

# Diary of Eliza Jane Magowan

1861

The new year is ushered in with gloom and fearful forebodings, clouds lowering over our beloved country threatening to break up this glorious Union (in which we have grown and prospered as people never did before) and menacing with Civil War and all its untold and unspeakable horrors. Our wisest and best statesmen almost despair of a satisfactory compromise of the difficulties between the North and South. South Carolina seceded on the 20<sup>th</sup>, of Dec; other Southern States will follow. What mighty events are in the future of the year 1861? The Omniscient God only knows. The Northerners threaten us on one side, the Indians in a large body on the frontiers of Texas. Montgomery with his lawless band of land pirates scouring Kansas and Western Missouri, and last but not least we fear rebellion and insurrection among the blacks. O Thou disposer of all things in Thy hands we are, and thy goodness and mercy only can save us. If Thou guide not our rulers then there is none to save us.

Jan. 4 Appointed by Buchanan as a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer. We have sinned as a Nation with a high hand, as a Nation we should repent and reform. Let each resolve firmly, and faithfully to do his duty and leave the rest to God – hear our prayers for peace. May owning slaves is providential and geographical. I have tried to discharge my duty in the fear of the Lord – and I do think if the ministry of the Gospel had preached Christ and left politics alone, we never would have come to this emergency. I include aspiring politicians and thick-headed editors.

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**May 16** My birthday, 55 years old. “Teach me the measure of my days” – There is nothing but war and rumors of war talked of -- It will be a sad and dark page in our country’s history, a fratricidal war. (Ambition and envy).

**June 23** Went to Springfield to hear Mr. George. Had not been there for a number of years. Saw a great many graves of my old friends and old pastors, who have been at rest for 33 years, Rev. J.P. Howe.

(Lists dates of the Secession of the Confederate States...)  
We have had an exciting time this summer, with political dissensions distracting the public mind. Churches split, families divided, and friends alienated. May the Lord have mercy upon us and teach us humility and patience. – May Church and State come out of the furnace of affliction, purified and refined.

**Oct. 10** 8 hundred and odd Federal troops passed by here this morning on their way to their encampment to the Olympian Springs. Civil War has been inaugurated in Ky. The whole nation is in an uproar. Lord hides us in the hollow of Thy hand until the storm is o’er. Many of our friends and acquaintances have had to take refuge in flight, to keep from being arrested and taken to prison for opinion's sake. Lord have mercy on us, we have sinned woefully bringing about this dreadful state of things. To be thrust from the height of prosperity to the calamities of the Civil War in so short a time. O, the wickedness of our rulers.

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**Nov. 28** Thanksgiving Day – did not attend. Anna and Miss Pitman are here for dinner. Four Federal soldiers called for their dinner. If thine enemy hunger, feed him. More prudence than benevolence.

**Dec. 31** Dinner with cousin Ann Laughlin. We have had a fine fall. Mild weather and good roads. Trade is depressed, goods are high, and money is scarce. Am thankful that this part of the country has been spared the ravages of War. In eastern Ky. the Union troops have been up twice; between the two contending parties the country has been nearly desolated (from accounts) and the poor are suffering greatly. What a dark page in American History and darker still in the book of God's remembrance.

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The year 1861 which has just closed will loom us in immense proportions to the future student of our history, to the antiquarian who searches into the records of the past. His attention will be attracted by it as the great landmark of our destiny –the year that precipitated a glorious and brilliant and happy past into a turbulent, bloody, and uncertain future. We have no heart to linger upon the distressing events of 1861 but hope that the year upon which we are entering may disappoint our dread apprehensions as much as the preceding one did our fond calculations. Our times are in the hands of the Lord.

June 5 Attended the funeral of Mrs. Matilda Wilson today. Two years ago, her husband was buried. She was 66 years old. She was a kind neighbor and warm friend. The Methodist Church, the community, and all her family will miss her – my old friends are nearly all gone... We have had exciting times respecting the War. People are very divided in Ky. We have been threatened with a lawless band of jayhawkers lately, but they have not arrived. There is so much bitterness of feeling, that old friendships are broken up. I have been very much excited but I pray that I may possess my soul in peace. I am a Southern Sympathizer.

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July 20 Looking for the Rebel Army, no preaching today in consequence. O for Peace! Grand skedaddle of the Union forces in town last night. Expecting Morgan, but no enemy appeared.

July 29 Seven rebels shot in Mt. Sterling and 30 more from the windows of houses. Prisoners were taken by the Union forces whom they met in their retreat about a mile from town. Great excitement, and many arrests and searches. Johnny left home on July 22. May the Lord help him and me.

Aug. 4 Forty Union soldiers and their horses stayed here all night. Ate supper and breakfast. Sent here by pretended Union men of Mt. Sterling. Rather a light paper on a widow. But everyone who is not for coercing the South has to be oppressed. The country is full of swindlers, horse thieves, and murderers, all justifying their crimes in the name of Liberty. Good Lord delivers us.

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Aug. 20 Ordered by the Lincoln provost Marshal to furnish dinner for 25 persons (men) and to send it to town by noon. Mary A. Magowan and Mary Daugherty came up on the 16<sup>th</sup> and stayed three weeks.

Sept. 1 Camp Apperson broke up on short notice.

Sept. 2 Johnny returned home after an absence of 6 weeks to escape taking that abominable oath.

Sept. 5 Capt. Peter Everett's Confederate Cavalry entered Mt. Sterling.

Sept. 6 Major Cameron's Co. entered 400 strong, hailed by Southern men, as their deliverers from Lincoln's despotism. I pray they will hold Ky. (Confederate)

Sept. 21 Gen Marshall's Army passed here today. The General dined here and gave Carrie a pass to go through his lines back to Mason. She had come up the day before. About 200 soldiers got a bite to eat here today – servants cooking all day, Sabbath as it was. Feeding the hungry is like taking the ox out of the pit.

Sept. 22 and 23 Soldiers calling all day for something to eat, poor fellows, far from home, ragged, dirty, and hungry, fighting for liberty.

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Oct. 3 Had to prepare supper for 60 or more of John H. Morgan's men, after dark. Six stayed all night, among whom was Col. Gains, and a wounded man – done by bushwhackers in the mountains.

Oct. 21 Federal forces returned to Mt. Sterling. They sent ten of their pickets and horses for me to feed. Johnny left for the South on the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup>.

Oct. 26 Still feeding pickets. When can we rest? We have had a very dry fall, warm pleasant weather, until a few days, we had frost. Yesterday a cold rain, and last night a deep snow on the ground. Very cold and roses on the bushes. The Northern troops have brought cold weather and worse.

Nov. 6 Mrs. Bean, Carrie Poyntz, Cousin Ann, and Anna are here for dinner. Times are distressing. The Federals are pressing hard on the Southern sympathizers. Three Federals have just notified me they are going to haul my hay and oats to camp.

Nov. 10 Seven wagons and between 15 and 20 armed men drove up here today, and loaded up 3 wagons of corn and 4 of hay, the men eating up the dinner off my stove. Taking cabbage, shooting at my turkeys.

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**Nov. 13** Five more loads of hay were taken from me by the 22<sup>nd</sup> ILL. Regiment (no pay). They have taken off Asa's black man Charley, and several other blacks. They are real Negro thieves, and every other kind of rogues, and no one dare to interfere. The 14<sup>th</sup> Ky. Cavalry camped in the neighborhood, are not much better as a body, and still, we are called on to sustain the unconstitutional government that employs such means to oppress and subjugate us if we dissent and remonstrate, we are called rebels and have all kinds of indignities.

**Nov. 25** The Ohio 7<sup>th</sup> (? 9<sup>th</sup>) Cavalry encamped in Mr. B. Tipton's woods, took 12 loads of corn in the shock from me, was firing pistols in my yard before 3 o'clock and stole all my turkeys and chickens that were not in the hen house. No white person here, but Anna, little Jimmie, and myself. I write this so that perhaps my grandchildren may know how people were oppressed for opinions sake, during Lincoln's odious administration and inhuman Civil War. Oh, Lord be thou our help in time of trouble.



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Dec. 25 This is the day, 1862 – years ago Peace on earth and goodwill to men proclaimed by the angelic choir, at the birth of our Savior. Although 18 centuries have elapsed, still poor sinful mortals are engaged in terrible fratricidal strife. Today they are robbing the widows and unprotected. They have taken from me today 6 loads of corn, and two loads of hay. Perfect rogues

Dec. 26 One load of hay

Dec. 27 One load of hay and 4 of corn, although I remonstrated with their upstart Major, it was no use. On the night of the 26<sup>th</sup> seventeen soldiers searched my house for Johnny. He was not here, then they had the imprudence to ask for apples, after having stripped my orchard in the fall. I fear, yea, I know, I do not bear this chastisement as patiently and humbly as I should. Human depravity is an incontrovertible doctrine and an independent spirit cannot be subdued by oppression. We involuntarily despise the tyrant. O, Lord give me more of thy spirit of my Savior who prayed for his persecutors and when reviled opened not his mouth.

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1863

Another year has commenced and the nation is still engaged in War, carnage, and robbery.

Jan. 14 Mr. Richard C. Durrett married to Miss Anna Taylor of Washington, Mason Co. God bless thee and thine Dick. Asa was one of the attendants. Samuel Abijah Brooks was wounded at the battle of Murfreesboro, Tenn., and died on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Jan. 1863. "Fighting against despotism," Johnny got home 29<sup>th</sup> or 30<sup>th</sup> – Nearly six months avoiding the abominable oath that Lincoln prescribes for all who differ from him.

Feb. 23 Expecting the rebels. The Federals destroyed about \$ 50,000 worth of their property commissary stores in town.

Feb. 24 About 1,000 of Morgan's men entered Mt. Sterling. We baked bread and sent it to camp. Six of them stayed all night.

Feb. 25 The Federal regiment from Danville arrived, and the rebels retired toward Tick Town. Both parties are reinforced in the evening. The 14<sup>th</sup> Ky. Cavalry has returned from their skedaddle. Mr. Washington Thomas died from personal violence – having cut his throat the night before. Poor man, poor Crit.

Feb. 28 Rebels re-enter Mt. Sterling.

**Mar. 1** Retire beyond Slate.

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**1863**

**Mar 2** Feds return with strong reinforcements, go as far as Slate, find Rebels in line of battle, fire several rounds of cannons and return to annoy citizens.

**Mar. 8** Still feeding Feds pickets, we are very much imposed on.

**Mar. 22** Rebels attack town about 3 o'clock in the morning, and the Feds fire from their houses and courthouse. The Rebels demand a surrender or they will fire on the town. The officer in command refuses, and the Rebels fire some buildings contiguous to the courthouse. The Feds surrender about 390 prisoners, all their stores and ammunition. Capt. Pendleton fell mortally wounded, Capt. Terrill was wounded, Lt. Moppin wounded, and Young Weedin on the rebel side. Several Feds were killed and wounded. The rebels leave town at 12 and some not until 2 o'clock. The Federal reinforcement arrives and pursues some six or eight miles and returns.

**Mar. 24** Another skedaddle of the Feds. Town relieved of the presence of soldiers until Monday the 31<sup>st</sup>. A large Fed. force enter town there is a picket skirmish near Mr. Bondurant's in which Mr. Cushingberry is mortally wounded and another rebel body. The Feds pursue Cluke beyond Owingsville, with no engagements, some skirmishing. They return the next day very troublesome living on the road. About 10 or 12 men came here to search the house for

government property. After a thorough search none found, but some old clothes and two old guns at the stable, that the rebels had thrown away. This is the third time my house has been searched; nothing has been found to implicate me. A

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**Mar. 24 (cont)** malicious neighbor or an unfaithful servant can put one to great annoyance. A contraband's word is better than a white man's with a Lincolnite. (o tempora, O mores!).

**Mar.** A federal officer took my riding mare at the point of the pistol out of my yard and I have not seen her since.

**Apr. 12** The Federal Camp near us was removed. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Ohio, some gentlemen among them, the majority Abolitionists and rogues.

**Apr. 13** Our house was searched again by Lincolnites.

**June 13** 14<sup>th</sup> Ky. Cavalry and Peter Everett's Co., fought between here and Olympian Springs. The 14<sup>th</sup> retreated, losing 12 or 13 men. I went this morning to Gilead and returned Sunday evening. By this means, I saved my horse from being taken by the soldiers. Heard Mr. Ramsey preach.

**Jul. 27** Harry Magowan was brought out from the hospital in town. He is wounded in the thigh, but not by a rebel bullet, but by Maj. Foley of the 10<sup>th</sup> Ky. Com. A. About 2,000 troops are camped near the town; 1,200 of the 10<sup>th</sup> Ky. on Johnny Hinkston's farm. We are very much annoyed. O, for a just

peace. If all the broken hearts this cruel war has made were collected together, they would form a pyramid as high as a mountain, - May God help the sufferers, and may they find rest and peace in him. O, my country, how are you fallen? Where are your boasted civil institutions gone?

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Dec. 26 Rebels raid in Mt. Sterling – burned the courthouse.

1864

Jan. 21 Mrs. Zantippa Poyntz died today at Mr. Beans. They were banished from their home in Mo. by Federal authorities but thank God she has now a happy, peaceful, and eternal home, from which no petty tyrant can expel her. She has long been a member of the Presby. Church.

Mar. 1 I can stand at my window and count 7 or 8 regiments. They are destroying all of Johnny's fencing and timber.

Apr. and May Troublesome times here. Property of every description stolen and destroyed.

May 19 The widow Sabra Oldham and her two sons, were found murdered in their beds.

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June 1 Abe, Lewis, Dave, Base, John Westley, Moses, Jerry, and Wallace started off to the Federal army, an unparalleled outrage. God save our country from such rulers. Private property and state laws were trampled underfoot.

June 8 Rebels stayed in Mt. Sterling. They captured the Feds camp. Five wounded rebels were brought to my house.

June 9 A large force of Feds came in, surprised the worn-down rebels, and had a bloody battle. Morgan had gone on to Lexington with his cavalry and the broken-down infantry were surprised in the early morning. Their ammunition was captured, they fought for 6 hours bravely and then returned in good order toward Winchester. Formed a line of battle twice, and waited for the Feds to come out of town, but they had had enough and preferred a wall between them. The rebels took 4 of their wounded from here the evening before. Mr. Harris stayed for three weeks. They (the Feds) took him from here between one and two o'clock Sat. night to Lexington, with other convalescents (sic) wounded. I have seen some of the horrors as well as devastations of war. Alas, Alas.

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June 12 Battle at Cynthiana. The rebels took all of our horses and money in hand and robbed friend and foe.

June 24 Our house was searched again for rebels – making 8 times. None here, but the wounded man. Cousin Mary Ann Magowan here. There were 90 rebels wounded and many died in this warm weather. I do not know how many were killed on either side. The official report was exaggerated and incorrect.

Sept 18-19 Surrounded by Federal soldiers' camps. The men who are not for peace should be put in the front.

Nov. 1 The roses are in full bloom. A heavy frost this morning and a heavier chill on the feelings of the community. The draft has come off and takes some of our intimate friends. I am thankful my sons are yet spared, how many youthful hopes, prospects, and lives have been sacrificed to Molock by this bloody and cruel war.

Nov. 14 The drafted men got off by buying substitutes.

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1864

Dec. 25 Another anniversary of the Prince of Peace, being the fourth which has visited us since the commencement of this bloody struggle. From how many of the churches of this land will there be a prayer for peace; such a prayer as this, the recollections of this day suggest. How many of our clergymen can consistently make such a supplication to Deity? How many of them have consistently preached since the War began for peace between the contending States? It is unnecessary to answer these interrogations – as unnecessary as it is painful.

1865

Feb. 8 Mr. Miller Yates, and Mr. J.T. Magowan having rented my farm, Mr. Yates brought his wife here today and I am to board with them. We have troublesome times, nearly every night someone is robbed, and very frequent murders of quiet citizens. Surely these are “perilous times”, men’s hearts failing them for fear.



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1865

Dec. 23 Dined at Anna's. Miss Dink Caldwell had fixed up a Christmas tree for the children. A family party passed off very happily. We have a great reason for thankfulness. Peace is restored, and we can again sit under our own vine and fig tree and none to make us afraid.

1866

Jan. 1 Again I am privileged to live to see the commencement of another year. This dawns more favorably upon us than the preceding, and if our rulers had wisdom, the country would soon be restored to its former tranquility, but never can those valuable lives lost in the dreadful conflict be returned, nor the property stolen and destroyed be restored to their rightful owners. The negroes are all free (poor things) and I submit to the new order of things as best I can.