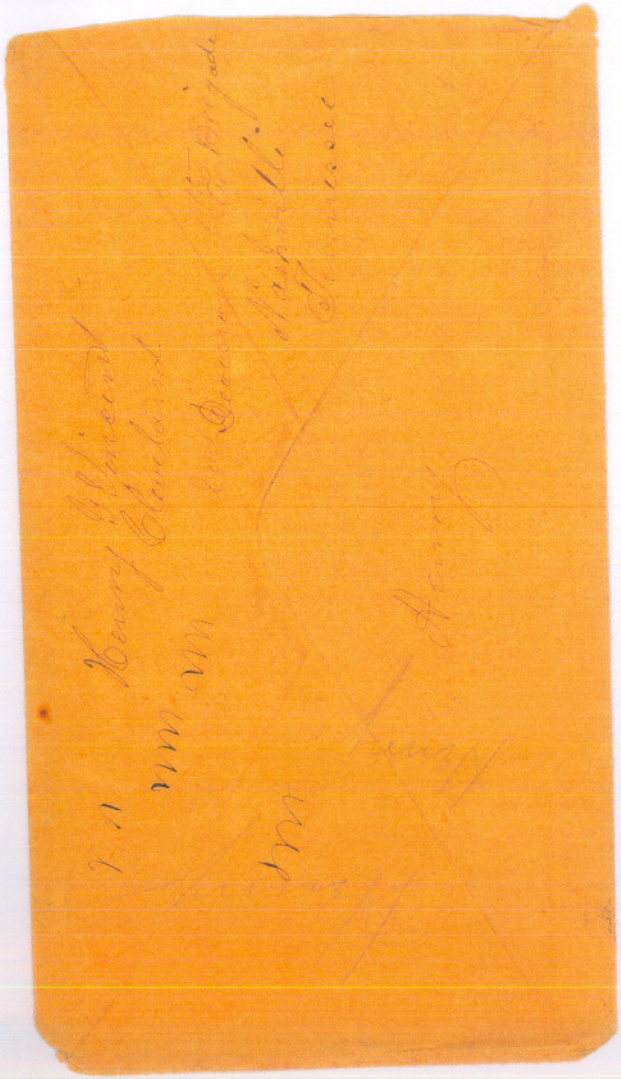
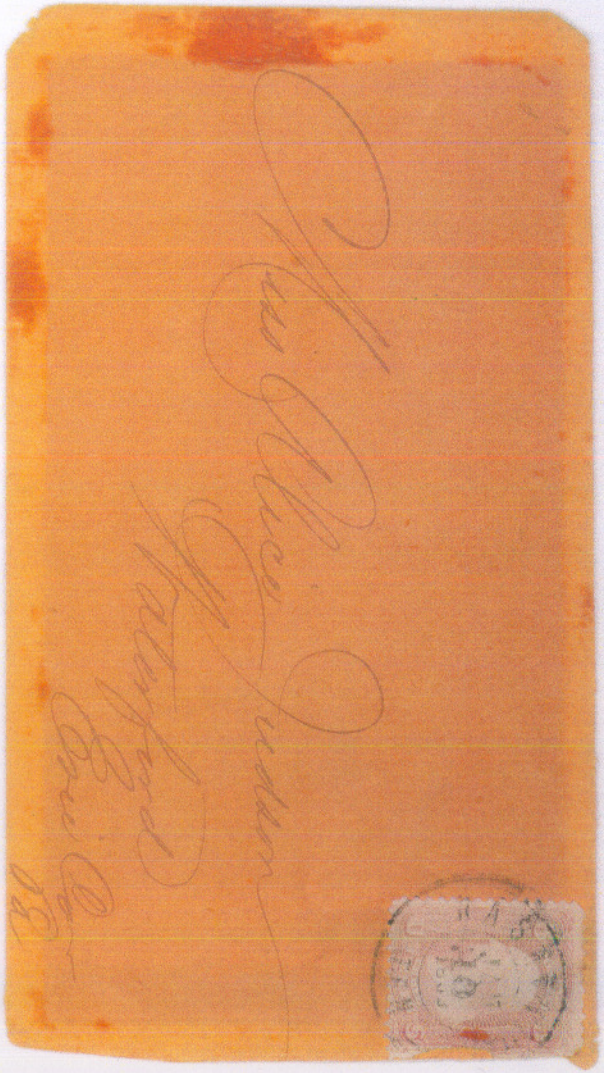
BEKEMEIER
354 HUTTLESTON AVENUE
FAIRHAVEN, MA 02719





Alice you will please direct to me as before Lieut H.G.V.
but only direct to Nashville without the addition
of please forward Ever of thee Hank

*

Nashville Tenn Jan 8th/63

Dear Alice

Knowing what great anxiety must exist in the minds of my friends at home and in Waterford in regard to my safety since the battle of Murphreesborg I hasten to relieve their suspense by writing what I believe to be a fair and impartial account of my experience and feelings upon that never to be forgotten occasion

Upon Christmas day while lying in Camp about six or seven miles out from the City of Nashville expecting to enjoy it as best we might so far from home we suddenly received orders to pack up our duds and get ready to March at a moments notice. Accordingly we proceeded to strike our tents, load our waggons and put matters in a shape to move. We went out on the pike with our Division and waited there some two or three hours ~~waiting~~ for further instructions which soon came ordering us back to our old Camp again We laid there till the next morning when we tried it again and finally succeeded in going forward on the Nolinsville pike. Soon after it commenced to rain hard while the wind blew strong and cold.

It continued without intermission all day long but this did not prevent us from fighting the rebels every few miles they taking strong positions upon the hills and mountains and firing their artillery at us as we advanced. We kept driving them in this manner two or three days in succession sleeping upon our arms and the wet damp ground every night without any tents or other protection save what we could get from straw and our blankets. One day we halted and then set forward again in pursuit

– This 4pg letter is one sheet, fold on left side. –

* "G.C.R & Co"; oval blind embossing just above "D" in Dear Alice — also bird with banner in beak, can't quite make out printing, assume this is a paper manufacturers mark.

The rebels rapidly retreated backwards upon their main force and we taking a sort of cross road over the country made for the same point that they were anxious to attain &c. Rain rain. Nothing but rain seemed to be the order of the day but we still kept on through the woods of little Cedars and over the most intolerable rough stony roads imaginable until we came to a Corn field which was selected as our camping ground and we at once laid down again for the night within some three or four miles of what was on the morrow to be a bloody battle ground
The next Morning early the grand advance upon the enemys force Commenced in the midst of a chilling rain that drenched us to the skin.
Moving slowly and cautiously forward about ten O'clock our ears were assailed with the boom and roar of Cannon in our front announcing plainly that the fierce struggle had begun. My Dear Alice you Can have but little idea of the Confusion of sounds and uproar of a great battle. It far surpassed all my previous Conceptions or experience which had been Mostly Confined to small battles or heavy Skirmishes
This Continued in this way all day till about four O'clock P.M. when we were Called upon to Silence if possible one of the enemies batteries which had been annoying us excessively. We were accordingly ~~was~~ Moved to the extreme right of our line of battle and finding an excelent position Screened from View of the enemy by a dense forest of Cedars which stood between us and them. We opened our whole pieces upon them at once and after Killing some of their Cannoneers and disabling one of their pieces effectually they left in haste and the ground was ours

just about twilight the firing broke out for a few moments with redoubled fury and then as if by mutual agreement it ceased and darkness coming on soon all was silent as the grave —

It having cleared up during the afternoon the night was very windy and bitter cold. So near the enemy no fires were allowed to be built and as our waggon containing our rations dare not come up we were obliged from necessity to lie down tired and weary with the days exertions and go supperless to bed.

The next morning before the day had fairly broke and before we were hardly awake the rebels made the attack upon the very point at which our Battery was stationed. With their guns at a charge bayonet and with shrieks and yells that was almost deafening Thousands of them came rushing out of the woods that had concealed them down upon our poor devoted battery and unprotected rights. The Regiments of Infantry stationed as our support in front of us fought valliantly for a short time but after being shot down like sheep and overcome by greatly superior numbers they finally gave way in confusion and retreating left our Battery fairly exposed to the assaults of the foe — In a few moments they had shot dead many of our men and horses and when we had fired our cannon into their faces and all was no use our noble Capt gave the word. "Save yourselves boys if you can" Every one then began to look out for himself and started on the dead run to get out of the way The bullets came among us like a storm of hail pattering among the dry leaves and rating against the trees like a shower of stones. "Whiz Whiz" they came all around us and I was just on the point of

concluded to start on foot. For whose a [illegible] soon for they chased myself and others over two miles firing at us whenever they could get within reach They came very very close to Alice I can tell you much nearer than I usually like to have them. Being almost tired out and thinking that I had got out of their way I stopped under a tree a few moments to get breath when up came quite a force of cavalry and they giving chase I had to start off again. I managed to keep all the trees and fences between me and them that I could but twice I almost gave up in despair they were so close upon me that nearly concluded to surrender myself as a prisoner. But at length I came to a small stony creek on one side of which was a steep bank Rushing through the water up to my knees I succeeded in getting out and they gave up the pursuit

Going to the rear I found a few of our men collected together with some of the horses and harness, and we having no arms that we were familiar with stayed there till the next day when not being able to get food either for man or beast I was ordered to bring them here —

We went into the fight with about 120 men and now have here in charge of the siege guns about this city som 85 six or eight have gone into other batteries we hear while the rest can only be called wounded missing or killed We shall stay here for the present at least till we hear from our Capt and Lieut Berwick who were both wounded and are now prisoners. I have both telegraphed and written my parents assuring them of my safety I am thankful that I am able to say the same to you. Like the roar of waves upon the shore of the ocean the din of battle is still sounding in my ears. God protect the sorrowing friends who mourn the loss of the brave men who fell upon that bloody field in defence of their beloved country

Yours Truly C. Ferry

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