

## Park L. Myers Collection Explanatory Notes

Park L. Myers (1860-1928) was a Toledo physician and surgeon who served as a doctor with the rank of major in the Sixth Regiment of the Ohio National Guard during the Spanish-American War. The collection consists of one hundred and three letters, primarily from Myers to his wife, Jessie Foster Myers, the daughter of Charles Foster, Ohio's governor from 1880 to 1884, and Benjamin Harrison's Secretary of the Treasury. These letters span a period of approximately one year, and can be divided into two unequal parts: April, 1898 to January, 1899, prior to Jessie Myers' coming to Cuba; and May, 1899, from the time Jessie returned home to Myers' discharge from the service.

The Sixth Regiment actually spent very little time in the war zone. Mustered in April, 1898 shortly after war was declared, it went first to Camp Bushnell in Columbus in late April, and then moved to Camp George Thomas, Chickamauga Park, Georgia, in mid-May. In August, the regiment moved again to Camp Poland, Knoxville, Tennessee. After Christmas, they received orders for Cuba, and January 3 found Dr. Myers writing from Cienfuegos Harbor.

The Sixth Regiment's duties in Cuba cannot have exposed it to too much danger, as most of the officers' wives joined their husbands for an extended vacation, and it is unlikely they would have been able to if conditions were dangerous. (Dr. Myers expresses concern that his family will not be able to join him because of an epidemic, but never mentions fighting or possible attack by the Cubans). In any instance, the tour of duty was a short one, for May, 1899, Myers is on his way home through Augusta, Georgia; by the end of the month, he had been mustered out of the service.

Dr. Myers wrote about everyday events; there is little philosophy or speculation in his letters. He only briefly mentions the war, and offers no opinion on its causes; he states almost casually that full surrender will be the only terms acceptable to the United States, but his remarks contain little patriotic fervor, and he seems to be quoting a press release or official statement. His major topics, often discussed at length, were the weather, the scenery, and his daily routine. He also commented, not too patriotically, about paying taxes, and worried about the bills.

But Dr. Myers' letters provide insights into two topics which strike the reader less obviously at first: namely, accounts of military life, and disease and death. The United States Army of the Spanish-American War was not the efficient machine it is today. It was an uncomfortable union of National Guard volunteer units (such as the Sixth Ohio) and Regular Army units; it was plagued by "popular local commanders," with no military training, nepotism, and outright inefficiency especially in the Guard units. Since the state governors made all National Guard officer appointments below the rank of colonel, political connections were more important in determining appointments than were qualifications and merit, and Myers himself was not averse to using his connections. On one occasion he complains that another man got a majorship solely because of his political connections; he then asks his wife to write her father (the former governor of

## Park L. Myers Collection Explanatory Notes

Ohio) to see if he can do anything about it! Dr. Myers made no attempt to hide his relationship to Charles Foster, and often told his wife that he was able to get something only when he mentioned his father-in-law's name.

Logistics – the supplying of an army with food, equipment, and most important to the soldiers, pay – was a major problem. Often units would arrive at camp to find that their tent floors, blankets, and the mess kits had not yet arrived. Loading and unloading equipment often took forever, and as private transportation was frequently used, delays were sometimes interminable. Many times Myers would write they had been given orders to move, and they would pack up – only to have the order countermanded at the last minute, a situation which did little to improve morale. The doctor complained incessantly about his inability to get adequate medical supplies, and the difficulty in organizing and storing them for extended periods of time.

Intense rivalry characterized the relationship between the National Guard and Regular Army units. Regular Army doctors insisted on examining Guard Units; Guard doctors objected, and a fight ensued. Regular officers would try to appropriate Guard personnel, and another fight would start. Rank, as always in the military, presented a problem, especially when “local favorites” from Guard units, often with no military experience, outranked older “regulars.”

Military life, as glimpsed through Dr. Myers' letters, was not as exciting as it is usually depicted as being; and his version of the Spanish-American War does not evoke romantic images of Teddy Roosevelt and the Rough Riders charging up San Juan Hill (actually it was Kettle Hill). Camp life was dull and routine, full of reports, drills, and work. Band concerts and parades were employed to relieve the tedium, but even so, there were several desertions. These boys, Myers wrote, want to fight. Myers was an officer and a physician, so he had his work to keep him busy, and his rank no doubt afforded him opportunities not available to the average soldier, but one nonetheless gets the impression that evening parade did not evoke in him strong, patriotic feelings.

The prevalence of disease was a major concern to Myers, and he writes of fears of influenza, malaria, and typhoid outbreaks. Despite the high toll disease took (out of 2,446 official war deaths, only 385 were combat casualties), Myers writes of only two deaths in the camp, although it must be borne in mind that this was when the unit was in the States; there is no mention (by Myers) of deaths in Cuba. Myers complained about poor hospital facilities, lack of personnel, and inadequate supplies; as a result, preventive measures were undertaken. A rigorous program of hygiene and sanitation was started: soldiers were urged (sometimes forced) to bathe; garbage heaps and latrines were placed as far away as possible from cooking and living quarters; campgrounds were cleaned and policed daily; separate water facilities were maintained for washing and drinking. All these sound elementary today, but in 1898 they were almost revolutionary.

## Park L. Myers Collection Explanatory Notes

Despite his military and medical preoccupations and duties, Myers took time in his letters to be an absentee husband and father. He missed his wife, (one presumes “x’s” meant the same thing then as now), and eagerly looked forward to her coming to Cuba. He wrote her advice on her headaches and neuralgia, and on disciplining their two sons, Jesse and Foster, and inquired after their health and education. He told one of his sons not to breathe through his mouth, as the mouth was for whistling, and mouth-breathing would ruin his whistle; and he warned the older one about the possible (and painful) consequences of picking on his little brother. The two boys were fond of sending papa “dolls” (cookies) in the mail, and papa was just as fond of eating them.

The picture that emerges of Park L. Myers is one of many facets: a concerned physician, worried about obtaining supplies to care for his patients; a military officer, grasping for rank and position; Jessie Foster’s husband, dropping his father-in-law’s name to get what he wants; a loving husband and proud husband; a romantic who could poetically describe the weather and scenery; and a chronic complainer about inefficiency, taxes and bills. If his version of the Spanish-American War is not as romantic as Teddy Roosevelt’s, it was also not as tragic as Walter Reed’s.

(An excellent source for information on the experiences of the army before, during, and after the Spanish-American War is Graham A. Cosmas, *An Army for Empire*, Columbia, University of Missouri Press, 1971.)

## Park L. Myers Collection Inventory

- Folder 1      Synopsis of letters (Typed)
- Folder 2      Letters, April-May, 1898
- Folder 3      Letters, June-July, 1898
- Folder 4      Letters, August-September, 1898
- Folder 5      Letters, October-December, 1898
- Folder 6      Letters, December 18, 1898-January 15, 1899
- Folder 7      Letters, January 16-May 21, 1899
- Folder 8      Letters, Spanish-American War, April 28-Aug. 24, 1898 (photocopies)
- Folder 9      Letters, Spanish-American War, August 26-Dec. 24, 1898 (photocopies)
- Folder 10     Letters, Spanish-American War, Dec. 25, 1898-May 21, 1899  
(photocopies)
- Folder 11     Foster Myers Baby Book pages

## Park L. Myers Collection Synopsis, Spanish-American War Letters

*News Flash – As the result of the sinking of the S. S. Maine, War was declared April 25, 1898*

*April 26, 1898:* The first enlistment at Toledo, Ohio was at the old Armory, the 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, Ohio National Guard, William V. McMaken, Colonel, Commanding. Colonel McMaken stated that no one at this first call should be called upon to make too great a sacrifice of business and other interests, thus a good many men were turned away.

Everyone was in a hustle, and the confusion was great, with thousands of people crowding around the Armory to enlist. Even Miss Jones was in, and promised to wear knickerbockers to join. They expected 120,000 men a month to get in shape.

Ed. Speice was listed as Lieutenant – a Hospital Steward; Dr. Park L. Myers in charge of the medical department. They had dinner with Col. Bunker, Major Barker and Captain Stroud.

*April 29:* Glorious day, boundless enthusiasm all the way along the streets of Toledo, to the Hocking Valley Train at 11 P. M., which was headed for Columbus. Crowds were at the crossroads at Pemberville, Bradner, Rising Sun, Fostoria and all the way to Columbus. We shook hands with streams of friends and relatives with tears in their eyes saying “God Bless You,” and “take good care of our boys.”

We received a grand ovation at Columbus, receiving food in shape of box lunches (enough to last 3 days). It was a 4 mile hike to Camp Bushnell.

*April 30:* The field allotted to us at Camp Bushnell was damp. Our tents were up by 10 P.M. – no floors although they were promised. Some boys had neither straw, blankets nor overcoats to sleep on. It was very cold – anyway we had boiled eggs and bread which we ate off our lunch pans while standing around a fire. A little black “pup” was picked up as a Mascot, and a coat, (embroidered with red letters “FREE CUBA”) was made for it. Evidently it attracted more attention than the Colonel. I went to town for supplies and met Lynn Rogers at the Governor’s Office. The usual Regular Army and the National Guard rivalry flared up. The Regular Army Surgeons (examining officers) insisted that they take over all the medical examining and the Ohio National Guard Officers be sent home. At a mass meeting of the O. N. G., the officers refused to go and if they did the whole troop would return to Toledo. Many wanted Dr. Myers to telegraph the Secretary of Treasury Charles Foster to help them out. The West Pointers gave in and all the examining was done by the O. N. G. officers. All of us doctors were examined on Medical Hygiene Surgery by Drs. Loving and Halston of the regular Army.

## Park L. Myers Collection Synopsis, Spanish-American War Letters

*May 1:* Everyone was up at 4:45 AM since large crowds entered camp. The street cars carried about 35,000 visitors to camp. In recruiting our army to strength we had to weed out many whose nerves gave out when we talked about moving to war. It has been raining and field tents are damp. We are cold, and nearly every man has a cold.

*SIXTH LEAVES FOR THE FRONT* with Popular Colonel McMaken in Command—Rousing Reception. The bells have been sounding, and the whistles blowing signals of late, until it has come to be when the people hear them they stream to the center of the city in thousands to see the soldiers off. Another scene that has grown familiar to the eyes of the Columbus people was witnessed on Tuesday morning when the boys of the Sixth Regiment, Ohio Volunteer Infantry, marched through the city on their way to Chickamauga. As the men left the camp the few soldiers that are waiting there for orders came out to see them off and the sole band that has been kept in the camp came out to bid them goodbye. On the march through the streets of the city the soldiers were met, as have been the others, with a storm of applause on every hand.

The Colonel of the Sixth, Colonel McMaken of Toledo, has come to be known as the soldiers friend and as "the everyday colonel." He seldom takes to his mount but prefers, when the occasion permits, to march side by side with his command. By this one act alone he has endeared himself to his men and at the same time to the people of the city, who have noted in him a commander having the highest regard of each of the men in his command. While the men were on their way to the station on Tuesday he walked at their head and paid his respects to the Governor in passing at the gate of the statehouse. They reached the center of the city late in the morning and got away from the city in the early afternoon. The train, as have the others, went in two sections, the first being under the direct command of the Colonel, who rode in with his men, while the other was in command of the senior major.

*May 20: Camp Geo. H. Thomas, Chickamauga Park, Lytle, Georgia*

This camp is far away from any civilization, thus no newspaper. Strawberries are ripe (3 quarts for 25 cents), and there is plenty of company in wild rabbits and the night songs of the orioles and the whippoorwills. It rains, but the ground is porous so it soaks in, and does not stand around as it did in Columbus. It is three days now, and we have the best camp in the park. They ran two lines of pipe through the entire camp, one from Chickamauga Creek for washing (we wash our own clothes), and one from Crawford Springs for drinking. Our tents take up twice the space they did in Columbus. The grounds are raked and policed of all loose animal, vegetable and mineral products. My horse "Dolph" is always ready.

## Park L. Myers Collection Synopsis, Spanish-American War Letters

When the Third Corps is complete, we will have 50,000 soldiers here. The Division Commander, General Arnold, has been given another command, so now Gen. Poland of the 17<sup>th</sup>. Regular is in command.

On the 24<sup>th</sup>, a train load of recruits from Vermont with their heavy coats and blankets arrived at this warm camp. Also a troop arrived from West Virginia, thus making about 50 regiments.

On May 26 the cheers of the regiments could be heard for miles through the woods when the rumor was spread that Sampson had met the Spanish Fleet, and that the *New York* and *Texas* had been destroyed; yet the balance of our fleet had destroyed the entire Spanish Armada.

Postal service was good. A letter mailed from Fostoria, Ohio on the 28<sup>th</sup> arrives here 3 miles in the woods on the 30<sup>th</sup>. These letters from home tell of home bills piling up which my \$85 per month will not cover along with the expenses here. Food \$13 per mo., washing \$1.50, newspaper \$1.50, Postage 6 cents, tent boy 60¢, horse care \$4.00 and a new brown suit \$12.00. Railroad fare from Tiffin, Ohio to Camp is \$12.00.

Dysentery is one of our many troubles in camp.

*June 2:* Our refrigerators are made by digging holes in the ground, building up shelves and placing ice at one end which keeps our food safe from the 90 degree daily temperature. (A 15# ham costs \$1.80.)

As usual, some boys leave camp with passes and staying away for several days; they are called deserters. They are put in the guard house on a bread and water diet for 2 to 20 days and do all sorts of dirty work, and forfeit part of their pay.

Vaccination day is June 9. This becomes quite a tedious job to scratch the arms of some 800 men and 400 recruits at a temperature of 100. For weeks it has been dry and hot but on the 16<sup>th</sup> the rain came down in torrents. For a time we kept dry, then the next day the storm pulls out our tent stakes, leveling our tents, and everyone was soaked.

*June 24:* Being selected as one of the Division doctors by the Chief Division Surgeon J. H. Hysell, I moved my tent to the rear of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division Hospital so I could be near my work. Due to Dr. Osborn's sickness, I may be appointed Major in this place. Our extra duty here is to guide friends to their sick ones.

## Park L. Myers Collection Synopsis, Spanish-American War Letters

As in every army there are those who feel that we had no business in this war. They did not hate the Spaniards enough to fight and they thought that the story of the "Maine" was all a great hoax, and that we had no cause for war.

This came about when the Corps Surgeon Maj. Hoidekaper gave orders to take the Hospital Corps men and detail them as if they were privates putting them in one bunch with all the others, to be sent out of their regiment to any part of the army he saw fit.

This stirred up such a dissent that the order was revoked only after Division Headquarter Major Hysel learned of my political connection with the Sec. of Treasury Charles Foster. Major Hysel had received his commission through a political pull so he knew its value. He told Major Hoidekaper about this connection, and no telling what he might do if we did not take care of the boys who came from the best families of his sector.

We have 75 patients and 25 hospital boys so that the hustle of supper is quite a large deal with Ed. Bricker is doing the cooking.

*July 2:* The ranking of Majors and Captains were decided by lot, which of course showed no justice. The ranking was according to the date of mustering in the U. S. service, thus if two or more had the same date, they drew lots. Dr. Howe and I were mustered in on Feb. 12 – the result of the draw I was first. Dr. Howe was put with Dr. Kyle in the Second Division Ambulance Corps.

Politics still reigns since the President makes the appointments from Colonel up, and the Governor from the Colonel down.

Hurrah – Pay day at last \$273.00 – the army paid only every 2 months.

*July 8:* Rumors of our moving sped up our fitness drills – that is marching fullpack 6 to 8 miles, and camping out under pup tents for several days. One surgeon was attached to each unit. This kept up so that by August 14 there was a parade and a review of 40,000 soldiers. It was estimated that it will take 500 cars to get to the coast and 21 transports to Cuba.

*Sept. 6:* Sickness prevailed.

Orders from the Division Hdq. sent everybody to our hospital who had a fever of 100 for 24 hours. We had no knowledge of the order so it put us in a bind, sending 65 one day and 50 the next, so we had to stop them coming. We just got straightened out when we got word of the Ohio Hospital Train coming. The train was a great big Bushnell advertising scheme. Even Dr. Stewart on the

## Park L. Myers Collection Synopsis, Spanish-American War Letters

train said that the movement was unwise and demoralizing and that the boys would probably do better in our hospital than at home.

We expect 3 more doctors and 20 female nurses.

*Sept. 16:* Our boys one after another have been disheartened, then sick and soon furloughed. Some 40 and 50 are already gone. Furloughed a great train of Pennsylvania boys as well as 158 Indiana sick. These two regiments are to be mustered out as well as the first Georgia. Sick train from Mississippi and Georgia will arrive this week. This makes loads of work and is demoralizing to those left – 83 Ohio boys. We need new blood and many women from north are clamoring to come here.

Dr. Hysel has sent for 40 Red Cross nurses. Some of the men will have to move out of their building to tents to make room for them.

Our hospital sickness is increasing - up now to 325. The 14<sup>th</sup> Minnesota left today.

My candle had about smoked me out, poor type of wax.

*Sept. 28 :* On to *Knoxville Tenn. Camp Poland*

Our camp is in one of the most beautiful wooded hills, high up overlooking the city of Knoxville. The grounds belong to a Mr. Howell and is known as Turner Park. The large dance pavilion and erstwhile beer hall have been converted to a covered hospital.

We broke camp at 8 AM. I had 80 men and 10 horses and mules. We were loaded by 1 PM and since we were to remain here some time, many received furloughs.

The War Department decided to start up a Regimental Hospital- imagine to think after standing all the slander of a half equipped Division Hospital – then to be turned back to our regiment just as we were getting everything in fine order. This means 4 hospital tents, 2 doctors and one Major.

A rude 5 AM awakening – a cow stumbled over my tent rope.

*Sunday Oct. 2:* This Sunday we were escorted by Miss Rule to the Episcopal Church. She is rather nice although shaded in years.

## Park L. Myers Collection Synopsis, Spanish-American War Letters

October 5 is the date for the monthly report for the Division Surgeon on 1000 patients.

It finally looks as if you (Mrs. Myers) might get down to visit us.

Mrs. McMaken and other wives have visited. With a pass, all it will cost from Findlay, Harrimans Junction to Knoxville is \$2.00, and sleeper \$3.00.

With pay day finally coming and our uncertainty of moving, I will be home on a furlough.

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Back home the furnace needed fixing – plumbers are very expensive, 60% profit on material and 50¢ per hour or \$4.00 a day

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Nov. 17: Back in camp with rumors that our Division (Gen. Snyders) will move to Cuba immediately getting there Dec. 1. Dr. Kendal is in charge of the Hospital, and will retain his charge until we move.

On Nov. 20 we had orders to break up the Hospital. Telegram from Surgeon General said that the hospital train will be in at 8 AM to take all the patients to Fort Meyer. This means abandonment of the Second Div. Hospital and the scattering of the doctors. Our Brigade goes to Savannah, Georgia, and then to Trinidad.

Dec. 6: All the officers had to take a physical examination to ascertain their fitness to withstand a tropical campaign. We thought we might put *ice cubes* down their backs, then pour hot water on them to determine their condition, but we abandoned this idea for a regular physical. (There had been no specification as to what the examination was to consist of.)

Now that *Peace* is assured, President McKinley stated that only 3000 will be needed in Cuba and Porto Rica. Many think that we will never go.

A hard blow and a storm came which made me tighten the tentropes to keep the tent from falling on me. A cold wave came in, thus plenty of colds. Our move to Cuba was knocked out due to the trouble in getting 19,000 Spaniards out of Cienfuegos, thus delaying our move to Cuba until Jan. 1.

On Dec. 18 our quartermaster received \$14,000 from Washington to buy stores for our division in Cuba. Promised Christmas furloughs have been delayed or cancelled, and the 6<sup>th</sup> Ohio boys are tired of staying and staying when

## Park L. Myers Collection Synopsis, Spanish-American War Letters

promised movement. It has been raining hard and one can look in the distance and see snow on the Smokies.

The boys are also worried about the "Influenza" that is sweeping the country, especially in New York, where there are 100,000 cases.

*Dec. 23:* The 6<sup>th</sup> was ordered to Charleston on Monday, Dec. 26. All the sick were to go to Ft. McPherson at Atlanta. This movement could have caused all the Christmas packages to be lost.

On the 24<sup>th</sup>, orders were received to pack up. The first section was to move out at 7 PM; the second at 7:30 and the third at 8 PM. Then all of a sudden, the order to move was cancelled. The air became blue, howels went up because belongings were all packed, the beds torn up and the straw mattresses were burned. Sleeping was hard with no mattress but I had my "Kitten" with me. In a way the stop order was a blessing, since 1000 Christmas packages arrived.

*Dec. 25 Christmas Day:* Still here but we had a very nice Turkey Dinner.

The next day orders finally received to move out at 5 PM to Charleston via Atlanta. All sick patients were to go to Fort McPherson, and the nurses — Misses Irwin, Young, Pant and Hanbury — were ordered to Cuba by General Wilcox. We will have 7 doctors, 4 female nurses, and 35 corpsmen. All mail will be rerouted to Cuba to the 6<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Ohio National Guard.

There will be 14 coaches arranged thus:

1<sup>st</sup> Section – Dr. Myers in charge with Hdq., 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Dr. Alcorn and nurses.

2<sup>nd</sup> Section – Dr. Howe in charge with Hdq., 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion and Dr. James & McClain.

3<sup>rd</sup> Section – Dr. Moore in charge with Hdq., 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion and Col. Bulger, Dr. Speice & Iford.

*Dec. 30: Aboard the S. S. Minnewaska in Charleston Harbor.*

This ship is one of the governments largest transports. It is 365 feet long, has 7 decks and accommodates 1195 besides the ship's crew.

We arrived here from Charleston at 3 PM, laying on the tracks until 7 PM before we were loaded. All the soldiers went first, then some 140 horses and mules, tons of hay and many carloads of supplies including large platforms of cotton.

I had stateroom #7 with Majors Bulger, Howe, and Moore. After a quick wash, Porter and I took a short walk to the trolley car which took us along the old section of the town, and to the Charleston Hotel (finest in city) which was the

## Park L. Myers Collection

### Synopsis, Spanish-American War Letters

Officers Headquarters. There we met General Bates and Major Hysell in the dining room, and after a brief talk, Maj. Hysell wished to return to the steamer with us. He told me to take charge of the Division Hospital in Cienfuegos, Cuba.

The next day we steamed out of the harbor at 7:30 accompanied by a tender which kept with us out past Fort Sumter. The *Manitoba* was in dock and followed us out. Ten nurses were transferred from the *Manitoba* to us, making a total of 30 nurses.

As we steamed out into the ocean, the band played, whistles blew, and the boys cheered. Sanger's Division was on the *Manitoba* with the 12<sup>th</sup> N. Y. The quarters are not luxurious – with hammocks swinging 2 ½ feet apart so that at the middle of the ship there are from 25 to 30 hammocks side by side thus there are 2 layers or tiers two and five feet from the floor. Thus there are 50 to 60 men in one of these middle sections.

The ships sleeping quarters are not well lighted. In a storm with the hatches closed down and the port holes closed it would be pitch dark if it were not for the electric incandescent lights. Air was forced down into all the apartments by a special air pump and arranged so that the air flues carried the foul air out. It was a delight to walk on the upper deck for the fresh air.

Tonight as I watched the boys file up for super, one after another, company after company, each getting a pint of coffee, a spoonful of beans, 3 hard biscuits and a thick slice of corned beef, my eyes got tired counting them. Now the second bell for the six o'clock supper sounded, and I got a 25¢ meal for 50¢.

*Dec. 31: 385 Miles Out:* The boat tossed and rolled all night, yet I got up and took a salt bath in the bathroom. I found the port hole closed and it would not open and then I became sea-sick. This lasted all day, and thus, as usual, no good appetite. The boys were given a hose shower bath, that is – they would strip, come on deck to a corner screened off from the wind and the salt, and water was turned on them from a hose. Some had been sick but this shower straightened them out.

*Jan. 1, 1899: Sunday New Years in the Mid-Atlantic at 12:25 AM:*

The coming of the New Year brought sky rockets fired from the upper decks – the whistles blew crazily for five minutes, and blue flares were burned amid glorious confusion. Then back to bed.

A nice New Year's celebration. The band kept playing off and on during the day. There were Church Services some place on this large ship. We did

## Park L. Myers Collection

### Synopsis, Spanish-American War Letters

have services for a departed mule, which we dumped into the sea for the sharks to fight about. The animals and ourselves have on our heavy winter coats which is stifling in this 85 degree climate. The mules are sweating and the boys are lying almost naked on deck to keep cool. (All of our summer clothes are down in the hatch, unreachable at this time.) The fresh land breeze and the sight of Santiago has cured most of the boys of sea sickness. It will take approximately 8 days to unload all of our affects and animals, so we have to stay on board all that time.

#### *Jan. 2: In Santiago Harbor*

Cuba is in sight, Santiago de Cuba is rapidly approaching, and the Captain is altering his course to take us close to the war of 1898. By 3 PM we were in the harbor of Santiago where the remains of the "3 masted Reina Mercedes" lay half down in the water – her iron work red with rust. Further on the hulks of the "Alueirenta Quendo," the "Vizcaya" – the pride of the Spanish fleet and "The Christobol Colon." At the neck of the harbor could be seen the masts and smoke stack of the "*Maine*."

We will be in the bay of Cienfuegos in the evening, and all the unloading will be on lighters. The sight of the "Old Morro Castle" brought cheers from 1000 throats, and the band played "There will be a hot time in the old town tonight."

Our voyage has been smooth and quick, and all the sailors said that it was one of the most pleasant. Even so, Dr. Howe left his cabin with assertion that he preferred an apartment that did not shake his stomach so much.

*Jan.3:* Last night there was a strong wind which became a gale by morning. Owing to the reefs along the south coast of Puerta Principe, we stood far out well beyond sight of the land. Our sick bay increased. Water came so high that it swept over the brow and on the forward deck.

The mouth of the harbor is very narrow and circular, and some block houses and Spanish troops lined the narrow entrance. The bay was eight miles north and south, by 10 miles east and west; eight miles across lay the white walled city of Cienfuegos with its red tiled roofs.

We passed a British and U. S. Ship and the band played "America." Finally we heaved over our anchor – 2 miles off shore. Soon several lighters came out and began unloading our animals.

On the launch were our inspector, Dr. Balch, and other officers from Havana. They returned shortly with Dr. Hysell and General Gates. The General sent a cablegram to the Toledo Blade.

## Park L. Myers Collection Synopsis, Spanish-American War Letters

### *"ARRIVED ALL WELL"*

Dr. Hysell and General Gates reported concerning the peculiar city of Cienfuegos, a city of about 1600. It has good streets compared with most Cuban towns. The houses have no window panes – only bars – are right on the street – handy to look into. It is beautifully antique, but very dirty with the drains from the houses emptying in front in the street. Filth is everywhere, and odd characters can be found lining the docks, in the public square, before the government buildings, in the parks, and along the streets and alleys. Also there were groups of boys and girls – ages 3 to 14 – naked as the day they were born. They claim this is due more to distribution than inclination.

Our Camp will be some 3 miles out along the railroad which runs to Havana. It is a days trip from Havana to Cienfuegos; 28 miles to Santa Clara, and 50 to Trinidad.

*Jan. 4:* We loaded our men, all but a few on lighters this morning, and by noon were at the docks ready to move. By 2 PM we had gotten marching orders, horses saddled, ambulance in place, and colors flying. With our band playing a lively march, we marched up the streets of Cienfuegos, past the public (dirty) buildings, along a pretty square, down past the quaintest houses right on the curb without any window panes. Along over little hills, past block houses and forts filled with Spanish soldiers, past ruined houses and sugar cane factories, on to groves of Royal Palms, till finally 4 miles out we came to the high ground picked for our camp. The location is just along the row of recently deserted block houses of the Spaniards, and is quite isolated from any city life.

The Royal (useless) Palms are all about us. They look on close inspection like telegraph poles upon which a few long palm leaves have been stuck – the top 5-8 feet, the leaves green and the rest gray. The wood is soft fiber, more like a stack of large weeds.

Altogether the scene about the camp and on the way is one of enchantment, unless you happen to be squeamish.

One cannot go over the city with an eye of an inspector, without being convinced as to primitive character of the people. Like cows and horses when they have an inclination, that desire is followed as do animals – any place. We will change this by drenching them with chloride of lime and bread and water until they wished they were cows.

As for clothing, many of the better class dress very nicely and make one think of my own folks on a summer evening. True, there are poor but jolly-tempered children and elders with just enough clothes to cover their nakedness.

## Park L. Myers Collection Synopsis, Spanish-American War Letters

Evidently clothing here is regarded as an induction of self-consciousness and is not to be thought necessary. All the way out to our camping ground, dogs and children ran side of the regiment for miles.

### *Jan. 6: First Night in Camp*

Getting settled and making some order out of our hospital and baggage is some ordeal. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, including companies B, D, K & G, are ordered to Santa Clara with General Bates headquarters. Our location is so much better they hate to leave. Dr. Moore and McLain are to go with them, leaving Dr. Howe, Alcorn, James and Cable here for our regimental hospital. The 7<sup>th</sup> Calvary is expected in 2 or 3 weeks, when Major Hysell promised me an advancement to Brigade Surgeon. The nurses are still on the boat and if we can find tents, and a cooking range, all 15 will come ashore.

The bringing of the doctors wives to camp is a problem. First you cannot get a house and be with the regiment, thus a tent. There will be no facilities for a school – only eye education and the added cost of necessities is enormous. It will cost \$40 from Tampa to Havana with three changes across the island. Perhaps a cheaper route is the Ward Line out of New York.

Our commissary is not set up yet so our expenses are large and we are living from hand to mouth. The cost of running our mess is a question but gradually as the ship is unloaded with our mess equipment and rations, we should be getting along quite well.

### *Jan. 7: A good nights sleep on board the ship*

The sick were left here because the hospital tents were not up. It was a rough ambulance ride to camp. On the way we had to repair a bridge over a little stream and to my surprise the sills were made of mahogany and even the fuel we burn in our kitchen stove is mahogany. The tents are all large hospital tents of a pretty shade of brown and do not reflect the light as fiercely as the white tents.

My tent was nicely located amongst the Royal Palms to shade us from the mid-day sun. When my trunk arrived, I found the cot and mattress and what a find when the trunk revealed my Jaeger Woolen Blanket, and a goat rug. Temperature, 75 in shade.

Leaving camp at 5 PM in the Ambulance, we expected to go to our ship but there was no ferry available. We were hungry, so a merchant's son directed us to a café where we had a good meal – American money \$5.00 with Spanish change of 6 pesos and 1 peseta.

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The General's Headquarters is in the city hall. It is a most weird set of apartments, delightfully toned, colored ventilated and as fancy as a Moorish picture. Only the stench from the bath room makes one wake up and know that you are in a Spanish Community.

We were to prepare the ground for the hospital tents since we expected the 15 nurses and sick soldiers to arrive tomorrow. We were to have 3 large tents for the nurses (3 nurses to a tent) and 50 other tents but for some reason they were lost – thus no preparation.

The next morning the tents were found, and were erected under the supervision of Dr. Cable, and the grounds policed. The nurses were picked up at the boat at 2:30 PM and we left for camp at 3:30, having stopped to listen to our band playing in the Plaza. The nurses returned by ambulance, but the sick left by special train which arrived at camp at about 9 PM – tropical darkness 20 minutes later. Thanks to Ed. Bricker, we had a nice supper of rice, fried potatoes, hard tack and coffee. Soon the nurses returned to their quarters where they found cots, blankets, water and a candle, but no floors.

Here is a thought – they are expecting to return to Charleston for the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry. Perhaps arrangements might be made for the wives to come down this way. By the way – bring some garden and vegetable seeds so we can have our own garden.

*Jan. 9: "Hurrah" we have erected a large flag on a bamboo Pole near a Spanish Block House, and it sure looks good.*

With the 3<sup>rd</sup> Illinois moving out of Havana, we will be a little crowded.

Mesdames Howe, Porter, Bulger, Cable, Alcorn and James are all anxious to come to Cuba. Mrs. Myers has been delegated as the one to contact to organize the group travel. The rate from Fostoria to Tampa is \$16.00, to Havana \$22.00 and \$7.00 to Cienfuegos, which equals \$45.00. If children are along, that will be extra. Of course, if we have an epidemic of Cholera, Yellow Fever or Small Pox, all is off. It is rumored that the General will prohibit wives of officers in camp.

Linen suits are to be the uniform for all in this warm climate. They cost \$6.00 and the laundry charges are exorbitant since these people are not used to washing. Although, the days are hot, the evenings are cool and damp, and my blankets are in demand. The 90 degree noon sun has prompted General Bates to order all to keep out of the sun until 2:30 PM. This day it really poured, and everything was soaked, even the mules that were being felted. This downpour

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cleans the filthy air, and the people and children (naked) were out wading in the fresh cool water. Our rainy season starts about March 15, raining off and on until about June, when it rains steady for 35 days making a fearful paste.

“Bring some garden tools for I would like to have a garden; everything grows so very quickly, and with wonderful luxuriance. Bring some climbing roses, out from under the snow, for I am curious to see how northern roses would act after being wakened up in the middle of winter. I need a book on Botany, also one on Birds.” We have buzzards (very tame) which look like small turkeys that come to the kitchen for left-overs. Then there are curious black birds, which cry like a whimpering child, and Meadow Larks, and Bob Whites; but the English sparrows are absent.

*Jan. 17:* The 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion and Co. “D” moved out to Santa Clara with Major Barker in command and Captains Stroud, Culp, and Fox (of Fremont) are the company officers, Company G was left behind for Provost Guard Duty in the city. The band played “Auld Lang Syne” as they left. Santa Clara is a town of 16,000 population and is one of the healthiest towns on the Island, comparatively well built and clean. Two little streams are nearby.

Our first death occurred from Pneumonia – a Pvt. Espen. The boys must learn to adapt themselves to this climate of 90-100 in the daytime to the cold damp nights which require 2 heavy blankets. All the pine floors are elevated 18” off the ground which is our method of obliterating the material diseases prevalent in this area. My little brass lamp is my only illumination.

The night skies are beautiful here, and Chaplain quotes “Night has drawn his sable mantel and sprinkled it round with a lot of brilliant stars and a fine quarter moon.”

Buggies are unknown here, so the means of transportation is by the oxen or mule carts. Cats are as big as leopards.

Our band plays in the Plaza every Thursday and Sunday.

Dr. Hysell is down at the waterfront supervising the cleaning of the wharves. Cubans were scraping and shoveling the accumulation of ages, and to do a complete job the Fire Engines are called to wash the docks with steam. He also uses strong corrosives and chloride of lime to sterilize the area. All the scrapings are taken out to sea and dumped.

Our duty here is to police the country with squads of soldiers, and just to-day 45 have been added to guard the sugar refinery.

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### Synopsis, Spanish-American War Letters

*Jan. 21:* Ed Bricker and I went to Union Café for some coffee, buns, butter, sponge cake, and lemonade for 35¢. Also, we tried to purchase an undershirt with drawers to match for Ed. but none was available, especially in his size of 82 round – (He was certainly not that fat – the figures were in centimeters which is only about 34”.)

It finally looks as if the wives will be coming. They may start on the 26<sup>th</sup>. A little further note on the trip – they will have to take the train out of Havana. There is only one train a day and it takes a day and a night, and hard travelling in that it stops for unseen occasions.

*Jan. 26:* The wives finally got away and since the trip from Havana is hard one, we decided to meet them there. They are living in tents the same as ours with the usual inconveniences. One night a heavy storm ripped the tents canvass off the hung them on a tree. We all got soaked. My two boys attracted much attention with the natives since it was the first time they had seen American children so small. They all wanted to give gifts and handle them. With my surgical instruments my wife brought, I performed many miracles for the Cubans. The wives left about May 1 and arrived in Fostoria May 11.

*May 5: Camp Makenzie, Augusta, Ga.* (We are on our way home.) Temp. 75-85

The camp is on a sand hill, a great hill not peaked, but several hundred feet above sea level; and broad enough to accommodate a much larger number of troops than we are. The days are sweltering, and loose sand – several inches deep – stirred up by the wagons makes it very unpleasant. The flies have followed us from Chickamauga.

The troops are quartered in Sibley tents, 14 rows, in which reside 12 companies, hospital corps and the band. The rows run east and west. At the end of each company row is the cook and mess hall of boards and windows. Each mess house has a water pipe at its corner. Just west of the street of each company row, beyond the mess house, are the tents of the Captains and Lieutenants, making a row running North and South. The mess house is near the officers quarters so that they can keep a good watch over the food and the cleanliness there. Further west are three Majors' tents, and yet further the Headquarters row. There are electric lights in the entire camp. The tents have wooden floors and sides with canvass tops.

Here with us are the Second Engineers 9<sup>th</sup> Illinois and the third Nebraska troop ready to be mustered out. One entire company is from Hastings, Nebraska.

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*May 10:* Two weeks from today we will be mustered out. The boys are counting the days. The route home is through Atlanta, Chattanooga, Nashville, Louisville and Cincinnati.

Last night we had a terrific wind storm with large clouds of sand.

The Division Hospital here is a rather elaborate affair, spread out like your hand, with the office and drug room at your wrist, the connecting halls at the palm and the wards branching out like fingers. The wards are long with roofs 20 ft. high and all the closets are connected with water and sewer connections. Yet there is much discomfort in this area of dry 95 degree air. In charge of the Hospital is Dr. Banester.

*May 17:* This is Merry Making Week here, which we helped celebrate by a parade of about 400 men.

*May 24:* A Wednesday – *ALL MUSTERED OUT*  
A three day trip home will cost \$18.00

HURRAH – FINALLY BACK IN FOSTORIA, OHIO