

Breyfogle Sentinel Dispatch

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From the Editor

The end of 2007 is drawing near and although our publication goal for 2007 was met with our October edition we did mention the possibility of a 5th edition if we had enough information to fill another.

In reviewing the research material I have been working on I found a piece that I started working on in April 2007. Having completed reading the Civil War Diary book edited by George E. Clark, I was struck by the strength of the woman who stood in the shadow of Joshua D. Breyfogle, Sr. and felt in her memory we should have a piece that centered on her struggles. Much has been written about Joshua D. Breyfogle, Sr. yet very little has been said about his wife Mary and her heroic efforts during the 1850's, 60's and 70's.

At this time we don't consider this piece to be completed as we continue to look for additional

newspaper material to complete the picture. We will post this on our website early in 2008 in its completed format.

Sandy and I would also like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. The image below is a scan of the Thomas Nast print that appeared on the January 1863 edition of Harper's Weekly publication to celebrate the Christmas season with families separated by war.

You may contact us by mail or e-mail with comments, articles, or questions:

Mason City, IA 50401

dan@breyfogle.com



An Uncommon Woman

Mary B. (Reynolds) Breyfogle

1816 to March 17, 1898

By Dan Breyfogle © 2007

Introduction

There is a tendency in the study of family history, as there is in the study of history in general, to search for the most colorful characters and use their exploits to produce written works. These individuals, through their courage, heroic deeds, or foolishness make a mark on society that causes us to stop and take notice, and spark interest in more research. Yet surrounding these individuals are family members and friends that become not much more than names or faces in a crowd. But sometimes the most notable characters pale in comparison to those background individuals who toil silently and perhaps heroically while offering their love and support without any fanfare. Their contribution to society as a whole may not receive more than a passing glance to the researcher.

And so it is with Mary B. (Reynolds) Breyfogle, who at first glance may seem to be a minor player in the life of her husband. Joshua D. Breyfogle, Sr. is arguably one of the most recognizable characters in the entire Breyfogle family line and was certainly a noticeable individual. In his early life he traveled from New York to Delaware, Ohio, married, established himself in business, and then took off to search for gold in the 1849 California gold rush. Shortly after his return he joined the 4th Ohio Infantry to fight in the Civil War. He was a city sheriff, a tailor, a dreamer, and yes perhaps a bit foolish with his exploits.

We know all this because he left a paper trail in the form of diaries, journals, and letters that recorded a significant part of his time away from home and family. And although we found only a couple direct references to his name in newspapers, these were reports of activities he was involved in that left a mark on the community. But the purpose of this study is not to report on the exploits of J. D., but instead to look into his writings and other historical data to illustrate what must have been a very strong woman who was able to survive all the tragedy that befell her family during the 1860's. For you see, during a short 10-year period in the life of Mary Breyfogle, there were losses that most families would not face in a lifetime.

As much as we want this to be a story of Mary and what life must have been like for her, it is impossible to be certain what daily life was like. For all the journals and letters that exist telling Joshua's side of the story, not a single scrap of paper remains with Mary's direct thoughts or words to record her side of the story. And as much detail as Joshua revealed in his letters and journals about his daily life and adventure, he barely commented on her letters to him and rarely questioned her about specific issues at home. So much of what is presented here is conjecture based on the passages from JD's work, and should not be construed as documented fact.

One important fact must be emphasized in looking at this topic. As tempting as it would be to take exception to much of what JD wrote to his wife, we must remember that the level of communication between spouses in the middle 1800's was most likely quite different than between couples of the 21st century. And when we look at the society in general during this period it was uncommon to find much recorded information about the woman behind the man



Portrait by Giovanni Battista Troccoli

Portrait of Mary Morse, by Giovanni Battista Troccoli 1882 – 1940 Portrait painted about 1909 to 1915

We do not have a picture of Mary B. (Reynolds) Breyfogle and felt that we needed an image that would represent this very strong woman. We found a photograph of the oil painting that is in a private collection and felt that the pose could represent the subject of this piece. We do not wish to confuse our readers so offer this brief bio of the person actually depicted in the portrait.

Mary Marston Morse (1868-1954), the subject of Giovanni Troccoli's painting, never married and supported herself as a teacher. She and her sister Carrie also did wood carving to supplement their income and showed their work at the Arts and Crafts Society in Boston, where they studied with Troccoli. Carrie was known as the more skilled carver. Mary often did the gilding.

unless she became a public figure or was involved in some scandal. Obviously Mary did not fit either of these scenarios.

During our research for this piece we read many articles that tell us that life for a woman in the mid-1800's carried many restrictions. Some sources equate their situation to that of being considered property of their father's or husbands, depending on their age and marital status. One source mentioned that the male authority had final say in all matters and that the woman was taught at an early age to accept things as they were. Generally a woman could not expect to work outside the home unless she was single or a widow and jobs were severely limited, generally not more than domestic duties or perhaps as a teacher. So as harsh as some of JD's comments appear to be in the 21st century, they were certainly within bounds for the time.

We must also acknowledge that life during the middle to late 1800's was difficult at best, and in some cases appears to the modern researchers as downright cruel or oppressive when compared to life in the 21st century. It seems that hardship was a way of life to families during these times and it is doubtful that couples dwelt on their struggles or perhaps didn't discuss them beyond the mention of a direct need to be fulfilled by additional toil. It is also evident based on descriptions of family life during this time that revealing one's feelings to others was not commonplace and in most cases was frowned upon. We also realize infant childhood mortality rates were horrible so some of the tragedy to this family was not all that uncommon either, but when we combine all that happened from 1849 through her passing we feel her courage and resilience should be applauded.

The Early Years

It is difficult to know where to start this piece since so little is known of Mary, her family, or the early years of marriage. The census files indicate that Mary was born in Wales, but they do not indicate when she immigrated to this country, where she entered the country, or if she was a naturalized citizen. We do not have firm documentation on her parents name but we do know that she had a brother name Richard, which was revealed in one of JD's Civil War letters. In Joshua's November 10, 1861 letter to Mary he wrote that, "I saw your Dear Brother Richard in camp for two days, but did not speak to him. I should have sent a letter had it been any one else."

We read this to mean that the relationship between JD, and perhaps Mary, to Richard was strained since he did not send a letter by him. We also concluded by this description that they were not in the same unit as Joshua said he was there for two days, while the 4th Ohio Infantry remained at the encampment. We found a piece in the Biographical Sketches of Delaware Township, 1880, in which a Captain R. W. Reynolds, son of Richard and Margaret (Rowland) Reynolds, both natives of Montgomeryshire, North Wales was a tailor by trade in Delaware, Ohio during the 1830's.

This family entered the United States in 1823 and settled in Madison County, NY and Richard moved to Delaware and was bound out as a tailor apprentice. In 1850 he traveled to California on the Gold Rush and later returned to start his own commercial tailoring business. As we said, we do not have a firm connection between these names but based on the similarities between Richard's experience and Joshua's we wonder if this is the brother mentioned in the letter.

The first mention of Mary in the well established Breyfogle family history comes from Flora Grumman's work, which provided a marriage date of July 28, 1838. Later Lewis D. Breyfogle reported that "Joshua married Mary B. Reynolds of Springfield, Ohio," but nothing more.

In regard to Mary's parents and family we noticed in one Civil War letter where JD offers Mary advice about money and mentions that she should not give any money he was sending to our "Dear Brothers." We have concluded that he must have been speaking of Mary's brothers as we know that Joshua's brothers were in Lockport, NY or California at this time. He also mentioned not paying for "Fathers board." This certainly was a reference to Mary's father as Joshua's father Jacob D. Breyfogle remained in Pennsylvania and Lockport, NY as far as we can tell at this point in our research.

Based on the fact that this couple's children were listed on the census files as being born in Ohio it is very likely the couple settled in the Delaware, Ohio area following their marriage and by 1840, Joshua's name appeared on the census file for that year. The census forms prior to 1850 list only the head of the household and record family members as well as others living in the household by number only.

In general we know the following about this Breyfogle family:

- Rosella N. (AKA Imogene), the oldest child, was born May 6, 1839 and died April 16, 1866
- Roland C., was born September 16, 1842, and died July 28, 1870
- William D. (AKA Willie or Willey), the third child, was born February 26, 1845 and died April 30, 1865
- Joshua, Jr. was born May 12, 1848 and survived the war years, married, and had a large family

- Arthur B., the fifth child, was born June 11, 1849 and died December 1, 1861
- Mary R., the baby of the family, was born October 24, 1853 and died January 16, 1907

The Gold Rush

We know that Joshua traveled to California during the 1849 gold rush leaving her to care for 5 small children, which surely toughened and helped her to deal with providing for a family without direct support of her husband and perhaps provided her with the confidence to face obstacles on her own. Of course there is always the possibility that Mary supported this decision with the hope that riches would follow this trip. But with her pregnant and her other children being so young we don't think the thought of being alone at this time would have met with her approval.

The first entry in Joshua's Gold Rush Journal was dated April 2, 1849, 2 months prior to the birth of the couple's fifth child. This entry contained, like the rest of the entries, not a single word about the family he left behind.

April 2nd, Monday, 1849: We left Delaware at 8 o'clock this morning passing through Bell Point, Pleasant Valley and Amity and arrived at West Jefferson; stopped at Mantels Hotel overnight, everything safe and in order.

News from the gold fields would have been sketchy at best as there wasn't any established mail system. Any letters home were sent by way of those who were returning from the west or those who decided to return home before reaching California. The Lima Argus Newspaper, Lima, Ohio, on May 15, 1849 reported a serious cholera outbreak in St. Joseph Missouri. The report, which came from a letter written on May 1, 1849, reported that "The cholera was raging violently at St. Joseph's: some fifteen or twenty deaths occurring per day, in a population of 2,000." News of this sort would certainly have reached the Delaware, Ohio newspapers and would have increased the worry for Mary.

The final entry in his Gold Rush journal was dated December 7, 1850 and although it did not mention his return to Ohio, it did reveal that things had not gone well and is possibly the reason that there were no further daily entries.

December 7th: This day Charles left here for San Jose for the purpose of farming with his brother-in-law Henion. Mr. Coles also left for home. White slowly improving

J.D. mentions Charles, who was his brother and is suspected to be the Breyfogle that family legend describes as the one who discovered The Lost Breyfogle Gold Mine. He also mentions "White" who he refers to on a couple occasions in the journal as I.U. White, and he had a very low opinion of this person and his general lack of strength. So we know that the diary was not entirely a record of dates, locations, and facts.

Returning to the census files, the 1850 Federal Census form is dated August 3, 1850 and the entry for this family lists J. D. Breyfogle as the head of the household and his occupation as tailor, there are no notations indicating he is on the west coast searching for gold. We mention this listing because we find that his brother Charles, also on the trek, is listed on the Nevada City, Yuba County, California census, which is the location that the brothers settled in to search for gold. It is not our intention to lead the reader that there was something amiss with Mary listing J. D. as head of household while he was actually in California. As noted, Charles was listed on a California census form, yet Jacob C. Breyfogle, the youngest of the three brothers known to have traveled to California at this time, is listed on an Erie, NY census report.

Under Joshua's listing we find that he is the only one listed with an income so we are left with the thought that Mary is surviving by her own means (gardening, milk cow, etc) or on the charity of her family and friends. Although an undated letter from J.D. to his wife, published by Lewis Breyfogle as part of the diary, indicates that he has sent some money home.

Dear Mary: - Richard leaves here for home. I merely say to you that I will be home next Fall if I live. I sent by Doctor Knapp, of Illinois, \$100. - by White \$129. - and by Richard 60 odd. I hope you will receive it from all of them. I will write as soon as I get your next letter. Good-bye. Dick will tell you all,

(Signed) J. D. Breyfogle

None of Joshua's journal entries record the date of departure of Richard, Doctor Knapp, or White, but as shown above, the final entry of December 7, 1850 shows I.U. White continuing to recover from his illness. We also found a reference to T. G. B. Knapp being a charter member of the Marysville Masonic Lodge when it received its charter on November 27, 1850 in Yuba County. We are not sure that this is the same person mentioned in J.D.'s letter but if this is Dr. Knapp then it is doubtful that Joshua returned from California until 1851 and the fact that he mentioned returning home "next fall" would seem to indicate that his planned return would not be in 1850.

Lewis Breyfogle published one other letter as part of the diary; again it was not dated, but does give us a view of the man that Mary was waiting to hear from and to return from the Gold Fields.

Mary, excuse me for not writing more at this time. I am not in a humor to write. I will tell you all about it soon after Richard gets there, and believe me, you devoted husband.

(Signed) J. D. Breyfogle

We add this very short letter as a reference to the way J. D. communicated to his wife. We find this a striking contrast to later letters published with the Civil War Diary when J.D. begins to feel Mary is not holding up her end of the bargain by writing more letters to him. In this letter he tells her he is not in a humor to write and it is likely she accepted this without further comment, yet he demands her time to write letters regardless of her humor!

We of course do not have detailed information on the home that Mary and the children were living in, but the census file does give us the feeling that it is a working class neighborhood. These early forms did not record street names or address, but by looking at the occupations of those living near them we find occupations such as foundry worker, moulder (foundry worker who makes the molds for iron products), blacksmith, weaver, and shoemaker. In the 1880 Delaware Ohio History book we find that the first frame house was built in Delaware about 1808, so we suspect that the home they were living in probably consisted of a two or three room frame house with small out buildings for washing and perhaps a chicken house and shed for a cow.

Life in 1850 America was heavily tied to agriculture, even within communities. Most families gardened, kept milk cows, chickens for eggs and meat, and even may have raised a hog or two. We obviously don't have a detailed record of how Mary survived with 5-children to feed and clothe, and three of them aged 5 or younger, it would have been especially hard to keep things going while J.D. chased the dream of striking it rich in California. When he left, Mary was 7-months pregnant with Arthur and Joshua D., Jr. was barely 2 years old. William was 4 so perhaps she depended on Rose, 10 at the time, and Charles who was 7 to help her garden, cut and haul wood, feed any livestock they may have had, and milk the cow.

There was laundry for the six of them, meals to prepare, daily bread baking, butter to be churned, food to be canned or "put-up" as the garden produced it, lanterns to clean and refill, a home to clean, and water to haul for drinking and bathing as it is doubtful that there was any water source inside the home. Mary was alone with the children for at least two winters and although Delaware, Ohio has generally mild winter weather, it was undoubtedly cold requiring enough firewood or coal to heat the home and cook the food. There was a birth of their 5th child two months after her husband left for California and although we suspect her parents may have lived in or near Delaware, we have been unable to link them directly to her. So we do not know what sort of help she may have had from her family but would expect neighbors would do what they could to help when she gave birth to this son.

Of course there is also the thought that the older children would need to attend school and that brings to mind the need to assist them in their studies. And if all this wasn't enough, there is the occasional need for discipline of active children that may act out in the absence of one of the parents. Although families of this era had a high expectation that their children help with chores and caring for younger siblings, this was no guarantee that Mary did not face issues with one or more of the children and their relationships with neighborhood children.

Lewis Breyfogle did not record when and how Joshua returned from California, nor did the journal offer any insight on this topic. Joshua's cousin, Israel Breyfogle, traveled with a separate company to California and upon his return took a ship to Panama, crossed the isthmus on foot, and then traveled by ship to New York and then home to Columbus, Ohio. We are not sure if Joshua chose this route or traveled the same route home that he took to California. Regardless of the route, Joshua probably returned to Delaware, Ohio by the fall of 1851 and the fact that he returned to the trade of tailor and did not improve his stature in the community, we suspect that his adventure did not result in producing enough gold to put the family in any better financial state.

We do know that in November 1854 J. D. Breyfogle was appointed town Marshal of Delaware, Ohio and council meeting notes for November indicate that he received \$13 as partial pay for his service. In the December council notes it is recorded that J. D. was recommended an extra allowance of \$100 for one year of service. Again when we read the 1880 Delaware Ohio History we find an interesting description of the duties of the Marshal as follows:

"With the growth of the village, the Marshal became an important functionary. Besides representing, the majesty of municipal law, he collected the taxes, cleaned the streets, served on occasion as Street Commissioner, had charge of the market, and served in a general way as the vis a tergo [defined as a force acting from behind] of the Mayor and Commonalty."

Now this may seem to reverse the statement above in which we report that the family's position in the community was not elevated with his return. In looking at the duties it appears that he would have had a respectful and very visible job that would have made him somewhat of a notable character in Delaware, Ohio. But it appears that Joshua's term as Marshal was very short lived as the Council notes for March 10, 1855 revealed the following:

Resolved: That for the cause of Dissipation and Negligence, the present Marshal J D Breyfogle be and he is hereby removed from his office as Marshal of the Incorporated Village of Delaware from and after this date.

We offer this tidbit to illustrate how Mary's life was again affected by her husbands' activities. News of this sort would no doubt have set tongues wagging with rumors of just what dissipation and negligence meant if it wasn't common knowledge. We have very strong evidence that the family attended church or at least Joshua declared himself a Methodist in his Civil War letters and spent a great deal of time recording his thoughts about the need for a very strong moral and spiritual character in himself and others around him. We do not know about any other social activities or clubs, but rumors and gossip abound in this sort of atmosphere if there is something suspicious going on with a person, his job, or social standing and this would have been added embarrassment for Mary.

We also found a transcript of the 1859 city directory for Delaware, Ohio and it listed J.D. Breyfogle as a tailor at M. Duvalls - Sandusky and Franklin Streets, so it appears that his abilities at this trade continued through the troubled times. In fact, his military records and his letters and journal record his skill at this trade and on several occasions mentions that Mary and Imogene may also have been quite skilled at sewing.

Decade of the 1860's

As we look forward in time, in the 1860 Federal Census it appears the family has relocated in Delaware as none of the names of the neighbors are the same as in 1850 and the nature of the neighborhood now appears to be one of shop owners, with occupations listed as merchant, barber, and other similar trades. Joshua continues to be listed as a tailor and their 17-year old son Charles R. is listed as a clerk. It is very possible that the family has found living space above some of the downtown business establishments, but letters that are part of the Civil War diaries give thoughts of an old cow that may not be producing milk, so we think they may have moved closer to the center of town during this time.

The 1860's is a period of great turmoil in the country as well as within the Breyfogle family that faced some very serious issues. Although it is not the purpose of this article to discuss the Civil war, the events leading to it, and its eventual outcome, it was a significant event that would have produced a lot of discussion, which would lead to a very trying time for Mary and her family. To help illustrate the timeline that led to Joshua's enlistment in the army we found the following events that triggered the War Between the States:

- October 16–18, 1859 – John Brown, in an attempt to amass arms for a slave insurrection, attacks the federal armory and arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia.
- December 2, 1859 – Brown is hanged for murder and treason at Charles Town, Virginia.
- November 6, 1860 – Abraham Lincoln is elected President, with Hannibal Hamlin as his Vice President.
- December 20, 1860 – As a consequence of Lincoln's election, a special convention of the South Carolina legislature votes to secede from the Union.
- January 9, 1861 – Star of the West, an unarmed merchant vessel secretly carrying federal troops and supplies to Fort Sumter, is fired upon by South Carolina artillery at the entrance to Charleston harbor.
- January 9–February 1, 1861 – Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas follow South Carolina's lead and secede from the Union.
- January 29, 1861 – Kansas is admitted as a state with a constitution prohibiting slavery.
- February, 1861 – Delegates from six seceded states meet in Montgomery, Alabama, to form a government and elect Jefferson Davis President of the Confederate States of America.
- March 4, 1861 – Abraham Lincoln is inaugurated as the sixteenth President of the United States.
- April 12–13, 1861 – Fort Sumter is bombarded and surrenders to South Carolina troops led by P. G. T. Beauregard.
- April 15, 1861 – Lincoln declares a state of insurrection and calls for 75,000 volunteers to enlist for three months of service. .

SOURCE: CivilWar@Smithsonian website www.civilwar.si.edu

We will leave the rest of the Civil War timeline up to others to chronicle, but we stopped here because it is at this time that we again see J. D. Breyfogle make a decision that will complicate Mary's life. We are sure that the community of Delaware would have known of all of these events through newspaper reports of the possibility of war, and of course the activity of the Underground Railroad would have been common knowledge to those living in this part of Ohio. One resource indicates that, "The Underground Railroad in Ohio was an amazingly efficient and well organized operation."

With the newspapers full of stories and the local buzz created by the slavery issues and the fact that Joshua was working in a retail establishment he would have brought home the talk about all the latest developments. So we wouldn't be surprised to hear that the Breyfogle dinner table was full of talk about what would come next. Most historians record that there was a very strong loyalty to the Union as the Southern States began to secede, with most men either wanting to join the fight or feeling compelled to volunteer.

The Ohio History Central website indicates that, "following President Abraham Lincoln's call for seventy-five thousand volunteers to end the South's rebellion, Governor Dennison encouraged Ohio communities to form and send militia units to the state capital at Columbus." The exact time that the Ohio volunteers began to gather with the intent of joining the army is not clear at this point, but it is known that local volunteers would begin to gather and then at some point declare their unit active, elect officers, and then present themselves as a military unit. When we look at a letter written by Joshua D. Breyfogle Jr., written March 27, 1903 we find the series of events that occurred somewhere around the end of April 1861.

Joshua, Jr. writes, "I remember the evening when my brothers Willie and Roland, and my father, came home, and father said, 'Well, Mary, your boys and husband have joined the Army, and will soon leave for the Front.' The feelings of my mother can not be described." In this final sentence we have perhaps the clearest picture of what reaction Mary had at hearing this news.

It would have been one thing for Joshua, Sr. to announce that Roland had joined, after all he was 18 and of prime age for military service. But to spring this sort of announcement with what appears to be a great deal of pride surely left her in stunned disbelief and perhaps anger. Obviously she knew that Joshua could be impulsive, after having gone through the Gold Rush period, but to think that he would have worked out this deal with her sons and with no apparent discussion with her must have hurt deeply. She also would remember that the Gold Rush fever produced actions by Joshua that were not effected by the family situation. So making such an announcement could only mean that he was serious and there would have been no doubt in her mind that he couldn't be persuaded not to go to war.

Company C was officially formed at Camp Jackson, Ohio, located near Columbus, Ohio, but in the Joshua, Jr. letter he mentions that, "A few days after, they left for Camp Chase, Ohio." According to www.wikipedia.com, "Camp Chase was a Civil War camp established in May 1861, on land leased by the U.S. Government. It served as a replacement for the much smaller Camp Jackson. Four miles west of Columbus, the main entrance was on the National Road." We suspect that with the large influx of volunteers that Joshua and his sons did report to Camp Chase as Joshua, Jr. reported and joined the rest of the volunteers from there.

Sources indicate that on May 2, 1861 this company was moved to Camp Dennison, which was located near Cincinnati about 125 miles southwest of Delaware, and we would assume that the Breyfogles joined them there. It was at this location that J. D. and the other members of this volunteer infantry were mustered into the service of the United States Army. The official military records indicate that on May 20, 1861, at the age of 54, J. D. Breyfogle was sworn in.

In his book, "The Story of Joshua D. Breyfogle, Private, 4th Ohio Infantry (10th Ohio Cavalry) And The Civil War, George E. Carter provided a complete transcript of Joshua's journals and letters to Mary that are preserved in the Dartmouth College Library. The letters themselves speak volumes about the events that Joshua and his sons faced, and provide brief glimpses on the family left behind to struggle through the war years on their own.

In his first letter home, dated May 22, 1861 JD reports seeing Roland and indicates that "Roland is surprised to see his father." We are not exactly sure what he meant by this, perhaps they were separated in the movements, but it is very obvious in his son's 1903 letter that they all volunteered at the same time. What is not clear in this 1903 letter is how strongly Joshua, Sr.'s sons felt about what they had done. In transcripts of letters home it appears that Roland may have had some misgivings, perhaps his mothers reaction left him with doubts on how wise this action was. It is no doubt that they left Delaware with her in tears.

Joshua wrote his third letter home, dated May 29, 1861, and works very hard on Mary to have her give her consent for Roland to officially join the army. He wrote, "It appears very shabby here to go back." He tells her he thinks Roland has made his decision but knows if she will give her consent it will "go easier on the boy." And he concludes the discussion by telling her, "We can do more for you here than we could at home." In this he is referring to the fact that

he promised to send all his pay home and that he knew Roland would do the same, or at least a portion of his pay. In the 1903 letter Joshua, Jr. spoke of his mothers consent with a casual thought, "but she was patriotic, and gave her consent." We wonder if she consented or just stopped protesting knowing how strong Joshua, Sr. could be once he made up his mind on something. And with Roland being away from his mother and only his father and the others around him to influence him we are sure his decision was greatly influenced by everyone but his mother.

Regardless of the exact timing of becoming a volunteer we know that Roland was mustered into the Army in early June. He was the family's second child and oldest son and was a little over 18, and he was sworn in on June 3, 1861. We understand that a mother would fear for her son regardless of age and with JD gone as well it would have been a very difficult time. Having faced living without a husband as provider during the Gold Rush period Mary was probably better suited to survive, but we doubt it would have been any easier to face the thoughts of a husband and son joining the war effort.

In his 7th letter home dated June 18th through 20th, JD begins discussing William joining him as a volunteer. It is not clear just how this topic came up except that Joshua mentions receiving a letter from Mary and later he writes, "Now a word about Willie. He must wait till he hears from me as I want him with me. I should have sent for him, but as it is he must be a good boy till I know where we are going and then I will send for him. He must be patient and faithful to you and his Employers." This seems to indicate that Willie remained at home so perhaps Joshua, Jr.'s memory was not entirely clear on all three Breyfogles leaving at the same time. It also tells us that he was working in Delaware presumably providing some income to the family.

Regardless of the exact order of things, on June 22nd Joshua penned a letter to Mary to confirm that Willie had arrived to meet him and since JD expanded on the topic we present it here to illustrate how Mary received the news that her son was safe, but that her 16-year old son was not part of the war.

Writing from Bellaire, Ohio JD says, "Willey got here this evening. You may think I was surprised when I saw him but I did not, in fact Mary could not scold him after thinking the matter over I thought it best to do the best I could. I think I will be able to get him in at full wages which will be better than he could do at home and I shall look after him very close. Roland says give him a good licking and send him back but I pacified him. Now Mary you must keep a stout heart, you have enough to kill a common woman but you are like myself a little uncommon and you will brave it I know."

The next transcription is a short letter to Mary from Willie, perhaps prompted by Joshua's demand. In this very short letter Willie concludes by saying, "and tell Pa when you write that I told you I would go if I felt like it." With such a short letter it is difficult to drag much meaning out of it, but coupled with JD's letter of the same date it is very evident that Willie did leave home to join the army without regarding his mothers concerns. The official military records indicate that June 23rd, William joined the army at the age of 16.

War, regardless of where it is waged, or the reasons for fighting it, is a terrible time for the country, state and community. But for a family, as we will see, can be a devastating time. Mary began the year of 1861 with a husband and 6-children in their home in Delaware. Her husband and one son were employed according to the census file and this latest correspondence indicates that another son was employed as well. Based on this we can deduce that they were able to live fairly comfortably. The Gold Rush adventure was behind them and one would think that Mary may have had a brighter outlook for the future.

But then within a 60-day period her husband and two sons marched off to war and she was left to hold her family together and survive again without much hope of financial or moral support. Again, we aren't sure if any of Mary's family was near, nor do we know what sort of support she would have expected from the Breyfogle side of the family. Joshua's brother Charles appeared to have remained in California following the Gold Rush Israel, Joshua's first cousin, and his family was living near Columbus, but that was too far away for any sort of support or regular help, and we are not sure if there was much contact between the families under normal circumstances. But we do know that at the age of 45 Mary would again be tested as she remained at home with four children and worried about the two that were gone.

Mary was left with all the chores and responsibilities at home and the need to supplement her income since, as we will see, the military pay did not come on a regular basis. With the mail system being rather primitive, communication would have been slow at best, and with her time divided between household and other chores Mary no doubt had little time for letter writing. In a letter dated November 21, 1861 Joshua writes, "Give my love to all the children and tell them there is not a day or an hour but I think of them and they must be good children and tell Joshua and Arthur I am very sorry to hear that it is so hard for you to make them cut your wood. You must tell them that they must mind you in everything and be good boys and learn as fast as they can."

As we suspected during the Gold Rush days, Mary was forced to use her children to help with the household chores, including cutting wood. Joshua, Jr. would have been 13 and Arthur 12 at the time and the chore of cutting wood would have been heavy work for such young children. But heating a home and providing fuel for the cook stove required a lot of wood so we are sure Mary used any resource available to keep the family warm and fed. We also find in the 1880 History of Delaware Ohio that prices on nearly everything sky rocketed in Delaware as the war effort reduced the work force needed to produce the goods and services.

Joshua, it appears, had little to do before the unit moved to join the war effort so he filled his time by writing long letters home filled with bluster about all the colonels and generals he met and how much favor he was in with these high ranking people. In his editorial notes in the book George Carter mentions the fact that many of the journal entries mirrored the letters and it appears that JD was using these entries to compose letters. He also notes that for all the self promotion used in his letters, little of it turned out the way JD thought it would. And so it is at this very early point that Joshua begins scolding her for being slow to write.

Joshua had not been away from home more than a week or two when he wrote his second letter home and opened the letter with, "I have written two letters all ready and rec'd no answer yet." This rather lengthy letter was full of news of the camp, his slow-paced work schedule, all the important people he was in contact with, and his plans to get Roland into the very best position as if he had the power as a private to do such things. At the end of the letter he again visits what will be a continuing theme with, "I want you to answer my letters as often as you can conveniently." This letter dated May 26th was written just 6 days following his enlistment.

Three days later, on May 29th he wrote another letter in which he concludes with, "You must answer my letters as I am two letters in advance and you must try and keep up." Then 5-days later writes another letter full of talk about important people he is meeting and sends his love following the line, "I send you some stamps so that you will have no excuse for not writing." As we said at the outset, we are not trying to judge Joshua, but it is very evident that he is not finding favor in Mary's response to him and it appears that he thinks she has little to do but write letters to him.

But before we give the reader the impression that JD was a cold person with little feelings for the plight of his family we offer this next excerpt from his June 18th to 20th letter to Mary. The camp was full of rumors of a move to "Dixie" as JD wrote and perhaps the reality of what faced him and his sons had set in. He included this passage near the end of the letter:

"We are going to Marietta [Ohio] and if you write at once I will get it before we leave there as we will not probably stay there more than two or three days but the surest way would be to write to Marietta and here as usual, and I will be sure to get the one that is directed here as it will follow us where ever we go but it will be some time before I will get it whereas if you write to Marietta it [might] miss me but you better write to both places and you will be sure.

"Now Mary God Bless you. I know you think I have written enough for one letter and if providence orders that we never meet again believe me that it was my misfortune and not my will to be anything but a kind and loving Husband and you must forgive me and forget my Unkindness and Neglect. Give a fathers love to Our Children and remember me as one more unfortunate than guilty, and if I Never return Believe me that I have always been your true and loving Husband."

Then on July 28th Joshua tried to comfort Mary about her concerns over their absence when he wrote, "I rec'd your letter dated the 19th July and one for each of the boys while on the march for this place which made the third or four since we have been in Virginia and I was very glad to hear from you but was sorry to hear that our absences trouble you so much, you must not fret about our absence as it is unavoidable and we must make the best of it."

Of course we don't know if Mary expanded on her concerns or if Joshua used a single sentence or paragraph to conclude she was unhappy with the situation. But we suspect that since she would have known that there would be no chance of changing Joshua's decision we think it was probably little more than few words of concern that prompted his remark.

Aside from her constant worry over their well being we also find evidence that she was beginning to experience financial problems and perhaps problems from others outside the family that may be taking advantage of her situation. The next passage leaves the reader with thoughts that she had demands for rent payments or perhaps had not been able to collect payment from a boarder. It is also possible that Mr. White was the landlord and had demanded that another be boarded in their home and this person was misbehaving. A footnote in the book indicates that "White" may have been Dr. James H White a doctor practicing in Delaware, Ohio. Joshua's August 2nd letter included this very strong sentiment:

“Now Ma if I was you I wouldn’t move out of that place till you get money from us which can’t be long now and if he gets ugly put him out of the house or tell White that he must behave better or you will and can have him taken care of. I was so mad at the old rascal that if I could come home and kicked him out of the premises but the time will come when I will bring him up with a sound turn.”

On September 22nd the Breyfogles saw their first action. JD in his 20th and 22nd letter home reported that they were called out of their tents about midnight and began a very long march, which took them to Maines Gap, VA where the troops fought their first battle. Willie was wounded and JD described it as follows. “When we got down the mountain I found Willey had been carried back wounded. I found that Roland had escaped safe and I went back to see him. I found him with a ball through his foot, it entered at the big toe and came out a little in front of the centre of his foot without breaking a bone, he had it dressed by the doctor.”

Willie was sent back with another wounded man by way of a horse and buggy taken from a Confederate sympathizer while the rest of the company continued the fight. In his September 26th letter JD sent money home and reported that he was nursing Willie back to health, no doubt little comfort to his mother that was receiving news of this injury via letters that must have delayed the news reaching her. And with such sketchy details filtered through Joshua we can only image her concern as she struggled to maintain a home for her children in Delaware.

He concluded the letter by telling her again of the money he was sending and then wrote, “I think you should better put it in the bank, don’t give it to any of our Dear Brothers for they will want you to pay for Fathers Board again and don’t pay him one cent for anything back. Treat him kindly when he calls but don’t lay yourself under any obligations to him or them. If you want any advice or assistance in any way go to Mr. Burr or Waldo.” Clark’s research indicated that Mr. Burr was probably Jonathan N. Burr, a doctor practicing in a small town near Delaware.

On October 5, 1861 Joshua wrote a letter to Mary reporting that Willie was not doing well and that, “I got a furlough for forty days for him. I thought he would do better to be home where you and Imogene could attend him.” He also mentioned that their military doctor did not think that he needed any surgery, just rest and a good diet. He also mentioned that the furlough could be extended if Willie did not improve in the forty days.

Joshua, showing the strain of war and being isolated from news at home started this letter by scolding Mary again about not writing often enough. He said, “I will write again without hearing from you but I think it will be the last time that I write without an answer. I am out of patience, here it is Saturday and no news of the money or yourself. I thought you would certainly write Sunday. Every low scamp gets letters in the company regular but me, and not one writes half as often. I think the old proverb holds good, familiarity breeds contempt, I think if I would write only once a month I might get an answer. I will try it, I guess.”

He concludes the letter by telling her that he is including a pencil drawing of the fort they have been building and he wants her to get it framed and covered with glass to preserve it for his return, then adds, “if I live to have that pleasure.” His mood in this letter, like others of this period is very sour and one wonders if his mental state is suffering from the pressure of war, his son’s injury, and the fact that he admitted in a letter to missing the company of his son Willie.

Returning to the subject of finances back home, Joshua’s October 14th letter included the thought that, “the money Roland says he sent for you to use as you thot fit and I the same, and you must buy anything you need, you know best what you need and you must exercise you own judgment in it.” Then he adds, “I think if you can get along you had better get the carpet in the front room but you and they must be the judges. I don’t like the idea of your having another family in a part of the house. I think with your economy that we can manage to pay five dollars per month for rent or even six and get along tolerable well.”

This passage gives us a clue to the cost of living in those days and the fact that the family did not own their home but was renting it. It also reveals that Mary or their landlord was considering a boarder. We wonder if Mary was trying to reduce her living cost by renting out a few rooms to another family or perhaps was facing eviction for not paying rent due to the lack of funds. We also found it interesting that although Joshua knew money was very tight for Mary, he wanted his pencil drawing “preserved under glass,” which obviously would have been an unneeded expense for the family at that time.

In his October 27th letter Joshua reveals he was injured when a wagon wheel rolled over his foot and caused him enough pain to return him from a battle to the hospital. He reminds Mary that Willie should not return until he was completely healed. Willie returned to duty in early November which is documented with JD’s November 10th letter indicating he had arrived in camp. We can only imagine the pain in seeing her son return to the war after having him home for such a short time.

In his November 25th letter to Mary, Joshua comments on a topic that surely must have put Mary in a very tight spot. Imogene, the oldest daughter who was now 22 years old, had made the decision to move to Buffalo, NY. It is not entirely clear if this move was to live with the Reynolds family relatives or other friends of the family. In several letters Joshua has referred to Imogene and Mary “sewing for others” as a way to earn money and I am sure that this was one of the primary concerns of both parents. Of course there was also the cost of getting there to which Joshua wrote, “in the first place she would need some new things and then it would cost about ten dollars to take her there and when they got tired of her or she wished to come home there would be ten dollars more.”

This is one of the rare occasions where Joshua spent any amount of space in a letter to discuss family matters and he reluctantly concluded, “I presume my advice is of not much weight. You will do what I hope is best for her in the matter but I really think she might remain at home with you at least till I come home if that even happens, in preference to going where they will keep her till her cloths are used up and they have no more to do for her and then send her home as soon as she can raise money to come with. The ground you know Mary has all been gone over once but do as you please and I will drop the subject for the present.”

We suspect that it is possible that Mary was supporting this move as JD mentions that the subject has come up before. As much as Mary could use the additional help and any money that Imogene could raise through sewing, as a mother she would also want to see her daughter have every possible advantage that this opportunity might present. It is also possible that this move would have provided Imogene with opportunities that could not be provided based on the financial and social standing of the family at this point. As it turned out, Imogene did not leave her mother’s house in 1861.

Before the close of 1861 Joshua and Mary suffered the death of one of their sons. But it was not one of the sons fighting the Civil War; rather it is their 12-year old son Arthur. The family's fifth child, passed away on December 1, 1861. Family records do not indicate the cause of death and there are no official records at this point in our research to offer any clues. In his November 15th letter to his wife, JD Breyfogle referred to an illness of his son as follows:

“This morning I rec’d your Sunday letter and was very glad to hear of all your healths except Arthur, I hope he will soon get well.”

Illness in the middle 1800’s was often treated with home remedies and patent medicines, and without knowing Arthur’s condition or what effected him there is no way to determine if there was any course of treatment or if this was something that came on suddenly. We also noted earlier that about this time Mary had written that both Joshua, Jr. and Arthur had been pressed into service cutting firewood, a heavy task for children of this age and perhaps the exposure and work were part of his illness. Dr. James H. White, mentioned earlier, may have been called to treat Arthur, but regardless whatever struck him, between November 15th when Joshua responded to her letter and the first of December Arthur was gone. We present JD’s December 2nd letter in its entirety as it provides a glimpse at how such a tragic event was handled between this couple.

“Dear Mary

“I just rec’d a dispatch from John but was not much disappointed in hearing that Arthur was no more, for from your last he was too low to recover, it is a great affliction to us all but how much more to us that could neither hear nor see him and now we cannot realize that he is dead: but Mary you know that we have been very highly favored by providence while our neighbors and friends have lost children, fathers and mothers, we have been free from death and almost sickness. Still I know it will affect you very much but your must bear in mind that you have children left who look alone to you for their guide and you must bear up and take care of your health for it you should be taken sick I do not know what I should do, and the boys would be nearly crazy. Only think Mary what the consequences would be to us, especially to the children under the present circumstances. I could not come home to stay any time with them and now Mary do try and reconcile yourself to this severe stroke of Providence and remember that what is our loss is His gain and for my sake and your children do take care of your self and preserve your health. The boys send their love and sympathy and I can not tell you my feelings but you must believe me ever your most affectionate husband.”

It must have been very difficult for both parents to loose a child without the comfort afforded by being together. Yet we see Joshua attempt to console Mary by telling her his loss was greater because he was not home. Again, communication between spouses in the 1860’s was radically different than it is today, but this seems to point to a pretty self centered individual and although he certainly suffered at the loss and being away, we can only wonder how helpless Mary felt as she watched her son die, regardless of her efforts to save him.

The worry over her husband and sons stationed so far from home coupled with the loss of a child must have weighed heavily upon her. Not only had she lost a child but now she was faced with funeral and burial arrangements and at this point Joshua and the boys had not been able to send money home as regularly as they thought. Of course there was also the discussion of Imogene leaving home and although this topic is visited in later letters with a brief question or two, it is not entirely clear if Imogene made this move or not. This sudden death in the family more than likely postponed any move.

Nine days later Joshua had received more letters from home and as one would expect the death of Arthur must have been the primary topic as this is the only topic in his reply. In fact he concluded the letter by saying that he had more news to write concerning his situation but that he was in no mood to take time to write it. This is an obvious indication that although Joshua seemed to leave Mary to worry and care for the children, he did have strong feelings over this loss, and perhaps was feeling very out of touch with his family at home.

Having said this, we do find it remarkable that he opens this December 11th letter to Mary by saying, "I rec'd your letters to the boys and myself and was very sorry to find that you took the blow so much to heart. Remember Mary we have been very remarkable blest with health for over twenty years, and we ought to submit to an dispensation of Providence without a murmur. You feel his death severely but you were with him to the last to sooth and nurse him and I was away without being able to do anything for his relief."

He goes on to remind her to take care of her health and then mentions all the help she had from friends and neighbors during this time. In what might be an indication that Joshua may not have been the most adored man in the neighborhood when he comments that the, "kindness you perhaps would not had if I had been at home." He also takes this moment to criticize Mary by writing, "I am very sorry you buried my poor boy on the lot you have. I would much rather he had been laid in the potters field than there, but I presume you done the best you could under the circumstances." We have searched the burial records at Oak Grove Cemetery where the Breyfogle family was buried and find no record of Arthur so we do not know where the burial took place.

It does appear that Mary may have had financial help in the final arrangements by her brother Richard, Doctor White and a person JD names as Mendenhall. We do not know who this third person was, but JD did remark that he hoped to have a chance to repay them someday for their help. Everyone handles grief in a different manner, and we are often reminded that the death of a child is a burden that weighs very heavily on a parent. So we will not try to judge Joshua severely for what on the surface appears to be coldness in handling this situation. He mentioned in this letter that he had Arthur's picture in a locket around his neck and that he never removes it. But this is the final mention of Arthur in his letters home.

We know that childhood mortality was high in the middle 1800's but we doubt that any parent would shed their grief in a few days or weeks at such a loss, even though loss of children was common place. But we again remind the reader that public displays of emotion during this time was not common and it is very possible that Mary suffered silently as she went on with her life and cared for her family. With three children left at home and her husband and two sons fighting a war, Mary surely was a very strong woman to carry such a load.

It appears that Mary did not write to JD during much of January, perhaps the grief she felt prevented her from thinking much about writing letters, or perhaps she busied herself with the house and children at home to bury the sorrow that surely was weighing heavily upon her. JD sent money home on January 8, 1862 and commented about the lack of information from home. He also indicated that he did not anticipate any further pay for them until March and mentioned that he knew this would put Mary and the kids in a real bind.

Sometime about the middle of January Mary had written a single letter to Joshua and notified him she had moved to another house. He seemed to accept the news as a good thing but did worry that she would be in "a pinch for money," as he again repeated that they would not have any more pay until March. Since this move occurred shortly after the death of Arthur it is very likely that Mary was trying to remove herself from the house in which he died and all the bad memories that surely surrounded this sad occasion. We do not know if Imogene made a move to Buffalo, but in the middle in this same letter of January 14th Joshua concluded, "my love to them both and to Imogene, if she is there. I have not heard from her nor about her for sometime."

Perhaps this move was also about Imogene leaving home and the need for a smaller house for just Mary and her two remaining children. We of course don't know the circumstances that Mary and her children were in but suspect that they were living hand to mouth and probably did not have much in the way of household items to move from one place to the other as it appears that up to this point this Breyfogle family had not been in a strong financial position.

The troops were under constant movement and in April of 1862 Joshua's unit had traveled to Washington DC and his letters home were full of excitement and wonder over visiting the capital. This rebound in his spirit probably helped

Mary in the fact that some of his letters previous to this were very somber. In an April 10th letter to Mary we hear Joshua begin to complain of the rheumatism, which will plague him through the rest of his service. He concludes this letter with his disappointment over not getting paid, "Our paymaster has not yet come although at the end of this month we have six months pay due us. I hope it will be soon for you must need money very much."

Nine days later Joshua wrote to tell Mary they had been paid and he had sent them eighty dollars. His spirits were beginning to fall again as he was in severe pain from the rheumatism and did not have shoes so he had missed a couple battles. This news would have added to Mary's concern over his well being as during this time there was little effective treatment of this problem. We did find a 19th Century Medical Book that suggested hot air or vapors could reduce the pain as well as the use of the "wine of colchicum root mixed with peppermint water, and bicarbonate of potassium." Had he been home the treatment would surely have been one of the many patent medicines of the day and rest. But military service in a theater of war would not reduce his suffering.

He concluded this April 19th letter with, "Give my love to the dear children and tell Mary she must keep that ring to remember her pa by, as it is possible she may not see me again, poor child she can love him without alloy as she was too young to know and hear his faults, good by Mary and God Bless."

The summer of 1862 must have been particularly difficult for Mary. Joshua complained in every letter he wrote in June and July that he had not heard from her even though he and the boys had sent money home to her. As we mentioned above, Joshua made no further comment on the death of Arthur and we suspect that Mary was either keeping herself busy to bury the sorrow or perhaps had become depressed herself as she dealt with this loss and the concern over Joshua's health and her sons, now involved in the heavy fighting in Virginia. Joshua's letters are full of the glory of the battle and the excitement of the sounds of battle. We doubt very seriously that Mary really wanted to hear of all the glory, she just wanted them home safely and all this to be behind them.

Perhaps the other reason for not writing was the fact that about June of 1862 Joshua D. Breyfogle, Jr. ran away from home at the age of 14 to join the army. We think Joshua, Jr. tells this part of the story best so we will reproduce it as he wrote in his March 27, 1903 letter to his sons:

"Of course my patriotism was on the jump, and two or three of my chums and I began to scheme some way to be a soldier. We waited until the 4th O.V.I. had reenlisted. After serving I think five months, the members came home on furlough for thirty days, and had started for Washington, D.C., when there was a call for volunteers for the six month service. I thought this my opportunity, so joined Co. K. 86th O.V.I. got as far as the depot in Delaware when I was nabbed by a man by the name of Reynolds, an uncle, and taken home. The next day I started again with some men. Once more I was caught and returned to my mother.

"About a week after, I met a man in the town by name of D. W. Lugenbeel (who still living in Del.), and he said, 'Dos, I will get you to Columbus all right.' So I went to the depot by the way of the R.R. Bridge, and while he went over on the march with a squad of recruits. I jumped the train opposite the depot, found D.W.L. I crawled under his seat and he spread a shawl over the seat, hiding me from view. I soon heard a man's voice asking if anyone had seen Josse Breyfogle. Gee, I was scared (but always believed in 'the third time's the charm.') But he passed out of the car. The rain had started. I crawled out, stuck my head out of a window, and there 20 feet from me was this man Reynolds. I yelled at him, and placing my thumb and finger at my nose, wiggled it. Was he mad?" confusion

We have verified that the 86th Ohio Volunteer Infantry was being organized at Camp Chase in Ohio around June 10, 1862 and was moved out 7-days later. Although the official records of this enlistment for Joshua have not been found, we know that this organization of the 86th was for three months, not the six-months that Joshua, Jr. reports to his sons. Based on everything we can see at this point it does appear he joined in June as the official government records indicate 86th was shipped to Clarksburg, VA for guard duty between June 17th to August 21st, which lines up perfectly with Joshua' Jr.'s letter.

We spent considerable time trying to pin down an exact date and verify this service but can only use the circumstantial evidence above as well as one very casual mention in one of Joshua, Sr.'s letters to firm this up. As we have indicated, Joshua, Sr. did not always comment on everything that Mary wrote him, and at times his writing lacks a sense of urgency as you will see in this brief passage in a June 20, 1862 letter to Mary. Joshua concludes this letter by saying, "Write as usual and tell me about Joshua and be sure you either write yourself to Captain Mead or get Doc White to for him to receive his pay and have it sent to you when ever they are paid off, write as soon as you receive this and believe me as ever. Your affectionate husband."

This simple passage mentions nothing of the boy running away to join the army, nor does it mention anything about Mary's brother trying to stop him. And his casual comment does nothing to console Mary at what can only be imagined as total panic over this child running off to fight in a bloody war that was raging all across the south by this time.

In fact we find it amazing that his only comment is one of trying to get the new found income to Mary. This certainly is an indication that money remained the largest problem Mary faced outside of the loss of one of her children to death and now three children and her husband fighting in the war. This surely was a very hard time for Mary and the two daughters lived with her at this time.

We have another clue that links the younger Joshua to the 86th with a short passage in Joshua, Sr.'s letter to Mary on August 14, 1862, "I wrote to Joshua at Clarksburg and got an answer last week. He says he is a drummer and is going to be a soldier as long as he lives, he is well." The Clarksburg connection is appropriate as the 86th moved to Huttonville, VA between August 21st and the 25th and then was back in Clarksburg until September 27th when it returned to Delaware, OH and was mustered out having completed its 6-month enlistment. But Mary's relief over his return would be short lived as the 86th was reorganized immediately and her son reenlisted with this unit and left Delaware after a 30-day furlough.

Summer turned to fall and by October Joshua's general health had worsened again. He wrote perhaps the longest letter yet to Mary on October 9th telling of having, "something wrong with my legs from the knees down and dysentery." The dysentery was widespread in the unit and of course bad water and diet would have been common among soldiers, but the leg problem, which was rheumatism, was returning and aggravated by forced marches with heavy packs. It seems that pride may have been another issue as Joshua refused to ride in the wagons on these marches as he felt it "looked bad." As always he admonished Mary for not writing and this letter was prompted by one he received from her, the first "for a great length of time."

The letter rambled from battle to battle and local camp conditions with little mention or question of the family and anything that Mary may have written to him. He did report that Willie's enlistment was coming to an end but since he, "still acts as orderly for the colonel, has very little to do and enjoys himself very well, and as long as he has no harder duty I think he might as well stay here as get a discharge, for you could do nothing with him at all there." He goes on to relate that keeping Willie "within bounds" is very difficult and therefore it is better that he stay where JD can look out for him.

By now Willie is 17, and having been exposed to men much older and in battles that made him feel part of this older crowd, it would be unlikely that he'd feel compelled to listen to a parent, or so Joshua felt. We suspect this increased Mary's worry over a son that entered the army too young to start with, and now to hear that he may be displaying a wild streak would leave her with thoughts that he should be home away from all this mess. Joshua again turns to the subject of money and tells Mary to do the best she can as he suspects there will be no pay to send home until November. He tells her that she should seek "credit for what you want if you get out of money."

Joshua had written earlier in 1862 that he thought he could get home for a few days in the fall, but now it is November and he does not think he will be able to make it home before Christmas. Joshua's journal entries take the place of letters as he begins the process of getting what must have been a medical discharge. On November 18th he wrote, "Am just getting ready for town after my papers." On the same day he writes that he thinks he will get his discharge sooner than others because, "there has been a very large number of sick sent in from the army the last day or two."

By December 2nd Joshua had his pay and discharge and left for Columbus with Doctor Welch as he was traveling the same way. Clark notes in his book that Joshua ended 1862 out of the Union Army and back in Delaware, yet he starts 1863 with an enlistment into the Tenth Ohio Cavalry as a paid substitute. He was to receive \$300 for this service but does not receive the pay.

We do not see any letters or journal entries that describe the discussions or thought process that JD used to make his decision to enter the army again, this time at the age of 56 and now with continuing problems with rheumatism. Undoubtedly Mary tried her best to convince him to remain at home as there would be no shame in not continuing with the army service. He was well beyond the age of the general recruit, did not gain any rank or stature that would have put him in a less strenuous service, and surely had a real need to stay home with his family. He joined a unit that was not associated with his previous unit in which his two sons were members so he could not have argued that his persuasive nature could help their sons. There was the allure of \$300 to be paid for taking the place of another, but surely they could have survived with him returning to the work of tailor or other odd jobs.

The only reasonable argument he could have made was the money and the fact that a cavalry unit did not require as much travel on foot, which seemed to be what made it possible for him to continue in the service. His rheumatism is

not mentioned in letters or journal entries, but his condition was more than likely chronic and only made tolerable by the service on the back of a horse.

As Joshua returned to service his letters showed he was constantly agitated by the disrespect of the general enlisted soldiers and the poor moral character of the officers themselves. By March Mary had written to him with news that she was considering a move to another house in southern Delaware, Ohio, but he replied in his March 8th letter, "it is too far out of town. You had better pay seven dollars a month and me and the boys must try and pay it." If Mary looked at this letter the way we do she would wonder what thought process he was using, he tells her to pay the rent and promises to send money, then he follows with the news that they would not be paid anything until they got to Nashville, but then would be paid monthly. There was no timetable given for this to start so she was being advised to stick it out where she was and probably pay a few dollars more in rent on the hope that he would make good on the promise to send more money.

On March 10th he is steaming down river on the Steamer Princess and writes a note promising to send money, "which will enable you to live in a decent part of town." Then in the very next sentence he continues, "Expect either to be promoted or killed, in either case you will be enabled to live comfortable without me." As much as it is not for us to judge, the communication between them when we see one side only, this letter seems an attempt to throw guilt on Mary by telling her that the money from a promotion or dying will help her situation.

By March 27th Joshua has become desperate for news from home as others in his company had received mail and word through them was that Mary has moved to southern Delaware, Ohio, against his wishes. He writes, "I am very sorry that you have gone so far in to South Delaware. I wrote you in one of my letters not to leave where you were, and I would try and meet the rent." But again, he continues with the fact that they are not yet in Nashville and have not been paid.

It is our thought that Mary has made a desperate move to try to hold things together. It is obvious by his remarks that Joshua feels that the southern part of Delaware is not a good part of town and therefore we would surmise that rent would be much cheaper for Mary who is essentially living without any finances. We have not been able to locate any historical reference that supports this contention, but it is obvious that Joshua did not favor this move.

If it is as we suspect, Mary must have either not received his letters before making this decision, or made the choice in spite of his wishes. As a wife and mother who watched her husband chase a dream of gold and riches in 1849 leaving her to fend for herself and then to have him leave her again to fight a war at his advanced age we are sure she probably ceased worrying about what he thought was best as she watched as he made poor decisions as well. He concluded this letter by requesting newspapers from Delaware as they have no knowledge of anything beyond their immediate circumstances.

In an April 11th letter to Mary he acknowledges receiving letters from her and one from Roland, both dated March 11th. It is obvious that the mail system was severely handicapped with the war effort and the constant movement of the troops, yet he continues to admonish her to write sooner. We do realize from this letter home that Mary has announced that she purchased the house and Joshua indicates, "I am very glad you have bought the house you speak of and will try and raise all I can to meet the first payment."

As conciliatory as this sounds, he continues by indicating he has not yet been paid and has nothing to send her. In fact he writes to Mary on May 24th, over a month since his last letter, that, "I received your letter yesterday and was glad to hear that you were all well, and am very sorry that I can't help you out of your pecuniary troubles but you are a pretty good financier and I think will work yourself out." We think this casual comment reveals that Joshua again looks at his situation and not Mary's. He continues the letter telling her they are living well with good rations, while at home it is obvious Mary is having trouble making ends meet. It is likely that the first house payment must have been late or was not made at all putting her in a very bad spot.

On July 4th Willie wrote his mother from Hospital 1st Division 2 near Gettysburg, PA and tells her, "I thought I now would drop you a few lines to let you know that I am all right with the exception of a broken jaw and a sore head. I had it broken on the 2d day of this month by a solid shot striking a stone fence and knocking me on the head and knocking my jaw on a stone and breaking my jaw as nice as possible at the chin." He adds a few more lines telling her it is knitting fine and is causing him pain and trouble eating. Then in typical youthful bravado he concludes the letter with, "Bully for the union!" A mother sitting at home with little news or knowledge of her children's welfare must have been sickened with this sort of news even though her son is saying he is doing just fine.

Mary must have quickly written the news of Willie's injury to Joshua who responded to her on July 19th and said, "I rec'd your kind letter last night. I had been out on picket two day and when I came in found your letter. I had been very uneasy on the boys account but thank God they are safe." Then he reports again that they have not been paid and

that there are no immediate prospects of being able to send money soon. He then continues the letter telling her news of the recent battles and brags that he shook hands with General Reed and Doctor Williams of the 121st Ohio who were camped near them.

Joshua tells Mary that the reason his substitute pay is being held up is that their captain has been on furlough and that he holds the money. He also reveals that there is a very hostile mood concerning this and that there are those in the camp that would, "kill him as soon as they would a hog or a dog." He expresses a very keen desire to send her money and knows that they must be suffering horribly for the lack of funds. In this July 19th letter we pick up a hint of things to come.

By late September Joshua has heard that they will be paid soon and there is now a way for Mary to receive the money directly every 60-days instead of waiting for Joshua to send it by others back to Delaware. He does not know the process but tells her to get with Dr. White or her brother Richard to get the proper paperwork going. He tells Mary that he will live on rations alone as he knows she is in desperate need of the money.

In his book, George Clark does not indicate if there were no letters between this late September letter and the next one published in the book, which was in February of 1864. George Clark, with all his research on Joshua, Sr., must not have found the 1903 letter by Joshua, Jr. as this may have provided a clue for the reason for no communication during this time, or so we think.

During October of 1863, the 86th OVI, Joshua, Jr.'s unit, was attached to the 9th Ohio Cavalry and this is the only official military records that show Joshua Breyfogle, Jr. served during the Civil War. The record indicates that he was mustered into the 9th Ohio Cavalry on September 22, 1863, and was assigned duties as bugler. He would have been a little over 15 years old at the time.

Mary was fully aware of this change and reported it to her husband who wrote, "I think on the whole that it is the best that Joshua went where he did as I do not think they will leave the state at least for any length of time and the time will soon roll around I hope he will be like Roland and Willey but it is barely possible." But Joshua, although he always seemed so sure of his predictions, was wrong that his son would remain in the state. The 9th Ohio Cavalry saw service in Kentucky, Tennessee and several other states during the remainder of the war. In his letter to his sons, Joshua, Jr. tells of several major battles so it is evident that he saw action that his father had not anticipated.

As 1863 ends and 1864 begins the 10th Ohio Cavalry that Joshua, Sr. is assigned to remains in Tennessee and the first letter published in the book is from February 5th. For the first time it appears that Mary addressed Joshua's lack of communication. He reported to her in this letter that for the last four months they have had duty in the Cumberland Mountains and communications have been severely limited. To this end he says, "This is a partial excuse for the neglect you speak of. Another is or was the impossibility of getting paper envelopes or stamps. As soon as we got here yesterday I got your short note and was rather pleased than otherwise as it looked more like a lover quarrel than anything else."

With this letter we feel Mary has begun to realize how irresponsible Joshua has been by leaving her penniless and responsible for maintaining the home and family alone. We would think that his first enlistment may not have caused her as much concern as this second one. There would have been no reason for him to leave except to satisfy some need of his to be involved in the war first hand. He of course would have pointed to the money raised by substituting his service for that of another, but in the end we are sure Mary reached a point of knowing that she could not support his poor behavior any longer. We also think that Mary would have certainly looked at her husband as the reason three of her sons followed him into the war as well. As we said, Roland was prime age for service and before the war ended Willey would have certainly been required to serve, but Joshua, Jr. would probably not have been required to serve.

Perhaps her growing discontent with Joshua and his influence over her sons can be felt in this exchange. In a letter to Mary while camped at Gillams Bridge, Georgia during June of 1864 Joshua responds to a letter from Mary. He writes, "Notwithstanding your implied that you care not to hear from me more, I think it my duty as well as my wish and anxiety to hear from my boys. To write you a few lines to inform you that I have sent by the state agent Smith to your order fifty dollars, for which I enclose a receipt and you will draw the money from The Treasurer of the County. Should have sent you about forty more but a good part of our company were off and did not draw their pay."

In this same letter he suspects that Roland has returned home to recover from a wound, although the official military record does not indicate this, we suspect that this wound is the one that Lewis D. Breyfogle alluded to as the cause of Roland's death later in life. On July 15th Joshua sends more money by the state agent and writes a short note to Mary saying that, "I see by the papers that the boys are at home and I think it very hard that they do not write." We read this to mean that Joshua, Sr. thought both Roland and Willey may be home on furlough at this time. But we know that Willie was near City Point, VA at this time base on the 1903 letter in which his brother Joshua, Jr. indicated he was

thrown from his horse in June of '64 and suffered heat stroke as he lay exposed during the remainder of the battle. He was taken to a field hospital and reported that "my brother Willie heard of our stiff fight, rode over from his headquarters (he was still with Gen. French on his Medical Staff), found me lying in the bush, ordered an ambulance, sent me to City Point, to the General Hospital." He does not mention Willie again during his convalescence that lasted well over 2-months.

At the end of July Joshua heard from Mary and was much relieved that she and the family were well. Mary related that Roland was home recovering from his wounds but that he was healing slowly. At the end of the letter he writes, "I am glad the boys have concluded to stay out of the army." The military records do show that Roland was mustered out of the Army on June 21, 1864, but that he was promoted to Captain on February 26, 1865 and assigned to the 186th Infantry Regiment Ohio.

Willey, according to Carter's book, was transferred to the 4th Battalion Regiment Ohio on June 5, 1864. It is possible that these changes in their military status was not included in Mary's letter to Joshua or that the boys had not informed her of their exact military status so that she would not worry about them and they could enjoy their furlough's.

The time between letters gets longer as the year wears on and on September 13, 1864 Joshua acknowledges receiving her letter of the 12th, which is assumed to be the 12th of August as he is in Georgia and a letter sent from Ohio would not have arrived overnight. He writes, "am sorry to hear that the boys and yourself are so unwell."

Mary must have had quite the surprise towards the end of August or perhaps the first of September. As she walked across a street in Delaware, Ohio, Joshua, Jr. appeared dressed in the finest military uniform as he arrived on the train home for a furlough. The timing of this furlough is based on several passages in his 1903 writing and provides clues, such as he was wounded in June of '64, transferred to a hospital and indicated he was there two months. Then he was returned to duty and his unit had, "orders to be relieved and make our winter quarters for the winter of '64.

At any rate, he was still very weak from his sun stroke so his colonel ordered him home on furlough. Joshua, Jr. reported that he received \$275 in pay and bounty and traveled by train to Columbus where he, "bought a suit of military that fit me fine – gold stripes down the pants, gold chevrons, gold lace cap. My I was proud I was a vet." Upon his arrival in Delaware he continued, "Met my little mother on the street. We met in the middle of the street, and how she did laugh and cry!"

This must have been a special moment for her, with tension between Mary and her husband, and then to be surprised by this visit of her son, we are sure she was very much relieved. Joshua, Jr. had no illusions about remaining home for very long and undoubtedly Mary probably tried to push this out of her mind as her son was home. But the time was short according to Joshua, Jr. and he said his goodbyes, "and my poor little mother was nearly heart-broken, but I was off."

There is a lack of journal entries and letters during the period between September 26th and November 1, 1864 as Joshua was able to get back to Delaware. Clark mentions that Joshua did jot a few entries from September 12th through October 12th traveling back to Delaware and a few random journal entries mentioned the trouble in making train connections. He wrote in his journal that he arrived home at one in the morning October 24, 1864. So he spent nearly a month returning home, stayed there one day, and then rejoined his unit on November 1, 1864.

We suspect he was greatly agitated in the time to get home but wonder what sort of reception he received from Mary when he arrived. Mary appears to have developed a degree of independence during the later half of 1864 and a one day visit from her absentee husband probably did little to comfort her when life was so tough at her end. On November 4th Joshua wrote a letter to Mary without a word of his visit, but did mention a letter of November 3rd in which we assume he must have said something about the short visit and extended travel. Clark indicates in his book that this letter was not found in the collection so we wonder if Mary did not receive it or chose to discard it. We suspect she did not receive it as it is obvious she saved nearly every other scrap of paper he sent her, even those in which he scolded her badly.

On November 10th Joshua wrote again with news and a receipt for the money he sent. We found a curious passage which may be an indication of something Mary may have said to him about his past writing. He writes, "I have written two letters before I have nothing to say that would interest you." It is very possible that the very long detailed letters about the battles, death, and other details of war may have worn thin for Mary.

Joshua's unit faced very hard duty during November and December of 1864 and this was very evident in a very poor letter to Mary on December 22nd. After signing off he adds a postscript in which he says, "I will try soon to send you a more sensible and collected letter but I am so tired and worn out that I am not fit for anything. Only think near six weeks constant duty of fighting and marching night and day and only three days rest during the whole of that time and you can judge how I feel."

The year of 1864 ended and began with Joshua camped near Savannah, GA. His unit continued to move through the south and as the last days of the war approached we see a lot of journal entries but no letters are transcribed for the book. Clark reports that not a single letter existed in the collection for 1865 although there is one reference in the journal to a letter Joshua received from home just before returning home from Washington D.C.

On Sunday April 30, 1865 Joshua arrived in Columbus at 3:30 AM and was unable to catch a train to Delaware until Monday May 1st. What should have been a joyous home coming for him unfortunately was not. William D., or Willie as he was called, was the only direct casualty of the war for the Breyfogle family. William D. Breyfogle, died of wounds from the war on April 30, 1865 at about 9:00 AM. Records are not clear as to the actual cause of his death, but we know that he died at home at the very young age of 20. Now Mary had lost two sons, both without having her husband there for the final moments. It is difficult to know if Joshua's arrival the next day provided her with the support she needed as there are no further journal entries or letters to document this very sad occasion.

Joshua did jot a note in his journal that "we buried him on Monday 1st of May at four in the afternoon, had a very large funeral and a fine day." Willie is buried in Oak Grove Cemetery, Sycamore Ridge, which became the family plot. Joshua remained home until the 16th of May when he returned to Washington DC to pick up his discharge papers that were not properly signed before departing. On Friday July 21, 1865 Joshua departed from Washington with his official discharge and thus closed this chapter of his life.

The 1870's and Beyond

With Joshua's return home we can only wonder at how strange it must have been for Mary and her two daughters. Mary had been on her own for a little over 4-years, watched as 2-sons died, moved several times, bought a house without her husband, and generally held what was left of her family together through a terrible war and lack of financial support. Ten years before this period she had been on her own for two years when Joshua traveled to California to seek riches, so now after 47 years of marriage he was home and at an age when life generally slows down a bit.

Imogene, her first daughter died almost exactly one year after William on April 16, 1866, just 20 days before her daughters 26th birthday. Family records do not provide any clue to the cause of her death and there is no indication that Imogene married or ever left her mother's home. She is buried in the family plot at Oak Grove Cemetery, Delaware, Ohio with the headstone carrying the Breyfogle name. With this unfortunate death Mary now had 3 surviving children and a husband weary from the war. One assumes that her husband went back to the trade of tailor, although we can't be certain exactly what shape Joshua was at this time.

As we said, the decade of the 1860's was a tragic period for Mary; she had lost three children and now faced the loss of her husband when he ended his life on January 28, 1868. The Ohio Democrat, New Philadelphia, Ohio reported the incident on February 14, 1868 and indicated that he left a note that did not mention any family member. At this point it seems evident that Joshua was unable to make the transition between the war years and civilian life and that he was perhaps dealing with some form of mental illness.

We have no direct evidence of this thought but based on the tone of his letters throughout the war, which became more somber and each one seemed to indicate a growing paranoia. His suicide occurred "a day or two after the suicide of Rev. Mr. Brush, in the same town," as the paper reported. Joshua's note referred to the fact that he would be joining "Brother Brush in a few moments." He is buried in the family plot at Oak Grove Cemetery and George E. Carter, author of the Civil War book cited previously, visited the plot to find that the headstone reads "Father Breyfogle."

Suicide has always carried a stigma and perhaps it was easier for Mary to not record his first name than to have others comment on his tragic end by having the grave plainly identified. We are sure that after all this time and tragedy that Mary survived this death the same way she did her two sons and daughter. Certainly she would have busied herself with maintaining her home and providing a meager income.

As the 1860's ended and she passed out of these troubled years there must have been this brief period where Mary felt like all the tragedy was behind her. Joshua, Jr. did not remain in the military as he had written his father, but returned to civilian life and on January 17, 1870 he married Mary E. Dixon. We assume this marriage occurred in Delaware and we know very little of Mary E. Dixon other than she was born in England. Although Joshua and his family moved to Kansas a few years later, their first two children were born in or around Delaware, Ohio.

This brings our research to the 1870 Federal Census. Mary B. Breyfogle is listed as the head of the household on this form dated July 11, 1870. She has no employment listed and is living in a home valued at \$1,300. Living with her are Roland C., her second child and Mary R., her youngest. Roland is listed as 1st Lieutenant, USA and Mary a student in school. We are not sure when Roland was discharged from the army, or if in fact he died while in the Army. Roland passed away on July 28, 1870 and Lewis D. Breyfogle reported it was from war injuries. We suspect that he reported

this based on the letter Joshua, Jr. wrote to his sons. Less than a month from Roland's death Mary applied for his Civil War Survivor's benefit, which would offer a little assistance to Mary and her daughter.

Following the death of Roland, the decade of the 1870's seemed to bring an end to the suffering of Mary and her remaining family. She appears in the 1880 census living with her youngest daughter, now age 25 and unmarried. Mary B. is 65 years old and presumably living on the civil war pension awarded her in regard to Roland and perhaps for her son William. William's name appears on the pension index and the application date appears to be July 25, 1865. The exact amount of the pension(s) Mary received is unknown, but it is known that the maximum pension allowed for the death of the veteran was \$8.00 per month, and if there were dependent children an additional \$2.00 was awarded.

It is unknown when her son Joshua and his family moved to Kansas, but records show that two of their children were born in Kansas and an infant passed away there in 1879. Joshua, Jr. and his family appears on the 1880 Federal Census living near Wichita, Kansas. So Mary and her daughter had no direct member of the Breyfogle family near them during this time. We do find a record of the person we suspect as being Mary's brother, Richard W. Breyfogle, living in Delaware and would expect that she would have had some contact with him over the years.

This census is the final official reference to Mary B. (Reynolds) Breyfogle as she passed away on March 17, 1898 at about 82 years of age. Her death occurred before the 1900 Federal Census was taken and of course the 1890 Federal Census was destroyed by fire so we can't determine what happened between 1880 and her death. Mary passed away leaving her daughter Mary and son Joshua D. Breyfogle, Jr. to carry on this branch of the Breyfogle family. She is buried in the Breyfogle family plot at Oak Grove Cemetery, Sycamore Ridge, Delaware, Ohio. A visitor to this peaceful cemetery today could not possibly know the suffering of this mother and wife.

Mary's son and daughter-in-law, Joshua and Mary Breyfogle, Jr., lived near Wichita, Kansas though about 1883 where he was listed in the city directory. The 1900 Federal Census for Springfield, OH records Joshua, Jr. and family living there and the Springfield Ohio City directory listed him as superintendent of letter carriers for the post office located at 85 East Grand Avenue. This Joshua's grandson William Arthur Breyfogle was the person that donated the journals, diaries, and letters to Dartmouth College.

Mary R. Breyfogle, the youngest child of Joshua D. and Mary Breyfogle, Sr. continued to live in Delaware, Ohio and is listed in the 1900 Federal Census as living on Park Avenue. It appears to be a boarding house or hotel as there are many stops listed on the sheet with one or two names per stop. She passed away on January 15, 1901 and is buried in Oak Grove Cemetery under this name so we suspect she never married.

As we researched this information we can't help but feel that Mary was very strong and brave woman, even considering the time period when families faced many adverse living conditions. She was faced with many tragic events, yet did not appear to give up on her family or the future. For her to buy a house with no direct financial support during the third year of the Civil War shows a level of optimism that can only mean that she felt the future would be brighter than the dark days of the 1860's. We stand in awe of this sort of strength and independence at a time when women were expected to serve their husbands and were not often recognized as family leaders. She really was, as her husband described her, "uncommon!"

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To:



This edition dedicated to all the mother's who have kept a light on in the window as their husband and sons marched off to war.

www.breyfogle.com A Family History Website