.

. . . It must look nice round home now, here it is rather hot they have had strawberries and cherries here for over two weeks in the market it makes a man feel bad to look at all these things and not be able to get them and be almost starved to death besides our rations now seems to consist of only coffee and hard tack I guess some of the quartermasters want to make some money before they go home for we have hardly ever fared worse on the march

than we do now. I am as thin as a rail and it almost looks as if they was trying to starve a lot of us to death to get rid of mustering us out but they are mistaken we have lived as long in spite of them I guess we can manage to get along a little while longer but never mind we will make up for it when we get home. . . .

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Lunenburg Court House, May 26, 1865.

. . . Our major commanding our battalion is a provost marshal of the County of Lunenburg and we come here to see that the laws of the U.S. are enforced to make everybody take the oath of allegiance and to make the niggers work and so forth. I can give you no idea of this place for if I was to tell you the truth you would hardly believe it there is one house every 10 miles throughout the county the citizens tell me they poll about 600 votes in the whole county and it is about 4 times as large as Westchester Co. The town of Lunenburg as it is called consists of the court house (in wich I have made my quarters pro tem) a church a school house and about a dozen one story shanties they cant be called houses the country round is the roughest and the hottest I have ever been in and we all hope and pray that our stay here may be short but it dont look so for our officers say that we will be likely to serve our time out here the bare thought of staying here 3 months is killing me we will never see a newspaper here and I hardly think we will get more than one mail in two weeks and as for rations I expect we will fare bad enough here for I never saw a poorer county in my live. I think we was brought here through the influence of our Col who is very anxious to keep us in the service as long as possible and I hear that he volunteered to some here and wrote to the war department that the regiment would all like to serve out their time if he has done that I wish him no other harm than that he may chocke to death telling such infernal lies. . . .

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Lunenburg, June 13, 1865.

... I am at present in an even more secluded spot yet than I was in when I last wrote to you for I am in charge of the Freedmens camp which is about a mile from the court house in the woods. at present I have under my charge about 130 women and children of all ages and only a few crippled men because all the able bodied men are hired out as soon as they get here but nobody wants any women or children. My work here is light all I have to do is just to take in the new comers to hire them out as quick as possible and to issue rations to them while they stay here, but I see hear or smell nothing but niggers, but I am in hopes that we will soon be away from here, our captain told me to day that is at most 2 weeks we would get away from here.

I read quite a piece about us in the Sunday Mercury of last week stating why we ought to be home and also giving the reasons why we was not home long ago. it was got up well and did not spare our head officers any and I also saw an article in there stating that all heavy artillery regiments and all dismounted cavalry should be discharged imidiately.

... I have some hopes now of getting home sometime in July and I only hope I may not be disapointed for I declare time drags along so slow in this out of the way place that I can hardly notice it going at all but I suppose it is because we are thinking about getting home all the time and even if a man was surroundet with all the luxuries of a live, time could never pass in a place like this. I think certainly that this was the last place ever created and I think it was made late on saturday night by candle light but enough of this or I might work myself in a passion talking about a place that was never worth mentioning.... Well my dear I have told you about everything now but my farm for you must know that I got all my niggers camped on a big plantation my crop of cherries has been very good and I have had the full benefit of them for the first time in 3 years but they are all out now and I have

begun reaping my blackberries of wich I have several hundred acres and I think that with the help of these things I shall make out to live either till uncle Sam discharges us or sees fit to give us better rations than he does now. I think that this plantation could have with proper care and management been made to bring forth more than cherries and blackberries but you know the Yanks came down this way and old massa runned away and so forth. . . .

Herman Weiss to Adeline Weiss, Petersburg, June 22, 1865.

We started jesterday morning at 5 oclock from Lunenburg Court House and marched to Burksville 25 miles we got there by 1 oclock and started right off for here where we arrived last night at 6 oclock making the whole distance of 77 miles in 13 hours.

. . . To day our regiment has all been split up. The men wich are going home amount to about 300 and about 700 will have to stay. tomorrow morning at 6 oclock we are going to have the last dress parade as a regiment. I suppose you would like to know wether I am one of the 300. I am very happy that I can tell you that I am for the same day I wrote you my last letter they found our original muster rolls and that states that we shall be discharged 3 years from the day of enlistment but you must not be too glad my dear for I do not think that we shall be home before the 10th or 15th of July we shall go to Yonkers to be mustered out. I suppose we will lay there till all the papers is made up. . . . I will write when we get to Washington and let you know when to expect me home. . . .