

The following letters located in the State Archives of Michigan were written by Nelson Ainslee of Company F, of the 14th Michigan Infantry. He is not listed as a member of Company A, 16th Illinois Infantry, in the Illinois Adjutant General Reports; though he is listed as being a member of same by the Michigan "Brown Books" for a time. He enlisted into, and was mustered out of, in 1865, the 14th Michigan Infantry. Ainslee's letters to his wife in the Spring of 1864 are marked on the cover: "With 16th Illinois". The reason of his detailing to the Illinois regiment for a period of time is unknown. His letters are addressed to: Mrs N. Ainslee Waterford Oakland Co. Michigan. The letters were transcribed by Ken Baumann.

[Buzzard Roost] Gorgia May the 11, 1864

My Dear Wife

i take the present to pensil a few lines to you to let you know, that i am among the liven yet altho life is very unsertain here, at the place whare wee are now. Wee have drove the rebels from Tunel Hill to Busards Roast whare they are strongly fortified. It is said to be the strongest place to take in the Southern Confedracy. It is nothen but hills and mountains here. Wee have ben fighten here three days. Hard fiten and at it now and dont gane anything on it, only losen a grate maney men. The way it looks here now that it will take a week longer to end this batle and maby longer. Wee have a large force here one hundred and thirty thousand. i will say no more on this subject now. If i am spard i will write you all perticulars. i am with the 16 Illinois yet. The 14th and the 10 Mich hasent got here yet.

i am well and feele first rate. i have a trus the hed serge gave me to ware. i stand it but not with its [?] for to get out of waren it but it dosent work at this time. They have got in every thing that has got to light.

i recieved youre last letter the 4 which was dated April the 27 and i havent had any chance to write to you before, and i am now talken to you by the way of written while the canons are thunderen and musketry are thunderen. i saw one of your cosens before we went in the fight. He is a young tender boy for this business. i was sorey to se him here. His name is William Lonnie from Cleavland, he belongs to the 124 Ohio but he is one of the new recruts. i shall come out of this all write if it is my lot to do so, i think of you often my dear an childrens, take good care of your self. i hope that wee may enjoy our selves to gether again. i shal know how to appreciate it if i am spard. i must close this short leter for this time. You must excuse this for this was all the scrap of papers i had by me to write an there isnt no chance to get anything here now at the present time, i have not been paid yet and i am glad of it now the way things has shaped. My love to my dear wife and children. Write son. Direct to the 16 Ill as usual

Nelson Ainslee

[ps] The Michigan tenth, one company of them was rather unluckey a short time ago, garden the train of cars theren at Murfherysburor. When they left Nashville the rebels came out of the woods and fired on our men. They kild seven and wounded eight or ten. i supose you have herd of it. That was part of our duty when wee was at Nashville. Captain FitsGibens is permoted to mager in the 14th. It is

heltheyer here than it is in Nashville, We have all new tents, now need them this week.

i had to laf the other^{DAY} wee was on picket Lester was standin post at the time nearly haf a mile from our reserve. He saw 20 or 30 of our cavalry a coming on quick time. Lester thought it was the rebels a coming sure. He left his post and run, as fast as a hoss could run to our reserve. He said hurry up boys thare is [illegible] thousands rebels coming on the fast [illegible] they will kill us all.

The 22 has got to Nashville. Lester went in to Nashville and saw his son Farge. He is sick in the hospital. It is doubtful if he ever gets well so his father told me this morning. Well how is mis Lyons, what is her complaint. You said in one of your letters you would let me know. i have herd one story about her. Mrs Lester said that she had the bad disorder and R Brownson roat about the same. Let me know what you think of it when you write. Well i had some corn cake and milk for breakfast- milk 20 cents a quart haf water. Best of a secesh.

Rome Georgia
May the 19, 1864

My Dear Wife

i again take the present oportunity to pencil a few lines to you whilst i have a few moments. i will improve it when i can. i am well and tuff as an indian and can get around first rate. i have got a good trus that i can ware. Our division is in force. Wee tuck persesion of the city yesterday and day before yesterday wee had a hard fite with the rebels for about to ours. Wee lost several men taken the place. i suppose you will here the perticulars in the papers before this reaches you. Wee had to hard days march after wee drove the rebels out of Buserds Roost from thare strong fortifications. Wee folowed them up, didnt give them a minet the start of us. They have fel back to Atlanta forty miles from here. Wee will son be on thare back again as son as our men can get som pontoons briges here to cros the Coose river. The rebels burnt the briges after them.

This is a pretty place here. Some very rich planters live here. i have had sence i came here plenty of grene peas and ripe cherys here. Fruit is plenty here grene apels and pares are as large here now as a comon hen egg, The weather is getin to be hot here now. The 10 Michigan has just got with us now. The 14 hasent got with us yet. The report is that they are on thare way to. i am now in the rebels rifle pits, whare wee drove them out knight before last a talken to my Mary Ann, and if i could se you i should feele all write, but i think the time will son pas that i hafta stay here.

i suppose they will hold me till the time i was mustered into the United States and i think that was the seventh day of January and that will be a litle over seven months for me to stay get. Wee have not ben paid yet, i recievd youre last leter the 16 which was dated May the 5. i need write you more about the Busard Roost fight and the last here at Rome but we dont know the truth of our los of men. You will be apt to get the account in the papers thare as it is cept from us at the present but i think our los is the gratst without dout. Wee have captured a grate deal of stuff from the rebels. i hope you get all my leters. The last i wrote to you i was at Busard

Roost nearly a week ago. The report is that our generals ordered all letters to be stopt going north. I have got to stop writen. Write son. Direct as usual to the 16 Ill Inft to Rome Georgia. My love to my Mary Ann and children.

N Ainslee

Dallas Georgia
Sunday May the 29 1864

On the picket line to day makes three days on the line, whare there is hard scrimishes and fights knight and day and have not gained over a haf a mile in the time. Wee have a large force here and it apears as tho the rebels are as strong. My dear wife cant forget you altho I have not got a very pleasant place to write where the balls and shots are flying so near. They are at it hot and heavy. Wee are near Atlanta Georgia. The gorvenor of this state says if he cant whip us here in this fight he will hist the stars and stripes in Atlanta himself. So says some of the priseners that wee have taken yesterday on this batleground.

i am well except i have the diare for a few days on the account of hard marches and heat and pore [?] and litle rest knight and day. i hope you may get this in due time and find you and the children, well, i recived youst last leter the 27 which was dated the 11 which is all the comfort i get to read yours and to hear from you all and know that you and the children are well. i wrote you that i saw your cousin, Lonnie from Cleveland when i was in Ringold and havent sene him sence. He is in one of the Ohio ragments. He is to young a boy to be in this business. He told me that your uncle James son from Detroit was in the army. Your nephew isnt in the same core that i am in yet [illegible]. i am in the first brigade and second division 14th army core.

Mary Ann you wont get my letters more regular, i have answerd all of yours, the mail isnt regular here with us now. At thoes time i feele thankful that i can here from you as often as i do. i am with the 16 Illinoys yet. i havent herd from the 14 yet. i think they will be coming up in the rear after the spring campain is all over, when the grate danger is all over. They dont think here that they have thare grate name very very well as they have ben cald the brave bully 14th. The ragment has ben sent for several times by our general but i gess colonel Misner will out general all of them yet. They was at Chattanooga the last i have herd from them. Wee have not ben paid yet and i think that wee wont get any pay until the spring campain is over. i am glad they dont pay us now for wee woodent have much chance to send it home. i get along well without money now. It woodent be of no use to us here now. Wee have plenty of tobacco, no sutler travels with us here now. It is not safe for them. There hasent none ben with us for several weeks. You will get the particulars of the battles in the papers beter than i can discribe as it wood be unable for me to do as the line of battle extends for several miles, all wee know is what wee can se near us and cant move but one way and that is strate ahead as the line can advance.

i wote you that i have a good trus to ware. It helps me very much. i roat you that i sent to blankets and one pare pants with Barney Lenard to Clarkston. i wood had to throad them away. As Lenard was sending home to his mother i thought i wood send, You said you had let brother Nisan have som money. That is write let him have what he wants. i think he is perfectly safe and let it until next spring. Didnt Hurst

pay you all what he owd you? Dos Mcsuperson pay you more now or not? He ought to pay you 15 dolls a month. let me know. i get 16 dollars a month now. The grean backs will fetch dollar for dollar when i get out. My dear they cant ceap me onlys seven months longer at the longest then i think i shal be apt to se you all shure if i should live so long. My love to my dear Mary Ann and childern, Write son.

Nelson Ailslee

[ps] The new recruts wood give every thin they have if they was free again. It is prety hard on them. Not so hard on me i am used to it, i have to laf so at them.

You sea my paper is dustey and for what i careyd in my knapsack in time of nead i have cept it. Direct as usual to me 16th Ill, Hq Co A First Brigade 2 division 14th Army Core Dallas Georgia.

i wood like to se you. The nest i write to you i think wee will be in Atlanta. i dont receve any leters from aney one but my Mary Ann my only true friend. Nor i dont write aney onleys to you. All i ask to live to sea my dear Mary Ann and child-ern once more. Ceap a stif uper lip for i do.