Transcripts of Miscellaneous Ryder Letters 1861 - 1864
Ryder Family - Transcripts of Ryder Brothers Civil War Letters (prepared by Fay Ryder Grimm)
(donated by Bob Grimm, Nov. 2000)
Dear Brother

Feb. 26, 1862

I received your kind letter of the 14th inst. We received the one of the 18th, and we were glad to hear from you, and hear that you were well, but you spoke of having a cold, I guess that is a general complaint. I have had a bad cold and cough ever since I have had the measles. A soldier's life is a hard life, and especially a hard place to be sick. Our fare in Detroit was hard, but nothing to what it would be if we had gone on south. I know how to feel for the soldiers that is now in service, and I hope to God that the war may come to a close, and peace once more can reign. They are trying to transfer our company to the 15th Mich. infantry, but I guess they can't do it if they had used me decent, we would not said a word about going, in cavalry, but not in infantry, the prospect is, as they all say, that this war will close, in a short time, I hope it is true, after the surrender of Ft. Donelson, after the news got to Detroit, the greatest excitement...
that ever was in the city, cannon numbering 600, bands, sharpshooters, regulars or recruits from broadhead, micigan, st. clotee, all was out cheering, shooting and firing cannon, women, men, and boys waving handkerchiefs and great excitement in the evening. Gen. Howard made a speech, expressing great joy at the great victory the Union had won. Saying the back bone of the secessionism was broken, over his head was a banner bearing the following motto, "what God has put together, man cannot shake asunder." Our motto is the Union and the Constitution was written before its use.

If it should be that your regiment should disband, I would not never enlist in infantry nor in no other regiment, but I would come home. The Doctor says they is no help for John Bunnell. I have no more kennev, only the marriage of Helen Krumebacher. She is married to Sid fitzgerald, the greatest lover ever known. We went over there and when
they got all ready she went in the other room and cried about 2 hours and bid went in and told her she had not better have him if she felt so bad. she said it might as well come off then as any time, it had got to be done, he said it had not got to be done. so they started crying they went to Plymouth and got married and then he and his wife and Willard and Analizy went to his uncle's to spend the night. Helin cried all night. It happened they had 4 beds, Sid in one, Helin in the other, Willard the other, Analizy the other. They asked Sid if he would sleep alone, she felt so bad, he said yes and always if she wanted him to. I pity him.

We are all well, but Doby, she is better, right as soon as you receive this. J. E. Ryder
A. G. Ryder.
March 25 - 1862

Dear Brother - We received your kind letter of the 16th that you wrote to me and glad was we to hear from you for we had had no letter from you in a long time. We received a letter from you about the death of your friend soldier and we also read it in the papers, it is hard for to die at home but it is still harder to die away from home when they are no friends around. I suppose you have heard of the death of John Burwell, David McFarlin is just alive, he cannot live long.

I have receive 37.32 cents from the Lancers and an onerable discharge, they charged me 20.80 for our clothes but then I am satisfied. We have bin in hopes that the war was a coming to a close shortly. People around here think it will close this spring. I hope to look that it may be true, for the poor soldiers sake. If it does not close before long if I was in your place I would as a fellow did to Northville, he pretended he was lame and now he can kick up his heels and laugh about it.
He stayed to the hospital a spell. Bill Coats is all right now since he got home. We will send you a paper with this letter and if you get it we will send them often. We will put in half a dollar worth of stamps in this letter, we will send writing paper and envelopes when we receive an answer from this letter and the rest of the stamps. Don't put any more stamps on the letters you send home. I wrote a letter to you a spell ago and received no answer. I suppose you didn't get it.

You must write as often as you can. I must now close. Yours forever

J.E. Ryder

A.E. Ryder
Camp Michigan

Sept 6, 1862

Dear friend-

I have had a letter from home since I have been here, this makes 3 I have written. I thought I would write a few lines this morning. Knowing your feeling in regard to Alfred, I think he is all right. I saw Bill Farley and Hank Spurs yesterday and they said the cavalry made a charge on the enemy and when they came out Alfred was missing and after the battle they went there and he was not to be found among the dead and he thought without doubt he was a prisoner with some others. He said they were not many killed but more taken prisoners. Do not trouble your self for Bill said if he was a prisoner he would be released in a few days for they had no right to keep him, he may take the oath. He will either take the oath and come home or less he will be exchanged. The orderly sergeant said he thought he was a prisoner.
Bill I said they were all tough and healthy. I stand it so far pretty well. When I came across the sea I was awful sick (lake sick) but I have got over that and I am well. I saw many admirable sights upon the way. We were welcomed by every one that we saw. I think that Ohio is ahead of Michigan for Union people. The women would follow us and singing their hymns and say, "God bless the defenders of our country." We found such a Union feeling until we got to Washington there we found enemies. If you by anything get you have to pay 6 times as much as you do in dish and run the risk of getting poisoned. I had to pay 50 cents for a little chunk of cheese that I could take in to a very few mouthfuls, you could get it in dish for 6 or 8 cents. We went from there to Camp Lyon, from there to Camp Rich where we still are. We are now nearest to the enemy of any other regiment. The sheet is here thick and part of our regiment are guarding their property. One of them shot at a couple of our soldiers.
when we first got here. We were fixing our tents when our Col. came running down and said "form into a line of battle for the the enemy are upon us", but it did not come and in the night when we were a sleep he came through the lines with a yell that the enemy were there. He said "form into a line of battle or we will all be taken by the enemy". We sprang for our guns, loaded them and went into a line less than no line, marched down to the field but no enemy came & it was only done to try us, to see if we would stand to the reck. Write as soon as you get this.

Yours forever J.C. Ryder
John writes to Wm. Vinton (his mother's brother).
Thinks Alfred is safe.
Tells if a soldier hard ships but intends to stick it out.
Note - Uncle Wm. Vinton lived about where the American Legion Hall is now located on Newburg Rd.

Sept 11, 1862

Camp Shearer

Dear friends,

I thought while I had a little time to spare I would occupy it by writing to you. Although I have receive I no letter from any of our folks since I have bin here, and in fact any of we hurt, but I expect one shortly. I find that soldiering is the great importance of the day. I have not bin take in. So far in my experience, for I expected no fun in it. Many boys that I have played with in early life has been cut down in this late battle. I saw the wounded soldiers when they come in Washington, which amounted to about 12 thousand. I will not try to explain the sight of mangled bodies. I think Alfred is all right. I saw the orderly of his company and he said without doubt he was a prisoner and not killed. He said if he was a prisoner he would get home and take the oath of allegiance.

We are now about 4 miles from Washington.
and we have a fine camping place and have as good times as you could expect for soldiers.
I think that this will end in less than 6 mo.
in one way or the other.
They is a man in Washington that won't be 5 thousand dollars that this war will end in 60 days. I hope he will win it but I fear he would lose. If this war could end and I and Alfred could return home unharmed I should be thankful but if we should not we will stand what may come.
I can tell you that this is a hard looking country. There is no fences,
o crops. There is corn 2 or 3 miles away that is so high that you can not begin to reach the top of it, where you will see hundreds of horses
in it. It looks horrible. They is a man that I saw yesterday that was on a farm not far away, that declared that if the war did not close shortly that there would be famine in the South. There is in some parts of Virginia. For miles around there is not anything at all to live on.
Uncle William & horse here haunt worth mention. When I was in Virginia I saw lots of dead horses and lots of boys that had horses that took them from prisoners. If one should go into a battle he could get a horse if he wanted it but the soldiers here could not take care of them. They is lots of the cavalry boys that you can see on decent horses that they took in battle.

I want you to tell the boys around there to write to me, and I will answer them all. I can tell you that a letter is worth something.

I will now close by telling you that I want you to answer this letter immediately if you can. Write all of the news of Mich.

Yours Forever

J. E. Ryder

W. Vinton
John writes to his sister Elizabeth of Harrison McFarland, dead after being wounded. Alfred Noble has been to the hospital to see him. Johnson

Note: The Nobles lived on the farm adjoining our farm to the East.

Sept 1st, 1862, Camp Shearer

Dear Sister,

I thought I would write a few lines to you this morning to see if I could not get a word in reply. Last night we were talking in our tent, when some of the officers came along and said they wanted us to form into a line of battle and they wanted us to fill our canteens with water and get 40 rounds of cartridges and 40 caps. First it was only done to try us, but we thought the enemy was there for we could hear the cannon roar all day long. They said they wanted all to go that could bear arms. I and Noble had been sick all day. I had the headache, Noble had a big bile on his face and when the call was given some of the boys was so scared that they shook and layed down, it was one of our neighbors C. Wrench. I and Noble went. We can hear the cannon roar now here and there all the time. It is the battle at Bull Run. It is hard to lay in the battle field wounded. But such a day as this it is hot enough to
Mr. Hoyt went to Washington yesterday and saw Harrison Maie Farland. He tells an awful story of his sufferings. He says that he layed on the battle field 3 days after being wounded while it rained torrents and in the mud, and that when he went there he had 35 dollars and it was all taken from him while he lay wounded but Hoyt left money with him. He was in great agony, he said that he wished he could die, that he would die in a minute if he could for he was prepared to die. I suppose that it was because he was in such pain. The Doctor hasn't much hopes of him. Hoyt has got the ball that shot him, he is going to send it home. Noble and I were there gone down today to see him. I have not heard from Almice lately, is he going home? If he is I should like to have him come and see me first. I have bin expecting him every day. Ruben Farwell is getting along fast. All of the boys are well excepting for Camp diseases besides those that are waiting for a discharge. I and Noble stand
Soldiering pretty well. I will have to go now and drill. So good by and write often.
Your friend

J. E. Ryder
Co C. - 24th N.Y. Inf.
Washington - D.C.

Elizabeth V. Ryder
Dear friends. This is a sad day to me as ever I have seen since I have lived in this world of trouble. Oh dear friends what awful news has reached our ears I dare not tell what but you know the flower of our family has gone, but he may, and I trust in God that he may return unharmed. The orderly sergeant of his Company told me that the last he saw of him they was five rebels after him and they might have taken him prisoners, if he is he will get away shortly for they are going to exchange prisoners and he may be sent. They said that the regiment was scattered and had not got in yet.

Peter Farrell is wounded in the breast and forty bad and a saber cut in the mouth. Harrison MacFarland is missing. I can tell you it was a bloody field. The army passed by here yesterday. It was awful. I just heard that Harrison MacK was shot dead, shot through the heart. We have got to march this afternoon. Some say to the battle.
field but I guess not. If we should, let it come, that is what we come here for, but life is sweet and we will live if we can. We have got 300 prisoners here with us now. They look like a lot of dogs that don't care whether we kill them or not. They said they thought they was right and would not give in. They said that they was deceived in the Northern Army. I saw the Second Michigan Regiment pass but I did not see Charles Norderkine. We can hear the cannon was around us but I suppose at Bull's Run we get whipped awfully. Brockhead's Cavalry keeps a coming in. I may get a chance to hear about Alfred. As soon as I get where I can I will send my likeness home but I can't do it now for we are so far from a place.

I think Armstrong will get discharged and Jake. The rest of the boys is well. I have got to be a packing party quick. I have got to close. I saw J. E. Pyle, Farwell, Homestith, others. Yours Forever. J. E. Pyle

John describes the battle field of South Mountain.

Oct 8, 1862
Camp Harbaugh

Dear Friends,

I once more have an opportunity to write a few lines to you although I have not received any letters from home in a long time but we cannot get mail yet. We left Frederic on Monday last about 4 o'clock P.M. and marched until about ten o'clock and then the next morn we marched until about 5 o'clock and halted on the great battle ground called the South Mountain battle. It was when the 17th fought so hard. It was about half a mile from the main road. I went over the ground, it was too horrible to explain, there was a small log house that stood on the ground, it was torn to pieces and fences and trees were all shattered to pieces and they were all kinds of clothing over the ground, hundreds of knapsacks and clothing of all kinds and as we went into the house. He told me a pitiful story of his suffering. He had his house all torn to pieces and he had three little flags on his clock and they were all strings; they were 48 rebels buried in his well.
and near a hundred in his yard and about 200 around his house. It smelt awful bad as they were not covered enough and they was 1 that was not covered at all, and 1 captain & 3 privates not far away and the old man stayed there and composd the verses that I put in here. He said that he wrote it after the battle, he said if I sent it home he wanted I should tell them to think like one of old, for he had suffered the privations of a second revolution. I found this envelope on the battle ground where the dead seventeenth day. I suppose it was thrown out of their pocket before they was buried. On the rebel ground was found rebell verses and envelope with the following verse.

"May those Northern families who abuse their Southern neighbors approach near enough to feel the point of our sabers. May they come near to hear the click of the trigger and learn that a white man is better than a nigger."

Then we returned to our regiment and soon
marched on to this place. This is a beautiful country but it is too good for rebels. We expect a brush here before long. There is lots of rebel prisoners here, the barns and stables are full, they are wounded. One of them died yesterday. They say they will fight until every man is dead. They say that the saw bone lobe is hard to kill, some of them are going home to-day but their talk amounts to nothing and they are all most naked. Some had not enough on to keep decent and they were nothing but thin and bones, but friends I must close for it is time to go and drill. I have had no letters from home in a long time but the mail cannot get to us.

Yours truly

J.E. Ryder

G. Ryder & W. Ryder

Sharpsburg -
In Camp by Brookestation  Dec. 4, 1862

Dear Mother -

As I again have an opportunity to write I will pen a few lines this morning so that you may know how we are. The boys are all well but I and Nobles & I feel poorly well, all but being weak and having a cold and Nobles says that he is a good deal better. Yesterday they was two that went to their long homes and this morn they say they is still another that must go from our regiment. I did not learn their names. I received the gloves that you sent me yesterday. I had bought me a pair in Washington but I can put these in my knapsack for a pair of gloves is worth a good deal here for it is cold work to handle a gun with bare hands. We expect to get some more clothing today but I can't tell and they say that our pay will come soon. We are tenting now with five again.

Durfee, boys and Walter, Eldridge and A. Noble.

[Signature]
and Alfred Noble tented alone until last night and it made us plenty of room to sleep and we had our tent all fixed up as warm as we could and then we had to strike tent and move up nearer the rail road and the Col. made us double tent. We thought we would not move in some time as we got things looking quite decent. We drew half rations of candles so that we would read a chapter every night before going to bed. Some may think that the army will ruin any one. It may come but if one takes care of them selves there is no danger. Homer Smith was here to see me yesterday, he is a smart looking soldier, he is Sergeant now and Johnny Coats was here too he belongs to the same Company that Alfred does. He was detailed from the regiment and says he has not seen Alfred since he has bin back. I think I shall see Alfred before long. We don't know how much longer we shall stay here. We will go back to the brigade or we shall stay here and
guard the railroad. I think I should like it if I was in the Cavalry for it gives me pain in my side to carry a rapisodle but I must bring my letter to a close. Good by.

Yours truly forever

F. E. Ryder to his mother

F. E. Ryder.
John is sick to take part in battle which he watched from a hill. Regiment lost 18 killed. Says Charley Post disgraced himself by running away and deserting. Food is high - biscuits 20¢ - apples 7¢.

Camp near Fredericksburg Dec 19, 1862

Dear Mother

I received your letter of the 18th last night and I was glad to get it, for I had not had a letter from home in some time. The sun shines out this morning, warm and pleasant for this season of the year and I am now a writing on the ground with my tent pitched. We have had orders to march but we may not go today, we can't tell until the orders come to fall in. I am a getting along first rate now all but being pretty weak. A soldier can't expect to do as well in keeping his health as he could at home, for of course the ground is his bed and cloth for a covering and he must have a cold, and as much smoke, it gives one the headache. I am not a going to the hospital now but they took down some names this morning. They took down Noble's name to go but he may not.

I suppose you know that our regiment has been in a fight. It was pretty lucky only 18
felled and wounded. I was sick at the time but I tried to keep up but my strength failed. I saw the big fight. It was worth a thousand dollars to me but I don't care about seeing another. I stood upon a hill and saw both armies fighting. The shells would burst around like shot but some disguised themselves and friends by running. Charley Root run and deserted the company. He is now under arrest. Some think he will rather be sent aboard of the man of war for five years or be shot. If I should ever run in the time of battle I hope that I won't leave the field alive. We had quite a time here last night, the boys got mad and was a going to abuse the Col. but they got in the guard house. It was in Co. 2. All of the officers of the company are going to resign. I got the money that you sent Bennet but I did not see him and I got the gloves. We have bin paid off and I sent home $5 dollars myself and thought if you got that I would send 5 more.
Henry Horrington sent 20 dol. to pa and wanted him to draw the money on the check and if his wife didn't want any of it to pay it to Henryuttle. I have got me a new rubber (pencil) but I must close for we may move pretty soon.

Stuff that you buy here you have to pay for.

Biscuit here is 25 cents a piece, apples is 7 cent, spiece and small at that and it haint very often that you can buy them at any price.

Good by for this time. Yours truly for ever.

J.E. Ryder to his mother
John tells his sister of the joy of a house compared to a tent. Dreamed of what they would have to eat if they had access to the buttery (pantry) at home. Men of an Indiana regiment refuse to fight.

Camp Isabella Jan 4, 1863

Dear Sister,

As I have a little spare time today I will try and answer a letter that I received from you dated 25th and I was glad to hear from you for I did not know but what you had forgot to write. We are now in winter quarters and I hope that we shall stay here until we start for Michigan. We have not got our house quite done but what we have done is a big thing. We have been used to living in a 4 by 6 house and now to get into a house that we can stand up in and have it 5 x 12 feet long and a fire place in it. We hardly know what to do with our selves and all the fruit we have to find is our eyes, but I guess our eyes will be smoke proof in a few days.

We moved in our little cabin day before yesterday and built a fire in it and we found it so comfortable that we got wood and set up by our fire and told stories. What we would
First if we could get into our mothers battery, until midnight and then we took our blanket, wrapped it around us and lay ourselves away for sleep. I think if Uncle Sam don't settle this war pretty quick that it will play out for the deserters is a going off by great numbers and they is lots of them say that they will go home before 3 years or less they will never go home.

They was 37 that would not fire a gun at the rebels the other day. In the 18 Indiana but Dutch men should suffer death. If ever I am drawn in battle I think I should try and make my cartridge count. I saw a wounded rebel lying on the battle field and he said that he wished that this war would come to a close that they was tired of fighting but he said that they would never surrender until we drove them clear into the gulf and that he thought we never could do. But I guess that our soldiers want it to close about as bad as they, I think that our
men is to easy with them, they should use them as traitors should be used. We have to guard their houses and they don't deny but what they are traitors and have sons in the rebel army. It is getting late and I must draw my letter to a close and try and write to Alfred today. So good by for this time.

Yours truly,

J. E. Ryder

Elizabeth Ryder
Camp near Falmouth
Jan 21st 1863

Dear friends,

We are here once more in our small tents. We broke camp yesterday morning about 11 o'clock and arrived at this place last night about 8 o'clock. It was pretty tough on me, being the first marching that I have done and we were on purpose to try the rebels once more but the order came to strike tents.

Jan. 25 - We are now back to our huts again but what a time we have had to get back. It has been raining most all of the time since we left and it is a raining still. We have marched about 40 miles since we left the first day. When we left here we marched about 15 miles and we were halted by "Company into line" and the Col. read orders that we were once more to meet the enemy and all that lived to see the fourth day of July would eat their dinner at home, for this battle would end the
War and the boys were encouraged by that but so tired that they could hardly move wading in mud almost over their boots. They struggled on and sent up cheer after cheer for the Union. I don't know how I could a got through but I thought that I would not give up for it was a bad time as we were expecting a battle and they would call them a coward and that is worse than death. We went on until night and camped. The next day we got to the river about 8 P.M. We could not get across it was so muddy and if we had went across we would have got whipped worse than we did before for the rebels were there to receive us and told us to come on and they would fight us but we came back and I stood the march first rate while some fell lifeless and I noticed one fellow that I think that he didn't kick but a few times after he fell. We are all back or the most of us and feel first rate. Walter Eldridge has been detached from the regiment to go to the general
hospital to take care of the sick and wounded soldiers. When we got to our huts we found them occupied by an Ohio regiment but they left in the morning. They asked us to come in and they made us some coffee but I have got to go on inspection. There is many interesting stories that I would like to tell you but I guess I will wait until I come home so good by

Yours truly

J. E. Ryder.
Camp Isabella  Feb. 5/63

Dear Sister,

I received your kind letter of the 21st Jan. and I was very glad to hear from you and hear that you are all well as myself. I never was so fat in my life and feel tip top generally I suppose that you have heard before this of our great movement to cross the Rappahannock and have again returned to our old quarters. We had a right smart march and they had bin about 100 Court martialed since we came back for falling out of the ranks while on the march toward 3 o'clock. The penalty was generally to take off 5 dollars of pay and do police duty about camps for 14 days. Probably the boys were very tired and could not keep up but we were marching towards the enemy and was expecting a battle and to fall out of ranks the penalty is very severe. Often the penalty is death itself. But enough of that. The news is around camp that we are going to try the rebs once more.
in a day or two but I don't believe it. I don't believe I shant until we strike tents. I have just received a letter from Alfred, and it is well. They were some of our boys went out a scouting clear out beyond the pickets and they have come in with 11 prisoners, 2 rebs and 3 deserters and they found some pretty insulting folk there. The women was the ones that used their tongues most freely telling our soldiers that they needn't think that they could bring their old Frenchmen down here to whip them for they could not do it, and at their very houses was a guard but we took the valuables and left her a rowing.

It has been raining now for 2 or 3 days and I guess that can't cross the river right away for the battery can't move nor infantry neither. Our boxes have come and we have had a number of good meals of them and in fact rather to good for soldiers and now we drew soft bread 3 times a week, the first that I have had in over 6 months.
except things that I got from home and since we
have had soft bread & butter we haven't drawn
a natural breath since we have eat so much.
Walton Eldridge has been detached from the
regiment to tend to the sick and wounded
soldiers and since he left I and Nobles and
a young fellow by the name of John Dwight
tent together. He is as good a fellow as they is
in the regiment. I shall have to close for
the want of paper but I could tell more in
a minute than I could write in a day.

Good by

Yours truly forever

F. E. Ryder

Elizabeth V. Ryder.
This father writes John that he is going to his old home in N.Y. state on a visit. John has 4 months pay coming that he wants his father to use.

David Ryke.
He mentions the death of his Grandfather whom he says "had his faults".

Note - David Ryke is buried on the lot in Newburg Cemetery.

Camp Isabella  Feb 16/63

Dear Father - I will now try and answer the letter I received from you last night and I was glad to hear from you and hear that you were going east on a visit. I hope that you will enjoy it. We expected before this to get our pay, they is about $4 mos. pay now coming but the money I sent take it and use it to your own benefit. There has been but little excitement since we came back from the last march in regard to the fighting line but the story is here. That the army of the Potomac is going west and that they was going to be 3 brigades to guard Washington and we was going to be one of them and that our Brigadier Gen. Meredith was a going to be Governor over the District of Columbia and that they was going to take 100 out of our regiment for Can. but I guess that is all camp rumors and not true but enough of that -

You speak in your letter of the death of
Grandfather and you may well believe it was astonishing news to me. To be sure he had his faults but he has gone, to which I could scarcely make myself believe, but death is indeed solemn and more so to hear of those at home & dropping away than down here in Dixie where they is hundreds going to their long home every day. Although it is solemn to go over some parts of Virginia and see the burial grounds with their name and state. That is when they die in hospitals.

Wilson Eldredge has been a very sick boy but is getting better now. Have you heard from Alfred lately to know how he is getting along. The boys down here think they will be coming home by the 4th of July but I think that they will have to be a few more union officers in the Northern Army. I am afraid that it can not be done by fighting. The rebs are warmly dressed and have as much to eat as we do and are as willing to fight. They was one of our boys died in Richmond.
not long since and one that was was purposely taken prisoner and joined Stewart's cavalry. Shooting is to good for him. One of the fellows I tent with, John D., went out with a gang on a scouting expedition and he slept in Red. Stewart's house all night. He says that it is a beautiful concern with nice barns. There the army had not passed and the fences mostly stood - nigger huts scattered over the plantation. They took the men prisoners and the wimmin were as saucy as hottentot's dogs. They heard some of our boys talk, some were Dutch and they told Col. Flanigan he needn't bring his old Frenchmen down here to whip them for we couldn't do it and their houses were guarded. I should think they would set us to guarding Jeff's army and see that they was none deserted. I should think it would ruin North and South if it keeps up much longer, I will close. It is quite warm today. Yesterday it rained all day.

Good bye J. E. Ryder.

Yours truly, E. W. Ryder.
Camp Isabella March 5, 1863

Dear Sister - As an opportunity allows I will try and pen a few lines to let you know how I am getting along and to hear how you are at home. We are all well here at present. We have enough to do now days so that we get but little time to write. I have just come in from battalion drill and have got to go out again forty quick. Times in camp go on about as usual. When I wrote my letter to you I expected to go out on picket but I got out of that job and got one full as bad. I was detailed to go to brigade headquarters to guard some prisoners that was under arrest for deserting. and they was ugly, causing trouble to watch them and keep them from running. Capt. Hoyt expected to start for home today but couldn't on account of Mr. May staying over his time. They can't only 4 officers be absent at a time. Way should be back at the end of his furlough. I expect
that our folks has got back from New York before this. How does Charley get along. I hope he is around by this time. When you see Uncle William's folks tell them that I have written 2 letters to them lately and haven't received any answer yet. I should like to know how they are getting along. How has Grandma stood the past winter and how do they get along. Did you go and hear Mr. Way preach and lecture, if you did, how did he set us out. In fact knows but little about soldiering for on a march he has a horse to ride and a nigger to take care of him and cook his meals, as he is all right. I will now try and finish my letter by candle light. I have been out on drill which lasted until 3 o'clock and then we got up our meat and cooked our supper and went out on dress parade and listened to orders about on hours. The Col. told us that they could go out of a Company on a 30 day furlough but would assure them that he would take them home what
was left of the 24th by the 1st of Sept. He said that when Richesburg falls, rebellion is crushed, he said Gen. Hooker told him that he was afraid the rebels would run before he got a chance to fight them but I think that if that is Gen. Hooker's feeling it isn't very bad. Well I will close for this time for my candle is going out. Good bye Yours Truly

E. Ryder

Elizabeth V. R.
John tells his mother they are still in the same camp because it is too muddy to move the artillery. Speaks of Chaplain Way and Gen. Meredith of the 14th to now in the Iron Brigade. Gen. Hooker also commands the regiment.

John asks humorously how "Capt. Charley gets along." Does he straighten back on the lines and hold him self in the proud position of a teamster. I should like to have the young gent down here to drive six miles with a guy line.
Camp Isabella April 18, 1863

Dear Mother,

Your welcome letter of the 15th was received last night and now I will pen a few lines in answer. This is a very fine day, the warmest it has bin this spring. You see by my heading that we are still at the old camp. Although we have our five days rations yet in our knapsack and the others 3 has not been dealt out yet, we did not go because it was so muddy that the artillery could not move, but they can now. They has been one regiment by this morning on the move and the ambulances came yesterday and took away our sick and as far as I know the health of the 24th is first rate. A very few dangerous and in fact but a few sick. There is a New Jersey regiment closest by that isn't very healthy, they bury one most every day for 2 or 3 weeks, but their getting better now.
We had a regimental inspection this morning and Mr. Way delivered the prayer after inspection and is to preach at 2 PM. Our Col. gets high praise for the good drill of his regiment. Gen. Meredith told him that he was proud of the 24th for its good drill and soldierly appearance and was glad to welcome it in with the old Iron Brigade. And Gen. Hooker told him after the review when all of the Col. went and shook hands, he said, Col. Morrow you have a fine regiment, fine regiment, fine as silk and the Col. felt so well over it he let us lay still for 2 days having nothing but dress parade. They say that the Free Press is down on Col. Morrow, how is it? If they are I guess they is no love lost with him. He was a Democrat when he left home but he says nothing has been done since the commencement of the war, that is wrong. That is about Lincoln, he says as he believes everything is lovely.
When we passed through Marrinton last fall we passed by the house where he was born and the old Col. had to drop a tear there as he would see many faces that looked familiar but the most of them were in the red army. He did not stop to talk with friends for he could not trust them.

You say Smith is home, I went to see him just before he started but did not know that he was going farther than Washington. I received the paper that you sent, it came very good. I hear from Welfield quite often. I am glad to hear he is well again.

How does "Capt." Charlie get along, does he straighten back on the lines, hold himself in the proud position of teemster. I should like to have the young gent down here to drive 10 miles with a guy line. As paper is getting short I will close.

Write often - Yours truly J. E. Ryder

J. Ryder
John says the rebel prisoners complain of the poor food their army has. Some only get corn to eat. He sends 40% of his pay home and begs his parents to use the money as they wish.

Camp Isabella April 26/03

Dear Mother,

Your letter was received last eve and was glad to hear from home and that you were all well. As for the health of myself, they is no use me telling for it has got to be every time alike — well. I have just come in from inspection and we expect to have preaching soon, I can hear one of the Wisconsin preachers from here. It is quite pleasant today. For 3 or 4 days back we had a great deal of rain, so that the roads were very bad. I do not know when we are going to leave here. I don't know so we ever well. We had orders two or 3 days ago to move and we went about half a mile and came back, and it was raining and as we got near our camp the Com. was at work making rifle pits to mount guns. They is two now close by, the boys think we will be attacked here. I hope well and if they want a real dance shortly I will give my
old cap. After we came in from the march—the boys or part of them went out on a
scout. I was on guard and was glad of it for it rains all of the time and they could build
no fire but they are going again shortly and I hope it won't rain for I have got to go.
They took some prisoners, 3 I think and some horses and mules. The rebels said they
were pretty hard up, he said that they had nothing but Yankee hard bread and very poor
and old bacon and some times two day with nothing but an — we have bin that
with almost nothing, nothing but popcorn.
But we have good as soldiers could expect more, and more we have hard-tack, peck, coffee, sugar
all other are extra and only get them one in a while and we get all of the hard soap we want
and half rations of candles but I will close as it is getting time to go to church. Pa also
wrote to me and I will answer it tomorrow if I can or as soon as I get time, you spoke
of Mr. Goldin stepping out. I guess that's free, don't care about changing his name. I got my pay yesterday, 4 months pay and I will send $43.26 dollars to you. I went to the landing and got a good home meal for $1.00 and they all gave $1.00 to the band and so did I. Ma will you accept (money) it as a present and tell Pa to use the rest as he sees fit. I wish you would keep the gold even if I never come back. Take the $40 to buy whatever you wish, don't say you won't.

Yours truly forever,

J.E. Ryder  H. Ryder.
Dear friends,

I thought that I would pen a few lines to you this morn to let you know that I am well. Although we came here from the battlefield I felt some what tired and some sad but feel pretty well at present. I suppose you will hear long before this of the death of Brown. He was shot while making a charge across the river. We lost 24 men. We drove 3 times our number and they were in rifle pits. And I can tell you that I miss Tree greatly. He always was in good spirits and always contented himself by thinking of the better times a coming but the poor fellow is gone. He always stood at his post however dangerous it might be.

I begin to think what Alfred wrote home once is more truth than poetry; that who gets out of this war all right will have something to be thankful for. We was not in the front line.
of battle until the last when we retreated back we was there but not attached. Oh I can tell you but little on this little paper but if I ever live to get out of this war I can tell a great many things that would interest you. I think the rebels lost 4 to our one for they would attack us and then while our infantry was fighting them our men poured grape and canister into them. They was about 6 acres that was completely stacked with dead and wounded, mostly rebels. Although we had a great many. The rebels set fire to a piece of woods and burnt up a great many. We expect Capt. Hoyt here today. I hope he will come. What do you think of the war. don't you think it will end this campaign. They is quite a number of regiments now going home. If they get them again they will have to draft them. I received a paper from you last week and was glad to get it.
I would like to have you write often as you can. I receive a letter from Tibby on the battlefield and answered it there while standing by our rifle pits and watching the rebels. I hope Alfred is all right. I got a letter from him the other night. I lost my "housewife" on the battlefield and would like another. I would like in it a small pair of shears and some thread, needles and a fine comb and a few pins and am about of stamps. I will now close hoping this may find you all in health and good spirits. Yours truly Forever

J. E. Ryder
The great battle to which John here refers was the battle of Chancellorsville May 2-3. The northern army was defeated. His regiment lost 24 men which he calls lucky. Not much sleep for eight days. Phillips a man from Salem shoot himself in the foot to escape battle - some run away.

Camp Way, May 11th 1863

Dear Father,

Our Capt Hoyt arrived here yesterday and I can tell you that the boys were pleased to see him once more in Dixie and he brought me some things that came good in this part of the world, for about this time it is impossible to get a thing. After so great a battle, for in such a time every thing such as sutlers (?) bands and numbers of others that don't carry guns show their heels to the front so it came just right for me. I stood it first rate all through the fight, although was very tired when we arrived at this camp for I had but very little sleep during the 2 days. For nights we had to work in digging rifle pits and breast works as the enemy would shell us by day, and tried to come theancordly over us by night, but no use. Our regiment was very lucky losing
but 24. In the regiment the 24th got high praise by Ben Meridith for charging on the
rebs and taking the heights and after we crossed the Col. said that the next morn
we had got to charge on the heights beyond.
and I can tell you it made every soldier
look pale for they was ten times as strong
as we was and had a big battery but the
next morn we had orders to re-cross the
river and go to the extreme right to reinforce
Hooker. We got there on Saturday and the
greatest fighting I suppose never was known.
We had got a — and the rebs fought us and our
canons mowed them like grass. Although we lost
thousands but they lost 4 to our 1. We then
expected to go right in to the fight and one
of our boys Wesley Philips shot a hole through
his foot. He is a son of the minister up by Salem
but we were put in the reserve and did not
go to the front until the day before we re-crossed
the river and the rebs did not attack us.
About one o'clock I came off guard and went to bunk and about 2 o'clock they came along the lines and told us to strike tents and fell in the line of battle. I thought of course the rebels was coming but we marched off and recrossed the river. They was a lieutenant in Co C, when we crossed the river and they was pouring the balls on us, he went over the pontoons up a stone wall and out of sight. He was scared to death and he came back to us yesterday and we hunted him out of camp so we call it pontoons in the back. He hant it for better to die like a man as Iree did than half die like a sneak as Philips did. Life is sweet and a man that says he fears nothing in battle is a liar or a fool and a man that will run is more than all. We was put by the side of Comaroth, 3 months men from New Jersey, Flanagan told us if they run shoot them first. I will not close. I wish this thing would soon close and I was there to help you. It is a good thing we have
the colt broke. I don’t want any shirts, I have plenty of clothes and enough to eat which as it is, good for soldiers. I wrote thanks letter and forgot to sign my name J. E. R. acting guardian. I sent you 45 dollars. You didn’t say as you had got it. But never mind all well for this time.

Yours truly forever

J. E. Ryder

G. W. Ryder
John thinks of the comforts of home. Has had a hard six days' march and another ocean prospect. Note - the camp is named for their Chaplain.

Camp Way  May 17, 1863

Dear Mother,

As your most welcome letter was received last we after coming in from the 6 days' scout thus soon I will pen you a few lines to let you know that I am yet well, but I do not feel very spry. We have had a right smart march for the last 6 days and now again I suppose we have got to start to go some where, to which I know not where. Some say to Bull Run, some across the river but I don't know. We have got to carry 7 days' rations. Our arms are already stacked. We had some pretty good news after we got in from the scout that Richmond had fallen. Ma I cannot write you a very long letter this time for you know we expect soon to be going but I thought I would write you a line so you might know how we all are. If ever this war should close and my life is spared it will be a lesson to me for I never realized the privileges of a home and of a plenty to eat and drink. Although I think if I live I have seen enough for what I have gone through with
for I have seen things that would be interesting to all and some things that would be sad to everyone that lives.

When you write tell all the news about Uncle Williams folks.

How is Granma, I tell you I like to get letters from there and hear from them. I will now close hoping this will find you all in health. I got the stamps all right, I don't want any paper or envelopes.

Yours Forever

J.E.R.       H. Ryder

Write about Alfred, if he was in the battle of Vicksburg.
John has been on the march for days. He talked with Alfred and saw Burr, Hooley and Farwell, calls it the best visit of his life.

Note - 3 days later he was killed. Read the final words of this letter.

Camp near South Mountain

June 25, 1863

Dear Mother,

I have just received a letter from you and as we have got a little time I will set out to improve it by writing a few lines in reply.

We haven't received a mail before in 2 or 4 days. We have been on the march every day since we left our old camp, we came here last night and have got a little rested now but are again under marching orders and expect to go to day but may not. We have just had our guns inspected and ammunition. As we was marching day before yesterday we passed by the 1st Cav. and oh if it didn't give me new life to see Alfred and all of the boys but could not only say a few words and again had to part and yesterday morning our noble Commander Gen. Meredith drew up in line and made a speech to us. He told us we was about to meet our enemies again and he said he did not ask us to do better than we had, but to do as well and
we will do it I believe, and last night we came into camp here and soon learned that the 1st Cav. was about 3 miles from us and I was very tired but that was not going to stop me if I could get away and so I and Noble got a pass from the Col. and started, we had hard work to get there on account of the — but with some teasing we passed the last one and soon I met Burr and he went with us to the right and there we saw Alfred, Farley and Farrell and we stayed till late at night and had the best visit I ever had in my life, talking over our old times and the times we had passed through in the war and about thought a little bread and milk wouldn't kill us at the time, but at late at night we parted in hopes to meet again some day. He (Alfred) had tried hard to get a pass to come here but could not and he said this morning he would try again but I guess they have moved. The rest of the boys are very anxious to come also and said if they stayed and could not
get a pass. They would take a French one.
I have heard I can'm this morn. I suspect
we will have a great battle shortly so as it has
got to be done let it come, and we will look
for the best. I did not think the cold would
break so easy. I will now close, we are all well.

Yours truly forever

J.E. Ryder

G.W. Ryder

Ma I got the tea all right. It will come very
good. I will write to you shortly. If we have a
battle cheer up and think it all for the best for
we will stand our chance. I and Alfred had a good visit.
Following are copies of Civil War letters of Alfred G. Ryder
1st Michigan Cavalry. Co. A.
under Capt. Kourigan.
Alfred has been in the army 5 months and wonders how many more like periods before the war is over. He gets a letter from John who has joined a larger regiment.

Jan. 14, 1862 Camp Broadhead

Dear friends,

Five months ago tonight was my first night of soldiering from home. And how well I remember that night and no compliments to it either. Withal I felt rather taken in but I've conquered all such feeling since. The question now is how many more five months will find us in camp.

The general opinion is here that we shall be back less than a year any way and if war is declared ever with England if we can't go back I believe shurly that there would be a mutiny in every nigh regiment. We came near going to the fight the other day at Hancock. If the rebels had not retreated after burning the bridge and destroying the telegraph, the whole division would soon have been after them. I think now we will have some fun if fighting is fun long before spring. Shurly if its ever to be done it should be done before this.

I got a letter from Annie the other day and sent one in reply. She writes a first rate letter, I don't hardly
I think that they will ever be called in if soldiering don't raise in demand. It takes a long while to learn the lance drill and a long while to learn the sword exercise without saying anything about the months that it takes to drill the horses.

(part of letter is destroyed)
Alfred hears that John has the measles - at home mentions the Hodskins and Shutte.

Note - They were & relatives.
Shutte lived in Capelante and Hodkins in Manista.

Camp Broadhead Jan 24, 1863

Dear Mother,

I received your letter three days ago and gladly to. That being the only letter I received from home in a long time. And glad was I to hear that you were all well.

You hardly know how to value good health in camp. O wate till I get home and I'll tell you how some poor fellows here live and suffer for the want of it.
But still it's generally healthy in our camps. Though the Maryland boys a short way across the street said to be infected with a very mortal disease. In fact I hear the drum beat mournful airs to the memory of some poor fellow near every day.

I to called the "black fox".

You write about my being dismissed on account of deafness. Gracious heavens! I haven't heard of such a thing before, and as for that I'm altogether better off than I have been for now I hear considerably from my right ear which has been perfectly deaf. I shall come out all right I think in the end. I hear that Johnny is at home sick.
with measles. It's hard to be sick but he will find that it is far better to be sick at home than for away. It's reported tonight that we cross the Potomack next week but it's not very reliable. A soldier's life is a life of expectations.

I received no letters in reply to those I have written to Charles and Egbert Vodkins or to Martin and Angeline Shatto. I shall never write again until they write. I'll write as soon as an opportunity offers to the ones you requested. It's been very bad weather here of late—continually raining or snowing. The snow melting as fast as it comes—some on the mountains where probably it all remains. You remember don't you the blue mountains on the map, they extend in our front as far as the eye can see. But we now are all white with snow.

Write again, you must not be troubled about my not reading it, it's better writing than some of the young folks write me. Yours forever A. G. Ryde.

Write often
Alfred describes his fine horse. Glad he is in the cavalry and does not have to wade in the mud like the Infantry. Names his tent mates - The Plymouth boy, Farley - Burr - Eckles - Coat - Nickles, etc.

Camp BROADHEAD Jan 30, 1862

Dear Friend,

The day being wet and rainy and having nothing to do I thought I would write a few lines although I've received no letter in a long time. This is a terrible country for mud, the soil mowing up for full six inches in depth. If it wasn't for the Government roads it would be almost impossible to get from camp. I rejoice in the day I enlisted in the Cavalry, when I see the poor infantry fellows swallowing trees deep in the mire. I have a splendid looking horse now, dark bay, one that used to belong to Ben Banks body guard. The fellow that owned him got nearly killed by a kick from another horse - and the horse coming back to the regiment I got possession of him. The sorrel horse that I had a time since I gave up to the fellow on his return and I made a good bargain for now I've got the smoothest looking fellow in the Co. Some say that we will haft to go home or enlist in the infantry. I can't tell what
I should do for I should both to go in the infantry.
Bills of 5 and 10 dollars are truly offered and taking, that we go home in three weeks but I believe yet our chance is good for quite a lengthy stay.

I hear that they have turned the lancers into artillerists but I don't know how truly.

We were paid again a few days ago, 25 dollars.
I have lent 10 to Walter Nickels a son of the Nickels that lives down by Whites. He gives me 12 next pay day. Good as the wheat. There are ten of now in our tent, Farley, Bunell, Burr, and our German friend John Anger, Wattierman, Eckles, son of Livia Eckles, John Court, Nickles and a fellow by the name of King from Ohio. We make two tents in one and it goes by the name of Plymouth altogether we all being called Plymouth boys.

Yours Forever
A. G. Ryder
Alfred rode over the Cumberland mt., at night a 30 mile trip. Had a strange feeling on the road with nothing to divert his attention but the clatter of horses feet and the clanking of his saber.

Hagerstown, Md. Feb. 8, 1862

Dear Friends

Although I feel somewhat tired and sleepy today I thought that I would write you a few lines if I do have nothing but a pencil to write with. I'm well with the exception of a cold and that a soldier most always has. I put out at 7 o'clock last night and rode till 3 this morning. Riding over 30 miles over hills and mountains. It seemed as though I only went down one hill to go up one still larger - riding to one of the highest peaks of the Cumberland mountains. It is called Fairview for the country can be seen for so many miles around, but it was midnight when I was there so I could not see much. I can tell you that it sets a fellow to thinking when traveling over those strange roads in the night with nothing to amuse or arrest ones attention but the clatter of the horses feet or the jingle of the saber.

After to day we go clear to Hancock then our march will be over 50 miles. The boys are all well your ever

A. J. Riker
Alfred has a new uniform. Complains of it being too warm. Has room next to that of General Williams. Town of Hancock has been vacated by all of its inhabitants.

Hancock Feb. 13, 1862

Dear Friends,

Today finds me as you see in Hancock. Our line has been extended from Fairview to this place 15 miles further. I started from Hagerstown at 1/2 past 7 o'clock this morning and arrived here at 1/2 past 12. I've seen all there is to see and with nothing to do I feel uneasy as I thought I would write you a few lines for diversion.

This is rather a dirty looking place at present. The citizens have all left it to the sole occupation of soldiers, soldiers, soldiers in every store, grocery and dwelling, all soldiers above and below and all around. I can look across the river and see where the seashore had their guns planted to blow up the city. It doesn't look but a little better way. The river only being seemingly 10 miles wide, it runs rapidly though it can be easily forded. It's the general opinion here that this place will be shelled before long as apart to the burning of Harper's Ferry, and I believe
it will be but though unsuccessful before they
have great advantage over us in position -
having mountains to shoot from where our
position is low in comparison. Most of the
soldiers here are from Connecticut though
some are from Columbus, Ohio. General
Williams is in command here, his office
being in an adjoining room from where
I write. I go back to morrow morning.

We have our new uniforms and they
tremendious warm to for this weather.

All well. Yours Forever

A. G. Ryder

14th

I'm back to camp and a more tired
fellow you never see but that's nothing
for I'll get over that

Write soon

A. G. Ryder
Alfred hears that the conscripts have been disbanded and hopes John will be released. Attends a Lutheran church a couple of times.

Hagerstown, Feb 18, 1862

Dear Friends,

I received your kind letter yesterday and was glad indeed to hear from you. True we are marching toward home slowly, but withal we find plenty of secession in this part of the country. Nearly all of these little towns you know flew the rebel flag until the military were among them. Frederick, for instance was intended as the rebel capital of the South. We have been having quite interesting times this morning with a secession prisoner. He was driven out and rather than to be captured as a prisoner by our scouts gave him self up as a deserter across from Williamsport. He was brought down here for safe keeping last night and this morning was sent on to Gen. Banks head quarters. He was a fine looking man, mounted on a good horse - with poor clothes and equipment and a smart talker. And now if he can authenticate his statements before Gen. Banks he will be all right. He said that he was at Bull...
Bluff and that there were 40 thousand seashell soldiers at Winchester and that we would have a hard fight there. In fact half of the people in this part are seashell at heart. It's half the time when we speak to them that they don't answer. We enjoy our selves yet as well as could be expected all being well.

I've been to church twice since we have been here. Lutheran church and a very intelligent profound preacher it has. I'm sorry to hear that the measles are among you. I hear again that the Lancers are disbanded. I hope so that Jonny may be released. That this may receive you all again well is my earnest wish.

Yours forever,

A.C. Ryder

I'll put this in at Frederick for I start for there at 9 o'clock to night. A&R
Alfred says Rueben Farrell has small-pox. All have been vaccinated. Wonders why John and Fanny do not write.
Watches 40 contrabands (negroes) work on a road.

Fredericksburg, Va.
June 23, 1862

Dear Friends,

I feel pretty well this morning and I rather think that I look pretty well for I have just put on a new suit of clothes. Rueben is considerably better - he looks alive once more. I can tell you that he has had a hard day. He is broke out all over, even to the top of his head, but the doctor told me this morning that he will have it remarkably mild. We all do our best for him. We all have been vaccinated and in case we come down probably will have it very light. At least borrow no trouble for it sufficient to the day to know thereof especially when there is no possible event of making a difference. There is the usual reports in camp relative to ourselves but nothing that would probably interest you. We get the mail regularly here but I get none from home but I expect to get some before fall. There is Jemmy, and I hear they don't write. What they might
Consider of very trifling importance is worth a good deal here I can tell you. I suppose that crops there are about as far advanced as they are here. Wheat begins to ripen and I've seen some corn that was starting out but this is by no means the Shannadoah Valley. There are about 40 contrabands to work on the road a few rods from where I am. Their overseer_gradually_eats_on his horse and bids them proceed and they look up as meek as possible and say "all right m'say". Give my respects to all and believe me Yours Forever

A.J. Ryder

Washington D.C.
Alfreda tent mates - Burr, Farley and Farwell are ill. He goes by way of Washington to Harpers Ferry. [Note: mother has written "good" at top of this letter.]

Centreville - June 24, 1863

Dear Friends,

Tonight finds me here in one of the worst places that I have been in. You can imagine what for a sleeping place it is when I tell you that I have counted as many as 50 dead horses together. So well I'm well, and that's something to be thankful for; when I tell you that the 5 boys that I enlisted with are all in charge of the medical department. Burr, Farley and Farwell. Farwell we left in Fredericksburg in charge of Kings Division Surgeon getting along first rate. We'll be with us again in a few days.

Farley went to Washington the night before we left, that is night before last, on the cars sick, and Burr is sick with us, so they are all down but me. We are ordered back to the regiment "double quick" but the way through the mountains seems to be unsurmountable so we have to go around by Washington and through Maryland to Harpers
Ferry and from there to the regiment. It is said that there is work ahead but I hope it's different work from what we've done lately. If I could only see you for a few hours I could tell you more than I could write in a month. I thought I would write you these few lines not knowing even that I could mail them. But I'll do as if it's possible and that's all any one can do.

We have tents once more - large enough for two. We carry them on our horses, they are of good service. Our mail facilities after this, that is when we join the regiment will be more direct. But I'll write again.

Yours Forever

A. G. Ryder

28th Washington - I had no chance yesterday to mail these above so I'll mail them today. I don't hear anything about Farwell or Farley since we left Fredericksburg. It is said that we
Start tomorrow or next day for Harpers Ferry hoping this may receive you as well as myself. I remain Yours Forever

A S Ryder.
Alfred has been very ill at the Navy Yard Hospital in Washington. Thinks the hard march caused his illness. He is lonesome without Ruuben Farrell who is sick. Has a new Shickes Carbine rifle.

Washington D.C., July 3, 1862

Dear Friends,

I thought that I would write you a few lines as the best means of whiling away these lonely passing moments. I feel very well to night although not sufficiently able yet to be reported for duty. I rather think that the cause of my illness was the over exertion in the quick march from Fredericksburg. I can tell you privately that I was utterly hard up for a little while. And I believe that I can thank my stars for the aid that the experienced surgeon in the Navy Yard Hospital rendered at that time. But then its no matter now I'm all right. I haven't heard any thing from Ruuben since we left yet, but then he was getting along fine when we left and I'm in hopes he will be with us soon for I can tell you that I'm very lonesome without him. You see that we are here yet and I don't know now when we will leave.
we have this eve got Sharpe's carbine rifles said to be a very effective weapon and I think that their appearance verifies saying for one of our boys shot 600 yards to night and put the bullet in the eye of the target and that the first time. But what would I be talking or thinking about if I was at home tonight. About what you suppose? I guess not—tomorrow is the 4th of July. I hope it will be celebrated in old Michigan as becomes the day. I know now of nothing that will interest me much tomorrow except I might go down and hear a declaration speech at the soldiers' retreat. But it's getting rather late so I'll cut short our letter by a prayer for your joys tomorrow.

A G Ryder
Alfred recalls his 21st birthday as following a succession of rainy days and wading rivers. Thoroughly wet and tired from lack of sleep for several days. Tries to discourage John from enlisting again.

Culpeper July 28, 1863

Dear Brother (John),

I received your kind letter of the 13th today and having time I thought that I would write you a few lines in reply. I have written a great many letters that you probably have never received at any rate that have never been answered. I wrote one at Warrington and one at the place before and one 10 miles from here in camp to my mother of which have been answered. You speak of the paper ending the war in 30 days. I five ended in 30 years the way it is carried on it will be sooner than I expect. Yesterday we came from beyond Leesburg and in coming I observed a guard in nearly every house. Now I can tell you that hundreds of men detailed for such duty weakens the strength of the army and its confidence more than twice that number killed in battle.

It is a curious country that protects and aids its open enemies any way and if the policy is followed...
Up you can rest assured that all we can do is sought, for protection and instruction never will go successfully together. Since we were here before we have been traveling nearly all the time. We started from here the 16th, it rained for 3 days every day. My clothes was wet for nearly all the time. If it would stop raining for a few hours we would have to swim a river and thereby get wet as rats again and so it went. But I have been well all the time.

I shall long remember my 21st birthday. I was as wet as could be, as mad & ugly as could be for I had had no sleep for 3 or 4 nights except the little I caught the night before on the ground in the rain with nothing over me. I was churning through the mud up to my eyes, on horse and oft times with bullets whistling by my head showing that some body in the front was making it - no carelessness. They shot one of my comrades arms nearly off but "sick on" as the people say here they had some trouble also. Our regiment and the N.Y. 5th went down near
Gordensville seeing what we could see and the rebels got mad and sent up on the— the whole of Ulica brigade and we liked to get in a scrape for they nearly surrounded us. But it would make you laugh sometimes to see them "left about wheel" when we got to close on 'um.

It's pretty warm sometimes here now days, we couldn't stand it if we didn't wear woolen clothes to keep us from burning. But then I have got use to it so that's nothing.

You spoke about enlisting again, if the war wouldn't last forever. All I've got to say is that I should like to talk with you for a few minutes I could tell you tales that would make you think if sticking near your mothers cupboard for a while at any rate. Don't you think because I don't write home my sufferings in flying coulers that there is no devil in the pot. For believe me when I tell you that I have seen strong men curse the day they enlisted with tears in their eyes. If you want a
taste again just try it at home for awhile. First fast for 4 days without even a hard bread, don't sleep, let it rain all the time and you be wet, without mentioning the comfort of whistling bullets and see how you like it. And then if you like it I will tell you something that you wouldn't like but then it's all what one might expect. I'm not yet deceived in soldiering. Tell the drummer boy, I should like to see him some day at his leisure and in fact I should be glad to see you all.

Aubrey has been unwell lately but is again around. Farley is sick and was very sick last night.

I'm well I hope you the same.

A. J. Ryder

Ezra Ryder
Alfred fears John has resiliated. Had hoped he would get in the Cavalry instead of the Infantry if he should get the war fever again.

Camp near Rapidan

Aug 18, 1862

Dearest Mother,

Your letter of the 10th was indeed very gladly received day before yesterday. I don't know how interesting it is to look over these few words so late from home. A letter is worth more than a thousand papers to me any time. You spoke of receiving $12.00 dollars and wish to know whether it is best to let me wash have it or not. Do as you think best of course. All I wish to know is whether you receive what I send. Write in your next how much in all you have received. You spoke of using it here rather than starving. Cash money here wouldn't pass for anything however; I guess that there is no danger of ever starving. You say that they say that the rebellion shall be put down this fall, I guess, I guess, that they will hasten to lengthen the time some. And that Johnny has gone to enlist. Well if he has
Don't be afraid that I shall lose hope. I feel all to write.
Yours forever A. B. Ryder

The boys are all well.

I got the war fever and am bound to go, I hope it will never terminate in chills here in Dixieland. I should think that he would have gone in the cavalry for it's a vastly better service than the drift. Though Charley Toy will make a splendid officer for he will be a man as well as a soldier. I hadn't heard of Charles Hodskin in a long time before although I expect he's somewhere within a few miles of me now with his regiment. But which way I can't tell.

As Forwell is in the same regiment, we are expecting to see them. The Mich. 96 are but a half mile away they are just from South Carolina. There is a vast army here. I hope that you will write often. It is very hard for me to get the material for writing though I have stamps now, plenty. I suppose that many of my friends think that I don't wish to write them but I used to write when I had a chance and would now if I could but it is as much as I can do to write home occasionally. I feel plenty well today. It is the first time that I've missed any duty since I've been in Va.
Camp Wallace, near Columbus

Oct. 1, 1862

Dear Mother,

Once again I'm allowed a good soldiers fare, but not this time without a pretty good idea of what was coming. We got on the boat that night as we intended and arrived in Cleaveland next morn all right. It was said that the lake was very rough but as for myself I slept so soundly to know. 40 men yesterday brought us safely to Columbus. But lo! there was but a few Michiganders left—all gone home. What few of us were left were sent to this camp in care of Lieut. Brock about 4 miles North of the city. While we were gone the boys had the good luck to be payed, so most likely we will hast to wait until next payday. But it's no difference to me you know for I have a plenty. Today is the day that the General ordered all to report but I see no more than usual for all are gone that want to and have the cash. We have tents but they are on very low ground and probably if it should rain would hast to be taken away in a boat. As for myself I can swim out without odds.
for anyone. But I think if things go on as usual I shall walk out and hire out to some of them rich farmers. You know I'll have a chance to get acquainted often times two-thirds of the battle in life. Nothing new in regard to an exchange, it looks dark as though they never want to exchange us. But as you say, as long as we are here we won't be likely to hear any bullets whistle. I don't hear anything new in regard to the Indian matter except that they keep organizing the men but whether it's for anything but a system in obtaining food and maintaining order I can't tell. But I'm getting sufficiently lightly for male facilities is very much confused. Tell Jonny to direct to Camp Wallace. Write often. Give my respects to all. John sends you and there of my folks his best. Yours affectionally.

Forever AGR

1st Mich. Cav

Paroled prisoners

Camp Wallace 8

Near Columbus
Camp near Alexandria

Dear Sister — Nov 15, 1862

Having a leisure moment I thought that I pen you a few words hoping that they may find you all well. We have a nice camp, finely situated on a little neck in the Potomac river. Vessels of all kinds, war vessels and commercial are dashing by nearly all the time making a lively appearance indeed. (5 or 6 lines deleted)

Will Farley went out with a party of about 20 toward Leesburg the other day and it is reported that they are all taken prisoners but I hope not. They were to return yesterday but have not yet appeared. I have no word from the 94th or none from Reuben since I came. I hope you will write me and give me the news. Write if you know anything about Jonny or not. They said when I first came here that I wasn't exchanged but since I have been convinced that I am and have been doing duty since. I hope I'll have a chance to go to the front before long and then I may see the boy. 
then it's hard finding any one in such a large army. This makes the 3rd letter that I've written home but no answer yet. But I must go and water my horse.

Write soon. Give my respects to all.

Yours Forever

A J Ryder

E. V. Ryder
Dear Friends

Dec. 12, 1862

Your kind letter of Nov. 27th arrived yesterday and although it is very cold writing I send you a few words. I tell you I was glad to hear from you. I was glad to hear from Jonny. I would like to know where he is this cold windy snowy day. It is the first bad weather since I first came back. The snow is two inches in depth. I'm glad you have got your work well along for it must be freezing cold now with you. Ma asks me if I have any gloves. I bought a pair of woolen ones while in Detroit that answers the purpose very well. There are about two hundred of our boys here now Col. Town is acting Brig. Gen. The winter has come and I think that there will be no more fighting until next spring. It is very tough on soldiers in the face of an enemy standing picket, with these cold nights. Send Jonny all the little comforts you can think of by mail as for me I get along as well as could be expected. If you have a paper
with the President's message in please send it to me. We haven't had it in camp yet.

Some think that the war will be stopped by the present Congress but the first thing I should look for is for a bill for a loan of 30 or 40 million or a proclamation for more troops.

We are all well hoping this may find you the same.

Yours Forever

A.G. Ryder
Alfred mentions Aunt Mary and Angeline (who?)
Ruden Farwell has had the bullet removed from his
shoulder and is recovering. Say he will shoot the ball
back at the rebels.

Camp near St. Scott

Jan 5, 1863

Dear Sister

I received your kind letter when at Drunewill
a few days ago and also one from Pa but have had
no time till now to answer it. We were relieved
yesterday and came in but I don't know how
long we will stay, maybe till we are paid.
I received a letter from Jonny but a day or two ago
he is getting better fast. I hope he will soon be right.
I am sorry for the poor fellows that were killed that
you mentioned and glad indeed for those that escaped.
It seems hard to believe that there is not a sun
that rises but what marches many many to their
graves but it's certainly true. I am sorry to hear
that Aunt Mary and Angeline are sick. I hope them
soon well. Write in your next about them. I hope
Grandma stands it well yet. Seems to me that
you are doing your business in lawin now
days in old Michigan. But I suppose those expect
that that there will haft to be something to keep up
the excitement and it don't matter what much, warring or lawin'. Tell ma that I very gladly received her package of stamped envelope. Reuben is here in camp and is much better than I expected to find him, he has had the bullet taken out of his shoulder. He has two of the balls that shot him, now he says he is going to put them in a shot gun and shoot them back at the rebs. Give my respects to all. I hope that this will find you all well.

Yours Forever

A. G. Ryder
Dear Father, Feb. 21, 1863

I hasten to reply to your letter of the 16th hearing the hard news of Charlie's sickness. I wish now that I was there with you that I might render what little help I could although I well know that you will do all in your hands possible. His sickness is indeed alarming but to heaven I hope he will soon come out well. I'm glad that you have so good help. I hope Aunt Martha will stay any way till tea gets back. But if Charlie does get well you of course will not fail to go after ma but the chances seems to be against his getting well soon enough. It's a hard stroke. You spoke about officers and truly said that I considered it as not worth mentioning. One of men was killed in the squabble the other day. Two men deserted the rebels and came in here this morn and report that
there are 7000 rebels in P. Chapehannah about 25 miles from here. But maybe that they are only spies. No wonder that the people are getting tired of this war and its very thought and name. But its end looks from here a long way off. I'm not sure too that the Democrats ought to drive the Republicans from Washington for they are truly getting to be an abomination in the sight of truth and law. But I hope that Charley will soon get well and that all the rest of you continue so. Write again soon for I'm anxious to know everything.

Yours Forever

A.G.

Where is Dibby that she don't write
Alfred writes from hospital. Had a bad tooth and a fever resulted. Reuben was taken prisoner in this hand writing looks pretty shaky.

Camp near Ft Scott, Va
In Hospital March 19, 1863

Dear Friends

I am just getting a little better from being some sick for a few days. I had first the neuralgia in my head caused by one of my teeth being rotten. My back tooth. I had it pulled and then I had a sort of a fever billious for a few days but am getting better now although I am very weak now.

I suppose of course you have heard before this time of Reuben being taken prisoner but I hope he is not hurt otherwise and he will come out all right in the end. I have had no letters lately. Yours Forever

A.G.
Alfred hopes enough men will be drafted to end the war. Hear some draftees at Plymouth fled the country. Mr. Drinkhouse an old neighbor is grateful for papers and letters received. Resents being charged for transportation on his furlough.

In Hospital near Ft. LeBoeuf March 27, 1863

Dear Father and Mother,

Your welcome message came at hard last eve, and I can't forgo the chance of penning you a few words this evening. I see that you hadn't yet received my late letters but most likely you will. I expected the excitement you speak of thereabout, but hardly could think that anyone would seek to avoid their lot by flight from their country. I hope that the authorities will call out as old Hall said enough to look down all opposition, and then we might look for the end of the war with some considerable hopes. We can stand it however without fear or trembling. So let it come as it may, we look for the worst and if better comes we have something to be thankful for.

I'm sorry Mr. Drinkhouse is going to move away for he is a good neighbor.

I received a letter from Jonny last night dated 2/8.
He says he was never better in the world with the exception of a cold. You speak of my rheumatism, it don't trouble me now any. Reuben Farrell has gone to the parole Camp at Annapolis. He started yesterday morning and a letter arrive for him at 2 or 3 from home I think. I will forward it today to him. You ask about my being paid. I have not been paid yet but expect to be any day. I didn't sign the last pay roll for they had me charged with transportation from Detroit but expect I might as well pay it now as ever for I think the charges will be continued on all pay rolls till it's paid. It vexes the boys. That are charged with me very much believing it to be the work of petty officers over flowing with meanness. I answered the letter I received from Grandma very gladly and hope that she will write again. I'm glad to acknowledge the receipt of those papers that you sent whereby I can tell what is going on among you to some degree.
Those things you enclosed in your letter came in play and I'm very grateful for all. I hope this will find you all well. I shall be soon out of this and with the boys again.

Write often

Yours forever

A.G.
Alfred has been in hospital. Captain has been kind to him. Said he has made many good friends in the army and has been treated well by all. Is thankful for the paper sent him.

Camp near Fairfax
April 3, 1863

Dear Friends,

I received a very welcome letter dated 3-7th and having a fine chance for a little while to reply I gladly take it. You see that we have moved camp from near Ft. Scott. We are in sight of Fairfax C. H. with our 5th, 6th, & 7th Co's. near by. I am out of the hospital now with the Co. but am not doing duty at present. The Capt. is very kind to me. Always insisting I do not need to go to the front yet. But I'm just as well as ever but not quite as strong. Eskes is here with me. We like first rate. I went over to see the 5th yesterday. They feel pretty well. B. S. Davis is Lt. again. Co. D. makes a very good officer I should think. Did Lloyd was over here a little while ago. He has lost one of his fingers by accidentally shooting it off. We expect the boys out at Union Mills will come in here and join camps. I hope that they
well. You need not be alarmed but what I can take care of myself well enough with the help of many good friends. When I came in the army I determined to make very few enemies and as many friends as I could and by good grace I believe I have no enemies here and very many good friends that would help me at any time. And by being prompt and in one place the officers will lend friendly aid to anyone. I'm not in need of anything at present as you might imagine but am just as thankful as though you had sent 10 dollars worth. I often receive these papers you send but haven't yet got paper and speech you spoke of in your last but likely will yet. I'm writing outdoors and it begins to rain so I'll have to stop by wishing this may find you all well. Write how Charlie is getting along. Yours forever

JG
Alfred tells Elizabeth that employment is the best antidote for absent society so he is writing. He is still confined to his tent but feels quite well again. Speaks of the large army camped around fighting everyday. Asks about Charley.

Camp near Fairpay

Dear Sister - April 5, 1863

Although I don't owe you a letter employment is my best antidote for absent society so I'll write you a few lines.

It's a cold bleak day but I'm comfortably housed at present in a large tent only occupied by our quarter masters, usually. But as the cold winds shake the canvas I think of the many thousands exposed to its chilling piercing blasts these very moments and for the coming night. I'm escaping a good deal tedious duty these days by not being with the boys at Union Mills. But I've offered my self for duty and the Capt. don't send me yet. He acts ever friendly with me lastly something that I always thought as beyond his nature. The Col. about have fighting nearly every day. Pa said in his last letter that he hadn't heard of any fight that we had been in.
There is fighting nearly every day but the paper misinformed him in regard to our going out with the 5th and 6th CA. wearing out horse flesh & c. none of our regiment was along. There is a large army here now 3 brigades of CA and a corps of drft. with lots of artillery. I guess we will give the rebel a hunt before long. I begin to feel first rate. Haven't received a letter from Jenny for a week or so but may good luck be with him. I want you to write often you can't tell how a letter cheers one up. It throws open light in many dark places by carrying one over to those far distant fire sides. How does Charley get along. But it's getting late be good night and may God be with you all

Yours Forever

A.G.
Alfred reports that his tent mates Farley, Burr and I Eckles are again with him. His clothes cost more than the boot, pays him. Don't think the papers should condemn the Democrats too hastily as there are many loyal ones in the army, we are not all traitors he says.

Camp near Fairfax, Va

April 13, 1863

Dear Friends

A good chance for writing you a few words present itself and I can't pass it by although you all gave me severly, I'm well and comfortable as usual. Our boys have all come in from Union Mills so that we are all together again in one camp. Farley is sick in this hospital at present though he is fast recovering.

Eckles, Nickels and Burr are with me in tent now, will good tent mates. We have been called in from picket duty and Copeland's Brigade have been sent in our place for 3 days then another Brigade will come in before our turn again. We are drilling or as it were finishing up our military instructions now days. Gen. Butler Price commands our Brigade and Gen. Steell the Division. I presume that we shall have the priviledge of seeing something beside drill before long. Gen. Casey's Division started this morning for Falmouth. We are all well clothed but
we have to pay for them. Our pants cost 6 dol., our jackets over 6 and every thing in this same ratio.
I was in debt last year over and above what the Govt. allows a year for clothing $11.64 but some of our Co. were as high as 30 dol. in debt. The government though owed me over 20 dollars on this year and I shant draw any more. The price of some articles such as shirts have lastly risen over 50 per cent. Since I wrote the above I have been on review. That is the regiment was reviewed by Gen. Price this afternoon. He gave us great credit for discipline. I received an ad-
of Tribune last evening and am thankful for the same. Don't you think though that there is too much useless denunciation of the Democratic Party contained therein.

One hundred of Democrats in the ranks and when they see the inventive applied to the party in general it makes their breath rattle with hard feeling.

It's not right to condemn a church for the sin of its members nor to condemn a whole party for the reason
Sunday, January

2:30 - WJR - Radio Theater
4:00 - WWJ - De Wolf Hopper
5:00 - WWJ - The Sentinel
6:30 - WWJ - House by Side of Road
6:30 - CKLW - Ryleskin's Amateur Night
6:30 - WJR - Grand Hotel
7:00 - WJR - Jack Benny
7:30 - CKLW - Will Rogers
8:00 - CKLW - Club Romance
9:00 - WWJR - Silken Strings and Merry Go Round
9:30 - WWJ - Album of Music.

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of a part, traitors don't deserve the name of democrats, I'm sure, and when applied to the loyal portion in such columns could be dispensed with. Don't you think so dear friends. Our 1st Lt. Bellmen has resigned and will soon go home to Detroit. He thinks some of doing teaming business, being a poor man and broken well down by hard ships. And be may by chance come out toward Plymouth occasionally, if he does I have asked him to call on you. You will find him one of the most agreeable story telling Germans you ever saw. Give my respects to all. Forgive this dreadful tiresome letter but my pen runs as easily I couldn't stop.

Yours Forever A.E.
Alfred says that many scalawaggs need for money has hurt the army. Mentions the death of Forest Brown. Has sent 60 dollars. Tell him to use it any way he wishes. Says Parley is better. Burr inside.

Fairfax, Va.

May 20, 1863

Dear Father

I received your kind letter of the 10th and was glad indeed to hear from you again and to hear that you were all well. You hadn't heard from Jim before but of course you have long before now. I received one letter from him containing full account of the death of Forest Brown and how the battle went.

You speak of the — against the Potomac army. That's true. Rivalry and jealousy and love of money destroy every attempt at success. I tell you there are a good many scalawaggs not worth a cent before in money or character and now doing nothing except laying up a good fortune against the time to come.

And a good deal of the ill success can be traced to them. I'm glad to hear that Capt Hoyt has started on his return for the boys will gladly receive him.

Also I'm glad to hear that Reuben has returned to meet his friends again. It is reported here that he is exchanged but I should think that if it was so he
would be approved by order in the newspaper.

Ma was rather badly deceived by the paper in reference to Richmond being taken. I received the paper you sent with the account of it being taken.

It's fine growing weather now. I expect that you are improving it in getting in summer crops.

I sent 60 dollars home by letter a few days ago. I addressed it to Ma, and likely it has arrived before this time. Use it any way you wish.

Farley is better and has returned to our tent. Burr is yet quite unwell and I am off duty today with an excuse of a sore throat. But not very bad however. I hope that you will receive this all well. Yours

A.G.
Alfred says Gov. Blair of Michigan has been here to review the troops. Was one of an escort chosen for him. A. Hines got honors he does not deserve as he managed to avoid all the fighting. Sends pictures to Charley.

Fairfax

May 25, 1863

Dear Mother,

I received your letter of the 18th this morning and also one that Pa wrote on the 17th. I see that you have received the check all right which I am glad to know. Reuben I expect is exchanged and I hope that he will come through without any trouble. For you know that sharpers are ready to press any little advantage they may have on a fellow.

Gov. Blair was here day before yesterday and reviewed us, and yesterday eight men were taken from each Co. as an escort for him. I was among them. We went down to the Potomac Falls and returned here last night about 12 o'clock. We have good news from the West but it may deceive us as bad as the capture of Richmond. I received a paper this morning. I read a presentation of a saber made to A. Hines and the remarks of the editor. They say that he is more accustomed to fighting than speaking and it's
laughable to read for he never saw a fight yet, only at a distance and I don't believe that he will be apt to. The boys are all well. I am well.

It is fine growing weather here, the corn is up, what little there is planted. I hope that this will find you all well. I sent a couple of pictures to Charley so that he will have something to interest him in.

Going to the office.

Write again soon.

Yours forever.

A. G.
Alfred sends his mother his picture. Has just had his hardest march as the rebels are now in Maryland. Describes his home for Charley's benefit. The dust is terrible.

Fairfax Co, Va

June 11, 1863

Dear mother,

I have just returned from a 4 day march and found your kind letter to welcome my sight. You spoke of receiving a likeness from me. I was going suddenly away and Burr sent the likeness for me one day so that accounts for the mystery. We have had the hardest march we ever had this time. We are undertaking orders again. We hear that we have got to go to Maryland to drive the rebels out but I don't know. I am well as usual and expect to remain. I have got a good horse.

Tell Charley he is a fine dark boy fellow and better than the Looks in the picture. Although he is getting a sore back from hard marching, but he will have to stand it. Reuben is getting ready for marching and guess that I will have to follow his example. So good by for this time. I hope that I will have another letter from you whenever that awful dusty marching Almost suffocates us sometimes. We can not see our file leader the dust is so dense.

May health & cheer be with you all. Yours forever.

A.L.
Fairfax Co., Va.
June 14, 63

Dear friends,

Having a few moments of spare time I thought that I would improve it by writing you a few words. It's pretty busy times now down here. I have been up now two nights in succession in the dust and of course I don't feel very good. Hooker's Army is on the go. But of it is here that is the reserves, Bloom's Corps. I hear that the Ist Corps were down at Manassas but I don't know how true it is. If I was sure I would try and see him but it's beyond anything mortal for one to get a pass in such a bustle and confusion almost. But I'm in hopes that I will see him yet. These
active times something is going to tell on the war before long. If the rebels are triumphant in their move, it's going hard but if not I think that it will draw things to a point and the sooner the better.

I'm tired of lingering, if fighting is to be done better do it now than to wait waits for sickness to destroy the enemy.

I got paid yesterday and enclose a check for $50 dollars. The boys.

(The rest deleted)

A. G.
END OF REEL
PLEASE
REWIND