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Crowdsourcing as Promotion and Engagement

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Digital Initiatives Librarian

Paul V. Galvin Library, Illinois Institute of Technology

The Civil War in Letters

A Newberry Library Transcription Project

*of common faith, they see each other in better light
and they bear and forbear, helping each other ten
times more than they could do otherwise.*

Whether you are an expert, or an enthusiast of Civil War history, you can aid research and enrich the historical record by transcribing these handwritten letters and reviewing the work of other transcribers. For more detailed instructions, see the transcription instructions and tips.

Read about this project, then click on a letter below to begin transcribing, or browse the collections to learn more about their contents.

This transcription project was launched in conjunction with the exhibition, "Home Front: Daily Life in the Civil War North," on view at the Newberry from September 2013 to March 2014.

Carlos W. Colby Letters (transcription Complete) [\(Browse collection\)](#)



John D. Beach Letters [\(Browse collection\)](#)



Edward W. Curtis Letters (transcription complete) [\(Browse collection\)](#)



George Deal Letters (transcription complete) [\(Browse collection\)](#)

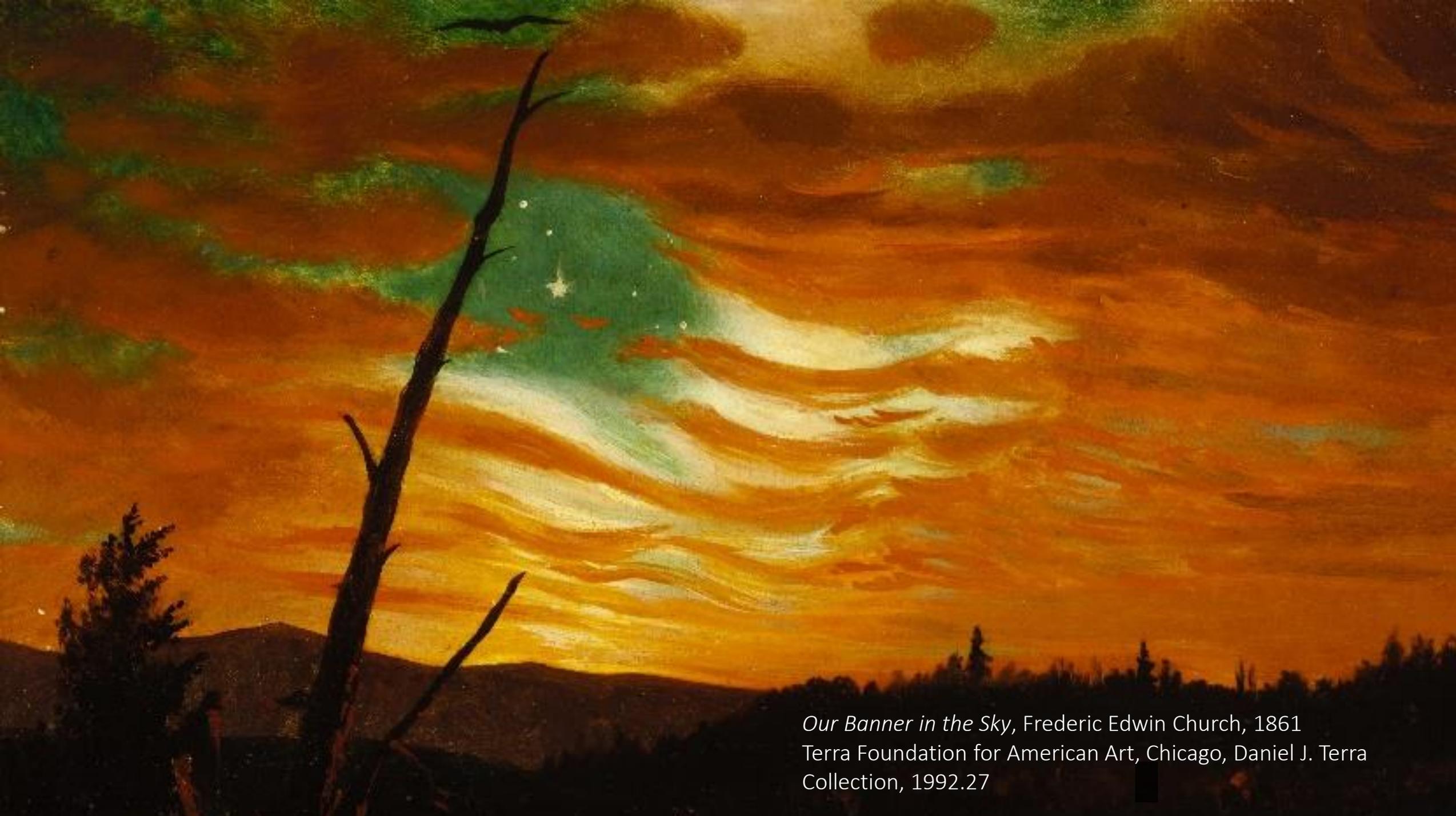


Adjutant's Office: 88th Ill. Infy.

Loudon. Tenn. April 16. Night.

16

For a little while good bye - good night. We march to-morrow morning; getting back into the Department of the Cumberland, from which we have so long been detached. I am glad of this, for it will lighten my labors, seeing that hitherto, by reason of belonging to one Department and being stationed in another, I have had to render in our Regimental returns and reports to both. We are at Camp at Charlestown, where I hope to find letters from your-



Our Banner in the Sky, Frederic Edwin Church, 1861
Terra Foundation for American Art, Chicago, Daniel J. Terra
Collection, 1992.27

Newberry's Civil War exhibit moves beyond the battles

Library's exhibit offers fresh, engaging perspective

September 25, 2013 | Steve Johnson | Tribune reporter



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In the landscape painting "Hunter Mountain, Twilight," context is everything.

It was painted in 1866, after the nation, too, had been denuded by the Civil War. And the artist, Sanford Robinson Gifford, had served in the Union Army and lost a brother in the war.

So the purple twilight means more than just the dimming of a day in New York's Catskill Mountains. And the stumps in a field that occupy the image's foreground are more than just the remnants of felled trees.



Somber and mournful, the painting is the powerful closing image of a new exhibition at the Newberry Library, "Home Front: Daily Life in the Civil War North," that itself paints a nuanced picture of what the war was like for those not directly involved in battle or statesmanship.

When we think of the Civil War, it is often in terms of blues and grays battling grimly in a field or, thanks to recent popular culture, of President Abraham Lincoln steering the nation through it.

But "Home Front," opening Friday, delivers a fresh and thoroughly engaging perspective.

It uses paintings of the period, scores of documents from the Newberry's trove, the era's patriotic sheet music and new recordings of some of the songs, and objects ranging from a woman's dress showing the seepage of military uniforms into fashion to a Myriopticon, a postwar Milton Bradley toy that encouraged children to revisit grisly scenes from the conflict via a backlit, box-mounted scroll.

The historical library, in organizing the show in conjunction with Chicago's Terra Foundation for American Art, wanted to tell a Civil War story that visitors might not be so familiar with, said Daniel Greene, exhibit co-curator and the Newberry's vice president for research and academic programs.

Separate sections address the cotton trade in advance of the war, the concurrent American Indian Wars in the west, the role of women and how the war played out in Chicago.

"What this show shows is that even if you're at a distance from war, you are intimately bound with it," Greene

And if that happens to make you think about the distance we've had in contemporary America from our wars, well, that's just fine with Greene and co-curator Peter John Brownlee, the Terra Foundation's associate curator.

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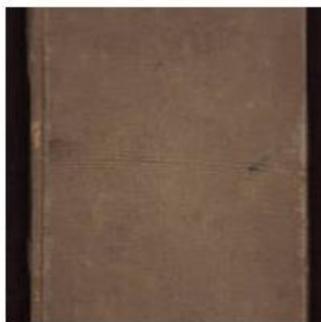
Newberry Library

Home Front

Steve Johnson, "Newberry's Civil War Exhibit Moves Beyond the Battles," *Chicago Tribune* (Chicago, IL), September 25, 2013

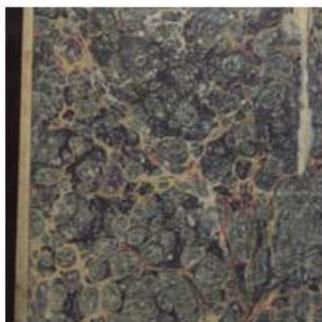
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8988 of 9379 pages have been transcribed!



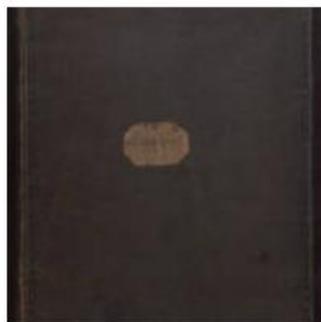
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NEW ENGLAND
MANUSCRIPT
COOKBOOK, CA. 1897



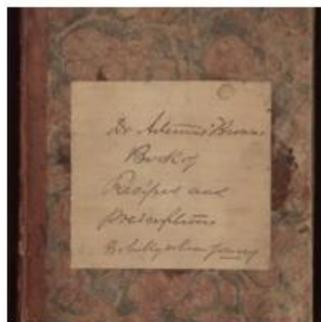
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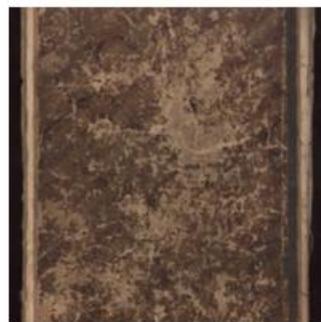
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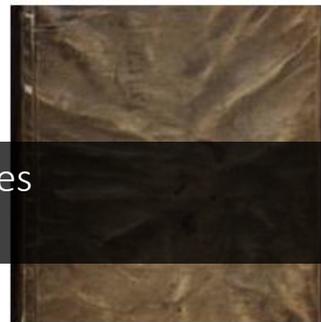
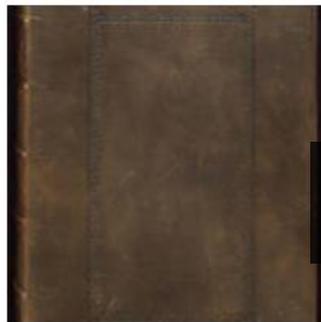
69% started

CARRIE L. WIRTS
COOKBOOK, 1917-1920



70% started

MARY CARNEGIE AND
SUSAN GILLESPIE
COOKBOOK, 1804-1905



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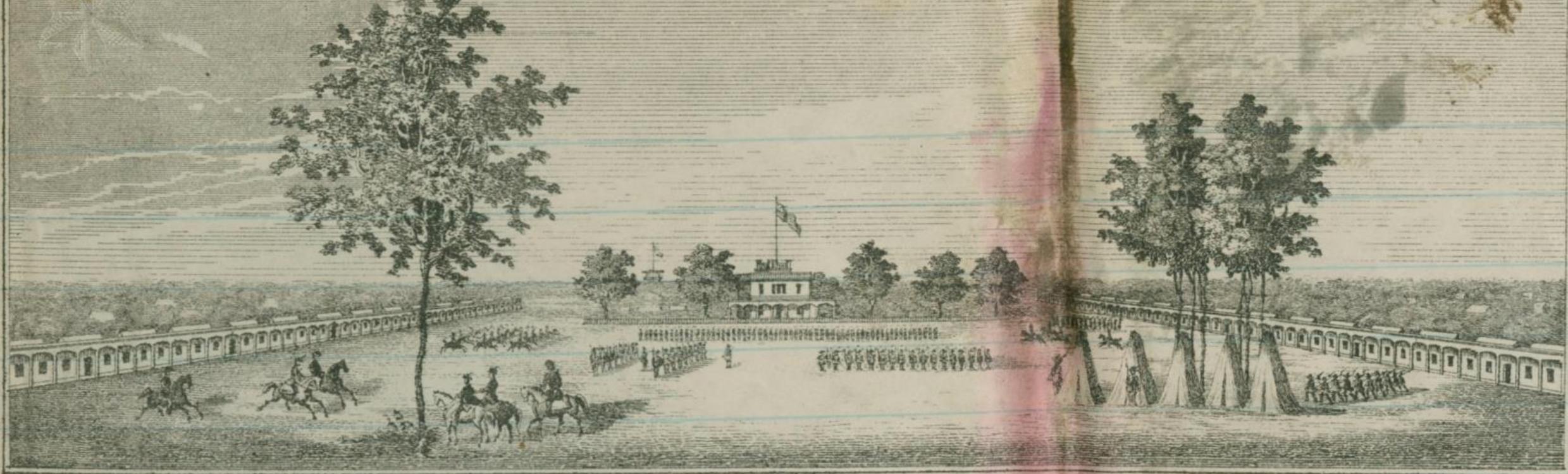
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51             },
52             function(data) {

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scripto





Lith & Publ. by A. M. Lear, Cor 3^d & Pine Sts.

CAMP BENTON (St. Louis).

Looking East.

Springfield, Sep 25th 1862

Dear ones at home

How do you all do?

I'm going to write again
I'll tell you last I read your last about a

James and Henry Patterson to "dear ones at home," Springfield, MO, Sept. 25, 1862, Newberry Library, Case MS 10025

(4)

The Civil War in Letters

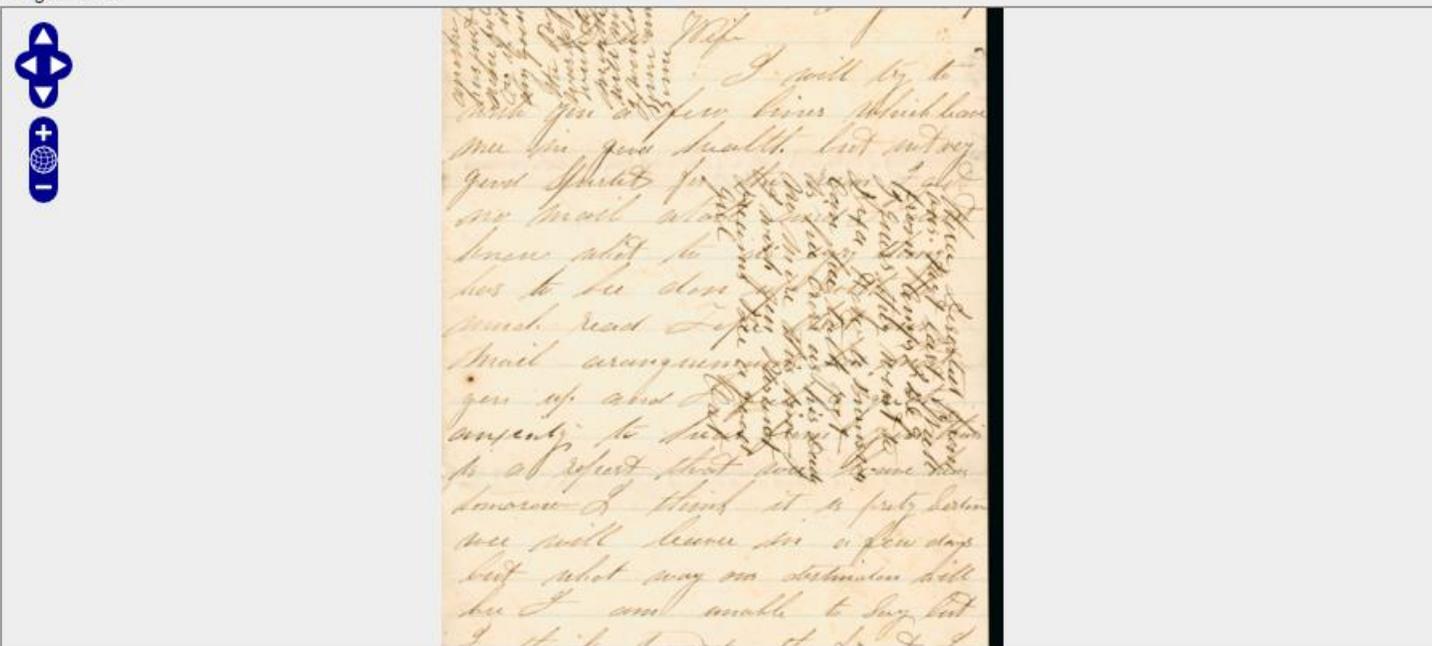
A Newberry Library Transcription Project

*of honour fades, they see each other in better light
and they bear and forbear, helping each other ten
times with the strength of ten.*

Home / Francema A. Mason Letters / Otis Mason to Francema Mason, Wauhatchie Valley, TN, May 1, 1864 /

Otis Mason to Francema Mason, Wauhatchie Valley, TN, May 1, 1864

image 3 of 4



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War's End

Although it is commonly regarded as the conclusion of the Civil War, the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia on April 9, 1865, did not mean the wars of war across the Northern home front. After the war's end, many women and children at home adjusted either to the loss or to the return of their husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers. Although Northern visual culture celebrated soldiers' homecomings, they often did so in a way that commemorated profound loss, depicting "suffering heroes" who had lost limbs or were permanently scarred by fighting.

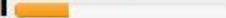
American painters also addressed the melancholy of war's end. Sanford Robinson Gifford's *Home Mountain*, Dwight and Lily Maria Sprague's *Flow of the Red, White, and Blue* both comment on the irreversible losses of war even as they search for signs of future promise. The challenge faced by the entire nation as the war concluded would be to honor the sacrifices made by both those who went to war and those who stayed at home, while also looking paths to national reunion.

Photo credit: Catherine Gass, Newberry Library, 2014



Otis Mason to Francema Mason, Wauhatchie Valley, TN, May 1,...

25% Started



Otis Mason to Francema Mason, near Chattahoochee, GA, Sept....

50% Started



Otis Mason to Francema Mason, Nashville, TN, Oct. 14, 1863

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Otis Mason to Francema Mason, Nashville, TN, Oct. 25, 1863

Needs Review



Otis Mason to Francema Mason, East Atlanta, GA, Sept. 13,...

Needs Review



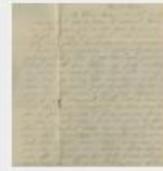
Otis Mason to Francema Mason, near Atlanta, GA, Aug. 7, 1864...

Needs Review



Otis Mason to Francema Mason, Bowling Green, KY, Nov. 4,...

Completed



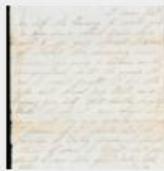
Otis Mason to Francema Mason, Mitchellville, KY, Dec. 15-17...

Completed



Otis Mason to Francema Mason, Mitchellville, KY, Dec. 28,...

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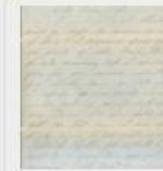
Otis Mason to Francema Mason, Nashville, TN, Oct. 17, 1863

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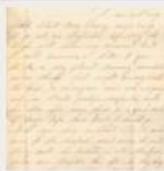
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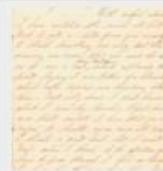
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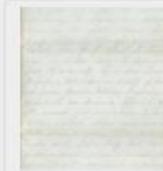
Otis Mason to Francema Mason, Wauhatchie Valley, TN, Apr....

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Otis Mason to Francema Mason, Wauhatchie Valley, TN, Apr....

Completed



Otis Mason to Francema Mason, Near Kingston, GA, May 20,...

Completed



Otis Mason to Francema Mason, Chattahoochee, GA, Nov. 11,...



Otis Mason to Francema Mason, Madison, IN, May 24, 1865



Otis Mason to Francema Mason, Atlanta, GA, Sept. 25, 1864

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HOME FRONT

DAILY LIFE IN THE CIVIL WAR NORTH

More than 150 years after it began, the Civil War still occupies a prominent place in our collective memory. Paintings and photographs, plays and movies, novels, poetry, and songs remind us of the struggle over the future of slavery, Lincoln's determination to save the Union, and the brutality of brother fighting against brother. Battles and battlefields occupy us, too. Bull Run, Antietam, and Gettysburg all conjure up images of desolate landscapes strewn with war dead.

Yet the frontlines were not the only landscapes of the war. Countless civilians saw their daily lives upended while the entire nation suffered. This exhibition explores the deep connections between Northern home fronts and Civil War battle fronts, revealing that even those who lived far from the fighting felt the war's effects every day. *Home Front* examines the cotton economy, visions of slavery and freedom, Indian wars, war relief work, and women's changing roles as a result of the cataclysmic conflict. It includes paintings from the Terra Foundation for American Art and books, magazines, photographs, correspondence, sheet music, broadsides, and newspapers from the Newberry Library. Seen together, these objects of daily life demonstrate the profound impact of visual culture in shaping individuals' understanding of the war.



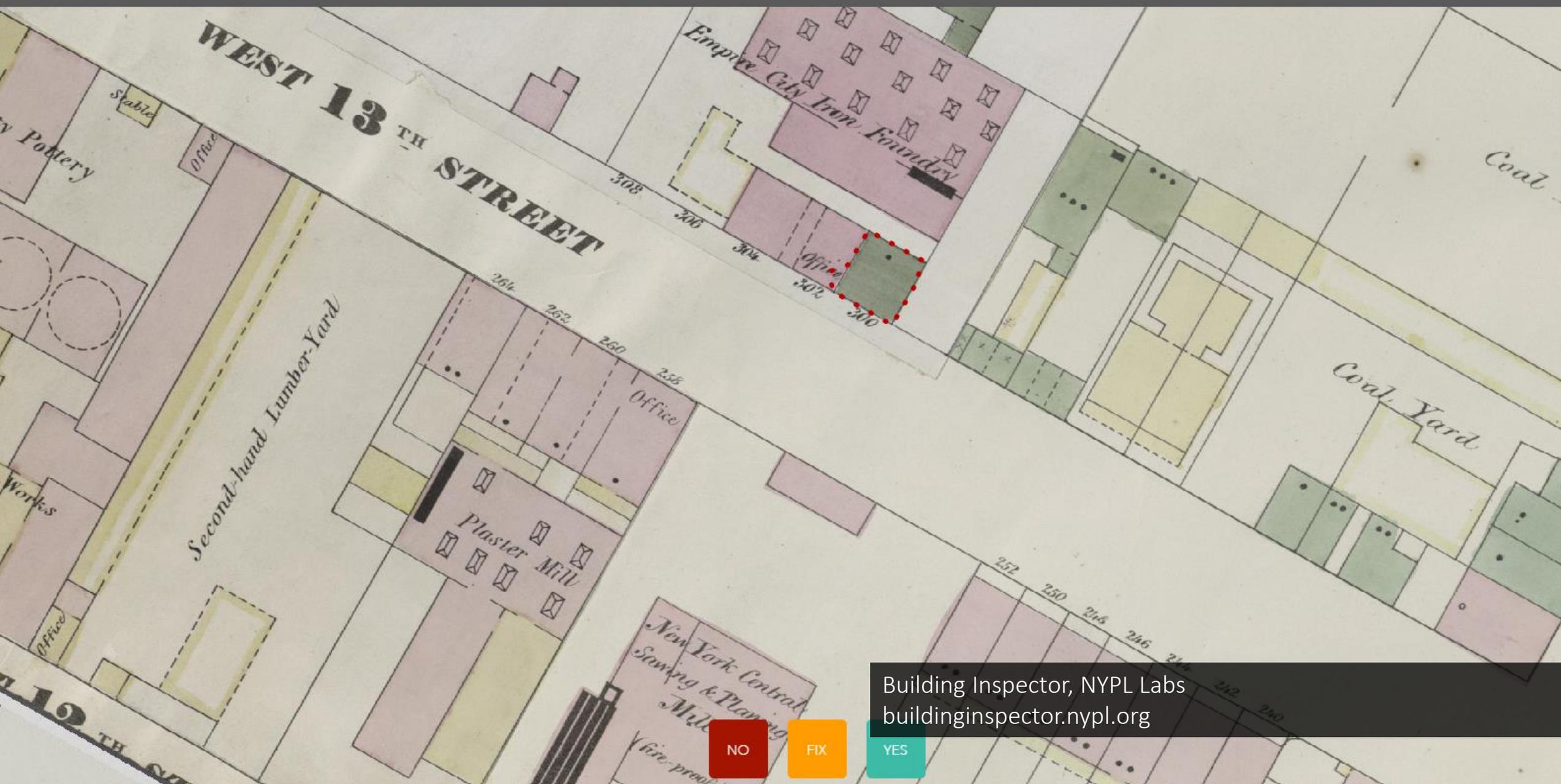
HERMON DUNLAP SMITH EXHIBIT GALLERY



Photo credit: Catherine Gass, Newberry Library, 2014



Photo credit: ARF Chemistry Research Building · photographer unknown · Illinois Institute of Technology Archives



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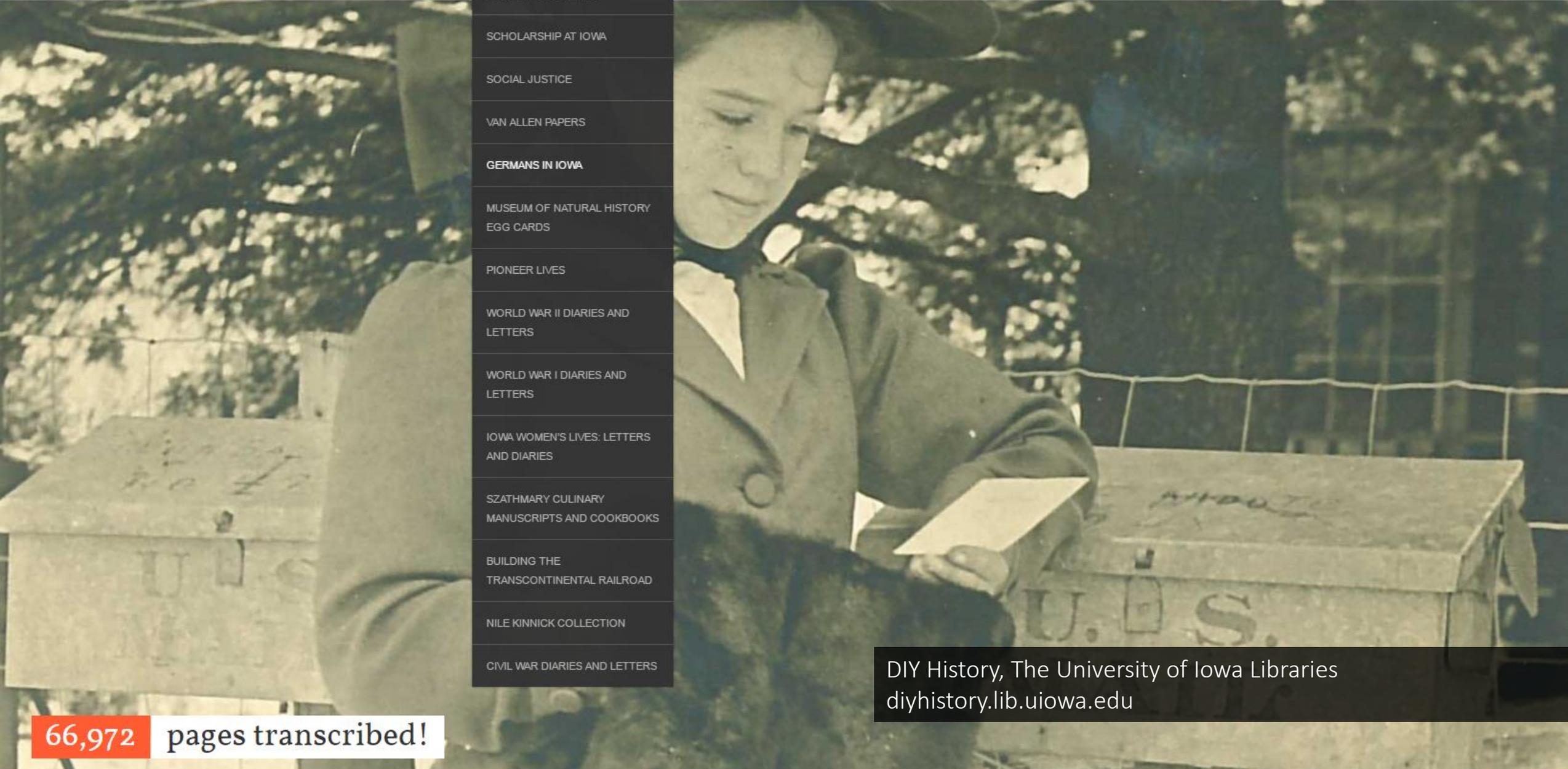
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YES



Photo credit: Puppies · Jay Melnick · <https://flic.kr/p/nrPLn6>



- EARLY MANUSCRIPTS
- SCHOLARSHIP AT IOWA
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EGG CARDS
- PIONEER LIVES
- WORLD WAR II DIARIES AND
LETTERS
- WORLD WAR I DIARIES AND
LETTERS
- IOWA WOMEN'S LIVES: LETTERS
AND DIARIES
- SZATHMARY CULINARY
MANUSCRIPTS AND COOKBOOKS
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