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Thomas Jefferson Lewis Memo

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A series of letters written by Thomas Jefferson Lewis to his wife, Lucinda J. Lewis, dated from August, 1862, to May, 1865, were donated to SHSI by Kaye Knouse in 1987. These letters were read through in November, 2007, with the possibility of writing a short article for the Battle Flag website. The letters did not show enough new information to justify an article that would show Lewis's experience to be interesting in a way uncommon to that of other soldiers or showing some new insight about the war.

There were many common themes in the letter but all on mundane topics. He had two brothers in the regiment, one of which had ups and downs with diarrhea/dysentery practically through the entire war. Since this was a common occurrence, an article is not justified based on themes such as this. Other themes include his health, the food that he ate on a given day, what clothes or supplies he was issued, references to other men in the regiment who were neighbors or in some way known to members of Lewis's family at home, questions about their baby daughter, or events

that occurred on almost a daily basis during the war. He wrote often of the lack of pay, a situation that most soldiers experienced during the war. He wrote a series of letters from the Prairie Grove battle site but without any new information or insight on the battle that had just been fought.

The great events of the war went unremarked by Lewis. He did not seem interested in relating any reaction to the great turning points such as the Battle of Antietam, the Emancipation Proclamation, the fall of Vicksburg or Atlanta, Lee's surrender, or Lincoln's assassination. The only comment Lewis had on the larger aspects of the war was on Lincoln's re-election, in which he said only that he didn't vote because he didn't think enough of either candidate to vote for him.

If future researchers are trying to find information on a specialized topic, some of Lewis's letters could be useful but not for a general article about his role in the war.