

Cincinnati Sept 12th
1862

Dear Brother

I write you a few lines at Henrys request to let you know that he is here he come down with a company of others yesterday, Henry, Thomas & Lemert one of Abner Lemerts Boys & a young Seward stays here all night last night, the folks are all well up there, there is a Regiment from Illinois just come in they are now Eating there breakfast at the Market house, two Regiments from Indiana Came yesterday & hundreds of men from all the County round there is a Battle Expected, you have

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got the things we sent you yesterday
 by this time, we were thinking
 perhaps you could get a furlow
 & come up tomorrow you &
 Emmet try & see if you can
 if you cannot, & are going to
 be kept there any length of
 time let me know & I will
 bake a box full of good pies
 & boil a ham & send you
 & a comfort, write tomorrow
 if you dont come here,
 it has been raining here a
 good deal last night,
 Write soon Your Sister
 Emily C. Wickham.

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Emily C. Wickham

Introduction by Robert N. Drake, 2020-12-04

Here is the short letter from Emily C. (Montgomery) Wickham to "Dear Brother," who I assume must be JFM [John Fletcher Montgomery] as it was included among his Civil War papers. I also attach my effort at a transcription and a short piece about the Squirrel Hunters who rushed to Cincinnati in September, 1862 to stem a feared Confederate invasion of Ohio. John Wickham, the brother of Mary Wickham who later died in the War, was a Squirrel Hunter, but I do not think that JFM was, in spite of her question about his being "furloughed." I suspect she is giving his leg a slight pull about being furloughed from farm work, but cannot know for sure. The letter is written the day before word came that the Confederates had given up on their plans, and makes reference to the feeding of troops at the Market House as is mentioned in the article.

The Lemerts were a prominent early family in the northeastern part of Licking County around a village then called Elizabethtown (after Elizabeth Lemert) and now called Perryton. The Montgomerys and the Lemerts intermarried. I am not sure who the Henry is to whom she refers. There are plenty of Henrys around to choose from!



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Squirrel Hunters

Squirrel Hunters were civilian men who assisted the federal government in defending Cincinnati, Ohio from Confederate attack in 1862.

In September 1862, Confederate forces under General Kirby Smith captured Lexington, Kentucky, in the second year of the American Civil War. Smith dispatched General Henry Heth to capture Covington, Kentucky and Cincinnati, Ohio. Major General Horatio Wright, commander of Union forces in Kentucky, ordered General Lewis (Lew) Wallace to prepare Covington's and Cincinnati's defenses.

Upon arriving in Cincinnati, Wallace immediately declared martial law. He issued a call in Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan for a volunteer militia. All business owners were to close their shops, and civilians were to report for military duty. Wallace stated, "Civilians for labor, soldiers for battle." Men in the regular army would fight on the battlefield, while the civilians would prepare trenches and other defensive features to prepare the two communities for attack. Cincinnati residents reportedly "cheerfully obeyed" the order.

Ohio Governor David Tod left Columbus, the state capital, and came to Cincinnati to assist Wallace. Tod immediately ordered Ohio's adjutant-general to send any available troops other than those guarding Ohio's southern border to Cincinnati. Tod also ordered the state quartermaster to send five thousand guns to equip Cincinnati's militia. A number of Ohio counties offered to dispatch men to Cincinnati as well. Tod immediately accepted the offers on Lew Wallace's behalf. He stated that only armed men should report and that railroad companies should transport the men for free and then later send a bill to the State of Ohio. Civilians from sixty-five counties numbering 15,766 men reported for duty at Cincinnati. These volunteer men became known as the "Squirrel Hunters."

Many of the Squirrel Hunters had no military training and carried antiquated weapons. Despite these shortcomings, they still rallied together to help defend Ohio from Confederate invasion. City officials commandeered Cincinnati's Fifth Street Markethouse to serve as a dining hall for the volunteers. Churches, meeting halls, and warehouses served as barracks. One day after he called for the volunteers, Governor Tod requested Ohioans to stop sending men for duty.

Thanks to the actions of Wallace and Tod, Covington and Cincinnati had adequate defenses to repel Heth's advance within two days. Wallace quickly lifted martial law and allowed all businesses to reopen except for those that sold alcoholic beverages. By September 13, 1862, news reached Cincinnati that the Confederate forces were withdrawing from Kentucky and that Cincinnati was no longer in danger. Wallace earned the nickname "Savior of Cincinnati" for his actions in September 1862. The Squirrel Hunters returned to their homes.

To thank the Squirrel Hunters, the Ohio legislature, in 1863, authorized funds for Governor Tod to print discharges for these men from military duty. The discharges thanked the men for their patriotism and their willingness to sacrifice their lives in the defense of Ohio. The resolution reads:

Resolved by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the State of Ohio, *That the Governor is hereby authorized and directed to appropriate out of his contingent fund, a sufficient sum to pay for printing and lithographing discharges to the patriotic men of the State, who responded to the call of the Governor, and went to the southern border to repel the invader, and who will be known in history as the SQUIRREL HUNTERS.*

As further recognition, in 1908, the Ohio General Assembly passed a resolution to pay each Squirrel Hunter \$13, equal to one month's pay for an Ohio militiaman in 1862.

See Also

- [David Tod \(/w/David_Tod\)](#)
- [Cincinnati, Ohio \(/w/Cincinnati,_Ohio\)](#)
- [Ohio \(/w/Ohio\)](#)
- [Columbus, Ohio \(/w/Columbus,_Ohio\)](#)
- [Lewis Wallace \(/w/Lewis_Wallace\)](#)

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