

Letters of G.H. Berry, Co. G, 89th Illinois Infantry

January the 2nd 1863

Dear Wife

We left Nashville on the 26 of Dec and arrived on the battle field Tuesday night [sic] and in the morning we was taken by surprise and was fired on by the Rebels and we had to retreat or be all taken prisners [sic]. I got out safe but I have not seen Thomas. [Note: Corp. Thomas Berry, the writer's brother, mustered in 25 Aug 1862 from Walnut Grove. He was killed in action at Pickett's Mill Georgia, 27 May 1864.] I don't know weather [sic] he is killed or taken prisner [sic]. We don't hold the ground that the dead is on. I think that he is a prisner [sic]. Thomas Whiting [Note: Capt. Thomas Whiting mustered in 25 Aug 1862 from Walnut Grove. He was killed in action at Chickamauga, 19 Sep 1863.] he is missing John Hulick [Note: Pvt. John B. Hulich mustered in 25 Aug 1862 from Copley. He died of wounds 16 Jan 1863.] he is wounded. Charles Bainbridge [Note: Recruit Charles V. Bainbridge enlisted 9 Aug 1862 from Walnut Grove. He mustered out 10 June 1865.] is wounded, grate [sic] many is scaterd [sic] coming in every day. I am in hopes that Thomas will come in yet. We have hard fighting here, 3 days harde [sic] fighting. I have had bullets come all around me. One canon [sic] ball come within six feet of me and good many within a rod of me. We made one bayonet charge to wardes [sic] the Rebels. We have had a harde [sic] time of it. We hafture [sic] be up knight [sic] and day.

January the 7th. The last I heard from Thomas he was going towards Nashville. He had no gun with him. I saw a man that knowed [sic] him. He might have bin [sic] taken prisner [sic] and paroled and sent to Nashville. We holde [sic] Murfreesboro but we hade [sic] to fight harde [sic] to gane [sic] it. I was in the hotes [sic] of the fight. Two days after the fight I was detail to go and burry [sic] the deade [sic] that was kill in ower [sic] Company ware [sic] we was taken by surprise. I found three men in ower [sic] Company. One was George Murry [Note: Pvt. George Murray mustered in 25 Aug 1862 from Walnut Grove. He was killed in action 31 Dec 1862.] and Bester [Note: Pvt. David H. Bestor mustered in 25 Aug 1862 from Walnut Grove. He was killed in action 31 Dec 1862] Dewit Cuder [Note: Pvt. Dewitt C. Scudder mustered in 25 Aug 1862 from Walnut Grove. He was killed in action 3 1 Dec 1862.]. Wilford Whitney [Note: Pvt. Wilford H. Whitney mustered in 25 Aug 1862 from Knoxville. He mustered out 10 June 1865.] is slightly wounded in the neck. Robert Wilson [Note: Pvt. Robert Wilson mustered in 25 Aug 1862 from Walnut Grove. He mustered out 10 June 1865.] is wounded, some 8 or 10 are missing. They think that John Hulick wont [sic] git [sic] well. The ball went in his mouth and come out by the side of his jaw bone. Thomas Whiting was taken prisner [sic]. Reading about the fight and being in it is quit [sic] different thing. The wounded and deade [sic] laying allround [sic] was look awful. In the two days all I hade [sic] was one cracker and little meat. In ower [sic] Division we had a loade [sic] of corn deliverd [sic] out to us. They took good many prisner [sic] from us and we took good many from them. Ower [sic] ajertant [sic] was wounded and ower [sic] majer [sic] was taken prisner

[sic]. Ower [sic] colonel hade [sic] his horse shot under him. I hope that we shant [sic] have another sutch [sic] a fight. If we do I hope that we will not be taken by surprise. Wen [sic] we was up at Louisville we was up at three oclocke [sic] in the morning but when we arrived on the battle ground we slept [sic] till day light. If they had come half of anouger [sic] sooner they would have taken the hole [sic] Brigeade [sic].

G H Berry

The last letter I hade [sic] from you was dated the fifteen of Dec. How I would like to see you and the children and all the rest of the folks.

Camp near Murfreesboro Jan 12th 1863

My Dear Wife

I received you letter dated the 28 of Dec and was glade [sic] to heare [sic] that you and the family was well. I wrote a letter after the battle with a pencil [sic] I sent it by a person that was going to Nashville. He may not have put it in the Post Office so I thought I would write agin [sic]. We have hade [sic] a harde [sic] time in this fight. We was taken by surprise on Wednesday morning the 31 of Dec. We had to retreat or be taken all prisners [sic]. The hole [sic] brigade run for life in ower [sic] Regiment we lost good many men. The first fifty rods that we run the bulets [sic] come past me like hale [sic] stone. I saw men shot down on my left and on my right and forward of me. I run a bout [sic] seventy rods and came to a fence I went over pretty quick and then I tum around rested my gun an [sic] a raile [sic] and fired at a Rebel that was picking one of ower [sic] deade [sic] men pockets. Charles Bainbridge was wounded and taken prisner [sic]. Wilford Whitney slightly wounded on the face and was taken prisner [sic]. John Hulick was badely [sic] wounded the ball went in his mouth and came out by the side of his face and went into his shoulder. He may live through it but it is harde [sic] telling. Thomas was seen on Thursday after noon. He was well and not wounded when one of ower [sic] boyes [sic] saw him. I have not hearde [sic] from him sence [sic]. Something is happen to him or he would have bin [sic] in camp before this time. There was a big fight that after noon ware [sic] he was he may have bin [sic] taken prisner [sic] or killed or wounded or he may be at Nashville I don't know witch [sic]. He had no gun when he was seen. He may have bin [sic] taken prisner [sic] and paroled and sent to Nashville. Tell Estell Berry that I have the likeness of Thomas' children it came sence [sic] the fight. They look verry naturale [sic]. Thomas received his wife likeness on the march [sic]. George H Murry and Bester and Scuder was killed all we know of in ower [sic] Company. Good many are missing in ower [sic] Company that we cant [sic] count for. Ower [sic] Colonel had his horse shot under him, ower [sic] Agertant [sic] was wounded and ower [sic] Major was taken prisner [sic]. Thomas Whiting was taken prisner [sic]. Ower [sic] Brigade charged bayonets once towards the Rebels but we did not come in contact [sic] with them. They run so fast that we could not ketch [sic] up with them. Cannon balls went a whiring [sic] by me pretty lively, one went past me struck within six

feet of me. I am verry [sic] thankful to the Lorde [sic] that I was sparde [sic] through the battle and came out safe. The Rebels fight desperate, they can fight as well as we can. We took good many prisner [sic] and as good looking men as we have. Ther [sic] clothes are not like owers [sic] that is all the difrence [sic]. I am in hopes that we shall see one other agin [sic]. I calculate to look on the bright side of the picture and keepe [sic] up good courage and put my trust in the Loarde [sic] and all things will worke [sic] out right. The women on the roade [sic] have all grn [sic] south with the Rebel Army. In passing through Murfreesboro I only saw 3 women, nothing but Negroes are left behind. Tell Estell Berry that I should have written to her about Thomas but I had not paper. You must tell all what I have written about Thomas.

George H Berry

We have crackers and salt meet and beef and coffee and sugar and beens [sic] once a week and rice and salt, sometime we draw flower [sic]. I have not received my pay yet. We was mustered for pay today but I don't know when the money will come.