

## Alice Williamson Diary

*A version of this diary that includes images of each page is also available.*

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**Feb. 19th 1864** What a negligent creature I am I should have been keeping a journal all this time to show to my rebel brothers. I have been studying all the morning and talking all the evening seeking & sighing for rebels. Our king (old Payne) has just passed. I suppose he has killed every rebel in twenty miles of Gallatin and burned every town. Poor fellow! you had better be praying old Sinner! His Lordship left Tuesday. Wednesday three wagons loaded with furniture came over. I do not pretend to say that he sent them. No! I indeed, I would not. I would not slander our king. Any old citizen can see by going to his (Paynes) palace that his furniture was not taken from Archie Miller's house & other places near by. He always goes for rebels but invariably brings furniture. I suppose his task is to furnish the contraband camp, i.e. the camp of his angels (colored).

**March 2d** Snow four inches deep, no winds and the air is quite pleasant, just cold enough to skate. Our king left Monday with a few soldiers in the direction of Hartsville. All the stores are closed by his order and no passes given till his return. Mr. D. has come to get Pa to go and hear what he says to his negroes as he is going to drive them off & he has been so ill used by old Payne that he is afraid to speak without a witness to prove what he said.

**March 3d.** Snow all melted and weather fine. Gen. Payne rode out this evening to look at the stock, in his last trip he killed only one man (citizen, he always kills citizens when he cant find soldiers) swears he will kill every man in Gallatin and Hartsville if bush whacking isn't stopped shortly.

**March 11th** Yesterday was the day of elections and as only the union men were allowed to vote nobody knows how it turned out nor do they care. Sallie Montgomery rode out this evening, the pickets would not let her pass, so she slipped them as many do. I suppose they are scared again. Perhaps that scamp John Morgan is about. I only hope he is, for we have not seen a rebel for more than a year and our day must come soon

**March 12th** Old Payne dined at Mrs. Hales today: every one despises him but are afraid to show it. Yesterday he went up the country a few miles to a Mr. Dalton's whose son came home from the Southern Army the day before and had the same day taken the Amnesty Oath. Riding up to the door he enquired of Mr. Dalton if his son was at home but before he answered his son came to the door. Old Nick then told him to get his horse and go with him. After insulting the father he carried his son a half mile away and shot him six times. One of Payne's escort hearing the young man groan with pain placed a pistol to his temple and remarked, I will stop that, sir, he shot him again. But this is nothing new this is the fifth man that has been shot in this way, besides numbers that have been carried off by scouts and never return.

**March 11th** I learn today that Gen. Payne had no charge against Mr. Dalton, so he told his (Dalton's) father. After killing him he rode back to the house and told Mr. D. that his son was in sight - he could bury him if he wished. Today a gentleman (Col. E\_\_\_\_) was in Paynes office when he was trying a young man about sixteen years old and the only support of an aged father who was with him. His crime was being a rebel. Payne sent the young man to jail telling the guard to bring him out a seven o'clo. The father actually fell upon his knees before the heartless tyrant but was heartlessly bidden to rise and go home, the young man has never been heard of since.

**April 11th** Another man was shot today at the race track: the yankee women went to see this one shot too; they say Capt. Nicklen is the one to work the prisoners and they intend to go and see them all shot.

**April 15** Yankees scared to death; they are looking for Forest. No passes given all the stores are closed by order of "Old Marster."

**April 20th** Yankees moderate; cooled down a little. -- Two men from Wilson, one from Hartsville brought down 3 days ago and put in jail they have not been seen since; if they are not already shot they will be. One of them had a brother shot last week: the charge against him was that he had been a soldier.

**April 21.** "All quiet in Gallatin to-day." Old Payne and all the rest are mad about the Fort Pillow affair. This vengeance will be taken out on the citizens of G. in a few days.

**April 22.** No arrests have been made yet on account of the "butcher at Fort Pillow." Don't be uneasy gentlemen your time will come soon.

**Apr. 23.** Well, well, was ever such a time seen before since E.A. Payne has been here, they have neither burned any houses or killed anybody in three whol days. What is going to happen? surely the rebels are coming once again to this God-forsaken village.

**24th** About an hour ago That Payne passed with his daughter and escort in the direction of the river; they are passing now going back Miss P. and two orderlies have a woman behind each one of them. I wonder what that means. They are "white contraband's" ("refugees") I suppose.

**Apr. 25th.** Gen. P. and lady have just passed again They are gone to bring over more passengers from the boat I 'guess'. Mrs. G.Love and Mrs. Cartwright were buried this evening.

**Apr. 26th** Weather beautiful. Yanks behaving like human beings with a few exceptions. Today a Yankee officer made his appearance in the school room accompanied by a Northern being whom I supposed to be a man, as he was not a gentleman; he came to look at the church saying that he was president of a school and that six of his assistants had just arrived and was going to teach the "freedmen" He says he will have 3 or 400 scholars and will need the largest house in town. What a learned city -- or rather yankee nest -- this will be. I suppose some of us citizens will get a situation as assistant teacher in the "Freedmens University".

**April 27th** Sis has just come home from Mrs. Lanes: while there she visited the grave of the stranger soldier who was shot Friday. The yankees took his coat and boots off and put him in the grave without coffin or wrappings of any kind.

**Apr. 28th** Remarkably quiet: no murdering for several days

**Ap 30th** Gen. Payne leaves tomorrow for Nashville. I recon we will have rest now for awhile.

**May 1st** This is the dullest May-day Gallatin ever seen; no picnics or anything else.

**May 2nd** A reg. of East Tennesseans have come to hold this Post. They are the meanest men I ever saw; but they have one good trait they make the negroes 'walk a chalk'

**May 3rd** The East Tennesseans burnt a school hous last night it was a contraband school. They say they will have none of that while they stay here.

**May 4th** The soldiers are behaving very well I do not suppose the negroes think so though they threatened to burn the old tavern last night (that like every thing else is filled with contrabands.) but the citizens told them if they did Gallatin would burn; they let it alone but say if they get up a school in it they will burn it and G. may go to H\_\_\_

**May 5th** A contraband was killed today; he insulted one of Miss B's scholars & a soldier being near killed him. Go it my East Tenn

**May 6th** Col. Miller of East Tenn takes command to-day. The soldiers say if Capt Nicklen leave they will kill every negro in G in less than a week

**May 7th** Capt N. is gone now is your time East Tenn

**May 8th** It is Sunday and very lonely. Nothing is to be seen but yankees who generally spend the day riding

**May 9th** Capt Nicklen come back today and the "Freed pussons of cullers " commensed their school today. They were dressed in style with their white swiss and hats. The citizens look for the tavern to be burnt every night

**May 10th** It has been raining all day I did not go to school.

**May 11** It is raining again today and cold enough for fires.

**May 12th** Weather pleasant, yankees behaving very well.

**May 13th** The Gen came up yesterday I suppose he came to see how we were behaving and if his 'pets' got their rights.

**May 15th** Gen. P. left-today no negroes killed; indeed the East Tennesseans are exceedingly quiet. -Capt K thinks he has nearly cured them of "Negro on the brain".

**May 16th** Mrs. Cage has gone to Nashville. The scholars went to school this morning expecting her up on the train Before the train come the President of the contraband school came over with twenty negro men and took every bench in the school house except one that was greasy; the girls told him to take that, it was good enough for negroes: but no, he said it would "soil the ladies dresses." The girls took that and threw it into the street. Mag King took the broom and threatened to break his head if he came up the step again: he seen she was determined and left.

**May 19th** We received a letter from brother Rush this morning by Flag of Truce the first for months. None from Brohter J. yet.

**May 20th** Citizens are afraid to speak to each other when they meet. The yankees have said they should not talk together since the late fight in Ten.

**May 21st** The yankees say they won a glorious victory in Ten but we know who won the victory for them being so crabbed. The citizens dare not smile for fear of being thrust into jail 'for rejoicing' as many are.

**June 5th** Our school will be out in two weeks and I have been so busy preparing for an examination that

I have neglected my journal though nothing has transpired of interest. The Tennesseans set fire to the contraband school, but by ringing bells and firing gun Nicklens men assembled and put it out

**June 10th** The country is overrun with Yanks: they are camped in the woods in front of us and have already paid us several visits killed sheep, goats and chickens Our new yankees are very neighborly. They come over to see us every few minutes in the day. Some came today and demanded their dinner at two o'clock but did not get it. They went off cursing us for being d\_\_n rebels

**June 13th** Nothing has happened today, Yankees racing around as usual. I see two officers coming, and as there is no one down stairs I suppose I will have to go. Now for a quarrel Yanks.

**June 15th** In all the doings of the Yanks their fiendish acts today will ballance them all. They brought a man in today and hung him up by the thumbs to make him tell where he came from: he told them but they would not believe him. He fainted three times. They took him down at three o'clock to shoot him. I have not heard whether they did so or not. They would neither give him food or water though he begged for the latter often. This was done by order of 'The Nicklen'.

**June 16th** The man that was brought in yesterday was shot today without any charge only that the Yanks believed him to be a spy. He was an irishman. Capt. Nicklen shot him today at 11 o'clock

**June 30th** Everything is going on very quietly now. Old Man and Son has been back to see the good rebs of G.

**July 2d** Yanks as usual. We have one of them sick here

**Aug 14** I have been 'running around' all vacation. Nothing has taken place except a fight at Atalanta. Yanks say they whiped; Rebs say they whipped and East Tennessee says both are telling d\_\_n lies about. Brother Joe was taken prisoner at Lexington in Morgans last raid: he is now at Camp Morton Ind. We had a letter from Rush last week: he is well but low spirited because he cannot hear from home

**Aug 15.** "All's quiet in G. today." This mornings paper brings a long list of names of persons ordered from Paducah to Conrad by Gen Payne: he has only been there a few days. Sambo in his political sermon says he has conquered "the great city of Gallatin which was so 'ceeding by 'bellions" and gone to conquer Paducah. I pity that place.

**Aug 16.** Our teacher Mrs. Cage has gone to Dixon Springs to teach. I suppose we will have to go to the 'Contraband Academy.' Sis is in debt to me. I must put it down or she will never pay it. She owes me a brass button for a remark made on the camp flies.

**Aug 17** It is raining and very gloomy. We spent the day at Mrs. T's.

**Aug 18th** Sis owes me another button for my remark on her soda and exercise.

**Aug 19** No news. Jimmie H. was brought down on the cars yesterday to be buried at the old homestead. Two sisters are all that remain of that once large family: they were driven South and know nothing of his early death. He died at Camp Douglass.

**Aug 20th** I have been visiting all day but did not hear any news.

**Aug 21.** Raining again. Sallie L. spent the night with sis. Jenny G. has just come to spend a week

**Aug 22** Sallie M. and I have been enjoying ourselves finely today. Jennie Griffith has lost none of her wild way.

**Aug 25** I went home with Sallie, Monday and just got back. No news. Gallatin is commanded by Col. Patten. The yanks have just left with one of Pa's horses they swore it was a government horse and took him off.

**Aug 29** There has been great excitement for several days The yanks are looking for Wheeler. Pa is in Louisville

**Aug 30** Yankees all ran in the fortifications today and carried with them all the citizens they could find. They are going to shell the town if Wheeler comes Aug 30st Wheeler has not come yet. Yanks still frightened.

**Sept 1st** The yankees turned the citizens out today. Wheelers men have never been this side of Lebanon.

**Sept 5th** A few days ago 40 yankees crossed the river scouting; they came back yesterday in every direction scared to death. They say Wheeler took their arms others say they never seen Wheeler, but got frightened and threw them away. We have not had a letter from brother Joe for a month

**Sept 10** The widows and widowers who married last winter are seperating. Mrs. Trimble an Mrs. Joiner left their husbands last week. There was a man shot last week and anoth today; both citizens. Mr. Patterson (the one who was shot yesterday by Col. Trimble) is not dead yet.

**Sept 11** No news; we went over to Mrs. Lanes this evening I met my friend Miss Boude there.

**Sept 12** Morgans death is confirmed. The yankees are in a great glee. Never mind; his band are still living; you had better stop rejoicing. I suppose Nicklen feels at rest he knows Morgan was the only one that cared for us. I think the citizens should put on mourning for him. No letter from Jo or Rush yet.

**Sept 16** Todays paper brings sad news "Atlanta has certainly been taken: Sherman has ordered every man, woman and child from that place Payne has been ordered from Paduca because he treated the citizens so bad. Why couldn't he have been ordered from here, he did a thousnd times worse here than there I suppose there a few union men at Paduca.

**Sep 17** Gallatin is guarded by one regt. of white yankees and part of a regt. of black

**Sept 18** No news; yankees behaving very well.

**Sept 19** Cold and windy: every one has fires

**Sept 20th** The citizens are running in very direction trying to get to the Southern army The yankees are drafting everyone between the age of seventeen and fifty I wonder what the deserters will do now

**Sept 21st** No letters from Rush or Jo yet: we are very uneasy

**Sept 22** Gen. Payne stayed at Paduca 56 days and shot 67 men: he is under arrest Paduca is a union place. The noblehearted patriots who suffered here will never be cared for save by those at home whom their wrongs have made desolate. A company of negroes have just passed well armed they are going out to forage & steal I suppose.

**Sept. 24** Spent the evening at Mrs. Lucas with N.T. No news

**Sept. 26th** Very cold for this month: Frost two nights The eighth Tenn. regt. left Saturday

**Sept 27th** Tom Miller is to be hung Friday week for resenting and insult offered his mother by a yankee. He has been in the penitentiary a long time. His mother has gone to Washington to petition for a pardon.

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[Alice Williamson Diary - Table of Contents](#)

Knoxville, Tennessee  
January 16th, 1864

Dear Martha:-

On yesterday I received your letter and was glad to hear that you had got able to walk to town and back. With proper care I think you will soon get well. The small pox still exists here, but there is not so much said about it now as when it first appeared. I do not now hear of many new cases and the people do not seem to regard it so much.

I have bought me a bedstead bed and mattress for which I paid \$85, but I could get no bed clothing; yet I have had my bed moved to the custom house and am sleeping on it without bed clothing, laying on the mattress and covering with the feather bed. It was an excellent arrangement during the cold weather that we have had, but will be rather hot when the weather moderates.

I received a letter from Ada Smith a day or two since which I enclose to you. I send also two ounces more of Indigo and six ounces of Madder. Also some old newspapers, I have no late ones except Brownlow's which I send. I cannot tell when I will come down at this time.

Yours E. T. Hall.

Knoxville Tennessee  
Dec. 8th 1864

Dear Cousin Carrie:-

Your kind letter by Judge Brown is rec'd. I was glad to hear from you. I have been quite sick for the past few days. Was in bed all day yesterday. Am better today. Had a hard night sweat last night, which you know is very weakening. I have been taking medicine today and hope I will escape the sweat tonight, and be well tomorrow.

Col. Ingerton, who was wounded by a drunken soldier, two weeks ago in this house, died this eve about dark. His poor wife is here. They have only been married five or six months. She is a poor delicate woman. I do feel so sorry for her. The officers & soldiers of Gen. Gillem's command do greatly mourn the loss of so good an officer.

The letters I brought through by flag of truce, have all been sent back to me, except one, which I am sorry to say, was Jimmie's letter to you. Jimmie promised me he would write nothing contraband, or nothing that would cause me trouble. I glanced over the letter and saw nothing I thought wrong. When Col. took the letters to the P.M.'s office he told the P.M. he did not think it necessary to examine the letters, that he & his wife had looked them over, and to just stamp them & seal them. But he did read them, & disapproved of Jimmie's, & when ~~Maxxakka~~ Col. called for them, the Provo. M. told him one was contraband. It came near getting us both in trouble. Col. excused himself by saying he did not read that one, which was true; & then they blamed all on me. I am sorry it is so. I would like much to send the letter. But I have done my duty & I know you can expect no more of me. I send one to Uncle S. Johnston from J.

You wished to know "how the boys looked, what they said, how they were dressed &c" All looked well (healthy) and were well dressed. I cant begin to tell you what they said. They said so much. Sister Carrie write me that Pryor & Jimmie called to see them after I left. Jimmie went back to see them after they had left N. Market & I believe stayed all night. Mother & Carrie both like Jimmie. Mother calls him my brother & introduced him so to every one. Col. J. Rhea called to see me about an hour after I was gone. I cannot tell you anything about Cousin Mary. Though I think Sam said she was in Ala with the remainder of the family. Ajt. Love was in Va.

Friday night . Cousin Will Harris & Dr. Cawood from Dabdrige called to see us tonight; have just left. Col. is with me yet. He cannot go to Nashville until the way is open. We are still boarding at the Franklin House. Boarding is only one hundred & fifty dollars a month. Cheap for a Lieut. Col. whose pay is only \$180 a month. I payed only \$50 for a dress last week. I think I will make one do me some time. The next good chance you have of sending me a package, please send me the old body of my green dress.



(From Ada Thornburg to Carrie Stakely, Dec. 8, 1864)

2

Col. went out and bought your stamps immediately after I gave him the money. Enough to send many letters.

Come up and see me while we stay in Knoxville. Col. has reported for duty here. So we cannot go to Madisonville. I am alone tonight. Col. has gone out on the street to do some shopping for Mrs. Gillem. He left as soon as our company left and has been gone at least an hour and half. Come with with me while he is out. Carrie, Col. is one of the best husbands in the world. He seldom ever leaves me alone after dark; only when necessary. Takes such good care of me when I am sick. All the ~~me~~ harm I wish you, is that you may get such a good one when you marry.

Col. and Mrs. Hall have agreed to try to do something for S.B. but they cant change military laws. No prisoners are allowed to take the Oath or come south of the Ohio until they are exchanged. They will try to have him exchanged as soon as possible.

Write to me soon. It is not necessary to look for letters from Maggie and Mary longer; or to ask them to write, I presume. My love to all. Good night.

Your aff. cousin

Ada.

P.S. Please send these letters off as soon as possible. I have kept them so long. Send Mrs. Parker's to her immediately.

Ada.

Home [Madisonville] Feb. 28, 1865

Dear Carrie:-

Uncle Henry brought me your letter last Friday. I was very glad to get it. Ma had received one before she answered it but we did not get to send it until yesterday. Ma started to Loudon yesterday--she went to Grandpapazs in the evening and expected to go on today. Aunt Thula is staying with us; I get along very well with the work. Ma told me not to weave any while she is gone. Jimmie Houston expects to start tomorrow. Mrs. R. [or H?] is coming when Jimmie gets there. Hessie & Alice are very busy. Margaret received a letter from Ada this evening. She is still at New Market; she has been up to Grainger Co. She said that Aunt Aggie had been up to Bristol to see Capt. Hill, he is very low with consumption. Sam Sr. is also there sick. Ada says she is suffering with the toothache. Col. T. is on march, he knows not where; he was at Cairo the last letter she received from him. You need not expect to have my letter written well or the lines straight. The boys are making check lines out of old "saddle bags" and Rosa and Willie are laughing and shaking the room by running over it. Lannie had his foot scaled the other night. I think he caught cold in it, it is tolerably sore. Grandfather received a letter from Aunt Betsy this evening; Mr. Hall sent it down. Aunt B said she had not heard from home in eighteen months. They have raids up there even now & then, one side will run awhile & then the other. They are all getting along very well--all well. Knoxville is their nearest P.O. She said if we would write there she would perhaps get the letter. Sister Max M. also had a letter from Mr. Hall. He said Mr. Click had been at K. & staid two or three days. The Dr. said Mrs. Coffin was a little better this evening; she is very bad though. Ma staid with her three or four nights last week. There! ? has just snuffed the candle out and I made a line! Aunt Thula says tell you "Willie and Lannie are sitting here making check lines and laughing at each other for making them so long, Sam is chewing gum wax and she is knitting" But Sam says he is over-seeing! You know I used to talk about the boys asking me for everything, but now Lannie says it is a great worse. He says "Mary, where's my knife", "Mary, where's my thread?" "Mary, where's my needle," etc etc. I gave Ella her Christmas gift the other day; she was very glad to get it. I thought it was very pretty. We all get along very well in school. Oh, I like to forgot to tell you, Jimmie Johnston is exchanged--aint you glad? I am. They got a letter from him, written on the boat. He said he would have forty days furlough, which he would like to spend at home, but he guessed he would spend it in N. Carolina. Col. Eakin wrote home that he expected to hear of an exchange. Mollie said she thought that he said that Matt was exchanged or was going to be, she did not know which. I hope you had a pleasant day last Saturday. Mary Ann and family staid all night at Grandfather's Friday night, on their way down to Loudon. Uncle John and the rest of the men that were with the wagon, came back this evening. I have not been to town since you left. Matt Houston spent the day with me the Saturday after you left. Grandma, Mollie & Alize were down for a little while one evening. I did not see but one or two of the Rebels in the raid. Jo Russell & William Henry Russell & L. Hood were the only ones I spoke to. Col. Kirk's men did not behave very well in town. The Rebels said they could not find McIntyre in Sweetwater., although they looked very carefully for him. They did not want to take him, they said they wouldnt take him, only wanted to see him because the people said he was a "clever Yankee" and they never saw one. Give my love to all the girls; tell Annie that I think that as she has left us for good, she might let us hear from her. I hope your shoes will be large enough. Write often. Affectionately

Mary.

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