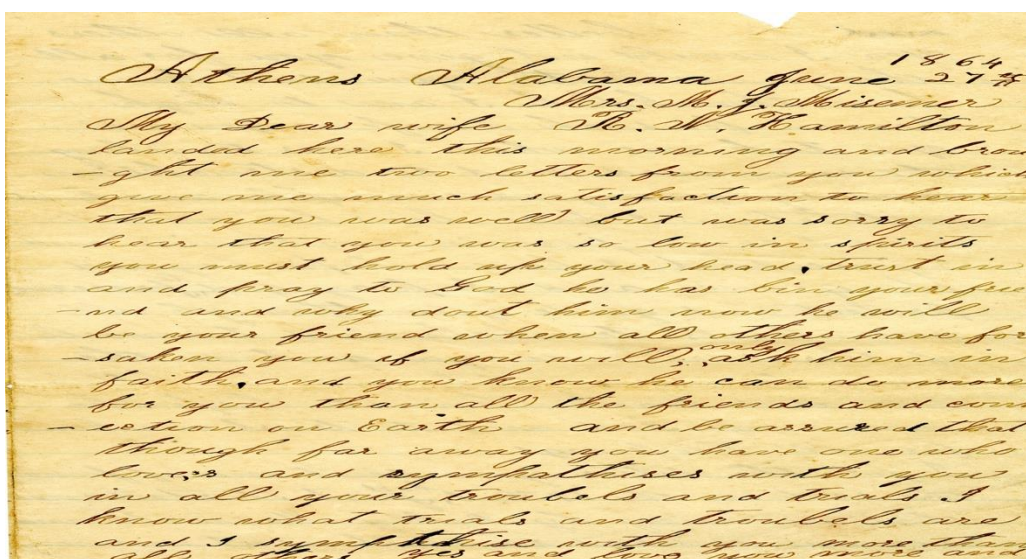


Henry M. Misemer's Letter to his wife Martha J. Misemer

May 2nd 1864

Manuscript: HL_MSS_21-07_02-Folder42



Athens Alabama June 27th 1864
Mrs. M. J. Misemer
My Dear wife W. W. Hamilton
I recd here this morning and brought
-ght me two letters from you which
give me much satisfaction to hear
that you was well but was sorry to
hear that you was so low in spirits
you must hold up your head, trust in
and pray to God he has bin your friend
-nd and why doubt him now he will
be your friend when all others have for-
-saken you if you will, ask him in
faith, and you know he can do more
for you than all the friends and com-
-etion on Earth and be assured that
though far away you have one who
loves and sympathizes with you
in all your troubles and trials I
know what trials and troubles are
and I sympathize with you more than
all other yes and love you more and

First page of the letter.
See Appendix for full size images of each page.

Transcribed by Braulio Fonseca

For English 618:Research Methods in English

Instructor: Dr. Brian Gastle

December 7th 2022

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

This transcription and its attendant annotations, explanatory material, and bibliography were prepared by students in ENGL 618: Research Methods in English, the required gateway class for the MA in English at Western Carolina University. The learning outcomes for this class include the following:

1. Conduct appropriate, effective, and ethical scholarship
 1. Effectively find and use advanced research tools (handbooks, databases, guides, bibliographies, etc.) appropriate to a subject.
 - Students will be able to use a wide variety of such tools and evaluate those tools.
 2. Find appropriate advanced research (print and electronic scholarship) and apply that research to specific disciplinary questions or issues.
 - Students will be able to find a variety of scholarship, evaluate both the appropriateness and rigor of that scholarship, and incorporate that scholarship correctly and effectively.
 3. Develop accurate bibliographies and reference citations.
 - Students will be able to annotate, abstract, and cite materials following standard MLA format.
2. Understand the process by which the texts we use are made available.
 - Students will be able to conduct basic editorial work and evaluate the editorial work of others.

All work is presented as submitted by the students. While these students take great care with their transcriptions and annotations, errors are always possible. As these students learn throughout this class, good scholarship requires checking of sources and corroboration by authoritative sources.

It is hoped that the transcription and annotation of WCU Special Collections materials will be useful to the institution, students, scholars, and other patrons and users of WCU's Special Collections materials

INTRODUCTION TO DOCUMENT

This manuscript is a letter written from Henry M. Misemer to his wife, Martha J. Misemer. The letter is dated June, 1864, one year before the *Sultana Disaster*. Researchers indicate that 1,195 of the 2,200 passengers and crew died including Henry Misemer, 200 later died from burns sustained during the incident, making the *Sultana* incident the deadliest maritime disaster in U.S. history.

Cpl. Henry Marshall Misemer (1832-1865) was the son of Heinrich Misemer and Susannah Biebel (or Bible). His first marriage was to Margaret Jane Brown on January 25, 1855, and the couple had one daughter, Mary Elizabeth “Lizzy” Misemer. Margaret Jane died on August 31, 1857, and Misemer married Martha Jane Bogart on February 2, 1859; she had three brothers, Solomon (Sol), Levi (Lee), and Charles Harrison Bogart.

At his death, Misemer left four young children with Martha Jane: Mary Elizabeth, from his previous marriage, as well as Charles Franklin, Margaret Ellen, and Laura Caroline. During the Civil War Misemer served in Company F, 3rd Regiment, East Tennessee Cavalry, USA, along with Martha’s brothers.

Henry was captured by Nathan Bedford Forrest’s troops on September 25, 1864, and paroled from the Cahaba, Mississippi, prison. Misemer, along with Levi Bogart and Charles Bogart, died in 1865 in the explosion of the USS *Sultana*.

Misemer’s widow Martha, who later filed for a widow’s pension, remarried a Dr. Daniels, on February 28, 1872.

The letter is post marked “Athens Alabama.” In this letter Henry acknowledges that in Martha’s previous letters she has expressed being in low spirits and he tries to console her by assuring her that God will continue to be there for her. He acknowledges that when they originally met, he was a man of sin, and she helped lead him to God. He asks her to pray and watch over his children and asks her to teach them to be close to the word of God themselves.

Henry details his brigade’s previous route that led him to Athens, starting from Nashville, then to Decatur, until finally arriving at Limestone County. He expresses a desire to be sent to East Tennessee but acknowledges he is close to giving up hope that he will. He mentions his son Charlie in this letter and advises Martha to be careful spending money until she sees how much corn and fodder that she raises which lends the fact that they were farmers. He also goes on to tell her that he has been sick and spent his money foolishly which I take as, he didn’t expect to survive the war.

In this letter Henry let’s Martha know that her brother Solomon (Sol) is with him and to give his regards to his wife Mary. Solomon would be one of the few who survived the *Sultana Disaster*. Henry finishes his letter by speaking of the re-election of Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson and speaks his praise of them by saying, “I say hurray for Abe and Andy.”

EDITORIAL STATEMENT

The manuscript itself is written on aged parchment paper that has become a discolored tan with blotches of stains and possible water damage. The ink that the letter was written in has gotten lighter and faded over time, but there are times that the ink is a fresh black, which leads me to believe that someone has seen these letters prior to me and tried to edit the document slightly. The paper has been folded twice, leaving two distinct folded lines on the page. These creases have not affected the readability of the text itself.

The letter itself is divided up between four actual physical pages and I will designate the change in those pages in the transcription which you will see centered in the page, i.e. [MS Page1] and [MS Page 2] etc.

This transcription is a diplomatic edition, meaning the text has been transcribed as closely to the original document as possible. This means any spelling errors, grammatical issues, or syntactical issues were preserved. Henry Misemer's penmanship is fairly easy to read, but here are some features of Henry's handwriting to take note:

- He does not dot his (i)s throughout the transcription.
- The letter (P) often appears as a (Pr), predominantly when used in upper case.
- Henry uses a form of ampersand, but it is not a traditional one. Henry's version appears like a (h) with a loop hanging off the back side.
- When a word come to the end of the page and does not have the space to completely be written in, Henry begins the next line with a dash mark and continues the spelling from there.
- Henry uses the word "Lisp" in regards to his children praying and speaking to God which is an old term used to describe children's innocent communication as they pray.
- Henry does not use punctuation and his sentences except for the very occasional comma and his sentences end and begin immediately after the other without a period to designate the change. In the transcription I tried to give a little more space between sentences to show that a new sentence had started.
- The line breaks have been preserved as shown in the manuscript.
- Some lines in this transcription look longer than others, but on the manuscript, they are aligned. The reason they appear longer in the transcription is because Henry wrote in additional text above the actual sentence line.

The digital photos found in this transcription were taken from Western Carolina University's Hunter Library from Digital and Special Collections. (See Apendix)

TRANSCRIPTION

[MS page 1]

1864

Athens Alabama June 27 th

Mrs. M. J. Misemer¹

My Dear wife R. W. Hamilton²

landed here this morning and brought me two letters from you which give me much satisfaction to hear that you was well but was sorry to hear that you was so low in spirits you must hold up your head. Trust in and pray to God he has bin your friend and why doubt him now he will be your friend when all others have forsaken you if you will, only³ ask him in faith, and you know he can do more for you than all the friends and commecetion on Earth and be assured that though far away you have one who loves and sympathises with you in all your Troubles and Trials I know what Trials and Troubles are and I sympathise⁴ with you more than all others yes and love you more and

¹ Martha J. Misemer, Maiden Name: Martha J. Bogart, Married Henry M. Misemer on 2/9/1859. Married by Rev. Thomas R. Bradshaw

² R.W. Hamilton, Union, 1st Cavalry Regiment, Corporal, Imprisoned 26, October, 1863 at Vincent's Cross Roads. Escaped imprisonment at Cahaba, Alabama in the winter of 1864. 2nd Imprisonment in 1864 at Johnson's Creek, Arkansas, released in July 27, 1864. Survived. (Ancestry)

³ Inserted above the line.

⁴ It appears that he originally misspelled the word and tried to correct it as the ink is darker on the P and T.

[MS Page 2]

And⁵ ⁶ better than all others
Yea I would not give you for all
Things on earth you don't now
How thankful I am to high
heaven for such a wife as you are
you took me when I was Traveling
the downward road to destrucktion
and by your good example and kind
instruction I have ben led on until
now I can rejoice in my Savior and
rejoice that I have a hope beyond
the grave and I pray god, to⁷, preserve
protect and guide you through all
your trials troubles and turmoils
of this earth do you not do the
same for me, watch over our little
ones and teach them to lisp he
name of God and to trust in him
for all blessings
I got the letter you sent me of June
The 10th on the 17th I had, just started one
That morning by Billy Maxwell⁸ and
We was ordered to start next morning

[MS Page 3]

To Decatur Ala we left Nashville
on the morning of the 18th and after
a march of Eight days we landed
at, Athens Ala Limestone County
Ala one hundred and ten miles
south of Nashville and twelve
or fifteen miles North of Decatur
was ordered to put up tents to stay
ten days and maybe longer the
balance of our Briggade the 2nd & 4th
E Tenn can I went on to Decator
what we are here for or how long we

⁵ The word "and" is marked out

⁶ A small rip in the page occurs here

⁷ The word "to" is inserted above

⁸ Unknown

will stay here no boddy seems to
know it is reported and generaly
beleived that Forest is concentrating
his forces at Moulton Ala to make
a raid on the Nashville & Chattanooga
R. Road or Chattanooga & Dalton road
and when he makes his raid or is
driven off that we will go to East
Tennessee but I dont think so we
have ben promised so often and so
long to go to E Tenn that I have given
up all hope of ever being sent there

[MS Page 4]

I think we will, ,Be either⁹ stationed on the
Back Road from Decator to Stephen
-son or be sent to the front in Georgia
most likely the latter we boxed up
our over coats and left them in
Nashville and it is said they were
marked in Cleaveland whether
they were or not I dont know
Martha I sent you a silk apron
a small pistol a knife to Charlie¹⁰
and an old comfort, and a letter¹¹, by Billy Maxwell¹²
write to me whether you got them
and the things the Bill called for
that I sent By John Wright¹³ or not
I didnt buy them shoes I give Wright
the money to buy them not knowing
wether I would get a pass to go to town
the day he started or not I did get
one but he had bought them when
I got these I saw they was no account
But it was too late and I said nothing

⁹ The word "either" was added and written above.

¹⁰ Charles F. Misemer, Born: 2/24/1860, Son of Martha J. and Henry M. Misemer. (Ancestry)

¹¹ "And a letter" inserted above

¹² Unknown

¹³ Unknown

[MS Page 5]

I was in Nashville the 17th just
and bought fifty pounds of rice
and paid 19 cents a pound for it
I put it in with Brents goods¹⁴
marked to Mrs. H. Misener, in case of Brent¹⁵, Brents
agent told me he had an order to ship
the goods the next day and I suppose
they are at Athens before now I didnt
have to pay Wright for his trouble sow
about 8 or 10 bu¹⁶ of wheat I don't believe¹⁷
I would buy any hay tel you see how
much corn and fodder you can raise & pull
let the cloves seed sowing go tel the
war is over, Tel me what you are doing
with the meadow How much corn
have you in and where how much
has Father and where I say for
you to do your own managing no
difference what others say or think
you have to make your own liveing
and it is no boddys buisness how you
manag¹⁸ your own affairs and do as you please

[MS Page 6]

you wish me to explain a sentence
we call Shoulder straps that all
commissioned Officers wear to denote
their¹⁹ rank. Scabs, and what I meant
was when this war is over and they
have to pull them off the privates
that have served under them will give

¹⁴ The ink is dark and over drawn on the "d." It appears that someone added it after he had written the original letter.

¹⁵ "In case of brent" inserted above.

¹⁶ Abbreviation for "bushels"

¹⁷ The word "believe" is curved down the right side slightly.

¹⁸ The 2nd "a" in manag was added above the word.

¹⁹ The word "their" has been inked up and appears it was originally misspelled and he went back and fixed the last two letters.

()²⁰ some of²¹ them a good thrashing for mistreating
them I got the socks you sent they
are a neat fit I sold both pair of the yarn
ones for 1.00 per pair in fifteen minutes
after I got them I have the ones you sent
by J. K.²² and they are good yet them and
the cotton ones will last me tel Dec
and I couldnt carry them that is the
reason why I sold them
Well I have twelve dollars By me
I confess I have spent a good deal of
money foolishly or at least I could have
done verry well without spending it
since I . left home I have ben sick a
goodeal and bought lots of things to

[MS Page 7]

eat that done me no real good
and for a long time after I come
here I could²³ not send it home I had
no place to keep my money But in
my pocket²⁴ and,²⁵ lots of the Boys had their
money stold out of their pockets I
was Scouting half of my Time and liable
to be killed or captured and loose it
and consequently when I saw any
thing I wanted I got it But since
I could send it home I have not
spent much foolishly and will spend²⁶
less hereafter This is the first
letter I have sent By mail I wrote
to you about your address and you said
you had none but would let me know
as soon as you got one you have never
told me you had one yet I knew I
could send by mail to Athens
But as you had not written any thing

²⁰ It appears to be to closed commas ()

²¹ The words "some of" inserted above the line

²² JK stands for John Kisner who is written about in the letter but John Kisner's actual identity is unknown.

²³ Apparent tear in the paper at "d" in "could" but it is still easily readable.

²⁴ ^ next to the word "pocket" indicating he intended to add the next word to the page.

²⁵ The word "and," was added.

²⁶ This word curves down to the right as he was running out of space on the paper.

about it I didnt suppose you would
inquire for letters at Athens. I would
have sent letters regularly if I had have
thought you would get them

[MS Page 8]

I will send you some money
the first chance if you need any
before I send you some call on
Mr Brent I let him have
Sixty two dollars the goods I
sent for by him will not cost
more than forty dollars freight
and all perhaps not that much
Sol²⁷ says to tel Mary²⁸ he sent her
a letter yesterday and will write
again, in , a few days he wants to
know whether She got the money
he sent her by John Wright²⁹ and
the goods by Billy Maxwell³⁰
or not
Well Martha I want to see you
verry bad But furlowing has play
-ed out and there is no telling when I
will wind up this war O³¹ yes I
forgot to tell you old Abe, Lincon
is anominated again for President
and Andrew Johnson of Tenn for vice
Pres – I say hurray for Abe & Andy
direct your letters to Athens Ala³² to follow

²⁷ Solomon Franklin Bogart, 3rd Regiment, Tennessee Cavalry, Company F, Imprisoned at Cahaba, Alabama.
(nps.gov)

²⁸ Mary E. Misemer, Born: 12/3/1855, Daughter of Henry and Margaret J. Misemer. In care of Martha after Henry's
death. (Ancestry)

²⁹ Unkown

³⁰ Unkown

³¹ On the page it looks like a 6 or some kind of swirl that could be an O, indistinguishable.

³² Action at Athens September 23-24, Detachment captured. Action at Sulphur Branch Trestle Sep, 25. Most of
Regiment captured. (nps.gov)

The regiment³³

Yours Only H. M. Misener

[This leaves all well my health has improved since I wrote you last.]

Appendix

Athens Alabama June 27th 1864
Mrs. M. J. Wisemer
My Dear wife T. W. Hamilton
landed here this morning and bro-
-ght me two letters from you which
give me much satisfaction to hear
that you was well but was sorry to
hear that you was so low in spirits
you must hold up your head, trust in
and pray to God he has bin your fri-
-end and why doubt him now he will
be your friend when all others have for-
-saken you if you will, ^{only} ask him in
faith, and you know he can do more
for you than all the friends and conn-
-ection on Earth and be assured that
though far away you have one who
loves, and sympathises with you
in all your troubles and trials I
know what trials and troubles are
and I sympathise with you more than
all others yes and love you more and

Above is an image of [MS Page 1] of the original manuscript.

and better than all others
yea I would not give you for all
things on earth you dont know
how thankful I am to high
heaven for such a wife as you are
you took me when I was traveling
the downward road to destruction
and by your good examples and kind
instruction I have been led on until
now I can rejoice in my Savior and
rejoice that I have a hope beyond
the grave and I pray god ^{to} preserve
protect and guide you through all
your trials Troubels and Turmoils
of this earth do you not do the
same for me, watch over our little
ones and teach them to hysp the
name of God and to trust in him
for all blessings

I got the letter you sent me of June
the 10th on the 17th I ^{had} just started one
that morning by Bally Mapwell and
we was ordered to start next morning

Above is an image of [MS Page 2] of the original manuscript.

to Decatur Ala we left Nashville
on the morning of the 18th and after
a march of Eight days we landed
at Athens Ala Limestone County
Ala one hundred and ten miles
south of Nashville and twelve
or fifteen miles North of Decatur
was orderd to put up tents to stay
ten days and maybe longer the
balance of our Briggade the 2nd & 4th
E Tenn Cav I went on to Decatur.
what we are here for or how long we
will stay here no body seems to
know it is reported and generally
believed that Forest is concentrating
his forces at Moulton Ala to make
a raid on the Nashville & Chattanooga
R. Road or Chattanooga & Dalton road
and when he makes his raid or is
driven off that we will go to East
Tennessee but I dont think so we
have been promised so often and so
long to go to E Tenn that I have given
up all hope of ever being sent there

Above is an image of [MS Page 3] of the original manuscript.

I think we will, ^{either} be stationed on the
Rail Road from Decatur to Stephen-
son or be sent to the front in Georgia
most likely the latter we boxed up
our over coats and left them in
Nashville and it is said they were
marked to Cleveland whether
they were or not I dont know
Martha I sent you a silk apron
a small pistol a knife to Charlie
and an old comfort, ^{and a letter} by Billy Maxwell
write to me whether you got them
and the things the Bell called for
that I sent by John Wright or not
I didnt buy them shoes I gave Wright
the money to buy them not knowing
whether I would get a pass to go to town
the day he started or not I did get
one but he had bought them when
I got there I saw they was no account
but it was too late and I said nothing

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I was in Nashville the 17th Inst
and bought fifty pounds of rice
and paid 19 cents a pound for it
I put it in with Brien's goods
marked to Mrs. H. M. Misener, ^{in case of Brient} Brient's
agent told me he had an order to ship
the goods the next day and I suppose
they are at Athens before now I didnt
have to pay Wright for his trouble sow
about 8 or 10 bu of wheat I dont believe
I would buy any hay tel you see how
much corn and fodder you can raise & pul
let the clover seed sowing go tel the
war is over, tel me what you are doing
with the meadow how much corn
have you in and where how much
has Father and where I say for
you to do your own managing and
difference what others say or think
you have to make your own living
and it is no boddys business how you
manage your own affairs, and do as you please

Above is an image of [MS Page 5] of the original manuscript.

You wish me to explain a sentence
we call shoulder straps that all
Commissioned Officers wear to denote
their rank. Scabs, and what I meant
was when this war is over and they
have to pull them off the privates
that have served under them will give
^{some of} them a good thrashing for mistreating
them. I got the socks you sent they
are a neat fit I sold both pair of the yarn
ones for 1.00 per pair in fifteen minutes
after I got them I have the ones you sent
by T. K. and they are good yet them and
the cotton ones will last me till Dec
and I couldn't carry them that is the
reason why I sold them
well I have twelve dollars by me
I confess I have spent a good deal of
money foolishly or at least I could have
done verry well without spending it
my tobacco has cost me 25 or 30 dol
since I left home I have ben sick a
good deal and bought lots of things to

Above is an image of [MS Page 6] of the original manuscript.

eat that done me no real good
and for a long time after I come
here I could not send it home I had
no place to keep any money But in
my pocket, and lots of the Boys had their
money stold out of their pockets I
was scouting half of my time and liable
to be killed or captured and lose it
and consequently when I saw any
thing I wanted I got it But since
I could send it home I have not
spent much foolishly and will spend
less hereafter This is the first
letter I have sent by mail I wrote
to you about your address and you said
you had none but would let me know
as soon as you got one you have never
told me you had one yet I knew I
could send by mail to Athens
But as you had not written any thing
about it I didnt suppose you would
inquire for letters at Athens I would
have sent letters reguarly if I had have
thought you would get them

Above is an image of [MS Page 7] of the original manuscript.

This leaves all well my health has improved since I wrote you last

I will send you some money
the first chance if you need any
before I send you some call on
Mr Brient & let him have
Sixty two dollars the goods I
sent for by him will not cost
more than forty dollars freight
and all perhaps not that much

Sol says to tel Mary he sent her
a letter yesterday and will write
again, a few days he wants to
know whether she got the money
he sent her by John Wright and
the goods By Billy Maxwell
or not

Well Martha I want to see you
verry bad But furlowing has play
-ed out and there is no telling when
I will get to come home But I stile
live in hope, I think this summer
will wind up this war, O yes I
forgot to tell you old Abe, Seimeon
is anonirated again for President
and Andrew Johnson of Tenn for vice
Pres - I say hurray for Abe & Andy
direct your letters to Athens Ala to follow
the regiment Yours Only H. M. Misener

Above is an image of [MS Page 8] of the original manuscript.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ancestry Library Edition. Ancestry.com.

Ancestry provided most of the information used to find family names, dates, places of residence, and other information.

“Battle Unit Details: Union Tennessee Volunteers, 3rd Regiment, Tennessee Cavalry.” *NPS*, National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-battle-units-detail.htm?battleUnitCode=UTN0003RC>.

This webpage provides an overview of the major movements and engagements of the 3rd Regiment of the Tennessee Cavalry, of which Sol and Marsh Bogart were members. This is how I discovered what occurred on September 25, 1864 that led to Sol Bogart’s capture and subsequent imprisonment.

Bogart, F, Solomon. (Sol) 3rd Regimen, Tennessee Cavalry, Company F, Imprisoned at Cahaba, Alabama. (<https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-soldiers.htm#sort=score+desc&q=Solomon+Franklin+Bogart>)

Hamilton, R. W. Union, 1st Cavalry Regiment, Corporal, Imprisoned 26, October, 1863 at Vincent’s Cross Roads. Escaped imprisonment at Cahaba, Alabama in the winter of 1864. 2nd Imprisonment in 1864 at Johnson’s Creek, Arkansas, released in July 27, 1864. Survived.

Misemer, M. Henry. Henry M. Misemer, Corporal, Co. F, 3rd Reg., Tenn. Cav. Vols, died: 4/27/1865, Reported POW: 9/24/1864. <https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-soldiers-detail.htm?soldierId=2FEB94BB-DC7A-DF11-BF36-B8AC6F5D926A>

Misemer, Martha. Maiden Name: Martha J. Bogart, Married Henry M. Misemer on 2/9/1859, Married by Rev. Thomas R. Bradshaw
<https://www.ancestry.com/genealogy/records/martha-misemer-24-35hf8w5>

Misemer, Charles. Ancestry.com. *U.S., Find a Grave Index, 1600s-Current* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012. Original data: *Find a Grave*. Find a Grave. <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi>. **DIED 1919**

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Norvel, Clint. Clinton L, Norvell, Union, 3rd Cavalry Tennessee, Company B,F, 2nd Lieutenant, Survived. https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/discoveryui-content/view/1884154:1555?tid=&pid=&queryId=6cc7a3b9536e651bd3e522b983d535c0&_phsrc=jtY38&_phstart=successSource

“Sulphur Creek Trestle.” *American Battlefield Trust*, American Battlefield Trust, <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/civil-war/battles/sulphur-creek-trestle>.

This is the webpage I used to learn more about the battle Sol was captured during. The American Battlefield Trust is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of battlefields of the American Civil War, among other important American wars.

The Sultana Disaster Museum, *The Sultana Association*.
<https://www.sultanadisastermuseum.com>