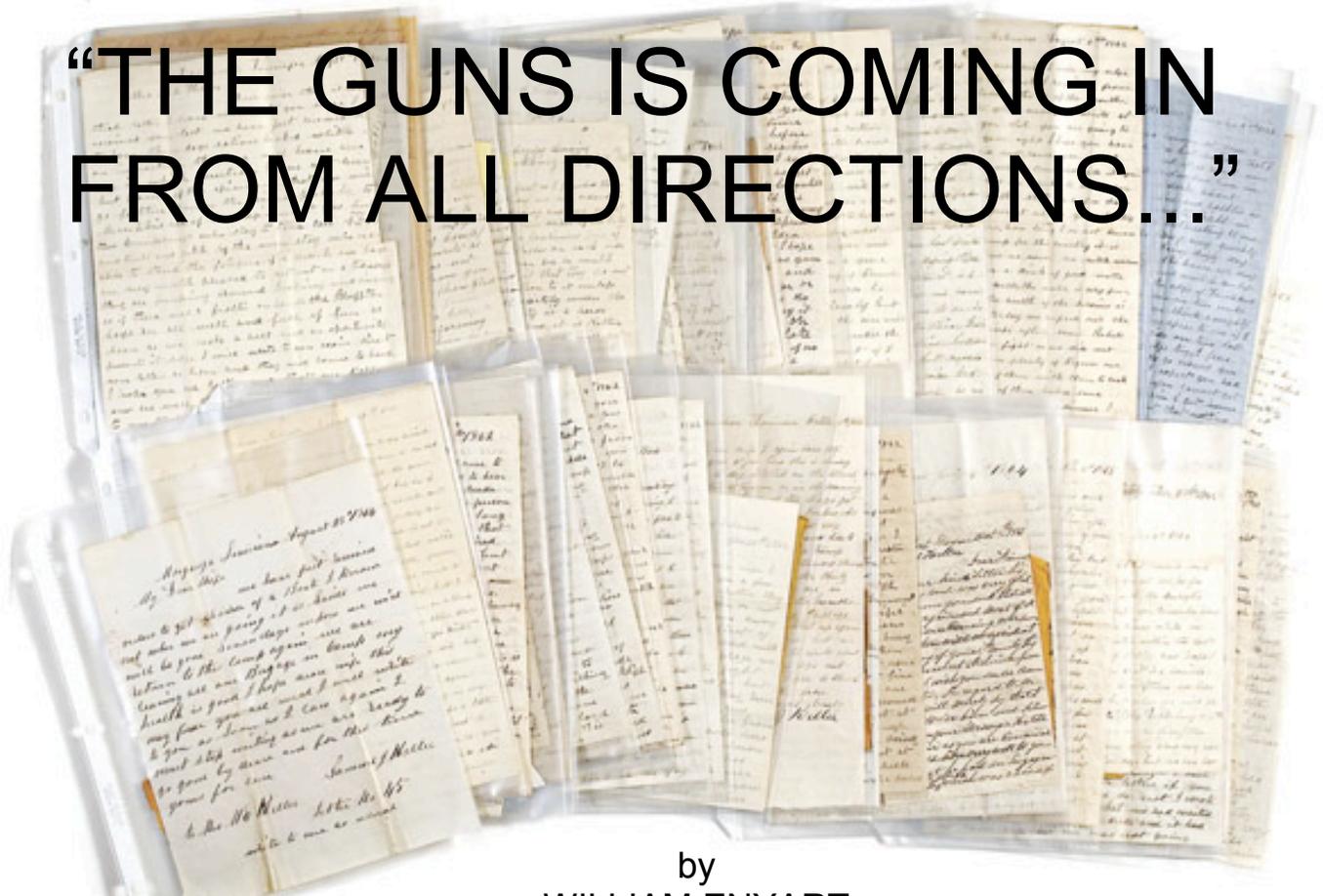


“THE GUNS IS COMING IN FROM ALL DIRECTIONS...”



by
WILLIAM ENYART
1863

[Ed. note: This letter was brought to me by a student in the early 1980's. The family was not able to figure out what it said. As near as I can determine, the letter reads as follows:]

April the 7, 1863

missispia we ar About Four Miels From black river in rear of Vicksburg and we had A big batele on the First Day of May at Chickswa bluf and it was a harder Fite then the Shilow or the Pea rig batele and the forty Seventh was in the hottest place in the batel the tride to flank us and we had to Fite our way out The bales and Grape Flue round us as thick as hail and we Fough all Day mor or Les the Last round we had we Fought Two ours and A half Stude fine Fast as they bold the rebes had about Fifteen thousand Men and born out with About Five thousand we wr Lyin in A very nice place now but suin will move again we have don Sum hard marching Sence we left helena we ar well at present and I hope if Thouse fine Lines may Find you all well and doing well and you Can git the house Plasterde if wish I For got to tel you in the other Leter Direct your to the 47 regiment indiana Volenteers in Care of Cap handley our men is Giting this morning on hed of us two or three miles we ar under the Sound of Cannen all the time now we had 23 wounded in our regiment and Four kild jack Aigerbrite is wounde in the thige Searlesey he is the onley on in our copneny one ball Struck Mea on the pants Lage our house is Maid of brush we Capterd three or Fore barle of Molases and the boyes is Making Taffee It is very hot there I have

*Sean Corn waist high Down there Every thing Looks beautiful there we ar ling at
rockey springs now the Guns is coming in From all Drecking Thousand of them all
Stearning of Viksburg and Jacon we will Suin have them Surounde Trie and git Aong
as well as you can and think we will bea home after B bitel if we Fire I must Close
My Letter right Suin Nothing More at presant but remain your Til Deth Rought in A
hurrey I O is Ginerley pirty hel they in the Armeey*

William Enyart

[Ed. Note: William Enyart's letter in its original form is nearly unreadable. The key word to me was Vicksburg. The Union Army under U.S. Grant moved quickly and powerfully against Vicksburg in the spring of 1863. When I saw that key term, I knew this was no ordinary letter back home. Punctuation and spelling in the 19th century can be very frustrating. In addition, many men wrote letters home that had never written letters before and were barely literate. This is what I think William Enyart was trying to say:]

May the 7th, 1863,

Mississippi. We are about four miles from the Black River in the rear of Vicksburg [Mississippi], and we had a big battle on the first day of May at Chickasaw Bluff, and it was a harder fight than the Shiloh [Tennessee] or Pea Ridge [Arkansas] battles and the Forty Seventh was in the hottest place in the battle. They tried to flank us and we had to fight our way out. The balls and grape flew round us as thick as hail, and we fought all day, more or less to the last round we had. We fought for two hours and a half. We stood fine, and fast as they come. The rebs had about fifteen thousand men and born out with about five thousand.

We are lying in a very nice place now, but soon will move again. We have done some hard marching since we left Helena, [Arkansas]. We are well at present and I hope if these fine lines may find you all well and doing well, and you can git the house plastered if [you] wish. I forgot to tell you in the other letter - direct your[s] to the 47 Indiana Volunteers in care of Cap[tain] Handley.

Our men is gitting on ahead of us two or three miles. We are under the sound of cannon all the time now. We had 23 wounded in our regiment and four killed. Jack Aigerbrite is wounded in the thigh - seriously. He is the only one in our company. One ball struck me on the pants leg. Our house is made of brush. We captured three or four barrels of molasses and the boys is making taffee. It is very hot here. I have seen corn waist high down here-Everything looks beautiful. We are lying at Rocky Springs [Mississippi] now. The guns is coming in from all directions - thousands of them - all steering on Vicksburg [Mississippi] or Jackson [Mississippi]. We will soon have them surrounded. Try and git along as well as you can and [I] think we will be home after the battle if we fight. I must close my letter. Write soon. Nothing more at present, but remain yours til death. Written in a hurry. I is generally pretty healthy in the Army.

William Enyart

[Postscript: William Enyart's regiment was later moved to Louisiana. He probably contracted a disease of some sort while serving there and was sent back to Indana. He died in Indianapolis at Burnside Barracks on August 23, 1864, a little over a year after this letter was written. He was forty seven years old when he died and left behind a wife and eight children.]