

# Source #1

2304 red diamonds rule

Dear Brother

With much anxiety -- I assume the present appearance to write to you that you may know that I am well and my family also.

We live here in a land of distress and war. There is now an Army stationed in this County and a battle expected at Cumberland Gap. My oldest son is in the union Army and will be in the battle when it comes Oh! what distress. A great many of our relations are also in the same regiment (7th Ky.)

I am very anxious to know what the times really are in your country. I cant rely on the papers for news. There seems to be great distress in your country. You must write to me and let me know all about the times there. Mother is very ill. she has been at the point of death for a long time. I believe she is stricken with palsy. She was perfectly useless in every respect -- but is now getting a little better so that she can talk a little, but the left side of her body is perfectly paralyzed. She will never get over it.

The rebels are pretty well cleaned out of Kentucky and I hope the game is about played out with them. There is a great deal of sickness in County now and a good many deaths also. Bill Dowis is dead. Several others also that you know. I lost my youngest son by accident. He volunteered in the service and by accident shot himself and died away from home. I have now but three children. Tell Sam Mitchell if he is at your house that his folks are all well & Bob is in the Army. Brother Speed is in the Army also. Be sure to write.

Your sister,  
Nancy

War Time Letter from Nancy Steele Dowis to SJ Steele  
9 Mar 1862 - Lynn Camp, Knox County, Kentucky

# Source #2

2304 red diamonds rule

“If the Union or Confederate soldier was not a horse-mounted cavalryman or officer, he was a foot soldier. Throughout the war, these men marched long and hard, sometimes up to 30 or 40 miles a day. As a result, shoes became sorely needed by both sides.

The Union, backed by its industrial strength and factories, had the benefit of the sewing machine, a newly perfected invention that enabled thousands of Northern shoemakers to leave their benches and become soldiers. But the Confederacy fared far worse; it was extremely low on shoes. Worse still, corruption existed in some Confederate commissaries, where quartermasters shorted the soldiers and profits were pocketed.

There are many accounts of Rebels marching for miles barefoot during the winter. Ill-fitting shoes were also a problem, and carefully guarded shoe shops, situated close to brigade headquarters, were established to repair footwear. Often, Rebel foot soldiers with no shoes or poorly fitted ones were organized into separate commands to march apart from the rest of the troops on the soft grassy roadsides.

The men preferred shoes with broad bottoms and big, flat heels, instead of boots, which were heavy, twisted the ankles, and were difficult to put on and remove especially when wet. Shoes and boots were so valuable that special missions were made to procure them. They were even pulled from the feet of dead men on the bloodstained battlefields and were used by prisoners to barter for supplies such as food or tobacco.”

Source: Atlas Editions; Civil War Cards

# Source #3

2304 red diamonds rule

“On an ever memorable day, the 30th of November, we assembled at school as usual. Our teachers' faces looked unusually serious that morning. The Federal couriers were dashing hither and thither. The officers were gathering in squads...The bell called us in the chapel. We were told to take our books and go home, as there was every indication that we would be in the midst of a battle that day.

At four o'clock that afternoon I stood in our front door and heard musketry in the neighborhood 'of Col. Carter's on the Columbia pike. To this day I can recall the feeling of sickening dread that came over me. As the evening wore on, the firing became more frequent, and nearer and louder; then the cannon began to roar from the fort.

My father realizing that we were in range of the guns from both armies told us to run down into the cellar. We hastily threw a change of clothing into a bundle and obeyed at once. My mother, who never knew what fear meant in her life, was a little reluctant to go and leave the upper part of the house to the mercy of soldiers, but she finally joined us in the basement. A few minutes later there was a crash! and down came a deluge of dust and gravel. The usually placid face of our old black mammy, now thoroughly frightened, appeared on the scene. She said a cannon ball had torn a hole in the side of the meat house and broken her wash kettle to pieces. She left the supper on the stove and fled precipitately into the cellar.

After that, the only way we could get anything to eat was by sending a guard, who was in the yard, to the kitchen after it. The patter of the bullets on the blinds was anything but soothing... About four o'clock we heard the tramping of feet and the sound of voices. Our hearts jumped into our mouths, and what joy when we learned that our own soldiers were in possession of the town!...”

# Source #4

2304 red diamonds rule

Who are the men that clamor most  
Against the war, its cause and cost,  
And who Jeff Davis sometimes toast?  
The Copperheads.

Who, when by wretched whiskey tight,  
Hiss out in rage their venom'd spite,  
Who crawl and sting, but never fight?  
The Copperheads.

Who hold peace meetings, where they pass  
Lengthy resolves of wind and gas,  
Much like the loud cry of Balaam's ass\*?  
The Copperheads.

Who, when false faction is forgot,  
When patriots keep a common thought,  
Have discord and dissension taught?  
The Copperheads.

Who swear by bondage, and would see  
Rather their country lost than free,  
Who dread the name of Liberty?  
The Copperheads.

Who hate a freedom-loving press,  
The truth, and all who it profess,  
Who don't believe in our success?  
The Copperheads.

And who, when Right has won the day,  
Will take their slimy selves away,  
And in their dirty holes will stay?  
The Copperheads.

And who will be the hiss and scorn  
Of generations yet unborn,  
Hated, despised, disgraced, forlorn?  
The Copperheads.

\*This is a reference to a biblical story that can be found in Numbers chapter 22. Balaam was believed to have the ability to bless or curse people. He was sent a message from God through a talking donkey.

Source: <http://www.civilwarpoetry.org>

# Source #5

2304 red diamonds rule

“My Mother and I took charge of a hundred and twenty wounded men, who occupied Presbyterian Church, it being the largest Federal hospital, and with what we could spare assisted at another which was in a house owned by my mother and near our own home. When we first went to the hospital, the wounded men told us they had nothing to eat for two days. We first furnished them with bread, meat and tea, and coffee, every little luxury we could prepare, for several days. They they drew scanty rations from the Rebels, flour the color of ashes and a little poor beef suitable for well men, much less for wounded. All the cooking was done, and in truth, everything eatable furnished, at our house.

We fed the men twice a day. Sometimes at 10 o'clock at night we would carry them something prepared with our own hands. Many had been robbed not only of their blankets and overcoats but of their coats, and we lying on the floor upon handfuls of straw, with nothing else to protect or cover them. We furnished them all with the bedding we could spare, and made cotton pillows for all. There were no bandages to be had, and I made what I could out of my own underclothing. We would get up at daylight and with the help of servants commence cooking their breakfast. We never had time to rest, only as we sat down to eat something hurriedly, for as soon as we had finished our patients in the morning, we had to return home to prepare the next meal...”

Source: Warwick, Rick. Williamson County: The Civil War as Seen through the Female Experience.

# Source #6

2304 red diamonds rule

“Our Quarter Masters department..., really did a great deal more to break down the army than to keep it up. I mean that their shortcomings, their negligence, improvidence, and lack of energy counterbalanced their services. It is a well-known fact, and a most disgraceful one, that when General Lee crossed the Potomac fully *ten thousand* of his men were *barefooted, blanketless, and hatless!* The roads were lined with stragglers limping on swollen and blistered feet, shivering all night, (for despite the heat of the day the nights were chilly), for want of blankets; and utterly devoid of underclothes”

And the lack of proper equipment gradually made itself felt on the *morale* of our men. Months on months we were without a change of underclothing, or a chance to wash that they had worn so long, hence it became actually coated with grease and dust, moistened with daily perspiration under the broiling sun.

Vermin swarmed in every camp. Nothing would destroy the little pests but *hours of steady boiling*, and of course, we had neither kettles, nor the time to boil them, if we had been provided with ample means.

Starvation, rags, dirt, and vermin may be borne *for a time* by the neatest of gentlemen; but when he has become habituated to them, he is no longer a gentleman. The personal pride which made many a man act the hero during the first year of the war was gradually worn out, and undermined by the open, palpable neglect, stupidity, and indifference of the authorities until during the last year of the war, the hero became a "shirker," and finally a "deserter.--"

Source: Commanger, Henry. "The Blue and The Gray."

# Source #7

2304 red diamonds rule

“But there was another side to the lives of all Civil War soldiers – boredom. Between battles and especially during the winter when ice and snow prevented the troops from moving around, soldiers spent a lot of time in camp. They wrote letters, of course, and read newspapers and books when they could get them. They also played chess, checkers, backgammon, dominoes, and horseshoes. They participated in boxing, broad jumping, wrestling matches, foot races, hurdles, mock fighting, marbles, dice, cockfights, and early versions of team sports such as baseball and football.

When things got really bad, they even had lice races! Head lice were an accepted fact of life among soldiers of both armies, so to pass the time the soldiers would pull them out of their hair, put them on plates, and bet on whose would be the first to crawl off the edge. There’s even a story about how some Mississippi soldiers couldn’t figure out why one soldier was winning all their money until they found out he was heating his plates. Another story comes from a prisoner at Fort McHenry, who described prisoners gathering around an ant bed in the yard, picking off their lice, and betting on whether the ants or the lice would win the ensuing battle. Gambling was so common that many of the more “moral-minded” soldiers were disgusted.

But the most popular activity among all soldiers was playing cards, including poker, twenty-one, keno, and euchre. At that time, there were no numbers on the cards, just patriotic symbols like eagles, stars, and flags. Drawings of famous Civil War officers were the “face cards” (the kings, queens, and jacks) of the day. In the Confederacy, where paper was hard to get, soldiers would make their own cards, sometimes decorated with pictures of Jefferson Davis.”

Source: Birkholz, Elaine. "Fighting Boredom in the Civil War." Wicked Local.