

Murray Collection Letters

Guide to the Francis Murray Archival Collection (Corporal, Company C, 17th Regiment of Wisconsin Infantry Volunteers)

DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY

Repository

Civil War Museum, Resource Center Kenosha, Wisconsin

Language of Material

Material in English

Abstract

This collection contains 57 documents that Francis and his brother John Murray wrote home to their parents and other family members during their various encampments and campaigns of the Civil War. They are well illustrated, and easy to read and understand narratives. The letters contain descriptions of camp life, weather, daily routines, disappointments, and political thoughts of the soldiers, etc. as well as their encounters with the enemy. These letters home to loved ones begin with their enlistments and early encampments from March, 1862, through their final encampment and review from Washington, D.C. in early 1865 before their returning home to Wisconsin. You will note that in some cases only one brother signed his name to a letter and this was due to the fact that they were separated by being assigned different duties miles and weeks away from each other.

The soldiers of the 17th Wisconsin came largely from the Irish communities of the state of Wisconsin. At the Battle of Corinth, the 17th led a bayonet charge with the Gaelic battle cry "Faugh a ballagh!" which translates into "clear the way."

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Use Restrictions

No photocopying please

Preferred Citation

(Identification of item), The Francis Murray (Company C, 17th Wisconsin Veteran Infantry) Letters Collection, The Civil War Museum, Kenosha, Wisconsin

Provenance

The Civil War Letters by Francis and John Murray were copied, as written from the original letters by Mary Brennand Pederson (Grand-daughter of Francis) and Joanne Pederson Anhalt (Great-grand daughter of Francis).

Processing Information

Processed by Frederick J. (Rick) Holtz, 2012

BIOGRAPICAL NOTE:

Francis Murray was born in Canada in 1843 and at 21 years of age listed his occupation as "farmer". He enlisted into Company C of the 17th Wisconsin

Veteran's Infantry on February 28, 1862 in Fon Du Lac, Wisconsin. He reenlisted on February 29, 1864 in Vicksburg, Mississippi, achieving the rank

of Corporal, mustering out on July 14, 1865.

Corporal Murray served in the Union Army in the following campaigns; Seige of Corinth, Mississippi, Corinth, Mississippi, Waterford, Mississippi, Champion Hill, Mississippi, Seige of Vicksburg, Mississippi, Ft. Beauregard Louisiana, Orangeburg, South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina, Fayetteville, North Carolina, Big Shanty, Georgia, Chattahoochee River, Georgia, Seige of Atlanta, Georgia, Jonesboro, Georgia, Lovejoy's Station, Georgia and the Seige of Savannah, Georgia.

Doc. #1 of 57: A "Certificate of Service" verifying that Francis Murray enlisted into Company C, 17th Wisconsin Veteran Infantry Volunteers in Fon Du Lac, Wisconsin, on February 28, 1862. Also noted that Corporal Murray was mustered out of the Union Army on July 14, 1865.

Engagements that Corporal Murray fought in included:

Seige of Corinth, Mississippi, Corinth Mississippi, Waterford, Mississippi, Champion Hill, Mississippi, Seige of Vicksburg, Mississippi, Ft. Beauregard Louisiana, Orangeburg, South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina, Fayetteville, North Carolina, Big Shanty, Georgia, Chattahoochee River, Georgia, Seige of Atlanta, Georgia, Jonesboro, Georgia, Lovejoy's Station, Georgia, and the Seige of Savannah, Georgia.

Doc. #2 of 57: Volunteer Reenlistment Record, State of Mississippi, Town of Vicksburg. States the Francis Murray, age 21, was born in Canada, occupation listed as "farmer". Hereby acknowledged to have volunteered in reenlistment on February 29, 1864. Sworn and subscribed at Vicksburg, Mississippi, February 21, 1864. Before P. McGrath, 1st Lieutenant, 17th Wisconsin Infantry, and H. McKennan, Surgeon, 17th Wisconsin Infantry. Soldier has brown eyes, black hair, dark complexion and stands 5' 6" high.

Doc. #3 of 57: A letter to their parents, dated, March 12, 1862, Madison, Wisconsin. Dear Parents,

Noteworthy: Received your March letter. Pleased we will soon here when our regiment will go south. We drill with guns twice a day. We sleep with 17 to a tent and go to bed at 9:30 P.M. rising at 5 A.M. doing roll call with breakfast following at 6 A.M. After breakfast we drill for an hour and a half.

We had a recent election and are pleased with our choice of officers.
The officers are “obliging” and “humane”.
Write soon.

Your true and affectionate sons,
Francis and John Murray

Doc. #4 of 57: A letter to his parents, dated, March 18, 1862, Madison, Wisconsin
Dear Parents,

Noteworthy: We are going south next Thursday.
Will write as soon as we land our officers.
A little trouble today as they wanted the boys to go south without
their pay.
Boys are well at present.
Mr. Roseder sends his best respects to you and all friends.
Our priest is going to preach inside the campground.
You need not write until I write again.

Affectionately,
John Murray

Doc. #5 of 57: A letter to his parents, dated, March the r_y_th, 1862
(camp location not given)
Dear Parents,

Noteworthy: We are all well and hope these lines find you in the same way.
Left Camp Randall without our pay and arrived at St. Louis
on Saturday.
Hope to receive our pay in a couple of days.
Had a fire in the barracks, 4 men were burned, 2 badly.
The 14th Regiment left St. Louis the next day.
We saw William Hern the evening we went there. Hearn started
for New Orleans the next day.
Our camp is 350 acres and covered with soldiers.
We drill about 8 hours daily.
Believe to be 240 miles from the fight now.
There is a great fight at island #10 going on for a week now.
Expect to go to New Mexico when we leave here.
We now have a Priest with us all the time. He lectures on Thursdays
and we have Mass every morning.

Give our respects to all the neighbors.
Jim Gallagher and all the boys send their respects to all their friends.

Remain your affectionate sons,
John and Francis Murray

Doc. #6 of 57: Letter to their parents, from a camp near Corinth, Mississippi,
dated, June 20, 1862

Noteworthy: Dear Father and Mother,
Read yesterday your letter of June 8th.
Truly happy that you are still in "the land of the living".
Am sorry to say that not all the boys in the army can boast,
as a good many of them have been laid in their last resting places.
Many more have contracted diseases which will cling to them
throughout life.
Some have been sick with spells while a very few are fit for duty
all the time.
We are now camped in good quarters about a mile from Corinth.
Supposed we will stay here all summer.
Not much hotter than home but with cool nights.
Rebels though driven from strongholds are far from being subdued
causing hard fighting and a great deal of trouble.
Dan McLaughlin is still teaming with six mules but has been laid
off the last 3 days, sick with diarrhea.
James Gallagher is also down with diarrhea and had to be left at
landing.
Barney Harkins is also off duty with the same having a slight attack.
John Carmichael is quite well.
John Stoddart came back the other day from a St. Louis hospital,
and he sends his respects.

Affectionately,
Francis and John Murray
Co. C, 17th Regiment Wisconsin Volunteers
Corinth, B.R., Mississippi

Doc. #7 of 57: A Letter to Their Parents from a camp near Corinth, Mississippi,
dated, June 24, 1862

Noteworthy: Dear Father and Mother,
Write to let you know how we get along.
We got 2 months pay the other day. We are sending you \$20
a piece. The Quarter Master will express it to from Madison to

Milwaukee. You may inquire at the Express Office for \$40 sent by McGee.

We are in hopes we will again receive 2 months pay early in July when we will send you \$40 again.

We are all well.

James Gallagher is quite well as is Don McLaughlin

We don't know anything about our going or staying and don't think we will be coming home this summer.

We hear the army is getting the worst of it.

Your affectionate sons,
Frank and John Murray

Doc. #8 of 57: In Camp near Corinth, Mississippi, dated, July 1, 1862.

Noteworthy:

Dear Father and Mother,

The Quarter Master McGee left later than he had planned so you may not get your \$40 pay from us until before the Fourth of July.

New Muster Rolls have been made out and we have been mustered for another 2 months pay which we expect to receive within 10 days, when we will send you more.

We are all well and are under marching orders for either Washington or Richmond. We hope to be leaving in two or three days.

We must take our turn with other regiments to go picketing in the woods.

We have been out several times but as yet not seen any successionists. Instead we confiscated a pig with new potatoes and prepared quite a feast for ourselves in the woods with all the fixins.

Dan McLaughlin would have written home but will not write until he knows for sure where we will move to.

Barney Harkins also desires to be remembered to all, and James Gallagher does not want to be forgotten.

James Rossetter, John Carmichael, and John Stoddart also desire to be remembered at present.

Your affectionate Sons,
Frank and John Murray

Doc. #9 of 57: In Camp near Corinth, Mississippi, dated August 22, 1862.

Noteworthy:

Dear Father and Mother,

We received your kind and affectionate letter of the 13th which

gave us great pleasure to hear that you were all well.
Thank God for His kindness to us all.
We are in the same state of good health.
Frank and me sent home \$35 to you by Express and have not heard from it yet.
We hear great news about drafting and recruiting in Wisconsin, and are told that thirty five have enlisted from our town.
Frank is down on guard at the hospital. I have not seen him this last week.
We had quite an alarm the other night as our pickets were attacked by some rebels, and one of our men was wounded in the head with three buckshot.
Every other night our boys is all in good Spirits, and will not flinch but wish for a fight.
We think when this new army comes in the field, that that will soon put an end to this wicked rebellion.
At present we have plenty of good fresh bread and beef with potatoes and sometimes even whiskey.
James Gallagher, John Stoddart, Charles Carbery, B. Harkins are all well except Dan McLaughlin who is not very well, but nothing serious.
Write soon as this comes to hand.
Give our love to all inquiring friends, brothers and sisters, and James Rossiter is well.

Your sons til death,
Frank and John Murray

Doc. #10 of 57: Union, dated, September 5, 1862, (no location given).

Noteworthy: Dear Father and Mother,
I take my pen in hand to let you know that we are well hoping these few lines find you in the same.
All the boys is well, thanks be to God.
We are not with the regiment now. There are three out of every company guarding the division hospital which is 5 miles from our regiment.
We are camped at the the rebel breast works waiting for a rowe.
The regiment is getting along first rate with very few dying at present.
The fourteenth has moved up from Pitchburg Landing being camped one mile south of Corinth.
I have not seen William Hern in four or five months, but I was told that William had been in the hospital sick.
I will let you know how long he has been sick.
We can only spend so much money for candy.

If there is anyone in our neighborhood that wishes to enlist in the Seventeenth Regiment, there is a chance for them. Would like you to send Rosanne and Cate our affection too.

Still remaining your affectionate sons,
Francis and John Murray
So good by all we are bound for the happy
land of Canaan.

Doc. #11 of 57:

Corinth, Mississippi, dated, October 5, 1862.

Noteworthy:

My kind father and mother,
I take my pen in hand to let you know that we are in good health hoping that those few lines may find you enjoying the same. We are very sorry to hear that father has been sick so long. James Gallagher is well as is James Roseter and Charles Carbery. Daniel McLaughlin has been sick a long time and has gone north, but where I don't know. I am glad to hear all our friends are well, and give thanks to God for his kindnesses, for He is our Guide night and day. I would like you to send more stamps in your next letter and we would like you to send a couple of pairs of boots. Box them up in a little box. We will want them for winter boots. They cost from seven to ten dollars down here. We was up to the Fourteenth Regiment yesterday. William Hern is getting better but he is still in the hospital. He looks first rate. The Fourteenth Regiment got marching orders. We don't know when we will see Hern again. We will get our likenesses as soon as we get paid but I don't know when that may be. It will cost about two or three dollars. That's all at present.

Remaining your affectionate sons,

Francis and John Murray
Our love to all the children

Doc. #12 of 57:

Camp near Grand Junction, Tennessee, dated, November 7, 1862.

Noteworthy:

Dear Father and Mother,
The letter we received from you on the 26th had been longer than usual in route.

We were relieved from hospital guard duty the next day and returned to our regiment.

On our way home we called the Express office for the box, and got it all right.

I could not write you any sooner for we were ordered right out on picket guard. The next morning the pickets were drawn into march after Price.

I now take this opportunity to assure you that we are alive and healthy.

We left Corinth last Sunday and had a hard march to Grand Junction expecting to meet General Price and his rebel force there and have a big fight. But he had left and we are now laying here about 3 miles south from Grand Junction.

There is a large army of us here, at least 50,000 men, so you may expect to hear of us doing something soon if the weather don't get bad and break up the roads.

Our boots for marching are not yet shaped and they hurt our feet, so we put them off and were glad to put on our old shoes.

Mr. Rossitter, Mr. Gallagher all the rest are quite well.

Barney Harkin went to Jefferson Hospital near St. Louis.

While on the march the boys leave the ranks, plunder the houses, and set fire to them. They burn the fences, shoot the hens, geese, and pigs. In short they destroyed everything, leaving the whole country behind a desolate waste. So now no man can leave his camp.

We have roll call five times a day while our arms and accoutrement are inspected every day.

We are charged fifty cents for each cartridge missing.

I suppose Mr. Carberry is now home so he will have some tales to tell.

We had an inch of snow about two weeks ago.

You may address to your loving sons Francis and John Murray
Co. C., 17th Wisconsin
6th Division, Army of Tennessee
Corinth, Mississippi

Doc. #13 of 57: In Camp near Grand Junction, Tennessee, dated, November 21, 1862.

Noteworthy: Dear Mother and Father,
We received your letter today, your anxiety regarding us must be at least partially relieved, for we wrote you about two weeks ago, and explained the reason for our not writing before leaving Corinth. When we were relieved from guard at the hospital and rejoined the regiment, we were ordered right out on picket and while out the regiment had marching orders and were fetched in from picketing

just in time to join the march.

How long we may stay is to us a profound mystery, we may camp here all winter, and we may leave tomorrow.

We were expecting to fight Missierurs Secesh but they had pulled stakes and left, and we heard the had gone to Holly Springs, about 25 miles nearly due South from Grand Junction.

Holly Springs is said to be very strongly fortified, but they have evacuated it, and are said to be fortifying 20 miles below that place.

We will make a determined stand if we attack them. We expect an active campaign, hard marching, hard living, hard fighting.

We are now in a rich and well cultivated country, but there are large tracts of fine land laying waste, while there are great fields of cotton going to waste.

The owners are all away to the war and the n_____ are mostly all away to the Union Army or way up north.

There is a great deal of corn in the fields which is largely drawn upon by foraging parties for the sustenance of our large trains of mules and horses.

Occasionally our foraging parties also bring in pigs, sheep and cattle and then we have fresh meat.

We can have bread regularly but on campaign the crackers and bacon are our main support as they are easily transported.

We are strictly confined to camp on account of awful bad behavior of some scoundrels calling themselves soldiers. While on the march they straggled and plundered, burnt, and destroyed everything within reach. They burnt houses, stacks, and fences, shot poultry, pigs, sheep, and cattle.

The fences were on fire sometimes for a half a mile a stretch, and as the roads are very narrow, it was easily dangerous passing through so, so much the ammunition trains had to leave the road and travel through the fields.

We don't know anything about Dan McLaughlin further than seeing in the newspaper his name in a list of sick at the New House of Refuge Hospital in St. Louis.

Jim Gallagher wrote to him as soon as we found out, and urged him to write immediately to write immediately, but he has not written yet.

Barney Harkin was at Jefferson Hospital last time we heard from him. Gallagher has sold his boots for ten dollars to get cash on pay day, as they were too short for him.

He heard that Mrs. Brown was sick by letter to Dan Monagle two or three days ago.

Jim Rossiter is well. John Carmichael and John Stoddart send their respects and both desire to be remembered.
You will give our respects to all enquirers and accept for yourselves the sincere regards of

Your loving sons,
Francis and John Murray
Co. C., 17th Wisconsin Regiment,
Left Wing Army of West Tennessee
Grand Junction, Tennessee

Doc. #14 of 57: In a camp near Grand Junction, Tennessee, dated, November 26, 1862.

Noteworthy:

Dear Lorenzo,

I have intended for a long time to write you a few lines to show that although in the tented field in the midst of war and wars alarms, I still think of home and some of my boyhood's companions, you in particular.

I should have written by this time, but believe me, it is a really a very serious matter to undertake to write a letter, the materials for so doing are generally very scarce.

I have already been twice called for a paltry petty camp duty since I began and now after supper and seated on my knapsack with a shingle on my knees for a writing desk, in the midst of a noisy crowded tent, where I have generally elbow room, I hope to finish this short scrawl to you.

You ought to be here and see the boys around me. I stop frequently to take part in the frequent discussions, sometimes on politics but mostly on common military matters. Often a mock fight will occur between two or three which will infect all, and all will have to turn in and make a row in the tent.

You must have read the accounts of the Battle of Corinth. At the time I was away from the regiment with a detachment guarding a Hospital (so was John). So I was not with them in the fight.

But I saw a little of it and it was a terrible sight. I need not attempt to describe it, for I cannot paint such scenes.

The 17th had a hard scrape, and got out of it almost miraculously. The "Secesh" were numbered less than 500 and we were ordered to charge and capture a battery. Our division general gave great praise and said the charge was one of the most brilliant of the war. The newspapers did not give the regiment the credit to which they were fairly entitled. But depend upon it, if we ever get into a mess again you will read of them for our name as fighting boys is established here.

We expected to be kept as guard around Corinth. Corinth before the battle was pretty well defended, is now made quite formidable by a double tier of breast works in and around the town. We left Corinth on Sunday, November 2nd and had three days of hard marching to Grand Junction where we expected to give battle to the "Secesh" but they "skedaddled" and gone to Holly Springs. It is said they are fortified strongly there but have left that place also. On the morning of the 28th we left Grand Junction early and traveled hard all day resting occasionally and camped about 11 at night. We put in to Holly Springs the next morning, rested awhile and pushed on til we could hear the booming of canon in the distance. We then hurried on for our cavalry and artillery were fighting and we might be needed to support them.

(letter not completed nor signed)

Doc. #15 of 57: Camped on the Mississippi near Vicksburg, Mississippi, dated, January 28, 1863.

Noteworthy: Dear Father and Mother,
We have not heard from you in about two months. How is it with you all?
We wrote you last from Abbeville in Mississippi, leaving there on December 17th.
We marched southward 25 or 30 miles expecting to go to Granada some 50 or 60 miles further and have a battle with Secesh who are strongly fortified there.
We left quickly with the mounted infantry and with an Illinois Regiment took Holly Springs. We marched into town expecting to catch them, but they could not hold the place and so they burned the depot, two railroad engines and a number of cars plus a valuable assortment of supplies and paroled some of their prisoners.
The boys felt indignant at the post commander, Colonel Murphy of the 8th Wisconsin, who surrendered without a fight.
We stayed at Holly Springs for most of two days and on the second night we learned we had to go to Grand Junction in a hurry as the a force of rebels had surrounded our men there .
Their defensive force was so small that we left our knapsacks and took some bread and started midnight traveling at a dogtrot all night and the next day till we reached Davis's Mills. Davis's Mills is about 7 miles from Grand Junction.
The rebels over 3000 strong tried to burn a railroad bridge near Grand Junction but they were badly whipped by 175 men of 25th Indiana.

We got in about 4 o'clock P.M. and glad they were to see us for they were despairing of help and were preparing to evacuate. That was a hard march for us. Two men of the 32nd dropped dead on the road from sheer fatigue. We lay on our arms all night and glad to rest so for we were tired.

The next night being Christmas Eve we marched to the fort and placed in line of battle for Secesh, staying there until about 11 o'clock. Half of our regiment was taken to the cars and hurried down to Davis's Mills where we layed by our arms all night and all of Christmas Day expecting every moment to be attacked. We stayed there 5 days and secesh, finding that we were ready, did not come near us. We went back to Grand Junction having one night's rest, and being New Year's Eve at about 11 o'clock we were aroused and hurried into a little fort for a dispatch. The dispatch stated the rebels had been seen in force and we would certainly be attacked. We stood in line all night and all of New Year's Day and a portion of us all the next night and day. It was bitterly cold laying there on the hard frozen ground.

We left on the 3rd and came to Moscow on the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, then on to Lafayette, Germantown, and finally Memphis on the Mississippi River.

While there we got two months pay and sent you forty dollars by Express. Since our leaving Corinth all our moves were very hard service, hard marching, constant guard duty, and for over one third of the time without a tent. And for about a month we were on half rations (but we were never hungering for we managed by foraging to supply all our wants). Still the health of the Company is now better and we have fewer on the sick list than when we left Corinth.

We are now lying near the mouth of the Yazoo River a few miles from Vicksburg waiting for we know not what the river is lined with steamboats. There must be a large force here and we may possibly fight soon, we are lying on the Louisiana shore. It is sure the rebels have sent troops across from Vicksburg to attack our rear
We are anxious to hear from you.

Your loving sons
John and Francis Murray
17th Wisconsin
McArthur's Division
Army of West Tennessee
In the Field Miss
Via Cairo

We are all well. James Gallagher and James Rossiter each sent money by Express. We are all in good spirits.

Doc. #16 of 57: Camped near Vicksburg, Mississippi, dated, February 3, 1863.

Noteworthy: Dear Father and Mother,
I take my pen in hand to let you know that we are well hoping that these few lines may find you in the same condition.
We received your kind letter on February 1st that you wrote on December 21st, stating that you were all well.
I wish you would write more often. If you do not then I will stop writing all together.
You want to know what kind of colonel we have. He is a fine fellow and a good soldier. He is better to his men than Doran was.
Dear Father and Mother, you wished us a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year but we have seen a hard one.
I hope we will be home next Christmas but I am afraid we will never see old friendships again if the rebels make a stand at Vicksburg which they will.
It will be very few that will come out again.
There was two of our iron clad gun boats that ran the blockade the other day. The river is overflowing.
The low land where our troops are camped is a low flat plain right across from the mouth of the Yazoo River.
James Gallagher, James Rositer, and John Stodard sends their respects to you.
I sent a letter to Nowelnsen and got no answer. I would like to hear from him.
That's all at present. Our best respects to all the children and to all friends.
So we bid you farewell for this time not knowing whether ever we can be able to write again.

(letter was unsigned)

Doc. #17 of 57: Camp near Lake Providence, Louisiana, dated, February 22, 1863.

Noteworthy: Dear Father and Mother,
We were bitterly disappointed today when the mail came and we could get no letters. We have written to you three times and have got no answer yet.
It is true that our mail communication is somewhat irregular. Still we think that letters properly addressed are pretty sure to reach their destination
Before we came to Moscow on the Memphis and Charleston Railroad we were three weeks without any mail from that time til we left Memphis.

It is about a week since we had mail in camp and today you ought to have seen the excitement when it was announced that "the mail has arrived". Some of the boys were gratified when letters were handed to them while others were bitterly disappointed.

Some retired sulkily, while swearing that they would not write another letter while in the army. Others thinking that although materials are very scarce and dear here their folks at home might possibly require some paper we sent from here. Others hopefully conclude that they would wait for the arrival of another mail before getting out of patience. I must confess that we are not of the hopeful class, for we are entirely out of patience to hear from you.

I have said that writing materials are dear and scarce. A five cent bottle of ink costs twenty five cents, paper and envelopes in proportion and often cannot be had for love not money.

I am happy and thankful to the Father of all Good to have to inform you that we are all in good health and spirits, and sincerely hope that you dear father are at least continuing to improve in your health.

Uncle James Gallagher has got a better job. He drives one of the hospital ambulances. It is a very easy job and he has little to do. Dennis Harkins has been discharged, leaving the day before yesterday. He thought he would go to Fon Du Lac.

When I last wrote you we were down at the mouth of Yazoo River, six or seven miles from Vicksburg.

A Council of War has been held at which it was decided that we would not attack Vicksburg, but instead cut off their communications and compel them to evacuate.

Our forces have been set to cut a canal across a bend in the river opposite Vicksburg. This would shorten the channel fifteen miles beyond the range of rebel fort guns, so we could effectively blockade them.

But the river rose to a very high stage and broke through the levy near where we lay, threatening to overflow our camp.

We had got our tents ashore and pitched our camp on the Louisiana side. So our division had to strike tents again and ship board our fleet. Two weeks ago we came up 70 or 80 miles to this place. You may remember the little town (Lake Providence).

A portion of our forces are cutting a canal some 600 yards long from the river to the lake which will give us a channel through the lake to Bayou Mason and Red River where the rebels are said to have a large fleet of gunboats and transport.

If we succeed in capturing them, it will prove a severe blow to the cause of Secession.

The people in and around the town are in a sad way at the dismal prospect before them, for the river is said to be fifteen feet higher

than the lake. And when the levee is cut to let the river into the canal, not only the the town but a large tract of valuable farming country will be overflowed.

We are camped along the lake shore about 5 miles from town where we have abundance of wood and good water.

Our assigned duty is picketing and foraging. The other day we brought in twenty thousand dollars worth of cotton from guarding a train.

We have had no sign of snow since we left Memphis. We've had a fine few days almost like the first of June. The peach trees are full in bloom.

Tell Aunt Rose that James wants to hear from her, and also Mrs. Rossiter that James is well and is looking for a letter.

Dan McMonagle, John Carmichael, Barney Harkins, and John Stoddard desire to be remembered to you all and Uncle Dan and all the other good folks.

Your affectionate sons,
Francis and John Murray

Send postage stamps

Doc.#18 of 57: Camp near Providence, Louisiana, dated, March 13, 1863.

Noteworthy: Dear Father and Mother,
Your letter of February 25th came to hand the day before yesterday, and yesterday your March 1st letter was put into our hands. You may judge that our mail communications have not been very regular of late.
I am very happy and thankful to hear that you are all enjoying good health.
I am happy to inform you that we are all well. There is no present danger. We may be called into the battlefield today or tomorrow but we not the least idea of being required in that way for a long time. John is now away from the company on detached service with a squad of pioneers. The general nature of their duty is opening or making roads, building bridges, but at present they have very little work to do.
Regarding our money, we have some to spare. I will go to town tomorrow and send you some by Express. In the same package there will be twenty dollars from Bernard Harkin which you will please give to his father or mother. We do expect to get more within ten days, if we do so we will have more to send you.
I have already said the communication is very irregular.
Uncle James sent home money today in a package from James Rossiter to his wife. Please tell Aunt so that she may get it from

Mr. Rossitter.

Uncle James had a letter from Aunt Rosey yesterday and one from Dan McLaughlin Dan McMonagle also got a letter from Dan McLaughlin We were glad to hear that Dan has recruited so well. Mr. Curran will likely be 1st Lietenant and there will probably be some strife for 2nd Lietenant.

I will write you more fully next time. Give our respects to Patrick Duffy and all the folks.

Your loving son,
Francis Murray, Co. C,
17th Wisconsin, McArthur's Division
In the field before Vicksburg,
Via Cairo

Doc. #19 of 57: Near Lake Providence, Louisiana, dated, April 13, 1863.

Noteworthy:

Dear Father and Mother,

I am satisfied to hear that you have got the money all right for I had begun to think it a long while to wait for an answer about it.

I am happy to hear that you are all well and thankful to have to say that I am quite well as are all the boys. John is still with the pioneers down the river somewhere. I don't know how long he will be away from the regiment. If he comes back to the company, another will have to go in his place. He is better to stay with them as he has better times than we have.

We have had another pay and expressed home today thirty five dollars along with thirty five dollars from Barney Harkins, which you will please give to his father.

I subscribed three dollars to the fund for the aid of the suffering poor in Ireland. Our company raised two hundred dollars. The regiment raised fifteen hundred dollars.

I don't know anything about Johnny's pay but I expect he will get it where ever he is and send you some if he has a chance.

I suppose you hear a great deal about sickness in the army here.

I don't believe there is much our regiment has only four in the hospital. There are also seven or eight reported in the general hospital. It may be that our boys are more rugged than others.

Uncle James is well and he has sent \$30.00 along with James Rossitter's pile.

Our little tent is partially vacated as Dan McMonagle has gone up the river with some prisoners to Alton and won't be back for ten days.

I will have to close as we are having a heavy rain storm.
I am lucky not to be on guard duty tonight. Remember me to all.

Your affectionate son,

Francis Murray

Captain Rea has gone up to Memphis to see his wife. Women are not allowed to visit and come inside the tents.

Doc. # 20 of 57: At Millikin's Bend on the Mississippi River, Louisiana, dated, April 22, 1863.

Noteworthy: Dear Father-Mother,
I have already answered your last letter, dated, April 3rd, and would not have written you except for the occurrence of a very sad accident. Intelligence reported that we had lost James Rossitter. We heard a startling cry that James Rossitter was overboard, the boat we were one stopped and backed out, but poor James was never seen. Lieutenant O'Kane saw him go over and one of the men called out three times, "John come in". There was a faint hope that being a swimmer he would be able to keep afloat and run with the current to some point on either shore, but I fear this is hoping against hope. It happened about 11 o'clock and only a mile from our landing place. We are now twenty five miles from Vicksburg, and expect to do some marching by land. I have not seen John yet and believe he is only a few miles from here. But I will try to see him if I can get a pass. We are all well but all down hearted about poor Jamie. Remember us to all the folks.

Your affectionate son,
Francis Murray

address as before

Doc. #21 of 57: Near Carthage, Louisiana, dated, May 6, 1863.

Noteworthy: Dear Father and Mother,
With likenesses your letters came to hand the day before yesterday. Dan Monegle arrived in camp yesterday forenoon, and we were pleased to see him again and get his accounts of home. We left camp at Millikin's Bend and marched seven miles in a broiling

hot time. Then we bivouacked for the night and started the next morning just as a heavy thunderstorm was bursting. We marched 5 hard miles to a place called Richmond (not Richmond, Virginia) where we took possession of a Seces' stable and stayed the rest of the day and night. We started fires to dry our soaked clothes. We were not in the best spirits the next morning, as the 17 miles of road was muddy and we were on half rations. We halted at a large plantation on which many of the bayous were cut up making travel circuitous. Johnny with the pioneers is right beside us and will likely be with us for some days. We have been clearing out the bayou for steamboats to get in from such and to cooperate with us and move our stores. We know that our troops got possession of the Grand Gulf after some sharp fight the day before yesterday. Some 400 and 500 Secesh Prisoners were brought by our camp and we expect to see about 1500 more tonight. We are all well. Our address is usual, "before Vicksburg". Remember us kindly to all our good friends.

Your affectionate sons,
John and Francis Murray

Doc. #22 of 57: Camp near Vicksburg, Mississippi, dated, May 31, 1863.

Noteworthy: Dear father and all the rest of the family,

Now I take my pen in hand to let you know that I am well, and hope that these few lines will find you the same in health. We have had hard times as God Can Afford Climbing Hills and Hollers. We have been sitting for ten days here and we can see the rascals. We went out to bury the dead and they shot at us but did not hurt us. Frank made 2 charges at Vicksburg, and a ball from the enemy cut half of his hat from his head. He went tumbling down hill. But as luck ordered it, he was not hurt. You must excuse my poor writing for this time my pen is poor and my hand trembles that I can scarce make a word.

June the first, in the morning

We went out last night again. They was firing at us all the time that we was to work.

We have a Fourth of July once and twice a day. It is nothing to have a Fourth of July near every day and some nights.

We had a hard march from Grand Gulf til we got here.

You need not think hard of me sending more money than Frank, for I might just as well send it home as well as to keep it here.

Frank had to pay for his clothing, and I did not have to, so there is why I sent the most. Perhaps next time he will send home as much.

Dear father, you wrote to me that you did not know as you would live til we came home. I wish the Lord you may for I want to see you and the rest of the family and have a good old time with you.

John Stotert, Dan McMunigel, Jamie Gallagher, and Barney Harkins and all the rest of the boys send their love to all and all the folks around there.

This is from Johnny and Frank Murray to father and mother and all the rest of the folks

Doc. #23 of 57: Before Vicksburg, dated June 18, 1863.

Noteworthy:

Dear Father and Mother,

I have no doubt you feel very anxious about us.

After our terrible fighting I write to assure you that God Almighty has mercifully preserved us both.

Since I wrote you last from Smiths Plantation near Carthage, Louisiana, Johnny was here last night just after the mail came in. Your letters are dated from the 3rd.

Johnny told you that I was not really wounded, though I was hoisted some and keeled over. I was a little stunned and had to go to the rear, but I was fit for duty the next day.

We left Louisiana at hard times and entered the State of Mississippi at Grand Gulf which is a wild looking place.

We caught up to the main body of General Grant's troops at Champion Hill two days march from Vicksburg just as they were driving Secesh from a very strong position. The fight was hard and some of our boys suffered severely for they had to attack through a large cornfield.

Secesh were thick in the woods. We badly whipped them and they had to leave their own cannon behind.

The next day we marched quickly to Big Black River where we captured a fort, a host of prisoners, and artillery. We also took control of the river and destroyed the railroad to Jackson.

On the 19th of May we made a general charge on the enemy's works but were repulsed at all points by heavy loss. Had our supporting regiments come up promptly to our aid, the outcome might have been different.

Though our general reluctantly ordered a retreat, the 17th had to remain in position. As we lay close to the ground on a hill side (this is where I got my slight hurt by the explosion) as storm of bullets and cannon balls flew over us. Fortunately for us the shells were bad and very few of them burst. We laid there till the wounded and some of the dead were carried off. By three in the morning we were ordered to retire. The next day we found out that 64 had been killed and wounded in our regiment.

It is awful to stand in the gorges as the timber is slashed purposely in the roughest manner to embarrass an attacking party.

The pioneers are now helping us to day and night to make roads and forts. Johnny works at night for greater safety.

I, Dan McMonagle, Barney Harkins are sharpshooters and get into the rifle pits every other day and do no other duty. We are within easy speaking distance with the Secesh, and the moment a head appears on either side, bang goes one or more guns.

One of our boys was severely wounded the other day. A ball entered his chin and smashed his lower jaw running down along his neck and lodged somewhere under his armpit. He is sadly disfigured.

We have the Secesh completely surrounded and know that they are suffering by scarcity of water. We have reason to believe that they are short on rations if they don't give up or try to cut their way out.

Address as usual before Vicksburg. We are all well and in good spirits. Remember us to all.

Your affectionate sons,
Francis and John Murray

Doc. #24 of 57: In rear of Vicksburg, Mississippi, dated, July 2, 1863.

Noteworthy: Dear Father and Mother,

You must have got the letter we sent you about the 18th of last month which should surely set your minds at ease regarding our personal safety.

I explained to you how Frank's name happened to be mentioned in the list of wounded. He was not hurt.

We are in the hands of merciful Providence and let us place our trust in Him alone.

I hope that father is getting somewhat over his sickness again.

I am glad to inform you that we are all well and in good spirits. We have no casualties in our company since the last letter.

There is no fighting going on except what is done by sharpshooters in the rifle pits. The instant a Secesh shows himself about the breastworks, bang go the guns, and that is generally the last of him.

I should not be surprised if we have a grand blow up on the fourth for we have mined several strong points and have them ready to explode. Yesterday one of the strongest forts in the center was blown up by General Logan. Men and materials were sent up over 1000 feet into the air.

Hoping to hear in your next letter that father is gaining health and strength.

We are requesting you to remember us to all the folks.

and remain,
Your aff Sons,
John and Francis Murray

Doc. #25 of 57: Vicksburg, dated, July 10, 1863.

Noteworthy: Dear Father and Mother

Thanks be to God we are alive and well and unhurt and in possession of the redoubtable Secesh stronghold.

We were expecting to see some tremendous explosions on the Fourth but a more powerful enemy than powder forced them into a very unwilling surrender. They were starving and reduced to the necessity of eating mule flesh and had almost no corn meal.

They surrendered on the 3rd and we marched into the city, taking possession on the 4th. Wasn't that a glorious way for us to celebrate independence Day?

But every pleasure has its tolls. The heat and dust on our 4 mile march caused many to be overcome with sun stroke. We then had a few hours of rest and then marched back into picket duty inside the breastworks. We have thought it rather hard to go on picket guard for all night after the fatigues of the day and without supper too. We were over a mile from camp and the ground is very rough and dangerous. It is impossible to carry out coffee to us.

We have captured a large and splendid assortment of artillery and muskets, many of the guns are entirely new and have never been unpacked for use. The newspapers will give you better accounts for all these matters.

We are feeding the prisoners and their number is a great over thirty thousand. The poor families have suffered severely between hunger and terror. I am credibly informed that they had to eat rats.

I expected to find the city a heap of ruins but was surprised to see comparatively little cannonading. We might possibly stay here some time. I hope we may and not have to march in this hot weather. Johnny has not been over today and is about a half a mile from camp leveling and filling the works we made outside. Write soon. Remember us to all.

Your affectionate son,
Francis Murray
Co. C., 17th Wisconsin,
Vicksburg,
Mississippi
Via Cairo

Doc. #26 of 57: Natchez, Mississippi, dated, August 5, 1863.

Noteworthy: Dear Father and Mother,
I received yours of July 14th in good season and today another of July 21st.
I feel grateful to the Almighty God to hear that you are all enjoying good health and that you dear father continue to improve.
I am happy to inform you that at least I am well.
We got sudden unexpected marching orders at Vicksburg and came down to this place expecting to take possession of the place and whatever property might be in or around the place.
I have not seen Johnny since the day we left Vicksburg. That was July 12. He was quite well then and I suppose is now back in the rear of Vicksburg mining bridges.
We get the Chicago Times every time we get mail. I believe there will soon be a new organization of political parties. Send all the Democratic newspapers you please.
We can now buy ripe figs, apples, pears, green corn, melons, etc. so you may believe we live well.
When we came down to the landing here the Secesh had not believed that we had got possession of Vicksburg.
We have captured a large and valuable assortment of public property consisting of mostly cattle, ammunition, sugar.
We have been expecting a fight but are strongly reinforced, and there is no danger of any attack.
We have seized a great number of horses and part of our brigade is mounted and scours the country for miles. So we are in no danger. We are all well but Uncle James is not at all pleased because he gets no letters from anybody. He says he will write to nobody.

I must stop and give my respects to all and believe me to be your affectionate son.

Francis Murray

Address as before

Doc. #27 of 57: Natchez, Mississippi, dated, August 15, 1863.

Noteworthy:

Dear Father and Mother,

I wrote you about ten days ago and have not had time to get an answer as you will have barely have got that letter yet.

Now I write to tell you that I have sent you forty dollars by express so that you may be on the lookout for it. I have sent it by Barker's Express, a new agency down here. So you will have to take the trouble of hunting their agency in Fon du Lac.

I hope this letter will find you in better health. The boys are all quite well except for one exception. We had many sicknesses shortly after coming down here. We have all indulged freely in almost all kinds of fruits, figs, peaches, apples and melons.

They are plenty good and cheap.

I have not heard anything of Johnny since I last wrote you.

We are still here and wish we could remain here til our discharge.

It is a very pleasant and healthy place.

Our duty is not as heavy at first having been reinforced by troops who are quartered outside the town. This relieves us from of the necessity of being under arms all night.

A great number of troops have gone down the river and General Grant himself has landed here today.

I almost dread the order that will relieve us from duty here and send us on a the weary tramp again.

Our mounted men all are about scouring the country hunting up cotton and other Confederate property. Our mounted men in one of their excursions burnt a large cloth factory and destroyed several hundreds of hogsheads of sugar and molasses. They also destroyed lots of arms and ammunition. They were nearly caught by a large force of rebel cavalry who chased them a whole day on the wrong road.

I hope the people of Wisconsin will show better sense than offer any resistance to the draft. I hope for my part that our government would raise arms and equipment and send into the field men enough to walk right through the whole length and breadth of rebellion and at once clean out this foul blot in the history of this glorious country.

When you write again send me some postage stamps for I have none.
Uncle James is well. He will write to aunt today or tomorrow and
send some money.

I must stop to remember me to all the folks and address your next
letter to your loving son.

Francis Murray
Co. C., 17th Wisconsin
Ransom's Brigade
Mississippi
Via Cairo

Doc. #28 of 57: dated, September 6, 1863.

Noteworthy: Dear Father and Mother,

Now I take this time to write you to let you know that I am well
at this time, and hope that these few lines will find you the same
in health as they leave me at present.

I had not had a letter from you since before Vicksburg surrendered.
It has been three months since I have heard from you. I should
like to hear from you once more before I give you all up for this
world. I should like to hear from my brothers and sisters once more
before I can give them up for this world.

I did send you sixty dollars the sixth of this month.

I had not heard from Frank since he went down to Natchez and I want
to know if you do hear from him, I want you to write me.

This is all for this time. You must excuse my poor writing and
short letter.

John Murray to Father and Mother

Direct your letters

John Murray, 6th Division
Pioneer Corps of 17th Army
Corps in Care of,
Captain Bush,
Vicksburg, Mississippi

Write as soon as you get this if not sooner.

George P. Robins

Doc. #29 of 57: Natchez, Mississippi, dated, September 17, 1863.

Noteworthy: Dear Father and Mother,

I received yours of August 22nd and did not answer it in course

as I expected you would write again in a few days to let me know that you had got the money.

I am truly grateful to hear that you have been able to take care of the crops.

I saw one of Johnny's comrades the other day who tells me that Johnny is quite well and growing very stout. He has never written to me.

I need hardly say that I would like well to get home with Johnny but I fear that I will not get the chance. I have given up all hope of getting home til the war is over. Only two have gone from our company, and before my turn can come at this rate, our time will be about up.

I suppose you got a full true and particular account of everything concerning us from Captain Rea and Lietenant Curran who must have been having a glorious time among you. We are now looking for them back as their time is up there.

There is a great change here since they left. The whole regiment is now mounted and doing cavalry service. We crossed into Louisiana in advance of a strong force of infantry, capturing and burning a steamboat in the Black River. We also chased a rebel brigade who were on their way to support a garrison at Fort Beauregard at Harrisonburg. We found the fort evacuated. The poor devils had not had time to eat their breakfast when they left on the fires.

We had some skirmishing and a few wounded, but none in our company. We destroyed the forts guns and left our infantry never having seen the foe fire a shot. That was a seven day trip.

After resting one day, we were again ordered across the river to bring in a drove of 200 head of beef cattle. That took two days.

The rebels followed us in and were fighting in a small force across the river so we had to cross again and skirmished two days.

By the time we could be reinforced they had retreated beyond pursuit.

(kindly note: The rest of this letter is missing.)

Doc. #30 of 57: Vicksburg, Mississippi, dated, October 27, 1863.

Noteworthy: Dear Father and Mother,

I received your letter of September 29th on Friday, and the one of October 10th yesterday. As Johnny is over here today, this will will answer for us both. I got three newspapers but have no time to look at them. Johnny got two newspapers from you some six weeks ago. It was about the same time since he had had a letter. We are both very happy to hear that you are all well and have to thank God that we continue to enjoy good health.

John has done no duty for ten days. One of his comrades accidentally cut his shoulder with an ax while chopping. The wound is mending nicely.

The pioneer camp is in the city about a mile and a half from us. We are dismounted again, having left Natchez two weeks ago last Sunday. We left our horses there. A large rebel force was hanging around vicinity and the troops here were ordered to try and disperse them. Our brigade was needed here to guard the city. The troops returned after a destitute 25 to 35 mile a day march with no water. Colonel Malloy has gone to Wisconsin to have the regiment organization changed to that of cavalry. Most of us do not like the idea of dismounting. We like the fun of riding and having drawn cavalry clothing. Barney Harkin left Natchez for home on furlough the same day we left to come here.

There will be no more furlough granted this year by order from the War Department, so we have no chance til next year of getting home.

Uncle Jame's eyes are some better so he drives his teams once in a while.

Dan McMonagle has been slightly affected with fever but is doing duty.

The boys generally are well but kept on constant duty. We have alternate nights rest as we are the Provost Guard.

We have had a very cold spell, raining all one night and one day cold cold rain, and then froze all the next night so in the morning we had ice and everything was white.

We have heard that Lieutenant Curan is recovering and purposed leaving home to rejoin us at the end of the month.

There is some little talk here about the approaching state election, but we pay very little attention to the politics.

Give our respects to all the folks and write soon again to either or both.

Your loving sons,
Francis or John Murray
Complements to Anna Doherty
F. M.

Doc. #31 of 57: Vicksburg, Mississippi, dated, Sunday, January 3, 1864.

Noteworthy: Dear Father and Mother,

Brothers and sister I received you kind and welcome letter dated the 11th of December. You said that you expressed our box, but we have not received it yet. I began to think it must be lost.

If I receive it I will pen you a few lines so that you may know we received it.

I wish to God the men you spoke of would all have to come here and have a share of next springs campaign.

We spent a very good Christmas, escorting the fourteenth down to the river this morning. We gave them three hearty good cheers and a welcome home.

We have a recruiting office started for all that wants to reenlist for three years more.

I hope you will not be angry with us. I think as long as we have started out to support the old flag and Constitution that two more years won't be much, and you won't miss us if we would be home for two or three months as we are the talk and favorite of the state. One thing is that if this war were to last one year longer, there will be a great change that must take place.

We got news that our cousin William Herrin was dead, and they bought him a metallic coffin. They are bringing him home and it will be a sad thing for aunt and uncle to see him a corpse.

I hope to God as we are putting all our trust in Him, that He will spare our lives and come home to cherish you and mother in your old day.

Uncle James has left the company and gone to division headquarters to drive team with Willy until he is packed in his coffin and on board the steamboat.

We have no other news of any great importance other than to tell you we hear a good many rumors about moving, some say to Texas.

There is a good many pretty white girls here, and as far sparking that is played out down south. We have too much drilling and other duties to keep us engaged....

(kindly note: The rest of this letter is missing.)

Doc. #32 of 57: Vicksburg, Mississippi, dated, January 8, 1864.

Noteworthy: Dearest Father and Mother,

I must sit and right a few lines that first afford me a great deal of pleasure to right and hear from you. We all feel happy this evening having just finished our cakes and all the other things. The turkey and chicken are moldy but the rest was very good. The doves were all broke to pieces.

One thing I must tell you and mother is that me and Frank and Barney Harkins have reenlisted. All the company enlisted and we did not want to be the only black sheep in the flock. So I hope that you and mother won't take it to hard. For we thought it was as well

to see this thing all over for if it should last any longer then our old time we would be entitled to...

the draft in sixty days so we had better stay while we are in it.

Uncle James is enlisted to but Dan McMonagle will not enlist. He has some reason for it which I do not know.

One thing is we stand a chance of getting mounted again, and if we do it, it will be easier for us.

McPherson may be home soon. We escorted him to the steamboat and gave him three hearty good cheers and wishes for a pleasant voyage up the old Mississippi which we fought so hard to gain.

Barney Harkins wishes if you see any of his folks that you would tell them that he is well but caught a bad cold. He would write but is waiting for a letter.

John is sworn in and draws 502 dollars but Frank and Barnard is not served to years yet.

So now I must close in sending my best respects to all inquiring friend and my love to you and mother, brothers.....

from your loving son,

(letter not signed)

Doc. #33 of 57: Vicksburg, Mississippi, dated, February 11, 1864.

Noteworthy: Dear Father and Mother,

Your letter of the 27th came to hand two days ago and I know embrace the first opportunity to scribble a few lines in reply. We are very glad to hear that you are all well and trust that none of you got froze through that terrible cold spell at New Years. It was cold enough here at the time that a fellow of our company had two fingers bitten bad enough to peel the skin on New Years Day.

The temperature here has moderated greatly and we have had no snow.

There has been some hard work going on up the Yazoo River.

The white troops are all out from this garrison except two regiments on patrol guard in the city. One Illinois and the 16th Wisconsin are with us guarding the breastwork. There is a large force under General Sherman gone to the interior of the state, about 35,000 strong. We have heard that they have had some pretty hard skirmishing and have driven the rebels away twenty or thirty miles beyond Jackson. It is said that we will march to Mobile to the interior of the state.

This and guarding the breastworks is the cause of our not being home which we are very sorry for

We thank God we are all well. Uncle James' eyes are a little better. I enclose twenty dollars which I hope you will receive safe. John won't send any now for he will get his bounty in a few days. Then he will send the whole pile or carry it himself if we go soon. I would have sent forty dollars now but I loaned some and have not got it back yet. My time is not up yet to reenlist so I will not get my big pile for sometime. Hadn't you better buy the Sewell place if it is for sale? Get the logs ready for raising when we get home. Remember us to all the folks and answer this for I don't think we can get away before an answer can get back.

Your loving son,

Francis Murray

Doc.#34 of 57: dated, March 28, 1864. The 17th in camp in the field near Goldsboro, North Carolina.

Noteworthy: Dear father and mother,

I take pen in hand to let you know that we are all well at present and hoping these few lines find you all enjoying the same blessings as this leaves us at present.

Dear father I received your kind and welcome letter of January 22nd which gave me much pleasure to hear from home.

I am sorry to hear that so many have to run away for fear of the draft, but I suppose it can't be helped.

Our long march started January 29th with 12 days of rations to subsist on. We traveled over 500 miles in which we destroyed several railroads and burned the capital of South Carolina.

The fire lasted two days. There was over 500 boxes of tobacco besides thousands of dollars of clothing and all kinds of furniture.

If I ever live to get home I will tell you more about things that have past.

We got here the 25th of March. Pat McLaughlin is going home now in a few days and is leaving with Mr. Rossiters.

Bernard Harkin sends his best respects to all his friends.

Write soon. No more from your affectionate son.

Francis Murray

Doc.#35 of 57: from Camp Washburn, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, dated, April 20, 1864.

Noteworthy:

Dear Mr. Hugh McTaggart,

Dear father I take pleasure of writing those few lines to you hoping they will find you all enjoying good health. We got into Milwaukee at half past four o'clock stopping in town all night and then went up to camp this morning. There was so much excitement in arriving that we left the butter in the cars so that we did not have the pleasure of eating it.

Tell mother to let Aunt Ellen know that we had the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Doyle.

When you write again let us know how all the girls got along after we left.

You need answer this until I write again. The citizens of Milwaukee are giving a ball on the 17th to night.

Our respects to all the girls. We leave for the sunny south tomorrow morning at 7 o'clock.

The boys all feel good. I will write as soon as we get down south.

John joins me in sending his love and best respects to you all. Give our love to all the girls.

No more from your dear son,

Francis Murray

Doc.#36 of 57:

Athens, Alabama, dated, May 11, 1864.

Noteworthy:

My dear father and mother,

I take these few leisure moments in writing these few lines to you to let you know that we are in good health. Thanks be to God for His kindness and hoping these few lines find you enjoying the same.

To brothers and sisters and all inquiring friends, we left Cairo, Illinois on April 27th heading for Clifton, Tennessee. We remained on the boats for three days. We then left on a long and dreary march. At 11 o'clock the second day we were ordered on a forced march about 30 miles to a place called Palagche. We tried to keep it from falling into rebel hands.

The night we got there we made our beds on dewy grass sleeping two hours. We then heard the order to march to the cars where we slept the rest of the night.

Upon awakening, I found myself in Athens, Alabama.

Today our regiment is all on picket duty so I thought I would

write a few lines while I waited for John to come in.
I might not get the chance again so I will close by sending
our respects to all of the friendship girls, especially Elizabeth
Walker. Tell her I want her to have a nice little wife for me
when I go home, if she don't come to the conclusion herself.
That's all at present, from you affectionate son.

Francis Murray

direct your letters to Athens, Alabama or elsewhere

Doc. #37 of 57: Athens, Alabama dated May 14, 1864.

Noteworthy: Dear Father and Mother,

Frank wrote to you from Cairo. We have since seen some rather
exciting times. I sit down to tell you that in spite of rumors, we
are neither cut off by the enemy nor cut to pieces. We are all
well and in capital spirits.

We left Cairo on April 28th with six of our boats loaded with
troops and supplies and four gunboats to escort us. The rebel
guerrilla bands are all around on both sides of the river.

We came up to Clifton, a small ruined Tennessee River town on
May 1st. From there we marched before sundown on the 5th,
advancing 5 miles the next day. On the sixth we made 17 miles
and on the seventh, 18 miles. All this was over hilly and rough
rocky gravel road. It was very warm as with you in July, and
and the nights are disagreeably cold. Travel was somewhat severe
on most of the boys as some of them threw away their knapsacks.
We started early on the 8th but it took us a whole extra day to reach
Pulaski, a town hear the southern line of Tennessee which is on
the Nashville and Huntsville Rail Roads.

While on the way the rebels had surprised us, capturing our small
force at Florence some 40 miles above Pittsburgh Landing.

Just after dark having marched 33 miles, we spread our blankets
on the ground for we have no tents. Our rest was short.

At 11 o'clock we were roused in a great hurry and hustled into
cattle boxes on the railroad. Our commander being telegraphed
apprehended instant attack. So we poor seventeenth were sent to
stand the brunt of the attack by greatly superior numbers. Luckily
they did not come near us but we are still prepared for them.

We are under arms every morning at 3 o'clock and have a busy
picket guard out in every direction.

I wish we could be sent to join the main army for I don't like
detached service. Besides it is dangerous and very hard work

running from one place to another on every little alarm. And we seldom get any credit for it.
We left Cairo in to big a hurry and I being rather unsettled here I rather think that we will have to wait a long while.....
Remember us to all the folks. Frank sends his respects.

Your loving son,

John Murray
Co. C., 17th Wisconsin
Via Cairo

Tom Flanagan is quite well.
___ Stoddardts respects

Doc.#38 of 57: Huntsville, Alabama, dated, May 22, 1864.

Noteworthy: Dear Father and Mother,

This is Sabbath in the morning but there is no appearance of any chance to go to church so I will try to scribble a few lines to you. Uncle James arrived here the night before last and gave us all the gossip.

I received your letter of the second. James tells me that father is again prostrated by sickness. I sincerely hope that nothing is seriously wrong with him, and that we will have more cheering accounts of him in your next letter.

We left Cairo by steamboat April 28th arriving at Clifton, Tennessee on May 1st. We left Clifton on May 5th marching slowly as we were driving beef cattle, and they could not be driven fast or far. On the 8th we heard the "reb" was on the rampage and making for the same town we intended to reach the next evening, Pulaski. Pulaski is near the southern line of middle Tennessee on the Huntsville Nashville Stevenson R.R.. We got in at night and lay down with no tents and were roused in great hurry about 11 o'clock. We hustled into some cattle cars and were carried to Athens were we assisted some n_____ regiment.

The scoundrels showed no mercy as we waited there day and night for them until the rest of our force got along.

On Tuesday the last two regiments of us started between 4 to 4 P.M. and went 13 miles through a heavy thunderstorm, sprawling, stumbling, and floundering through the mud and mire. The lightning was very vivid and helped to repel an expected strong rebel raid on the railroad.

Johnny broke down on the road on Thursday and has not got over it yet.

We are all well otherwise and in good spirits. We hear that our army corps is on the way here and is expected today or tomorrow. We have a new corps commander too, a Major General Blair.

Our favorite General McPhearson has been promoted to the command of the department, and we don't have our pet Division General McArthur either as he is still at Vicksburg.

It is said we are going to Chattanooga 110 miles over an awful rough wild region which will try us some.

I hope we will be sent to join the main army. It will be far better for us than detached service running from one little place to another on every little alarm which besides being dangerous duty is very hard work and little or no credit can be gained by it. Remember us both to all the folks.

John Stoddard and Dan McMonagle desire to send their respects to you all.

I can't even guess where we may be when this reaches you, but address just as below and any letters will be sure to follow us.

Your affectionate son,

Francis Murray
Co. C., 17th Wisconsin,
17th Army Corps, Via Cairo

Barney Harkins came along with Uncle James. John Carmichael is also back but did not reenlist. You talk of our overcoats. If we had brought them we would have had to throw them away. Many of the boys threw away their knapsacks and all their contents. We have had some hard work to do and will have more soon.

F. M.

Doc.#39 of 57: dated, Wednesday, June 9, 1864.

Noteworthy: Dear father and mother,

I take pen in hand to let you know I am in good health hoping these few lines may find you enjoying the same. I received your kind and welcome letter June 5th.

I was sorry to hear you were unable to do anything since we left. We have had a hard time since we left home May 24th.

We marched from Huntsville to Beaver Dam 25 miles. We marched 17 miles on the 26th to Decatur and 27 miles from Decatur

to Elkerick where our cavalry had a skirmish taking 30 prisoners. Now we are about 6 miles from General Sherman's advance. I can't tell you much about our position yet. If I live and God spares me my life, I will have strange news to tell you. The day we left Huntsville and I was on picket, I did not see John but Bernard Harkins was up to the hospital. He was getting better and the doctor told him as soon as he got stout he could come back to the regiment. Uncle James is gone to the ambulance corps. Daniel McMonagle, Bernard Harkins and all the boys send their respects to all inquiring friends. We are going to march to the front tomorrow, so farewell father and mother, sisters and brothers. I bid you a adieu no more.
From your affectionate son,

Francis Murray
Direct your letter to Cartersville, Georgia

Doc. #40 of 57: dated, June 26, 1864.

Noteworthy: Dear Sister,

I set myself down to let you know that I am well at present hoping that these few lines may find you enjoying the same blessing. After a long and worrisome march we have come to a halt and find ourselves no in front of the enemy. It is almost impossible to climb the hill that is in front of us. This is as hard a place as I have ever saw in my life. Our army corps is on the left trying to flank the rebels. We are waiting every minute for the word-charge. Dan McMonagle was over to the fourteenth corps to see his cousin Charles Gallagher He says the breastworks is within thirty yards of each other and every day the dead and wounded are carried from the battlefield. Some men have given themselves up as prisoners of war and these men reported that there was a rebel brigade ready to give themselves up as prisoners of war. Sometimes this information is false though. One night last week the rebels formed several lines behind the other ready to make a break. They marched out by the flank at right shoulders and got within 15 yards and then in double quick time fired a volley into our men and then bayoneted every man they met. There was a terrible slaughter on both sides. Some of the officers said the next day there was about three thousand with nothing

but a strait bayonet hole through their bodies.
It must have been a horrible sight.
All the boys is well now. Thomas Flanagan and Patrick Mullaby
stand it well.
Uncle James is well but his eyes are very weak.
Brother John is with us once more and sends his love to all his
brothers, sisters, and friends at home.
Thank God, there is not an army tramping what little crops
you have beneath your feet like we are down here.
So guess I will come to a close. I can't think of any more at
present.
You must excuse my lead pencil. So no more at present from
your affectionate brother,

Francis Murray

I have had only one letter in over a month. I wrote a letter to Miss
Walker over a month ago and got no answer. I wish she would
let me know whether she got it.

Doc.#41 of 57: dated, July 24, 1864.

Noteworthy: Dear Sister,

I take my pen in hand to inform you that I am still alive and in
good health hoping that these few lines may find you enjoying
the same blessing.

I received your kind and welcome letter of July 7th which gave me
great pleasure to hear from him, but I could not read one half of it.
I would like to know what you meant by little wife. I could
not make it out. That don't make any difference. Try it again.
You may do better to go to school and study hard and learn to
read and write well.

I have marched a long distance since I last wrote you and a hard
fight to boot on July 22nd. The rebels made a charge on us with
a terrible yell which was kept up for an hour and a half.

The rebels were repulsed with a heavy loss. Our loss was heavy also.
We was on the right side of our corps and as luck was on our side
they did not charge in front of us as the woods was thick in front
of us.

We fired three or four volleys at them so they thought they hadn't
better come up where the seventeenth was.

The dead are not buried yet and it is a horrible sight to see all

the dead that are lying upon the field never to rise again.
I guess I will stop talking about.....

(Kindly note, the rest of this letter is missing.)

Doc.#42 of 57: In camp near Atlanta, Georgia near the the line of battle, dated,
August 10, 1864.

Noteworthy: Dear Sister,

I take my pen in hand to let you know that we are well hoping these few lines may find you all enjoying the same blessing. Although we have hard times, we are very lucky. If I should tell you about the hardships we have to endure, you would not believe me. I am very sorry to hear of father being sick so long. I hope he will soon be up again. Tell Cate Dougherty that I have not received an answer for the last letter I wrote and also one to Mary Dougherty. I would like very much to hear from them. Tell them that Pat Mullaby is well and sends his love to all the girls. All the boys is well. Dear sister, I have not much to say. Johnny Joynes is sending his love to you and all the rest of the family. No more from your affectionate brother,

Francis Murray

Doc.#43 of 57: In the field near Atlanta, Georgia, dated, ____,1864.

Noteworthy: Dear Father and Mother,

I take pen in hand to inform you that we are still alive and enjoying good health at present. Thanks be to God for His kind mercy. Hoping these few lines may find you enjoying the same blessing. Dear parents, you say that you did not get any letters from me in a long time, but it is not so. I have written one to father and three to Roseann in fathers name which I did not get any answers for yet. So I thought I would write you a few lines to let you know that I did not forget the loved ones at home. Yet I was very sorry when I heard that you did not get my letters. I suppose it can't be helped but I hope you will get them yet. We have marched a good deal from one place to another since I

last wrote you.

A great many boys have fell to rise no more but we have been very lucky so far. I hope and trust in God we will return home safe once more. Our regiment has lost seventy or eighty killed and wounded since we arrived in line of battle. Our company only had one badly wounded.

John Davis only received a slight bruise from a piece of shell. Uncle James is in the hospital at Rome, Georgia and says his eyes is no better.

John is going to write this afternoon. He will give you the details of the fights.

I must bid you goodbye. From your affectionate son,

Francis Murray

Doc. #44 of 57: In camp with the 17th near Atlanta, Georgia, dated, Saturday, September 10, 1864.

Noteworthy: Dear Mother,

I received your kind and welcome letter of the August 19th which made me happy to hear from home, it being the first letter I got in 3 months. I suppose I would have gotten it soon had it not been for Sherman's great flank expedition which caused the city of Atlanta to fall.

We were close up to the rebel works and got orders to pack our knapsacks with fifteen days rations to be drawn.

I did not know at the time but when Atlanta fell, we drove the rebels several miles and now we are filing back close to the city. I expect the army will be payed off pretty soon and I think there will be furloughs granted. If there is I will try and get one.

I guess the rebels will make a break for Mobile, Alabama now. I think it is likely we will have to follow them but if they make a stand at Macon, we will have a little rest.

Tell Aunt Rosey that I have not seen Uncle James since June.

I received a letter from him today and he says his eyes are growing worse all the time.

I am very sorry to hear that father has such poor health, but I sincerely hope that he will soon be able to be round again.

I hope this cruel war will soon be over so I can be at home once more.

Serious matters since our regiment left Milwaukee as they have lost no less than one hundred and fifty of our company. Our

company has lost 2 killed and eight wounded.
All the rest of the boys is well. Bernard Harkins sends his
best respects to all inquiring friends.
You said you wrote a letter stating how the draft was to come off
but I never got it.
When you write again let me know how the crops turned.
Sending my love to father and mother, to brothers and sisters
and all inquiring friends, so good night.
I must fix my things up for I am on picket tonight.
From your affectionate son,

Francis Murray

Doc. #45 of 57: In camp near Atlanta, Georgia, dated, September 15, 1864.

Noteworthy: My dear Mother,

I received your welcome letter of the second and I am so very
happy to hear that you are all very well, and especially that
father is able to take care of the crops_____.
We feel very grateful for the newspapers you so kindly sent.
I think that the boys up North need not feel badly scared
about enlisting or being drafted, for I think the war is fast wearing
to a close.
You should read and ponder General Grant's opinions and remarks
on the condition of affair in the Confederacy. I believe he expresses
the naked truth on this momentous subject.
It would appear that there is an impression that the Presidential
Election is to decide whether there will be war or peace.
General Grant is slowly but surely tightening his coils around
the terribly famous city of Richmond. I firmly believe that it
is a city doomed to fall into the hands of the Unionists.
When that happens we shall have passed "the beginning of the
end."
A week ago Frank got a letter from Roseann and answered it.
Think only the wounded and sick will get any furloughs.
We are quite well and have received ne'er a scratch and we
daily look forward to our officers to make out payrolls.
Then the greenbacks will fly around after our long spell of
poverty. There have been times when a few dollars would have
been beneficial.
Uncle James Gallagher is still in the hospital at Rome. His
last letter informed us that his eyes are no better, and I am
afraid that he will do no good in the army. He ought to be

discharged but the military authorities will not allow discharges nowadays.

Dan McMonagle has a very severe attack of fever and again is in the hospital.

Atlanta has fallen into our hands and we have just closed a terrible campaign. The scenes are too deeply graven on our hearts.

Discusses his part in the battle of Kennesaw Mountain

Gone to destroy rebel railroad communications south of Atlanta.

The Atlanta campaign left many dead and dying horses and mules.

Men were so worn out they experienced great difficulty in marching.

We are glad to hear our return to Atlanta.

John Murray

Doc.#46 of 57: From camp in the field near Atlanta, dated, September 16, 1864.

Noteworthy: A letter to his brother from John Murray

Recalling the fall of Atlanta

Discussion of the destruction of the city

3 railroads are still running through the city.

Doc.#47 of 57: From camp in the field near Atlanta, Georgia, dated, September 26, 1864.

Noteworthy: A letter to his sister from Francis Murray

Happy that his family and Uncle Dan are getting along well.

Uncle James' eyes are getting worse.

All the boys are well and so is brother Johnny.

Tell father we expect to get paid soon and expect to send home \$450.

I can read and write my own letters now.

Doc.#48 of 57: In camp near Rome, Georgia, dated October 13, 1864.

Noteworthy: A letter to his mother from Francis Murray

Have been marching day and night the last 10 days.

The rebels go faster than we can.

We took some prisoners southwest of Chattanooga.

Confederate General Hood is making for Tennessee.

The furloughs must be played out for this year.
Johnny joins me in sending his love.

Doc.#49 of 57: In camp near Galesville, Alabama, dated, October 22, 1864.

Noteworthy: A letter to their father and mother by John and Frank Murray

Tell Mr. Curn to send us tickets to vote.
Would like to get a letter once in awhile.
Please run downtown to buy us a candle to lite
us to bed so we can take our place at the root of a tree.
There is nothing but the heavens to cover our heads.
Sent on rebel paper.

Doc.#50 of 57: In camp near Galesville, Alabaman, dated October 22, 1864.

Noteworthy: A letter to his sister from John Murray

Glad to receive your letter.
Sorry to hear father is in such poor health.
Glad you got the corn and wheat done and write to let
me know how the wheat turned out.
I think it will be a long time before we can get home.
A great deal of talk among the soldiers about the election.
Some think if old Abe is reelected, there will be 4 more years
of war.

Doc. #51 of 57: In camp ear Marietta, Georgia, dated December 7, 1864.

Noteworthy: A letter to his mother and father from Francis Murray
Is noting his family's great excitement over the Presidential
election.
Soldiers here are divided on their votes, many favoring little
Mac while others want Lincoln.
We have been marching over 260 miles and expect to be
paid in camp soon.
Dan McMonagle and Barney Harkin have gone home on
furlough.
Got a letter from Rosann that she is improving well and
must go to school more.
Dear Sister, you say that Mary Dougherty got my letter
and did not think worth to write an answer to my letters.
Mother you can get this ring mended for I guess it is to
large for Roseann.

Doc.#52 of 57: In the field near Pocotaligo, South Carolina, dated, January 27, 1865.

Noteworthy: To a friend named Hugh (and unsigned).

Am sorry that I went on furlough now as passage cost me \$38.

When we got to New York one of the regulars stole my overcoat, goggles, and gloves, and I am almost froze.

Captain Rea has not got any letters since leaving Atlanta. Let me know if whether or not Dan or Barney got out of the draft. Write soon.

Doc.# 53 of 57: Near Goldsboro, North Carolina, dated, March 31, 1865.

Noteworthy: A letter to his sister from John Murray.

Since your last letter we have been traveling through more swamps and rivers than dry land.

We can carry only a small portion of supplies but have been able to live off the land's sustenance.

We have fared well on turkeys, chickens, eggs, bacon, fresh pork, fresh beef, honey, and molasses

There has been severe fighting on a small scale and the enemy has lost thousands of men.

Since we got here in January our troops are dirty and a more motley dressed crowd you never saw, some hat less, shoeless, breach less.

General Sherman who reviewed us laughed our grotesque appearance.

We will rest here for 30 days while being refitted as fast as supplies can get here.

Rumored that Richmond, Virginia will soon be taken, and we expect there is still some big fighting to do.

Hope to take part at your next spelling school.

I hope to dance with and kiss all the girls when I am home.

Doc.#54 of 57: In camp near Goldsboro, North Carolina, dated, April 2, 1865.

Noteworthy: A letter to his sister Rosann Murray from Francis Murray

Received your welcome letter and sorry to hear of father's long sickness and that mother too is sick.

We are all right and will be coming home.
We have had a long march through North and South Carolina
traveling over 500 miles on 12 days rations.
We have robbed the countryside leaving many a family destitute
with mouths to feed.
Uncle James is well and driving his team in the supply train.

Doc.# 55 of 57: In camp near Goldsboro, North Carolina, dated, April 8, 1865.

Noteworthy: A letter to Mr. William Murray from his brother Francis Murray

Your recent letter had gone astray and I only got it yesterday.
Hope that Dr. Smead can do something will do something
for father.
Hear that you hired out at Dr. Curns and you should stay
at home while father is sick as James and Rosann can't do all
the work.

Doc.#56 of 57: In camp near Raleigh, North Carolina, dated, April 23, 1865.

Noteworthy: A letter to his mother from Francis Murray

Received your letter of the 12th and that father has had a rough
time with his sickness.
Suppose you heard of the surrender of the Confederate Army
and expect we will be free from bondage in less than 6 months.
We have a long ways to march before we can get rail or water
transportation.

Doc. #57 of 57: In the field near Washington, D.C., dated, May 25, 1865.

Noteworthy: A letter to Miss Rosann Murray from _____

Received your April 22nd letter and sorry to hear that
father is getting no better.
I would like to hear about him every week.
We were reviewed yesterday in Washington by President
Johnson and Generals Grant and Sherman.
A huge crowd of citizens saw the greatest review that ever
was in the new world.

(Please note: the rest of the letter is missing).
