

Albert Shepard Papers and Letter

[Note: The following letter was written Nov 18, 1863 by Albert Shepard to his brother Eugene. Albert was a member of the 115th Illinois, serving in the Tennessee campaign.]

Shellmound Tenn [sic], Nov 18, 1863

Mr. E. Shepard.

Dear Brother, Since I last wrote you on the 12th we have drawn 4 months wages, and I wrote to Roseline on the 16th stating to her that I would send you fifty dollars (\$50.00) in sums of tens as I have heretofore, but as the mail communications are rather deficient from here to [illegible] the majority of the Co. came to the conclusion for to send together, getting a check of [illegible] master, which we intend to send to [illegible] Shannon at Mt Carmel, giving him the list of names and sums of money to pay out. The check will be some \$[illegible]. By this doing if the check should get lost there being a copy retained, we would not loose [sic] our money.

Hence I have thus sent \$50.00 X your name on the list to draw, so you will have to get it or send an order. It may be that Shannon can not cash the check without going to a Bank, if so he will probably charge a percent which you should pay, I had rather do this than risk by mail for a great many of the boys complain of losing money this way. It would not be best to go after this money for a few days after you get this letter, as the check might be delayed in getting there, It will be sent tomorrow.

I recd [sic] a letter from Morrill day before yesterday, announcing to my surprise the step which he has taken of late in leaving the "Methodist" Church and joining the "Freewill Baptis [sic]", and gone to Preaching. He gave me no reasons for this doing, only said he had now joined a Church that agreed with his concientious [sic] views [illegible] [illegible] this it seems that "Methodism" has [illegible] agree with him satisfactory. Likely the [illegible] of Baptism was to [sic] universal for him and without immersion and that only, (no other mode) all was lost. He may be candid in all his works, but this way of joining one church and then another often results in the destruction not only of the character of man, but leads to fanaticism. Although I could hardly think him to be that character who was not firm and unshaken, in the doctrines of Christianity.

I hope he may be successful in his calling and be instrumental in bringing many to Christ for I firmly believe if the Devil ever reigned [sic] or swayed the soul of mankind it is now, while this great rebellion is in [illegible]. The enlightened and civilized people of America hardly recognize the Almighty as a Supreme being, and seem to have forgotten that they owe to Him, even thanks for their first protection. Every thing is taken up, in the pleasures of worldly [sic] matter and the great future but little thought of [series of dashes are here]

The death of George Besore and Newkirk, was received in our Co. with more joy than sorrow, and most everyone was heard to say "two more Butter [illegible] gone up". This

is the sympathy Soldiers have for those infernal minions who are at home trying to check the progress of a reunion. The [illegible]st anathemes [sic], and the lowest regions of hell should be a mercy to these sort of humans. How can men for a mere foolish and political principle jeopardize their dearest rights on earth! O vain, are these men! They know not what peace and prosperity is. If they did, this great north with one terrific leap, would join heart and hand and with another, crush this mighty rebellion. This is the feeling of all the Soldiers, and when it becomes the feeling of both citizen and Soldier, we may look for a speedy termination.

Gen Sherman has arrived with reinforcements from the Mississippi. Our division of his troops passed here yesterday which the 26th ILLs 40th and 48th are in. We saw the two Co from our County in the 40th and 48th. Alex Banks, John Sheamer Winfield Wolf, [illegible] Breen and a great many others I might mention. Also Jacob S[illegible]g which went with Morrison in the 26th. The boys all look fat and hearty. The force is some 40 thousand coming through. The 63rd is along and expecting to pass here today.

When you send that box of things I want a bill of what it is, and you can add it to the balance other bill of what I owe you so that I can tell how much I am [illegible].

So far when you receive this last fifty if I understand right, My Cr is \$217.00 and Dr 15[illegible] [illegible] the addition of what you send to Dr. will be the way I have it.

The weather is tolerable mild excepting nights, which are pretty cool. We have [illegible]d houses up, but have not got our blankets yet, also overcoats.

If you have'nt [sic] sent that box yet, hurry it up as fast as possible and be sure to get the best of Boots also other articles and as soon as you send the box, let me know. I suppose you have an plus to your family. The disease must have been contagious in the Shepard family of late, by letters I have received. My love to Wife and Babies. Adieu, Your Brother.

A. Shepard

[Note:] Albert was 21 at the time and though parts are a little dramatic, its' [sic] evident that he is educated. His grammar and spelling appear fairly sound. From this letter we may develop some assumptions as to the character and personality of Mr. Shepard.

He appears to have a strong Christian faith and definite opinions. Albert and others in his company are not too unhappy upon hearing about the deaths of a Mr. George Besore and someone named Newkirk. Albert states "two more butter [missing] gone up" and further refers to "the infernal minions who are at home trying to check the progress of the reunion." Perhaps the completed word is "butterballs", and meant as a slur for obesity. The color of Confederate uniforms was often referred to as "butternut" and its' [sic] obvious that the term "infernal minions" was not meant in a complimentary way. Lincoln often spoke of the "reunion" in the context of bringing the seceding [sic] states back into the Union. Further, it could be that George Besore and Newkirk were

somewhat sympathetic to South. Afterall [sic], there were many Southerners that settled in lower, or southern Illinois.

I also have probate papers indicating that a Mr. George Besore, of Wabash County, was an attorney who was instrumental in settling the estate of Adams Shepard, Albert's father. Maybe there was some hard feelings concerning Mr. Besore's handling of the estate. Adams Shepard died just a few months before Albert enlisted in the Army [sic]

In later years Albert Shepard appealed for medical pensions on the basis of various on-going illness'es [sic] claimed as contracted during his his [sic] Civil War Service.

The Last Will and Testament made by Albert Shepard is dated March 19, 1900.

Various articles concerning news from "Linn" appear in the "Mount Carmel Register" during the month of May. The first is dated May 3, 1900.

"Albert Shepard is on the sick List."

"F.A. Shepard conducted business at Vincennes, Saturday."

"H.H. [see footnote below] Shepard and family, of Chicago, returned to their home near this place, Saturday."

[footnote: This could have been Albert's brother Morrill who we think had business interests in Chicago at the time. Did he return because of his brother's illness?]

The second article is an obituary dated May 10, 1900. It reads:

ALBERT SHEPARD

"Of Linn, While Temporarily [sic] Insane, Took His Own Life."

"The community was unspeakably shocked, Thursday morning, when the announcement was made that Mr. Albert Shepard, one of the most widely known citizens of the county, had committed suicide by hanging, at his home in Linn, that morning.

For some months past Mr. Shepard had been dealing in real estate, and looking after he landed interests of his brother, N.A. Shepard of Lebanon. The transactions had not gone his way and the worry and fear of financial ruin unbalanced him mentally. His friends had noticed his condition for some days but the idea that it would lead [end of article]