

January 17 1863 - A Soldier's Last Letter, by Leslie Korenko

Just three days before his death, Simon wrote to his friend on the island expressing hope that he would return home soon. "January 17 – Hospital No. 4, Nashville, Tenn. Saturday - We give the following letter...as the last probably he ever wrote, as it was written the Saturday previous to his death: Friend Holbrook – Since writing my last I have been in a pretty severe engagement which resulted in having my left leg amputated (above the knee)...I was wounded two weeks ago last Wednesday morning. The rebels were very good to me while I laid on the battle field. They would stop and give me a drink out of their canteens as they passed by and carried me to the camp fire. But I was glad when our troops came to the Hospital. It looked like old times again. I am getting along finely, am going to Cincinnati in a short time, and then home as soon as I can.

This makes eight days since my leg was taken off ...The Doctor says the wound looks nice and has commenced to heal which is good news to me. I had a severe chill Wednesday morning and another one commenced in the evening but [they] put on lots of blankets and gave me three glasses of brandy which threw it off in a hurry. Since then I have had no symptoms of a chill. I have been taking a brandy toddy every two hours, until today, which makes me absent-minded once in a while, but that is nothing after you get used to it.

Today I take the toddy once every three hours. Prof. [his brother Erastus was called Professor] has a bunk alongside of mine where he sleeps, so it makes it real comfortable. The bunk was made vacant by sending...wounded to Louisville out of this ward, and there hasn't been that number arrived since, owing to the weather being too stormy to bring them in.

It is very pleasant today though, and the snow is melting fast. The Cumberland River has risen over 30 ft. in the last 36 hours at this place and is still on the rise. A fleet of 25 steamers are expected...every hour, which will make Nashville look like a busy place. I hope Prof. and I can go back on one of them as I want to get into a free state where fruits of some kind can be had at some price. Prof. managed to get a few figs for 5¢ apiece yesterday but fresh apples can't be had at any price for love or money. Everything is very high here. Chickens 30¢ per pound ...

Jac. Rush and Bill Hutten came to see me yesterday afternoon. I was glad to see them too. This is a very nice hospital and all that, but it is not home after all, 'specially when one is sick. Will write no more at present. Write to me...give my love to all. Truly your friend, Simon Huntington"

Simon Huntington was fatally wounded at Stone River.



Leslie is the author of six books about the history of Kelleys Island including Kelleys Island 1862-1864 – The Civil War, the Island Soldiers & the Island Queen