Letterbooks of Civil War Letters (3 volumes)
Letterbook
Volume LB
July 1935 map of Battle of Gettysburg in 4 pieces

Piece #1c is glued onto the inside front cover of the "Civil War Letters" letterbook.
MIGHTY GETTYSBURG, PEAK OF CIVIL WAR

BY WHITLEY NOBLE

MILITARY annals of the Confederacy contain more than a few explanations as to why the Army of Northern Virginia lost at Gettysburg. In the north for many years after the close of the Civil War there lingered bitter disappointment over the fact that the victory at that historic engagement was not more nearly complete.

Few major military actions have been written about more copiously than Gettysburg, and few, indeed, have been the battles that have given rise to greater conflicts of opinion than the one fought in southern Pennsylvania meadow, grain field, and orchard through three long, sultry summer days 72 years ago this week.

No man who took part in the fighting at Gettysburg could have been capable of writing an unbiased report of the battle, no matter how honest his intentions. Historians have had to depend on accounts written by generals and other officers, on official dispatches and documents, and on observations collected from many and scattered sources. They have had to weigh prejudice against prejudice and opinion against opinion in their attempts to reach a correct level for their conclusions. It has been a tough job for historians all along the line, but with the mists of old hatreds now dissolved by the bright rays of a better understanding—even as sunshine today routs fog above Little Round Top and Culp's hill—there has come out at last that which we may accept as a fairly accurate reconstruction of the battle.

With closer co-operation between various units of his army Lee might have won at Gettysburg. But, on the other hand, there was faulty maneuvering also in the Army of the Potomac. Mistakes and errors of judgment on one side just about balanced those of the other. From a distance of more than seventy years it appears that the stronger army won because it was the stronger and not, as has been suggested, because of some principle of righteousness upon its side.

Maj. Gen. George Gordon Meade, newly placed in command of the federal army, was a capable, though, it has been

[Continued on page eight.]
At dawn, Buford's two cavalry brigades (3,100) find Heth (7,600) in line and reserve across Chambersburg Pike - Pender (6,200) two miles back. Buford deploys Gamble (3,200) at left facing Archer (2,200). Devin (1,780) at right, facing Davis (7,800). In Heth's reserve are Pettigrew and Brockenbrough (3,500), with his force dismounted, operating as infantry. Buford undertakes the engagement of Lee's advance divisions pending the arrival of Reynolds with the first corps.

By 9 a.m. Archer has been engaged by the 8th Illinois cavalry or Gamble's brigade and Canef's battery opens fire. Heth's superior numbers endanger Buford's flanks and he slowly gives ground.

By 11 a.m. Reynolds arrives with Wadsworth division, places Cutler's brigade (47th Bklyn, 56th Pa, 76th, 95th, 147th N.Y.) and Meredith's (iron) brigade (49th Pa, 24th Mich, 29th, 65th, 77th Wis.) in line relieving cavalry. Reynolds led double in command.

At 2 p.m., Wadsworth captures Archer and many of his brigade bycutting him in his attempt to envelop Meredith's left.

By 7 a.m., Howard brings up 11th corps, as double-day's senior succeeds him in general command. Ewell is coming down union right. Rowley and Robinson arrive and reinforce line.

By 4 p.m., Schurz comes up with main body of 17th corps, leaves Steenwehr on cemetery hill, passes through Gettysburg and posts Schimmelpfennig and Barlow north of town. Barlow advance too far northeast and Schimmelpfennig's line is extended to meet it.

At 2:45 p.m., Rodes launches Obert against double-day and Ewell and Dole against Schurz. Baxter, Schimmelpfennig, Cutler, and Stone shatter this attack.

At 3:30 p.m., Early arrives and throws his division on the corps.

Hancock assumes command by Meade's order.

At 4:45 p.m., Confederates close in Pender overlaps union left. Rodes hits center. Early drives union right to cemetery hill, previously selected union rendezvous.

Double-day's first corps falls back across Seminary Ridge. Through town, joining Howard's 11th corps on cemetery hill and ridge, Wadsworth's division occupying Culp's Hill.

At 6 p.m., Sickles with two brigades of Birney's division arrives within two miles of Gettysburg.

At 9 p.m., Hancock's corps (29) arrives and divisions.

Notes: Confederate front line, night of July 1:

Federals - Blue:

Confederates - Red:

Corps Commanders:

Division:

Brigade:

Emeralds indicate approximate numbers of troops.

Each square on the map encloses an area of 3000 feet square.
CIVIL WAR LETTERS

BY

Alfred C. & John E. Ryder
SLAVERY:

A SIN AGAINST GOD.

BY LUTHER LEE.

SYRACUSE:
WESLEYAN METHODIST BOOK ROOM,
1853.
SLAVERY—A SIN AGAINST GOD.

Limited servitude or such as pertains to children in their minority, and persons under various limited contracts and obligations, is not meant in the following Treatise. It is admitted that one person may rightfully owe service to another person under various circumstances.

By slavery is meant the system which reduces man to a chattel, and buys and sells him, and subjects him to the liabilities of other property, claiming the same right of property in the offspring by virtue of the right previously asserted to the parent. This is the system of American slavery, and against it and all other slavery involving the same principles, the arguments are directed.

Slavery consisting in the right of property in man, with the usual incidents of that right must be morally wrong, sin in itself, for the following reasons.
ARGUMENT FIRST:

IT IS INCONSISTENT WITH MAN'S RELATION TO GOD, AND THE OBLIGATIONS GROWING OUT OF THAT RELATION.

Dr. Payne, in his "Elements of Moral Science," says,—

"Virtue as it regards man, is the conformity or harmony of his affections and actions with the various relations in which he has been placed—of which conformity the perfect intellect of God, guided in its exercise by his infinitely holy nature, is the only infallible judge."

If this be a correct definition of virtue, and we believe it is; it follows, that man cannot rightfully sustain two relations at the same time, with both of which his affections and actions cannot harmonize; which is the case with the relation that all men sustain to God, and the relation of property, to man with its usual incidents. The relation we sustain to God, are various. He is our Creator, our Preserver, our Benefactor—He is the framer of our bodies and the Father of our spirits, and he is our Governor.

The quotation from Dr. Payne asserts that God is the judge of the conformity of man's affections and actions to his relations, and this judgment God has expressed in the first
great commandment, which reads as follows:—

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."

This commandment clearly lays such a claim to the affections of the heart, and demands such an entire devotion of the soul (Psuket Life) as gives tone to, and controls the actions; it therefore contains the foundation of absolute obedience to God. This is seen in the expression, "with all thy strength." This requires a consecration of the physical powers in obedience to God, under the control of the affections of the heart.

There is but one question more to settle, which is, can these affections and actions exist in the same heart and life, at the same time with those affections and actions which are consonant with the relation of a piece of property to its owner, a personal chattel to a chattel holder? Slavery may say what it pleases; common sense says no.

To be under obligation to obey God, there must exist the right and power of devoting our lives to God, for there can be no obligation where there is not both right and power to respond to that obligation. But the slave, who is the property of man, has not and cannot have the power of devoting his life to God, because his life is not at his own disposal, according to the dictates of his own understanding of right; he cannot do what God requires, but must do what men require, and wicked men too, who fear not God and regard not his law. Should it be said that
slave owners do not interfere with the slave's right to obey God, and liberty of conscience, every one must know that such an assumption would be false, for the extension of the right to slaves, to obey God, as free men professing the religion of the Bible deem it their duty to obey God, would overthrow the system of slavery.

Further, if it were admitted that slave owners grant their slaves the privilege of obeying God, it would not relieve the difficulty, for it would still follow that the system of property in man, takes away from the human chattel the right to obey God, and puts it into the hand of the owner, who has the power to close up before the chattelized traveller to eternity, the path of obedience and with authority direct his footsteps in the way of sin and death. Man cannot sustain the relation of property to man, without an infraction of the relation that he sustains to God, and of the rights and powers essential to the conformity of his affections and actions to this relation, hence, the right of property in man cannot exist.

The assumption of the relation of a chattel holder to a subject of God's moral government, is to step in between such subject and God, and disannul man's relation to his Maker, and absolve him from his allegiance to Jehovah's throne. Can this be right? Does the Bible sanction such a principle, beaming as it does with the mind of Him who declares himself to be a jealous God; flashing with the lightnings of his displeasure, and speaking in the thunder tones
of his wrath against all who turn away from the claims of his law to acknowledge any other authority, to serve any other God or bow down to the likeness of any thing in heaven, earth or hell? It cannot be.

Argument Second:

Slavery conflicts with various specific duties which the Bible requires of all men.

Dr. Paley, in his moral philosophy, lays down the following rule:

"A state of happiness is not to be expected by those who reserve to themselves the habitual practice of any one sin, or the neglect of any one known duty."

If then it can be shown that a state of slavery does interfere with a single duty to God, or involves its subjects in the necessity of violating one single precept of the gospel it will follow that it is and must remain wrong under all circumstances and forever.

It is the duty of all intelligent beings to use all the means within their reach to acquire a knowledge of God and his will. To remain ignorant of God and of his will concerning us through neglect of the means within our reach, is of itself a sin of the darkest shade. But from what source is the knowledge of God to be derived? The answer is plain,
the Scriptures. "To the law and the testimony; if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them."

It is clear that if the Scriptures are an expression of the mind of God, and have been inspired by his spirit, all must possess a common right of direct access to this fountain of moral light. This none will deny but the Pope and his menials. With this accords the practice of all Protestants; whenever they establish missions in any part of the world among the heathen, they put the Bible into their hands so soon as they can speak its language, or so soon as it can be translated into their own language. The only exception is found in the act of withholding the scriptures from the slaves of our own country, who might be taught to read them with far greater facility.

But God has made it our duty to know him, and to know him through this medium.

Luke xvi. 29. "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them."

John v. 39. "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think he have eternal life."

Acts xvi. 11. "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were so."

W. M. Discipline—"It is expected of all who desire to continue in these societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation by searching the scriptures. All this we know his spirit writes
on truly awakened hearts. All which we are taught of God to observe."

The same principle is contained in the creed, written or unwritten, of every Protestant religious sect on earth; and every Protestant sect condemns the Romanists for withholding the scriptures from the people; and if it be wrong to withhold the scriptures, slavery cannot be right.

The right and duty of all men to possess themselves of the scriptures and to read and study the same being established, it only remains to show that slavery is of necessity and forever inimical to this right and duty; taking away the one, and nullifying the other. The right of property in man cannot exist co-ordinate with the right and obligation to 'search the scriptures.'

1. The right and obligation to search the scriptures necessarily includes the right of acquiring property, first in money or money's value with which to procure the scriptures to be read: and secondly, in the scriptures themselves. But property cannot acquire property; the very idea of the right of property in any thing, supposes an equal right of property in all productions and increase or income of such property; so that property cannot acquire property in its own right and for itself. If property increases or gathers other property around it, such increase does not belong to the property that produces or acquires it, but to the owner of the property. If this be denied, it will follow that the productions of the slaves do not belong to the slave owner but the slave him-
self, which will overthrow the whole system of slavery. This view shows that the slave, as property, cannot possess, in his own right, a Bible or the value of a Bible in any form, and therefore, the command of God to 'search the scriptures,' and the assumed right of property in man, are totally and irreconcilably opposed to each other, so that while God requires all men to search the scriptures, no man can rightfully be reduced to a chattel. With this agrees the law of slavery which says that a slave "can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire anything but what must belong to their master." If a Bible should be given to a slave, so as to alienate the right of the giver in favor of the slave, the right to the Bible would not lodge with the slave, but pass over him and vest itself with the master, and this is not only by law but in the very philosophy of the right of property.

2. The right and obligation to search the scriptures includes the right to devote sufficient time to the pursuit of religious knowledge. But the right of property in a man includes the right to monopolize and dispose of his whole time, so that he cannot possess the right of devoting his time or any part of it to the study of the scriptures, from which it follows again that the right of slavery is at war with the duties which God has commanded. If the advocate of slavery will attempt to evade the force of this, by denying that the right of property in man includes the right to control the time of such property, he will ruin his own cause; for if the
slaveholder has not a right to say how the slave shall improve his time, his right of property in him will not be worth contending about. If the right of property in man includes the right of controlling his time, it conflicts with duties which God requires and must be wrong; and if it does not give the master the right to control the time of the slave, the whole practical system of slavery is a violation of right.

In showing that slavery conflicts with certain specified duties, it is proper to notice the duty of publicly worshipping God. On this point we will quote but one text.

Heb. x. 25. "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is." This text clearly teaches the duty of meeting together in Christian assemblies for religious purposes, while slavery declares that the right of slaves so to assemble cannot be admitted with safety to the system.

To conclude this argument, we say that to grant the slaves the simple right of obeying the Gospel, by attending to all its devotional and social duties as they are commanded and understood by Christians generally, would overthrow the entire system. To give them the Scriptures to be read according to the dictates of their own consciences, and to allow them the privilege of selecting their own ministers from whose lips they choose to hear the words of life, which is the inalienable right of all Christians, would come so near to the abolition of slavery as to leave but little to be done to complete it. The right of proper-
ty in man cannot exist without taking away the right of doing the duties and enjoying the privileges of the Gospel, and therefore the right of property in man cannot exist as a right, but must be wrong, whenever assumed.

ARGUMENT THIRD:

Slavery conflicts with those social relations and duties which not only spring from our social nature, but which God has also enjoined by positive enactment.

Man is a social being, and has received a social nature from the hand which formed him; which seeks intercourse, sympathy, and reciprocal enjoyments from kindred spirits. The various relations into which we are thrown by the current of our social nature, have been provided for by God in his word, where he has prescribed the circumstances, conditions and obligations of our social and domestic relations, and has thrown around them the protection of his law.

We will commence with the institution of marriage. This of course was provided for by the hand of God when he originally created man, and is the first institution in the chain of social relations; first in the order of nature, and first in the order of the positive institutions of the divine law. Matt. xix. 4–6.
"Have ye not read that he which made them at the beginning, made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain but one flesh? what therefore God hath joined together let no man put asunder."

Heb. xiii. "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."

On these texts it may be remarked, that God obviously designed marriage for all nations, races and classes of men. To say that God does not require marriage on the part of the African race, would be to say that he designs the extinction of the race, for all such perpetuation of the race out of wedlock is condemned and denounced by God himself. We are now prepared to show wherein slavery conflicts with the institution, and rights and obligations of marriage.

1. The right of property in man is inconsistent with the rights of the parties who lawfully enter into the marriage relation.

The husband has a monopoly of right in his wife. A wife belongs to her husband, in a sense which renders it impossible that she should be the property of another at the same time; if she is the wife of one, she cannot be the property of another; if she is the property of one she cannot be the wife of another. It is impossible from the nature of the two things that a woman should hold out the attributes of a wife to one man, and the attributes of property to another, at the
same time. The husband has an exclusive right in his wife, and the owner has an exclusive right in his property; hence, a woman cannot sustain the relation of a wife to one man, and the relation of property to another. The husband has not only an exclusive claim to the affections of her heart, but also to her time and attention; what power she possesses to promote the happiness of another belongs to him, and she has, as a wife, no right to seek the happiness of others beyond what is consistent with his happiness; her happiness should be his and his should be hers; they are partners in both joy and sorrow; "they are no more twain but one flesh." The right of property includes the right of controlling, using, and disposing of such property for the promotion of the happiness of the owner; hence, two persons cannot possess, the one the rights of a husband and the other the rights of property in the same woman at the same time. In the same manner the rights of the wife forever forbid the right of property in the husband. The man is not alone in securing rights to himself when he enters into the marriage relation; corresponding to his rights are the rights of the wife; if they are not in every respect the same, they are nevertheless equal in number and importance. The husband is bound no less to devote himself for the promotion of the happiness of the wife than she is to promote his happiness. This right of the wife to the love, the protection, the support, and entire devotedness of the husband to promote her happiness must forever preclude
the right of property to such husband vesting itself in the hands of another.

2. The right of property in man is inconsistent with the obligations resting upon the parties to the marriage relations. Rights and obligations are always reciprocal; hence, in treating of the rights of the parties, the corresponding obligations have been implied, but we wish to bring them out a little more distinctly. The right of the husband to the due regard and proper submission of the wife, involves an obligation on her part to render these things; the right of the wife to the love and protection of the husband, involves an obligation on his part to love and protect her. We will now present a few plain declarations of scripture on this subject, and see how effectually they overthrow the assumed right of property in man.

1 Cor. vii. 2. "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband."

The system of property in man, making them personal chattels, to be bought and sold in the market, cannot be reconciled with the above text. To let every man have his own wife, and every woman her own husband, in the apostle's sense, would overthrow the whole system of slavery.

Eph. v. 21. "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

23. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Saviour of the body."

Can wives, who are the personal chattels
of men not their husbands, comply with the above text? When the husband is sent to one market and the wife to another, can the wife obey the scriptures? Can the wife who is in the power, the absolute power of a man who is not her husband, and who can enforce his will in all things without let or hindrance by flattery, bribes, strength, prisons, whips and tortures; can such a wife submit herself to her husband as unto the Lord? and can a husband, who is under the same absolute control of another, be the head of such a wife, as Christ is the head of the church? Answer, common sense!

1 Cor. vii. 10. "And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband?"

Is it consistent with this text for one man to sell another man's wife, or to buy another man's wife, and drive her off in chains, to see her husband no more? It cannot be. If the wife has not a right to depart, then no other person can have a right to force her to depart. No person can have a right to compel another to do what such person has not a right to do without being compelled. A wife has no power to depart from her husband, and therefore no person can have a right to sell her, to buy and drive her away from her husband; and hence the right of property in husbands and wives cannot exist.

Eph. v. 28. "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29. For no man ever yet hated his own
flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church?"

1 Peter iii. 7. "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered."

How can a man, who may be sold and driven away at any moment, be under obligation to dwell with his wife? We will not multiply quotations or remarks; enough has been said to show that slavery and the marriage institution cannot exist together. Slavery takes away the power of the wife to preserve her own purity, and this is true of married and unmarried females. The female that is made an article of property, cannot call her purity her own; it may be taken from her at the pleasure of her owner. He may violate her at pleasure, and she has neither the right or the power to resist. He may tie her up with cords; he may confine her in any way he pleases; he may apply the lash to her cringing back to any extent he pleases; and all this he may do before the face of the man she may call her husband, and no one, bond or free, has any right to interfere; and in so doing he violates no law but the law of God, with which slavery has nothing to do more than to set it at nought.

All this follows of necessity, from the admission of the right of property in human beings. Note, the argument is not that all slaveholders actually commit these wrongs on the marriage institution and on female
purity, but the argument is that the system of slavery gives every slaveholder the power to do it at pleasure, and with perfect impunity; and that this is inseparable from the system itself; and that the system which lays the heaven ordained institution of marriage, and heaven-protected female virtue in the dust, helpless at the feet of the spoiler, for the riot and triumph of the baser passions of human nature, cannot be right, but must be wrong now and forever.

To settle the question, we say that matrimony exists among slaves or it does not.—The one or the other of these positions must be true. Which is true, we care not, so far as this argument is concerned. 1. If matrimony does exist in moral right among slaves, the parties are joined together by God, and Christ says, "what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." But slavery does sunder them, and the right of property includes the right of sundering them. If therefore slaves are married in moral right, slavery is guilty of parting those whom God had joined together, and drags after it the crime of adultery. The slave system separates the parties and joins them in other connections, so that within a few years the same man may have several wives, and the same woman several husbands, and all living at the same time.

2. If slaves are not married in moral right, as they are not and cannot be in the eyes of the civil law, slavery stands charged with breaking up this heaven appointed institution, and of involving the slave population
in the crime of general whoredom. There is so far as we can see, no way to escape these conclusions; if the advocate of slavery allows that slaves are brought within the marriage institution, he assumes that the power to separate those whom God hath joined together can rightfully exist; a thing, in our view, impossible. If he admits that slaves are not brought within the marriage institution, he assumes the rightfulness of general sexual intercourse without the bans of matrimony. Such is slavery, consisting in the assumed right of property in human beings, wherever it is found, in the church or out of the church. We speak as to wise men; judge of what we say.
ARGUMENT FOURTH:

Slavery further conflicts with those social relations and duties which not only spring from our social nature, but which God has also enjoined by positive enactment by subverting the rights and obligations which grow out of relations subsisting between parents and children.

That there are rights and obligations connected with this relation, around which God has thrown the protection of his law, armed with the arrows of his lightnings, and the voice of his thunders, cannot be denied; and that slavery disregards them and tramples them under foot, if not admitted shall be proved.

When God descended upon Mount Sinai and gave his law amid the dreadful lightnings that blazed and glared, and shot their fiery arrows athwart the smoke and gloom that mantled the Eternal upon the mount, and amid the thunders that bellowed terrors and poured the voice of condemnation in the ear of sin; He then wrote with his own finger upon a table of stone, as the fifth of the ten commandments, the following words: "Honor thy father and mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

The duty of the child to honor his father and mother, clearly implies the obligation of the parents so to teach and so to behave towards the child, as is calculated to inspire
the feelings and write upon the heart of the child what God wrote in the book of his law. This sentiment is clearly brought out in the comment of St. Paul.

"Ephe. vi. 1-4. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is right. Honor thy father and mother which is the first commandment with promise, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And ye, fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Here we have the obligation growing out of the relation that subsists between parents and children, as defined by the spirit of inspiration; and that slavery necessarily wars upon, and entirely subverts these obligations, is all that remains to be proved, and this is so plain and obvious that it is like proving what is self evident.

1. Can parents, who are subject to all the liabilities of property, and whose children are also property in the same full sense, bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? This cannot be pretended. Sons are torn away from the embrace of their father, and removed forever beyond the sight of his eye; daughters are borne in chains from the throbbing, heaving bosom and bleeding hearts of their mothers.

"Where no mother's ear can hear them,
Where no mother's eye can see them."

Slavery which assumes the right of property in man, in fathers and mothers, and mothers and children, takes from the parents all right of control over their children, and
hence, it violates the divine law, for that
commands them to control them for good.
God says to parents, "bring up your children
in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;
but slavery says, no, you cannot have the
right of bringing them up, or if you do, you
must bring them up for the market, bring
them up for me, that I may sacrifice your
sons upon the altar of my avarice, and
your daughters upon the altar of my lust.

2. Can children who are "personal chattels
to all intents and purposes and constructions
whatsoever," honor their fathers and moth-
ers? Can they "obey their parents in the
Lord?" Most certainly not. The son looks
not, cannot look to his father, if father he
knows, for authority and direction during
the years of his minority; nor can he honor,
comfort, and support that father in his de-
clining years, after the son has come to the
riper years of manhood. The daughter can-
not obey her own mother in childhood and
youth, much less can she honor and cherish
her in riper years; she must see her mother,
if she be allowed to see her at all, languish,
faint and die under the effects of toil, hunger
and the lash, without dropping a word of
consolation in her ear, or extending a daugh-
ter's hand to her relief—all this is true of
the daughter, concerning her who in anguish
gave her being, and sheltered her in her bo-
som during the cloudy morning of her exis-
tence, and nourished her upon the milk of
toil and weariness until she was strong
enough to endure life's heavier storms.

That all this is wicked, it would be an in-
suited to common sense to attempt to prove. It directly violates and sets aside as plain a command as there is in the book of God, and if this is not sin, the ten commandments may all be violated without sin.

Should it be said in reply to this, that under the circumstances of the parents are released from the obligation to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and children are released from the obligation to obey their parents in the Lord, as God's law does not require impossibilities; we respond, that God's law can never be annihilated or nullified in its claims. It is and must forever be, binding in some form; and if the above circumstances exempt parents and children from the obligation to obey God's law, or rather from the penalty of the law, for it is not obeyed, the guilt rests upon those who are the authors of such circumstances. If a man who is stronger than we puts fetters upon us so that we cannot do what God has commanded us to do, God will not, it is true, hold us responsible; but he will hold that man responsible who puts the fetters upon us for the non-performance of all that duty, of which he has been the cause. When the slaveholder steps in between God and the slave, and between parents and children, to prevent the discharge of the duties which God commands them as parents and children to discharge towards each other, he takes the place of both parent and child, and assumes before God the responsibility of the non-performance of the duty of both, for which God will hold him responsible.
This book and war
letters was the property of
Raymond Alfred Ryder and
Uncle of Johnny and Alfred.
Raymond translated the
letters in 1931.

The Letters Of
Alfred G. Ryder
And
John E. Ryder
Oct. 1861
From January 1862 to the
Time of their deaths in July 1863
At Gettysburg, Pennsylvania
Alfred tendered President Lincoln's Church.

LINCOLN'S CHURCH

(New York av. and H st. at 13th st. N. W., Washington, D. C.; Presbyterian, often called "the Presidents' church.")

They were tearing down the church where Lincoln prayed.

The men were hard at work with pick and spade.
The steeple fell a little while ago;
I heard the bell toll as it fell below.
The dust from debris rises like a cloud,
A grayish mass, then settles like a shroud
Upon this site so desolate today—
The place where Honest Abe was wont to pray.

I wish they wouldn't tear old landmarks down,
The shrines that should be standing in this town
As memories, to mark where stalwarts trod
Or kneel in silent homage to their God.
I wish they'd let the bricks and mortars stand,
Remain a part of this historic land.
I'd like to see the wrecking crews delayed,
Especially near the pew where Lincoln prayed.

March 1907 John Jay Daly

(Written on the back of an envelope while viewing the demolition with the author's friend, James A. O'Callaghan. Copyright, John Jay Daly, 1909. Printed with his permission.)
Camp near Capitol Hill
Washington, D.C.
October 20 - 1861

I am a little tired after walking much today. About a hundred of us started out for the Congregational Church, but as we were passing the Presbyterian the minister asked me in. Fully expected to see Old Abe there as that is the one he attends but we were disappointed. He is a splendid church with a good preacher. He preached altogether different from any Presbyterian I have ever heard before as he did not mention eternal damnation. He said that
All things work together for good and that God is the creator of rain, suffering, and disease only to bring man to a proper appreciation of the pleasures he enjoys. I believe these works to be true.

The general health here is good. Several are sick with the measea. I took some medicine to Billy Coote, not knowing that he had them. That was two months ago so I may not have taken them.

Billy is now well and has been deputized by the surgeon as a midwife.

Alfred B. Ryder
Alfred regrets his younger brother, John's enlistment. Recounts trials of a young soldier's life.
Camp Reed Head
Near Washington

I hear that Brother John has enlisted. Such good! I would like to know what he has done that for. Too many boys have already lifted their hands up in sorrow. Alas! Is there too much of a boy but I stand it better than the hundreds around me.

Truly I write home no doleful accounts of our sufferings but believe me when I tell you that the life of a soldier has overcome many

Has he been sworn in? To be the first. If he is not persuade him if possible
to learn all soldiering alone, especially for the present. Ask him how he would like to give up his bed and a night as last night, with a court-martial and sentence on his head, if when setting his house on guard in the cold, he went to sleep for a moment. But if he is sick, cheer him up and never give out to a feeling that will disturb his determination in the least. Let him rock himself to sleep in his own cradle and he will be apt to sleep sounder and wake up with a better appreciation of the
life he has lived. Tell him to write.

I received a letter last night saying Croft Farwell has left for parts unknown. He must have been homesick indeed to have brought disgrace on himself in that manner. But I can tell you privately that it has to be a self-controlling boy who sticks to his task without some grumbling.

Alfred G. Ryder
Alfred tells of camp life in the city of Washington. Mentions the unfinished Capitol Building.
Washington, D.C.
October 10, 1861

The day is stormy and dreary since noon and all the soldiers are cooped up in their tents.

This forenoon I spent in wandering around the city. But first I will tell you that we moved from Camp Broadhead to the position we now hold. Retracing our steps we marched to Washington, most directly to the point from whence we started. Proceeding a few rods each we each our tents in the very midst of the city. We now occupy a position...
almost within hailing distance of the Capitol. I can look out now and see its vast unfinished dome over the beautiful grove in front and I also can see in the other direction the many and vast buildings which compose the Washington Navy Yard. The latter occupied part of my attention this morning. It covers many acres and well filled with buildings of monstrous size. The vessels in port were the Pensicola, Pance, and Harriet Lane, all splendid
war vessels. They look as though bullets could never penetrate their thick iron sides. They all seem today abundantly supplied with the munitions of war.

This minute the news arrives that two men in Co. A. have been shot from the window of a brick house across the street. One was shot in the leg; the other I have not learned where but neither dangerously.

We are all well except Coates (William Coates). He is in the hospital.

Alfred E. Ryder

1st Michigan Cavalry
Company H
Alfred watches the New Year in on picket duty. 1-1-1863
Jan 1, 1862

Today begins the New Year and a pleasant day indeed. I watched the coming of the New Year last night on picket duty, and also watched the coming of the rebels.

The band been on the march for the last four days, up every night. Stewarts forces have been in these parts.

One of our men was shot last night while on picket. I was shot at but a few days ago while on the same post.

Thanks for the envelopes with the stamps all on. They will last a long time. Who can tell what the end of this year will bring?
It doesn't look very prosperous now to me but I hope for the best.

Rube Farrell is in camp and I haven't seen him yet. I rather think that he will get his discharge.

You speak about John getting his discharge. Why doesn't he do it, if he can't stand the life as I am pretty sure he can't. He wouldn't like living with in the Army it requires too much patience for him. But I trust that he is in good hands among good friends.

I am glad to receive frequent letters from home.

I tell you, Alfred C. Ryder
The date on the letter appears to be 1863 as 24th March was organized in July 1862.
Alfred participated in the capture of Harper's Ferry. Turtles of discontent of its people.
Charlestown, Va
March 2, 1867

Many interesting events have happened since I last wrote. Monday morning we started from Harperstown and arrived that afternoon in Frederick. Tuesday we joined our regiment eighteen miles toward Harper's Ferry. That night we slept on the ground having pitched no tents. Wednesday we were under marching orders all day, but night came and no more yet. It rained hard so we retired to an adjoining barn to rest, but we had no more than fairly got into our nest when orders came for an immediate move. All were up
in a hurry and out in the darkness to saddle. The mud was deep and raining still. We fell into rank and marched in darkness through deeper mud than we ever saw nearly four miles toward the Ferry. Then a counterman came and we were sent on return. We went back to the barn but were up at daylight to retrace our night's journey. We arrived at the celebrated place of Harper's Ferry and quartered there for the night. It is a very picturesque town though near all the people from left. Valuable horses have no other occupants than rats and mice. Its arsenal was burned down by our bombs and the heath had destroyed two splendid bridges.
Once there were fifteen thousand people but they rushed all the way back in a hurry for great confusion was everywhere manifest though they had been gone for three days.

We were ordered to scout the country toward this place and were ready by daylight. On coming up to the town we saw nothing military of any extent so we rushed through an a dead run. Gaining the opposite side we saw the rebels flying with the greatest speed they could make. The three battalions then divided one going each way. Our battalion gave chase to sixteen but they were too good runners. After following them a good many miles and, we returned bringing with us two
captured wagons, twelve horses, sixty barrels of flour, and some muskets that the fleeing rebels dropped. On our return the battalion joined and marched slowly through the city singing the "Star-Spangled Banner" and "The Red White and Blue."

So we have the honor of first entering and occupying the place. Now there are many thousand soldiers here. The people here look at us as though we were barbarians. Old women I see crying and young ones look sad. The are quarters in a meeting house though we have been on duty most of the time.
I was on picket the first night and out toward the "nest." All the rest of the pickets were driven in last night. Two of our boys were taken prisoners. The expected a battle soon as our pickets and theirs are in sight of each other today. Other regiments are arriving from Washington. I shall have to close as I expect to go with the company after a hundred barrels of flour which the rebels left.

This is the place where John Brown was hanged. The courthouse and prison are only a few rods from me.

I hear Companies E & F lost fourteen men in taking a four gun battery, a colonel and some soldiers. I have received no letters recently.

Alfred B. Ryders
LB-11 & LB-12 → April 17, 1862 - Alfred

April 15, 1862 - Alfred
Alfred recounts the capture of some of his comrades with the raid.
Tells of own narrow escape.
Scores officers for bad conduct.
Piedmont Station, Va.
May 17, 1862

I have some hard news this morning. Albert Wough of Canton and one other of our boys were captured day before yesterday by a horde of rebel cavalry while on despatch duty to Mount Royal. They were on the return and as far as Ridder when they met with fourteen of the 28th Pa. volunteers, whom they knew. Thereby they all stopped and were unguarded when it is reported that six hundred rebel cavalry rode down from the mountain upon them and they were taken unconditionally. They shot some of them slightly.
but we cannot learn which ones.

Our troops had the rail and probably some of the which was taken. Renten, Farwell, and another went through the place of fifteen minutes after it happened. They even hadn't left when they went through.

Desperate knowing it is very dangerous, one often has to go very near the enemy and you can believe they are continually on the alert for the stragglers. Not daring to attack in bodies.

We are now said to be in McDowell's division. We are under the command of Gen. Geary. This place is on the Manassas Gap Railroad about four miles from the Gap.
The are almost surrounded by mountains, the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Bull Run Mountains and so on. The rebels have a good chance to hide themselves for especial use and they improve it.

Yesterday morning I got up quite early and found my horse gone. I started in pursuit, encouraged often by circumstances. I kept going till I saw two gray coats coming around the brow of a hill. I had no arms so I retreated to the woods. When they left I found my horse.

So goes a soldier's life. No one thinks this morning about those who have been lost.
We are all deceived in our captain. He had supposed him to be a brave and fearless man and in every way qualified for his post, but not so. He is a coward and a blackhearted scamp and entirely unfit to command American soldiers. Although he has never especially mistreated me, others have often drunk deep the cup of sorrow from him. But never mind: there are fifty men in the company who would like to see a bullet through him if he ever goes into battle.

We are ordered by General McDowell to fortify against an attack. The saw, the spade,
and they are at work now.

Now a few words in regard to my pay. The mail is so uncertain that we cannot put much trust in it. Therefore I among others have taken a draft to your order on the U.S. If I am unfortunate in any way the draft will benefit no one but you. If I lose it I can get another. It will be paid before long when I shall send you a twenty dollar draft. Sign and tell it, you can sell it anywhere I guess and I am told you are paid. I have forty dollars now that I wish you had.

Some of us sent our overcoats home by express the other day.
The label on the box, Chas. Hoyt, Plymouth & Am. Exp. Co.
I wrote a letter to Hoyt, so he knows all about it. Set my coat and pay him the express fee and tell mother to clean it up a little if it ever arrives.

It is very pleasant here. The woods are dense with foliage. Rye is all headed out.

Alfred G. Ryder
P.S. I have kept this letter in my pocket three or four days with the hopes of buying a stamp to mail it; none are to be had. Unless I will send it in and let you pay for it there. A. G. R.
Mrs. George Rodgers
Nankin, Wayne Co.
Mich.
Alfred tells of the hardships of the march. Describes the Virginia countryside in June.
Fredericksburg, Va.

June 17th, 1863

I am well today with the exception of a severe boil upon my left shoulder that almost deprives me of the use of my arm. But I have reason from what I know to be thankful for only such light afflictions. Reuben Farrell had a chill of the ague with fever yesterday, but is somewhat better today. I am in hopes he will have no more.

We arrived here last evening after a severe march of three days. It rained a considerable part of the time and we had no tents in which to shield me from it or from the heavy dew that each night brings.
I came through Alexandria from there to Fredericksburg and through Stafford County. But what a contrast in that country and the Valley of the Shenandoah! This is a rough and toilsome looking region that one of the most beautiful that the sun ever shone upon. Few little towns we met with were mere wrecks. Dumfries, a place of a dozen buildings was once, the occupants told me, a flourishing city of many thousands. It is said to be the second town settled in the U.S.

Fredericksburg is a fine looking city, nestled along the banks of the Rappahannock. I was swimming in it a short while ago - that rip in the river, with the city.
was a U. S. gunboat swimming in there too, a designating looking object no doubt, in the sight of the rebels.

I expect to move again tomorrow morning but if not I shall soon write again although I do not receive any letters. I have written four or five without getting a reply.

I sent forty dollars in them.

If you receive it I am glad if you do not it makes no difference to me for I have still enough and to spare.

Direct your letters - Company H, 1st Michigan Cavalry to Washington or to your best knowledge.

Alfred C. Ryder
Camp ten miles from Culpepper Va. July 21 1862

Dear Mother! I have been on the march almost all the time since the 16th which included my birthday. It has rained all day. We have failed twice sometimes having to swim our horses. We went on a forced march toward Brandywine. Had to fight with the enemy near there. Wounding one of our Company so that he had to be left behind. We were without a meal for four days and you can imagine what even raw meat would taste good in such a time. It rained torrents for five consecutive days.

I received your kind letter of the 10th. You want to know how warm it is here. I'll tell you. If I lay myself in the sun it becomes my head to a blister. I touch with the effect a fight soon with Jackson. Off to front.

A. T. Doane
John visited a war hospital in Washington.
Talks with a wounded friend there.
Camps Shearer  
Near Washington D.C.  
September 24, 1862

I have not received but one letter since I have been here, but I may get one tonight. I shall not wait for it. I am on guard today and my relief does not come on till one o'clock. So I will improve my leisure by writing.

I am well and enjoying myself as well as I expected. Yesterday I went to Washington to see Harrison McFarlane and saw a great many sights. They were interesting. There was the Navy Yard, Washington's Monument, and the Capitol. The looker around the city on the forenoon and in the afternoon started to see...
Harrison. He got to the hospital at three and went through it. It was a bad smelling place. He saw many soldiers, wounded in different ways, some lightly, some mortally.

The men lay back on a bunk where lay a soldier who looked as though he were in great pain. He was one of the fellows whom we called Harrison Mcлярane but not one spoke of his death could I see. Edgar Durfee stepped up and spoke to him. I stood back of him and I asked the nurse where Harrison was and he rolled his eyes around and said: "Johnny, don't I look like him? Then I spoke to him but I still
Could hardly believe it was he. His eyes and hair looked natural and that was all. He had a beard all over his face and he looked like a skeleton. The nurse said that he thought he wouldn't stand it much a little while longer and had nearly died the night before. Some were getting well but a fellow who lay in the bunk right to Harrison had a leg off. It smelled bad. After we had our visit and with Harrison we tried to find Alfred but could not. So the with the regiment. If he is I think I could find him for I understand that it is near Washington. Two members of our regiment.
told me that we had marching orders so we hurried back to camp. It was false and I do not think we will be here long for we have been inspected by General Hood many. He thinks we can do big things on the field. He says we can fight.

Can't tell we may stay here a long while. It is too bad if we have to start again for we have got our tents fixed up nicely.

The drill thoroughly each day. Men are detailed from the regular army to drill us. We have got so now that we understand it quite well.

It is getting late and I must prepare to go on guard.

It is warm here yet.

John tells of misadventures illness has made upon members in his regiment.

Plight of the Confederates

Alfred at home on furlough.
Camp Harbaugh
October 13th, 1862

I do not feel first rate
for I have had the touch of
a sick headache but that is
nothing.

Our regiment, when it left
Detroit numbered a thousand
and forty. Now I think there
are some over eight hundred.
Our company numbers sixty
right on dress parade. The
rest are not able to fight.

Wright before last we
received orders about twelve
o'clock to get up, cook two
day rations, and be ready
to march at a minute's notice.
We hear nothing further till
today. The Colonel was asked
if we would be ready in
an hour. He replied we would.
The boys reported the Colonel as saying he was certain the war would be over in three weeks. I hope to God it may be true, but am afraid it is too good to be true.

I cannot say that I have a desire to return home until this war is ended, but if the war could end and afford me to go back to old Michigan, I would be one of the gladdest fellows you ever saw. Oh! that the Colonel’s thoughts may be right.

Ma, if you were here for a few moments on this high hill to look around you would think it wonderful. There are regiments camped as
far as you can see. There are three hundred thousand soldiers here on the Potomac.

The rebel pickets are not far from us.

The rebels are hard up. They haven't clothes enough to keep them comfortable. They look worse than the beggars of Michigan and most of them are mere skeletons.

One of the prisoners lay here groaning with his arm shot off. He said he expected to get well because raw boned rebels were hard things to kill. But there are lots of them die every day. Some of them have had friends here to visit them from the south.
I haven't told you about seeing the President of the United States. I saw him when I was at Camp Clark. He looks even more humble than his picture shows. He spoke at Frederick and said the war would end in six weeks, but there are plenty of stories to believe.

I have received two letters from Alfred; one when he was home. Am glad that he went home and only wish that he had stayed there. But it is my opinion now that we will both be home in four months. Of the Southern army cannot stay in Maryland this winter.
I think they are about played out.

Alfred wanted I should tell him about Harrison McFarland, suppose you have heard of him dead. I talked with him before he died. He said that when the ball hit him he threw up his hands and yelled. He fell to the ground and the captain put a knapsack under his head. He layed there days.

John E. Ryder

Co. E, 24th Mich Infantry
First Army Corps
Gen. Gibbons Brigade
Nash. D.C.
LB-20 & LB-20a  Both: John - October 22, 1842
John reason to hardships of a long march.

Praise officers.
Camp near Harper's Ferry, October 29, 1862

I was pleased last night while I was amusing myself by a smoky fire to receive two letters from home, one from you and one from Alfred. Nothing could be more welcome than they were.

I have passed through many exciting times since I last heard from you. It would be useless for me to attempt to explain the whole affair for you may know that we had but little fun on our last march.

We were in our tents covering up with our blankets to keep off the rain and...
cold, when the order came to pack up and fall in line in two minutes. We all sprang up, pulled down our nets tents and soon were ready to march through rain and mud over our shoals. So we began our long march. It was four o'clock and we went a distance of ten miles and camped for the night. It was as dark as tar and raining as hard as it could. We were the color of clay from head to foot. We were so tired and sleepy that we grumbled down one or two backpacks and laid down to rest. In a few minutes I raised up and found that I was in a puddle of water and as white as a drowned rat. I got up and stood by the fire until
morning. The boys felt bad in spirit. Some wanted to desert some thought they would rather go into battle and get shot.

I saw the morning we started again. Though the rain had stopped, the mud was still bad. Probably Alfred knows what the soil of Maryland and Virginia are after a heavy rain. We marched that day at a moderate pace and halted for the night. Eldridge and I fixed up a bunk and I never have slept better in my life so that morning came all too soon.

The boil a pot of coffee and ate some hardtack and it was about time to march when our Colonel came along with tears in his eyes and asked me...
how we felt. He asked the regiment if they would follow him and they said yes, as long as life remains. He made a speech to us that brought tears to many eyes. Said he knew that infantry life was hard but he did not want any of his men to leave him. Said there had probably not been a time in the present war when a regiment had suffered more than the 24th Mich. did on the 26th of October. But he said, "Boys, your Colonel is not to blame." I am the same common man that I was in Plymouth and there is nothing on earth that I think more of than the 24th Mich. except my wife and child." The men gave three
Chire for him and said they would stand by him. I believe there was never a better commander than Colonel Marmont. When in camp he would come and sit down with me and talk as common as a farmer. He says we are all here for a great cause. He has the good will of the whole regiment and they will stand by him through thick and thin.

You spoke of Calvin C vanity. He is a good officer. He has always met me first rate though some complain of him. I think if they tend to their business he will.

We are under marching orders again, Mr. Whipple, three companies in our knapsacks.

John E. Ryker
John writes Alfred his feelings on eve of his first battle.
Camp near Snicker Gap.
November 1st, 186-

I received your letter after we halted yesterday morning for rest. Glad to hear that you are still at home.

Have been many hard scenes to pass through. Have been continually on the march since we left Camp Penniman. I can tell you that we have tasted a soldier's life to its lowest depths though we are still above the sod.

I have come fifteen miles today and I think we will stop here tonight as it is almost dark.

We halted twice yesterday. The first time they told me to pitch our tents to stay two or three days. It pleased me to think of a good rest an
we were very tired from the long march through rain and mud and over and across.

We fixed our tents and as comfortably as we could with some straw. We then went to the brook and washed our shirts and underwear. And then the angle sounded to fall in so we ran and pulled down our tents, wrapped up our wet clothes and started.

We marched about five miles, halted and were again told to fix our tents well, for we were going to remain. We did but this morning were ordered to strike tents and march again, and here we are.

Now Alfred I presume that this will be the last time.
I shall write you before drink my life upon the battlefield.

There is an immense rebel army stationed at Antietam Gap just a few miles away.

Here goes a rebel captured now. One talking him right into our company. He has a fine black horse. We turned as if to try escape and get a bayonet at his head.

Alack we are preparing to go into battle tomorrow. If we do you must not get uneasy about it if you do not hear from me. I shall write when I can.

I should like it if this war would close so that we could go home and enjoy what we once did.

If I should get back in
the expected battle do not mind it. If I should I can stand it, but hope I shall not be.

Our regiment is the nearest to the enemy of any in the army.

Am as well now as one could expect after our hard march. Tell the folks I do not think I am going to get what I think will come home in the course of time. If it should be my bad luck not to then no one is to blame.

P.S. The boys have begun to throw away their extra clothing. It is scattered all over the ground.

John E. Ryder
John - November 7, 1862
John tells of soldier who committed suicide. Says no matter what comes, he will remain loyal to his country.
Brook Station
December 8th, 1863

I tried to write yesterday but it was too cold. Today we have things quite warm. But oh! My eyes! I’m almost blinded with the smoke.

The expect to move tomorrow but I do not know where.

Captain Crook resigned this morning. Says he will see you. He has always treated me well but some do not like him at all.

Hayk will be our new Captain. The Colonel wants Ed. Norton and me for orderlies and Shattuck for Lieutenant.

The paymaster has come. When I get my pay I shall send it home.

I received the letter you sent me by Bennett with
the four dollars back. I did not see the men. I don't suppose they can get here.

Some of our men were sent to a Washington hospital today. Three of our men have been hit, and two in our regiment recently.

A man was shot a little while ago by soldiers shooting over a fence. He was careless of
them to use bullets. He was shot through the shoulder but will live. He is in great pain.
They he wishes he had killed them.

It was not so hard on
him as the man who shot himself on one of our long
Marches. He became too tired
to keep up. The officers kept
Sweating in. Finally he stopped, put a gun to heart and fired. But the discharge burned sparks of life left.

I have just written Alfred. I hope he won't join the regulars. I think I should like being in the cavalry but I will not enlist in the regulars. Mother, you tell Alfred not to enlist in the regulars.

I am feeling a great deal better and I have not returned to duty yet.

I did not expect much from when I enlisted but, mother, never for a moment think that I would desert. I would suffer a dozen deaths first. I want to remain and serve my country as long as I can.
I can get my discharge in a short time if I wish it. I want to go home very much and as long as I can stand it I think it is my duty to help preserve my country. Then I can enjoy my home.

John E. Ryder
Alfred visits old battlefield, tells effects on trees.

Wants news of the world.
Brownsville-Virginia
December 21st 1862

I'm well but rather sleepy having been on picket duty last night.

You may think that this is too near Washington to have trouble with rebels or even the very anxious about them. It is a fact that we have a little fights with them nearly every day. Our command caught six last night. There are only about six hundred cavalry left in this direction from Washington.

This place is memorable for a very hard fight over a year since between Stevens and McCall. I counted more
than seventy trees that were struck with cannon balls. Half of them were cut clear down.

I received a letter from Mother yesterday, stating that your lawsuit came and alright. It was a curious case. I found thread, needles and money in the letter, for all of which I am very thankful.

John first sent to me from camp some paper and envelopes I was out of both.

John is acting orderly now to old General Abercrombie near Alexandria and will no doubt stay there during the winter. Dow is also orderly for some general down near Frederickburg.
I haven't seen him since the first day I came back.

Earley is with me yet. He will probably be Commissary Sergeant and then will have to return to camp.

I wish that when you go to town you would have the Weekly Advertiser sent to me for three or four months. It would be a great comfort to know something of what is going on the world. Direct it to Near Mt. Scott, Washington.

Alfred E. Ryder
Camp Fordigan
December 1863

dear friend: I have been very well of late. Camp is cold and I can't sleep much. What a blessing to good health in the army. Am thankful that I am not worse off. Are so many suffering with wounds and disease? Had the boys lack these I have had for some time. Usually slept on the ground but I have some stitches to die on. I expect to go into winter quarters soon. Suppose the papers say that the boys can arms and another battle soon. They are discouraged and some say they will never wish their lives in another one. A soldier told me that nineteen had deserted from his company, and that all but five of them in the regiment had resigned.
I think Tonya will go home on furlough. Charlie
Rook is in the guard house
awaiting trial. Come on
the dancer. I would die first.

There is not snow on
the ground. It is warm
days and cold nights.

Yours forever,

W. E. Ryder
Alfred describes a soldier's life in cold weather.
Camp Near Decatur
January 17th, 1863

Good luck turned up for me today in not being on picket duty as it is cold and rainy.

You speak of the terrors of war, but you could understand them better if you were here. I often feel very sorry for the people here. Day before yesterday I was on guard over some prisoners. Among them were an old man and his son, a lad of twelve years. Although arrested for high treason, delivering U.S. horses over to the secessi," those horses had been here twenty-four hours in all.
Nothing to eat when I came on guard. I could not help pitying them, so gave them my rations to eat. They have now been sent on to Washington for trial.

I hear Burnside has resigned his command. I judge that is the only sensible thing he has ever done.

I am afraid of the Richmond papers wishing to compromise. I don't know but I do not think they need to compromise under such a dispensation of power as we have had. But I do think there will be a civil war at home.
if this is not thought to a close within a year, by the accounts in the papers you send me.

I write today yesterday. Rather think that they are in their quarters again, the army having taken its old position.

It's bad weather for soldiering, being very muddy and stormy. But we cannot complain for we have had a mild winter so far. If we had had the duty to perform last winter as that we have had this, we would have thought that we would freeze to death. Hope I will get that supply of writing paper for I have
been very free with its one satety as you know and will cross the and. To the only way I can content myself when there is nothing to do is to be writing. I hear Condor an the distance but it may mean nothing.

Alfred E. Ryder
John - early May 1863
John tells of disgrace of some of his comrades. Doubts loyalty of some of his officers.
John tells of disgrace of some of his comrades. Doubts loyalty of some of his officers.
Our clothes are dry.
We had a job to do yesterday that was solemn to me. It brought disgrace upon certain ones that was far worse than death.

On the last march to meet the enemy some of the boys fell back and did not join the regiment again until we turned to come back.

Charley Root's sentence was the loss of his pay for six months and sixty days in close confinement with a chain and thirty pounds ball fastened to his leg. Also he is obliged to perform hard labor.
The remaining prisoners were drawn up in the presence of the whole brigade in arms. Their heads had been shaved clean. They tore off their buttons and drummed them out of camp. They had to walk turkey or get a bayonet run into them. There are not many who would not prefer death to such everlasting disgrace.

The snow is fifteen inches deep on the level now. It is so cold that I can scarcely hold my pen.

What about the draft in Michigan? We hear they will take everyone from eighteen
to party. I do not believe we can whip the South if we have the whole world. They are united to a man. You will not find a Southern man who will not say that he is fighting for his right and will fight until he dies.

Many of our armies would just as soon fight for the South for they think there is too much nigger in the fighting. They told us on guard to capture all that tried to pass except the nigger.

John E. Ryder.
John says then. Hooker assures his Colonel of the ultimate victory of Union armies.

Tells company, "John"
Camp Isabella
March 7th 1863

Received your letter mother and so glad to hear of your trip back to your old home. Glad too that Charley is getting along so well. His sickness has caused me much anxiety.

It is raining now. We have just been inspected by the Inspector General of the Army of the Potomac and have been ordered to get the wagons and everything in order to be ready to move.

We have a fine for the night. Had to carry it half a mile. Wood is getting scarce around here. Some are obliged to burn roots.
I wish mother, I could see you for a while and talk with you about friends in the East. How is Josephine? Did she want to stay or her grandmothers? I wish Aunt Maria could bring her wife and send her to school.

Our Colonel has been to see General Hooker who said he was certain we would soon whip the rebels. Said that all he was afraid of was that they would come before we got a chance to fight them. I do not think the General need mourn about that. But when we do attack them again we shall drive them as away as.
battlefield with its effects.
If we have good officers we can whip them. If we have traitors we will be driven back. I think Gen. Hooker is all right and will fight well.

But enough of war. If I ever get home again I think I can talk on subjects that will interest me more.

Special! E. Ranger first told me he was going home soon on furlough. He is so ambitious, I don’t. After going through with all the excitement of war he is still the same (bright?) youth that he was when he left the peaceable
dwelling of his mother. He said he planned to arrive home at noon on a Sunday. He would walk into church wearing full war equipment and look as cross and warlike as possible. Said he thought the folks would all say—"There is a fellow who wouldn't fight as soon as you would." However I am afraid they might say—"About face! March!"

Our Captain has been ill about ten days and I don't think he wants his wife to know it. He is a good officer and a brave soldier.

I received the Cayenne pepper. It will last me a long while.
White brought me the paper and envelopes.

I am well. Has never fatter in my life. Soldiers' fare will build one up.

Much grease is used in cooking. I like the food. (When I am hungry.)

John E. Ryder.
Alfred recounts a clever capture of Union general by the enemy.
Camp near Bull Run, Va.
March 12th 1863

Suppose you have heard of the great scare at Fairfax Court House the other night. The rebels took Brigadier General Stanton out of bed about two in the morning. It was the coolest thing you have ever heard of. They came into town and sent the guards to quarters, ordered the cavalry to saddle up, fell them into line and marched them off as prisoners. It served the general right for he was putting on style in town a long way from his command. Everyone here is glad of it. If the rebels would take the pains...
to gable up some of our atfliction officers every night it would be a good lesson for them.

Darley is here with us now so we are altogether once more. I am very glad of it.

Ritten and Duke are on for day picket duty now.

Received another letter from Johnny. He is well except for a cold. All have hard colds here too. So such a damp winter. Think we shall be free from them when warm weather returns.

Alfred G. Ryder.
Camp near Ft. Scott
March 20th - 1863

Dear Friends,

I am in the hospital. I was sent here on the 15th.
Am getting well fast through somewhat weak of course. Has
ill about a week before I came.

I have good care. Can have
wine to drink or anything I
have a mind to call for.

Our regimental doctor, kindly
in a fine fellow. I shall
be well in a few days and
and with the rest of the boys
Rutland (amateu?) go back from
Richmond all right. He put
up while there at a 4th
toby hotel. Didn't like the
fare very well and was glad
to get away after staying
two nights.

L.B. 42
A letter from Sid Bird received last night states that he is in Nashville and in orderly regiments in the 32nd Cavalry Co. G. Also had a letter from Grandma. The boys sent off a lot of Rebs whom they captured yesterday. This morning they came very near capturing the famous Capt. Mosby, so I hear. They didn't care much about fighting with our regiment. Rentz says they told him. But they say it is no fun to chase the Penna. fellows because there is no danger. They run like sheiks almost always.
I expect the draft is making lively times with you now days. If they do their duty they will call out another batch of a hundred thousand and have them drilling.

I believe there will be heavy fighting before long. At least while the roads are passable for heavy artillery and train wagons.

Write soon and respect to all.

Jenw. Harrin

A. E. Ryder
John takes part in long hard ascenting march. Has narrow escape. Eggs a real luxury.
Camp May

May 26th 1863

I have just returned from a six days search and am ready to say that I am most awfully bangeed up. However I have found some letters, one of them from home which has lightened my stiffened bones. I am never so tired when at leisure to scribble a few lines home.

In the six days we marched over a hundred and fifty miles. We left camp on the 20th at daylight and marched thirty one miles, going into camp at night in the evening. We marched under
in sleeping men and through a cloud of dust. The cavalry tried out and said they never rode so far before in one day but the Old Iron Brigade hopped it through. I think we had none killed by bullets, but one fell dead, annasnick, while marching.

We captured a rebel colonel, fifty soldiers, eight hundred mules, six hundred 'riggers' and a caravan of six hundred animals.

The relieved two regiments of our cavalry that the rebels had flanked, burned a bridge and drove the enemy back across the river.
Scorillas were numerous. One jumped from a thicket while our cavalry was a little way ahead of me. He shot a sergeant dead and got away.

The women were mean and the men whom we could not capture or shoot ran away.

The women called me Yankee robbers and everything that they could think of. They say the Yankees are a savage and bloodthirsty lot but we make them like lambs compared to their savagery. They will butcher and use cold blood.

When I camped last night and got my equipment off I was very tired. I and a man named Hill started out.
to get some milk if possible.

I walked down a path through a little chicken when we thought we heard someone talking very low. We went on further and were about to get over some brush when a man began sneaking up. Others were calling to him to come back and say we got closer. He had no gun and surprising that they were Master John boy Rebo and three of them we turned our heels and lired and warn as we were, beam back in camp.

Henry H. was first here and said they were going to cut his wife's pay down to five dollars a month. He feels
badly about it.
I have just had a good supper of eggs and potatoes.
Can get eggs only once
in three or four months.
Pay fifty cents a dozen for
them.
Just got a letter from
Alfred. He is well.

John E. Ryder
John has severe illness.
Tells of evil of hard drinking among officers.
Camp near Brock Run
June 24th 1863

We have been expecting to move for several days. We were called up at three this morning and are still here. I will not do any duty today as I was very sick yesterday. Was detailed with others of our command to go on Brigade guard. Commenced getting weak and large drops of perspiration came on my forehead. I saw I could not stand so got leave to fall in the rear. I layed down began to flow camps and fainted away. I was carried to a hospital, received good
Care and soon reflected from the spell.

I went to sleep and when I awoke they handed me a letter. It was from Alfred.

He had been near and had rode one day to find me but could not. Thinks I shall see him soon.

Do not think I shall be bothered with one of those spells again. I hope not for it was anything but pleasant.

I wish they would draft all the men from eighteen to forty and get this thing over with in a hurry. We have just enough men now to get licked every time.

The Rebels say our officers
Are drunk and theirs are not.
One great tall fellow is just going past now, a son of General Meredith. He is drunk most of the time and doesn't know whether he is alive or not.
Nobles is well and Hoyt and all the boys that are here now.

John E. Ryder.

P.S. I have just had a good dish of beef soup.
Fairfax, Col. H. Va.
June 24 - 1863.

Dear Mother! For the first six or seven days I have time to write. I have been on the march almost constantly. In one twenty-four hours we marched nearly twenty miles. We marched every night as you must know I am tired and sleepy. I am well. I passed last night within three miles of where Johnny was laid. I did not know it till after. We are under marching orders all the time and I think believe I can get a chance to see him. I think we shall be off to the rear of the rebel winter line. Pleasanton attacked them this front. So you see me didn't get into the fight on either day. Have turned our trucks over to the Quartermaster.
to have none anymore. I do wish we are going to
Mainland and I do not believe it. But what we do difference. Then. The four's
headquarters are in sight now. But the army do all
over the country for fifteen
miles around. I feel sorry
for the infantry this hot weather. We found in our
travels thousands of shoes and blankets that they have
thrown away.
If I do not write it
will be because I can't.

R. G. Ryder
From Mr. C. May 24th 1863
Erie pa. July 9, 1863

Mr. George Ryder,
Dear Sir: Perhaps from other
sources you have heard of two some
both of whom are in the service
of our country, and both of whom
I fear have been sacrificed upon
its altar. John went with me
in the 24th and was killed on
the first day of Battle near this
place, and I buried him with
my own hands

On my return among the
wounded at this place, in the
various hospitals, I found Alck
of the 12th Mich. Cavalry who
was wounded at Chickahominy
and is now lying in a
dangerous condition in a
hospital at the Union Hospital
home. I conversed with him for
a long time. He does not
expect to live. He is wounded
through the left lung and it is with some difficulty that the breathes. He had lost the use of his limbs almost entirely.

I asked him if he had any word to send home. He gave me the testament to give to his mother. He had carried it with him through the war as far. He also said to tell mother to do well by my brother and when you look on him remember me.

In regard to dying he seems to be resigned and said, “The best death. All things well.” He seemed to realize the need of a farther Church evidenced by works, and was trying to prepare for the worst. He wants to meet God in Heaven when he has gone exchanging their bickering world for a better home above.

He told me to tell you that...
William Farley had been a friend to him and had supplied him with some money.
I deeply sympathize with you in your sad sorrow. I shall do all I can for Alfred
while I remain here which may be a week yet and if
he dies I will see him decently buried. I am going again to
sell him down and carry him some lemons.
You can address me here for perhaps two weeks.
Alfred said he hoped to meet you all in heaven.
I am respectfully yours
William E. Way
Captain 24th Michigan Volt.
P.S. If Mr. Hawk goes home soon
I will send the Testament by him
Alfred's father was with him
when he died only 17th.
THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG, P4 JULY 3rd 1863.

This terrific and bloody conflict between the gallant Army of the Potomac, commanded by General George G. Meade, and the host of the rebel Army of the East under General Lee, was commenced on Wednesday July 1st and ended on Friday the 3rd at 6 o'clock P.M. — The decisive Battle was fought on Friday, ending in the complete rout and dispersion of the Rebel Army. — A National thanks and enduring fame ever crown the arms of the heroic soldiers who fought with such unflinching bravery during long and desperate fight.
William Farley had been in France to French and had understood them with some success.

I deeply sympathise with you and Dear love, shall do all I can for thee while I can. I have a little which may see a week sick, and if you die I will see him decently buried. I am going again to see them, room and carry them some lemons.

Can I address the Vice for perhaps a time next?ecided with the help of mech your all in heaven.

Most respectfully yours,

William C. Fran. Chalain 24th March, 1870.

P.S. Of Mr. Harp there is more, soon to meet with them all in heaven.

Clarke's father was with them when notified only 17th.
FRIDAY, JUNE 9, 1865.

In Memory of Alfred G. and John E. Ryder, after whom the Grand Army and W. R. C., of Newburg, was Named.

[Read at the Decoration Day Exercises by Mrs. John Bennett.]

FORTY years have passed since the carnage of battle ceased, and the emblems of civilized life were again restored. But we can never forget the fearful cost, the thousands and hundreds of thousands who marched away to war, and colors flying down to the gory fields to die for eternal right. During the four long and bloody years, thousands of brave men from every state in the Union so gallantly defended the government and the Constitution of our country, that the nation has been exempted from a foreign invasion, and we are now enjoying the peace and prosperity that we never thought it possible we should arrive at.

Among the first to respond to the call from our President, Abraham Lincoln, and who were two brave sons of the Lone Star state, were Captain Alfred G. and John E. Ryder. Both were born in Livingston and educated in our school. Alfred attended the University of New York during the years up to 1861, while the exception of the time Alfred was away at school, he was in a happy home with fond parents, sister and uncle. But he was too young to join the army, so he went to war as a volunteer as a nurse and was not taken prisoner at the battle of Shiloh. After the war, he returned to his home and went to work in the office of the Kalamazoo Daily News, where he remained until his death, which occurred a few months ago.

After being in the service, he further writes: Camp life was more delightful to me than to the experience, easier to imagine than to realize. Oh, Spirit of war! happy is it that earth is thy home. How dearful thy afflictions, how desolate, how terrible. God of Mercy have mercy upon men. How strong are the bonds that unite friend with friend and how terrible is their disunion. None can tell how many of our friends who have known not why he shall meet on this broad earth. Often have I witnessed silently contemplating its sadness, mothers and sisters giving all their last farewell to beloved father and brother. I've seen the tears roll down their cheek and the parting anguish, and so have I seen wifes and mothers of infant children around them, looking at their agonizing farewell on husband and to whom they depend for their daily bread. But I've also seen one narrow line of men drawn that links our sunset with our dawn. The air is full of farewells to the dying and mourning for the dead. I spent my 21st birthday amid rain, mud and bullets on the banks of the Rappahannock River.

The following is a letter written by Alfred from Point of Rocks, Sept. 4, 1862: (about one year after he enlisted) I have this morning a letter from my first in a long time an opportunity of writing you a few words. The time that has passed since I wrote you before, I can very truly tell you has been very eventful, indeed. I have been a prisoner of war in the hands of the enemy, but am now on parole and am to start for Annapolis this afternoon. I can tell you I have been in war for a few months where the rifles crack, sabres闪光, and sound and well, a very good story for me. The 29th of August was a fearful day for me. Our battalion headed a charge on the rebels that day and the support being withdrawn left us a few hundred fighting thousands with nothing but the sabres. You can imagine Alf cutting left and right and all the rebels till some of my rebel friends from the rear took an opportuinity to knock me from my horse. When the whole column galloped over me, I thought I was gone sure, but after they got over me I got up and it was as much as I ever could do. I tried to catch a horse but could not, when the rebels again took note of me and sent the balls freely, one burning my face clear across and taking off some of my under lip that you sometimes used to think was a little too prominent, but that is nothing. We fought hard but they surrounded us and took us prisoners and gave us nothing to eat for 68 hours, for the simple reason, I think, that they had nothing of the others. I know nothing of the others for I had not a thing, only what I had on. They came out all right.

Exactly from my letter dated April 17, 1862: We were on scouting. The rebels were hiding, they surrounded us. (Concluded on eighth page.)
As I looked I saw two of our men fall from their saddles. At noon they were enjoying themselves as well as could be expected, they were shot in the head. They were from Detroit, both brave gallant men. Four of us were ordered behind the dead. Their last words were—Boys, pray for us.

An extract from Captain R. E. B. Mendenhall's letter written June 25, 1863: God blessed me to say with the sight of my brother, Johnnie, for the first time in over two years. He looks capable of being killed. The sight of him is beyond description. I have been looking for the camp of the 17th Michigan Cavalry distinguished themselves. The battle of Antietam is probably repeated. Our forces are gathering for the onslaught.

June 28th: This is the last of the battle of South Mountain and the spot where the 17th Michigan Cavalry distinguished themselves. The battle of Antietam is probably repeated. Our forces are gathering for the onslaught.

June 29th: We left South Mountain early this morning and retraced our steps to the vicinity of our ancient camp near Hanover Court House.

John E. Ryder was born February 7, 1849, in the town of Asiansville, near Buffalo, N.Y. He was enlisted in the 13th New York Volunteers, A.C. and at the close of the war, he was 22 years old.

A letter was received from Captain R. E. B. Mendenhall's letter written June 25, 1863: God blessed me to say with the sight of my brother, Johnnie, for the first time in over two years. He looks capable of being killed. The sight of him is beyond description. I have been looking for the camp of the 17th Michigan Cavalry distinguished themselves. The battle of Antietam is probably repeated. Our forces are gathering for the onslaught.

June 28th: This is the last of the battle of South Mountain and the spot where the 17th Michigan Cavalry distinguished themselves. The battle of Antietam is probably repeated. Our forces are gathering for the onslaught.

June 29th: We left South Mountain early this morning and retraced our steps to the vicinity of our ancient camp near Hanover Court House.

John E. Ryder was born February 7, 1849, in the town of Asiansville, near Buffalo, N.Y. He was enlisted in the 13th New York Volunteers, A.C. and at the close of the war, he was 22 years old.

A letter was received from Captain R. E. B. Mendenhall's letter written June 25, 1863: God blessed me to say with the sight of my brother, Johnnie, for the first time in over two years. He looks capable of being killed. The sight of him is beyond description. I have been looking for the camp of the 17th Michigan Cavalry distinguished themselves. The battle of Antietam is probably repeated. Our forces are gathering for the onslaught.

June 28th: This is the last of the battle of South Mountain and the spot where the 17th Michigan Cavalry distinguished themselves. The battle of Antietam is probably repeated. Our forces are gathering for the onslaught.

June 29th: We left South Mountain early this morning and retraced our steps to the vicinity of our ancient camp near Hanover Court House.

John E. Ryder was born February 7, 1849, in the town of Asiansville, near Buffalo, N.Y. He was enlisted in the 13th New York Volunteers, A.C. and at the close of the war, he was 22 years old.

A letter was received from Captain R. E. B. Mendenhall's letter written June 25, 1863: God blessed me to say with the sight of my brother, Johnnie, for the first time in over two years. He looks capable of being killed. The sight of him is beyond description. I have been looking for the camp of the 17th Michigan Cavalry distinguished themselves. The battle of Antietam is probably repeated. Our forces are gathering for the onslaught.

June 28th: This is the last of the battle of South Mountain and the spot where the 17th Michigan Cavalry distinguished themselves. The battle of Antietam is probably repeated. Our forces are gathering for the onslaught.

June 29th: We left South Mountain early this morning and retraced our steps to the vicinity of our ancient camp near Hanover Court House.

John E. Ryder was born February 7, 1849, in the town of Asiansville, near Buffalo, N.Y. He was enlisted in the 13th New York Volunteers, A.C. and at the close of the war, he was 22 years old.

A letter was received from Captain R. E. B. Mendenhall's letter written June 25, 1863: God blessed me to say with the sight of my brother, Johnnie, for the first time in over two years. He looks capable of being killed. The sight of him is beyond description. I have been looking for the camp of the 17th Michigan Cavalry distinguished themselves. The battle of Antietam is probably repeated. Our forces are gathering for the onslaught.

June 28th: This is the last of the battle of South Mountain and the spot where the 17th Michigan Cavalry distinguished themselves. The battle of Antietam is probably repeated. Our forces are gathering for the onslaught.

June 29th: We left South Mountain early this morning and retraced our steps to the vicinity of our ancient camp near Hanover Court House.

John E. Ryder was born February 7, 1849, in the town of Asiansville, near Buffalo, N.Y. He was enlisted in the 13th New York Volunteers, A.C. and at the close of the war, he was 22 years old.
AA  Ryder family [Livonia]
    Letterbook, 1861-1863