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CIVIL WAR LETTERS  
OF  
ARZA BARTHOLOMEW, JR.

Co. B, 21st Michigan Infantry

Enlisted Aug. 14, 1862

Died at Murfreesboro, Tenn., May 8, 1863

WRITTEN TO HIS WIFE, FRANCES

Compiled by  
George G. Christman  
17012 Country Club Road  
Spring Lake, Michigan

Camp Siegel

August 21, 1862

Dear Frank:

I improve the present moment of writing you a few lines to let you know how we are getting along. We arrived here all right. We are all well. At present we had orders not to give any furloughs until we were mustered in and then they promise to let us have a pass for 10 days. I have not been up to your fathers yet, as Eber is going to the town and he is in a hurry to go. I will close my letter for the present, so good Bye for the present. The Boys are all well and in good spirits. I must go and be examined.

Camp Siegel

August 22, 1862

Dear Frank:

We arrive at Camp all right and the prospect of our leaving is the same as it was when we came down, but I think you had better come up Wednesday if you can get this in time to take the cars in the morning, as Charles is here and will stay two or three days, so that you will have company and Nancy will probably come up with you. You need not bring anything up to eat. We will probably have our guns this week as they are at the quartermasters. I will not try and write any news at present. If you had rather wait a few days until we are mustered in, you can, for it will not be anyway likely that we shall leave for 2 weeks yet. We have not got our clothes yet. I will try and find your folks if I can. I can think of no more to write at present, so good Bye from your affectionate Husband,

Arza

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Camp Siegel

Sept. 10, 1862

Dear Frank:

As I have an opportunity of writing you a few lines and sending it to you by Mr. Albee, I thought a few lines might be acceptable. We are all well and I am getting hungry enough to eat a dog. We are ordered to start tomorrow at 9 o'clock. We were paid off yesterday. I will enclose \$20 for you and if you get a chance to let it for 10% with good security you can let it out, but if you can't, you may keep it. William encloses \$25, 15 for you to keep for him, and \$10 for you to give to father \$10 of it. The whole amount is \$45. I will write to you as soon as I get to my place of destination, so good Bye for the present.

A-za

PS That picture I told you I was going to get I would not take, for they was not right. William wants you to let his money with the rest if you can.

Camp near Covington, Kentucky  
Sept. 15, 1862

Dear Frank:

As I have a few leisure moments to spare, I will try and write you a few lines. We arrived here all right, Sunday at 10 o'clock after a pretty tedious ride of 2 days and nights. I never was tired of riding in the cars before. I will give you a description of the journey to this place. We had orders to start Friday morning. We broke up Camp at 4 o'clock in the morning of Friday. We packed up our knapsacks and marched to town and had a breakfast provided by the Citizens of Ionia. We had about 10 minutes to feed then we were marched to the cars and started for Detroit at 9 o'clock AM. We arrived at Detroit about 3 PM. We were marched through town about 1 hour and back to the Station where the citizens had a good supper provided which we did justice to, You may be sure, after waiting all day for dinner. We were kept in the station of the Detroit & Milwaukee railway where we had a fair view of the land of Canada. Then at 9 o'clock we were formed in and marched to the cars of the Detroit & Toledo Road and started off and went about 4 miles to the crossing of the Michigan Central Road when we were all fetched up standing by another train running into us and throwing the Engine from the track and smashing two of the cars of the other train to kindling wood, and waking all of the soldiers up rather suddenly. But as good luck would have it, no one was hurt except some noses were bumped rather hard. ~~after the excitement~~ After the excitement had subsided, we all went to sleep the best way we could until morning, when we all started out in the Country for breakfast. Then we started after the track was cleared, for Toledo, Ohio, where we arrive about noon. We were provided with Coffee and hard crackers. From there we were put in freight cars which the boys soon riddled to pieces. They were pretty cold when it came night, but we all stood it first rate. At 10 o'clock we got to Cincinnati and marched to the 5th street and market place where we were provided with a good breakfast, which we did ample justice to you, you may depend. We were received with demonstrations of joy by the people of Ohio. The excitement has somewhat subsided in Cincinnati. They told us they had shut up their stores and

turned out to either fight or work on the entrenchments which are very numerous. The country around Covington is very hilly and broken and every hill is fortified. Rifle pits are dug all over the country. I was somewhat warm yesterday when we got to the campground but I stood it better than some of the other boys. But it is new business to us all. Yet I think after we get a little used to it I think we will stand it first rate. We had to sleep on the ground last night but I never had a sweeter nights rest in my life. The dew wet the blanket completely. About 12 o'clock last night we were ordered to pack up our knapsacks and be ready to march. All was hurry and confusion, but the order came at last to lie down again. They took two of the companies of our regiment and took them somewhere, but I can't tell where as they have not come back yet. Our Officers know about as much about what is going on in camp as we do, ourselves. We are on the bank of the river called the Licking River, but I don't know whether it is or not, as we are not allowed to mingle with other regiments at all. There are apple trees on the ground where we are that looks as though they are a hundred years old. The boys are stripping the trees as fast as possible, but the apples are hard and sour. I could not eat any of them at all. There is a rumour that the 2nd Cavalry are here. There was a battery of Artillery passed us this morning that they said belonged to that regiment, but it may be a humbug. We have very poor water. The well water is good but the well failed before we got all of the canteens filled. I have the pleasure of seeing from where we are encamped, the place where the Rebels were a week ago, but they say that they are all left for Dixie. They took 6 prisoners Saturday and they had them to show there Sunday. Well I must close for the want of room. Write soon. Give my love to all. Good Bye. For the present direct my mail to Cincinnati, Ohio, 21st Reg., Mich. Inf. Co. G.

Arza

PS You must excuse bad writing for I have no accommodation but a cartridge box to write on. There is a perfect rush of mule teams all along the road. Write how Fathers eyes are.

Indianapolis, Indiana

Sept. 19, 1862

Dear Frank:

As the cars have stopped for a few minutes, I thought a few lines might be acceptable. I write under different circumstances than I did the last time I wrote you. Yesterday we received orders to pack in one hour but where we should go we could not tell. But we packed up and struck our tents and marched for Covington. When we arrived there we found a very heavy force there embarking on board steamer for down River. That is the Ohio. But when there were about half the force aboard it appeared there was not room so we marched to Cincinnati and there we took cars for someplace we were not informed, but the supposition was we should go to Louisville, Kentucky. But that I can tell better when we get to our journey's end. The Enemy were menacing Cincinnati and we have been ordered to be ready to march at a moments warning. Night before last we slept on our arms and we thought we should have a brush with Secesh but we were disappointed for the present but I can't tell how long it will be. I think the Rebels wanted to keep our army on the watch for an attack and they kept a driving our pickets in every night and occasionally killing a few. They shot two and took 10 of our men night before last. The Rebels are playing a pretty sharp game. They want us to watch one place while they made an attack on another place but we are going to follow them right up. The other letter I wrote you I thought we should stay in Camp Raynall but it is not for a soldier to know where he will be from one days end to another. I like it first rate, better than I thought I should. We live a good deal better than we did in Camp Sigel. The boys went out a hunting geese and hens every other night and we could get mile without paying for it. The boys are in high spirits I tell you. We have some of the old Heroes of Pea Ridge. We will start about two minutes.

One Hour Later...I thought I would bring my letter to a close as I have not a very good accomodation for writing. We have halt at a place called Sessore for a few moments and I wanted to write you a few lines. I will close for the present. Good Bye. I will write again soon. I would write more if it had time.

Direct to Louisville, Kentucky.

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Camp near Louisville, Kentucky  
Sept. 27, 1862

Dear Frank:

As Peter has got a letter and it stated that you had not got a letter from me, I thought I would write another. I have written 2 already and I will not try ~~to~~ and write the 3rd one and I hope that you will get it which I have no doubt of. We have been on the move almost day and night since we left Camp Sigel. I wrote you a letter on the cars at a station on the road between Indianapolis and Louisville. We got to Louisville about 10 o'clock at night. We were marched to a fair ground and we were ordered to lay down and rest. I never slept better in my life than I did that night. The next day we were marched to a Camp about 8 miles from Louisville. I am getting so that I can sleep on the ground as well as an Indian. I never in my life saw such a place for dust. It is from one to two and four inches deep, just as light as snow and when we march it is so thick that we can't hardly see the man in front of us, but it is done with for the present for it is raining at present. Well I must stop for the present for I have just been detailed for guard for the first time.

Sunday Morning. Well I will resume my letter again. It has cleared off very pleasant. I have seen the warmest weather here that I have seen this summer. Well I will go on with my description of our marches. We were ordered last Wednesday to strike tents and march. We did not know where but it proved that it was not far, only about 4 miles just to the east of the City on the common. We were ordered to march about 4 o'clock with our haversacks and no guns. We started and arrived on the field of action about dark, where we found a plenty of arms in the shape of shovels and pick-axes, where we fell to work on a rifle pit and were left at it until about 1 o'clock when we were relieved by another Regiment. We all lay down and took a very pleasant sleep until morning when we returned to our quarters. Now I must tell you about the battle we had with the Rebels the next night. After we marched to our new quarters about 4 o'clock in the afternoon the order came to put out for the rifle pits to meet the hostile foe. There were a few that remained in camp that had aches and pains too numerous to mention but there were a pretty fair turnout, considering the notice we had of it. We were marched to the pits with our hearts set upon a fight, but after locking in vain until darkness set in, we returned, covered with glory, to our camp. The next night and the next morning, the scene was enacted over again. That day we had orders to march again, we were marched to the other side of the town, where we are at present encamped, just back of the city. I must give you a description of the city. It is a very pretty place on the south side of the Ohio River. There are some splendid buildings in it, but of the female portion of the town, they are the worst looking specimens of humanity that I can say. They are so dirty that you can hardly tell the negro from the white population. I suppose all of the aristocracy here have left the city, but the black and white are all together in the same house. They all seem to be for the Union now. It is rumored that we are to march tomorrow, but we shall not know more than 4 hours before we start. There is an awful amount of men here at present. You can form no kind of an opinion of an Army until you have seen the men. They are all over the country now. Frank you must write to me as soon as you get a letter for this is the 3rd one that I have written to you. One to Father, & one to Amanda. The other boys all get letters and it makes me jealous, but I will look for one until I get it. Write often. The boys are all well but Frank Garrison & Rofs. He is lame with his foot & Frank is rather bilious but the health of the men is good. I must close for the present, bidding you good bye for about 4 days, if I can get a chance to write. This from your affectionate husband.

Arza Bartholomew

Write where you have got that Note of True Castle and all of the money.

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Hqs. 21st Mich. Inf. in Camp on Mill Creek

Friday, Oct. 5, 1862

Dear Frank:

As I have a few leisure moments I thought I would answer your letter. I received it Monday and have neglected until now to write to you, as Willie wrote a letter the next day to father and I had not much time to write. You wanted me to write to Patience and \_\_\_\_\_ and I went right at it and wrote a letter to both of them. I fancy you will excuse me this time at any rate. It is snowing quite hard this morning. It commenced about daylight this morning and the ground is quite white at present (noon). We just came in from Picket. We have to go on about once in 5 days. It is not very disagreeable to stand Picket. There is something exciting about it. When the Rebels are about a mile from you, there is no danger of the boys going to sleep on duty.

I suppose you have pretty nice times out there by this time. Sleigh riding, probably. I shall not get a ride this winter for the snow does not stay on long enough to amount to anything. The people say that live here that they never have any snow to last over a day or two at a time. It is very pleasant weather here this fall. It is very dry and warm most of the time. We are looking for rainy weather all the time but it holds off pretty well. Well Frank, I can't think of anything to write at all. There is talk that we shall make an advance but there is no signs of it yet. The papers say that just as soon as the Cumberland River rises so that we can get supplies, we shall move. There is some skirmishing all along our line almost every day, but it don't seem to affect us much, for all we know of it is the firing. We have not been called on yet. I think I had better ~~mak~~ make a family letter of this and write to Father & Mother both, as paper is pretty scarce here at present. Well good bye, I remain your affectionate husband.

Arse

Dear Father & Mother:

As I still have a little room left I thought I would write you a few lines to let you know that I have not forgotten you. We are all well at present with the exception of William & Silas. Wm. had got a cold but I guess that it will not amount to much as he is getting better and Tip is a little better than he was, as he is so as to be around, but not very well. I hope that he will get so as to be on duty pretty soon. William is so as to be on duty and has been all the time. I think his cough is caused by traveling in the dust. I was very sorry to hear that your eyes were so bad, but I am in hopes that you will not have as hard a time as you have with them. I suppose you are getting a little news by this time, from Washington, as Congress has convened. I have not seen the President's Message yet. Probably you have got it before this time. I was very glad to get those papers in my letter but it takes rather too much of my letters and I like to get a full letter when I get one. I would like to have you send me a Weekly Paper that has got the Congressional proceedings in. Either the N. Y. Tribune or the Detroit Weekly. There is no use of sending a daily here. Since the road is opened from Louisville, the other boys get their paper regular. You can have it sent direct from the office or any other way that you see fit. Mother, I want you to help Frank take care of my young soldier and don't let him enlist until I get back. I suppose you have great times feeding him on Catnip and saffron. I want you to tell me what for a looking fellow he is. Frank rather praises him up which is natural for a mother. I must bid you good bye. I remain your affectionate son.

Arse Bartholomew, Jr.

Park Barrack

Oct. 6, 1862

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Dear Frank:

I received your much welcome letter Sunday evening and you may be sure was glad to hear from you once more and to hear that you were all well. I don't want you to think that I am dangerous, although I am down a little at present. The day that William wrote you that letter, that day I was out on picket and took a cold and it pulled me right down, although I have been able to be around the whole time. Yet I am too weak to follow the Regiment. There was a general forward movement of all of the troops commencing Wednesday and I was left behind with several others that was not able to carry their knapsack. Mr. Ross was left behind. He had got a very bad foot. It is all broke out. I guess he will get his discharge but it is not certain. There are men here that have been lame for a year and can't get their discharge. I was very sorry that I could not go with William but there is no chance to help one another in a march. They have had a pretty hard march of it. There is a man here that whot himself while on picket duty and he says they put them right through at the rate of 20 miles a day, and I heard that the most of the boys threwed their knapsacks away. They are bound to catch old Bragg if it takes a let. At any rate I hope so. He is a slippery old fellow to deal with. I can't tell where Williams is but I think if any of them can stand it he can, for he gets fat every day that he is here. He did not have as heavy a load as some of the boys, but it is heavy enough. I don't know wher Mr. Ross is, but probably you do. I left him in town but I think he is in the Hospital. He told me he was going to write that day.

Well as I had hardly room to finish my letter on the other sheet I will take another. I suppose you would like to know how I am situated. It is a very large brick building about 2 miles out of town, with first rate water and plenty of air, which they don't have in town, for it is the stinkiest place that I ever saw in my life. It would do you good to see the shades. Sunday night the streets are lined with them in their best clothes. They dress better than anyone I ever saw in the North. I believe that they are a great deal better off here than they are at ~~any other place~~ any other place you can put them. They seem to be contented and have enought to eat and drink. We are, and you can hunt the State over and you can't find a nigger that is as well off as they are here. Well I will write more on that subject for it might be considered by some of the friends as rather niggary. You must not neglect to write about all our wordly affairs. I want to know how much grain we have got and how much potatoes and buckwheat too. And how much it costs to thresh the grain and if John wants anything. He must take the wheatas he agreed to. I hardly thought that John would try to take the advantage but it is hard telling what a man will do until he has a chance. You must not worry about me for I am not what you can call sick only a cold and that is getting better. I can't tell how soon I can get to the Regiment for they are a good way off from here at present. Well I will bring my letter to a close. You must excuse me for writing with a pencil for I have nothing else to use. Direct to Park Barrack, Louisville, Ky. Don't put on the Regiment nor Company. When I leave here I will let you know more than at present. From your affectionate husband,

Arza

Camp on Mill Creek

Oct. 10, 1862

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Dear Frank:

As William was writing to father and he was stopped pretty suddenly and did not mail his letter on that account, I thought I would drop you a few lines to let you know that I was all right yet. Well, I suppose you would like to know what stopped William from sending his letter. We came very near having a little skirmish. We heard several pretty heavy guns and we were ordered to have everything in readiness to leave at a moments notice. About noon they began to shoot pretty fast off to the south of us and so we were taken about a mile out but the secesh failed to come up to the scratch and they ceased firing and we have not heard of them since. We were allowed 15 minutes to get some supper and get ready for another march. We went out about a mile on the pike and lay there in line of battle all night. We had a pretty strong forcea at that point together with a section of our Battery, but morning came and no rebels came. We had just finished a cup of Coffee when we were once more ordered to fall in and we were marched back toward camp. But to our surprise, when we came as the paddy says, where the camp was, it was not there and we went on a short distance in the rear of the division and found all of our tents and camp equippage, so that our position is changed from the front to the rear of the division. Of course I know nothing of the reason for the change. We are about 1 mile nearer to Nashville now than we were before, but how long it will be so remains to be seen. We are on a very pleasant campground. It is in a piece of woods and plenty of water close by. We have very good water since we came to Tennessee. Oh, Frank, I must tell you about our adventure yesterday. The old Colonel came to our Captain and told him to take ten men, one from each Company, and go out in front and see if we could find any Grey-backs (What he calls Rebels). But the Captain did not want to go unless he would let him take his own men, so he told him to choose his men and he called for volunteers. William and I went out with him. We scouted about 2 hours and to his disappointment we found nothing but our own soldiers. We went to an old Slaveowner and had a good chat with the old lady. They are all Union at present. I believe if they could vote their state back into the Union they would do it by a large majority, but they don't know which will hold the state yet, but I hope they will not be in doubt long. I think as soon as the River raises, that we shall make an advance, but it keeps very dry here yet. It is very pleasant here at present. There is frosty nights here now, but the days are very pleasant. We had a little snow here last week, all gone now. Peter Ross got a letter from Mrs. Forss the 7th. She got to Louisville all right but she found no Peter there. He has given up of getting his discharge at present at least, for his foot don't look very bad now, but I guess it would break out if he was to march again. Well I must bring my letter to a close for I have got to help the boys pitch the tent and it is getting late. Give my love to all. Tell Amandy and John that I got their letter and I will answer it just as soon as I can. I got the one that you wrote with the lock of hair and have answered it. You must write often. I am well and tough as ever. Well Good Bye for the present. This from your affectionate Husband,

Arza Bartholomew, Jr.

to his old via via,

you understand

Park Barracks  
Sunday Mng. Oct 12, 1862

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Dear Frank:

I thought I would write you a few lines once more as I have got tired of waiting for a letter from you, but I suppose they have all gone to the regiment so I will excuse you for not writing. I suppose you write as often as you get a letter from me. I am getting a little better now but I don't get any strength at all. I have a kind of a dumb ague. I have a kind of a fever and chill every afternoon, but I am pretty well in the morning. I think I will be able to go to the Regiment in a few days but I can't tell how soon there will be a chance to get to it. Now Frank, I want to have you write all about our business and tell me how things go on in that place. I want to know hoe many potatoes there was for I suppose they are dug and how the Buckwheat turned out and what you have done with the hogs. If you can sell them do so, but if you can't sell them why you will have to fat them if there is corn enough. I want to know whether they have sowed the wheat on my place. In fact, I want to know all the news and some that are not news. They are news to me. Anything you can write is as acceptable here. I have not heard from William since I came here. We heard they was in the battle but I guess it is not so, for it was mostly Kentucky and Ohio men that were engaged in the fight. I want you to have father send me the paper for these papers here don't never tell anything about the Michigan troops at all. Have him direct them to Park Barracks and don't put the Co. or Reg. on at all. Well I can't think of any more to write at present for I have not had a letter since I wrote the last one. You must excuse me for writing with a pencil for I can't get ink to write with here, and I have no good place here anyway. I have not heard from Ross since I came here and I don't know where to write to him. If he has wrote home and you know where he is I want you to write and let me know so that I can go and see him. Well I can hink of no more this time so good bye,

From your affectionate Husband

Arza

Park Barracks  
Oct. 19, 1960

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Dear Frank:

I just received your kind letter of the 14th of Oct. and you can imagine something of the pleasure it gave me when I got it. I have been here almost 3 weeks and this is the first one that I have got since I came here. I got one just before I left the Reg. which I answered after I came here. I have not got the letter that you wrote about Jenette being killed. I wish you had of written the particulars of it. I suppose the letter that you wrote has gone to the Reg. but I may get it, for the letters that were directed to the Reg. are all here and there was a Lieutenant that got left by being sick is going to open the packages and the letters that belong to the soldiers that are sick, their letters are to be taken out and brought to them, so perhaps I shall get a letter tomorrow and if I do I will answer them immediately. I have not heard a word from ~~Mr. Ross~~ Mr. Ross yet, but I expect he is at some hospital in town. His foot was no better when I saw him last. We were all ordered to go to the hospital that were not able to march with the Reg. I had a pretty hard cold and had just taken a portion of Pills and was pretty weak so the Captain told me to stay and come with the Baggage, but the surgeon put a veto on that and ordered us to the Barracks and we were marched to town. They were so full that they could not take us in, so the most of the boys had to lie on the sidewalk, but I was more fortunate and so was Ross, for we went into a house and slept and the next day we were marched to this place. I am pretty well except the dysentery that makes me pretty weak but I don't think it will be very serious. I don't know when I can get to the Reg. for they are a good ways from here now. I have heard by men that came back from there and they say that the Companies are reduced to from 30 to 40 men so you see that I am not the only one that could not stand the march. The Boys all threw their knapsacks and overcoats away and all they kept was their blankets so that they could march easy. I heard that they marched 24 hours without stopping. That is enough to kill anything that is human. Our Orderly Sgt. was taken Prisoner on the march. He went to a spring and was taken prisoner, and paroled, and he is in town now. I want you should write about Jenette being killed for I may not get the letter at all, and I want to know the full particulars of it. You must keep up good courage for it may not be long before the war will be over and then I shall come home to my dear old woman and then you will be repaid for all of your trouble. You need not let anyone have the money without hand security and I am not very particular whether you let it or not. Well I must stop. We had preaching here today. No more at present, this from your affectionate husband.

Arna

Park Barracks  
Oct. 23rd, 1862

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Dear Frank:

I received your kind letter of the 19th and you may be sure I was glad to hear from you once more although I have nothing to complain of since I came here, in the line of letters. I have got 3 since I came to this place, two from you and one from Amanda. I got one from you and one from Amanda last evening and I thought I would answer it immediately. I have no news of importance to write at present. We were all ordered to pack up and go to the Reg. this morning but the commander of the barracks excused me from going on account of my health. I am pretty well, all but being weak. I have had the dysentery until I am pretty weak in the legs but it has entirely left me now, so that I am only weak. As soon as I get strength I shall be able to join my Reg. but it is hard telling when there will be another chance to get to the Reg. I have not heard from William yet. The Reg. is about 150 miles from this place and I suppose they are still on the march but I am not certain about that. The Rebels are still on the retreat and the supposition is that our Army will follow them up, but time will tell better than I or an other individual. I am very well pleased with the way you have managed the business, you are equal to any man. You may tell father that he can use his own judgment about what to sow the land to. I want it seeded down at all events. In the Spring, if it is possible for it to be sown, I think that Spring wheat will be the most profitable to both. Or Oats if it is too late and wet in the Spring for wheat, and I wish to have the ground that Rice clears put into wheat and seeded down when it is sown to wheat. Please write when that was to be done that Rice was to clear. I should like to know so that I could tell whether it is according to agreement or not.

Now I will try and describe a couple of Secesh soldiers that were brought into this camp this morning. You would think that they were anything but soldiers, they were dressed in a suit of cotton clothes colored a butternut color. Their coat and pants were of the same kind of cloth and such dirty looking fellows you never saw in your life. They were deserters from Bragg's Army. They said that there was two more with them, but they gave out on the road and stopped. I could not get a chance to hear them talk for they were taken to head-quarters and from there to town. The Rebels seem to be tired of fighting but they fight when they are drove to it like very devils.

I got a word from Ross the other day, that he was in No. 1 barracks, so I got a pass and went down to see him but I could not find anything of him. I was so tired that I could hardly get back to camp again. You wondered how it was that we did not know where one another was, but I am about 2½ miles from town and he is in town. Well I must bring my letter to a close. Tell Father not to send any more papers for I don't get any of them at all. You need not be afraid to write anything that you want to, for nobody but me will see it. I shall be very anxious to hear from you now, You may depend. Don't wait for a letter from me, but write every week. This from your affectionate husband

Arza

Sunday Morning, Nov. 2nd, 1862

Dear Frank:

I received a letter last night, bringing the news of your sickness. You may think me harted, but I was glad to hear that you had got through with what has been a source of great anxiety to me, and I know it had to you. But Thank God, I hope it is over with. I have been looking for a letter from you. It is a great relief to me at any rate. I left Louisville Saturday for the Reg. and came to their camp last night and found the Boys all well with the exception of being pretty tired with the marching, but they are all in good spirits and that is the main thing with a soldier. We are all resting today and can't tell how long we shall remain here but probably not long. But you know just as well as I do. Bragg has got away and it is hard telling whether we shall follow him or not. The Boys have been near enough to a battle to smell gun powder. I did not have the honor of participating, but I may yet, for all of that. I am very well pleased to get back to the Reg. once more. I can tell you it seemed like getting home, to see all of their faces once more. We are encamped in a very pretty place and we have good water which is everything in a camp.

Now Frank, I want you should take good care of yourself and the little one whose name I have not learned. I want you to hire someone to take care of you until you are perfectly well and able to work. But don't be in any hurry either about going to work for the cost is nothing to your health, which is everything to me. I am surprised to hear the weight of the soldier. He will be able to help a good deal by next summer, won't he. I want you to describe him to me in your next letter, yourself. I am afraid that others only make him a little more than he really is, but you can tell me all about it yourself. I would have been glad to have been there but it was otherwise and can't be helped. But keep up good courage for a little while and I will be with you again if the Lord spares my life. It seems as though I should be there in a short time. At any rate I hope this war will end by next Spring and it will if they will let the men have a chance to fight. But if they don't then there is no knowing anything about it.

Now I want you to keep the money unless you can let it for 6 months and with good security for I calculate to want it to use when I come and if it was out for a year, I could not get it to use.

My health is good now and I am getting pretty strong so that I think I can stand it first rate. Please excuse bad writing for I have no chance at all. Tell Father that I thank him and mother for writing to me and just as quick as I can I will answer it.

Give my love to all. Now take good care of yourself and write soon. Direct to the Reg. as you did before I left it. Good bye for the present from your affectionate husband

Arza

Mitchellville, Tennessee

Nov. 6th, 1862

12

Dear Franks:

I write under different circumstances. Only 2 days ago we left Bowling Green and now we are in Tenn., but only just over the line. We had a pretty hard march of 2 days but we all stood it first rate. It was a little hard on my feet for I have lain still so long that my feet was tender.

There is a rumor that we shall stay here for a while and guard this place. The 1st Mich. Engineers and Mechanics are here, and they are going to build a storehouse that Rebels burned. There is a piece of the road they they destroyed. There is a tunnel about a mile and a half that they run a train of cars into from each end and set fire to them and blowed the tunnel up and they say that there has been a fire in there for 2 months and it will be something of a job to clear it out and if we are allowed to stay here and guard this place until they get the Road in running order we shall have to stay quite a while.

There is a great difference in the feelings of the soldiers since Buell has been relieved of the command of this army. They think that if Rosecrans gets a chance at the Secesh that they won't get away as easy as they have before. We have got some Generals that will give them fits if they get a chance at them. Well I hardly know what to write. I have not heard of any news since I left Louisville. We can't get any news while we are on the move that there is any dependence in, but if we believed all we hear we should all be at home in 2 months. The Wisconsin troops all voted for their State Officers but the people of Michigan don't think their soldiers votes are worth anything, but I hope they will elect the best men. I don't think that the troops are ~~iscreet~~ well enough informed to tell who they do want to vote for. The Misc. troops went Democratic. That is the majority.

I just wish that you could see the country that we have come through. There is hardly a fence left in the state of Kentucky and they will take just what they want if they are short of meat they will take the last cow a man has and poultry is free for anyone and so is hogs and sheep. You know but little of the horrors of war where it is carried to such an extent as it has been in this state. There is the poorest houses in this state that I ever saw in my life. We would hardly think of wintering our cattle in them, but the Rich have good houses but no barns. I have not seen anyplace that I like as well as I do our own state. It is either all stone or clay as hard as a stone. We are filling our Reg. with contrabands. Our Capt. has two and every Officer almost has frog one to two apiece. I expect each Non-commissioned Officer will have one before we get through but if they all liked them as well as I do, they would not have as many shades in camp as they do now. After they have been in camp a little while they are the biggest men in the mess. I have no confidence in a nigger at all. If they should get with the Rebels they would tell them all they knew. Well enough of the nigger. The boys are all well and in good spirits and prettymuch all are writing to their wives and sweethearts. William is dipping his pen into the same inkstand to write to Pather and Eber is the same way writing to Burt Hancock. Lew and Sil are well and both writing. Tell Mrs. Ross that the Capt. has sent his, that is Ross's descriptive roll to him. Tell here to write to Ross to that effect. I did not see him while I was in Louisville. I was in town 2 days and did not see him at all. Give my love to all and tell Father take good care of the boys and tell me who he looks like for I want to know whose it is for you know I have my doubts about the fellow, for I expected a girl. Write twice a week direct to Louisville just the same as you have. Well ~~enough~~ I have wrote nonsense enough. Don't worry about me for I am well and tough as a bear. From your affectionate husband

Arza

Mashville, Tenn.  
Wednesday Nov. 12, 1862

13

Dear Frank:

I take my seat on my knapsack once more to write you a few lines to let you know how I am getting along. We arrived in this place last Monday about 2 o'clock in the afternoon and went into camp in a piece of woods about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from town on the north side of the River. It is a very good camp in the woods. We have to bring our water from the Cumberland River, that there was so much fighting done on last winter. I will give you a description of the River and the other great sights to be seen as far as I have had an opportunity of going and that is not far. The River at the present stage of water is about  $\frac{1}{2}$  as large as Grand River but if it comes up to high water mark, it must be quite a little stream, for they say that it raises 60 & 70 feet higher than it is at present. It is very low now. The Rebels have done a great deal of damage here. They destroyed a most splendid suspension Bridge that crossed the River, that could not have cost less than a million dollars and another that was built with piers and timber that was a pretty costly bridge. It looks hard to see so much property destroyed, as there is on the whole road that we have traveled over. It is amusing to see us as soon as we stack our arms for the night when we go into camp. There is a perfect stampede for rails. The fences move off as is by. Every man does his best to get the most rails he can. Well we have got to go on battalion duty

Wednesday evening. I will try and finish my letter this time. We had a Brigade drill this afternoon and we had the honor of seeing Gen. Rosencrans and having him inspect us. I like the looks of him very well. The soldiers all have perfect confidence in him and think that where he goes that the Seesh will be made scarce. I suppose you will want to know when we left Mitchelville. We left there Saturday about noon and traveled 5 miles and Sunday we resumed our march and made 20 miles before we went into camp for the night. We can't pay much respect for the Sabbath here a soldiering, sometimes. We marched 12 miles on Monday and got through by noon. Oh, by the way, I had almost forgotten to tell you that the Wolverines are the best company in the Reg. When we traveled 20 miles in a day, and the dust so thick that a man could not hardly see the man in front of him, we all stacked our arms at night and the other companies were not more than  $\frac{2}{3}$  up with the company at night. I tell you the old Colonel noticed it and the next day they wanted an advance guard for fear of Gen. Morgan as he cuts some strange pranks in these parts with our Baggage Trains. So who does he pick for the position but the Ottawa Wolverines and we loaded our old Rifles with the hope of showing his Rebel head but he disappointed us for once and the guns are loaded yet. I think that we have got Old Kentucky pretty well cleaned. There will probably be a few bushwhackers but it is hard to tell who they are for. They are good loyal citizens when we are there, but as soon as we are gone and they can pick up a few sick men and get a wagon train, they are soldiers. We had a pretty good rain here last night, the first I have seen of any account since we came to Kentucky. Frank, I want you to write all of the news for a newspaper is a luxury that we are not blessed with here. Write the war news for we have all kinds of rumours. One day they will tell that Richmond is taken and another that England and France had ordered us to stop fighting and it keeps us in doubt all the time. So you need not be to it for news for me at any time, and write twice a week at least. Tell father that I did get the one that Wheeler spoke about. I guess you directed to the Barracks. Well I will have to bring my letter to a close for I have filled my sheet pretty well this time. The boys are all well. William & Sile are writing by the same candle that I am. My health is 1st rate since I got back with the Boys. You must take good care of the boy and tell me what you have named him and when he is large enough get his and your likeness taken and send it me by mail for I want to see how the fellow looks. I suppose you will think he is handsome as can be, considering his parents. Tell father to write to me if he can see to write and I will answer if we stay long enough in a place.. Well I will bid you good bye and a good kiss for you and the little one. Give my love to all. This from your Affect. husband

Apsa

You wanted me to send a name for the boy. Now it is hard for me to tell what name I do want for him. If I could see him I could tell better what to call him. I would much rather you would name him yourself, but you can write and tell me what you want and I will tell you in my next, what to call him.

14

Nashville, Tenn.

Sunday Morning, Nov. 16th, 1862

Dear Frank:

As it is Sunday and I have a few moments to spare I thought that I could not spend it better than by writing you a few lines to let you know how I am getting along, although I wrote only 3 or 4 days ago, but I promised to write every opportunity and I am going to fulfill every promise that I am able to and I want you to do the same for there is no regular mail here yet, but there will be, just as soon as they get the Railroad done. They think it will be done in a week or two. I have not had a letter since the day I got to Bowling Green but that doesn't discourage me in the least for I have written 4 since I got any. I shall keep doing just the same until I get home and I don't think that will be a great while, if they give us a chance to fight them. I guess that they will do that for Gen. Rosenorans is putting things right. Though the state of Kentucky is pretty much clear there are a few Bushwhackers, but it is hard finding them out for they are good loyal citizens but just as soon as we are gone and they can get a chance to cut off a few wagons they will do it, but they get fooled a little once in awhile. There is an immense army here. You can form nothing of an opinion of it without seeing it. We are encamped about 1 mile from the River where the City is. We are on the north side of the River and the principal part of the city is on the south side. I gave you a full description of the place in my other letter and I think you will get that without any doubt. If you don't, I will tell you more in my next. There ~~is~~ is nothing of importance to write from here. I am getting so ignorant that I hardly know who is president of the United States, and consequently I want you to write what the news are, for I have not had a paper since we left Louisville. They will not carry a paper if they have a great deal of mail so you will be doing me a great favor by writing often and writing all the news. Write what the prospect is of peace and if there is any talk of intervention. I can't tell whether I am pleased with the election or not but I rather think I am. Probably father will think I am getting to be a Democrat, but I guess not, but I am glad that Church was elected over Kellogg. I think Kellogg was too much of a fanatic to suit me and I believe that Church was a good Union man. There has got to be good sound Union men to settle this war and no fiery abolition fire-eaters. I am getting perfectly disgusted with these Contrabands. There is no trusting one of them. They will steal the last cent a man has. The Captain got two of them and one was so honest that he wanted to borrow a revolver of Milo Hatch and he lent it to him, and he borrowed a good jack-knife of another fellow and he left and forgot to come back again. It was amusing to see how eager the Officers were to get a nigger to wait on them. The Old Chaplain got two and one of them stole his Revolver and left for town and forgot to come back also. I have an idea that the nigger is about played out. I hope that our place will never be blessed by one more of them than there is now. Will I will say no more of the nigger at present. The boys are all well at present. William is on guard today. The Lieut. Colonel died last night. He was ~~sick~~ not sick over 5 days before he died. The Boys did not like him as well as they do the other Officers but he was a brave man for all of that. Lew & Sile are well. There is a good many a little sick but not many that are very sick. Well I can think of no more at present. You must write often, twice a week at least. Tell father to write the news to me for I don't know anything at all. If I was obliged to stay here 3 years I would not know what state I belonged to. Write all about the young soldier that you have found and tell me all about the young chap for I would like to form some kind of an idea about him. I hope you are well. Lew got a letter today from Matilda and she did not say anything about you. I suppose you have cold weather there now. We have quite mild weather here. It is raining here today but very slow. It has been dry all summer. Baber is off foraging. He was out yesterday and got a pig. They live on the country as much as they can. There is not much left now. No more at present so good bye. This from your affectionate husband.

A sa

On picket 8 miles South of Nashville

Sunday, November 23, 1862

15

Dear Frank:

It is with heartfelt gratitude that I improve the present opportunity of addressing you once more through the medium of the pen, although it has been 3 weeks since I have received a scratch of a pen from anyone. The day I left Louisville I got one letter from Dr. Miles and Father and that is the last time I have received myself, but the other boys got letters so that I hear from home once in awhile. We left Nashville yesterday and I suppose it is a prelude to an advance, but of course I can't tell until it is fairly under way, but things begin to look a little that way. They have the Railroad about complete so that there is not the trouble to get supplies that there was before, as the provisions had to be transported 30 miles by team and it took a very strong force to guard a train for fear of the Rebel Cavalry which tried to capture ~~xxxx~~ a train that was going through the mountain but they failed for the want of men which is very often the case with them. There is a pretty large force here at present but I can't tell the amount of men. The country is all alive with camps and teams all over the country, foraging, which is a pretty profitable business for Uncle Sam as his boys are very faithful hands at it. We get a little fresh meat now and then just as soon as we get into camp last night there was a perfect rush for Pork which was plenty and fat as mud. I must tell you a little anecdote of our Brigadier. He was riding around looking at things in general when a gun was discharged that attracted his attention and he rode over that way to ascertain the cause when he discovered our old friend Lew and a couple more of the boys at work skinning a fine porker (which by the way is the only mode of dressing a hog that we have in this part of the Confederacy) when our friend thought best to leave his prize and pretend to be carrying rails for a fire when the old fellow followed him up until he got close enough to speak to him when he said that those fellows was making off well. Says he, I would not take anymore than I wanted and especially of the rails. Two or three ought to do for a man. You may be sure we had a good ham for our squad that night. We can live likd fighting cocks for awhile in this country, for the pigs and hens are plenty here, and we have learned to board with them, if they have anything to eat which by the way, is not always the case where we have been, for where the Army moves they take everything there is to eat for man or beast. Well I can think of no more news to write, so I will write something of our health. We are all well at present and able to eat the Rations that Uncle Sam furnishes together with all that we pick up which is quite an item, and sometimes quite a luxury. Oh, I had almost forgotten. There was a very sad tragedy took place the other day in camp. One of our comrades that messed with us was taken sick and lay in the tent for about 3 or 4 days when he was taken to the Hospital tent and stayed there one night and the next morning he came to our tent and stayed awhile and told us that the Doctor was going to take him to the Hospital. In about 2 hours we were informed that he had shot himself. Sure enough, he committed suicide by putting a Revolver to his forehead and blowing his brains out. We can't ive any reason for such conduct in a soldier ~~for xxx~~ For ny part, I prefer waiting and letting nature take her course. Well I will have to bid you a good Bye, hoping that you are ~~xxxx~~ more fortunate in getting letters of mine than I am of you. Write the news and direct to me as father did to William, and I will bid you a good Bye. This from your affectionate Husband and the father of 10 pounds of boy.

Arza