Transcripts
of
John Ryder
Letters
1861 - 1864
Dec. 11th 1861

Dear Brother,

It has been over a week since we received a letter from you, and we all begin to think that you are very sick. We heard by the way of Farley's letter that you were sick in the measles, but we heard since that you were getting better. If you are sick and cannot write get one of the boys to write for you so that we shall know how you are getting along. I want I should caution you to be very careful about lying on the cold ground exposed to might air any more than you can help. Have you received our letter of the Fourth and also the blanket that we sent?

If you haven't received your overcoat back we send yours. It is very cold here now, the snow has blown some and cold raw winds, and frozen very hard nights. We have been hearing about finished. I suppose that you have heard that Crawford Farwell had enlisted in the Twenty

4th is yet in Detroit. Have you heard from Charles Hadchine yet & know whether he is any better. Doctor Morton's son, a young man of 20 years died yesterday with that disease. Know either than Bob Morton. I believe his name was Bob Morton.

The small pox is in Plymouth very bad. The school has broken up and one of two streets fenced and signed "No over this street." They have it bad on the street, that Naram. Naph (C) lives on, they have it to the next door from his. Dr. Rogers is crazy with it the doctoring other that had it but they are careful not to let it spread and keep fathers away from the house.

We are all well at this time hoping to hear the next letter in I agree will find that you are getting well from your illness.

Please answer this when you receive it. I am very impatient to know how you are.
Camp Beckwith Jan 28, 1862

Dearest Friend,

When I left home that morning I expected that I would return the next day, but when I got here, it was hard to get away, the Capt said I must stay, for we were disbanded, we may be disbanded, but we have had no discharge nor no pay, I have had an undercoat, pants, drawers, socks, they say if we are disbanded we will receive our full coat and our full pay from the time we enlisted. I have made out my roll bill and had it printed, which amounts to $6.85 cents which they say I will get when payed off. They say we will be payed off in 3 or 4 days, and perhaps sooner, but you cant tell till they tell so many stories, the first story was, that we was to go into Wisconsin to the 2nd, in 3rd regiments, the 3rd in indians brigade, and every company in the each, the dispatch just arrived that we should go as flying artillery and start for Washington in less than two weeks, but they say know town, the best lawyer, that we shall go as lawyers as they have no right to take us at all, some of the officers say we will go as lawyers but the majority of them say we will be disbanded, you cant tell how it will turn, they is great excitement in camp, some say they will suffice before they will be furloughed into any other regiment, they have tried to get me & enlist again, but all I want is a discharge, and pay, and then I will enlist for Plymouth, I borrowd 100 of Will Abbott at 5% along some fixed rate. I was on guard yesterday and last night, they east three furloughs home, I have just a great ways from where I stand, so it made it so light as they all right, it looked awful bad, to see such great houses burn, I must now close, I will come home as soon as discharged, and get my pay.

F.G. Royer

And a warm wish to everyone.
Feb 12, 1862

Dear Brother,

I suppose that you have heard of the disbanding of our lancer regiment. I suppose that they are disbanded, for I think the news was a regiment in the United States Army, that have starved and suffered for the want of provision, as the lancers. You may think that I have changed my mind wonderfully since I wrote to you before, and indeed I have, for when I first enlisted the officers were not coping and good as pie and we had plenty to eat, but as soon as the companies were full, the officers threw off their copings cloth, and put on a scowm, and then we had dog's fare. After I got through with the scowm, which was hard, I went back to camp backache, and I caught a cold and had chills and fever, and was darned sick with the sick headache, which was not very new, where you could hear the scowm and groaning, and fighting of about a thousand men, the next day they took me to the hospital, where I stayed 1 week, and I tell you, I was glad to eat while I was there, and when I got better I went back to camp, and had nothing but dry bread and meat that fairly stank, the bread would come out, and the wood would lap it up, some of the time we had nothing but bread, and coffee, that tasted like dish water, the officers have commenced sending again for the men to enlist again, just the worst of them as to smart. For them, they had a paper and asked them to sign it, and said it was nothing binding, but I have since learned it was only transferring them into blacktoe regiment. I would not sign the paper, but Jake Born (华润?) did, and a number of others, my Chaplain has got about 70 for Stockton, I think he will fail out his company. He has got with catch a smooth tongue. His name is Weber on the lancers, he had 127 men, the largest company in the command, we are disbanded but not mustered out of service. Ourselves we will be mustered out as paid off, which I suppose will be.
the few part of the week, they have no guard now, and they go and come as they please, the new col was there and felt very sad to think they were disbanded, and started immediately for Washington to see if he could not have them bring back, but it is too late for they say they won't go now at all as lancers, they grow my friends out of camp made the quartermaster of our outfit on a raid, ground col Tilman out of camp and one Capt and raised the very devil, they have got 1 thousand lancers, I suppose they will keep them to spear bull progs. I have got one suit of clothes clear through and if I get my pay it will come to about 30 dol, I think if I get out of this I shant enlist again, right of any way we are all well but i have she is not very well yet, but sets up and is around, right as soon as you receive

Yours Forever,

J. E. Ryder
Dear Brother

Feb. 24, 1863

I received your kind letter of the 21st and also we received the one of the 18th and we were glad to hear from you, and hear that you are well, and your speech of having a cold, I guess that is a general complaint. I have had a bad cold and cough 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 the tent was hard, but nothing to what I would have if we had went on South. I know how to feel for the soldiers that is now in service, and I hope to God that this war may come to a close, and peace may soon come again.

They are trying to transfer our company to the 15th sick infantry, but I guess they can't do it. If they had treated us decently we would not have said a word about going in cavalry, but in infantry, the prospect with they all say, that the war will last in a short time. I hope it is true. After the surrender of Fort Donelson, after the news got to Vice, the greatest excitement that ever was in the city. Lancers numbering 600, bands, sharp-shooters, regulars, and recruits from Brodie, Miller, Stanton, all were out shooting, shooting and firing cannon, women, men & boys waving handkerchiefs and great excitement. In the evening Whitman made a speech expressing great joy at the great victory the Union had won, saying the backbone of secession was broken. Our President was a Yankee, hearing the following motto: "What God has put together, man can not shake asunder." Our motto is the Union, not the Constitution was written before the war.

If it should be that your regiment should exist, I would much rather enlist in the infantry than in the other regiment but I would come home.

The doctor says they are no hope for John Bunnell. I have no more news only the marriage of Helen Nicklebacker. She is married to J. J. Fitzgerald. They
greatest lover ever known. He went over there, and
when they got all ready, she went into the other room
and cried about two hours, and Sid went in and told
her she had not better have him if she felt as 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 Welland
and Annsbby went to his uncle's to spend the night. It
happened they had four beds, Sid in one, Helen in
the other, Welland in the other, Annsbby 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 Abby. She is better.
Write as soon as you receive.

J. G. Ryder
March 26, 1862

Dear Brother,

We received your kind letter of the 16th that you wrote to me, and glad were we to have 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 Collier and we also read it in the paper. It is hard for to die at home but it is still harder to die away from home where they are friends around. I suppose you have heard of the death of John Bunzel. David McFarlan is just alive - he can not live long.

I have received $37.32 from the fencera and an honorable discharge. They charged us $33.38 for our clothes, but that I am satisfied. We have been in hopes that the war was coming to an close shortly. People around here think it will close this spring. I hope to God that it may be true, for the poor soldiers sake. If it does not close before long if I am in your place I would do as a fellow did in Nashville. 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 alright 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 little 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 close now, now close.

Yours Forever,

J. E. Ryder

Note: Mr. Coats ran the Eumden Coal yard at Stark - Dad was always suspicious of his patriotism.

(Raymond Ryder)
Dear Brother

I came home from Detroit last night, on a ferry of 10 days, and we received a letter from you. Had you said nothing about receiving the letter that I wrote to you. I received a letter from you about two weeks ago, it was the same day that I started for Detroit as a sailor. I have been enlisted about 3 weeks. you say in your letter that you have heard of it, and think that I was foolish for it. I don't know but I am, but I have not been sorry for it yet, and still I may be yet.

We have a good captain, he could be in the United States, the ship is a good deal of his men, and will not see them starve or freeze to death. Our first lieutenant is John McFarlin which is not the worst of men. Second is Cleon Baker, fine fellow, he is collected and he is a good fellow, and we are all as tight as a brick. We have been examined by the Doctor, and sworn into the Fleet Service, and mustered into the United States Service. We have lost our overcoats, and they are warm things, and they expect the rest of them might off. I suppose you have heard that our Col. Rennie has resigned, on the account of the trouble with England, and I am glad he has resigned. The regiment would be better off if the rest of their Canadian Officers would resign. One of the officers was so particular with this letter the other day I do not know how long it will take to start for Washington. I hope my bag, cloth and tell bring you and some anxious freight, partly afraid they would die before their time come. The crew, that they used to be 13-16 feet long, the blades about 16 make long, which over three the bargeman, and then you have your arrow and pistols. I must close now by bidding you good by, hoping that you will return as soon as you receive this.

J. E. Ryder, to R. G. Ryder
Late August 1863

[Handwritten text]

[Signatures]
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 have not told what, but you know that the flowers of our family have gone, but the may, and to think in God that he may return unharmed. The orderly sergeant of this company told me that she had to save of him that they were five rebels after him, and they might have taken him prisoner. Perhaps here a prisoner. If he is, he will get away shortly for they are going to exchange prisoners, and he may be lost. They said that the regiment was scattered and had not met yet. But the orderly said he thought he was a prisoner, so he was not sure that he was killed. But he said he might come around all right, for the regiment was as scattered. But he is one of the missing. Randolph Farrell is wounded in the breast and pretty bad and a saber cut in the mouth. Harrius McFarlane missing. I saw tell you it was a bloody field. This my friend by here yesterday. I was awful. I just heard that Harrius McFarlane was shot dead. Shot through the heart. We have got to march this afternoon. Some 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 it if we can. We have got 3 or 4 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 were right, and would not give up. They said that they were deceived in the Northern army. I saw the second regiment pass and did not see Charley Tobakers.

We can hear the cannon roar around us, but I suppose at Bull Run we got whipped awfully. But let's see why keep it coming on. I may get a chance to hear about Alfred.

As soon as I go where I can I will send my letters home, but I can't do it now for we are so far from a place.

I think that all militia will get discharged, and Jake the rest of the boys as well.

I have got to be a packing pretty quick and I have got to close. I saw Joe Farrell, Tom Smith, and others. Yours forever,

[Signature]
Camp Michigan  
Sept. 1, 1862

Dear friends,

I have not had a letter from home since I have been here, but I expect to get one. This makes three I have written. I thought I would write a few lines this word knowing your feelings in regard to Alfred. I think he is all right. I saw Bill Farley and Hank Burr yesterday and they said that the cavalry made a charge on the enemy and when they came out Alfred was missing, and after the battle was fought he was not to be found among the dead, and he thought without doubt he was a prisoner with someone. He said they were not many killed but more taken prisoners. Do not trouble yourself, for Bill said if he were a prisoner he would be released in a few days. For they had as right to fight him. He will either take the oath and come home, or live he will be exchanged. The orderly sergeant said he thought he was a prisoner. Bill said they were all tough as well. When I came across the river (Jubilee), I was awful sick, but I have got over that and I am well. I saw many admirably right before the way. We were welcomed by many on we saw. I think that these are ahead of us for Union people. The women would follow us and wave their handkerchiefs, and cry God bless the defenders of our country. We found several Union feeling until we got to Washington. Here we found enemies, where the day before, 5 or 6 men took to under God, in buying food, if you buy anything you have to pay 6 times as much as you do in Michigan, and even the rest of getting prisoners. I had to pay 50 cents for a little drink of water, that I could take in a very few mouthfuls. You could get it in Mich for 6 or 8 cents. And we went from there to Camp Lyon, from there to Camp Mich, where we still are. We are now nearest to the enemy of any regiment. The bashes are here thick and part of my regiment guarding their property. One of them shot at a couple of our soldiers when we first got there. We were sitting around tents when our colonel came running down and said form into a line of battle for the enemy were upon
us, but it did not come. And in the night, when we were
in our sleep, he came through the line 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 were into a line like that as soon as time marched down to the
field, but no enemy came. It was only done to try us, to see
if we would stand to the rush. Write as soon as you get it.

Yours Truly,

J. E. Ryder
Dear Friends,

I thought while I had a little time to spare I would occupy it by writing to you although I have received no letter from any of our fathers since I have been here and in fact anything heard but I expect one shortly. I find that soldiering is the great importance of the day. I have not been taken in so far in my experience for I expected no fun in it. Many days that I have played with in early life has been set down in the late battle. I saw the wounded soldiers when they came in Washington which amounted to about 14 thousand.

I will not try to explain the sight of wounded bodies.

I think that 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 go 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 war will end in less than 6 months in one way or the other. They in Washington that wants it but 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 Alfred and I 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 fence, no crops. There is corn 3 or 5 miles away that is as high that you can not begin to reach the top of it, where you will see hundreds of horses turned in to it. It looks horrible. They is a man that I saw yesterday that owes a farm not far away that declared that if this war did not close shortly they would be a famine in the South. There is some parts of Virginia, 4 miles around that there is not anything at all to live on.

Uncle William a horse here and worth much. 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 would go into a battle he could get a horse if he wanted to, but the soldiery here could not take care of them. They is lots of the Cavalry boys that you can see with dead 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 here 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 the West.

Yours Always

J. E. Ryder

W. Vinton
Camp Shearer, Sept. 19, 1862

Dear Friends,

I received the letter from home last night. It was from my mother and I was glad it was received with gladness. I wanted to know whether you knew about Alfred. Yesterday I heard from him, that he was all right, and I knew was as glad in my life for the day that I wrote that letter to you. I heard from one of his company that he was surely dead, and I was told you that. I was not very easy until I heard from him again. William Farley, a boy from Kansas City, was here yesterday, and they thought Alfred would go home. He was far better off lastly. He had left and came yesterday. He said that he felt well. I should like to go and see him but I cannot get out of camp. I think that Alfred will be here in a few days. We have got a new camping place, and I cannot see that I have been much relieved in the fighting. I do not expect to see few, I expect to work. I really think that it is more pleasant to be at home where you can get plenty to eat and a good bed to sleep in. Although I cannot say that I would want to come until the war was over, and then I want to come on the fighting train. There is some fighting that has been awful terrible. I suppose that John, Farley, Bill Lewis, all hometown, and any Cahill will get discharged.

I was down at the back when the wounded soldiers came in from the bloody battle field. Bill Brown, the wounded was estimated 12 thousand, and I saw the retiring army pass by. I saw one flag that was all on fire strings, and you could see the marks of battle on many of them. It was indeed enough to make one heart blood run cold, to see the wounded soldiers mangled in every direction, with arms and legs off, and heads swollen, and eyes blown out.

I heard that the news had reached home that we had all been killed or taken prisoners, what folly. The way that one night they came rocket was in the air, and were drawn in a line of battle, and towards morning we did not return.
and we commenced firing our guns at 8 & practice on battalion exercises and the news went through the strangest that we were all cut to pieces or taken prisoner.

Are they going to draft us next? I think that this war will have to come to a close sooner or later. The citizens said if it did not end in a short time that they would be a famine in the South. Write often, and give all of the news, tell others to write. Send me all and all of your news and give me the news. How is Grammy this hot weather. Did you go to church. Yours now and ever.

J. E. Ryder
Co C 3rd Mich infantry
Washington D.C.

T. Ryder
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 tents when some of the officers came along and said they wanted us to form a line of battle and they wanted us to fill our canteens with water and get 10 rounds of cartridge and to cape. First it was only done to try us, but we thought the enemy was there, so we could hear the cannoneer roar all day long. They said they wanted all to go that could bear arms, and make it look like we were sick, and the bell was given some of the boys were so scared that they shook and looked down.

It was one of our neighbors. C. Dyer (?) I and Dobie went and we had a lot of fun with the lady. (O.K.)

We can hear the cannon roar now here all of the time. It is the battle of Bull Run. It is hard to tell on the battle field sustained such a day as this. It is not enough to boil eggs.

Mrs. Hoyt went to Washington yesterday and saw Harrison McFarlane. 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 torrent, and in mud, that when he went there he had 20 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 would die, that he would die in a minute, if he could see he was prepared to die.

I suppose that it was because he was in such pain. The doctor had no hopes of him. But Hoyt has got the ball that shot him. He is going to send it home. Dobie and Dyer had gone down to day to see him.

I have not heard from Alfred lately. He is coming home? If he is, I should like to have him come and see him first.

I have been expecting him every day.

We are in camp now, eating plenty of food. All of the boys are well, excepting camp disease, besides them,
that are waiting for a discharge. I understand soldiering pretty well. I will have to go now and drill.
So good bye, and write often.

Yours Forever,

J. E. Ryder

Infantry, Washington
D. C.
Dear Friend,

Louis I have got a good chance to write a few lines and send it by the mail, by one of my brothers, and I will do it, although it would be as easy by hand. But it is nearer home when I send it by hand. Our own dancing regiment that left the city of Detroit has commenced to look smaller. Our regiment has not been in battle but I find that disease will take off a few. There is not so many here, but we now sick enough for duty.

I have not heard from Alfred since I got that letter from home, how Ayot had a letter from Washington last night, stating that Harrison's Tumor was of getting worse, and it was a possible thing to come home and today he is at ease.

The sent a word that he wanted I and Tim to come down, but I can not go, for I can not get past the Bridge for the guard.

We have got settled down in our tents now as that we are perfectly contented. I can like soldiering that is I can stand it like a book (1) if it was not for the long marches, but we have got something to be thankful for, was in awful & I am in, but it is nothing & I suppose to having our homes in such a place. There is a town that little not far from here, that said before this was commenced that his farm would bring 1000$ a year. Now he could not get 500$ a year now. He that his farm was burned up his crops taken, and he said they would starve, and I could tell you stories in which experience, that would make you be thankful that you lived in the precious little State of Ohio. Tell the father that I am afraid of a stop in which they would have something else I think of if they were here, which would they think if they should see a lot of Recluse come to their desolate home, and turn their farm, and come to the house and take every thing that they wanted, and with loaded revolvers, make the woman go and get them a warm meal, but I am thankful that they is one that has nothing but what they pay for.

This is very sad news yet, the news is cut up year -
by sea, and has been 6 or 10 days. I don't know whether it is around or not, but along the road, the Sec. Hardee has cut it for them. the farmers watch their crops, but the soldiers go in, as with the same weapons — but enough of that.

I have got to bring my letter to a close. Joe Jenkins is going to start, write as soon as you get this. Write a letter to sibby the other day.

Yours truly,

J E Ryder
Co C 26th Michigan
Infantry Washington
D.C.
Camp Sheau<br>Sept. 24, 1862

Dear Friends,

I have not received but one letter from you since I have been here, but I may get one tonight, but I shall not wait for it. I am on guard today and my relief don't come on until one o'clock and so I will improve my leisure by writing a few lines home to let you know that I am still well and enjoying myself as well as I expected. Yesterday I went to Washington to see Harrison McFarlane and saw a great many sights, in Washington, that was interesting. That was the Navy Yard, and Washington's monument and the Capitol, which was a great sight. And we looked around the city in the forenoon, and in the afternoon we started to see Harrison and we got to the hospital about 3 o'clock and we went along into it, and it was a bad smelling place, and we saw those lots of wounded soldiers, wounded in different ways, some light, some mortally, and we saw them laid back to a bunk, where lay a soldier, that looked as though he was in great pain. He was one of the fellows that we called Harrison McFarlane, but not one spoke of his looks could I see, and Edgar Dufree stepped up and spoke to him. I stood back of him, and I asked the nurse where Harrison was, and he rolled his eyes around and said Johnny don't I look like him, and I spoke to him, but I could not believe it was him. He looked natural in his eyes, and his hair and that was all. He had a beard all over his face, and he looked like a skeleton. He once said that he thought that he would stand it but a little while longer. He said he come fairly near a dying the night before, and they was some there that was getting well. They was a fellow that lay on the bunk next to Harrison that had his leg off. It smelled bad.

And after we made our visit with Harrison, we went to try to find Alfred but we could not do it. So I was with the regiment. If I see I think I could find him.
I understand that the regiment is near Washington, but I could not find it, for they were a couple of the member of our regiment that told me we had marched order, and so we hurried to camp, but it was false. But I think we will not stay here long, for we have been inspected by Gen. Woodberry, our Sen. and he thinks that we could do a big thing on the field. He says that we can fight. But we can't tell, we may stay here a good while. It is too bad if we have to start again. For we have got our tents up. We drill now days partly thorough. They have this men detailed, from the Regulars to drill us. We have got so now that we understand it partly well. But it is getting late and I must begin to get for the guard. It is quite warm now yet.

I want you to write often as you can for we are glad to get letters from home. Good by for the present, to which I still remain yours! Forever

J. E. Reynolds
Co C 24 Michigan
Infantry, Washington
D. C.
Dear Friends,

I am glad to say that this morning I have got a letter from home to answer. It was written by Mr. and Mrs. I was glad indeed to get it, you gave me the news about Alford. I had not heard from him since I received the last letter from you and I see that he is getting near home. I wish that he go on and stay there. Was there heard news this morning? Harrison McFarlorn is dead. He died yesterday at 3 o'clock, and he was buried about 4 miles from Washington. He died without fear, he was reconciled but died very hard. It was not his wishes to be sent home, but he thought the money could be used in a more useful way. But we hope thought we could raise a contribution and send him home.

It is too bad to see a good boy like him lie in an enemy's country. What do you think? I wish we should get back our little boy. But I will write again and see. My tent got their feet as the Corps was going out. He asked me about the father and Tom.

I have not heard from John Vankorn. I should like to see Charles Rochdale. We are pretty busy now. We do not get much time but we improve all the time we get.

I had to leave off to go to do our washing and cleaning up our tents. Suppose that Galt Farley will be home by the time we get this letter. We get along pretty well. Read a first rate. We are busy now, all of the time, on drill and police duty. The Col sent down to Washington and got 1 hundred thousand rounds of cartridges besides having 50 rounds per piece.

I have got to go now. We have a show fight near every day. We had one last night and had lots of fun. We whipped the enemy. We fought 1 hour and drove them into the woods and surrounding woods. Capt. Vinton & Co. charged rapports on them, and took them prisoners. We have got in again from our fight.

It was an exciting time. But we got whipped tonight. We had the enemy in check about half an hour when we were
Attacked by 4 times our number and we surrendered. But
night before last we whipped them nice. We ran about
30 rotes and cornered the enemy and we fired on them and they
made a bayonet charge on them and we gave one of the most
merciful yells ever was heard and took them prisoners.
So night they was 2 or 3 hurt pretty bad by accidents. Some
shot their revolver. Some got as excited that they play
in earnest. Sometimes in a bayonet charge they yell
almost enough to tear the ground up and almost as as
though they wanted to fight in earnest. They in a bad
lieutenant in Co J that is shot in the leg but (not bad).
Capt. W. Wight lead & fight with E B Wight in the same
battle. Capt. Wight and the E. Wight come to gather. Capt. W.
Wight grabbed the other Capt. after he got his sword
knocked out of his hand and downed E. Wight. So I
don't know which whipped. W got his sword taken and
E B got taken and they was fetched. Our officers are the
best kind. As for the company officers the regimental
officers, the Col. will talk as common as a private. He
calls our Company the two (?) Company. You Dec to
get along with the work. I wish rere to help him. Well we are coming one of these days. Write as
soon as you get it. I have real that letter now and I
should guess I have wrote 2nd. Last sleep.

Yours Forever

J E Ryder
Camp Shear, Sept 28, 1862

Dear Friends,

I suppose that today is our last day in Camp Shear, we are under marching order, we are going to Frederic, Maryland, and I thought I would send a line home before I started, we will rather start to-morrow, or to-morrow morning. So goes a soldiers life, we get things looking plenty well, and we supposed that we would stay here this winter, but we are mistaken, in soldiers you don't know what your going to do, until you are ordered to fall into line, march; they have been different reports as to our regiment. When we come to Camp Shear, we were attached to the engineers company, to chop and build a fort, about three miles from our camp, and we stayed there a while, three companies went to chop every day, and the time we stayed in camp we drilled from morning till night, and I supposed that we would stay and work on the fort, and then after the news came that we were going back to Michigan to guard prisoners, and today our Company was going to shoot, and just before we started, we had orders not to go, but to fall into line, and the Col said the orders that we were going to Frederic, and the Col felt pretty good, he said that we were going to fight, and we gave three cheers for the Col, and he replied, that he loved his men, and was satisfied as to their training, and to spare respectility of Co C, he said the news should forget that company, he said it was the 2nd Battery Company, and he said they were respected at home, for they had made him one in the Guard House, he said they was quick birth, but well grown, he said they was the pride of the regiment, and we heard him, and he said if we went into a battle we would have nothing to cheer for, when we come out, and then the regiment gave a thundering cheer, for Col. Marrow, and his men got scorch and sprang around, and he said his horses could the battle after off, but enough of that, I went and got me a deck of cards the other day and I tried the luck of any thing I ever ate, and a little shuck of liver, we had to buy 34 cents a pound for butter, check butter as you make
would be worth 50 cents, 30 cents, but it is not worth much; it is half bad and white from (v) stuff. They is lots of things that grow in Chinaw that would not taste bad, but
then we are in Bridg, and that should be very able to lend a
young man home. I have faith to think that I am as saving
home again, and I am sure that I have just as much a
desire to come back, when this war come to a close, as any other
fellow, but if it should be for me not to come back, I suppose
I can stand it as well as any body else, but it is getting late
I must close, for we have got to be ready to march at five
o'clock, or 6, but we don’t know when we will start for
any certain, we may not start until morning, but when I get time
I will write again, I don’t think I will until we get there,
carriesales
we have got to more of corn bread, they don’t eat enough,
it is a good thing in settled, it is a larger ball than the one that killed Harrison Me, I suppose you
will see it. Jake Farley took it home, write as oft as
you can, good by, Yours Forever,

J. E. Ryder
Deer Sister,

We left our camp Thursday last Tuesday morning, and received your letter just before we started, but not in time to answer, and I was glad to hear from you, and we marched to Washington and stayed all night in the yard where Washington monument and the Capitol was, and at 2 o'clock we got aboard of the car and came to Frederic, we have got to march from here in a short time, I should think it curious if you was here, I look around and see as many thousands of soldiers, we are right by the side of the railroad, and this is thousands passing a going to Harvey ferry, I suppose they is fighting in that direction today, for they is cannonading in that direction, we are by the place where the Secede had a fight not long ago. They is a house near by, where the man stood in the door and saw the battle, you can now see a smiling face on all of the soldiers in Frederic, and you have to look out what you eat, we enjoy soldiering as well as possible, but still it is not so pleasant as it would be a cutting up corn, but tell my that we have got the Third officers that ever was to had in America, I will speak especially of Lieut. Hugh, look tell Mrs. Hensley, he has been true to me, and is liked by everyone, he is a soldier among soldiers, he津贴 with red cloth right. I hope he may be spared in battle above all other officers, but the rest are pretty good, our Col will sit down and talk with a private as well as an officer, look on the line he is a tiger, and the rest of the officers are good, and I suppose that their bravery will be tried in a few days, we are in the Fiftieth Division. Sitting packed in every direction, Frederic is full of wounded soldiers, I do not feel quite right today, I have had the sick head ache, and Alfred is very well, we have had some unexpected packed in Washington, and we sleep in traveling tents, they are quite becoming suitable for this hot weather, I shall try to well and I must to close this time.

Eleanor Fifield.
Oct. 2, 1842 - p. 2

My dear [name],

I want to say a word to you, I am going to write a letter as soon as I can get time; we have not received our mail now for 2 days and I may have a letter soon. We have had news from Roberts, letter that Alfred Ryder was at home. And I can tell you it was good news, for I knew you wanted to see him and I should like to see him, but that is impossible now. I hear to that he could get a discharge and if he can for money sake why don't he get it. I think he has done his part in soldiering, one that has suffered and been in prison as he has, when in the name of common sense don't let stay at home, tell him he has done more than his part, and take the discharge, for if others would do their duty as he has, they might be satisfied, look good by.

You're love and forever

[Signature]

[N. Ryder]
Dear Father,

As I again have an opportunity to write, I will gladly improve it, for a few minutes, for I can tell you that we have had but little time for rest, since we have been on the march day and night, and part of the time by night. Oh, what marches we have had for 4 or 5 days past. Since we left Camp Pennington we have tasted of the soldier's life, yesterday and day before was the longest but not the hardest. Monday we got in late at night near Manasses Gap, to which we expected great battle, but lucky for us, the rebels fled for life, and so we boys thought that we would stay there a day or two, so that we could get a rest, for we had marched so much, but just as the light had commenced as breakiing, they would see to set, pack up night of, and at 3 o'clock we resumed our journey, and they put us under a forced march, that is hurry up, get a long double quick, and so forth, and they put us through until late at night, and when I got there I laid down, on the ground and stayed until morning. We marched about 20 miles that day, and that march our regiment was small, but they still tell us we met march, at 7 o'clock, and we did, and got there about midnight last night. We marched the same distance yesterday. When we got about 10 miles, we got out of satables, and we boys, that is, Elder and Elder, and funnel boys, got hungry as wolves, and we did not know what to do, as I and Elder funnel thought that we would go on double quick, we headed and saw if we couldn't get something to eat, and we went ahead 2 or 3 miles, and stopped to a house, and we saw pigs, turkeys, and lots of stuff to eat, and we went to the house, and they was a woman that came to the door, and we told her that we was very tired, and hungry, and wanted something to eat, and she said that we could have nothing, for she was poor, and she gave many other excuses, and we asked her where the men were, and she said that she had some, and didn't want any, and we told her that the rebel army had them, and so we went back into the woods and unclogging nose, and the rest of our load, and loaded our guns, and went back to the house, and the old woman came out, musing, we made
for a turkey, but could not get one, so we row to the hen roost, broke the door in, and I held back the woman. Captain went in, and I held back the woman, until he got 2, but his got away, but I held fast to mine, and I row, and we went on, and we thought that would make a small meal for as many, and so we went along until we saw a very nice hog, and I looked on him, and was satisfied, but I must close, it is getting late, we will move again soon. To day is the first flake of snow I have seen this year, but we have got to march again pretty soon. I feel very sore today. I do not feel much like writing, but good bye. Write soon.

Yours Truly

J. W. Mason
Dear Friends,

I now have the opportunity to write a few lines to you, although I have not received any letter from home in a long time. But we can not get mail yet. We left Frederick on Monday last about 4 o'clock p.m. and marched until about 10 o'clock and then the next morning we marched until about 5 o'clock and halted on the great battle ground called South Mountain. It was where the 17 fought so hard. It was about half a mile from the main road. I went over the ground. It was too horrible to explain. They were a small log house that stood on the ground. It was all torn to pieces, and fences and trees were all shattered to pieces. And they were all kinds of clothing over the ground, hundreds of kenies and clothes of all kinds. And as we went to the house, the told me a pitiful story of his sufferings. He had his house all torn to pieces and he had three little flags in his clock and they were all in strange ways. They were 48 rebels buried in his well and over a hundred were buried and about 360 around his house. It smelled awful bad as the rebels was not covered enough, and they were one that was not covered at all and 1 captain and three privates not far away. And this war men stayed there and composed the verses that I put in here. He said that he wrote it after the battle. He said if I sent it home to 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 twentieth lay. I suppose it was thrown out of their pocket before they were buried and on the rebel ground was found rebel verse and envelope with the following verse:

May their southern families who abuse their Southern neighbors,
Approach not near enough to feel the point of our swords.
May they come near enough, to hear the click of the trigger,
And learn that a white man is better than a negro.

And then we returned to our regiment and soon marched.
This is a beautiful country, but it is too good for rebels. We expect to teach them before long. They are lots of rebels prisoners here, the barns and stables are full. They are wounded. One of them died yesterday. They say that they will fight until every man is dead. They say that the raw bone rebel is hard to kill. Some of them are going home today, but their talk amounts to nothing for they don't know how, they look like an uncivilized set of fools, and they are all much raked. Some had not enough on to keep decent and they were nothing but skin and bones. But friends I must close, for it is time to go and drill. I have had no letter from home in a long time, but the mail can not get to us.

Sincerely,

E. Ryder

Sherbrooke
Dear Mathew

Having a little time to spare today I will improve it by writing a few lines to you although I do not feel very well. For I have had a touch of the sick head ache, but that is nothing. Our regiment when we left Detroit numbered one thousand and 43. And now I think they is now over 600 and our company numbers 68 on dress parade. The rest are sick or else doing guard duty. Right before last we received orders about 12 o'clock to get up and knock 2 days rations and be ready to march at one o'clock. No notice, and we received no further orders until today. They was an order came to the bat, to see if we could be ready to march in one hour, and the bat said that we would, and now the order came to build stables for the horses, in which they are work now, and the bat said that the bat said that he would let 500 dollar that the war would be ended in 3 weeks time. I hope it is true. I can't say that I have a desire to return home until this war is ended, but if the war would end, and I and Alfred could return to old Mass I would be one of the gladdest fellows you ever saw. Ask that the bat, thought maybe right. Was if you are here for a few minutes, upon the high hill, and look around, you would think it wonderful, to look as far as your eyes could see and see the many regiments. There is three thousand soldiers here on the Potomac, the rebel frigate is not far from us. The to rebels are pretty hard up. They have got a few guns and keep them uncomfortable. They look worse than the hogs of Dear and the most of them look like skeletons. But one of the prisoners here said when the boy was growing with his arms shot off. He said that he was going to get well, he said that they saw how rebels was had things to kill, but they is lots of farm that die every day. They have had friends die to wish them from the south. I guess I have told you about my seeing the President of the United States. I saw him when I was at Camp Clark. He look little more humble than his picture shows you, they say that he spoke at Frieberg and he said that the war would end in less than 6 weeks but they is lots of stories to believe. I have received 2 letters from
Alfred, one when he was at home and the others in C. and I have answered them. I am glad that he went home and I wish that he had stayed there, but it is my opinion now that we will both have the at home in less than 4 months, although I don't know, but if the Southern army can't stay in Maryland this winter I think they are about played out. I suppose they will never get for the most part detained some two days. Alfred wanted I should tell him about Harrison, and I forgot it. I suppose that you have heard of his death. I saw him and talked to him before he died. He said when the ball struck him he threw up his hands and hollered and fell to the ground, and the captain put his haversack under his head and the chef there too. But I must close it is now late. Yours truly,

J E Ryder

Lieut C. Co. 24th Mich infantry
first Army Corps
Gen. Gibbons Brigade
Washington D.C.
Camp Harbough, October 20, 1862

George Ryder Sir,

I thought I would put in a line in Johnnie's letter to let you know that I am well, and feel well. I think that soldiering agrees with me fine. We are now under marching orders. We are going 10 or 12 miles up the Potomac, as we expect. I have shown you to send my money to. I made an allotment in amount of ten dollars a month on a month. I send it to your safe keeping, if my wife needs it, let her have some of it, and if she don't, keep it until we call for it.

Henry Haceington wanted to put this in for him, this picture is one that I see Brown gave me, does it look anything like him? Show it to the folks but keep it if you want it.

(unsigned - but written by John)
Dear Sister,

I thought I would write a letter this morning to let you know we are all still well, although I have not written for 2 or 3 weeks. I have had a spell of the sick head ache. It is not very new to be sick here, although it is not as bad as it might be. Alfred have has been quite sick for almost 2 weeks, but he came away from the hospital last night and slept in his tent. I don't know whether he wanted his father to know it or not, but he is getting along pretty well, but he looks weak yet, and Watson Eldridge were his sick. He returned to his tent last night. They were sick once in our company, and only so can he raised few dress parade. It is not doing very well for this big regiment, although it is now as large as the hole of the brigade. We left Camp Harbachy day before yesterday about 2 o'clock, and marched to the place, Camp Penniman, Maryland, to the distance of about 6 miles, and when we were ordered to strike our tents, and then we were ordered out, and again we received marching orders. The Col. said that this time we marched, that he supposed we would march on the risen soil of Virginia. The bullock is about 15 miles from me, and such is the life of a soldier, we do not know one minute what we will be the next. We have had 2 days ration, boiled up, and we may march in two minutes and may stay here 12 weeks. I think that the rebels would like to settle this on reasonable terms and it is the general opinion of the citizens here that this war will end this fall. I hope to God that it may be so, sometime it looks encouraging and then again it looks dull, but all of the boys are in good spirits and are willing to endure the hardships, and dangers, but are still looking with an anxious eye, for the war to end. When we are now it is a beautiful country as I ever saw and we are camped in a good place, but give me Michigan to live in. I can tell you that things here brings something, Iatarine one rent a house and little meat cooked things to, and an apple it would score me, is all one, and soft bread for cents for a little half cup. But enough of war. It is getting late. I must close now. I haven't received any letter from home in a long time. I write one & two the other day. Yours forever,

H. E. Wash
Neil Gage Farley give you this letter.

Camp Penniman Oct 28

Dear Mother

I thought while I have got a little more time I would write a line to you. I received a letter from your 4 or 5 days ago, which was duly answered, and that was the last I got from home. It is a getting some what cool nights here now and you had right it was plenty cold, and now I have not got time to write much, but when I was in D.C. I aloted ten dollars on a month of my wages, and when we come down South we could not live on Uncle Jonas, and so now my mummy is all gone, and I thought I would wait until I drawed my pay, but I am getting out of paper and want know how long it will be before we draw our pay, and I should like to know you send me 2 let. and then I can get on.

Yours truly

J. E. Ryder to his mother M. Ryder

Does this look any like your next picture.

Co C. 2nd Artillery

Farish Army Corps 2nd Division Brigade

Washington D.C.
Dear Brother,

I have just received an other letter from you dated Oct. 14th and it was received with gladness, for I had not received any letter from home in a long time and I can tell you it gave me a shock of joy to know that you had once more arrived in your native town, and I hope you will not be called on to go back, for I think that you have done your duty in the line of soldiering, and I now stand ready to take your place, for I know it must be a homesome place to our Father, to have you both gone. But it is curious to me that you don't get my letters. I have received three this will make, and they were duly answered, but I hope you will get this. Tell Uncle William father that I received their letter which will be answered in due time. We are about to leave this place, and I can hardly think of nothing to write. We left Camp Norfolk near Sharpsburg last Monday, and arrived at Camp Penniman near Behaville the same day, about 10 a.m. and then we received orders against March, but no time set for us to go, and today we are preparing to start, but we may not go today in a day or 2. I do not know where our destination will be, but we are in about 5 miles from the rebel army, and our Col. said that the next move that we make, that he supposed that we would go to the front and lead, and the regiment received his orders with Ohio and a tiger. I don't say that I am anxious to go into a battle, but if this thing can't be settled without it, the quicker the better. I believe that it will be all across by next spring, and it is in the opinion of all of the folk down here, and I hope to God that it may be so, and we can all return to our peaceful homes. I think that they promise to be some good roads in the enemy's camp here, and if you come. But now I am satisfied to undergo the trials of Dixie, and our Company is a coming down to go. When it left Retruck we had 115. Some of them are discharged, and the rest has orders to, and some are in other regiments, but Alfred we have got one of the best companies whatever could be got up. I am acquainted with everyone in it. They are all good farmer boys, and one of the best Col. is ever seen, although he used bad language. And all of our
affairs are all right, but I should like it if I was in the City, but I am here and I must make the best of it, for it would be cruel for me to tell of the hardships of saluting, for you know it well. But I can tell you that we have had our share, but we have not got to be here forever, for if we went home, we will be under fire, a foot or so. It is not quite as easy to march 20 miles as it is to kick corn, and live on hard tack.

You spoke of your teeth. I have not seen a tooth since I left Washington. Neither have I seen soft bread, but it is a lot and tea, tea and tea, but I am satisfied as long as I live.

You spoke of rubber blankets, I expect to have one. Thank you very much. If I get it and a pair of gloves, I have got them. But it is a getting time to go to bed. We don't get time to write in the daytime, and as we occupy every minute, I want you to write as often as you can, and all to write. I will answer all I get, and more.

All of the new boys come in to our tent to hear your letter and they want you to write to them. You know them all. Alf has asked you to write to him, and Watson, Edridge, Burrows, and Harry Brown and all of the rest of them. I think I have wrote enough now.

Yours forever,

[Signature]

Tell our folks I should like a couple of dollars.
Camp near Harpers Ferry, Oct. 29, 1862

Dear Mother,

I have received last night while I was amusing myself by a smoky fire, to receive to letters from home, one from you and the other from Alfred, and they were nothing but I could have got to be more welcomed than they were. I have passed through with many exciting times since I last heard from you. Although it would be useless for me to explain the whole affair, you may know that we have had but little fun in our last march. We were in our tents, a covering up with our blankets, to keep off rain and cold, when the order came to pack up and fell in, in less than two minutes we all sprung up and went to pull down our tents, and were soon ready & marching, through rain and mud, over our shoes, and as we started our long march, it was then about 5 o'clock, and we marched that night to the distance of about 10 miles, and camped for the night and it was dark as tea, and raining as hard as it could, and we were the color of clay from top to bottom, and we were as tired and sleepy we could be, and in a few minutes, I raised up, and found that I was in a pool of water, and we were wet as a rat, and I got up and went and stood by the fire until warm, and the boys were so sick enough, some were going to desert, and others wanted to go into a battle to get shot, so it kept from all night, and in the morning we started again, though the rain had stopped, but the mud was awful. Probably Alfred knows what the soil of Maryland and Virginia is, after a heavy rain, and we marched that day quite moderate, and night come, and we halted for the night, and I and Edridge fell up our tents, and I never slept sounder in my life, and soon come and we doled some coffee and ate some hard tea, and it was about time to march, when our col came along with tears in his eyes, and asked me how we felt, and he asked the regiment if they would follow him, and they told him yes, as long as life remained, and he was ordered to read a paper so that if they were any man in the regiment that wanted & go into the regular army, I left them go, and the col. red it, and then spoke & the regiment until
He brought tears to many eyes, he said he knew that the infantry was hard, but he said he did not want his men to leave him, and he said that probably they were never a time known, in the present war, that a regiment suffered more, unless upon the battle field, than the 24th Michigan did, on the 26th of Oct. But he said if ye get Col. Land to claim, he said he'd send someone down to say that I was at Plymouth, and they said yes, and he said that they were nothing on earth that he thought more of than he did of the 24th Michigan infantry and that was his wife and child and he must into tears, and the men gave in cheer for him, and said they would stand by him through danger and trial, and he thanked and left. I believe they were never a better Col in the world than Col. Marrow, when we were in camp if it would rain he never told us to stay but rain, home for camp, and when we stuped on the height of the 26th, he told us not to have any rain, we could get our hands on, and nights when we were in camp he would come and sit down and talk, and aye as a farmer, he says we are all here for one great cause, and he is with us; he is the pet for the regiment, and he has got the good will of them all, and they will stand by him through thick and thin, and he's got the pet for the regiment, he has got the good will of them all, and we all like him. You spoke of brecky he is a good officer, he has always used me first rate, some complain of him but I think he will. Now we are under marching orders again, with heavy rations in our overcoats and pipe in wagons. I will answer Alfred's letter right off, but I don't know when to direct for the hand to home. I have written a letter to him, and he says the hand received any. Tell Shady to write, I have written to him, and I shall answer to his letter as soon as I can. All write, give my respects to all inquiring. Good by.

J. E. Ryder to his mother, N. Ryder.
In camp near Snicker's Gap
November 1st, 1862

Dear Brother,

I received your kind letter of the 23rd, yesterday morning, while I was baled for a rest, and I was glad to hear from you and knew that you were still at home. You have had many hard scenes to pass through with since I last heard from you. We have been continually on the march since we left Camp Bammimon, and I can tell you that we have tasted of a soldier's life to its lowest depths. Although we are still above the rib and are now stopped here for a rest. We have marched today 15 or 16 miles, and I think that we will stay here tonight for it is almost sundown now. We halted twice yesterday, the first time they told us to pitch our tents for we would stay there 2 or 3 days, and we were quite tired, marching so far, and part of the time through rain and mud over our shoes, but we were so pleased to think we were going to have a good rest we went to work and fixed up our tents as good and warm as we could, and went and got some straw, and then we were all right, and so we thought that we would wash our shirt drawers andصرف, so we went to the back brook and washed them in, and commenced washing and the boys sounded to fall in, so we rowed and pulled down our tents, done up our wet clothing, and started, and we marched on 2 or 5 miles, and they told us to jerk our tents good, for we were a going to stay, and we did so, and this morning we was ordered to strike tents and march, and now we are here, and Alfred I presume that this will be the last letter that I shall write to you until I reach my life upon the battle field. We are blank by an immense rebel army, stationed at Snicker's Gap, at the distance of about 3 or 4 miles. There you a rebel car. now by the now. They take him right in our Company. We have a nice return here. We just turned to try and get away back get a bayonet at this back. Alfred we are a going to go into a battle to narrow, but we may not, but I think that we will, and as if we do, you must not set uneasy if you get a letter for a while; but if I get time I shall write. I should like to if this war should close so that we could come home, and enjoy a little well. I should get hurt in the expected battle, but not much.
it. If I should, I can stand it, but I hope I shall not.

Our regiment is closest around to the enemy of any other on the army, but by that I mean a getting dark and I must soon bring my letter to a close, if I get time. I shall improve every moment in writing and I want all you all to write to me, and I shall be the same, but you may call this a letter for all until I get time to write. I am well now as you could expect, for our march. Tell me I think I am not going to get shot, but that I am a coming home in the course of time, but if I should be my bad luck bad to, then they is no one to blame. I will now close by bidding you all all good by, and remaining your friend and brother.

Yours forever,

J. E. Ryder

At Ryder

The boys has began to throw away their extra clothing, you can see hundreds of dollars worth here all over the ground. I have not yet.
Camp near Fayetteville, Virginia
Nov. 12th 1862

Dear Mother,

As we again halted for the night, on our road to Richmond, I again sit down to pen a few lines to you, we had quite an easy march yesterday, only went about 12 miles, and had a pretty good rest. Me, I have received your letter, and one from Alfred, and received news to hear that Martin Burns was you, it greatly reminds me that life is uncertain to all, little did I think that when I bid him good by, when I was at his house, it was for the last, and still less did he think when I left home that he would be the first to fall, Martin Burns was a good boy, and he is well known to many in this regiment, that face can never be seen. I hope that Eddy may be spared, it will be hard indeed to die mother, Me it is every hard indeed to think of dying at home, but it looks still harder, to see good boys, take their death real upon the ground, with me one & the other are encouraging words, but as like as not you will hear some one swear at you, for making us such trouble. I have seen men hurried like butchers, but enough on that. We are as traveling now everyday, we expect to meet the enemy shortly, received your letter, and the five hat. It came good & true, I bought me a pair of shoes, and some other things that I needed for winter, it will keep me a good while. I should think that you would have been busy most of the day busy soon, but these footings stamps some good, for they lead to the good. Here, our money is good, nothing only & retailers, the farmers want cash money. You inquire as to our living, it would be you to good & true, for them the land much stay for a while, but some nice night when I am a sitting by the fire at home, I can tell stories, that you may think that what a great privilege we enjoy, I have a good home, and plenty to eat, I can tell how to cage what I ever had. And I have seen starving, look upon one that that lone, and grown on it. And I never have yet, such fine a day we had beautiful weather, and that is nothing. I can tell you it has gone through with what you would a thought to wonder a little
me, but when we a chance we brag. We get around a week and try to buy some of his potatoes, and he may say he won't sell &c., and then we say really, and in we go the wagon to purchase, and get the potatoes, but you can't find much here to eat. I felt every week eating so much bread, meat and nothing else. We go to their houses and ask for something to eat, and they will give you nothing, and then we try to buy it and can't, and then we send a tall, through a dog or chicken or something, but I have done things, at private houses, before their eyes, that would draw tears, while I was at work, for they would be so仿佛, and declare that it was all they had, and must share, but I had to do it. I have just turned up all of my letters for I thought the day I went into battle, and the rebels took one, I did not want them to read them. I don't get much of anytime to write, but tell all of the father I shall as often as I can. Write one to him, the other day, I am sorry that Alfred don't get my letters, but if he is back again they is no use of writing more, but tell him I understand ready to answer one, and will.

J. E. Ryder
Camp fell near Fayetteville, Virginia
Nov. 14, 1862

Dear Brother,

As I again have an opportunity, I thought I would write in reply to the letter to which I received from you the day or so since, although not knowing whether you would ever get it or not. For the letter to which I received from you, you expected to return to your regiment the next morn. Alfred, your letter was received with pleasure, although it contained the saddest news. I had heard in a long time, that is, at the death of your brother Martin.ubber, it was indeed sad and unexpected news, for I had heard that he was sick before, it will be hard for the poor mother, for she thought so much of poor Martin, that death is for me all, whether it be sooner or later, upon the battle field or at home. I hope and pray to God that this war may come to a close, so that we may return to our homes, and thence stay, until we are called away by death, for I think I can enjoy myself better in old Mich. than I can here in this dreary and forbidding looking country. We are now ordered to march today, and I must hurry through with my letter. I wish I were the life of a soldier. We have been on the march every day, for about a week or ten days, until yester day, and yesterday was one of the saddest days I ever had, of the sick and dead, and you likely know what a place this is be sick, with about 2500 being a hospital, and all the blame of camp life working around you. It was enough to drive me crazy, but I feel better today, but I am pretty weak yet, but do not feel able to walk 15 miles, with marching on and there being provisions, and tents, but I have got to go as long as I can. This is the most sickly hole they are in Virginia I judge, for they are a rolling out like sheep, but I hope I shall be able to go in again in a little while and advantage with the regiment. Our company has got down to about 30 men, but it is a large part of the regiment is, as all the rest of the brigade, but I think that this war will close before long. Our provisions is the same as yours, salt pork and hard bread, when we get any. Now for a few lines they could not get provisions to eat, and they were none.
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Hungry soldiers. I am willing to stay here, and fight as long as I can stand it, but when she was clean I return as gladly as the next one. I expected to see hardships, when I enlisted, but I will allow I have been disappointed, but I am determined to go as long as I can, but I have seen boys talk of home, and cry like children, but I can't say I feel as bad as that, for I would not care about going home now. I know how to do good, and am willing to do it, when we are drawn up in battle, we have been up in the line, but no enemy came. We met 15 hundred rebel troopers on our march, but they skulked over the mountain. But I must be close now and pack up. I send my respect to all enquiring.

Yours Truly Forever
J. E. Ryder
O. E. Ryder

I bought me a nice rubber blanket, and it was stolen from me while I was asleep. I may possibly possibly find it. If I don't I think I shall get another. I received the five dol. you sent.
Camp near Aquia Creek, Nov. 23rd. 1863.

Dear Father:

I thought this mean, while I was writing in my tent, that I would try and see if I could not write a few lines to you, as I had not written in a few days past, now recede that I received any, for we don't get a mail very often here, and when we get letters they come in a bunch. I have received one letter from Alfred since he was here in Dille; he was at Alexandria then, and it was promptly answered, the reason that I have not written before is because that I have not been able, and because we have been continually on the march, but broke in the ambulance, the hardest thing on earth for a sick fellow. I have been sick now about a week, I am sorry even myself, for all of the boys said that I was getting jolly, and I think I was for I never felt stronger in my life, although it was hard too and salt pork, that done it, but now I feel pretty well, and weak, I feel better now, I commenced with the sick head cold, and diarrhea, which made me pretty weak, and the other day it rained all day and night. And I caught cold, and it made my lungs pretty sore, but I hope I shall get better pretty quick and return to duty. It is raining here now for 2 or 3 days, to which it has not made it very pleasant. In camp, we came to this place last night, it is very pleasant place, with water near by, we don't know how long we shall stay here, to buy it is quite warm and pleasant, probably you have read in the paper of Roswell B. Curtis, of our company, lying at Washington Hospital, he died at War, and was a good soldier boy, he was my marching mate. I have marched with him a good many times, you would be surprised if you were there, to see the regiments how they shrivel away, this in one Company, you may find 30, or 40, sick and fatigued, and 20 or 25 on duty. Farewell, our company are now scattered 60 or 70 all told, so when you read of a regiment going into battle, at any instant they are all killed and wounded. Tell Bob in the company, and the men not to join us in the battle, as you may.
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(4) now how it goes, you would think it might be a full company, they say that they are going to send a lot more men to Washington to the Hospital, but I must know soon, for my hand begins to waver, how do you get along with the work, if I could, I wish I was there to help do up the fall work, and to take care of the cats and horses, I am good by for this time.

Yours truly Forever

F. W. Peyster

This is a verse that Alfred sent to me, and as I thought I would send it home.
Camp at Broad Station

Dec. 27th 1862

Dear Mother,

As I again have a little time to spare this eve, I thought that I would improve it by writing to you to let you know that the sun still shines upon us. We are now about 11 miles from where we were the last time that I wrote to you guarding a rail road. I think that we will stay here some time although I can't tell. This is indeed a strange world, while in camp, you will see the scarcity longing of camp life, while part of the regiment is off on burying one of our number, his name is John Harris, from Virginia, of course in Company F. They are yet a great many sick in the hospital, and a great many went off to Washington hospitals. They did talk of sending off a lot more, but I don't know. I myself, feel some what more like a person, than I did the other day, although day before yesterday I needed a sick bay as I never did. They did talk of sending me to Washington, but I guess they won't, if they should, and it was a decent place to stay. I don't think that I should come back to the regiment, until I get well.

I can tell you that we have been in a hard place for a sick person, they weren't a house nor a thing to be seen, nor many. And we had but a little left that Uncle Sam furnished us, and when we came into this road, we were as hungry as you may think, and today I got a chance to buy a pint of meat, and I made me a Johnny cake, and it tasted the best of anything that I ever ate. What a fool I was to laugh at what they had in Detroit, do be sure it was not quite clean, but if I tell it read I would not laugh. I believe if I am ever the lucky enough to see home again, it would be too good, that I ever some how here. For I can realize what I never did before, but enough of that, and I will tell the rest, if I come home. I have not heard from Alice in some time. I saw a splendid one of the curious looking objects of man kind
I never did like war. We captured 200 rebels, and he was one of them. He was one of the raggedest, dirtiest that could live, he was barefoot, and bare headed, he wet the snow, and he would shake, so that he would almost fall over, the rest of the rebels was sent off, and this one was so bad that he could not go, he said that he had good clothes at home, and they asked him why he didn't go home and he shook a while and said, it is good enough here. Well it is getting dark, and I must close, good by.

Yours truly I am

J. E. Ryder

To his mother, N. Ryder

I have sent off for some more clothing, and I put in for another rubber blanket, if I ever get them.
Dear Mother,

I again have an opportunity to write (I will soon as feel better) this morning so that you may know how we are. The boys are well but I and youna, and I feel pretty well, all but being weak and having a cold, and noodles says that he is a good deal better. Yesterday they wrote that went to their long homes, and this morning they say that they is still another that must go from our regiment.

I had not heard their names, I received the shoes 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 shoes is worth a good deal here, you it is used to 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, Burns, Keys, and Wales and Eldridge, and A. Robbins. I and Alfred Robbins tented alone, until last night, and it made us plenty of room to sleep, and we had now that all fixed up as warm as we could, and then we had to strike tents and move up near the railroad, and the lad made one little tent. We thought that we wouldn't move in some time, and as we got things looking quite decent, and 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 some, but if one takes care of himself, they is no danger.

James Smith was here to see me yesterday. He is a smart looking soldier. He is sergeant rec'd. Johnny Coats was here too. He belongs to the same company that Alfred Overse. He was detailed from the regiment and says he has not seen Alfred since he has been back. I think that I shall see Alfred before long. We don't know how long we shall stay here. We will go back to the regiment brigade as soon we shall stay here and guard the railroad. I think that I should like it if I was in the cavalry for it gives me a chance to carry a knapsack. But I must bring my letter to a close. Good by. Your truly,从来.
Camp by Brooke Station Dec 7th, 1862

Dear Father and Mother,

I received your kind letter of the 23, this month, and am glad to get it for I had not heard from you in a long time, although I was sorry to hear that Alfred had gone back. I have received one letter from him since he has been in D.C., the second time, he was at Alexandria. He did not tell me where to direct, although I wrote once to him, and directed it to Washington, it is not very pleasant here to stay, it is rainy and wet out, and when it rains our tent is not sufficient to keep us dry, for you know that as soldiers bed is on the ground and as it rains down in our tent, and so many few meanings we wake and find ourselves floating on a puddle of water, our tent is about 4 by 6 feet, and two tents together, and sometimes 3 or 4. I had tent with 5 and 6, but 3 and 4 use tents alone now, and it makes us more room, but enough of that, it has been very nice weather here for a few days until now, it is now commenced raining again, and it makes it very bad for troops to go, for in Virginia, if it rains a little, it makes awful roads, it is now about noon, and you would laugh if you were here, to see the boys a trying to cook their dinners, one or 2 hie and they, huddled around a little smoky fire, with a little piece of salt pork and a couple of hard tin, so hard cracker, it is the smoke that makes my head ache, we are almost blinded with smoke, all of the time, we can get things furnished by uncle Joe, but I can tell you that we have been in a pretty tight place, for 3 or 4 days, about all we got we had to cramp, and all we could cramp was bread and meat, and we could not buy anything at all, to keep life, I gave 5 cents for enough salt to eat a little meat, and was glad to get it at that, and I saw a fellow give 5 cents for a little morsel of bread, but you would go to the store, you may wonder why we didn't get a house, but Virginia is different from old Mich, not a house or farm field to be seen there, but the armies had swept everything before them, but we are now in a place where we can get something, when we come home, if you see many potatoes in the barrel, it would be like me, to fill our haversack, we have got nice to seeing the women and old men.
ery, and thicker usually, but I hope the war will soon
close, so that we can return home. We are now girding a rail
road, and if they should be a battle, probably we would be
in it, but I would rather fight than march. This is a very good
place, I do not feel very well yet. I have got a cold, and feel
very sore, week, if I can I should like to get in an ambulance
driver, or something like that. But I must close, good by. Yours
truly Forever.

J. E. Ryder
H. Ryder
N. Ryder
Brother Charlie

As I have a little more time to spare, I will write to you, to let you know how things looks down in old Virginia. I can tell you my joy that this is a hard looking place to be compared to the places which you live, when you see a picture or a paper of one of the old men of Virginia, you may think it looks just like him. It is quite a curiosity here to see a man withatiens clothes on, and when you see one, it is generally one with an old ragged, furnished suit, talking at hisancy and beggary for something to eat. But Charley they is a groome things that would interest the eye of many, if you was here now, to see the glimmering of thousands of bayonets and the rattling of flying artillery, a going over the stones and rocks, rushing to and fro, and they is something more that would interest you, still now. To see as many horses, they is thousands of horses, a passing here all of the time, but they are mostly mules, from the size of sheep, up to a big horse, but they drive horses here different from what they do in North they drive with one line, and 4 and 6 horses together. Just talk of driving home this winter on picnics and he is going to take his little daisy writer. I told him how they knew horses in North and how important they were laughed, until his black feet would shake. I know this Charley if you can. I will find this letter.

J. E. Ryder

Now, I got that mustard, if you can I would like a little tea you said you was going to send it. I know golves but they will come good and I have plenty of money.
Brooks Station Dec 8th 1863

Dear Father,

As I have a little time this afternoon I will try and answer the letter that I received from you, dated the 30th. I tried to write yesterday but it was so cold that I could not do it, and today we have had things pretty warm, but oh my eyes are almost blinded with smoke. We expect it more tomorrow. I dont know where we will go. This morning our captain started for home. He has assigned the sage that he will come and see you. Captain Brady has always served me fair rate, but some did not like how it all. Hoyt will be the captain, and the lay wants it aright, and we went orderly. I thought for quick hand, and as I dont know. The pay master has come and we shall get our pay tonight or tomorrow morrow and when I get it I shall send it home. I received the letter that you sent by Bennett and the four sheep but I did not see the men. I dont repeat that they can get here. I should like to see them. They may come yet. They sent off some this morn for the Washington Hospital. They have had 6 or 7 deaths in our regiment in 2 or 3 days. They was a man shot a little while ago by some men that was a shooting over a game. It was careless for they had no business to put in a ball. He was shot through the shoulder, but he will live, although in great pain. The sage that he wishes that it would kill him, but it was not so hard to be shot as it is to shoot yourself. They was one in our brigade that became so tired that he could not keep up, and the officer kept a howling him, and he stopped and placed the gun to his heart, and now already of life left him by the discharge. I have just written a letter to Alfred. I hope that he will not enlist in the regulars cavalry. I would like it first rate if I was in the cavalry, but I wont enlist in the regulars. Now I will finish a few words to you. You tell Alfred that I wont enlist in the regulars. I feel a great deal better now, but I have not returned to duty yet. I did not expect to see much more when I enlisted, but of this, never think it I would digest I would suffer a dozen deaths first. I would stay and save my country as long as I can. If I could get my discharge in less than a week, if I wanted it. I want to come home very bad, but as long as I can stand it.
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I think it is my duty to help preserve my country and then I can enjoy my home. Yours forever.

J. E. Ryder

[Signature]
Camp near Fredericksburg  
Dec., 1862

Dear Sister,

I thought this morning while I had a little time to spare that I would write a few lines to you although I have received no letter in a long time from home. I received one letter from Alfred and one from Uncle William last night and I was very glad to get them. It is very warm and pleasant here to day and I guess suppose that they are in need of telling you about the great battle that we have just into, although I was not fighting myself, but I was when I could see the hole thing. I will not try to explain the awful sight. But you can imagine better than what I can tell. Our company looks like a lot of scoured leaves this morning. We have been under very hard marches for the last days and part of the time double quick. I was so tired that I could do nothing. They were but 15 left of our company that was able to do anything at all. Our company was not in so much danger as the rest. They were supporting a battery, and we lost 18 killed and wounded in the regiment, only 2 wounded in our company. I think the men of the front line, and the Capt. seem to have been killed, shot off, and some were wounded. But other regiments, some of them bought off their men by order. It was the greatest sight I ever saw to go to the hospital. You could hear the wounded cry and bellow and great sadness. And I saw them a bugging them, they would rap the edge of their overcoat round their head, and put them in a bag hole, and cover them up. I saw Hank Burr last night, and he told me that Tom Burr had got his discharge, and he said if he could get it, he too would do it. He said that he hadn't seen Alfred. Our officers, about all of them want to resign or go home on a furlough.

I was getting better before I had to march so much, but I feel plenty well all but being very tired, but I feel better by leaving you good by. For my hands is so numb that I can write no longer.

Yours truly,

H. C. [signature]

T. [signature]
Dear Mother,

I received your letter of the 10th 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 morn very warm and pleasant for this season of the year, and I am now writing on the ground with my tent packed. We have had orders to march, but we may not go to day, we can't tell until the order comes to fall in. I am now getting along first rate now, all back being pretty weak. A soldier can't expect to be well in keeping his health as he would at home, for of course the ground is his bed and sheet for a covering. And he must have a cold and as much smoke, it gives one the head ache. I am not going to the hospital now but they took down some name this morn and they took down double name to go to the hospital, but they may not go. I suppose that you know that our regiment has been in a fight, but it was pretty lucky, only 18 killed and wounded. I was sick at the time, but I tried to keep up, but my strength failed. I saw the fight. It was worth a thousand dollars to me. But I don't care about seeing an oth. I stood upon a big hill and saw both armies a fighting. The shells would twist around like shot, but some disregarded themselves and friends, by running. Charley Root run and started the company. He now under arrest. Some think that he will either 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 troops got mixed and was going to abuse the lot, but they got in the guard house. It was in Co B. All of the officers of the reg. is a going to resign. I got the money that you sent by Bennett, but I did not see him. And I got the gloves. We have been paid off and I went home 15 dollars myself, and thought if you got that I would send 50. Tony Bulington sent 20 dol to pay & wanted him to draw the money on the check, and if his wife didn't want
any of it to pay at. I sent Tuttle. I have got me a new rubber, but I must bide for me may now pretty soon.

Stuff that you buy here you have to pay for. Peas

- Brilliant tea is 20 cents a piece, apples is 7 cents a piece, and small at that, and it isn't very often that you can buy them at any price. Good by for this time. Yours

truly forever

J. E. Ryder to his mother.
Cambridge, Nov. 23, 1862

Dear Friends,

I thought this morning while I was reading in my tent that I would write you a few moments in writing a letter home although I can tell you I don't feel very well. The cold and exposure have gotten a hold on me and I feel very sick. I am not in good health and my lungs are very sore. Oh what a great blessing it is to have good health in the army. If I could only keep well I would be so happy, but I should be thankful that I am no worse than I am. For they is many that is suffering with wounds and diseases that is worse than mine. We have been here now two days and I had the wet  bed last night than I have had in a good while. We have generally had to take up with the ground, but I have had some staves to lay on. We expect to go into winter quarters fairly quick.

I suppose that the papers say the the boys are all anxious for another battle, but they are discouraged in fighting and they say that they will never risk their lives in another battle. They even a soldier told me that they were 12 deserted out of his company in to day. They have only 3 captains in our regiment. They have all resigned. They were 3 captains and a friend started this man. I think that Lincoln will come home on a feeling. Charley Ross is in the guard house, a waiting for trial. Snow on the deserters. I would sue his first. But I must close. They are no snow on the ground here. It is warm days and very cold nights.

Yours truly,

J. E. Ryder,

Capt. Ryder

A. Ryder
Dear Mother,

And I again have a little spare time. I thought that I would improve it by writing a few lines to you. We are now in a new camping place. I suppose that we will stay here this winter, and so we are going to build our huts. The nights are very cold here yet, although it is cold enough for the place we have to sleep. I received a letter from you and one from Alfred last night, and I too tried to answer them last night, but I could not go through with it, and so this morning I will try again, although it is not in a very comfortable condition, for it is done with a blanket around my head. I do not feel so good as I did, for I have got a cold that makes me about sick all of the time, and I have some of the time been sick. I have not done any duty in a good while, have sick the time that the battle was, although I was there, and saw some thing. I could see them while they was fighting. It was an awful sight. How the shells did not sound very pleasant a bursting around.

I have just about sick from. If one is even so sick, he has no one to look to him, but I have walked 10 miles when I could fairly walk as I walked, I was so sick. But I am here, and have got to stay.

I think of spring, when the ground breaks up, and we have to walk in mud. I'll keep sick much longer I will try to get a discharge. If I can. Afield Noble is going to be examined to the doctor this morning. He may get a discharge. I don't know if Father writes a letter to the doctor something about it, and kept asked him about it.

He looks a good deal better.

All of the boys have sent home for a box of stuff and from home. I think it is foolish to do it, but if the rest do, I should like to have them sent. If you send one and what they have to do, I want some butter and cheese, and I don't care what else. And my hat if you can, for this little cap fingers instead. But I shall have to close, by bidding you good by.

G. L. Ream
N. Ream.
Dear Father

I thought this morning while I was in my tent, that I would send a few lines to you, to let you know how I was doing. I am sure that I feel plenty well this morn, all but having a bilious cold. We are now a rising up for winter, as when we get out of the tent, we shall be plenty comfortable. We are now encamped upon a ridge hill, and it is rather to sleep to sleep well, for I waked up at night and found myself about half way down hill, but when we get our houses done, we will not slide down hill. But that is nothing, for it is quite warm here now. When that cold spell was over, I woke up and found my hair froze to the tent, and ground with ice, but that wasn't so bad as I slept this snow. This soldiering is a big thing but I can't see it. That night there was a few apples that were brought in camp, and in less than 10 minutes they were 500 soldiers around to buy an apple. They sold them 3 for 25 cts, and before I come away they sold them for 15 cts, and I believe that if he had asked 35 cts a piece, they would have sold as fast as he could have them out, and he would all as fast as 20 could hand them out, and they sold potatoes, pears, 3 for 5 cts. But they are no sure of buying any thing, for unless law furnishes such good stuff. It is hard to get bacon and potatoes. Take the hard task and break them up, and there you will find some very nice taffy to feed up on and eat. And we have drawn 1 large ration of very nice bacon. To eat it on two you will find it alone with mayos, so then is where the government. We get live stock, that is counter nothing, but we are here and I shall stay until they send me to the general hospital, and then I shall do as some others have done, but if I get well and am able to be a good soldier, I am willing to stay. But if I am going to the sick all of the time I don't want to stay. I think I am going to get along now. I have thought that I would enlist in the regular army but it made up my mind that they in regular enough. They are about the same I of our regiment write, but cannot of the. If you send that box send it right off, and send me meat and corn and some butter and cheese, and what else you please, fruit, sugar, and tea.
if you can make them so that they will keep an't make. You can see what people folks sends, and you can send what they do. All well.

Yours truly.

J. E. Ryder & his Father
E. Ryder
Camp Sackett, Dec 31st 1862

Dear Matthew,

I received a letter from you back home, with some threads and readers in it, and the threads were very acceptable, for I had just got out, and that will last me a good while. It has been very warm and pleasant here for a few days past, almost like summer in New York, but quite cold nights, until today, it has been very cold and snowing threatening, and I find that the ground had been rather quiet as well. I thought when we came here that we would stay all winter, but it is not the case, we went to work and put up a good warm tent, but we have not got into it yet, and last night the order came to prepare for marching at 12 hours notice, and probably the next order will be 3 days rations in our haversacks, although we may not move atall. I hope not, for it would not be very pleasant to have slept out last night.

I feel a great deal better than I did, but they are a great deal of sickness in our regiment, at the time of the battle, I did not go into the ranks. I followed the regiment as long as I could stand up, until Friday, and then I went on the battle field and saw them fight, and that night, about half of our Company was completely tired and worn out, by hard Marches, like myself, and was not able to help on Sunday. I believe hard Marches kills more men than the bullets. I heard an old soldier say that they were a man in his Company last summer, that went until they fell down and died in five minutes.

Ma if Rubens folks don't send that bap, you needn't.

If we are a going to move around all winter I don't care much about it, but if they send it, I should like to have you send one too, for I should hate to see him missing away on good stuff and have none myself. We are mustered again to day for 8 months more pay. I would send some more money in this letter, but some say that we don't get our pay until next April, and if we do I shall send it home. I have got 10 dollars more now. What little stuff you get keep in your pockets. I match as I have in Mind, and what uncle can furnishes is out top of, and it is getting late and I will keep this.
good by. this from J. E. Ryder to
his mother J. Ryder
I should like to have a few more stamps, if I get a chance.
I will take my money and buy me a pair of boots.
Dear Friends,

We are now once more in our small tents about 18 miles from our little lake. We broke camp yesterday noon about 11 o'clock and arrived at this place last night about 3 o'clock. It was pretty tough on me, being the first marching that I have done and we came here on the purpose to try the rebels once more. But the order came to return to camp. Jan 25. We are now back to our tents again. But O what a time we had to get back. It has been a raining most of the time since we left, and it is 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 to move to meet the enemy, and that all that lived to see the fourth day of July would eat their dinner at home, and that battle would end and the war, and the boys, encouraged by that although as tired as they could hardly move, by walking in mud almost over their boots, they trudged on, and set up there after they saw the Union. I don't know how I could get through, but I thought that I would not give up for it was a tall time, as we were expecting a battle, and they would roll them a coward, and that is worse than death. But we went on until night and camped, and the next day we got to the scene, about 8 o'clock at night, but we could not get across it was so mucky, and if we had went across we would get whipped worse than we did before, for the rebels were then 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, until some fell down, and I noticed one fellow that I think that he didn't kick, but a few times after he fell. But we are all back on the march of us, and feel first rate. Watkin Elderidge 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 lake we found them occupied by an Ohio regiment, but they left in the morn. 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
that I will wait until I come home, so good by

Yours truly

J. E. Ryder
Dear Sister,

As I have a little spare time to day, 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 to me. But we are now in winter quarters, and I hope that we shall stay here until we start for West. We have not yet got our houses quite done, but what we have done is as a big thing, for we have been used to living in a tent and a hoop, and to get in a house that we can stand up in, and have it 9 by 13 feet long and a fire place in it. We hardly know what to do with ourselves and all the fault we have found is our eyes, for I guess that our eyes will be sore for a week or two days. We moved in our little box yard on Friday and built a few in it, and we found it so comfortable that we got wood and set up our fire, and told stories, what we would eat first if we could get into our mother's butter, until midnight. And then we took our blankets, wrapped it around us, and lay there for a sleep. I think that if Uncle Sam don't settle this war pretty quickly that it will pay off for the beast is a going out by great numbers and they are lots of them say that they will go home before 3 years unless they will never go home. They was 39 that would not for a gun at the rebel, the third day, in the 19th Indiana. But each man should suffer death. If ever I am drawn up in battle I think that I should try and make every cartridge count. I saw a wounded rebel lying on the battlefield 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 clean into the gulf, and that, he thought, we would never do. But I guess that our enemies wants it to know about as well as they. I think that our men is too easy with them — they should see them as traitors should be seen. But we have a guard their houses, and they don't seem to bother that they
are traitors and have gone to the rebel army. But it is
getting late and I must draw my letter to a close and try
to write to Alfred to day. So good by for this time

Yours truly

C. E. Ryder

Elizabeth V. Ryder
Camp Isabella, Jan 6th 1863

Dear Mathew,

With pleasure I sit down to write the letter that I received from you last night, dated Jan 28th (?), which contained the best news that I have had since I am in Dixie. But I don't expect that this will get there in time enough for you to read it, but I hope that it will reach you. I am that you are going to your state, and I am very much pleased, and I want you to stay and enjoy yourself as well as possible. The day of provisions has come, and we have satisfied ourselves with vegetables from old mechanic and I have got the stamps that you sent me. We talk of changing our gun, we use Springfield rifles now, and the men talk of getting new Spencer repeating and shooting rifles, you can load them and shoot in a minute, it is a good weapon, it is a shortie.

Have you done any of the 54th walking through the rebel brigade some fine soon.

I have got a letter from Alfred, and he is well. Wilson says that he will get Alfred's boys to him.

But you speak about staying six weeks if they sent battle this winter, never mind about the battle, if they do, or do not, don't let it make any difference with you, for whether they is battle or not, your being at home is anything that you can do is of no use.

I don't think of getting hurt, and if I do, whether it be small or great, I can stand all. But I am enjoying myself well, and if this war don't and before next winter, and if I am alive, I am going to get a furlough and come home. But I hope that the war will end before that. But I must close, good by.

except this, from

F. G. Rainier to

Mathew G. Rainier

If you get a good chance send some envelopes and paper for these are hard to get here.

Mathew—we have just received marching orders, but we order to march back, that is, no time set. I don't hardly think that we
will march at all. If we do, let her rip.
Camp Isabella, Jan 10th, 1863

Dear Friend

Today was a day of considerable excitement in camp on the account of the return of Col. Thomas, and the stories that he brought me from home. I reckon that I got as much as any of them. You do not know how much I think of the welfare of a few things known here in this far-off state. In a short time after it came we had plenty of writers begging for a taste, but I invited Aunt Mary to eat with me, and she did so. It made her laugh and think of home. Such a cake as you sent me would bring a dollar or ten shillings; the fruit fetches 15 or 20 cents, and the apples would have brought 15 or 20 cents apiece. But you can get them now for 25 cents. I have just got me a new pair of pants, and so now I am pretty well off for clothes. The boots that you sent me is a little large, but I raise my foot and I find that they are nice for this wet weather. I hear that Henry and Mr. Farlow has enlisted. Poor simple child, how he will repent the day.

I knew that I thought that it could not be thatallback, scared as they be, but when he gets down here, he will find the likes of Michigan. He's friend, no house, only once in a great while, and no one to care for him when he is sick, but will throw you a couple of hard tack, and you can live or die. He may imagine, some dark and stormy night, when it is cold, and the wind halfway to your knees, and the order to strike tents, and be ready to march in 10 minutes. And in that time you are ready, and as going, and it is dark, and you fall over rocks, and by morning you are all wet through, and round with mud from head to foot, but enough of that. We have got one of the most comfortable houses that there is on the ground. It rains hard and we still were dry, and while others were wet through. I expect that we shall not stay here a great while. Some of the old soldiers say that we will have 6 or 8 more inspections, and then go across the river, and lose 20 to 30 thousand men, and come back again. But I
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I should think we would have to do something pretty quick, but it is getting late and I shall have to close, so good by.

Yours truly,

J. E. Ryder

7th R.
Dear Father,

I received a letter from you today, and as I am at leisure, I will write and answer it. It is very warm and pleasant here to-day, and I can say that I feel very much better than I did the last time that I wrote to you, we have got a com-
fortable little house, with a fir tree in it, and for the first time since I left Michigan, we now sleep off from the ground, and I find that it is a great deal better. My cold has nearly left me, and I think that I have gained, and am feeling plenty well. What I did, since we have slept off the ground, we have made our bunks about 2 feet from the ground and have stakes in the ground, and leaped small poles across, and covered it with pine boughs, so that we are trying to enjoy ourselves as well as we can.

Our little boy is now Capt. Hoyt. He received his commission this morning. Look for Company C. He has just come in here, and he has received a letter from you, speaking about my being sick and coming home. He thought that I looked as much better than I did, that if we stayed in here in winter quarters, that I would get along very fairly well, and he said that he would write to you, and if I was taken down again and was sick much longer, that he would do something. But I hope that I shall be able to return to duty in a few days, they is a good many that is getting better since we have come into winter quarters, but they is some-
that was sent to the general hospital that I think they will stay until they get their discharge. Harry Denis and a number of others, well, and among these (some?) is going tomorrow.

I have got 5 letters that I wish that you had, but they is a considerable risk in sending it, but I guess that if Hoyt goes home I can send it by him. He says he will go if he can get a fair length for 20 days, but if they suspect that we won't get any money to tell about, and if we should write, I would want to see it.
I have got some over 11 letters left yet. Thank Washington wanted you to pay him to Henry Tebbel. He said that his wife didn't want any. The report is that this regiment is going to Washington. But I guess that it hasn't. It is now getting dark and I shall stop & close. Tell Charles that I received his letter, and I will tell him some good story some day. So good by

J. E. Ryder to
E. W. Ryder
Camp Isabella, Jan. 28th 63

Dear Father,

I received a letter from you some time ago and now I will improve the first opportunity to answer it. They had been many strange things passed me since that time, on the 20th we struck tents, and marched about 15 miles and were halted, few orders, and the order came that we were now ready to cross the river and meet the enemy. And of course the boys were tired, and the officers encouraged them by saying that the battle would end the war and we would all be at our homes by the fourth of July, that was yet alive. And so we marched on until about 10 o'clock at night and camped. And it had been raining hard since the order was read, and so in the morning we marched on until we got near the river and camped, for the pontoons to be laid, so that we could cross. But we found a mighty army there to oppose us, telling us to come, and they would fight us. If we had had a trial to cross I think that it would have been an awful slaughter. By this time we had got orders to retreat back to Camp Isabella. So the next day we started, and still raining, and the mud almost to the top of my boots. Belly for the boots! Oh the poor boys that had shoes. I saw some fall as though they had been shot but I felt first rate, believing and tried to make it, all for the best. But we got to Isabella at sunset and found our tents occupied by the 25th Ohio. But they gave us room until morrow, and then they moved out. When we got here we found in our company 6 men. I happened to be one of them first out across the river (1). And the captain raised my gun and rapsack, as Lincoln carried his rapsack 50 miles. In the march we marched about 45 miles. So I have given you a history of the great Isabella as usual. And to cap it off with, I can say that I never was so fat as I am at present, and feel first rate. I fear that I am going to be the tallest one they is in his Company. After all, I hope that I shall, for it isn't very pleasant to be sick in the army.

I haven't got what you sent. Buy it when you need any.
clothing, for I have got enough to keep me very comfortable, and extra clothing is hard to carry. I have received the stamps that you sent; but the mail has come in and I have got a letter from you. It will be one tomorrow, but I am all right and I expect to live, to see the city of Newbury once more. But one of the good horses that came with me from Plymouth, died just before this march. His name was John Jones. We expect our pay a gain in a day or two, and then I shall send it home. I hope that you will get some thing to Alfred, for I suppose that he is on the go the most of the time, but such is a solider life. All right.

Yours truly

J. E. Ryder

& his father H. W. Ryder
Dear Mother,

I received your letter yesterday and now as this is the first opportunity I will try and answer it. I have just seen and two drills parade and heard the salute given to 13 men that straggled on the last march. Their sentence was 500 days, taken out of their pay, and strict confinement and hard labor for 12 days. It would astonish you if you knew the strictness of military officers. Of course we lock each man was astonishing to every officer, how the men could stand it, and a great many went through all right and sound excepting — but the penalty is severe to them that fails such when we are marching toward the enemy. You are not allowed to fall out on a march, unless you fall, and can not go any further. If you do, it is sometimes death, that is when you areExpecting a battle. And I think that I shouldn’t want to fall out, for they often fire the volley. Company A

Now had 7 deserters in one day and Company E have lost about 25 men by desertion, and other companies in two; but not quite so bad.

But our Company has lost now, and never have been désigna by cowardice, but once, and that was Charley Royal. He let two of Company C into all right, and on our last march to meet the enemy, there. Kinney & Company I fell out of the ranks, through cowardice, and sent in his resignation under the conditions that he could not fight, for he thought his rebellion never could be put down by fighting, and so, he was dishonorably discharged from the service of the United States. The officers are all resigning and the privates are deserting. Your guard house are full of them, and I don’t know which is the worse. A resigner or a desertor both is unfit to live.

But it has stopped raining, and it is very warm. Nice weather. That boy that you sent by William hasn’t got here yet, but they are near by, about 5 miles. The trains went after them yesterday but could not get them. I think that they will be along in a day or two. I have heard from Alfred lately, but not much. I expect that he is like myself, don’t get much time, and I expect that he has picketing to do. (A good (2), it was.
Indeed a narrow escape he had, but I find in soldiersing that life is altogether uncertain, and not much to be relied upon. But this is a prayer meeting to Capt. Hoyt tonight, and I must go. We all feel such pain and expect to come home in less than one year. So soldiersing is a going to play out.

So I can think of now that would interest you, and I will close, so good by.

From J. E. Ryder to
his mother J. Ryder

They say that it is only about 25 miles to Bfford. If I thought it went over that I would go and see him.
Dear Sister,

I received your kind letter of the 21st Jan. and I was very glad to hear from you and to hear that you was all well as myself, for I never was as full in my life, and feel the 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 have had a right smart march and they has been about 100 court martials since we come back, for falling out of the ranks while on the march towards Falmouth. The penalty was generally to take 5 dollars of pay and be placed duty about camp for 10 days. Probably the boys were very tired and couldn't keep up, but we were marching towards the enemy and was expecting a battle, and to fall out of the ranks, the penalty is very severe after the penalty is death itself. But enough of that. The news is around camp that we are going to try the rebels once more in a day or two, but I don't believe it, nor about, until we strike tents.

I have just received a letter from Alfred, and is well. They was some of our boys, went out a scouting, drew out beyond the pickets, and they has come in, with 11 prisoners, 3 killed, and three deserters, and they found some pretty interesting folks there. The women was the ones that fired their tongues most freely, telling our soldiers they needed think that they could bring their old preachers down here to whip them, for they could not do it. And at think very knew even a guard, but we took the valuables and left two or racing.

It has been a raining now for 2 or 3 days and I guess that we can't cross the river right away, for the battery can't move now, nor infantry neither. But our brees (?) her done and we has had a squad of good men of them, and as good, as good, for soldiers, and now we drew soft bread 3 times a week, the first that I have had in over five months, excepting what I got from home. And since we have had soft bread and better, we haven't drawn a natural breath since we have eat so much.

Watson & Eldridge has been detached from the regiment to tend to the sick and wounded soldiers, and since he left, I hear no
and a young fellow by the name of John Bag, tents together. He is as good a fellow as they are in the regiment. But 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.

Yours truly, from

J. E. Ryder

E. Elizabeth V. Ryder
Camp Isabella Feb 11, '63

Dear Father, I will now try and answer the letter that I received from you last night, and I was glad to hear from you, and hear that you were a going on a visit. I hope that you will enjoy it. We expected before this to get our pay. They are pretty near 4 months pay now coming, but the money that I want, take it and use it to your benefit. They have been little alertment 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 to camp, and that they were a going to be 3 brigades to guard Washington and we were a going to be one of them, and that sure Brigadier, 1st March was a going to be governor over the District of Columbia, and that they was a going to take 100 out of us regiment for Cat. But I guess that it is all camp rumors, and no truth. But enough of that.

You speak in your letter of the death of grand father and you may well believe that it was astonishing news to me. To be sure he had his faults, but he was one, to which I could scarcely make myself believe, of a kind and gentle soul, and more so to hear of them at home, a dropping away, then down here in Dixie, where they is hundreds a 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 their beds.

Nathan Elbridge has been a very sick boy, but is getting better now.

Have you heard from Alfred lately, to learn how he is getting along. His boys think here that they are a 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 will not be done by fighting. The rules are warmly discussed, and have so much to eat as we do, and are as willing to fight. They are one of our boys sick in Richmond, not long since, and one that was purposefully taken prisoner and joined Stuart's Cavalry. Shooting is too good for him. One of the fellows that I talk with, John Day,
went out with a gang on a scouting expedition and he slept in rebel Stewart's house all night. He says that it is a beautiful concern, with new fences. Now the army had not passed, and the fence mostly stood, nigger huts, scattered over the plantation. They took the new prisoners and the women was as easy as battledog. They heard some of our boys talk, and some of them were distress, and they told Col. Flanagan he needed bring his old Frenchmen down here to whip them, for we couldn't do it. And to them I was was (we?) guard, I should think they would act as the quartering Geppa army to see that was none deserted. But I should think it would rain north and south if it keep up much longer. I have been just out on drill... It is quite warm today. Yesterday it rained all day.

good bye J. E. Ryder
Yours truly G. W. Ryder
Dear Father

I received your letter of the 16th last week and was glad to hear from you, although it made me to hear of Charles being so sick and severely while he was so far from home, and it will spoil your visit, although I am glad that he has good care taken of him and I hope that the next letter that I will hear of him getting better. I have just got a letter from Alfred stating that he has had a narrow escape from the enemy, so that he has to schedule for his life while two of his tent mates were among the missing. We have been out on picket 3 days, and it was a feat of a job, raining and snowing all of the time. But we have got in now, and have got dried out. Yesterday we had a job to do that was rather solemn to me, a big grave upon certain ones that will be far worse than death. That is the boys that fell out on the last march to meet the enemy, and did not crawl the regiment until we turned to come back. Charles Roper's sentence was 1 year to months to be thrown off from his wages, and he kept in close confinement 40 days, with a chain hitched around his leg and a ball fastened to it weighing 30 pounds, and obliged to perform hard labor.

And the rest of the prisoners were drawn up in the presence of the Brigade, in arms, had their heads shaved, chains, but one torn off their coats and thrown out of camp. Some of them fell very bad, and others did not cared, offering to pay the labor bill. But as they did not take it, they were much obliged. But when they came to be drawn out of camp they had to walk turkey or get a run into them. They cost many feet what we would chase back, rather than to have such everlasting disgrace. The snow is 15 inches on the level and so cold that I can scarcely hold my pen.

But what is the prospect in Michigan about drafting? We know here, that they are going to take every thing from 18 to 40. I think that we could not whip the South if we had the world, for they are united to a man. You will next find a southern man but what will say we are a fighting for our rights and will
fight till we die. And they is about half of our army that
had just as live fight for the south as we, for they think they
is too much nigger in this fighting. They told us on picket to
capture every thing that tried to pass but the nigger, let things
But if they would give us union officers, we would whip them
in 3 months or live.

But I shall have to close. We are all well at present,
but having had colds in bring out in driving storms.

Yours Forever
J.E. Ryde
E.W. Ryde
Camp Seabrook, March 5th, 1863

Dear Sister,

As an opportunity allows I will try to pen a few lines to let you know how I am getting along and to know 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 from battalion drill and have got to go out again pretty quick. Times in Camp go on about as usual. When I wrote my letter & you expected to go out on picket, but I got rid of that job, but got one full as bad. I was detailed to go to brigade aid quarters to guard some prisoners that were under arrest for deserting, and they were ugly, causing trouble to watch them, to keep them from running away. Capt. Hoyt expected to start for home today, but could not on account of Mrs. Way staying over the time. They can't only of officers be absent at a time. Way should be back at the end of his furlough. I suspect that our Fellers have got back from New York before this. How are Shrely and Charley get along. I hope she is around by this time. When you see Uncle William's folks tell them that I have written a letter to them lately and haven't received any yet. I should like to know how they are getting along. How are Grandma about the last winter, and how do they get along. Did you go and see Mrs. Way fresh and lecture. If you did, how did the lecture end.

In fact he knows but little about soldiering, for on a march he has a horse to ride and a rigger to take one of him and to cook his meals, and 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 word and cooked our supper, and went out on dress parade, and listened to orders about an hour. The Col. told me that they could go out of a company on a 30 day furlough, but would assume them that he would take them home without left of the 24th by the 1st of Sept. He said that when Wickham Falls, rebellion was created. He said Sen.
Fother said I'm that he was afraid the rebels would run before he got a chance to fight them, but I think that if that is true, Fother's蚕筑 failing, it isn't very bad. Well I will close for this time, for my candle is going out. Good night by your truly

J. E. R.
E. Elizabeth V. R.
Dear Mother,

With great pleasure I will try and ans. the letter that I received from you last night, and I was glad to hear of your going east and enjoying yourself at your old home, and I wish that you could stay longer. I am glad that Charley is getting along now, for I was so looking with anxiety to hear of his sickness. It is surprising now. We have been inspected to day, by the inspecting officers of the army of the Potomac, and we have been ordered to get the wagons and everything in order, ready to move. We have got our wood for the night, and how to carry it near half a mile, the wood is a getting scarce here now. In some places they have to burn roots, but I think I shall try to get some drawn. The I wish I could see you for a while. I would like to talk to you about the ladies, etc. You say that you saw Josephine. How did she feel, did she want to stay at her grandma's. I wish that aunt Maria could bring her up and send her to school. Our Col. went and saw Gen. Hooker, and he told the Col. that he was just as sure that he was going to whip the rebels as he ever was a living man. He said all he was afraid of was that they would run before he got a chance to fight. I don't think that the two need to mourn, but when we attack them again, we will drive them, or cover the battle field with its effects.

If we have got good officers we can whip them. If we have got traitors we will be drawn back as usual. But I think that Hooker is all right, and will fight good.

But enough of war. If I ever get home again, I think I could talk on subjects that would interest me more, although at present the most interesting, and to be looked at than any thing in America. ...
He said that when he got home he wanted to get there on Sunday, about 13 p.m. and would go over to church and go right in, and wear his belt and revolver, and all of his fighting cutlery, with his sword on, and have it unikithed, and a draping on the floor, and look as cross and was like as possible. He thought that they would say, that fellow would go live fight or not. I guess they would say, that fellow would just as live go out of doors as not, and as they would say, about five, march.

I am sorry to inform you of the sickness of our Capt, he has been sick about 10 days, and is now quite sick. I hope he will be around shortly, but I dont know as he wants his wife to know it. He is a good Capt and a true soldier. It is now getting time for parade. Well so I was glad to hear from him in your letter and will ans it as soon as possible. I got the law of pepper, it will last a long while, and the paper envelopes that white druing. I am well, and never was fettin in my life. A soldiers fare is stuff that will slot one up good, they eat as much grease. I am a getting so that I can content myself on a soldiers fare, and like it, when hungry. Write often.

Yours truly Forever

J. E. Ryder

N. Ryder
Camp Scobell, March 10th, 63

Dear Father,

This morning I will try and write the letter I received from you a day or two since. I have just got off guard, and so was allowed a short time to rest, and I will improve it by writing. It was raining and snowing together, as it was very pleasant weather, the prospect is good that our stoppage here is short. Col. Scobell came down yesterday with a lot of privates to examine the quarter of the 26th to see if they could account of their being so many sick, and taking out of the regiment, and they decided that it was because the soldiers were living under ground, that they had deep holes, and lived where the snow in winter could not get to them, but now houses went up, we dug no holes, but have built up with small logs, and so that in all were not endangered to disease. But the Col. said that we must all take off the top of our tents and let the snow show in to them, and it rains and we can not do it. The Col. said he thought that we would leave here shortly, to get the troops out, but I hope we won't, for now have got a good tent, and if we should go out, I think it would be of little good.

The way hasn't got along yet, it isn't liked very well by the officers, for they can't only go many at a time.

They have got one here an arrest for staying over his time. Some Smith came here to see me yesterday. He is in the regiment yet. He talks of going home on a furlough, he is sergeant now, and a smart soldierly looking fellow two.

Capt. Hoyt is about the same this hour. He had set up but every little, as I wish he would hurry and get well, so that he could take command of the company again, it seems as though when he went around that everything is well, his place as Captain never could be filled, he was kind & the troops, and a shoulder strap never made. Now the happier man, and I don't know that is remarkable in this army. If they are ever a true and good Christian on this earth, it is Capt. Hoyt.

I hear that they are going to draft 800,000 men on et al. it will make the old earth in speed think I wish.
they would send some fellows, that I could mention down in this regiment, and we would get on a 20 mile march through mud, rapeseed, and all of a soldier’s traps, 3 days ration and as fast.

How do the accids seem to take it, do they object coming I will send above hoping that this may find you all well as myself.

Yours truly

J. E. Ryder

Lt. 24th Mass.

infantry Washington

N.B.

Brigadier

1st Brigade

1st Division

1st Army Corps

Army of the

Potomac

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Dear Father

I received your kind letter of the 10th last eve and was glad indeed to hear from you, but was sorry to hear of your being unwell. It is a complaint that is spread all over, for everyone I knew had bad colds. I got a little from Alfred last eve. He was troubled with a cold. We expected before this to move from this camp, but I reckon we won't move now in quite a while, for they have been more snow on the ground for one or two days, than there has been before this winter, and it was raining now quite hard, so the blankets can't move, in quite a while. We had ordered to move our camp, on account of our having to carry our tools as far, and the men digging holes in the ground to live in, causing a great deal of sickness, but we had it countermanded, the Col told us we would let the Doc examine our tents, and make the under-ground now live on top of the ground, we could stay, and we done so. Our tent was all right. Before that we had to carry our tools about half a mile, but now, about a week now the teams have drawn a great deal faster. I got a letter from Eldridge Watson & turned back this eve. He is a getting better. Thinks he will soon be able to join his regiment. Capt. Hugh is about the same, partly bad off, he thinks he will go to the Doc Hospital now partly quick. I can't tell you it will be a great loss to this Company, for one that takes his place & Capt. his location by all. I think Hugh will get his discharge, but I hope he will get well and return to his Company.

Andrew Fanning (?) got back from Mitch last eve. I haven't seen him yet. I think that I wouldn't like to get a furlough for an actual time, when I get one. I would like to hear it for life, for coming to stay for 20 days & would get broke off from duty at once, and it would be hard to break in again. I think I will be a home next winter. At least I hope so. Alfred said he said that it made him 20 years younger to go to New York. He thought that if it made him 20 years younger, if we got out of this war
alone, that we would have to make a trip back, and so I think, if you never saw a soldier with his harness on, if you ever see a pack of mules on a picture, going to California, it is an exact likeness of a soldier. Bank & Lee have detailed out of the regiment to drive one of.

You speak of some having to go to Canada. I wish that some of these fellows would be sent down in this regiment. He said he had sent for some of them to fill up this regt. and he says if they don't he will let soldiers charge on them. I can tell you I had rather be a soldier than to be afraid to fight for my country. I think that is feared & fight will have hard feel if they take them right from their homes & set them in Virginia, they will be good for nothing. I saw one that would cry for more than two women to cry when he had to lay in to hard & cold pack over a smoky fire. He would say it a manner weep that I may return. Write soon, your truly.

J. C. Ryder
Dear Mother

Your most welcome letter of the 15th received last week, and as I am at liberty to write I will pen a few lines in answer. It has been a rainy, and snowing now, for about a week, so you know that the roads are pretty bad here in Virginia. This may be the last letter that I will write in the old camp. You say that you read in the paper about our moving, that is the army of the Potomac, to which I expect we will do shortly, although we may stay yet a spell, but when we start I expect we will march on to Richmond.

They are making calculations for a great movement. The officers have got to move the small dog tents like ours, only two feet wider for all of the officers, and we have got to carry 10 days rations, 3 in haversacks, 2 in satchels. I do not know where we will go, some think we will take transports, some think we are going to make up the rebel and go back to the mountains, and will not go in a number of days, and tomorrow Sunday may not find us here, for we do not know what we will now finish. I hope to leave off, to stand guard, to day in my guard, Capt Hoyt is gone to the Sanitary at Washington, where party sick who we left here and I fear we have lost him as Capt his place can not be filled.

The last day before yesterday morning, I went he was well, and back, the way to take his place. Leppard of Canton is not liked at all, he thinks them shoulder straps look too nice, to be pleasant. I got a letter from Alfred the other night, our second line in front Company A, and we are going to home.
March 25, 1863

The luck of Plymouth now, has likely by the company any of the provision that was sent to the troops. Have not come yet nor I guess never will. How does the draft go along. Does it seem to prosper with the men? May talk of dying before coming. But I guess the war can't get them. And they if they need, they can die here.

I wish they would come in this regiment and they would call for more than 2 women to sweep. They in some regiments in the Ohio regiment they call themselves Volunteers, but well laugh at them. I can stand 12 times as much now as could when stationed from home.

The horses are overrate of to Washington, and are getting ready for the great movement. You need not be afraid of the ground hurting me. I shall be proof against all such things. But, it will keep good weather it will. We will act by my rights. On a march we what take a soldier down. I weigh about 155 pounds, I will now close hoping that this may find you well as myself.

Your forever,

L. Ryder

H. Ryder
Camp Serabeta, March 29, 1863

Dear Sisit,

Your recent welcome letter of the 11th was received last eve. with gladness, although was sorry to hear that you were unwell, and the rest of the family also. We expected before this to be gone from this camp, I do not know how long we will stay, but perhaps not long. We was to have a grand review yesterday by Gen. Ramery to see if we was all right, but it rained all day and so we adapted it to morrow, we had a regimental inspection today. we do not know where we will go, but adapted to go down, and whisper a kind word in the rebel ear. I have sent my overcoat to Washington and I am a going a little lighter than I did last summer, one rubber, one woolen blanket and tent is all I will have in my backpack in the warmest weather, and that will be bad enough to use. The August, blankets, gun, equipage last summer. Besides them we carried an entry shirt, and breevers, overcoat, shoe coat.

I shall have a table and wear that while I am washing. we was called out the other day with the brigade and our Col. Van Merckle made a speech to us all of the boys like him. He was Col. of the 14th Indiana for 6 months. He spoke in an effecting way, about the present condition of our Country, and that the people at home were a trying to injure the government by story, and wanted to settle the war in dishonorable terms, and that the army of the Potomac was demoralized and worn out, and was no good for anything, at the best, and he said that he wanted to call our citizens for 15 minutes and we might vote whether we thought it was true, realized that the fourth brigade are still willing to fight the battle of their country, and if the people of the north will see reason in favor of the south, that we will put them down, saw at the fornic of the bayou. The ground shook, with the word of if they dont stop it I know the army of the Potomac will not all stand yet, you can tell the traitors at the North, if they dont stop it I know
Faw the south that this Brigade will come over to
the Anacordia over them and the told me that they were
the worst enemies he had, much worse than the rebels before
me.

So I guess that they will have to come to it, yet that in the
drafted men, I will now clear as it is a getting late.

Please write soon, and give the news about the draft
and as far as yours truly

J E. Ryder

Elizabeth P. Ryder
Camp Isabella, April 6, 1863

Dear Father,

I have been on a week or two days up to see the 11th and last week when I got back, I was glad to find that I had received a letter from home. I had a good week up there, and knew a great many there that I knew in D'Urbe, that I never expected to see in D'Urbe, and Tommie Smith is as fat as a hog, and they have got one of the handsomest coats I have seen in the army.

But the snow had all melted away, and the roads are pretty muddy, we have just been out on battalion drill and I find it pretty muddy, I don't know how long we will stay here. We have had orders to be in readiness, but no orders to march, we have been inspected or reviewed by Gen’l Hooker and the H. and the Hampton is reviewing the right wing of the army now.

Our Col. tells us that he won't put it off longer than he can to take the 24th home in. He says he heard some speaking at Washington the other day and he says that one speaker said that the war would end by Sept. 6, and another said in 60 days, and another 30 days, and he said the last one came nearest to the truth that it would end now, for he said whether we would fight or not, the riots could not stand it much longer, but that he had played with his head on the subject and he said they could not stand it no longer, for were we to find them, they were fat, and have their trousers full and as willing to fight as our men.

I think that Bill Barton got on the wrong road, for Hoyt was not half as sick as he made out. I am sorry to hear about Alfred being sick, but it is a good thing if he have good care and food. I had a letter from him not long since, and he was getting better. I will now close as it is getting late.

Write often.

Yours truly, F. E. Ryder
E. D. Ryder

I received the stamps all right.
Camp Porter — April 14th, 1863

Dear Friends,

Again we are ready to advance. We have orders to be ready to march at an early hour tomorrow morning. Wherever we go I knew not, but think the whole army will be in the same order, as I have wandered about some today. The Col. gave us this afternoon to wash and write to our friends. We had brigade drill this forenoon, we drilled in skirmish drill.

This is very nice weather, and the roads are very good, and I think now is the time to strike the blow, although they may be some bad weather yet, but it is better to wait until it gets so hot that we will have to move under no pressure, and I hope it will be for our advance, that we will have the victory, and put an end to rebellion.

We have just been furnished with 60 rounds of small cartridges.

The boys are sending off their extra clothes. Mr. Way preached last Sunday, I heard him, it seemed like old times. Although I did not hear him in the church at Newburg, but in the road, where we formed square against law, and he preached.

They were a woman that came here Saturday to get one of the boys that had died. It was a New Jersey regiment. It looked like old times to see a woman as they are scarce in this part of the world as is 20 bal. gold pieces, and also with the rest of the news.

They were a fellow deep out of camp Sunday for hunting. The way they do it is to have four walks ahead of him, with their bayonets turned toward him, and so many behind, and two on each side so that he has to step very careful or get a bayonet stuck into him, and sooner beating, and they generally have guns and insult.

Well it is a getting late, peace parade might at hand, and lots to do to night, so you will excuse me.

The order has just come that we have got to take & keep rations. I will now close by still remaining yours truly

Yours,

J. E. Foyles
April 14, 1843

I have just had a letter from Alfred. He is well.
I have just had off had my license taken, so I send it also Alfred.
Camp Sembler, April 19th, 1863

Dear Mother,

Your welcome letter of the 13th was received last week, and now I will pen a few lines in answer. This is a very fine day, the warmest day that it has been this spring. You see by my heading that we are still at the old camp. Although we have our five-day ration in our knapsacks, and the other 3 have not been dealt out yet, we did not go because it was so muddy that the artillery could not move. Then the Yanks, one regiment by rail, this morning on the move, and the ambulance cars yesterday and to-day away our sick, and it probably we will improve the weather shortly. The health of the 24th is first rate, but a very few dangerous, and in fact, but a few sick. They are a very jolly outfit, close by, that look very healthy. They bury one, meet every day, few or 3 or 4 cases, but are getting better now.

We had a regimental inspection this morn. Our boy delivered a prayer after inspection and in to preach at 2 p.m. Our lot gets high praise for the good drill of his regiment. Our medical told him that he was proud of the 24th, for the good drill and soldierly appearance and was glad to not welcome it in with the old Iron Brigade.

And our brother told him after the review, when all of the boys went and shook hands, he said "C.O. Morison, you have a fine regiment, fine regiment, fine as well." And the C.O. felt as well over it he let us stay still for 3 days, having nothing but dress parade. They say that the Free Press is down on C.O. Morison. How 'at is it. If they are they they to 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 General, he says, so he believes everything is lovely.

When we passed through Warrenton last fall, we passed by the house where he was born, and the old lot had to drop a tear there as he would see so many faces that looked familiar, but the most of them were in the rebel army.
He did not stop to talk to friends for he could not trust them.

But you say Smith is home. I want 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 Alfred quite often. I am glad to hear he is well again.

How does Capt. Charlie get along. Does he straighten back on the line, hold himself in the proud position of captain. I should like to have the young gent down here, to drive 6 miles with a gallon. As paper is getting short I will close. Write often.

Yours truly,

J. E. Ryder

N. Ryder
Dear Mother,

Your letter was received last night, and was glad again to hear from home, and that you were all well. So far the health of myself, they say is very good, for it has not affected me very much. I have just got 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 have 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 when we will leave. We had rather two or 3 days ago to move, and we went about half a mile and came back. And it was raining and we got new our camp. The men were at work making rifle pits and rifle guns. They have more than 200 by 100. The boys think we will be attacked here. I hope we will, and if they lend (they lend) a red horse shortly, I will give my ride cap. After we came in from the attack we march the boys up and down, turn out for a round. I was on guard and was glad yet for it raised all the time, and they could build no gun. But they are going again shortly and I hope it doesn't rain. I have to go. They took some provisions, 3 I think, and some beef and milk, the ribber said they were pretty hard up. The said that they had nothing but Yankee hard bread and very few, and old bacon, and sometimes two days with nothing but on trees (entails?). We have been that with almost nothing, nothing but pop corn, but we have good as soldiers would expect rain and snow. We have hard tack, pickled coffee sugar, all other are eaten, and only eat them once in a while, and we get all 10 dollars notes we work and half rations of candles. But I will close as it is time to get church. So also wrote to me, and I will see it tomorrow if I can as soon as I get time. You spoke of Mrs. Baldwin stepping out, I guess that Fannie don't care about changing her name. I got my pay yesterday, 4 months pay and I will send 40 dollars to you. I went to the landing and got a good home.
meat for 1.00 and they all gave 1.00 to the band and so
I did.

Me will you accept it as a present and tell Pa to use
the rest as he sees fit. I wish you would keep the rest
even if I never come back. Take the 1.00 and buy what you
wish. Don't say you won't.

Yours truly Forever

J. E. Ryder

N. Ryder
(The date is foggy—probably 7)

Ft. Scott Crossing—April 29th, 63

Dear Father & Friends,

This is a sad time for me, we have been under an awful fire for most all day, and what can I say to express my feelings, while one of our best boys is cold in death, but it was your fault. I am almost sure, he fell doing his duty, never spoke after, only he said: oh dear, I am shot. And also my tent mate, John Brown is wounded and 3 or four above. We intend to attack them tomorrow morn.

We saved the very last round.

And these Friends, I can write now.

But as I am so apt to fall on the coming day or the next, I bid you all good by, hoping it may come out all right. I think I shall live through it, but if I do not, content yourselves, for I believe I am prepared.

Good by,
this from your son.

J. E. Byrdee
Camp near Battle field 1863 (Fitz Hugh Lee's) (April-May 25)  

Dear Sister,

Your letter was received just about 10 minutes after crossing the river and Brown received his death wound. The 24th and 6 Wisconsin crossed first. The 24th opened the battle and crossed first and so you can not imagine my feelings to see our brave boys fall so fast by the fire of theirRound of our boys fell fast. The rebels were in rifle pits on the tall hill and we were down on the level ground as they had a fair chance at us. We fired at them as fast as we could, and followed as hard as we could get. We killed a number of them and took 100 prisoners. We have been under fire now for 7 days and so we don't sleep any too much. Our men are cut up pretty bad but we expected to have to take the height, and if we had we would have been cut up bad, but did not.

Yesterday our fellows was cut down like grass and the rebels worse than ours. Our artillery gave them some grape and filled the air with pieces of rebel.

The rebels come in and a large know their arms quite fast. They have to get them break before they will fight us, and some of them will stage. They use one brigade in our division, went out back way and came in with about half a regiment. One major was killed, a brigade wounded, and least 3 out of 10. They haven't been matched fighting today.

When we was crossing the river Major Van Winkle stood on the other shore, and when he saw our men fall, would come like a mad man and say, oh lay down your arms you are one ofitches. But when we go ashore we charged them, and what run me shot.

When we got on shore the smoke flew from us as we had to get covered from head to foot. I will read more, hoping this may find you will, and that this may be the last battle.

(J. E. Ryder)
Dear Friends,

I thought that I would pen a few lines to you this morn to let you know that I am yet well, although when we came here from the battle-field I felt some what tired and some a bit feel pretty well at present. I suppose you will hear long before this of the death of Brown. He was shot while making an charge across the river. We lost 24 men. We drove 3 times our number and they were in rifle pits too. I can tell you that I miss Free greatly. He always was in good spirits and always contended 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 began to think what Alfred wrote home once in more truth than poetry - that who gets out of this war alive will have something to be thankful for.

We was near in front line of battle until the last. When we retreated back we were then, but when not attacked. 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 you a great many things that would interest you. I think the rebels lost 4 or 5000. If they would attack us and then while our infantry was fighting them, our men poured grape and canister into them. There were about 6 areas that were completely attacked with dead and wounded, mostly rebels although we had a great many. The rebels not fire to a piece of wood and burn up a great many.

We expect Capt. Washbrough today. I hope he will come. What do you think of the war. Don't you think it will end this campaign? There are 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 should like to have your write often as you can. I received a little from Sale on the battlefield and an.
it there while standing by our rifle pit and watching the rebels. I hope Alfred is all right. I got a little 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 scissors and some thread, needle and a fine comb and a few pins. And am about out of stamps. I will send these. Hoping this may find you all in health and good spirits.

Yours Truly, Forever

J. E. Ryder
Camp Way, May 11th, 1863

Dear Father,

Our camp arrived here yesterday and I can tell you the boys was pleased to see him once more in Delhi 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 many a battle. For in such a time every thing suited as saddles (2) bands, and number of other that don't carry guns shows, then led to the front as it came just right for me. I stood it first rate all through the fight, although we were very tired when we arrived at this camp. For I had but little sleep during the days. For nights we had to work in digging rifle pits and break woods as the enemy would shell too by day, and tried to come the ass inily (2) move by night, but no war, our regiment was very lucky, being but 20 men in the regiment. The 30th got high praise by the general for changing on the rebel and taking the heights and after we crossed the del said that the next men we had got to charge on the heights beyond, and I can tell you it made every soldier look pale, for they were too tired as strong as we were, and had a big battery. But the next men we had orders to reserve the rives and go to the extreme right, to reinforce Forbes, and we got there on Saturday, and the greatest fighting I suppose never was known. We had got a Bragg (?) and the rebels fought us, and our cannon moved them like grass, although we lack thousands, but they look it to ours one. We then refused to go right into the fight and one of our boys Wesley Phillips, shot a hole through his foot. He is the son of the minister up by Salem. But we was put on the reserve and did not go to the front until the day before we crossed the river, and the rebels did not attack us.

And about one o'clock I came of guard and went to bunk, and about 2 o'clock they came along the line, and told me to strike tents and fall in line of battle. I thought of course the rebel was coming that we marched
off and received the rifle. They were a lieutenant in Co B, when we crossed the river, and they were crossing the braille on ice. He went over the pontoon up a stone wall and out of sight. He was sent to death, and he came back to see yesterday and we heard him out of camp so we call it pontoon in the back. Fuller that in the feet, that is relating to our men that shot his feet. Oh it bank it feel better to die like a man as Free did, than half die like a sneak as Phillips did. Life is sweet, and a man that says he fear nothing in battle is a liar or a fool, and a man that will run is worse than all, he was put by the side of courage. 3 months men from New Jersey, Fleming told us if they run shoot them first. Well now boys, I wish this thing would come closer and I never have to keep up. It is a good thing we have the east broke now, I don't want any extra. I have plenty of clothes and enough to eat when we are good for soldiers. I wrote to Peter and forgot to sign my name. I sent you $5.00 dollars, you didn't say so you had got it, but never mind. All well for this time.

Yours truly forever

J. E. Reeder

G. W. Reeder
Camp Way, May 28th, 1869

Dear Friend,

Your most welcome letter of the 5th was received last week, and will assure you it was received with gladness to know how you are all getting along, and that you have a good boy to help you on the farm. We think here, and hope it may surely be, that this war will close by fall, and that if I can be there to help you on the farm, I suppose you have heard all about the war round-about before this in the Battle.

Our Company was very lucky this time, as Company C suffered the worst, this time, but we were very lucky as a regiment two, for we only had 23 killed and wounded, and some regiments were cut up bad, although we were exposed to heavy fire. But they did not know we were as weak and dare not try it. We are now in a very pleasant camp, about 1 and a half mile from the Rappahannock, and 2 miles from White Oak Church. We do not know how long we will stay here, but probably we will try the rebels again pretty quick. I do not stay with the regiment now as I am still driving team.

It is a getting pretty hot weather here now, so that the grass is growing up pretty well, although we have no corn, or such things or growing here. Most farmers are all laid to waste, and the owners are most all in the rebel army.

As we sometimes go beyond where the army has been, and the rice lots are all grown, and some of the fences are standing, I think what an awful thing it is to see so much, nice land all contamined and laid to waste, by the curse of slavery, and treason. I hope when this war ends that slavery ends also. There is some beautiful land about here, and if worked by northern men, it would be ahead of every thing in the shape I land. It would take some time to get it in good condition. I am well at present, and our regiment is in good health. We have but a few sick. Most of them are wounded men.

Our wagon trains are prominent, so very regular detailed from the regiment to drive them.
May 18, 1863

If any is well as I have been down to the regiment.
If you get this letter before the dealer made out if
You can buy the white oak for 20 dollars & buy them, and
I will send you the money as soon as I get it.
I will now close and hope this may find you all in
Health.

This from your friend
Mary Harrington
George Ryder
Campia Way, May 18, 1863

Dear Mother,

As I am at leisure now, I will improve a few moments by writing a few lines. I have received no letter from home in a longtime. It is pretty warm weather down here in Dixie now. We haven't had a great deal to do since she fight. We came in from picket the day before yesterday, and I was near sick for two or three days as we lay out on picket through a heavy rain. I caught cold and had the sick headache.

We were on picket by the river, and the reef was clear by on the other side. We talked with each other a long time, and afterwards the reef officers made them anchor. They sent me over a paper. I tried to get one to send to you, as they said I should have one the next mail, but we could not talk them, as they was thought to be some picket firing to do. But all was quiet, they mourned over Jackson greatly. They said they did not want to fight but had to, they told us, they thought if the printers could settle this war it would be done quick. we told them then we did not want unless they would lay down their arms. We told them we did not want to fight them, but would, if they held out. They said that we Michiganers was the greatest boys they ever laid, they said they had fought a number of times with the 4th Mich. and the 24th would not be far behind. They was the 3rd Georgia, the regiment we fought the other day when we was on picket up on the right. We advanced towards them, and we come every year getting fewer or captured prisoners. We advanced within 15 rods of a hill, and just the other side, it was alive with reefs, and they was one of our men from the other side of the river ran down and told us to halt, and retreat, or we would be taken, and we went back in quick time, and pretty soon we saw a couple of pickets reef, soft working towards us, and pretty soon they got into a hollow, and run towards us, with the barrel the other way, and we of course did not fire, and they run up to us, threw their guns on the ground, jerked off their cartridge boxes and belts, and dropped on
on the ground so their own men would not shoot them.

I think that two thirds of the red army would do the same if the Radical friends that hated they did not want to have or disagree although when they are called on to fight they will fight like tigers.

Farrell Brown is buried good for a soldier. He is buried alone in a pleasant field high ground and well dug, with a board at his back reading, name, company and regiment.

I am feeling pretty well again and well please, hoping this may find you all in health. I would like to hear from Alfred since the battle and hope the ones that is left from this campaign may go home by fall and think they will.

Yours truly, Forever.

J. E. Rigdon  H. Rigdon

Ed. Flanagan is here as a tiger. He made the rebels dance, he got 3 or 4 bullet holes in his clothes.
Dear sir,

I have spoken of selling the calf. I don't know that 100 dollars is all he is worth. But I thought a great deal of him, and should hate to lose him if he is a good one. Unless there is something the matter with him. What do you think about these being a species. If they are, I would sell him but I don't think I shall know for he wants him bad. If he is right I would keep him for he is a great calf but if he is going to be worthless I would sell him. Your information shall I do.

When you write again I would like some details as to tell you I had my horse wins. I have got some negroes. I will send you yours truly,

[Signature]

I went home to do this. Have you got it.
Dearest Mother,

I received a letter from you last week, which gave me a small joy, and I wrote you a letter yesterday morning, as I think I had not had one before since the battle, and we have plenty to eat, and the same to do, as we are encamped in a very nice place, and the 1st wants to take a great deal of pain with it, and probably when we get it fixed properly, Hooker will want to visit Johnny Reb.

They have many of us that care about visiting them again, for we have to take care of it and board, and we don't like the way they welcome us.

I was on guard last night, and so I do not feel very well this morning. The rebels say that they have got tired of fighting, and they say that if we let them alone, they would go, but I guess that old Joe Hooker won't let them alone.

Hooker said before we went into the battle of Fredericksburg that all that came out of the battle alive would come in battle by a rout, but I guess he was a little mistaken.

Dear Father

I was glad to hear from you in the last letter, and that you were all well. Our regiment is very healthy at present, the most sick now is wounded, this is very, very pleasant weather. I suppose by this time in which you are planting corn. There is some beautiful land around here, as I was down in Pickens the other day, I saw some of the best land I ever saw.

It was owned by a planter, but was one mile there. He lived in a four-story house with a lot of negroes driven around, and he owned 1600 acres. His father had about 7000 acres rehomed. You may travel here for miles and not see a house, as they are a great way apart. This man was a Union man, he had two prisoners at Richmond.

I wish we could hear from them, but if it was with the rebels probably he had hire at Washington a prisoner.

They went much worse today, and as I will now close, hoping this may find you all in health, the boys are all
well too now our Capt is as getting pretty smart again,

Yours truly

F. E. Ryder

G. W. Ryder
Camp Way, May 31st, 1863

Dear Father,

I have just come in but a little while ago from a 6 day march and they say we are taking that I'm much wonderfully changed up. But as I returned to the camp I found I had some letters and one from home, which lighted up my stiffened HOME face I am never as tired when at leisure, but what I can scribble a few lines home. In the 6 days we marched 150 miles, a little over. On the 20th we left camp about daylight and camped for night about 8 o'clock, marching 31 miles that day, through blazing sun and a cloud of dust. The CDS sent out and said they never rode so far in one day. But the old 5th Brigade kept it through, I think we had more killed by CDS than fell dead while marching, was scouts. We captured one rich lad, 60 soldiers, 800 mules, 600 muggars, or a caravan of 600 animals, and relieved two regiments of our CDS that the rebels had flanked, and burned the bridge, and drove them back across the river. The quarrelling was thick as could be. They were one jumped from a thicket while our CDS was a little way ahead of me and shot the sergeant dead, and got away. The evildoers were mean as heart, and the man would ruin what we could least capture or shoot. The women called us Yankee robbers and every thing they could think of. They were one fellow sneaking up, and one of our fellows saw him and shot him first, and then put 3 balls through him. They say that our Yankees were a savage blood thirsty set of men. My gracious, we screech them like lambs compared with their savagery. They will butcher a child's blood. Never did a Yankee do it.

Last night when we camped for night, so was awful tired, and when we got unharnessed, that is our truck off, I and an other fellow by the name of Bell, thought we would go back a ways to see if we could not find a little milk, and we was walking through a kind of a thicket in a path, and we stopped to listen, and thought we heard some one talk very low, and passed on a ways farther, and we was near a pair of barns, and one of them sneaked up, and the rest of them told him in
a law voice to come back. I suppose they wanted us to come a little farther. We had recourse and found it was Mr. Johnny Reb. I think they were 3 of them. We turned our heels and were tired and worn out. We were. We made good tracks for life and soon left them in disappointment. Henry H. was just here. He says they are going to cut his wages pay down to 5 dol a month. He feels quite bad.

Thinks nothing is too bad.

I got the stamps all right.

I have just had a good supper of eggs and potatoes. We can't get eggs only once in 3 or 4 months. We get them now for 50 cents a dozen. I will now close hoping this may find you well. I have just got a letter from Alfred. He is well.

Yours truly forever.

J. E. [Signature]

H. W. [Signature]
Camp Way, May 27th, 1863

Dear Mother,

As your most welcome letter was received last week after coming in from the 24th's battle, I saw I had only your few lines to let you know that I am yet well but I do not feel very happy for we have had a rough march for the last 6 days. And now again I suppose we have got to start to go somewhere, to which I know not where. Some say Fort Donel, some across the river, but I don't know. We have got to carry 8 days rations our arms are already stacked in the street. We had some pretty good news after we got in from the scout that Vicksburg had fallen.

So I can not 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 as dear 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 every one that lives.

When you write tell all the news about uncle Williams father.

How is Grandma? I tell you I like to get letters from them, and hear from them. I will send back hoping this may find you all in health. I got the stamps all right. I don't want any papers or envelopes.

Yours Ever,

O. B. H. Rafter.

Write about a kind of it was in the battle of Vicksburg.
Camp Way, May 30th, 1863

Dear Mother,

Your kind letter of the 15th was just received this am, and as I sit down to write you a few lines by candle light, as if I dont write now I cant write in a few days again, as we have to go on picket to morrow, make a very desirable job at present, as I taught the party bad card while on the scout. While we are here in Camp Way we do pretty well, as we have got our tents made off the ground. Our picketing is a good deal different than it was last winter, as now we are in a few rods of them, they on one side of the river, and we on the other.

They made a little fire and sent a paper over to us, but the red officers stopped it. We would talk backwards and forwards with each other. We fought them in the last battle. They said that the first volley we fired we killed 9. They said that the Michigan boys would fire anything for they once fought with the same. They would fight like tigers. Our boys told them when to relieve their pickets or they had no watch. They said they did not want to fight. Some of them came across and threw down their arms, and said they would fight no more. We made more in talking decent to throw then we do to get mad and fire. They before yesterday they was heavy firing on the picket line. I am more afraid of their shooting see on picket, for they like see while out of battle, but well fight brave in battle. They are Kentucky boys. That red chief that we captured, the citizen said he was a very smart man. When he saw the stars and stripes waving, he burst into tears and said, O, that flag, that I once looked on with pride, and caused all nations of the earth to tremble to look upon. But says he, where is it now. Yes, I should think where these is it tranversed by miserable rebels. One of the citizens that we stopped to, said at the outbreak of this war he was for the union but now a red. He said he was in business with northern men, and had nothing personally against a man, and he would not make it seem as though we was really enemies. He was not a very bad red as some that was smacking in
the book & shoot us. Capt. Knox told me some thing about (his scrape with old Brown. The old rascal of our Knox got home alive, and what boys goes with them, their filthy old mouths must be closed. For it is too great to be borne. For where are we when we go through hardships and dangers as we do, in such a good cause? Is it useful to listen to such slang. Col. Blair, Barnes from Detroit and a number of others spoke very encouraging. Col. Flanagan spoke also in a patriotic way. He said when we were crossing the river he felt as though when our hope was falling, he was willing to go with them, to die for his country. You asked as to our sufferings, missed Farrell as to his burial. What you spoke about his poor friend could not expect (?) although buried good for a soldier. I think he was rapped in his blanket. But as you know that is good for many does not get that or even until mostly decayed. The boys will often look around and say ah! such fine work was done. John says they say her back, the size of his leg by his wound. I will put it all in here. The housewife is all right. I will now close hoping this will find well.

Yours truly

J. E. Rejim
Camp Way June 5th 1863

Dear Father,

Your letter and Ma's was received last eve. and I am at leisure at present. I will pen a few lines in reply although I write a letter to Ma day before yesterday, although am ready at any time to write when I can get an opportunity. We have been out this morning and had a drill and as I have now got my gear cleaned up. I will give a little of the news happened since my last. We have been now for some time under marching orders, but still remain, and twice have been two called up at the midnight hour, to pack and get ready to start. I do not know, but think our force are across the river yet. They are so many stories I believe now, unless they come from the best authority, they are occasionally some enem ahead down at the river, and I am told that our men are throwing up breastworks, the other side, but you probably know more about it than we do.

They were not many of few thought last night that we would be here this morn. the order came to inspect us, to see and to sure that we had 6 rounds of cartridges and 3 days rations and the Col. thought we would find ourselves gone this morn. but does not seem to be the case.

I see you have considerable faith in the fall of Richmond, and we do here live, but we don't hear a great deal about it. I can tell you they is as much help back to soldiers as can be, only when we gain a victory, sure at this last Fredericksburg our men was almost willing to walk into sixteen death. See they was so encouraged by Hooker, saying he had them in a trap, and that was our last battle, if we held them a little longer, but I don't know but it is better for the men surely fight better, and that is what we want, I think you got a good price for the corn(s), is they any corn big enough to have. I will have hoping this will find all well.

Your loving son,

J. E. Ryder
Camp Way, June 7th, 1863

My Mother,

I received a letter from your brother and also a paper from home, and was very glad to hear from you, and that you were all well.

It has been considerable excitement in camp now for a few days. Two or three nights ago when we came in from picket, at 10 o'clock, we were ordered up to get ready for a march at daylight, to draw rations, get breakfast, and so forth.

And at daylight we struck tents, stacked arms, packed knapsacks, and were ready for a forward, but now came, and at noon we pitched tents again and night before last we about 4 o'clock our men, or part of them, crossed the river. They were met by the rebels and a fight took place. Our col. went down to see them cross. The rebels as usual were in their pits, and our artillery opened on them a while, and soon the infantry charged across. The rebels fired in a murderous fire upon them, and saw our men stop off the boats, they got out of their pits, formed in line, and when our men was scrambling up the steep hill, they shot many of our men, but as soon as our men got where they could fight to the top of the hill, they moved the rebels, and soon they turned to run, but our boys was doing what rebels deserve, and our artillery was just cutting roads through their ranks at a terrible rate, and soon they broke ranks, and as they had a long plain to go across to get out of the way, about 200 of them ran back to us and gave themselves up, as they could not stand the ball, shot and shell, and they were heavy cannonading until after dark, and we got ordered to get up at 3 and be ready to march at 4 A.M.

We of course at 4 was all ready to move forward, but we did not go. They were cannonading through the day, and last eve the Col told us we might pick up our tents, but must not leave the camp, and be ready to march at a short notice. They has been here very little firing to day. Col. F. Leonigam was down last night. He said the pickets
was firing and the rets advancing, and a large cloud of dust in the distance. He thought it was reinforcements.

But we are here now about noon, marching orders but no orders to march. I am on guard to day. They will be preaching to day at 2 p.m. if we have no orders to march. It is very nice weather now. I have received a letter from Alfred, he is well.

I got the housewife and stamps all right.

David now knows Hopping this will find you in health.

We are all well now excepting little lame, caused by your great march.

Yours Truly Forever

F. E. Ryder

F. Ryder

Your asked a question in one letter about the wobury inhabitants to which I now nothing about. Feel sure I will soon be at home and relieve him of his great burden. I am glad he can ride him.
Camp near Broad Run
June 26th 1863

Dear Mother,

As I now have a little time to spare I will improve it by penning a few lines to let you that we are still living and pretty well. This letter may never reach you, but I will however write it. We have not had any mail in 7 days, and we are very much regretting it.

To-day we are laying still although had to get up last night at 3 o'clock to go but did not. It rained all night. They were rockets in the air, and that may be the reason we were called up. I will not try to tell you of our horrible marches. The men that was shot in our Brigade was done in the presence of our Division while halted for dinner. It was an awful marching, as the blazing sun of Virginia poured down upon us like fire, you can judge it was some that we were under. I heard one regiment in our Division, and think he was a corporal, that during the march or rather the heat of the day, and all along the road, it was covered with blankets, coats, and clothing of all kinds, I threw all I had but what I had to carry, that was rubber tent, gun cartridges, 6 rounds, portfolio, contain 3 days rations.

I expected to see Alfred but still did not but passed by within a short distance when he was said to be on picket.

We saw the boys of the 6th Cav. and we turned off on another road, just before we got to the 1st and fifth. Ed Shannon said that he passed through Fairfax and saw John Coats of Alfred's Company and that he was well. He was one Company of the fifth Cav. that came to our Company Day before yesterday with our line to see them safe to the Brigade, he has been to Washington, our boys thinks that they had better bust their Cav. as they were making a tour of inspection.

And went farther in a day. If they had a good battle of the 57th Cav. Corp B. I would like to be transferred to it full of life. I wish they had one.
So I shall try to make the best of the service that I am in. They have a number of our boys that could not walk and were sent to Washington. Dobbs is here by my side sleeping being very tired. Hays is well. They talk of making the officers carry their baggage. If they do, I am afraid he would —?

I think now that the north will have to turn and to take as little of a soldier life. I will now close and hope this may find you in health.

"Yours truly forever,

J. E. Ryder

H. Ryder"
Dear Father,

I received your kind letter two or three days ago and have been the talk about moving move all of the time. We were called up at 3 this morn but still remain.

I don't do any duty today as I was very sick yesterday. I was detailed with 2 others of our com to go on Brigade guard, and was being inspected and mounting the guard as I commenced growing weak, and large drops of sweat collected on my forehead, and said I could not stand, and as I got here I fell in the rear, and layed down, and then I commenced cramping and fainted away, and then I was carried to hospital by some men, and was well cared for, until I came all right from my bad spell. I went into a sleep, and when I woke they handed me a letter, and it was from Alfred, and was glad to hear from him, and that he was well, and that he had rode one day's ride, and that we found him but could not stop, but I think that I shall soon see him.

I do not think I shall have to be bothered with one of these spells again, at least I hope not, for I had no very pleasant feeling. I wish that they would drill much all from 8 to 10 and go on with this thing in a hurry. We have got just enough men need to get licked every time, especially if the officers get drunk every time as they have done. The rich soldiers say our officers drunk, there is all right, and the privates get the whiskey at Frederickburg one regt came up staggering, and then our men will kick them and drive them, and the officers is to drink to hold the ground. There is one great long fellow, just going by, New Merchelton now. He is as drunk half the time he don't know whether he lives or dead. But enough of this, Part of the boys are out on picket.

Noble is well and Stout, and all the boys that is here, excepting —

I will now close. Hope this may find you well & to which I at least be by the time you get this. Yours truly

E. R.

E. R.
Camp near South Mountain 70
June 28, 1863

Dear Father,

I have just received a letter from you and as we have got a little time I will improve it by writing a few lines in reply. We haven't received a mail before in so many days.

We have been on the march every day since we left our old camp. We came near last night and have had a little rest now, but we are again under marching orders and expect to go to day but may not. We have just had our guard inspected and ammunition. As we was marching day before yesterday we passed by the 6th Art and ended up if it didn't give me one look to see Alfred and all of the boys, but could not only say a few words, and again had to pack. And yesterday morning our chief commander Gen. Magruder dressed us up in line our brigade and made a speech to us. Told us we was to meet our enemies again and 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 6th Art was about 2 miles from us. And I was very tired but that was not going to stop me if I could get away. And so and neither got a piece from the lot and started. Had hard work to get them on account of the provost. But with some time we passed the first one and soon reached Piers. We went with us & the 7th and there we saw Alfred, Forley. Farrell and we stayed till late at night and had the best week I ever had in my life, talking over our old times, and the times we had passed through the war and about thought a little bread and milk wouldn't hurt us at the time. But at last at night we started in hopes to meet again some day. We had tried hard to get a place to come here but could not, and he said this way he would try again but I guess they have moved.

The rest of the boys were very anxious to come also and said if they stayed and could not get a place they would take a French one. I have heard it eaten this way.
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I expect we will have a great battle shortly, so and has got to be done, let it come, and we will look for the
luck. I did not think the luck would break so easy.

Yours truly forever

J. E. Bayliss

L. W. Bayliss

Tell A. get the tea, all right. It sure come very good. I will write
to you shortly. If we have a battle, then up, and think it all
for the best. For we will stand our chance. I and
Alfred had a good visit.
June 30, 1863 (2)

Carry? Charly

I told Mrs. Brown she can be proud of her son. One of the boys took it as though he were a leader. He was detailed to guard the presents but let Sam stay in the place as some event will. Yesterday, they were one of our boys in an encounter, and it is through his fault I got rid of going out to battle. I saw tell you to battle is horrible, but it is what I think a rub will do it, for I would rather be in some place. I have just saw Horace Smith. I suppose Alfred is here somewhere. I hope if ever in the battle he will come out all right. I am now on picket and they are facing toward Gettysburg.

Said by (J. E. Ryder)
Written some time after Feb 8, 1864
Written to the Ryder Family.

[No date - no location]

(salutation)

Having a little leisure this morning I thought I would write you a few lines in reply to the letter I received from you a long time ago. I should have written before but the times have been so dull that I could find nothing to write about.

In the first place I return many thanks for the present you sent me in my box—although this may seem a rather late hour to acknowledge it.

We are now in camp a mile from the city.

(Salute line missing)

It is when Alfred first saw it it must have been a pleasant place—now the effects of war are everywhere to be seen in the battered & ruined buildings, the fences gone and everything rapidly going to ruin, 

The only event since we have been here was the reconnaissance in force by the Army Corps, and a division of cavalry, the full details of which you have probably already read, as it would be useless for me to write them. The village of Racoonville & Racoon Ford on the Rapidan was burned by a detail from our Brigade. The Red sharpshooting had been in the habit of coming across the river, hiding in the houses from them pecking off our pickets. — I was not out having been sent out on picket the day before the fight.

Capt. W. W. Wright, 7th Virginia, is now our Lieut. Col. He was promoted over Capt. Edwards to the great satisfaction of the whole regiment.

I believe I have written about all there is to write about so I will close.

Yours etc.

Alfred Dobie

(Pink note of John Ryder)
Written some time after Feb 6, 1864
Written to the Ryder family.

Salutation

Having a little leisure this morning I thought I would write you a few lines in reply to the letter I received from you a long time ago. I should have written before but the times have been so dull that I could find nothing to write about.

In the first place I return many thanks for the present you sent me in my box—although this may seem a rather late hour to acknowledge it.

We are now in camp a mile from the city.

Several lines missing it when Alfred first saw it must have been a pleasant place—not the effects of war are everywhere to be seen in the battlefield & ruined buildings; the fences gone and everything rapidly going to ruin, & this is the third time our army has occupied the place.

The only event since we have been here was the reconnaissance in force by the Army Corps, and 2 divisions of cavalry, the full details of which you have probably already read, as it would be useless for me to write these. The village of Raccoonville & Raccoon Ford on the Rapidan was burned by a detail from our brigade. They had sharpshooting been in the habit of coming across the river, taking in the houses from them, pecking off our batteries. I was not out having been sent out on picket the day before the march.

Capt. Wm. Wight, of Company C, is now our Lieut. Col. He was promoted over Capt. Edwards to my great satisfaction of the whole regiment.

I believe I have written about all there is to write about so I will close.

Yours etc.

Alfred Noble

(Pint note of John Ryder)