



THE CONFEDERATE MARCH ON WASHINGTON: COMPARING PERSPECTIVES

Objectives: Students will learn what a primary source is, how to find information in primary sources, and why primary sources are valuable in the study of history. Students will learn what life was like in Washington, DC, during the Civil War, and compare the perspectives of two individuals who differ in age, gender, race, and class.

Time: 1 hour and five minutes (*Adjust Time As Needed*)

- introduction, (*suggested: 15 minutes*)
- small groups, (*suggested: 30 minutes*)
- large group, discussion, (*suggested: 20 minutes*)

Skills: Reading, Critical Thinking, Analysis, Document Based Questions and Answers

Content Area: Social Studies, American History

Materials: (contained below)

- Mary Henry Diary Entry and Transcript
- Solomon G. Brown Letter and Transcript
- Student Worksheets

Grade Level: Grades 6–8

Historical Overview:

Mary Anna Henry (1834-1903) was the daughter of Joseph Henry, the first Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. She lived with her family in the Smithsonian Institution Building, or “Castle” on the National Mall in Washington, DC, from 1855 to 1878. Mary was well-educated and kept company with many prominent scientific and political citizens of Washington. During the Civil War, DC remained the capital of the Union, but from the “Castle,” Mary could see the Confederate States of America. On the border between the warring Union and Confederacy, Mary wrote about events in the city over the course of the entire Civil War.



Solomon G. Brown (circa 1829-1906) was the first African American employee of the Smithsonian Institution. He was hired in 1852, just four years after the establishment of the Institution, and worked there for 54 years. During his time at the Smithsonian he held many titles and performed many duties in service to the Institution. He served under the first three Secretaries, Joseph Henry, Spencer



Fullerton Baird, and Samuel P. Langley. Brown formed a deep personal friendship with Baird, which is evident in the letter featured in this activity. He also served his community in Anacostia, a neighborhood in DC, and was a prominent advocate of African American progress.

Solomon G. Brown was a free black man living in Washington, DC, and he grew up while slavery was still legal and practiced in the south. In 1861, the Civil War began, with the country divided into the northern Union and the southern Confederacy, split over the issues of slavery and states' rights versus a strong federal government. While Brown was born free, slavery was not made illegal in Washington until President Lincoln signed the DC Emancipation Act on April 16, 1862. Even after the act, African Americans in Washington, and throughout the north, were not treated as the equals of white men. They would not gain the right to vote until after the war when the 15th Amendment was passed in 1870, and even then, were considered second-class citizens.



Since the start of the war, Washingtonians had feared that their city would become a battleground. DC sat between confederate Virginia and Maryland, which had not seceded from the Union but held many citizens sympathetic to the south. The first battle of the war was fought just 30 miles southwest of DC in Manassas, Virginia. Union soldiers filled the city, both preparing for and returning from battle. Whenever the confederate troops drew near, the citizens of Washington braced for an attack, but it wasn't until July 11, 1864, that a battle came to their city. The confederate troops marched on DC from Maryland to the north and attacked the Union stronghold Fort Stevens in Northwest Washington. The Union troops held off the Confederate army who retreated on July 13 leaving the city unharmed.

Primary and Secondary Sources:

A **primary source** is any original source of information that provides a direct or first-person connection to a historical event. Examples may include: documents such as letters, diaries, birth certificates, receipts, and notebooks; photographs and drawings; objects, such as clothing or furnishings; oral history interviews, and home movies. Primary sources were created by a person who witnessed an event first-hand.



Secondary sources are summaries, second-hand accounts, and analyses of events. They were created by someone who did not witness the event, but may have read or heard about it. Examples may include: books or articles written on a topic, artworks depicting an event, letters or diaries recounting a version of events told to the author by another source.

One source can contain both primary and secondary information. For example, a diary entry that contains a version of events the author read in the newspaper (**secondary**) and the author's feelings about the event (**primary**). Whether a source is primary or secondary can depend on the question you ask. If you are looking for information on how an event occurred, the diary entry written from a newspaper article would be a secondary source (the newspaper article may be a primary source). But if you are asking how the author learned about an event, the diary entry written from a newspaper article would be a primary source.

Primary sources provide valuable information that we cannot find elsewhere. They speak to us in a first-person voice and bring history alive. They provide an individual's view of historic events and times, and they tell stories about how people lived and coped in the past. These letters, diaries, and photographs create engaging stories for students to learn about and relate to. By comparing conflicting primary sources, students learn to carefully examine actual documents, as well as the words they contain, evaluate evidence and point of view, and develop critical thinking skills about the past and also about their world today.



Instructions for Teachers:

Explain the definition of a primary source to your students. Ask them to think of examples of primary sources. Ask why they think primary sources are a valuable way to study history.

Divide students into small groups. Print copies of the letter, diary entry, transcripts, and worksheets for each student in each group. One set of groups will be given Mary Henry's Diary entry, and the others will be given Solomon G. Brown's letter.

Before sending the groups to work on their respective sources, describe the historical context of the confederate March on Washington DC in 1864, and the two individuals whose writings they will be examining.

First have students examine the original documents carefully in their individual groups. Students should use the original documents and complete an analysis of the documents before they turn to the transcripts, which can be used for reading.

After students have thoroughly analyzed and read their documents and answered their questions in the small groups, bring the class back together for a large discussion. Have each group share a summary of their documents and the answers they found. Ask these questions to begin a discussion:

- What does Solomon Brown's letter tell you about the lives of free Blacks in Washington, DC, during the Civil War?
- What does Mary Henry's diary entry tell you about the lives of women in Washington, DC, during the Civil War?
- How do the two people's perspectives on the event differ? How are they similar?
- How does reading these documents differ from reading a history of Washington, DC, in the 19th century?

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Instructions for Students:

In your assigned groups, look at, read, and analyze your source documents carefully. Answer the questions listed on your worksheet, using evidence from the documents to support your answer.



The Confederate March on Washington: Comparing Perspectives
Mary Henry Diary Entry

Names: _____

Questions:

1. Who wrote this diary?
2. When and where was this diary written?
3. What is this diary describing?
4. Why was this diary written?
5. Who was the intended audience?
6. What was the point of view of the diary writer?
7. What does the diary entry tell you about life in Washington, DC, during the Civil War?
8. Is this diary entry a primary or secondary source or both?
9. Are any/all parts of the entry a primary source, explain why or why not?
10. How could you check the accuracy of the information found in the diary?
11. How does the information in the entry compare to what you have learned in your textbooks?



The Confederate March on Washington: Comparing Perspectives
Solomon G. Brown Letter

Names: _____

Questions:

1. Who wrote this letter?
2. When and where was this letter written?
3. What is this letter describing?
4. Why was this letter written?
5. Who was the intended audience?
6. What was the point of view of the letter writer?
7. What does this letter tell you about life in Washington, DC, during the Civil War?
8. Is this letter a primary or secondary source or both?
9. Are any/all parts of the letter a primary source, explain why or why not?
10. How could you check the accuracy of the information in the letter?
11. How does the information found in the letter compare to what you have learned in your textbooks?



Mary Henry Diary Entry, July 10 - 18, 1864:

1864.
July 10th Sunday. Several persons were called out of church this morning exciting our curiosity and on coming out after service we were startled by the intelligence that a large body of Southern troops 40 or 50,000 in number were marching on Wash. They had thrown the city of Baltimore into a state of intense excitement by their near approach - had cut the northern central rail road & burned Hagerstown. These reports have all been confirmed but there are various conflicting opinions entertained in regard to the supposed object of the enemy whether a raid, merely for purposes of plunder or a demonstration on Wash. to cut off Gen. Grant's troops from the vicinity of Petersburg is still a matter of conjecture. The quarter master's clerks have all been ordered to report themselves for service in the defense of the city.
11th Mon. The city in a state of intense excitement. Southerners said to be at Rockville & Skunkishang with our pickets. After cutting the Northern Central R.R. yesterday, they proceeded across the country cutting the telegraph wires on the Phil & Howard turnpike & burning the residence of Gov. Bradford about 5 miles from Baltimore - this was in retaliation.

Mary Henry Diary Entry, July 10 - 18, 1864, page 1, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/mary.htm>



1864 (4 vii.)
July. | for the burning of Gov. Hetcher's house by
10 Gen. Hunter. At Magnolia Station about
18 miles from Baltimore the bridge over Pumpo-
wam Creek has been destroyed. 2 P.M. - Mother
just in from a shopping expedition. Says
we are surrounded by the rebels - city full
with refugees from the country, coming
in with wagons filled with household
effects. Rebels fighting at Senally Town.
3 P.M. Mr. Gill brings news of the
closer approach of the enemy. Mr. Shad
has come to offer his services in case they
may be needed in the defence of the Post.
Says the rebels are attacking Fort Mifflin
on Seventh St. - We are going to the top of
the high tower. (Top of the tower) The
city lies before us peaceful & beautiful
in the rays of the setting sun. The
head river lost in the distance by a
cloud of mist hanging low on the horizon
is dotted here & there with boats two of
which have moved with stealthy eager-
ness into the port of the Arsenal.
We are told they are laden with troops.
Dr. Gamble & others have joined us. A
jet of smoke rises curling off into the

Mary Henry Diary Entry, July 10 - 18, 1864, page 2, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/mary.htm>



rose colored clouds, disappearing & appearing again marks the scene of the conflict if there is any. Mr De Rust who is looking through the glass reports signals from the top of the Soldiers Home. We look & see the signal maker with his flag. A body of colored troops are moving down 12th. We watch them as they move slowly along their lines & little ones crowding the paces. The sun is sinking lower now & shedding the last beams over a scene of such quiet beauty it seems to mark our excitement. The shadows of the towers stretch farther & longer over green parkland below us. Gen. Hamlin tells now it is night with the attack we made. Our heads beat quicker we look toward the distant Capitol the white house & wonder if it possible they can be in danger. But the little jets of smoke curl up lazily as before. The sun has gone down. Gen Hamlin wishes to go we follow him by one.

10 P.M. Have been in the city long. Everything quiet & orderly. The rebel force estimated at 45,000. Gen. Blair's force

Mary Henry Diary Entry, July 10 - 18, 1864, page 3, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/mary.htm>



July. 1864
Burned.
12th Tuesday. Going at 5 O'clock in the morning communication with Baltimore out off. Going again at 1 O'clock. nothing known. Went to drive in the afternoon with Mr. Gill went to Cemetery of 14th & 7th Sts. Driving first out Seventh we came to Canphile Hospital where at the top of a hill we were stopped by a man on horseback who forbade our going further. A number of people had collected here to see if anything could be seen or hear if any news was afloat. We retraced our steps & crossing over to Seventh street encountered the President coming into the city from the Soldier Home in an open carriage surrounded by a body guard of horsemen. Just beyond the college we were stopped as before & obliged to return.
13th Wed. 11 A.M. No certain news - Kochs said to be rehearsing. I. P. M. Heard of the repeat of the evening confirmed. (Evening) Went to drive with Father. Passing the railway yard near the Post. saw it filled with fugitives. All

Mary Henry Diary Entry, July 10 - 18, 1864, page 4, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/mary.htm>



July 1864

13 rolling rail way stock had been sent to Alexandria by order of the President when the city was supposed to be in danger but had been sent back as rebels are said to be at Falls Church. Driving out 14th we encountered about 40 prisoners escorted by mounted officers. Their buttoned dresses were soiled & worn but they seemed brave & undaunted & many of them were exceedingly fine looking. One tall Virginian amused me he moved sturdily alone in dignified disdain without one look of the curiosity indulged in by his companions. We encountered no other war indications, until we came to the hospital surrounding Columbia College. The poor invalids were enjoying the cool evening air lying the benches on each side of the road. One or two pale sad young faces excited my warm sympathy. They looked so much in need of home kindness & affection. Later on we encountered the rebels & were obliged to return. There were about 10 soldiers placed at the side of the road with two stand of arms stuck in front of them. One of the men came forward to speak

Mary Henry Diary Entry, July 10 - 18, 1864, page 5, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/mary.htm>



July 13 1864
to us. He told us it was certain the rebels had retreated. Father said he was surprised to hear there had been quite a severe battle in the neighborhood. He said the man only a skinhead. "But we lost 300 men" said Father. "Oh that is nothing" replied the man. "We don't consider that anything of a battle in these days". Life has grown sadly cheap within the last few years. Turning down a side road we found a Goldsboro station to guard a foot-path across the fields further on another station upon a cross-road. We were not molested again however until we came to the (S) gate on South St. Here we were told by a fine looking young Officer that the rebels had retreated towards the Potomac & our troops had gone to Tenally town to endeavor to intercept them. The soldiers on Seventh St. road were much further out than last evening. On our return Mr. Bates called said the Southern had greatly enriched themselves by the raid - had carried off not only cattle & money but women & imprisoned them in the Southern army.

Mary Henry Diary Entry, July 10 - 18, 1864, page 6, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/mary.htm>



July 1864

They certainly managed the affair well
Hagerstown was compelled to pay \$20,000
to purchase her safety. The loan was not
burnt as reported. Some fears are enter-
tained that the face of Southerners which
alarmed us will unite with those at
Falls Church to attack us from the South.
Our ^{difficulties} ~~projects~~ are too strong in that direction
to be taken.

14th Thurs. The Blagden's here this morning
They live so near the scene of conflict -
we had felt very anxious about them.
The first they knew of the late &
affair was the news which startled
us all on coming out of church on
Sunday. On riding home they saw
an ambulance & some riders coming
down the avenue & supposed the family
were leaving but on a near approach
found the party consisted of Col.
McCook & staff in search of a place
to establish head quarters. Numbers
of our Union societies came to them
this Sunday & Tuesday to food
& drink but they suffered no especial
inconvenience except from the heat.

Mary Henry Diary Entry, July 10 - 18, 1864, page 7, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/mary.htm>



July 1864
of losing their houses. They visited
14th the scene of action & gave us a great
desire to do so. Mary picked up a
diary of one of the rebels who was
present while they were present.
One poor fellow had been burned so
badly his feet protruded from his
grave. The nurse of her little brother
whose husband was in the employ of
Mr. Blair ^{now a Capt. in the army} told them the rebels had en-
tered her house burnt & lost her clothes
before her face in retaliation they said for
what her husband had probably done in
the South. Took all the food she had for
her children & then told her they would
fire the house. She was leaving it when
Breckenridge rode up & exclaiming in-
dignantly at the brutality of the men
ordered them from the premises & placed
a guard there so that she should not
suffer further molestation. Her little
sons were much attached to a small
donkey owned by Mr. Blair & left in
their charge which had been seized by
the rebels. This they asked Mr. Breckenridge
to return to them. He did so but it was

Mary Henry Diary Entry, July 10 - 18, 1864, page 8, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/mary.htm>



July
1864
19 afterwards seized again by the rebels de-
claring it was old Blair's home & they
must have it. Much of Mr. Blair's
furniture was destroyed before Breckinridge
could prevent but he succeeded in saving
private papers & silver which were care-
fully packed & sent to a place of safety
with a card saying "for the sake of old
friendship". Breckinridge had enjoyed
Mr Blair's hospitality while planning a
dual in the vicinity & had been treated
with great kindness. At the house of
Mr. [] we found devastating traces of
the rebels. The furniture was entirely destroyed
and the yard strewn with letters of the
most private & affectionate nature.
At 5 P.M. we started to view for our-
selves. The first mark of the recent trouble
we encounter near Fort Mass. A woman
stood disconsolately ^{to the side of the burning} ~~the~~ house which
had been burned. We asked her if she
had suffered by the said. She pointed
to the ruins and told us that had been
her home. A Union Officer came to her &
asked her for some Gosport oil, supposing
it was needed for the fort - she went

Mary Henry Diary Entry, July 10 - 18, 1864, page 9, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/mary.htm>



July 1864
14th., with alacrity for it. He then asked
for lamp Wick & cotton cloth which
she also gave him. What do you want
to do with these things she asked "Be
your house madame was the cool
reply. The poor woman was obliged
to remove her property as fast she
could, losing most of it. Remains of other
burned houses, felled trees, & a ball's
marking the road next, met our view when
we came to a barricade completely across
the road which compelled us to turn to
the right & go through a field where
we encountered rifle pits dug by our men.
Beyond this we passed several houses
burned or sacked before we came to M.B.'s
beautiful residence. The fence was torn down
the gate way only remaining as we drove
through the grounds we found various
proofs of the presence of the Rebels.
The smouldering ashes of their camp
fires - broken boxes canteens &c. while
innumerable poultry feathers testified to
the havoc which had been made among
the fowls I doubt which a cock crow
could be heard there for months.

Mary Henry Diary Entry, July 10 - 18, 1864, page 10, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/mary.htm>



The house we found guarded. It is
delightfully situated, the avenue leading
to it winding through ^{a grove} ~~the~~ of magnif-
icent forest trees, which completely hid
it until a turn in the road brought
it to view. Some of the servants were
folding up a carpet & packing some out
at the side of the house a number of
carriages containing soldiers were at the
front. We went round to the back entrance
picked up some hard tack, a song book
a pack of playing cards & some other trifles
left by the rebels. We drove through the
grounds to a lovely spring & then
passed out into the high way again
by a different road from that we came.
Everywhere we found signs of the rebels
in cups, ashes &c. As we came on to
the turnpike we saw some persons in
a grove opposite to us. We joined them
& found some of the rebel graves. Several
large square pits filled with straw had
been prepared for the burial of others but
were left unfilled in the hurry of departure.
Further up the road we found some of
the rebel wounded under trees or per

Mary Henry Diary Entry, July 10 - 18, 1864, page 11, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/mary.htm>



miserable tents. In the first of these we found the Surgeon, a fine looking Op. who had been left in charge of them. His frame noble undaunted bearing interested us greatly. We asked if he was a prisoner. He said he thought he ought not to be considered such as he had volunteered to remain with the wounded. His dress was rough & worn but he proved an exception to the rule that a tailor makes a gentleman. We asked if they had food. He answered proudly enough had been left to supply their wants up to that time. In the next tent two poor fellows lay shot through the head. One seemed to be dying. He lay with his eyes closed breathing heavily. His features were delicate & regular & his forehead where the line had not reached it as fair as a girl's. They both lay on the ground with only a little hay under them. A high looking little fellow was sucking off the flies. We asked him if he had had enough to eat. He answered merrily we always have that about. You must tried of the war up here

Mary Henry Diary Entry, July 10 - 18, 1864, page 12, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/mary.htm>



We left the two poor unconscious fellows
with heavy hearts. There were 8 or ten
in the next tent - One badly wounded
in the leg, but looking happy & contented
as he lay on the grass sucking away the
flies with a spray of leaves. Outside
the tent was a merry little officer
one of those who had volunteered to
take charge of the wounded. He cut off
his rebel buttons for us & when we objected
said with a laugh he would capture some
union ones. How long do you think it will
take to make me a good union man he
asked of a bystander. A great while I
should think said the person addressed
as you say you would shoot your own
father were he on this side. Near the
next tent a poor fellow was pouring
water over a wound in his head, by
him was another of the wounded men.
He said he had remained because he
could not leave his tent. & asked us
to go into the tent to see him. He
was lying on a blanket with clean
linen & I had a strong contrast
to the his appearance in strong con-
trast

Mary Henry Diary Entry, July 10 - 18, 1864, page 13, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/mary.htm>



with his surroundings. His companions
were dirty enough. Their uniforms were
all dirt. under their whatever they might
have been originally. On our way home
we visited a house which had been
riddled with balls from the fort. Some
rebel Sharp Shooters had been stationed
here & protected by a pile of stones at
the corner of the house one of them had
pucked off an officer. It was afterwards
occupied by our troops. Our rifle pits
extended from the house to the road
a distance of about 40 ft. They consisted
of holes dug in the ground with a
slight embankment of earth in front.
An Englishman called in the evening
had also been at the scene of conflict.
He had found upon the walls of one of
the houses he visited numerous rebel
inscriptions. On a marble top at the
only article of furniture left on the
place was inscribed. "This house is
marked in retaliation for the many homes
made desolate in Virginia. On one of
"your walls" our compliments to
the ladies. Sorry not to find them at

Mary Henry Diary Entry, July 10 - 18, 1864, page 14, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/mary.htm>



July 1864

"Home." A note picked up on the stair contained an apology & the ^{highly} secret of the officer in charge for the destruction of her wardrobe. A music book lay un-
injured & beneath some lines addressed to my mother in Heaven was written "Saved to an ~~other~~ orphaned rebel. The following is the purport of a letter addresed to the President found in the yard.

Dear Uncle Abraham.

We like the way you fight - we hope you will be re-elected. We have come this time to show you what we can do we will return & give you another lesson. We have insisted for 40 years on the war. Yours The biggest rebel in the ^{country}

18th Passed Sat. night at Mrs. Peab's. Miss Wheeler came in - said the Secretaries of the City of Baltimore had been aware of the intended raid of the Southern & many ladies had gone on the train captured at Gunpowder Bridge provided with refreshment - & when the train was stopped & the cry of "The rebels, the rebels" startled the passengers.

Mary Henry Diary Entry, July 10 - 18, 1864, page 15, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/mary.htm>



Transcript:

July 10th Sunday. Several persons were called out of church this morning exciting our curiosity and on coming out after service we were startled by the intelligence that a large body of Southern troops 40 or 50,000 in number were marching on Wash[ington] They had thrown the city of Baltimore into a state of intense excitement by their near approach---had cut the northern central railroad & burned Hagerstown. These reports have all been confirmed but there are various conflicting opinions entertained in regard to the supposed object of the enemy whether a raid, merely for purposes of plunder or a demonstration on Wash. to call off Gen. Grants troops from the vicinity of Petersburg is still a matter of conjecture. The quartermaster's clerks have all been ordered to report themselves for service in the defence of the city.

[July] 11th Mon[day]. The city in a state of intense excitement. Southerners said to be at Rockville & skirmishing with our pickets. After cutting the Northern central R.R. yesterday, they proceeded across the country cutting the telegraph wired on the Phil & Harford turnpike & burning the residence of Gov. Bradford about 5 miles from Baltimore--this was in retaliation **[Start Page 2]** for the burning of Gov. Fletchers (of Vir.) house by Gen Hunter. At Magnolia Station about 18 miles from Baltimore the bridge over Gunpowder Creek has been destroyed.

2 P.M. Mother just in from a shopping expedition. Says we are surrounded by rebels - city filled with refugees from the country, coming in with wagons filled with household effects. Rebels fighting at Tenally Town.

4 P.M. Mr. Gill brings news of the closer approach of the enemy. Mr. Shaw has come to offer his services in case they may be needed in defence of the Inst--Says the rebels are attacking Fort Mass. on Seventh St. We are going to the top of the high tower. (Top of the Lower) The city lies before us peaceful & beautiful in the rays of the setting sun. The broad river lost in the distance by a cloud of mist hanging low on the horizon is dotted here & there with boats two of which have moved with stelthy eager motion into the port of the Arsenal. We are told they are laden with troops. Dr. Hamlein & others have joined us. A jet of smoke rises curling off into the **[Start Page 3]** rose colored clouds, disappearing & appearing again marks the scene of the conflict if there is any. Mr. De Bust who is looking through the glass reports signals from the top of the soldier's Home. We look & see the signal maker with his flag. A body of colored troops are moving down 12th we watch them as



they move slowly along, their wives & little ones crowding the pavements. The sun is sinking lower now & shedding its last beams over a scene of such quiet beauty it seems to mock our excitement. The shadows of the towers stretch longer & longer over green pasture below us. Gen Hamlin tells now if to night will the attack be made. Our hearts beat quicker. We look towards the distant Capitol the white house & wonder if it possible they can be in danger. But the little jets of smoke curl up lazily as before. The sun has gone down. Gen Hamlin rises to go, we follow one by one.

10 P.M. Have been in the city every thing quiet & orderly. The rebel force estimated at 45,000. Gen Blair's house **[Start Page 4]** burned.

12th [July] Tuesday. Firing at 5 o'clock in the morning communication with Baltimore cut off. Firing again at 1 o'clock. nothing known. Went to drive in the afternoon with Mr. Gill went to terminus of 14th & 7th Sts. Driving first out Seventh we came to Campbell Hospital where at the top of a hill we were stopped by a man on horseback who forbade our going further. A number of people had collected here to see if anything could be seen or hear if any news was afloat. We retraced our steps & crossing over to Seventh street encountered the President coming into the city from the soldier home in an open barouch surrounded by a body guard of horsemen. Just beyond the college we were stopped as before & obliged to return.

[July] 13th Wed[nesday]. 11 A.M. No certain news--Rebels said to be retreating.

2 P.M. News of the retreat of the enemy confirmed. (Evening) went to drive with Father. Passing the railway yard near the Inst. saw it filled with engines. All **[Start Page 5]** rolling railway stock had been sent to Alexandria by order of the President when the city was supposed to be in danger but had been sent back as rebels are said to be at Falls Church. Driving out 14th st we encountered about 75 prisoners escorted by mounted Officers. Their butternut dresses were soiled & torn but they seemed brave & undaunted & many of them were exceedingly fine looking. The tall Virginian amused me he moved sturdily alone in dignified disdain without one look of the curiosity indulged in by his companions. We encountered no other war indications, until we came to the hospital surrounding Columbia College. The poor invalids were enjoying the cool evening air lining the banks on each side of the road. One or two pale sad young faces excited my warm sympathy, they looked so much in need of home kindness & affection. Father nor we encountered the vedettes &



were obliged to return. There were about 10 soldiers placed at the side of the road with two stand of arms stacked in front of them. One of the men came forward to speak **[Start Page 6]** to us. He told us it was certain the rebels had retreated. Father said he was surprised to learn there had been quite a severe battle in the neighborhood. Oh no said the man only a skirmish."But we lost 300 men," said Father. "Oh, that is nothing," replied the man, "we don't consider that anything of a battle these days." Life has grown sadly cheap within the last few years. Turning down a side road, we found a soldiers station to guard a foot path across the fields further on another station upon a cross road. We were not molested again however until we came to the toll gate on Seventh St. Here we were told by a fine looking young Officer that the rebels had retreated toward the Potomac & our troops had gone to Tenally Town to endeavor to intercept them. The vedettes on Seventh St. road were much further out than last evening. On our return Mr. Bates called said the Southerners had greatly enriched themselves by the raid. [They] had carried off not only cattle & money but men & impressed them in the Southern army. **[Start Page 7]** They certainly managed the affair well. Hagerstown was compelled to pay \$20,000 to purchase her safety. The town was not burnt as reported. Some fears are entertained that the force of Southerners which alarmed us will unite with those at Falls Church & attack us from the South. Our fortifications are too strong in that direction to be taken.

[July] 14th Thurs[day]. The Blagdens here this morning. They live so near the scene of conflict we had felt very anxious about them. The first they knew of the state of affairs was the news which startled us all on coming out of church on Sunday. On riding home they saw an ambulance & some riders coming down the avenue & supposed the family were leaving but on a near approach found the party consisted of Col. McCook & staff in search of a place to establish headquarters. Numbers of our Union soldiers came to them during Mondy & Tuesday for food & drink but they suffered no especial inconvenience except from the fear **[Start Page 8]** of losing their horses. They visited the scene of action & gave us a great desire to do so. Mary [Blagden] picked up a diary of one of the rebels who was interred while they were present. One poor fellow had been buried so hastily his feet protruded from his grave. The nurse of her little brother whose husband was in the employ of Mr. Blair & now a Capt in the Army told them the rebels had entered her house burnt & torn her clothes before her face in retaliation they said for what her husband had probably done in the South. Took all the food she had for her children & then told her they would fire the house. She was leaving it when Breckenridge rode up & exclaiming indignantly at the brutality of the men ordered



them from the premises & placed a guard there so that she should not suffer further molestation. Her little sons were much attached to a small donkey owned by Mr. Blair & left in their charge which had been seized by the rebels this they asked Mr. Breckenridge to restore to them. He did so but it was **[Start Page 9]** afterwards seized again ~~by~~, the rebels declaring it was old Blair's donkey & they must have it. Much of Mr. Blair's furniture was destroyed before Breckenridge could prevent but he succeeded in saving private papers & silver which were carefully packed & sent to a place of safety with a card saying "for the sake of old friendship." Breckenridge had enjoyed Mr. Blair's hospitality while planning a duel in the vicinity & had been treated with great kindness. At the house of Mr. the[y] found devastating traces of the rebels. The furniture was entirely destroyed and the yard strewn with letters of the most private & affectionate nature.

At 2 P.M. we started to view for ourselves. The first mark of the recent troubles we encounter near Fort Mass. A woman stood disconsolately by the side of the road near the remains of a house which had been burned. We asked her if she had suffered by the raid. She pointed to the ruins and told us that had been her home. A Union Officer came to her & asked her for some Kerosine oil. Suppose it was needed for the Fort she went **[Start Page 10]** with alacrity for it. He then asked for lamp wick & cotton cloth which she also gave him. What do yo want to do with these things she asked, "Burn your house madame," was the cool reply. The poor woman was obliged to remove her property as best she could, losing most of it. Ruins of other burned houses, felled trees, & abatties fortifying the road next met our view until we came to a barricade completely across the road which compelled us to turn to the right & go through a field where we encountered rifle pits dug by our men. Beyond this we passed several houses burned or sacked before we came to M[ontgomery] B[lair]'s beautiful residence. The fence was torn down the gateway only remaining. As we drove through the grounds, we found various traces of the presence of the Southerners. The smouldering ashes of their camp fires, broken boxes, canteens &c., while innumerable poultry feathers testified to the havoc which had been made among the fowls. I doubt which a cock crow will be heard there for months. **[Start Page 11]** The house we found guarded. It is delightfully situated, the avenue leading to it winding through ~~rows~~ a grove of magnificent forest trees, which completely hid it until a turn in the road brought it to view. Some of the servants were folding up a carpet & packing some articles at the side of the house. A number of carriages containing visitors were at the front. We went round to the back entrance picked up some hard tack, a song book, a pack of playing cards & some other trifles left by the rebels. We drove through the grounds to a lovely spring & then passed out into the



highway again by a different road from that we came. Every where we found signs of the rebels, tin cups, ashes &c. As we came on to the turnpike we saw some persons in a grove opposite to us. We joined them & found some of the rebel graves. Several large square pits filled with straw had been prepared for the burial of others but were left unfilled in the hurry of departure. Further up the road we found some of the rebel wounded under three or four **[Start Page 12]** miserable tents. In the first of these we found the Surgeon. A fine looking Off[icer] who had been left in charge of them. His frank, noble undaunted bearing interested us greatly. We asked if he was a prisoner. He said he thought he ought not to be considered such as had volunteered to remain with the wounded. His dress was rough & worn but he proved an exception to the rule that a taylor makes a gentleman. We asked if they had food. He answered proudly enough had been left to supply their wants up to that time. In the next tent two poor fellows lay shot through the head. One seem to be dying. He lay with his eyes closed breathing heavily. His features were delicate & regular & his forehead where the Sun had not reached it as fair as a girls. They both lay on the ground with only a little hay under them. A bright looking little fellow was switching off the flies. We asked him if he had enough to eat. Yes he answered merrily we always have that aren't you most tired of the war up here. **[Start Page 13]** We left the two poor unconcious fellows with heavy hearts. There were 8 or ten in the next tent-one badly wounded in the leg but looking happy & contented as he lay on the grass switching away the flies with a spray of leaves. Outside the tent was a merry little Officer, one of those who had volunteered to take charge of the wounded. He cut off his rebel buttons for us & when we objected said with a laugh he would capture some union ones. "How long do you think it will take to make me a good union man," he asked of a bystander. A great while I should think said the person addressed as you say you would shoot your own Father were he on this side. Near the next tent a poor fellow was pouring water over a wound in his head; by him another of the volunteer nurse. He said he had remained because he could not leave his Lieut. & asked us to go into the tent to see him. He was lying on a blanket with clean linen & shaved ~~a strong contrast to the~~ his appearance in strong contrast **[Start Page 14]** with his surroundings. His companions were dirty enough. Their uniforms were all dirt color then whatever they might have been originally. On our way home we visited a house which had been riddled with balls from the Fort. Some rebel Sharp shooters had been stationed here & protected by a pile of stones at the corner of the house one of them had picked off an Officer. It was afterwards occupied by our troops. Our rifle pits extended from the house to the road a distance of about 40 ft. They consisted of holes dug in the ground with a slight embankment of earth in front.



An Englishman called in the evening had also been at the scene of conflict. Had found upon the walls of one of the houses he visited numerous rebel inscriptions. On a marble top table the only article of furniture left in the parlor was inscribed, "This house is sacked in retaliation for the many homes made desolate in Virginia." On one of [the] bedroom walls "our complements to the ladies Sorry not to find them at **[Start Page 15]** Home." A note picked up on the stairs contained an apology & regrets of the Officer in charge to the young lady of the house for the destruction of her wardrobe. A music book lay uninjured & beneath some lines addressed to my Mother in Heaven was written "Sacred to an ~~abser~~ orphaned rebel. The following is the purport of a letter addressed to the President found in the yard.

Dear Uncle Abraham--

We like the way you fight-- we hope you will be reelected.

We have come this time to show you what we can do we will return & give you another lesson. We have inlisted for 40 years or the war. Yours

The biggest rebel in the T country



Letter Solomon G. Brown to Spencer F. Baird, July 15, 1864:

4380
July 21
Smithsonian Institution
Washington July 15th 1864
Prof Baird
Dear Sir
Yours dated July 12th have just arrived and we are all glad to hear from you and family all here is well - many have been much frightened at the annual visit of the Rebels to their friends at Maryland, but we are told that the Johnny Rebs are returning home with lots of presents ~~and~~ including money from their pay entertainers, we are also told here ^{that} among many other funny things they performed ^{that} they knocked but the door of Washington was not opened unto them they being a set of high bred gentlemen concluded not to come in with us, some of civil treatment, so they marched off much to the joy (and comfort) of a greatly excited populace of this city, but you would really feel secure were you here just now

625
Just as I was going to put this in the mail I saw a letter from you dated July 12th and I am glad to hear from you and family all here is well - many have been much frightened at the annual visit of the Rebels to their friends at Maryland, but we are told that the Johnny Rebs are returning home with lots of presents ~~and~~ including money from their pay entertainers, we are also told here ^{that} among many other funny things they performed ^{that} they knocked but the door of Washington was not opened unto them they being a set of high bred gentlemen concluded not to come in with us, some of civil treatment, so they marched off much to the joy (and comfort) of a greatly excited populace of this city, but you would really feel secure were you here just now

Solomon G. Brown to Spencer F. Baird, July 15, 1864, page 1, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/brown2.htm>



particularly when the Report come in that the
Rebels had left - for the South, to see the great number
of brave fighting men that come out from their
hiding places and paraded through streets in search
of arms to meet the Rebels. but they was mistaken
and to return to them several dens, I.E. the printing
saloons, gambling halls and other low places. to fight among
them else, for it was impossible for decently disposed persons
to pass certain localities without be interfered with
by this brave men who wanted to fight when the Rebel
had gone, But not one gravel in the Roof of your
very pleasant home has been misplaced, the inmates
have much frightened the past 3 days refusing all
consultations, but glad to sing on my visit this day
found them ^{very} ~~happy~~ ^{Parlous} ~~and~~ of food which sustain life. and
do at least afford consolation to the hungry. Mr Vander
desires to be remembered to you and says that up to this
time nothing have come & with ^{the} exception of one Thrilled Box
(114) Books which Prof H. had me (Solomon) to open and
miss gone to enter send aff. your chest, gun-belt & sword
shall be got ready to day (and sent af to E. Town. My
the work of rearranging books. on hand progresses but

Solomon G. Brown to Spencer F. Baird, July 15, 1864, page 2, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/brown2.htm>



Slouty, The Seed Nat. Part. 1. of Meteor Results is being
delivered Bound in cloth.

The Building is very slowly attended by visitors
scarcely one person to be seen in Museum
at any one time in the day.

Mary, & Sarah desire me to remember them kindly to
you Mrs Baird & Miss Lucy.

And I would say that I may also be remember to them
Paul Henry & family, Mr Meek, Mr Lyle, Mr Banister,
Mr Reese Mr Force & Miss Sumner is still here
also Mr Grant. Mr Seipp, Mr Lulivan, & Mr DeBorst.
and assuming Mr Brown is also here.

all able to be at their several past & duty
so that no dissatisfaction seems to exist. all is harmonious
The market here have taken a sudden rise so that
the cost of living since Saturday last is awful
in the extreme. Flour \$20 @ 25. Butter .50 @ .75. Hams 35 @ 40.
Milk 30 @ 35. Shoulder Bacon 25 @ 30. per lb. (and I learned this moment
that they are yet going up in price. Should you go to Phila
Please send me word what hams can be bought for there
with the address of the Parties, and Brown Sugar is 35 @ 40
here with an upward tendency, now what people here is to



do is a question remain to be solved.
I will not write more here will send for letter
soon from you.
I send on to day another Batch
of Bafus. to the care of your Brother Mr. Wm Baird
If your Mother is ^{or ready} ~~soon~~ Be kind enough to give
regards to her -
Yours very Respect-fully.
Solomon G. Brown
P.S. I had proposed a place in centre of the cell cellar
under South tower under stone floor for the deposition of
a box of Valuable committed to my care should any
thing suddenly turn up to prevent them being shipped
to a place of safety. outside of town.
This you will remember should any thing turn
up - but at present they remain where
you last saw them
Yours
Solomon

Solomon G. Brown to Spencer F. Baird, July 15, 1864, page 4, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/brown2.htm>



Transcript:

Smithsonian Institution

Washington July 15th 1864

Prof Baird

Dear Sir

Yours dated July 12th have just Arrived and we are all glade to hear from you and family all here is well - many have been much frightened at the annual visit of the Rebels to their friends at Maryland, but we are told that the Johny Rebs are returning home with lots of Presents ~~an~~ including money from their [?joy] Entertainers, we are also told here that among many other funny thing they performed that they knocked but the door of Washington was not opened unto them. they being a set of high bread gentlemen concluded not to come in with no, sure of civil treatment, so they marched off much to the joy and comfort of a greatly Excited Populace of this city, but you would really feel secure wane you here just now **[Start Page 2]** particularly when the Report came in that the Rebels had left for the South, to see the great number Brave fighting men that came out from their hiding Places and Paraded through streets in serch of arms to meet the Rebels. but they was mustered out to return to they several dens .I.E. the drinking Saloons, gambling halls and other low places. to fight enemy them selves, for it was Imposable for decently disposed persons to pass certian localities with out be interfered with by this brave men who wanted to fight when the Rebel had gone, But not one gravel on the Roof of your very pleasant home has been misplaced. the Inmates have much frightened the past 3 days refusing all consolations, but glad to say on my visit this day found them ~~Par taken each~~ Partaken of Food which sustains life and do at least afford consolation to the hungry. Mr Varden desire to be remembered to you and says that up to this time nothing have come & with the exception of one Flügel Box (114) Books which Prof H. had me (Solomon) to open and Miss Jane to Enter send off. your chest, jun-box & trunk shall be get Ready to day and sent of to E. Town, Ny. the work of Rearranging stock on hand progresses but **[Start Page 3]** slowly. The Sec'd Nat. Part. I. of Meteo Results is being dilivered Bound in cloth.

The Building is very slimly attended by visitors scarcely one person to be seen in Museum at any one hour in the day.

Mary, & Sarah desire me to remember them kindly to you Mrs Baird & Miss Lucy.



And I would beg that I may also be remembered to them Prof Henry & family, Mr Meek, Mr Gill, Mr Banister, Mr Rheese Mr Force & Miss Burner is still here Also Mr Gount Mr Diggs, Mr Sullivan, Mr DeBust and occasionally Mr Brown is also here.

All able to be at their several post & duty so that no dissatisfaction seems to Exist. all is harmonious The Market here have taken a sundon Rise so that the cost of living scence Saturday last is awfull in the Extrem. flour \$20 to 25. Butter 50 to 75. Hares 35 to 40 [?mulding] 30 to 35. shoulder bacon 25 to 30 per lbs. and I learned this moment that they are yet going up in price. Should you go to phila Please send me word what hams can be bought for there with the address of the Parties. and Brown sugar is 35 to 40 here with an upward tendency. now what people here is to [Start Page 4] do is a question remain to be solved.

I will not write more here will look for a letter soon from you.

I send on to day another Batch of paper to the care of your Brother
Mr. Wm Baird If your mother is ~~there~~ at Reading Be kind Enough to give
regards to her-

Yours

very

Respectfully

Solomon G. Brown

P.S. I had prepared aplace in center of the cole celler under South tower under stone floor for the deposition of a box of valuables committed to my care should any thing suddenly turn up to prevent them being shipped to a place of safty. outside of town.

This you will remember should anything turn up - but at present they
remain where you last saw them

yours

Solomon



Additional Resources:

Reliable websites with documents online:

SI Stories, Smithsonian Institution Archives,
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/index.htm>

Smithsonian Institution Archives History Pages,
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history>

Smithsonian Institution Archives Home Page,
<http://siarchives.si.edu/>

Historic Pictures of the Smithsonian, Smithsonian Institution Archives,
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/historic-pictures-smithsonian>

Smithsonian Institution Education site,
<http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/educators/>

Smithsonian Institution Abraham Lincoln Online Conference,
<http://www.smithsonianconferences.org/2009/siarchives/>

American Memory, Library of Congress,
<http://memory.loc.gov>

Digital Classroom, National Archives,
<http://www.archives.gov/education/index.html>

Edsitement, The Best of the Humanities on the Web, National Endowment for the Humanities,
<http://edsitement.neh.gov/>

History Matters, The U.S. Survey Course on the Web, The Social History Project,
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/>

New York Times Archive, <http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/>