

Alfred Shannahan Letters

May the 17th, 1862

Camp near corrinth [sic], Mississippi [sic]

Dear Miss

I take my seat to write a few lines to let you know that I received your letter and was deprived of the privelege [sic] of answering it. There was [sic] no letters allowed to go out of camp for two weeks. We can send letters now. I was glad to hear that you was well and that Miller could go around. I am not very well at the present time but still I am able to do my duty. Warrie [sic] was taken sick in a few days after the fight and he was sent to New albany [sic] I guess and I have not heard from him yet. I expect he has gone home if he was not to [sic] sick. It is very warm weather here. We are fixing for another big fight soon. There is skirmishing every day. I can hear the cannons roar at the present time. We are within five miles of corrinth [sic]. I saw Newton Donaldson not long ago. He was well. Old John Mccurtain [sic] was over to see me the other day. He stands soldiering prety [sic] well. I would like to hear from Ike very much. We got paid of [sic] since the fight. We got four months pay. We will soon have ripe peaches down here. I saw wheat and oats that was getting ripe. There is some corn down here that is ho [sic] eight inches high. We are in a sort of a wilderness. There is not much raised here. It is a heavy timbered country. Now and then a little farm. As I have to go on gard [sic] prety [sic] soon I will close my ill composed letter trusting we may meet again.

Write soon. Tell Miller to write. Give my love and best wishes to all enquiring friends and take a share for your self. You must look over all mistakes for I wrote this letter in a hurry.

I will try and do better next time.

From your friend  
A Shanahan  
Lib Benjamin

Camped at Manchester the 6th of August

Most highly esteemed friend

It is with great pleasure that I attempt once more to write you a few lines to inform you that that I am well and that I have not entirely forgotten you although it has been a long time since I last wrote and when you hear my reason for not writing I think you will excuse me for not writing sooner. I have been on duty every day except one since we commenced to get out railroad ties and that was about one month ago. I was sent out 8

miles to guard [sic] the railroad and was out there ten days. The officers are very strict on us. We have to do a great deal of duty. I have not seen Ike since the night that we wrote Miller a letter. The boys are very busy baking pies. There is more black berries and huckle berries here that I ever saw before.

I wish you and Jane would step over next Sunday and if you will I will go with you to the best black berry patch that you ever saw. Our captain is about to leave us. He is trying to get into a negro regt. I have not seen any black troops yet but there is plenty of them in some parts of the army. Lib they are talking of giving fifteen days furloughs but you need not look for me untill [sic] you see me. The rebels are about played out in this part of the world. There is some comes in about every day from down around Chattanooga. They say that they are all leaving old Bragg. I think there is some prospect of this war coming to a close. I dont [sic] think that our regt [sic] will do any more hard fighting. We have ripe peaches here and plenty of roasting ears. I expect that there is more roasting corn out here than for corn. Crops are behind.

I will give you some of the prices that we have to pay. For butter 50 cts [sic] potatoes (200) two dollars per bushel. Coffee was six dollars a pound before we came here. Sugar one dollar and a half [sic] per pound. There was a citizen told me the other day that it could not hardly be bought for that. Tell Jane that I am going to write her the next letter I write to White. I started to write her one about three weeks ago and got it about half done when I was detailed to go on duty and then I did not get any chance to write for awhile and I did not send it.

Well I believe I have wrote enough for this time. Excuse all my mistakes and bad writing. I would like to see you all and James especialy [sic]. Give my best respects to all and you know that you have my best wishes in every thing.

You must excuse this short letter for it was wash day with me.

From your friend and well wisher  
A Shanahan

To Miss Elizabeth Benjamin  
in, camp, at, Manchester, Coffee, County Tenn [sic]  
Company (G) 9th Ind Vols  
2nd Brigade 2nd Division  
21rst [sic] Army Corps  
Army of the Cumberland  
Tenn [sic]

Write soon  
Good bye

Cow Camp Jackson  
Camp Andrew Jackson  
Nashville Tennessee  
Sunday March 9th 1862

Dear Miss

I take my seat with pen in hand to answer your welcome letter. It found us all improving. I got your letter at Louisville [sic]. We was on our road to this place. I was glad to hear that you was well. We left the ones that was not able for duty at Louisville [sic]. Ike and Miller was not able to stand guard and they was left there. I have not heard from them since. We have fine weather here since we got here. There is a large force at this point. They are mostly Indiana boys that is here. The tenth is here and I saw Newton Donalson. He looks better than I ever saw him. His regiment got here the next day after we did. They are camped four miles from us. He says that Sant is in the 40th regiment. I have saw several boys that I knowed [sic] in Jasper. The fifteenth is coming here. Old Nelson makes up put on a good deal of styl [sic] more than the boys likes. We have to salute all the officers when they pass us. There is not as many sick in the regiments now as while we was in fetterman [sic]. I was mistaken when I wrote that Joseph Shafer was well. A day or two before I wrote to you I saw Joe and sat and talked with [sic] him more than an hour. He was well then and in a day or two I heard that he was dead. He took the measles and they went in on him. He was not sick long. We was on the boats eight days and on the cars three days. I got awful tired of riding on the boats. We did not have any thing to eat on the march but raw meat and crackers. That was pretty [sic] hard living we thought. When we got to Clarksville [sic] we got some sesesh [sic] hams that was taken at the fight at fort Donalson [sic]. I believe that they have a better living than we do. I think that the war will be over before long. There is enough here I think to clean the rebels out clear to the coast of Alabama [sic] and they are still coming. There is a great many talking of joining the regulars.

Well Lib, Miller and Ike was taken good care of. One of our company waited on them and there is no better persons among sick and at night we would go and set up. Well Lib I wrote Julie a letter and have not got any answer and I am waiting for an answer. You must tell her to write. Lib did you write all of that letter? The last part of it had no name to it and I did not know where you wrote it or not. Please let me know.

Write soon.

Coffee is one dollar per pounds, sugar 25 cts [sic] a pound, salt 15 cts [sic] per pounds, other things in proportion. Write soon and give all the news.

No more at this time but still remain your sincere friend untill [sic] death. Good bye.

Alf to Lib Benjamin

March the 10th 1862

My dear friend and relation

I now seat myself on the battle field to let you know that I am still alive. I was in the fight all day and it was a hard fight. The balls came very close to me but never hit me. Four of our company was killed and several wounded some slightly. They attacked our force on Sunday and run our men out of their tents and at night our force was hemed [sic] up in a little hudle [sic] at the landing. We got to the river at Sundown that is our division and we crossed the river after night and stood in line of battle all night and early monday [sic] morning we marched in persuit [sic] of them. We did not go far before the reports of the guns told us that they were close. Our line of battle extended seven miles. We drove them back several miles. The ground was strewn with dead and wounded. Our adjutant was shot early in the action. I will give the names of the killed in our company. Charles Guild a sargeant [sic], privates Bill Thomas, Frank Reeding, and Bill stretch [sic] was wounded and died in short time. There was a bout ten wounded mostly slightly. I think there was not more than 20 killed out of our regiment and our forces engaged was about 2 hundred thousand. The Sesesh [sic] had a big force. I heard that Miller had gone home. If he is at home you can tell him that this fight was not like the green brier fight. Warrie was struck with a spent ball. The balls fairly shaved me. I thought they would hit me with all the dodgeing [sic] I could do. You must write soon and if Miller is at home tell him to write. I must close as my ink is full my paper is all blotted. The Sesesh [sic] are about ten miles from here. It is likly [sic] that we will have another fight soon. I want to hear from Ike and Miller the worst way. Excuse all mistakes and bad writing. They have not got all the sesesh [sic] buried yet. I must quit writing. Give my love and best wishes to all enquirring [sic] friends.

No more this time.

Write Soon.

Give all the news

Alfred Shannahan

to Miss Elizabeth Benjamin

Write soon and dont [sic] forget your old friend.

April the 26 1863

Dear Miss

I take my seat this morning to answer your kind and to me most welcome letter which I received yesterday. It found me well and I hope when these few lines come to hand they may find you well. I have nothing to write that will interest you and therefore you must excuse me for it is the same thing over and over every time. Ike and myself got a letter from miller yesterday. He was well except his finger and it was getting better. Lib you wanted me to write and let you know when I thought that I would go home. Wel [sic] I cant [sic] tell you. I may not get to go at all and I may get to go in a month but I

dont [sic] expect that I can get to go until fall if then. Your school will be out long before I can go. I would like to go this spring but they are not giving any furloughs yet. It was the order of General Rosecrans to give a limited number of furloughs and I dont [sic] see why in the duce [sic] they dont [sic] give one or two out of a company at a time. When we soldiers enlisted they promised us 40 days furlough out of every year and I have been in the service over 20 months and have not seen home. The weather is warm and every thing is green. The trees are all leaved out and the hills are all covered with their lofty cedars. Every thing is beautiful to behold and the wild birds of the air is singing their morning songs while I am hemed [sic] up here to be commanded by officers. Well Lib I heard the other day that Sally Burns was married to William Smith. I worked for his father two years and I think that she could not of [sic] done much worse. I may think wrong just because I dont [sic] like him. I glad to hear that you have been a good girl since you have been going to school and I hope you have improved your time while in the school room. We dont [sic] have preaching only about once in the six months and then it is out in the open air.

Lib I want you to write and let me know if Jane is at terre haute [sic] or married and if she is will you tell her for my sake to write me a few lines and let me know why she has not written to me. I wrote to her last but have never received an answer. I handed Ikes [sic] letter to him the same day that I received it. He stays at head quarters but his letters come to the company. He comes down to the company every evening to see if there is any mail for him. He has wrote several letters since I got him to commence. He thought he could not write so that any person could read it. You must excuse all mistakes and bad writing. Write soon and tell Jane to write if it is only a line or two.

Good Bye from A Shannahan  
to Miss Lizzie Benjamin

Chattanooga Oct 8th 1863

Dear Cousin

It is with the greatest of pleasure that I attempt to write a few lines in answer to yours of the 23rd which I received and was glad to hear from you once more. Your letter found me in good health and I trust that these few lines may find you enjoying good health. I have nothing of importance to write. We have had a big fight since I last wrote and we rather got the worst of it. We had to fall back to this point. The loss was heavy on our side in wounded. They lost as many or more than we did. We fought prety [sic] near the whole Southern Confederacy. We done well to get back to this place. They followed us up and are in our front in full force. We can see them march around their gards [sic]. They shelled us prety [sic] near all day the 4th but they did not hurt many. We have got this place well fortified. They cant [sic] drive us from here I dont [sic] believe. There was not any killed in my company. The loss of the regt [sic] was over one hundred if I am not mistaken. We have been heavily reinforced since the fight. Our reinforcements are from the eastern army. We have had very dry weather ever since

the 16 of august. There has been only one good rain in the last seven weeks and that was the 1rst [sic] of this month. The roads were very dusty. After marching all day you could of [sic] hardly told that we once was white. We have had some prety [sic] cool nights with heavy frosts. To day is as beautiful a day as I could wish for. I was in hopes that my letter would find James in better health. Ike is in good health. He is still driving head quarter teams. Lib I wish you would step over to Chattanooga and bring me some peaches for we have not had any since we crossed the tennessee [sic] river and we are on half rations. I presume that uncle has got some gentler horses that he used to have or he would not let you and Jane drive them. I would think you would look quite antic with your hair shingled off. Since I began to write this letter they have begin to fire the cannon off to our right. Just so they dont [sic] trouble me while I am writing. I dont [sic] care how much they shoot.

I would like to be at home to go to some of them union meetings. I believe that I will have to kill some of them copperheads in Jasper when I get home. I have picked out three of the strongest butternuts. I have seen some of their letters that they wrote to some of the boys. I would like to be at home to go to school with miller this winter. Lib tell Jane that I say I am getting very angry at her for not writing to me. I have wrote her a letter that she has not answered and am going to write another some of these fine days. I feel in hopes that she will write some of these times. If she dont [sic] write soon I will not ask her to my wedding.

Well I well [sic] have to close for the firing has commenced all a long our lines. I send my best wishes to Bill and Etna. What happened to Sim's folk? I never hear any thing of them.

I send my love and best wishes to all my friends. Write soon and give all the news. Excuse all mistakes for I was in a hurry and I am so nervous that I can hardly write at all N.B. They have been having high times out in Jasper with the butternuts. I will close hoping to hear from you soon.

I still remain as ever your friend  
A Shannahan

Well I will try to get my letter finished. This I had ready to seal up when I was called on for fatigue duty. It so dark that I cant [sic] hardly see to write. The firing has ceased. It was our men shelling the reb [sic]. They are moving to our right. They did not return the fire. Well I will close for I have not got any light and I cant [sic] see to read what I hav [sic] wrote. I remain as ever

your friend and well wishes  
A Shannahan

Detachment 9th Ind Vol Feb 20th (64?)  
Camp at Blue Springs Tenn [sic]

Dear Miss

I take my seat to write you a few lines in answer to yours of the 26 of last month which I received yesterday and was truly glad to hear from you once more and to hear that you all was in good health. I am well except a bad cold and trust that those few lines may find you in good health. I have nothing to write that will be very interesting only that we have been marching some since I last wrote. We are about 40 miles above Chattanooga on the rail road leading to Knoxville. We are at a town called Cleveland. It is a very nice town and the citizens are all union. Our division was the first troops that was camped here. You never seen a glader [sic] set than they were when we went into camp here. We have been camped here over a week. The rebs [sic] have been prety [sic] shy. There is some cavalry that scouts through the country to conscript all of the citizens that they can find. There is a great many citizens moving to Ind [sic] and Ills [sic]. There was two or three familys [sic] went to White County. There is some talk of us going to Knoxville before long but it is only camp rumor I think. We have had several prety [sic] cold days. It is some warmer today. We have good times. We got our pay the other day and it come in at the right time for the boys was prety [sic] near all out of money and here we can buy a most any thing. This is the best country that we have been camped in for a long time. Our regt [sic] was out on a scout the other day and the women and what few men we saw was the gladest [sic] set that I ever saw. The girls would sing us some very nice songs. They all say that they like the yankees [sic] but they dont [sic] want to have any thing to do with the rebs [sic]. They would hoist the stars and stripes as we passed nearly every house. The citizens of Cleveland raised the flag the other day that they used to before the war broke out. There is a great many deserters come in to our lines from the rebs. If they continue to come in as they have for the last two months. I dont [sic] think that they will have much of an army by the time I get out of service. I think that one or two more hard fought battles will end the rebellion.

Lib I was afraid that Miller would go into the service with Ike but I would rather hear of him staying at home. He may stand the service better this time if he goes and I hope he will. You must try to keep him at home untill [sic] I get there and then I will talk to him and get him out of the notion of enlisting and then we will go to California to dig gold. I would like to see the Veterans. The talk is afloat here thus the 9th is on their way back to this division. If they are they did not get to stay at home as long as they expected. I should like to be at home to go to some of the nice parties that you have. I hope you have a merry time. Well I will be at home some of these fine days. Lib what is the reason that I cant [sic] get a few lines from Jane? I have wrote two letters to her and have not had the first scratch of a pen from her since. I am waiting for answers patiently. I got a letter from Mollie Thompson the same day that I got yours. Well I have wrote all that I can think of at present. I send my best wishes to uncle and aunt and to all the rest. The health of this army is good. I dont [sic] think that there will be any fighting very soon in this department. But I think that the most of the hard fighting will be done with this army. That is if the rebs [sic] try to get back Tenn [sic] which I think

there is no danger of them getting. The rail road is in running order to Charleston 12 miles above this place. It will soon be running to Knoxville. There is a rail road from Cleveland to dalton [sic] but it is tore up in several places. It is only 25 miles to dalton [sic] from here. The rebs [sic] is there but I dont [sic] think that there is a very large force at that point.

Well I think I will bring my scribling [sic] to a close. Look over all mistakes and bad writing. I send my love and best wishes to all my friends and you have my best wishes in all things. Write soon and give the news.

Good Bye A. Shannahan

enveloped addressed to

Miss Elizabeth Benjamin  
Chalmer, P.U.  
White Co.  
Ind