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Write a summary of the collection of letters. How would you describe this young soldier’s experiences with war? (Minimum of five sentences)
McKinney  Texas
June the 19th /61

Miss Mollie J. Cook

Dear friend

...There is a company of volunteers (cavelry) that will leave in a few days for the field of action, that I expect to go with if I can get off with them. There is also a company of Infantry in camp waiting for further orders, both companies were raised in this county. The cavelry company will be led by Captain James Throckmorton, their point of destiny is not yet ascertained for certain never before in the history of our county has such commotion and excitement prevailed all seem to be of the same mind and the cry comes from all, my Country and our liberties shall be maintained. ...

J. S. Boon

Dispose of this as your better judgment may dictate. Jimmie

Iuka, Miss. Febr the 27th /62

Miss Mollie Cook

Kind Friend

... the prospects before us are not very flattering, for our safety in these parts, for our numbers are few comparatively here, although we are in the heart of the Confederacy, yet we are in a few miles of the enemies lines, and they have been farther into our country here than we are now, they have been to Florance [Florence] Alabama, and they passed unmolested too, and from that place (Florance) they taken a large amount of government stores. They were in gun boats, which were gun proof even against cannon balls. We are stationed here as a guard to protect the railroad and bridge. The bridge is about five miles from us, we have to take it in turns in guarding the bridge each company stands for three days at a time. We cook our provision and camp with no from our camps we have a hard time of it, and have had ever since we left Texas. I suppose it is fair, for such is the life of a soldier or at least I find it is such since I left my adopted state (Texas) for I have left behind me there all that is near and dear to me, save my Father and his family which are in Tennessee, ... It is about eight miles to the Tennessee river, and if we do have to fight here it will be a hard fight. They say they will have this road at all hazards and if they do attempt to take possession of it, it will be no childs play, and a many poor boy will bite the ground, and who of us will escape I cannot tell. We are determined to give them the best fight we can. We number at this post about two thousand men, though we can in a few hours warning concentrate ten thousand men here.

Jimmie Boon
Camp near Corinth, Miss. April the 2nd /62
Miss Mollie Cook,

Kind Friend

...Mollie, in camp is a hard place to be sick, you have no idea how a poor soldier suffers while sick in camp. It is no use to undertake to tell how much a sick man wishes to be where some kind hand can administer to his wants, and wipe and cool his scorching febrile face and especially to prepare something that would be palatable for him to eat. Its no use in talking nor writing about such things, when a man can't help himself, but there is one thing certain there is one man that I know of who will know better how to appreciate Female association, if ever he lives to get back to his beloved and adopted state, ("I guess thine is") Texas. I shall not write his name just now but a hit to the wise is sufficient – for I know you are easy of perception (so that's all).

... It seems if a man gets sick and goes to the Hospital he is certain to die, our company loses every one that goes there, we have lost eighteen men that we know of. ... We have another colonel now. Maj. Stanley [Wright A. Stanley] of your town is our leader now. Col. Maxey [Samuel Bell Maxey] has been promoted to a Brig Generalship, he is at Chat[t]anooga Tennessee, he wanted us to go with him, but Gen. Johnson [Joseph E. Johnston] said he wanted us here at Corinth. Maxey appointed his entire staff most from this regiment. We are in the grand army of the Mississippi valley [Army of the Mississippi] now, which numbers many thousands, and in the face of us but a few miles (twenty at most) off are our enemies encamped in equal numbers as near as we can find out. They are well disciplined and much better armed we are and have been for two weeks expecting every day a fight – our pickets bring in some of the Federals most every day in my opinion there will be a general move made soon, and when the fight commences it will be no childs play, but it will be a struggle for life, and many a poor soldier will bite the dust, and who will escape, we cannot tell, God alone can tell, he alone can tell when the end of this war will be. ...

Jimmie Boon

Worsham Hotel, Memphis Tenn April 28th 1862
Miss Mollie Cook

My kind friend do not think me impertinent in writing to you so often I have not waited for you to answer my last letter but I do hope you will excuse me for troubling you this time. Mollie, I write this from the fact that it is the last chance I fore see for I have no doubt but the feds will have [entire] control of the Mississippi River ere this reaches you & so we will be cut of from Texas [entirely] and then you see that will stop all communication between our army and Texas. This looks some what discouraging but I will not dispare. I still have strong hope in our success. ...

...I will return in a few days as my crippled leg is about well and my health sufficient to stand. Another Bartle will be fought I have no doubt in less than ten days and it will be an awful Battle as there is the largest Army that has ever been at any place in the history of this war, it is supposed that there will be in the two armies together three hundred thousand men. I expect to
go into it and risk my life once more in the glorious cause of my Country if I am so fortunate as to survive the dre[al]ful conflict I will be very thankful and if it should be my fate to fall on the Battle field I shall have done nothing but my duty if I could no in my dying moments that it would cause the shed[d]ing of one single tear from my best and most cared for friend it would be enough for me it would it would make me breathe my last breath more freely and easy but enough of this. I hope for better things.

Chatanooga, Tenn Augt 15th /62

Miss Mollie J. Cook

Kind friend

Your kind favour of the 20th of May came to hand yesterday, rest assured it was a welcome messenger to me, it being the only intelligence I had received from you for more than four months. I supposed it was owing to the blockade of the river. It found me in better health than I have been since I have been on this side of the Mississippi river, for I have been sick nearly all of the time since I left Little Rock Ark, and I have just returned from the Hospital after an absence of more than two months. I have had a severe spell of Typhoid fever. I came very near peging out twice as I thought. I suffered very much especially for the want of attention. I pity any person that is forced to the necessity of going into a Hospital. For during my confinement I did not get anything fit to eat that was prepared there, and Oh! The suffering of the poor soldiers that are in the hospital.

Mollie, I often thought of those I knew in Texas, that would have administered to my sufferings, for I could not keep from thinking of them far away (and to me most dear!) I had no kind hand to give me a drink of water to cool my parched lips, or ease my aching head, or prepare anything that was fit to eat.

...

We are stationed for the present twenty five miles west of Chat[t]anooga, on the railroad heading to Nashville Ten. We are Gen. Maxey’s Brigade the advance guard of the army of this place. The Tennessee river only sep[a]rates our Pickets from the Federals. We are not allowed to shoot at each other here. The Federal Pickets and ours meet in the river and exchange papers in a friendly like manner, and some of them even venture to cross over even against orders all such and to be taken prisoner (after being assured that they will be permitted to return, unharmed) and spend an hour with the pickets and return again. The Federals are deserting daily and coming in to our lines. The Tennesseans have been treated most shameful by the Yankies, their property destroyed, Negroes stolen and in many instances killing some and brutally treating women and children.

...
Bridgeport, Alabama [undated letter, ca. Nov. 1 1862]

Miss Mollie Cook,

Kind Friend

As I have a few minutes time I will devote it to you in writing you one more letter. After a long and tedious march, over Hills, Rocks, Mountains, and some fine rich country, we have had a hard time of it, marching at times both day and night, and part of the time on half rations. I wrote to you from Sparta, Tenn. about the first of September, from there we crossed into Ky. at Tompkinsville from there to Glasgow, Munfordville. There we captured forty three hundred Yanks, guns, ammunition, seven cannon, from there we moved toward Louisville. We did not proceed far before we left the road and turned toward Lexington by way of Bardstown Springfield, Perryville, Danville, Harrodsburg. From Harrodsburg we turned back to Perryville, where we met the Yanks and had a fight with them, drove them back for several miles with heavy loss on both sides. The Yankies lost about three to our one. Our Brigade under Gen. Smith [Edmund Kirby Smith] was not in much of the fight, did not fire a gun only a few shots with the cannon, we were exposed for a few minutes to a severe cannonade, in which we lost Capt. John. Lane of your town, he was struck on the left hip mutilating of his body in an awful manner he lived but a few hours. I did not see him, but was told he died happy. Some few others of the boys were slightly wound[ed]. I presume you have seen the particulars of the fight ere this in the public papers. From this place we began the retreat crossing at Cumberland Gap from there to Knoxville, Chat[tenooga and to this place, which is where the railroad crosses the Tennessee river leading to Nashville, we leave here for Murfreesboro Tenn. We expect to have a fight near Nashville. The health of our regiment and the army is good, better than has been for some time; our retreat from Kentucky has disheartened us very much, we did not want to leave there, but our Generals ought to know what is best for us.

I have not heard from Capt. Wise [Harvey Wise] since he got back to Bonham, what has become of him? has he joined the army again? Mollie, we do not hear from home but seldom, and when one of us gets a letter all wants to hear the news, such as who is gone to the wars, who is left at home, how is all, especially the Girls...If I was with you I could tell you many strange and hard things, such as hardships privations and almost starvations. Give my respects to your Mother and all of my friends who may enquire after me, and accept the best wishes and respects of your friend and Lover

Jimmie

PS Write soon and often to your friend kind Mollie.

Jenken [James H. Jenkins] of our company who was taken prisoner a Chila [Shiloh] has been exchanged and is with us again, he had a hard time was badly treated by the Yankies.

Your Jimmie
Camp near Shelbyville, Tenn. Feb 22nd 1863

Miss Mollie Cook,

My Friend:

... Although everything has been resting here quietly to outward appearances, for some time, but the weather has been so bad and raining most of the time for the last two months, that it is now almost impossible to move an army, we have some very disagreeable weather but we have good tents with nice chimneys to them and plenty bed clothing to keep us warm and we enjoy ourselves very well considering. And as it is no better we are thankful that it is no worse. We pass of the time in part very pleasantly this bad weather, and time seems to pass off very fast. We meet in our tents, around our comfortable firesides, play our pranks, run our jokes, rehearse the scenes of the battle field, though awful and solemn, yet sublime and grand. This may seem strange to you, yet often while exposed to a severe fire both of cannon and small arms, I could not help but admire its grandure. (But I always admired it most when it was in the distance and I was out of danger.) yet never forgetting loved ones in Texas, and especially our Lady friends. These we love, yet we fear that there will not be many of them single or rather enjoying single blessedness, when we return to the land of flowers and beauty and for whom we are now on the tented field and for whom we are both willing to suffer and die, as many a noble heart has already done, for their protection, in this unholy war, which seems to be waged more for spoils than anything else now. God send that it may soon end.

We are now in a Texas brigade composed of the 10th, 14th, 15th, dismounted cavalry and ours the 9th infantry commanded by Gen. Ector.

It seems from northern reports that we get that the war will not last no great while. The indications seem to point to a better day and that not far off. There seems to be a general dissatisfaction both in the army and in the states especially the states of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Newyork, and portion of other states. It is caused by Abe's emancipation proclamation. They say that they will not lend a helping hand to wage a war to take the negro from his rightful owner. Already has Illinois made steps towards seceding from the Federal government and asking the middle and western states to meet her in convention at Louisville Kentucky, and there consider the best steps to take for the future and appoint delegates to send to Richmond, to ask admittance into the Southern Confederacy. So great is the dissatisfaction in the federal ranks that the government seems to be tottering and crumbling to fall... such are the gleanings of northern papers. I would be glad you all had the papers to read that I have had for this last ten days, you would hold up your heads and look cheerful again, but it won't do to become too sanguine and buoyant [buoyant] with hope and loose [lose] sight of our position and condition, if in the event all of this proves to be false. But I do verily believe if we do our duty to our God and our country, both as soldiers and citizens, we will hold the yankies in check this winter and next spring. So badly will they be whip[pled] by their own failures, that by the first of August they will acknowledge our independence, and liberty will perch upon our banners, and peace will once more shine abroad over our lovely country the Southern Confederacy (so mote it be) the dissatisfaction is much greater in the yankie army than in the states, we often hear of mutiny and rebellion in their ranks, such is the report given by deserters from their ranks, as almost dayly [daily] occurences. Abraham is beginning to fear the honesty of his best generals, he is removing them from office and placing in their stead men of his own stripe, less competent to fill their places as Generals, but all of this is so much in our favour and proves that we have friends in the north who sympathises with us, and will lend us a helping hand if they could. We have one
deserter from their ranks in our regiment, he joined us at Murfreesboro, he makes us a good soldier, but desertions from the federal army is such a common occurence of late there is not much notice made of it. ...With this you have the friendship and love of a Texas soldier. I remain as ever, your Jimmie.

Mollie: write to your friend soon and often, give me all the news and oblige your friend,

Jimmie

Shelbyville, Tenn., March the 22nd /63

Miss Mollie Cook,
Kind and True Friend

... I am truly glad to hear and know that the good Ladies of Texas are doing such a noble part for her soldiers, for without their aid and especially their good admonitions and prayers, how hardly could we keep up or do anything to prosper in these times of great troubles. ... O! how we poor soldiers desire to return home to the fond embraces of those we left behind. But yet I am not cast down, or low spirited “nay verily” but I feel proud of my station “as a Texas soldier this morning” and why should I be otherwise, when everything around me looks so cheerful “its true there are some sad hearts” but nature seems all smiles, just bursting forth in her green verdure, and the birds sing, so sweetly all around the sun shines so beautiful and nature seems to be all love. And from the front all is quiet, and of late cheering news come from almost every quarter, whether true or not, the general dissatisfaction that prevails in the Yankie army and especially the fighting within their own ranks, which accounts we hear almost every day. A few days ago they had a general battle in Rosencrans [Gen. William S. Rosecrans'] army at Murfreesboro some four hundred were killed, frequently hear heavy firing in their own lines, and on yesterday we heard that all of the Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio troops were leaving, and falling back to Nashville and from there to Bowling Green [Bowling Green] Kentucky. This is glorious news if it only be true.

I thought a few days ago we were going to have a fight here, a courier of Rosencrans [Rosecrans] was intercepted with orders to Gen. McCook [Gen. Alexander McDowell McCook] to strengthen his pickets and bring on a fight at this place, but we were prepared for them and lay in line of battle for several days and nights, but the bravos of Lincoln never made their appearances, and I guess that it was well enough for them, if they had I guess they would have rued the day they left their homes to try to subjugate a free people. We are quite sanguine of our ability to hold the vandals in check here, and I do verily believe, that if we do our duty, both as Soldiers and Citizens, to our God and our Country, that ere the Summer months pass we will gain our independence, and we poor Soldiers be set at liberty and be permitted to return to our homes, to enjoy the boon of peace. That has caused the life blood of so many good men to flow almost like rivers through our sunny south. Oh how cheering this would be, may God speed the time. I am truly sorrowly to hear that there is some dissatisfaction in our western army, and that some of our Texas boys have deserted, This is very gratifying to every true Texian. But I think that Gen’s Price [Sterling Price] and Kirby Smith will restore confidence to the people & in the Soldiers, and that they will soon rally around them, and the army will be reorganized and the
Yankee army be driven far back north. I think that it was a good selection in sending Gens. Price and Kerby Smith, they are good men, especially Gen. Smith, he is a Christian soldier and above all others. Give me a praying man for an officer, under such an officer as Smith, Jackson & Stuart I would not dread to go into a fight. I wish we had more of them than we have. We have some cavalry and picket fighting with the Yankees most every day, but this is so common we take but little notice to it. It seems that the Yankees are bent on destruction, say that they can’t whip us (they tell the citizens so) but will starve us out, tell the farmers that they shall not raise any crops, they take their stock and drive it off, gather up the plows and burn them, and destroy every vestage [vestige] of property that they can that belongs to strong southern men, such is the fiendish and brutal disposition of Lincoln’s band of hirelings that he is trying to subjugate us with, but he will never succeed, so long as there is a woman left to use a broom stick even. I think this is the exclamation that comes from every southern heart.

...With this you have my kindest regards and the love of your absent friend,

Jimmie

(Write to your friend often)

Yazoo City, Miss. June 8th /63

Miss Mollie Cook,

Much esteemed Friend, I write this short note and cast it to the winds hoping that it may reach your hands, that you may know that you still have a place in my memory and a share of my kindest regards, and that you may know something of my whereabouts.

This evening [evening] find me in good health, and about four miles east of Yazoo City, and in hearing of the roar of the cannon at Vicksburg, and expecting to have a fight with the Yankees every day. Gen. Grant has a very strong force between us and Vicksburg. Gen. Johnston is uniting a very heavy force in their rear, and I think there will be a generally [e]ngagement soon, if so it will be a most dreadful fight. There has been already severally hard fights the Yankees have burnt Jackson loss estimated at five millions dollars, and all the public property at Yazoo City and the navy yard, both places were burnt a few days before we arrived there. We left in Shelbyville about a month ago. We have been here for more than a week, we came down by cars and steam boat, to Jackson [Mississippi], and walked from there to this place, a distance of fifty miles. I dislike being transferred from the Tenn. Army to this, our fare is very poor beef and coarse corn meal and occasional some bacon, and sugar, besides having bad water to drink and Swamps and musquitoes to contend with, which is not very pleasant or amusing. But we have a hope that if we can succeed in driving the Yankees from this portion of the state, we will be transferred to the west side of the Mississippi river. It is believed by some of our leaders that this will be done, if so there will be an loud and long yell given by some Texas boys, very near all the Texas boys that were in Tennes[ ] and different portions of this state are thrown in to this Army under Gen. J. Johnston. There has been several engagements here recently, and our loss has been heavy, having to fight such great odds in one engagement near Jackson. The 7th Texas lost near two hundred in killed, wounded and prisoners, there has been no fighting except cavalry since we have been here. There has been some very hard fighting at Vicksburg, and Port Hudson,
which has been very much in our favour and heavy loss to the enemy.

Much depends on our driving the Yankees from this portion of the Confederacy. If they get Vicksburg they will have the door opened to all this state and Alabama and we Texas boys will be entirely cut off from home. You must excuse me for this letter, for I am in a great hurry. You must take the will for the deed.

Mollie, I am very anxious to hear from you. I have had no news from you in a great while, though I believe you have wrote to me regularly. An interest in your prayers I ask; give my kindest regards to all and accept the best wish and love of

Your Jimmie.

Write soon and often.

From a member of Compy I, 9th Tex. Volunteers Ectors Brigade Johnson Army.

[undated paper, similar paper & ink to the June 8, 1863 letter]

P. S. Since I wrote the above letter, we have received orders for our Quartermaster to turn over all wagons except one wagon for every seventy men, one ordinance wagon for every three hundred men, one wagon for head quarters, one wagon and one ambulance for the medical department, and all baggage save what we can carry ourselves. This is indication of some kind of a move, but it is all a mystery to us. Be this as it may, I am for anything for the good of my country, so we can but gain our independence, our liberty, and release ourselves from the tyrannical rule of Abolitionism, of old Abe and his minions, or would be gods of this country, “our lovely South.” We have been idle now for some time much longer than I expected, when we came here from Murfreesboro, and I think it is time we were doing something and not lie idle here, though I care not to get into another such a fight as we had in the late battle of Murfreesboro. Oh what destruction of life, and mangled bodies on that field, my heart sickens at the recollections of that scene of carnage, but anything to gain our independence. I am willing to bear as much as flesh and blood can bear so I but come out a live, and sound. Mollie, an interest in your prayers I crave. May I ever be remembered by you at a rich throne of grace. Write soon. I ever remain your true friend,

Jimmie.

Camp near Big Black river, Miss. July 4th /63

Miss Mollie J. Cook

... I look forward with anxious expectation to brighter days in the future, though the dark cloud of war and desolation is dark and lowering and very much so at this time, for it seems that Lincoln with his hordes of hired servants both white and black are moving against us at this point with a determination to take it any how, and which will or can only be excelled by the skill of southern chivalry and Generalship of the brave oppressed defenders of the South, who are willing (as many have already done) to shed the last drop of their hearts blood for their country, a country that abounds with all the natural resources of wealth and the requisites to make a great and powerful nation. I believe there is more patriotism among the Ladies than
there is among the men. I have seen enough to convince me of that fact. There has been but one known desertion in our Company, and I believe that his Sisters was the cause of it, which is a great shame and pity to the Sex, and to our cause, that there are among us such enemies. I call them enemies for I cannot give them any other name, those that should be our friends, are in many instances our most bitter enemies, but I hope such instances are few, yet in some portions of the country there are some vile and bitter enemies to our cause and to our country.

We are now encamped about thirty miles in the rear of Vicksburg, and in striking distance of Grant's Army, which is between us and that place, he has a very strong force and from reports very well fortified, besides the country is a good natural fortification. Gen. John[ton] has a good army here encamped, he is with us here, and from all outward appearances my impression is that we will have a general engagement here soon, probably in a few days. Gen. Grant has been trying the strength of Vicksburg for near twelve months, and more particular for the last six weeks. The roar of cannon has been almost incessant both day and night, and so far they have failed and have been forced to fall back with heavy loss and Vicksburg still stands, the Gibraltar[r] of the Confederacy, and a living monument of the goodness and mercy of God, and bids far to still remain ours. Oh! may the providence and blessings of God be with us, and may He be our strength in this time of need, that we may be able to drive a most tyrannical foe from our country, and so far beyond our lines that they may never trouble us any more. That we may be a free and independent people, instead of an oppressed and down trodden surf, which we will be if we fail to gain our independence. If we can succeed in raising the siege of Vicksburg we will have better days to dawn upon us soon, which will be hailed by many a gladened heart with joy inexpressible almost.

The health of our command is good. I am in better health now than I have been since I left Texas, and fleshier than you ever seen me. I guess you would hardly know me now, for I have been exposed so much, and so badly sun burnt, but I don't think that my morals or habits are changed any... I remain as ever

Your Jimmie

Meridian Miss. Oct 8th /63

Miss Mollie

... it seems that I never will be permit[ted] to visit you all again, as until this wicked & unholy war is over, if it ever will end, and this seems doubtful for sometime yet to come, for me there is but little prospect of it ending soon. The future is all dark to me, but we will yet be free. Tell me not that as proud and numerous and wealthy people as those who form the Southern Confederacy will ever be enslaved! no never, though it yet may cost (as it were) rivers of blood to flow. The life blood of many of our best and bravest men, for we never have an engagement with our enemy but what we lose some of our noble soldiers, and best officers.

I suppose you have ere this seen an account of the late battle of Chicamauga river near Chattanooga Tenn. I was not in the fight, I was sick at the time and was sent off with the baggage of our regiment, but from accounts the boys give it was a hard fought battle. Our regiment came very near being taken prisoners, at one time were nearly surrounded, had to save themselves by retreating in double quick time, in fact the whole brigade came near sharing the same fate, many of the brigade were captured and among them were two of our company, John
Odell, & Jeff Day, of Farmersville Collin County. We lost two killed, James M. Burns & James M. Harris, and two wounded Sol. Dobson first joint of forefinger, right hand, J. W. Whisenant in next, slight, most all received slight bruises from balls or fragments of shell. Our regiment lost eight killed and sixty wounded in Stanley’s old company, no one was killed, three wounded, Davis, John Bates, and Bush. Yates with the three wounded boys were taken prisoners. The wounded prisoners have all been exchanged for on the battle field. We lost two commissioned officers, Lieut. Fitch of Grayson Co. and Lieut. Hamilton of Hopkins Co. Col. Young was badly wounded in left breast, ball passing through and out near the shoulderblade, no bones broken. There will be a full list of the casualties of our regiment published, so I will give no more.

As to the position of Rosencrans [Rosecrans'] Army, I know nothing more than it is in possession of Chattanooga, and Bragg’s line extend to the river both above and below. He has possession of Lookout Mountain, and has a full view of Rosencrans movements and works. I know nothing of Braggs forces, but I am satisfied they are sufficient for the task, and as to his movements, and plans they are secrets of his own, everything is kept in the dark from us now. It may seem strange that we are in this part of the country, but we are here, but can’t tell why. I would like to give you more news, but I cannot at this time, secrecy seems to be the policy now. Dr. Trimble is in fine health, you have his kindest respects (his family especially) also William Campbell. You must remember me kindly to your Mother and relations, and all enquiring friends. I await patiently your answer to this, and others. I remain as ever your true and faithful Friend

Jimmie