

# A Guide to Letters of the Hardgrove Family 1862-1863

Letters of the Hardgrove Family 1862-1863  
1862-1863

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## History

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## Title Statement

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## Descriptive Summary

**Accession number**

11106

**Language**

English

**Abstract**

This collection consists of electrostatic copies of four letters, 1862-1863, three from Union soldier Lieutenant N.H. Hardgrove to his brother, William Hardgrove, and one from Benjamin down to his sister, Judith A. Hardgrove.

## Physical Characteristics

4 items

## Repository

Special Collections, University of Virginia Library

# Administrative Information

## Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

## Use Restrictions

See the [University of Virginia Library's use policy](#).

## Acquisition Information

These copies of Civil War letters were given to the Library by Mr. C.L. Redus, Houston, Texas, through Robert Rutland, Charlottesville, Virginia, on September 7, 1993.

## Preferred Citation

Hardgrove Family Civil War Letters, 1862-1863, Accession #11106, Special Collections Dept., University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Va.

# Biographical/Historical Information

The Hardgrove Family, from Ohio, had several members in the Union Army during the Civil War.

# Scope and Content Information

In the first letter, N.H. Hardgrove, Camp Shiloh, Tennessee, to William Hardgrove, Democracy, Ohio, April 26, 1862, Hardgrove describes his first time on Mississippi soil during a reconnaissance near Corinth, Mississippi, on April 25, joining four other divisions of Pope's and Rosecrans (Union) Army of the Mississippi, 1500 cavalry troops and two pieces of artillery on a twenty mile march there and back, driving the rebels out of their advance camp, and burning all of their tents and possessions in retaliation for the rebel attack on their camp on Sunday, April 6, during the Battle of Shiloh. The federal troops sent seventy- five to eighty shells into the Confederate camp before returning with eleven prisoners. He also mentions that another division went to Purdy, Tennessee, a small place on the Memphis & Charleston Railroad, where Union troops captured hundreds of prisoners.

In a second letter, Monterey, Tennessee, May 26, 1862, Hardgrove thanks his brother for sending him three dollars since he has not been paid yet, mentions his bout with yellow jaundice, refers to a hearty meal of hard crackers, salt pork, and beans, describes an incident in which a rebel citizen tried to steal some commissary stores, and complains about the distance from fresh drinking water, "The further south we go the worse the water gets." He mentions that General John Pope's (1822-1892) division engaged in very hard fighting over control of a spring that he guarded with siege guns. Hardgrove belonged to the Reserve Corps, which consisted of the First Division, commanded by General John Alexander McClernand (1812-1900) and the Third Division, commanded by General Lewis Wallace (1827-1905). Hardgrove's individual brigade, which was located to the extreme right of the Reserve Corps, was busy constructing over three miles of breastworks about four miles to the rear of the advance. The armies of General William Starke Rosecrans (1819- 1898) and General Franz Sigel (1824-1902) joined his division. He also talks about the loss of men in his regiment through sickness, death, furloughs, and other causes, "Six months active service in this wooden country uses up men mighty fast. We left Camp Sherman with over nine hundred men fit for duty - we now muster five hundred for duty." He intends to remain in service as long as the conflict lasts, "We are mighty independent with the Staff Boys and they know it and are afraid of us. We do just about as we please. We ask no favors from them nor do we expect to receive any. We have no respect for them and they have none for us; we pass them by as we would a dog and they do the same."

Hardgrove's third letter, camp near Helena, Arkansas, July 27, 1862, mentions his journey after leaving Memphis, Tennessee, down the Mississippi River about ninety miles to Helena, where General Samuel Ryan Curtis (1817-1866) had his headquarters in the residence of Confederate General Thomas Carmichael Hindman. Wallace has five thousand men and Curtis has about twenty-five thousand on hand and supposes they will soon leave for either Little Rock or Vicksburg, where P.G.T. Beauregard (1818-1893) has a considerable force. He describes their camp routine along the Mississippi River and the regiment's use of five hundred pounds of ice a day to keep their water fresh. Captain Briggs had gone home on furlough the day before they left Memphis and Charles D. Miller of Mount Vernon became acting adjutant: "There will be over two months pay due us. We have to come down to army rations hard crackers and salt pork. Wherever an

army encamps it almost lays waste to the country. There are large cornfields here with a hundred acres or more in them which have been destroyed since the army has been here. And in fact everything else. There are too many of us here to live well off of the country."

The fourth letter is from Benjamin Downs, Hardenburgh, [Ohio?], January 7, 1863, to his sister, Judith A. Hardgrove, and refers to the participation of his son, Edward Downs, a member of the [26th Regiment 2nd Volunteers?] in the Battle of Prairie Grove, Arkansas. His son, who was now in the hospital at Fayetteville, Arkansas, believed that a knife and looking glass in his pocket saved his life. His wife's brother, Joseph Waldorff, was not in the fight because he was guarding the provision train four miles back from the front lines. A neighbor, William Fineher, was killed in the battle. News had just been received about the Battle of Murfreesboro, involving a great many of the local men. Downs also mentions that two of his brother-in-laws were in the fight at Murfreesboro being in the 82nd Regiment Indiana Volunteers commanded by Colonel Morton Craig Hunter (1825-1896). His letter discusses news about other family members including his brother George's children, Leonard, William, and Kate (Hulse) Edminster. Apparently Benjamin and Judith's sister Margaret had died after childbirth; but their brothers, Curtis and William were all well.