

## Navigating through the Civil War with Diaries in Hand: The Diaries of Two Company Clerks in the 17<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Infantry

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ON JANUARY 5, 1864, Orin M. Jameson, a twenty-one year-old clerk in the 17<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Infantry, recorded in his diary that he “wrote all day for Sgt...Enlisting papers and forms.” On the same day, twenty-four-year-old James B. Fowler, also a clerk in the 17<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Infantry, wrote in his diary, “Orin & I wrote for Co G all day.” Two days later, Jameson scribbled in his diary that he received a letter from his father. On the same day of Jameson’s diary entry, Fowler wrote in his diary that “Orin got a letter from home.”<sup>1</sup>

That the diary entries of Orin Jameson and James Fowler were so similar and referred to each other should not be surprising, as they were company clerks in the same regiment and they both came from the farming community of Sumpter, Wisconsin, where their families had relatively large farms.<sup>2</sup> The similar diary entries also reflect their relationship. Close friends, they had become brothers-in-law when James married Orin’s younger sister Isabell in July 1861. Orin was also married, to Ruth Sharp (they married in February 1862), and when the men enlisted, each had a very young child at home.<sup>3</sup>

In their diaries, neither Jameson nor Fowler ever explained their motives for enlisting, nor did they ruminate on the meaning of the Civil War. Their daily diary entries, supplemented with notes in various sections of their diaries, nevertheless provide a unique opportunity to explore how Union soldiers from the same community, who were close friends and related by marriage, who led parallel lives as clerks in the same regiment, used their diaries during the Civil War in ways both very similar and very different.

### **Scholarship on Civil War Diaries**

While this article will discuss what the Fowler and Jameson diaries reveal about their thoughts, I am more interested in teaching students to explore how the soldiers used their diaries. Civil War historians, when discussing diaries as primary source material, tend to identify patterns across the diversity of thoughts expressed in diaries in order to support their more general claims. Ryan Keating, for example, uses the Fowler and Jameson diaries to support several of his claims about the 17<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Infantry, including that “furloughs were cause for excitement among the troops”:

Private James Fowler noted that the men of the 17<sup>th</sup> had a “first rate time” as they prepared for their journey home to Wisconsin. The trip home was exciting and a bit off-putting, with “everybody drunk [and] fighting,” Private Orin Jameson confided in his diary. The enthusiasm of the soldiers likely escalated as they traveled through Illinois, where they were met in every town, wrote Private Fowler, by “very patriotic folks waving hand kerchiefs table cloths and every thing to be got hold of.”<sup>4</sup>

In this instance, Keating quotes the Fowler and Jameson diaries interchangeably as evidence for his claim, and to give a personal flavor that reveals what it felt like to be a soldier in the 17<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin. Keating’s methodology, practiced by many historians who utilize diaries, provides strong evidence for generalizations about soldier experiences.

A different methodology, promoted by Jason Phillips, focuses on the personal stories of soldiers within the cultural context that informed their writings. By highlighting “soldiers’ individuality,” he maintains that historians would contribute “to a larger disciplinary effort to explain how real people—along with impersonal forces

like environment, markets, and governments—make history.”<sup>5</sup> In the last decade or so, other Civil War historians have focused their attention on the individuality of soldiers. For example, Robert Bonner examines soldier letters and diaries as individual expressions that attempted to make sense of the war. Bonner furthermore calls on scholars to explore soldier writing as a “cultural practice.”<sup>6</sup> Taking up this call by looking specifically at soldier letters, Christopher Hager shows that, in their letters, soldiers experimented with writing to capture the “personal—new experiences, new feelings.” As such, for many letter-writing soldiers, their “identity as a writer became intertwined with” their “sense of...purpose as a soldier.” Indeed, soldiers often approached writing letters “with the martial discipline of drill.”<sup>7</sup> Peter Carmichael takes a case-study approach to soldier letters, one that contextualizes their stories over time and understands their letter writing practice as “a creative act.” Soldiers, he contends, “made meaning of their experiences in radically different ways.”<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, soldiers familiar with popular literary culture during the Civil War would have understood the war experience as very individualized. Rather than depicting national meanings for the war, Alice Fahs has shown that popular war literature portrayed “personal experiences of the war as the basis for its most profound meanings.” The short stories of Ambrose Bierce, Drew Faust argues, were meant to present the Civil War as something to be “read only in the context of individual lives.” For writers like Bierce, the only thing that could be known about the Civil War was individual soldier experiences.<sup>9</sup>

At the same time, during the Civil War, many soldiers feared losing their individuality within the regime of the military, that they would be changed by their military experience. Some historians have argued that “the daily drilling, as well as battle, wore away” at the former identities of soldiers.<sup>10</sup> Simply being away from home also caused many soldiers to feel disorientated away from the security of familiar support.<sup>11</sup> Other historians have shown religion and comradeship to be helpful in sustaining soldiers during the war. Earl Hess, identifying ideology as a key factor, argues that, for working-class soldiers, “habits of thought, their experience with manual labor, and their philosophy of life all contributed to their emotional ability to survive battle.” As a result, he concludes, they used ideology to “mold” the war “into familiar and manageable forms.”<sup>12</sup> Peter Carmichael, in contrast, contends that soldiers of all stripes developed

a philosophy of “pragmatism” during the Civil War that enabled them to be mentally flexible and adapt to the circumstances of war.<sup>13</sup>

The scholarship on personal diaries points to diaries as another potential adaptive source. For Rachel Langford and Russell West, the process of keeping a diary is a way for diarists to affirm themselves in place and time through the discursive act, where the self is both an observer and actor, and as such is able to make personal meaning within the context of their own time. Gayle Davis, meanwhile, argues that diaries have often served as a “coping mechanism” that helped diarists placed in challenging circumstances mediate “between the familiar and the new.” In this way, the routine of diary writing provided a degree of order in an uncertain world.<sup>14</sup> Taking the scholarship on diaries into account, this article will explore the ways in which writing in a diary had adaptive purposes for James Fowler and Orin Jameson.

In focusing on the Fowler and Jameson diaries, the “anthropology of experience” also provides a helpful analytical tool. According to Edward Brunner, this approach “sees people as active agents in the historical process who construct their own world.” Making the distinction between “life as experienced (experience), and life as told (expression),” Brunner argues that “expressions also structure experience.” In this respect, diaries and other forms of personal writing are cultural texts that communicate personal experience, expressing the writer’s perspective by constructing meaning from the experience.<sup>15</sup> In his study of soldier diaries, for example, Jason Phillips demonstrates the influence diaries had on the thoughts and actions of soldiers. In particular, the rumors soldiers documented in their diaries provided a lens through which soldiers understood the war, and thus “affected” their “war experiences.”<sup>16</sup> Here, the Fowler and Jameson diaries will be understood as “cultural artifacts” that existed within a larger nineteenth-century American diary writing culture that employed diaries as tools for particular personal purposes. Within this cultural context, and the biographical contexts of these two diary-writers, I examine the Fowler and Jameson diaries as a whole to uncover how Fowler and Jameson used their diaries as a tool for processing their experiences during the Civil War, and the ways in which their diaries became integral to their experience of the Civil War. This approach leads me to ask a central methodological question: What happens when soldier diaries are examined not

as being produced by soldiers who happened to keep diaries, but produced by diarists who happened to be soldiers? In other words, how was the Civil War experienced by *diarists* who enlisted in the military? This study presents the very practice of diary writing itself as having a profound influence on how diary writing soldiers like Fowler and Jameson experienced and navigated through the war.

### Orin Jameson and James Fowler

Orin Jameson enlisted into Company H of the 17<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Infantry on November 2, 1863 at the recruiting station in Baraboo, Wisconsin. Two days later, James Fowler enlisted in the same company after having served in the 6<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin from the start of the war until being discharged for an injury in 1862. Throughout their time in the military, both Fowler and Jameson remained very much rooted in their home community in Wisconsin. Jameson was born in the township of Sumpter, while Fowler moved to Sumpter from Virginia with his parents and siblings in the mid-1850s. A small farming community, as one historian described, Sumpter had bluffs that “lie as loaves of finely baked bread in a pan, each loaf separated from the other by a scenic valley.” The Jameson family was one of the original founding families. Valuing education for their children, soon after the township was settled, the Jamesons helped start King’s Corner School in 1842. When the King’s Corner School formally became part of the Wisconsin state system in 1851, school was held on the Jameson farm until an actual schoolhouse was built a year later.<sup>17</sup>

Both Fowler and Jameson also had connections to nearby Baraboo, a much larger town where they enlisted in the 17<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin. On the eve of the Civil War, Baraboo was a rapidly growing mill community located along the Baraboo River, just a few miles north of Sumpter. First settled in the 1840s, within a decade, it had a highly developed educational system, which emphasized the literary arts. The variety of “literary societies, devoted almost entirely to scholastic problems and discussions” were very popular. In 1858, one of the first settlers to Baraboo, David Crandall, helped establish the Baraboo Collegiate Institute, a private high school where students were so enthralled with the literary arts, they formed the Hesperian Club that created a library. On the eve of the Civil War, the Republican-leaning *Baraboo Republic* was widely read in Baraboo and surrounding townships.<sup>18</sup>

As a young man, Orin Jameson had built up quite a local reputation as a farmer. In 1863, he proudly “displayed two plants of rye” produced on his farm to the *Baraboo Republic*. Orin had something quite extraordinary—while the local record had been sixty-four heads per plant, the specimens brought to the newspaper had 105 heads and 120 heads.<sup>19</sup> While there are no sources available to explain how he achieved this remarkable feat on his farm, it is possible that like many nineteenth-century farmers, he kept a farm journal that helped him manage the farm. Farmers often used these journals to keep track of their work on the farm. To maintain their own self-discipline, some farmers would regularly offer the simple notation “I worked,” and then briefly detail the type of work they were doing, such as “plowing” or “harvesting.” They would also record the total amount of each crop harvested. These farm journals thus served “as an account of their work.” Additionally, farmers used a day book or ledger to keep track of financial obligations. For many farmers, these journals were essential tools for the management of their farms.<sup>20</sup>

By the time Jameson and Fowler reached the 17<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin in Vicksburg, they both were identified as having the skills necessary for clerk duty, which included “good penmanship and a capacity for keeping good reports and records.” While there is no information that reveals why these two volunteers were assigned to clerk duty, their experience with farm journals would have made them good candidates for this position. That Fowler and Jameson were so quickly identified for assignment as clerks also suggests that they had a higher level of education than the other men who enlisted with them.<sup>21</sup> As David Crandall was a close relative of the Jameson family, Orin Jameson (and perhaps his close friend James Fowler) may have attended Crandall’s Baraboo Collegiate Institute and joined the Hesperian Club, although this is only speculative since there are no records available to indicate this. Regardless, Fowler was assigned to clerk for Company H, and Jameson was transferred to Company G so he could clerk for that company. As a result, they worked together in their clerk assignment. Both men were also promoted to sergeant.

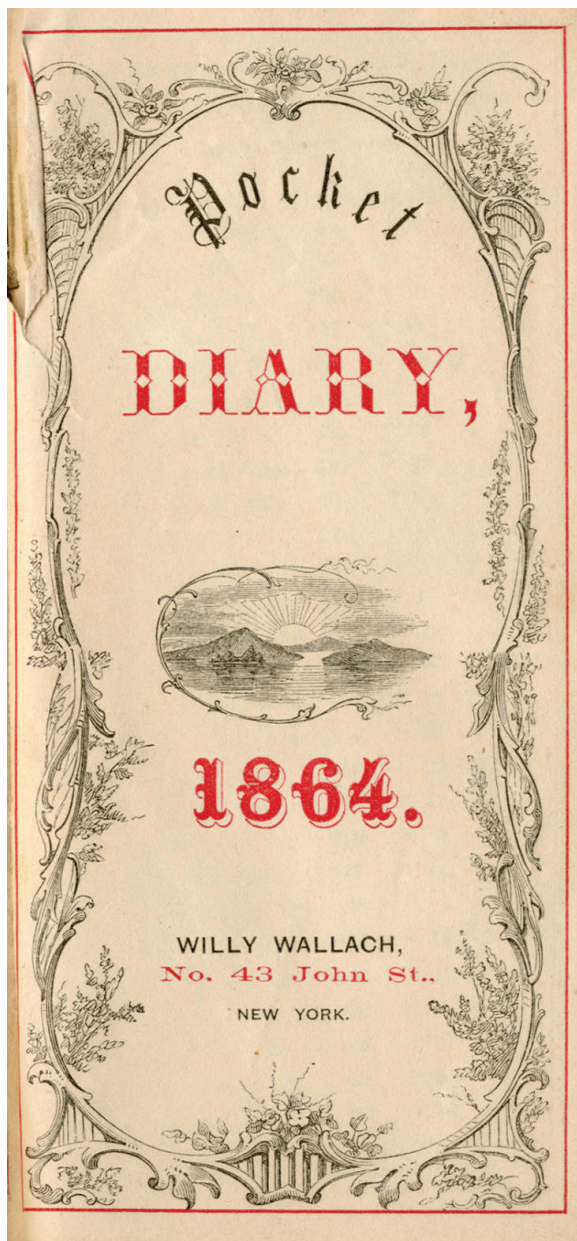
As company clerks, Fowler and Jameson spent most of their time in a daily routine of maintaining records and writing reports. Responsible for the Morning Report Book, Sick Book, Rosters, Descriptive Book, Clothing Book, Order Book, Account Book of Company Fund, Register of Articles Issued to Soldiers, and Record

Book of Target Practice, they were deeply entrusted by their superiors for accuracy of documentation. Central to their work was what accountants refer to as “cost behavior” in their documentation. For example, if a soldier required clothing beyond what was allotted to him, it had to be documented, and the soldier was expected to reimburse the army. The company clerk was also responsible for documenting details of every non-commissioned officer and enlisted man in the Descriptive Book. In addition to noting such details as age, height, birthplace, and occupation, clerks were expected to write in the “Remarks” section anything that could “have a bearing on the soldier’s merits, character, and service.” This could include such things as “promotions,” “compliments,” “wounds received,” and “punishments.” The clerk’s objective in documenting this information was to “list every important item to the credit or discredit of a soldier, to enable officers succeeding to the company to have a correct history of the men.”<sup>22</sup> In keeping the Descriptive Book, then, clerks documented the value of each soldier in the company. Clearly skilled as writers and recordkeepers, Fowler and Jameson applied their talents not only to official documents, but also to their own personal accounts.

### The Diaries

Just as they began their work as company clerks after joining their regiment in Vicksburg, on January 2, 1864, Orin Jameson and his friend James Fowler each bought their own separate diary books for seventy-five cents. These identical books, titled “Pocket Diary, 1864,” were published by the Willy Wallach Publishing Company in New York, and distributed by T. Fitzwilliam Stationer in New Orleans (see **Figure 1** for the cover page from Jameson’s diary). By the mid-nineteenth century, the type of personal writing found in diaries was often practiced in schools, even small prairie schools like the one attended by Fowler and Jameson. Writing well was particularly stressed for boys, with good writing presented as essential for success in the marketplace.<sup>23</sup> Educator and reformer William Alcott’s *The Young Man’s Guide*, which went through sixteen editions by the mid-nineteenth century, stressed to young men the need to keep a regular journal, one in which they wrote down both their “observations” and “thoughts.” Doing this regularly,





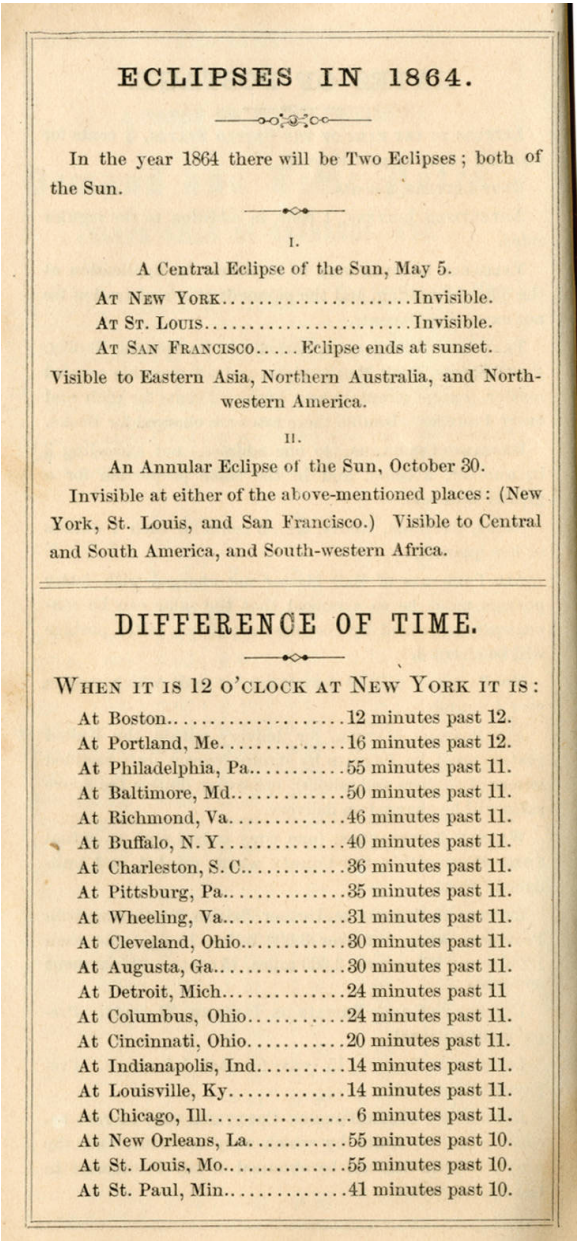
**Figure 1:** Publisher's Cover Page, Diary of Orin M. Jameson, Jan. 1 - Aug. 7, 1864, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, <<https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/quiner/id/34542/rec/15>>.



he argued, “encourages a demand for close observation” and is a “useful method for improving the mind.” The regular habit of diary writing would be, according to Alcott, the best way of “preparing ourselves for usefulness.”<sup>24</sup>

For young men holding middle-class aspirations, Thomas Augst demonstrates in his study of nineteenth-century clerks, habitual diary writing provided them with a “meditative experience” that enabled them to “inscribe” a sense of personal character into their diary as a way of adapting to the “dislocations” caused by the emerging market culture. In this respect, diary writing became for many men a means of retaining their individuality as they went out into a rapidly changing American society.<sup>25</sup> During the Civil War, many men continued their practice of diary writing when they enlisted, attaching the practice to middle-class masculinity. Others began keeping a diary for the first time for similar reasons. As they experienced dramatic changes in their cultural settings, such as moving from a rural farm to the environment of military regime, writing provided one means by which they could come to terms with the significant differences in the gender expectations they encountered.<sup>26</sup>

The annual pocket diary that Jameson and Fowler purchased, popular in America by the 1850s, encouraged a specific kind of writing. Meant for the “record-keeping needs of businessmen,” publishers included calendars, postage rates, and almanac material (see **Figure 2** for sample material from Jameson’s diary). The focus, however, was on the dated pages that left small blank spaces for purchasers to “keep a record of their public careers.” Publishers marketed their pocket diaries to Americans preoccupied with recordkeeping, particularly the rising middle class, who would see it as a way to “harness” the commercial market. That said, many Americans did adapt the pocket diaries to their own needs. Diarists, for example, often used it to mark visits to friends and relatives, or to compile their family histories. In this way, pocket diaries served as tools that provided individuals with the ability to give meaning to personal events simply by writing them down. During the Civil War, pocket diaries became increasingly popular among soldiers because they were small, light, and easy to carry in their knapsack. According to Molly McCarthy, the very process of writing in their pocket diary, no matter how brief, provided soldiers with the opportunity to give value to their own individual experience.<sup>27</sup>



**Figure 2:** Almanac Material Page, Diary of Orin M. Jameson, Jan. 1 - Aug. 7, 1864, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, <<https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/quiner/id/34550/rec/15>>.

The Fowler and Jameson pocket diaries provide significant insight into how these two men experienced the Civil War. It is nevertheless important to notice what is absent in their diaries. For example, the 17<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin was known as an Irish regiment, but neither Fowler nor Jameson had any Irish heritage, nor did their diaries exhibit any reference to the Irish identity of their comrades or of the regiment more generally. This indicates that as the 17<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin became increasingly mixed over time, by 1864, the Irish identity of the 17<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin had become less pronounced.<sup>28</sup> On a more personal level as well, neither the Fowler diary nor the Jameson diary reveal any details about how they felt about life in the military, or the Civil War more generally. The letters Orin Jameson wrote to his cousins Robert and Kittie Crandall, however, do provide some insight into how he felt about being in the military. Very soon after arriving in Vicksburg, he assured Kittie, "I like soldiering." About a month later, in a letter to Robert, he confirmed these sentiments. Robert, who had enlisted in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin in August 1862, and had been promoted to Second Lieutenant within a year, may very well have influenced Orin's decision to enlist. At the very least, as Orin summarized in his letter to Robert, "you said you was glad that I was a soldier." Orin confirmed that he enjoyed being a soldier, writing to Robert that "it just suits me" and he was "having splendid good times." He clearly expressed identifying with being a soldier in ways very similar to Robert, and in ways that he himself had not expected: "I like it a great deal better than I had any idea I could."<sup>29</sup> Robert, who began keeping a diary about his military experiences in the fall of 1863, may also have influenced Orin's decision to keep a diary.<sup>30</sup>

Orin's diary entries, different in style and content from his letters, were very brief and (with a few important exceptions) generally discussed matters quite different from what he wrote in his letters. His diary also sometimes contradicts details in his letters. While his diary documents numerous days he was on "picket duty," for example, Orin told his cousin Robert that he was pleased about his clerk assignment because "I have all the writing to do...and get excused from Guard duty." Moreover, while his diary regularly listed the letters from home that he received, he complained to Robert, "I have not heard from Home for some time."<sup>31</sup> Even his writing utensils were different, as he consciously used a pen for his

letters and a pencil for his diary. On one occasion, though, when he wrote to Kittie in July 1864, he felt it important explain why he was using a pencil rather than a pen in that one instance:

I let the Sergt-major take my Ink yesterday and he lost it so I have to write with a pencil. I did not want to write with a pencil but I thought it better than to not write at all.<sup>32</sup>

Why did it matter which utensil he used for writing? While a pen is certainly darker, and thus could be easier for Kittie to read, Orin was conscious of the fact that he used his pencil for his diary and pen for his letters—out of necessity, his diary writing tool was being used for letter writing. Whether that mattered to Kittie, we will never know, but it mattered to him. While Orin designated his pencil for a specific purpose, his diary (and James Fowler's) served multiple purposes.

### *Diary Writing for Accounting Purposes*

Both Orin Jameson and James Fowler wrote their diaries in pencil, and their diaries show these two friends to be intertwined in each other's lives. As practiced in farm journals, almost all their diary entries began with a statement about the weather. Assigned to clerical work together, they each constantly referred to their duties for this assignment in their diaries with the simple notation "writing" or "wrote"—similar to how farmers would note "working" in their farm journals. Thus, for both of them, the act of keeping a variety of account books was understood as engaging in the action of "writing." Fowler and Jameson also each mention their work together in brief statements. On January 14, 1864, for example, Jameson scribbled that he "wrote for Co. G," while on the same day, Fowler noted that "Orin and I wrote...all day." In addition, they each listed going "drilling" and going on "picket" duty as a regular part of their military life. But they also kept track of each other's whereabouts. When Jameson wrote "not feeling well" in his diary, Fowler noted on the same day, "Orin out sick." When Fowler recorded receiving a letter from a friend back home, Jameson scribbled that Fowler "read letters from home today."<sup>33</sup> Their diaries thus document a close friendship, but also functioned as an account of their relationship, one in which they consistently accounted for the actions and well-being of the

other, as well as accounting for the times they were together. That both men wrote so similarly about the other suggests that for them, accounting for their friendship in their diaries was a way to manage their friendship in the midst of the uncertainty of war.

Fowler and Jameson also recorded their reading experiences. In accounting for their reading habit, they offered little or no commentary on what they read or how they read. Books, nevertheless, had important symbolic meaning for Fowler and Jameson, representing “artifacts” from their former middle-class lives.<sup>34</sup> By inscribing their reading habits into their diaries, they affirmed continuity of the self as they adapted to their new lives in the army. Their first entries for January 1, 1864, for example, were remarkably similar (see **Figure 3** for the first entries from Jameson’s diary). Jameson wrote:

A clear and cold morning. Snow to be seen that fell the evening before. I was around camp all day, busied myself reading and writing. Got wood for Night. The wind in the S.W. and myself cold. I was so cold could not sleep.<sup>35</sup>

On the same day, similarly, Fowler wrote the following:

A very cold day. The ground is frozen very hard. Little swans in the afternoon. Carried some wood for our tent. Read a novel. Davenport Iowa was the title.<sup>36</sup>

Jameson and Fowler were probably together that New Year’s Day, enduring the freezing temperature and hauling wood. Perhaps they even read together. One can easily imagine the harsh weather and how they warmed themselves as being worthy of note in their first diary entry. But they also each accounted for their own literary habits throughout their diaries, and did so regularly. Fowler, for example, noted in February that he received some books from Boston and “at night read one of the Books.” He also noted that he read the speeches of the radical Evangelical theologian Abner Kneeland, and also read “the Boston Investigation all through.” Jameson, meanwhile, noted when he read Charles Anderson’s “The Cause of the War,” calling it a “most splendid reading.” He also sometimes scribbled that he “Read a paper from home,” while other times he was more specific, writing that he read a copy of the *Baraboo Republic*.<sup>37</sup>

In addition, Fowler and Jameson regularly noted their attendance at the theater in Vicksburg in February 1864. Jameson accounted for going eight times and Fowler five times.<sup>38</sup> Neither diary ever



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FRIDAY, JANUARY 1, 1864.

A clear and cold morning snow to be seen that fell the evening before I was around camp all day busied myself reading and writing, got snowed for night, the wind in the P.M. and night cold I was so cold could not sleep

SATURDAY 2

A clear and cold morning I think the ground is froze about 2 inches deep. Had a very little during the day. Clouded up about noon and remained so during the day. My room in the S. E. of the school. Palmer about settling his clothing bill with the company.

SUNDAY 3

A cloudy morning mild. Went to the M. & W. got boards, cl. stand and sundry articles. The M. & W. escorted the M. & W. to the boat. Went to the Fairleigh got back at noon. Fixed games & I put up a tent and moved in to it at home and I went to the city & got some bread. Rained some at different times.

**Figure 3:** First Entries Page, Diary of Orin M. Jameson, Jan. 1 - Aug. 7, 1864, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, <<https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/quiner/id/34565/rec/15>>.



listed the titles of the performances that they saw, indicating the act of attending the theater was more important than the actual content of what they saw. This is significant because, as there were no local theaters in Sumpter or Baraboo at the time, it is likely that Fowler and Jameson had never attended a professional theater performance until they enlisted in the army, and certainly did not go to the theater as regularly at home as they did when they were stationed in Vicksburg. That being said, attending the theater in Vicksburg (which had a rich theater tradition that remarkably continued during the siege of Vicksburg) would have appealed to their literary sensibility.<sup>39</sup>

More than any other topic, however, Fowler and Jameson devoted an enormous amount of space in their diary entries to reporting letters they wrote and received, sometimes identifying the correspondent, though not always. Accounting for their correspondence was a way for these two soldiers to manage their continued connection to their friends and family back home. For example, Jameson noted that he received a letter from his father on January 7 and wrote a letter to his father on January 8. These entries are typical of the entries in his diary where no information as to the content of the letters was provided. When details were provided, Jameson only wrote a few words. On January 23, he noted writing a letter to his sister Isabell and receiving a letter from a Mr. Clark, commenting only, "All well." At the end of June, he listed receiving a letter from "Ruthie," and added the comment, "good news my little Girl better." Generally, such details were missing. On many occasions, he did not even list who he wrote to or received a letter from. He would sometimes, for example, note that he wrote a letter "and done some other writing," "began a letter," "wrote some for myself," and "received 4 letters."<sup>40</sup> This constant notation for when he wrote and received letters provided Jameson with a method for him to account for his relationship with friends and family at home, to ensure that the war did not impede on those relationships. Documenting his writing was also a way for him to discipline his writing habit; and documenting the receipt of letters enabled him to identify the product of his writing habit.

Fowler's diary was remarkably similar to Jameson's in the ways in which he accounted for his letters. On January 18, for example, he noted that he received a letter from "my dear Isabell" and that he "answered Isabell." He also noted when he wrote to "Saby,"

his father, and “Grand paps.” Most entries provide no information on the content of the letters, though a few provide a glimpse. On January 17, for instance, he received a letter from home saying that his son “Billy is better.” Two weeks later, he noted that he wrote a “song” for Isabell that he sent her. In February, after noting that he received a letter from Isabell, he commented that he “was glad to hear from home. Folks all well.”<sup>41</sup>

On a few occasions, the diaries of Fowler and Jameson reveal how the war affected their letter writing practice. When the 17<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin began preparations for battle near Big Shanty on June 15, 1864, Jameson noted how the war impeded his letter writing, scribbling that he was unable to finish a letter to his wife “Ruthie” because they had orders to “move out.” While he never explicitly stated that the war intruded on his letter writing, Fowler’s July 22 entry is very suggestive. Just as the 17<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin began participating in the siege of Atlanta, he recorded, “I wrote a letter to Isabell & Allison about 12 oclock the enemy attacks us all points very heavy fighting took a good many prisoners.” While it is unclear whether his letter writing occurred before the attack started, or if the attack interrupted his letter writing, rather than separating the four events (letter writing, attack, battle, taking of prisoners), the four events were presented as seamless. A little over a month later, in one of the only instances when he revealed the contents of a letter he wrote, on September 3, he noted, “I wrote a letter to Isabell telling her of the capturing of Atlanta.”<sup>42</sup> Significantly, he did not discuss the capture of Atlanta in any detail in his diary. That to his wife he detailed the capture of Atlanta, but in his diary only accounted for what he discussed in a letter to Isabell, further illustrates how Fowler saw his diary—as an account book of his letter writing practices in relation to the war, but not as a space for discussing the war itself. Those discussions were the reserve of letters.

Overall, then, both diaries accounted for the actions of Fowler and Jameson in the military; their clerk “writing,” as well as the constant “drilling” and “marching.” But simultaneously, they accounted for each other, for their reading and theater-going habits, and for their letter reading and letter writing. Applying the writing practices they developed from keeping farm journals and the various books they kept as company clerks to their personal diaries, Fowler and Jameson had developed a “rational” method for ordering their lives.<sup>43</sup>

By accounting for their leisure time as much as they accounted for their time on duty, Fowler and Jameson both managed who they were by inscribing their independent selves into their diaries. In this way, military bureaucracy did not pull them away from their families and community, but instead provided a writing method for retaining those connections; through their diaries, they maintained continuity with their past selves and communities even while recording their activities with the Union army. In their diaries, the requirements of soldiering were not presented as all consuming, but rather just elements of a regular day that consisted of familiar activities, such as reading and writing, or new enriching activities, such as theater-going. These particular activities were also middle-class practices, and thus accounting for them enabled Jameson and Fowler to literally inscribe their middle-class status into their diaries. Their effort to account for their correspondence with everyone from their home community also demonstrates that their diary served as a mechanism for reminding them of their links with their home community and their families.<sup>44</sup>

### *Diary Writing for Emotional Purposes*

Despite the similarities of the activities recorded in the diaries, Jameson's diary does have important distinguishing elements from Fowler's. Jameson penciled emotional expressions at a variety of points in his diary; Fowler's entries, in contrast, were devoid of emotional language. He wrote nothing about how he felt about the war, other people, or anything at all, for that matter. The growing scholarship on the history of emotions is helpful in understanding how Fowler and Jameson used their diaries in terms of their emotions. William Reddy promotes using the concept of "emotives" as a way for identifying emotional expressions. While language can never fully encapsulate an individual's internal emotions, emotive words are "managerial and exploratory," and as such are used as a strategy for navigating through whatever situations one may be confronting.<sup>45</sup> Civil War historians have begun to integrate emotional history into their scholarship. Most prominently, Drew Faust examines how soldiers and civilians alike responded emotionally to death during the Civil War. Identifying what she sees as "shared suffering," she explores the inner contours of the minds

of Americans to shed light on the difficulties Americans had with understanding the grand scale of death they encountered, and the “means and mechanisms to manage death more than a half million dead: their deaths, their bodies, their loss.”<sup>46</sup> Seeking to delve into the minds of soldiers and their families to offer what he terms “an emotional history of the Civil War,” Christopher Hager argues that letters from the time period “reveal” the “processes of adjustment to profound transformation...along an invisible path traversed only by envelopes.” By reading the contents inside the envelopes, “we can sense what the Civil War felt like to the common soldier and his family.”<sup>47</sup> Based on his analysis of soldier letters, Peter Carmichael further argues that emotions played a significant role in shaping the perceptions and actions of soldiers. The Civil War unleashed a slew of emotions—emotions so strong, they “possessed the power to transform soldiers in ways they could never have imagined before 1861.” While it may not have shaken the soldiers’ willingness to fight, it often made them adopt a more pragmatic approach to the war over time, often altering their conceptions of manliness and changing their understandings of the Divine.<sup>48</sup>

As the diaries of Jameson and Fowler were private writings with little or no expository discussions on any topics, they functioned very differently from soldier letters. Both men, though, did employ their diaries to manage their emotions and adapt to their circumstances, albeit in very different ways. When Jameson made a mistake writing the muster call, for example, he used emotive language, stating, “got it wrong made me mad.” But Jameson also expressed deeper emotions. On March 1, he wrote, “has been a long lonesome and very unpleasant day to me.” In comparison, words like “mad” and “lonesome,” and other similar emotive language, never appeared in Fowler’s diary. The contrast in emotive expression between Jameson and Fowler is illustrated most dramatically in their diaries when they prepared to return to the front after a furlough home in the spring of 1864. Fowler simply stated that he “bid my folks good bye.” On the eve of his departure, in contrast, Jameson wrote that his “thoughts and feelings overflowing” and his wife and daughter “seem nearer & Dearer to me than ever before.” Then, he added, “Tomorrow is somewhat Dreaded.”<sup>49</sup>

In addition, Fowler never mentioned in his diary about feeling homesick, while Jameson wrote about missing his family regularly.

In a letter to Kittie, Jameson emphasized the need for letters from home, writing, “there is nothing that livens up a man in the army as much as a kind... word from Home, and to know that he has dear friends who sympathize with him.”<sup>50</sup> But while making a request for letters implied he felt homesick, only in his diary did he make his feelings explicit. After attending the theater when a play made him think of home, he wrote, “reminded me of home and my family.” When he felt “lonesome” during the winter and spring, he noted that he sought out his companion, James Fowler. When the same feelings resurfaced during the summer, he wrote on August 2: “got to thinking of my family brought the blues on me so I might say for one Home sick.” Both his friend James Fowler and his diary helped Jameson cope and focus on soldiering. Jameson often used the “Memoranda” section of the diary to write longer entries that expressed feelings in more depth. For example, on June 22, 1864, he wrote, “James and I took a walk...had a long talk of things at Home of the past present and future laid plans to be taken up when this war is over.”<sup>51</sup> Talking to Fowler about future plans in Sumpter helped to re-root himself in his home community and distance himself from the war. Writing down in his diary that he had this conversation probably helped distance him from the war even more. Fowler, not mentioning details of their talk, simply noted on June 22 that “Oren sat with me while I ate breakfast.”<sup>52</sup> Not only did Fowler make no mention of whether he felt homesick, he made no reference to his friend’s homesickness. For Fowler, if he felt homesick or had any feelings about Jameson’s homesickness, his diary was not a place he used to express such feelings.

Homesickness, often referred to in the nineteenth century as “nostalgia,” was common among soldiers during the Civil War, many of whom had deep connections to their families and home communities. At the time, there was a belief that homesickness could have a negative effect on soldiers. Soldiers struggled with feelings of nostalgia because it made them doubt their masculinity and ability to be a soldier. Some military and medical experts promoted the idea that soldiers should be encouraged to develop the willpower to suppress such feelings, while others felt that finding ways for soldiers to connect to their families and friends at home would provide the emotional sustenance they needed.<sup>53</sup> Jameson was certainly very conscious of the effect his homesickness was

having on him as a soldier, writing on one occasion that “this must soon wear away or else wear away the life of a good soldier.”<sup>54</sup> The historian David Gerber, in his study of nineteenth-century British immigrants who experienced “nostalgia,” argues that it actually served as “an adaptive mental strategy for negotiating continuity and change” by reconciling the past with the present.<sup>55</sup> Viewed through this lens, Jameson’s diary was a tool he used to outpour his feelings of homesickness, and account for them, to navigate through them as he tried to come to terms with being away from home. While perhaps Fowler did not feel homesick, like many soldiers, his silence on this matter may have reflected his need to deny these feelings to himself.<sup>56</sup> Or, it may be that he simply did not see his diary as a place for accounting for and managing his emotions.

The contrast between how Fowler and Jameson used emotive language in their diaries is also evident by the way the two men wrote about their experiences in battle. In writing about several different encounters with Confederate troops around Big Shanty on June 12, 1864, when the fighting got particularly intense, Jameson commented that it was a “disagreeable day.” Fowler, in contrast, focused on describing events, scribbling only his description of what happened, that they had been “skirmishing” and “some shells in the rebel line rained all day.”<sup>57</sup> The differences in their diary entries in this instance is quite striking, as Jameson clearly understood his diary as the place upon where he could mark how the war affected him. For Fowler, his diary entries were meant only to write down what he did, and what happened, with no intent to write emotive language.


The dissimilarity between Fowler’s diary and Jameson’s diary was perhaps most pronounced in how they each wrote about the death of their own child. As Faust demonstrates, many soldiers found it emotionally challenging to come to terms with the news that a family member had died. Some tried to deny the news. Others used a variety of methods to make the death of a loved one feel real. To do this, they relied on “the creation of visible symbols of grief that could be used to rehearse and enact” bereavement.<sup>58</sup> As Mark Schantz demonstrates, Americans also went through the bereavement process by trying to “package that suffering in literary forms.”<sup>59</sup> When Jameson learned that his young daughter Leizzy had died in July 1864, he wrote about it being a “heavy blow on me.” Words alone could not “express” how “sad” he felt.



Regretting his decision to join the army, he proclaimed, “I played the fool enlisting.” So distraught, he also documented his insomnia. Then, in the “Memoranda” section of his diary, to participate in a symbolic act of bereavement that would make his daughter’s death real to him, he added the specifics of his daughter’s death, the date and time, as well as her exact age, creating an epitaph for her in his diary (see **Figure 4** for the bereavement page from Jameson’s diary).<sup>60</sup> In contrast, when Fowler learned that his young son had died a few months later, his reaction in his diary was very different. He reported receiving a “letter with the sad news of the death of Billy,” adding, “Oh how I feel.” But then he stopped himself, and ended his entry with, “Answered it [the letter].” Fowler appeared to still have an urge to write about his feelings regarding his son’s death in his diary. He turned to the “Cash Account” section of his diary and wrote on September 14, 1864, “Received the sad news that my boy is dead.” But he could not write any more, he could not write how he felt.<sup>61</sup> Unlike Jameson, in his diary, Fowler could only account for the sadness expressed in the letter he received, but did not express his own emotions about his son’s death nor create any symbols of his death.

The differences between Fowler’s diary and Jameson’s diary highlight two very different approaches to diary writing by these two brother-in-laws with remarkably similar war-time experiences. As they came from the same farming community, and were part of the same regiment, they would have experienced the same cultural expectations—that as men they should be able to manage their emotions.<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, Jameson used his diary as a space for emotive language to help him navigate through his life in the army. Fowler did not see his diary in the same way. But while his diary reveals a very private man of few words, Fowler actually later became known in his community as a very “outspoken” individual. His obituary explains that “when he had anything to say he never minced matters but said it right out.”<sup>63</sup> In the context of his obituary, Fowler’s writing style in his diary suggests that he just did not see his diary as the place to express his private feelings or personal opinions.

Fowler’s diary, though, does have a distinctive feature from Jameson’s that is important to note. Specifically, Fowler sometimes used his diary to make lists, which Jameson never did. For example,

MEMORANDA.		
Date.		Dollars. Cts.
Keeneau Mott 4 <sup>th</sup> July 2 <sup>nd</sup> 1864		
Recd a letter this day ann		
ouncing the Death of our little		
Leizy who had died June 22 <sup>nd</sup> 1864		
at 12 hrs 10 <sup>th</sup> A.M. aged one year		
three months and 20 days		
(Befone Atlanta August 7 <sup>th</sup>		
1864 Orin was killed by		
Orchel Sharp Shooter		
Died 20 minute past 10 A.M.		
August 22 <sup>nd</sup> 1864		
coming to sing Orin		
died / pocketbook and		
pocket case by Lt.		
John Carlin		
		

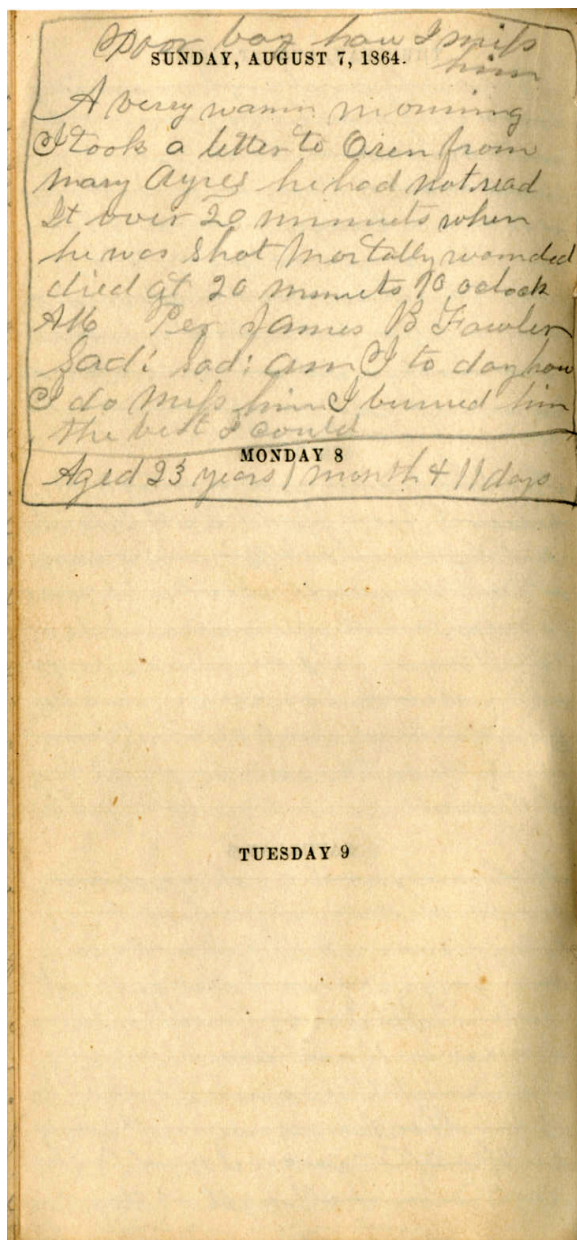
**Figure 4:** Bereavement Page for Leizy Jameson, Diary of Orin M. Jameson, Jan. 1 - Aug. 7, 1864, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, <<https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/quiner/id/34664/rec/15>>. Note James Fowler’s additional parenthetical entry on the later death of Orin Jameson.

while Fowler did not write much in his diary when the 17<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin was on furlough in the spring of 1864, about a week after returning home, he simply listed the following on March 28, repeated again on March 29:

James Fowler  
Isabell Fowler  
Billy Fowler.<sup>64</sup>

Perhaps in those moments of writing, he was trying to mark his place in time, that he was indeed at home with his wife and son on March 28, and again on March 29. Listing himself along with his wife and son was also a statement of identity, a proclamation of his priorities at that moment, and who was important to him and who he was, all inscribed into his diary. That he made the list twice, however, is very suggestive. While Fowler may not have seen his diary as a space for emotive language, his two listings of his family were his way of expressing his emotional ties to his family; rather than use emotive language, he expressed his emotions in the accounting form that the diary was produced for.

Fowler's need to list his name along with his wife and son offers insight into other ways he used his diary. In early May 1864, the 17<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin began marching daily, beginning from Cairo, Ohio, down through Huntsville, Alabama, and then proceeding towards Ackworth, Georgia, arriving on June 8 to join General Sherman's forces in position to attack Atlanta.<sup>65</sup> In addition to recording regular entries through this time period (as did Jameson), Fowler added a special section to his diary titled, "A History of our camps on March" in which he provided a list of where they marched and camped each day. This contrasts with his regular daily entries that mentioned marching, but only indicated the amount of time they marched, not to where.<sup>66</sup> Fowler's "History" provided him with a way to expand on the many company account books he was required to keep. While such books accounted for men and materials, they did not account for place. Like many "spatial narratives" written by soldiers, Fowler's "History" (added at some undated point after his regiment had concluded marching) offered him a way to use his diary for reflecting back on the marching experience by retroactively marking a sense of place. Doing so thus enabled him to ground himself in the midst of the chaos of the war. In this respect, his



**Figure 5:** James Fowler's Entry Mourning the Death of Orin Jameson, Diary of Orin M. Jameson, Jan. 1 - Aug. 7, 1864, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, <<https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/quiner/id/34638/rec/15>>.

diary functioned as a type of roadmap—one that marked where he and his regiment had been each day. As such, it served to root him in space and time as he navigated through the war in the midst of the uncertainty he felt as a soldier.<sup>67</sup>

Moreover, while Fowler appears in his diary as a man much less able to express his emotions in comparison to Jameson, this assumption must be questioned by looking at Fowler's response to finding Jameson lying dead after being shot in battle on August 7, 1864. Fowler's experience was all too common during the Civil War, as many soldiers found their friends dead on the battlefield. To give meaning to the life of a close comrade, soldiers would make a special effort to provide a respectful burial.<sup>68</sup> Fowler demonstrated this inclination when he described in his diary how he ran to Jameson and "found him down." Fowler then recorded the time of death, adding, "I buried him." Absent in his diary, however, is any emotive language. In the days that followed, moreover, he made no mention of Jameson in his diary, which leaves the impression that Fowler was unable or unwilling to express whatever grief he experienced. But this is actually not the case. At some point, Fowler must have thumbed through Jameson's diary and found the blank entry for August 7. In it, he recorded that he had delivered a letter to Jameson just twenty minutes before he was shot. Then Fowler issued emotive language he could not write in his own diary: "Sad! Sad! Am I today how I do miss him. I buried him the best I could" (see **Figure 5** for Fowler's entry in Jameson's diary). Using Jameson's diary as a place to go through a symbolic act of bereavement, Fowler also turned to the "Memoranda" page, where Jameson had written the epitaph for his daughter Leizzy—underneath, Fowler wrote an epitaph for Jameson: "Before Atlanta August 7<sup>th</sup> 1864 Oren was killed by a rebel sharpshooter. Died 20 minutes past 10 AM." In this way, he engraved Jameson's death just beneath Leizzy's (see **Figure 4** for Fowler's addition to the bereavement page from Jameson's diary). Fowler's most intense grief, however, was expressed in a letter to Jameson's cousin Kittie. "It seems to me that I have lost all," he wrote two days after Jameson was killed, "you do not know how much I miss him."<sup>69</sup>

Significantly, in his "Cash Accounts" section of his diary, on a page labeled "August letters," Fowler also listed all the letters he received from his wife Isabell that month, and all the letters he wrote to her, noting the dates letters were received by him and sent to her.



That he did this a few weeks after his dear friend Orin Jameson was killed by a sharpshooter is revealing. As he mourned the loss of his dear friend, he sought to connect with his wife, not just by writing to her as he had done regularly all along, or noting on particular days that he had written to her, but by actually creating an account of their correspondence, a visible account of their connection, and perhaps his connection to Orin Jameson through his sister.<sup>70</sup> August 1864, it is important to stress, was an important month for the 17<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin, as the regiment was part of the siege of Atlanta. James Fowler nevertheless felt it important for himself to take account of his correspondence with Isabell. Fowler used his diary to create order in his life, especially when experiencing moments of great distress. Although he did not use emotive language in his diary, he used the diary to manage his emotions. He was not thinking of the siege of Atlanta, he was thinking of his wife.

In general, the content in Fowler's diary from August through December remained similar to the content of his diary before the death of Orin Jameson. The one exception was his entry for November 8, when he observed the "considerable excitement about Election," and that eighteen in his company voted for Lincoln while fourteen voted for McClellan. In almost the same breath, however, he also wrote that he went "to get a furlough." The next day, he noted that he got the "furlough signed."<sup>71</sup> From November 22 to December 11, when his regiment was part of Sherman's March to the Sea, Fowler was home on furlough and did not write in his diary. His diary does pick up on December 8 when he returned to his regiment and continues through December 31 while the 17<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin was engaged in the siege of Savannah.

Significantly, for the period January 1 to January 15, 1865, just before the 17<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin engaged in the Campaign of the Carolinas, Fowler continued writing in his diary by using the blank spaces from November 22 to December 8. Why he stopped keeping a diary in mid-January 1865 is unclear, as there was still some space available. He wrote nothing about the end of the war in April 1865, Lincoln's assassination, or when he was promoted to Lieutenant in May 1865. His last diary entry, written in the December 8 section, but marked January 15, 1865, provides no clues, as it is typical of many of his diary entries. He first remarked on the weather, and then wrote, "got ready to march and marched onto the railroad."<sup>72</sup>



## Conclusion

When he mustered out of the 17<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin in July 1865, James Fowler returned to his wife Isabell and his farm in Sumpter. Soon after, Isabell gave birth to their only daughter, Elizabeth. Over time, Fowler emerged as a pillar of the community, serving as Director of King's Corner School from 1883-1886. Fowler died of a sudden illness on March 30, 1895. His wife Isabell died of the same illness the next day.<sup>73</sup> If Fowler joined any veterans organizations or ever discussed the war after returning home, there is no record of it. What is known about Fowler when he returned from the war, then, is that he placed his full attention on his family and community, leaving the war behind him.

Or, maybe not. On December 21, 1956, Alice A. Weidenkopf presented the James Fowler and Orin Jameson diaries to the Wisconsin Historical Society. How these diaries ended up in her hands, we can only speculate. The Weidenkopf family were prominent in Sumpter in the late nineteenth century, so it is quite plausible that James and Isabell Fowler had befriended them. Perhaps after their death in 1895, the Weidenkopf family acquired the diaries.<sup>74</sup> Whatever the means by which Alice Weidenkopf came to possess these diaries, that she presented them to the Wisconsin Historical Society together tells a story. On the one hand, the many letters Fowler wrote to his beloved Isabell have not survived. There can be many explanations for this, but none can be ascertained. On the other hand, what can be ascertained is that James Fowler did manage to preserve his 1864 diary, as well as the 1864 diary of his dear friend Orin Jameson.

For James Fowler and Orin Jameson, the diary writing process was an experience itself, both of the Civil War and separate from it. As company clerks, they wrote in a variety of different account books to manage men and materials. In their free-time in the army, they regularly sat down and wrote in their private diaries as a method for cultivating their relationships and their literary habits, and navigating through their experiences in the Civil War, and whatever emotions they may have brought up for them. Through their diaries, Fowler and Jameson resisted being engulfed and defined by the war experience, and insisted on maintaining their individuality through their diaries. That individuality is apparent in the contrasting ways Jameson and Fowler expressed emotive language in their diaries. But as I have

shown here, the absence of emotive language in Fowler's diary does not necessarily reflect a man with more restrained emotions than his friend; rather, he just managed them in his diary differently.

For these two army clerks, the Civil War appeared as an enormous event, one in which they were subject to being away from home for long periods of time, boredom of camp life, following the rigors of army discipline, constant movement to places uncertain, fear in the midst of battle, grief for the loss of loved ones, and the general chaos of war. Armed with their diaries, and the culture of accounting they were ingrained with, they navigated through the war. Their diaries could never truly represent their inner lives, and what went through their minds each day. The two diaries do portray, though, two men who participated in the Civil War, but were neither defined by it nor overwhelmed by it.

No doubt, there is a plethora of other soldier diaries that did the same. The Civil War was a "single event," with hundreds of thousands of soldiers who fought in it, many of whom wrote in diaries. That so many diaries have survived for historians to peruse makes any narrative of the Civil War "thick" with individuality.<sup>75</sup>

## Notes

1. Orin M. Jameson, Diary, January 5-7, 1864, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wis Mss 118S; James B. Fowler, Diary, January 5-7, 1864, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wis Mss 119S. Orin Jameson's Diary hereafter referred to as OJD, James Fowler's Diary as JFD.
2. Western Historical Company, *The History of Sauk County, Wisconsin* (Chicago, IL: Western Historical Company, 1880), 738.
3. *Index of Sauk County Marriages, 1842-1907*, pp. 52, 82, Sauk County Historical Society, Baraboo, WI.
4. Ryan W. Keating, *Shades of Green: Irish Regiments, American Soldiers, and Local Communities in the Civil War Era* (New York, Fordham University Press, 2017), 176. Chandra Manning explains her methodology when examining soldier letters, diaries, and camp newspapers. To identify "patterns in soldiers' predominant understanding of the war," she finds quotes related to the topics that she is interested in, and places them in the context of the "letter, diary entry, or camp paper article in which it appeared." Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 2008), 10-11.
5. Jason Phillips, "Battling Stereotypes: A Taxonomy of Common Soldiers in Civil War History," *History Compass* 6, no. 6 (November 2008): 1408.
6. Robert E. Bonner, *The Soldier's Pen: Firsthand Impressions of the Civil War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), 5, 9, 24.
7. Christopher Hager, *I Remain Yours: Common Lives in Civil War Letters* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 5-10, 49-50, 74.
8. Peter S. Carmichael, *The War for the Common Soldier: How Men Thought, Fought, and Survived in Civil War Armies* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 11-12.
9. Alice Fahs, *The Imagined Civil War: Popular Literature of the North and South, 1861-1865* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 11-12, 109; Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 2008), 207.
10. Scott Nelson and Carol Sheriff, *A People at War: Civilians and Soldiers in America's Civil War, 1854-1877* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 214-215.
11. David Anderson, "Dying of Nostalgia: Homesickness in the Union Army during the Civil War," *Civil War History* 56, no. 3 (September 2010): 262.
12. Earl J. Hess, *The Union Soldier in Battle: Enduring the Ordeal of Combat* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1997), 127-142. Also see Reid Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers: Their Expectations and Experiences* (New York: Viking, 1988), 56-58.
13. Carmichael, *The War for the Common Soldier*, 7-10.
14. Rachel Langford and Russell West, "Introduction: Diaries and Margins," in *Marginal Voices, Marginal Forms: Diaries in European Literature and History*, ed. Rachel Langford and Russell West (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Rodopi, 1999), 6-21; Gayle R. Davis, "Women's Frontier Diaries: Writing for Good Reason," *Women's Studies: An Inter-Disciplinary Journal* 14 (1987): 5-7, 10-12. For more, see Paul

John Eakin, *Living Autobiographically: How We Create Identity in Narrative* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008); Judy Long, *Telling Women's Lives: Subject/Narrator/Reader/Text* (New York: New York University Press, 1999); Carol Acton, "'Stepping into History': Reading the Second World War Through Irish Women's Diaries," *Irish Studies Review* 18, no. 1 (February 2010): 39-56.

15. Edward M. Bruner, "Experience and Its Expressions," in *The Anthropology of Experience*, ed. Victor W. Turner and Edward M. Bruner, (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 12. Sharon L. Smith has suggested that diaries can be examined from an anthropological perspective "as representations of individual experience" and "as texts" that "were part of the social environment or ritual." See Sharon L. Smith, "Making Sense: Journals as Tools for Learning and Representing Student Experience in a Field-Based Doctoral Program" (Ph.D. diss., Oregon State University, 1996), 14.

16. Jason Phillips, "The Grape Vine Telegraph: Rumors and Confederate Persistence," *The Journal of Southern History* 72, no. 4 (November 2006): 753-788.

17. Erhart A. Mueller, *Only in Sumpter* (Stevens Points, WI: Worzalla Publishing, 1977), 93, 171-172; "History of John Fowler Family," clipping, Sauk County Historical Society, Baraboo, Wisconsin.

18. Western Historical Company, *The History of Sauk County, Wisconsin*, 431-441, 443-444.

19. Erhart A. Mueller, *Also in Sumpter* (Stevens Points, WI: Worzalla Publishing, 1980), 3.

20. Lynn A. Bonfield, "The Work Journal of Albert Bickford: Mid-Nineteenth-Century Vermont Farmer, Cooper, and Carpenter," *Vermont History* 72, nos. 3-4 (Summer-Fall 2004): 118-121; Christopher Densmore, "Understanding and Using Early Nineteenth Century Account Books," *The Midwestern Archivist* 5, no. 1 (1980): 8.

21. Darwin L. King and Carl J. Case, "Duties of Accounting Clerks during the Civil War and Their Influence on Current Accounting Practices," *Academy of Accounting and Financial Studies Journal* 8, no. 3 (September 2004): 43.

22. August V. Kautz, *The Company Clerk* (Philadelphia, PA: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1865), 31. For more, see King and Case, "Duties of Accounting Clerks," 42-47.

23. Susan Miller, *Assuming the Positions: Cultural Pedagogy and the Politics of Commonplace Writing* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998), 82; Miriam Brody, *Manly Writing: Gender, Rhetoric, and the Rise of Composition* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), 95-100; Henri-Jean Martin, *The History and Power of Writing*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 452; Louise A. Jackson, "Nineteenth-Century Elementary Composition Instruction," *Language Arts* 63, no. 6 (October 1986): 601-606.

24. William Alcott, *The Young Man's Guide*, sixteenth ed., revised (Boston, MA: T. R. Marvin, 1846 [1833]), 226-227.

25. Thomas Augst, *The Clerk's Tale: Young Men and Moral Life in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 11-14, 24, 32, 47-48, 63-68, 185-206.

26. Lorien Foote, *The Gentlemen and the Roughs: Violence, Honor, and Manhood in the Union Army* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 39-46; Michael C. Nelson, "Writing during Wartime: Gender and Literacy in the American Civil War," *Journal of American Studies* 31, no. 1 (April 1997): 60-65. On the ways in which cultural changes effect gender expectations, and how men come to terms with these changes, see Babs Boter and Suzanne M. Sinke, "Adjusting and Fulfilling Masculine Roles: The Epistolary Persona in Dutch Transatlantic Letters," *The History of the Family* 21, no. 3 (2016): 337.

27. Molly McCarthy, *The Accidental Diarist: A History of the Daily Planner in America* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), 103-105, 146-151, 156-160; Molly McCarthy, "The Diary and the Pocket Watch: Rethinking Time in Nineteenth-Century America," in *Controlling Time and Shaping the Self: Developments in Autobiographical Writing since the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Arianne Baggerman, Rudolf Dekker, and Michael Mascuch (Boston, MA: Brill, 2011), 129; Molly McCarthy, "A Pocketful of Days: Pocket Diaries and Daily Record Keeping among Nineteenth-Century New England Women," *The New England Quarterly* 73, no. 2 (June 2000): 275-279, 286-288.

28. Although often referred to as the "Irish Brigade," even during its initial enlistment, only about one-third of the volunteers in the 17<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin was Irish. See Keating, *Shades of Green*, 86.

29. Orin Jameson to Kittie Crandall, December 13, 1863, Crandall Family Correspondence, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, MS 203; Orin Jameson to Robert Crandall, January 30, 1864, Crandall Family Correspondence, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, MS 203.

30. Robert B. Crandall, *Diary*, Sauk County Historical Society, Baraboo, WI.

31. Orin Jameson to Robert Crandall, January 30, 1864, Crandall Family Correspondence, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, MS 203.

32. Orin Jameson to Kittie Crandall, July 15, 1864, Crandall Family Correspondence, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, MS 203.

33. OJD, January 14, 1864; JFD, January 14, 1864; JFD, January 26, 1864; OJD, January 26, 1864; OJD, January 16, 1864; JFD, January 16, 1864; JFD, January 29, 1864; OJD, January 29, 1864.

34. On the meaning of books in nineteenth-century America, see Mary Kelley, "Reading Women/Women Reading: The Making of Learned Women in Antebellum America," *The Journal of American History* 83, no. 2 (September 1996): 413.

35. OJD, January 1, 1864.

36. JFD, January 1, 1864.

37. JFD, February 6, 1864; JFD, February 23, 1864; JFD, February 27, 1864; OJD, January 20, 1864; OJD, January 13, 1864; OJD, July 29, 1864; OJD, August 5, 1864.

38. OJD, February 1864; JFD, February 1864.

39. For more on the theater in Vicksburg during the Civil War, see Guy Herbert Keaton, "The Theatre in Mississippi from 1840 to 1870" (Ph.D. diss., Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1979), 87-96.

40. OJD, January 7-8, 1864; OJD, January 23, 1864; OJD, June 30, 1864; OJD, January 25, 1864; OJD, February 5, 1864; OJD, April 26, 1864; OJD, June 13, 1864.

41. JFD, January 18, 1864; JFD, January 29, 1864; JFD, February 4, 1864; JFD, February 7, 1864; JFD, January 17, 1864; JFD, January 30, 1864; JFD, February 14, 1864.

42. OJD, June 15, 1864; JFD, July 22, 1864; JFD, September 3, 1864.

43. For more on how nineteenth-century clerks used their personal diaries, see Augst, *The Clerk's Tale*, 52-56.

44. Ryan Keating emphasizes that even for the Irish soldiers in the 17<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin, their local community was "as important to their identity as their ethnic heritage." See Keating, *Shades of Green*, 212. For an alternative argument, which suggests that military bureaucracy tore away at connections to home communities, see Timothy R. Mahoney, *From Hometown to Battlefield in the Civil War Era: Middle-Class Life in Midwest America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 297-328.

45. William M. Reddy, "Against Constructionism: The Historical Ethnography of Emotions," *Current Anthropology* 38, no. 3 (June 1997): 327-351; William M. Reddy, "The Logic of Action: Indeterminacy, Emotion, and Historical Narrative," *History and Theory* 40, no. 4 (December 2001): 10-33. For more on the historical issues related to emotional expression, see Barbara H. Rosenwein, "Worrying about Emotions in History," *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 3 (June 2002): 821-845; Susan J. Matt, "Recovering the Invisible: Methods for the Historical Study of the Emotions," in *Doing Emotions History*, ed. Susan J. Matt and Peter N. Stearns (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 41-54.

46. Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, xv-xviii.

47. Hager, *I Remain Yours*, 10-11.

48. Carmichael, *The War for the Common Soldier*, 61, 85, 90.

49. OJD, February 27, 1864; OJD, March 1, 1864; JFD, April 18, 1864; OJD, April 16, 1864.

50. Orin Jameson to Kittie Crandall, July 14, 1864, Crandall Family Correspondence, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, MS 203.

51. OJD, February 9, 1864; OJD, April 19, 1864; OJD, August 2, 1864; OJD, Memoranda, June 22, 1864.

52. JFD, June 22, 1864.

53. See Frances Clarke, "So Lonesome I Could Die: Nostalgia and Debates over Emotional Control in the Civil War North," *Journal of Social History* 41, no. 2 (Winter 2007): 253-282; Anderson, "Dying of Nostalgia," 247-282.

54. OJD, April 18, 1864.

55. David A. Gerber, "Moving Backward and Moving On: Nostalgia, Significant Others, and Social Reintegration in Nineteenth-Century British Immigrant Personal Correspondence," *The History of the Family* 21, no. 3 (2016): 294-297.

56. Anderson, "Dying of Nostalgia," 271.

57. OJD, June 12, 1864; JFD, June 12, 1864.

58. Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, 144-147.



59. Mark S. Schantz, *Awaiting the Heavenly Country: The Civil War and America's Culture of Death* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 106.
60. OJD, July 2-3, 1864; OJD, Memoranda, July 2, 1864.
61. JFD, September 14, 1864; JFD, Cash Accounts, September 14, 1864.
62. Michael Barton, *Goodmen: The Character of Civil War Soldiers* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1981); Hess, *The Union Soldiers in Battle*, 97.
63. Obituary for James Fowler, Sauk County Historical Society, Baraboo, WI.
64. JFD, March 28, 1864.
65. E. B. Quiner, *The Military History of Wisconsin* (Chicago, IL: Clarke & Co., 1866), 651.
66. JFD, "A History of our camps on March."
67. For other examples of these types of "spatial narratives," see Mahoney, *From Hometown to Battlefield in the Civil War Era*, 232-235.
68. Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, 76-79.
69. See the notes written by James Fowler in OJD, August 7, 1864; OJD, Memoranda, July 2, 1864. James Fowler to Kitty Crandall, August 9, 1864, Crandall Family Correspondence, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, MS 203.
70. JFD, Cash Accounts, August 1864.
71. JFD, November 8-9, 1864.
72. JFD, December 8, 1864, but crossed out and replaced with "January 15, 1865."
73. Mueller, *Also in Sumpter*, 306; "History of John Fowler Family," clipping, Sauk County Historical Society, Baraboo, WI; Obituary for James Fowler, Sauk County Historical Society, Baraboo, WI.
74. "Notes" for James B. Fowler Diary, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Wis Mss 119S MAD 4 /16/C5; "Notes" for Orin M. Jameson Diary, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Wis Mss 118S MAD 4 /16/C5. For more on the Weidenkopf family, see Harry Ellsworth Cole, *A Standard History of Sauk County, Wisconsin*, Vol. II (Chicago, IL: Lewis Publishing Co., 1918), 1025.
75. J. Matthew Gallman similarly argues that the Civil War was a "single event" that was "thick with patterns of change." See J. Matthew Gallman, *Defining Duty in the Civil War: Personal Choice, Popular Culture, and the Union Home Front* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 158.

## Appendix: Sample Student Assignment

### **The Diary of Orin Jameson, January 1, 1864-August 7, 1864**

This diary has been digitized by the Wisconsin Historical Society and is available for use at <<https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/quiner/id/34539/rec/15>>.

*Background information: Orin Jameson was twenty-two years old, with a wife (Ruth) and infant daughter at home in the farming community of Sumpter, Wisconsin when he enlisted in the 17<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Infantry on November 2, 1864. He joined his regiment a month later, which was engaged in the siege of Vicksburg, Mississippi. Promoted to sergeant, he worked as a company clerk. On August 7, 1864, his friend and brother-in-law James Fowler, also a clerk in the Wisconsin 17<sup>th</sup>, found him killed in military action while the regiment was preparing for the siege of Atlanta. A month earlier, Orin had experienced his own grief when his wife wrote him that their infant daughter had died.*

For this assignment, you will examine the ways in which soldiers used diaries to adapt to life in the Union army.

1. Do a close reading of the January 1864 diary entries (pages 1-11). What patterns do you see in what Orin Jameson writes about in his journal entries? How do you see him using his diary as he begins his military service?
2. Read Orin Jameson's diary entries of April 18, 1864 (page 37) and August 2, 1864 (page 72). How do these diary entries differ from his January 1864 diary entries? How has Orin changed? How is he using his diary differently?
3. Read Orin Jameson's diary entries for July 2-3, 1864 (page 62). How does Orin discuss learning the news of the death of his infant daughter? Then read the Memoranda on the top of page 126. How is Orin using the Memoranda section of his diary to come to terms with his grief?
4. Read Orin Jameson's August 7, 1864 diary entry, written by James Fowler. Then read the Memoranda in the middle of page 126, also written by James Fowler. How is James Fowler using Orin Jameson's diary after finding Orin killed on the battlefield?
5. From your examination of Orin Jameson's diary, what conclusions can you draw about how soldiers used their diaries?