

Alfred Riggs Letters

Dec. 6/62

Camp on Mill Creek

Dear Brother,

Your very welcome letter of the 22 and 25th. I have just read both—the 5 dollars enclosed. I am very glad that you keep well. The five dollars you sent I am very much obliged to you for and shall save it to send home to be put with the rest of your money. Thanks to good fortune we have just received two months pay. I got 26 dollars and had enough more owing me from the boys to make 35 dollars in all that I have besides the five you sent me which the most of I will send home the first opportunity [sic] I have to do so. I am afraid you stinte [sic] of your self [sic] by sending me the money but if you should want any before you get paid again let me know and I will send you some. We have most four months pay due us yet and the paymaster says we will soon get pay for two months more.

Henry Neff, from Harding talks of coming down here to see us, if he does I will send the money home by him. He has a brother in this company—5th Corporal.

I have not had a letter from home in a long time but I expect one by the next mail, which by the way, comes every day. We are now camped 6 miles southeast of Nashville on the Nolenzville [sic] Pike. We came here on the 22nd of Nov. Thanksgiving Day (the 27th) we went out on a scout 5 Regiment of us and 2 sections of artillery on the Nolenzville [sic] Pike. The enemy had been firing on our pickets every night so we went out and cleaned them out. We came up to their pickets at 8 O clock [sic] in the morning. We drove them six miles, fired some shells and solid shot and a great deal of musket balls at them, they firing at us they fell back taking all their killed and wounded but one with them. We had none killed. We would have gone farther but the officer in command had orders to go no further than we did.

There is a large force here and when we start South from here we will go with a force large enough to make a mark where ever we go. There is some 35,000 secesh 25 miles south of here which we will call on on our way to Chatanooga [sic], which place we expect to start for in a few days or weeks. I don't know which but I hope when we start from here that Grants [sic] forces will be knocking away at Vicksburg with Gov. 2 Sneefs [sic] and that the forces in Kentucky will march through Cumberland Gap and take Knoxville, in Eastern Tenn. and that Gen. Burnside marches on and takes Richmond. If this could only be done then I think the war would soon be wound up and as the negro says—done gone. Oh, if this war was only at a close and the North and South were on friendly terms again I would be willing to give back all the money I have received and all that I am now worth and take a new start in the world again. But I am afraid that it will be some time the ways things go before this war is brought to a close.

The troops here are most of them in good health, especially the old ones. Our Reg. has none sick except those that were wounded in battle and skirmishes and some of them are coming back to the Regiment.

I hope that we will both live long enough to get out of this thing well. If we do we will take a good hunt in Kansas then buy some land for farmers in the South part of Kansas and go to raising stock that pays better than most anything else. Land is most to [sic] high price in Illinois for a poor man to buy.

I am now 3 third Corporal. Our first corporal is in the hospital at Louisville. He was shot through the leg at the Battle of Perryville. We are in the 11 Div. (Sheridan) and Gen. McCooks [sic] Corps. We go on picket—a regiment in a place it is our turn to go in the morning. It snowed all day yesterday and is very cold of nights and freezes at night hard. The Cumberland River is lower now than it has been before for 23 years.

Hoping this will find you well and hearty I will bid you good bye. My love to you and our folks when you write home. So now good bye Dear Brother.

Yours Affectionately,
Alfred Riggs

Write every time you can and I will do the same.
A.R.

Dec. 14/62

Camp on Mill Creek, Tenn.

Dear Brother,

I have just rec'd yours of the 7th and was very glad to hear that you were all well. Yesterday Simeon and myself went down to Nashville. We saw the 104 Reg. they were on the cars and started for Louisville. Soon after we got there I saw Elder Wilsons [sic] son Elias Thompson Jr. Scoonover, Charles Ruger, J Varel, Larks, Eds [sic] Son. The boys were all well Swinner Berman was killed. I think that them 100 dollar men didn't amount to much in the part they have taken in putting down this rebellion [sic]. I am sorry they were taken prisoners but they must fight better the next time and not give up so soon.

Houghtaling Battery is now in our division. I am going over to see them before long. The last letter I got from Henry he was well and hearty. He lent me 5 dollars. I rec'd mothers of Nov. 30 am answering it. Mother has done a good thing with this land and now it will be safe. I am glad the colts are in good condition. You must have the two horse colts altered in the spring. If the Norwegeons [sic] have killed that stear [sic] and you find it out make him pay well for it, the cusses ought to be put with the Negroes and sent to

the devil all together. You have done well making so much molasses. Save plenty for mother to use.

We have a skirmish every few days out to the lines but it don't amount to much. But when we leave here in force the Secesh will have either to fight or to leave this state. I am in hopes that Burnside will flush out the enemy and take Richmond. That once taken we can soon do the rest, but I am afraid that the cold weather will hinder this army from moving far for some time.

The weather here is very pleasant, dry and warm. Our Reg. is healthy as could be expected. Simeon is well. Write soon (Direct as usual) My love to you all and a kiss for mother and Pet.

Truly Yours,
A. Riggs

Dec. 15/62
Camp Sheridan, Tenn.

Dear Brother,

I thought that I would write you a few lines this morning. Yesterday I rec'd a letter from George. They were all well at home. George was helping Snelling pick corn. George sold some 50 dollars worth of molasses during the Fall. Warren has sold 40 acres of land where the old house stands and the 25 acres of timber that he mortgaged to Eberding, has been sold to Knights. So now Warren has only 80 of prairie and 5 of timber and that is all under mortgage and he will have to sell that before gits [sic] out of debt.

That celebrated 104th Ill Reg't [sic] from Ottawa has been taken prisoners, paroled and sent back to Ill. I saw the day before yesterday as they left Nashville on the cars. They were all 100 dollar men. Elias Thompson, James Scoonover and John Varel were among them. Houghtalings [sic] Battery from Ottawa is in our Division.

The weather is or has been very pleasant of late while today it is now raining and I hope it won't stop until the rivers are filled so that the gun boats can come up the Cumberland and Tenn. Rivers. Then, and I think not until then, will this army do something.

How are they doing in that Department with the shelter tents? Have you got any of them yet? They have been issued to this brigade but we will not take them. We will burn them before we will carry them.

Write often as you can and I will do the same. There is nothing to write about of importance. So now good bye dear brother.

Yours Afec. [sic]
A. Riggs

[Editor's note: Alfred wrote this letter to Henry and this is probably one of the letters Henry mailed home to George after Alfreds [sic] death.]