

Below are passages from the diaries of fictional characters. Even though these are not from the diaries of real individuals, you can get an idea of what children living during the era of the Civil War might have been thinking and writing about on a daily basis.

From Dear America: When Will This Cruel War Be Over?: The Civil War Diary of Emma Simpson, Gordonsville, Virginia, 1864

Wednesday, November 23, 1864

Sometimes I try to remember what our lives used to be like, but it has been so long I have difficulty conjuring up the images. I can, at times, picture the house when it was alive and full of activity — everyone getting ready for a carriage ride into town or perhaps an excursion into the countryside.

Mother giving the servants last minute instruction, Father and Brother Cole seeing to the bags, and me sitting at my vanity for what I am sure must have seemed like endless hours...Those days are gone forever — I am no longer young.

At times I feel like I am a thousand years old — that is what this cruel war has done to me.

From Dear America: A Picture of Freedom: The Diary of Clotee, a Slave Girl, Belmont Plantation, Virginia, 1859

Wednesday, November 23, 1864

Freedom is one of the first words I teached myself to write. Down in the Quarters people pray for freedom — they sing 'bout freedom, but to keep Mas' Henley from knowin' their true feelings, they call freedom "heaven." Everybody's mind is on freedom.

But it is a word that aine never showed me no picture. While fannin' this afternoon, my eyes fell on "freedom" in a book William was readin'. No wonder I don't see nothin'. I been spellin' it F-R-E-D-U-M.

I put the right letters in my head to make sure I remembered their place. F-R-E-E-D-O-M. I just now wrote it. Still no picture...