

GIFTS AND ACQUISITIONS

Letters from the Ranks, 1861-65

THE Rutgers University Library is fortunate to have in its manuscript holdings a representative number of collections dealing with the part played by the enlisted man in the Civil War. In recent months this body of material has been expanded by new and valuable accessions. Perhaps the most interesting of these items are the letters of Alfred N. Ayres, Company B, 72nd Regt., New York Volunteers (originally organized as the 3rd Regt., Excelsior Brigade), of Chautauqua County, New York. Ayres enlisted at the beginning of the war (May, 1861) and served until its conclusion in 1865. His letters, chiefly to his father, Joseph Ayres, span the entire period and are especially important in that they reflect the radically changing sentiments of the soldier at the front during the different stages of the conflict. Early in 1861, for example, Ayres writes of liking soldiering "very well indeed," and notes also that "the rations are more than we can eat" while "the quality is first rate." His youthful exuberance is high as he reassures his parents that "we are enjoying ourselves Tip Top, although surrounded on all sides by the enemys of our Country." Hardly a year passes, however, before the youth makes a complete about face in his attitude and expresses himself as "anxious to see the end of this terrible war." Comfort was a thing of the past when during the 1862 campaigns around Richmond he writes about the possibility of "laying in these swamps all summer." Food too becomes a source of complaint, and during a brief illness, he found strength enough to inform his kinsmen that they "could not imagine how a sick man feels here with nothing but Government Rations . . . to live upon." All in all the situation of the private soldier as Ayres saw it was "Slavery worse than African Slavery," and he was convinced that the northern farmers "provided better for their beasts. . . ."

But Alfred Ayres was by no means a malcontent by nature, and he did not always write complainingly. After a rude indoctrination, he adjusted to the rigors of infantry life, and his letters of 1863 and

after show that his patriotism survived discomfort. In a letter of March 10, 1863, for example, he commends his father's "sterling Patriotism" which is reminiscent "of the Patriots of the Revolution, those who overlaid the foundations of this glorious Country which is now so furiously assailed by the Slave Oligarchy." He goes on to reassure the senior Ayres that "the Rebellion is bound to be Crushed" for "We soldiers know that we can whip them and we will do it." But strong patriotic expressions at this point in the war, though not unusual, were generally not the rule. More evident are the sobering effects of the war experiences which resulted in such mature attitudes as demonstrated by Ayres in a letter to a younger brother: "You say you would like to draw a bead on some of the Rebs. Remember that you cannot get near enough without exposing yourself to some as skillful marksman as yourself; it is not all on one side I assure you."

Another new and valuable source for understanding conditions among the enlisted men are the letters of Lawrence H. Haddock. Private Haddock was a member of Company H, 22nd Regt., Massachusetts Volunteers, which saw considerable fighting in Virginia. The letters, addressed to a young son, Edward C. Haddock, provide a vivid picture of front line activity. A good example is the letter of June 1, 1862, in which Haddock treats of the fighting around Hanover Court House on May 27th and recalls: "that night we slept on the battlefield. It was a hard place I tell you for a man to sleep among the dying and the dead." As with most soldiers, food and money occupied much of Haddock's thinking, and a letter of June 13, 1862, finds him complaining that "we do not get much to eat nor very good at that" and "we have not been paid for over two months." Regardless of his many ills and obvious discontent, Haddock's patriotism, like that of Ayres, was enduring. Regarding the taking of Richmond which was very much a public issue in June of 1862, he wrote: ". . . I say we can and we will, . . . we expect a rough time doing it but it must fall."

The Alfred N. Ayres letters were presented to the Library by Mrs. Benjamin Long. Those of Lawrence H. Haddock were a gift of Mrs. J. H. Haddock.

Other Manuscript Accessions

Space does not permit a complete listing of all the manuscript materials which were received by the Special Collections Department during the past six months. The following, therefore, is not to be considered in any way a full account. Rather it is simply a selective treatment of what appear to be the more significant items (donors' names in italics):

- Anderson, John. Stone mason's accounts, Trenton, N.J., 1725-28. *Miss Katherine N. Stryker.*
- Barkalow, Matthias. Methodist Independent Church records (baptisms, marriages, deaths) prepared by Barkalow, itinerant preacher of Monmouth and Ocean counties, c.1807-27. *Mrs. Ethan Allen and Mrs. Arthur Griggs.*
- Beers, Nathan. Family papers, chiefly deeds, mortgages, etc., Monmouth Co., N.J., 1796-1836. *Mr. and Mrs. Joseph E. Conover.*
- Bower, William. Papers relating to a request for a veterans pension, including Civil War items, 1865-92, Moosup, Conn. *Mrs. Edward Angell.*
- Capner-Exton-Hill Families. Papers, chiefly correspondence of the Hill-Hulsizer families; also genealogical notes and records, 1828-92, Flemington, N.J. *Miss Mary B. Hulsizer.*
- Connett, Albert N. "Connett Genealogy" (typescript, March, 1950). Comdr. Connett through *Miss Helen M. Wright.*
- Dey, Harvey S. Family papers, chiefly relating to real estate holdings, Cranbury, Middlesex Co., N.J., 1842-1909. *Mrs. Harvey S. Dey.*
- Eltinge, Wilhelmus. Record of sermons (Dutch Reformed Church), Bergen Co., N.J., etc., 1799-1812. Huguenot Historical Society through *Kenneth Hasbrouck.*
- Hager, Albert H. Diary, 1865, Newark, N.J.; diary of Byron G. Hager, 1868, New Brunswick, N.J., etc. *Mrs. Marcus S. Wright.*
- Hardenbergh, Johannis G. Farm accounts (in Dutch), Ulster Co., N.Y., 1763-93.
- Knox, John P. Papers relating to his ministry in the Dutch Reformed Church (licenses, certificates, etc.), New Brunswick, N.J., etc., 1837-45. *Mrs. Asher Atkinson.*

- Larison, Mary Jane. Diary (copy), Trenton, N.J., 1855-57. *Trenton State College*.
- McAllister, Robert (1813-91). Papers: correspondence, chiefly letters to his family (wife, Ellen Jane McAllister, and two daughters Henrietta and Sarah), concerning life in the Union Army and battles with the enemy, 1861-65; official papers, including letters received, drafts and copies of letters sent, reports, etc., 1861-65; postwar letters, notes and writings relating to the military side of the war, 1868-88; notes and annotated remarks relevant to McAllister's career by his daughter, Henriette McAllister Baldwin, c.1891-1914; McAllister family photographs; photographs and pencil drawings of New Jersey units (1st and 11th Inf. Regts.) attached to the Army of the Potomac, 1862-63, Belvidere, N.J., etc., 1861-1914. *Mrs. Edith Butler and Mrs. Edith Blunt through the New Jersey Civil War Centennial Commission*.
- McKelway, St. Clair. Typescript manuscript of the short story "First Marriage" (1960); also letter, April, 1963, New York, N.Y. *St. Clair McKelway through I. Robert Kriendler*.
- New Jersey State Federation of Labor. Correspondence, typescript drafts and research notes, relevant to a projected published history; the materials represent two separate efforts, one by I. L. H. Kerrison of the Rutgers University Institute of Labor Relations, the other by Lewis H. Herrman of the Federation. *Institute of Management and Labor Relations, Rutgers University*.
- Quackenbush, William. Papers, chiefly relating to Quackenbush family land holdings, Monmouth Co., N.J., 1799-1884. *Mrs. Charles E. Wikoff*.
- Slavery in the United States. Letter of Pierce Butler (signer of the Constitution from South Carolina) regarding the slaves on his plantation in Georgia, 1808; slave auction accounts, 1789-91, Georgetown, South Carolina; slave bill of sale, 1815, King George Co., Virginia. *Mr. and Mrs. Philip D. Sang*.
- Smith, Rescarrick M. Papers, 1835-60; Andrew J. Smith (son) papers, 1863-64, Hightstown, N.J., etc., 1835-64; also papers, chiefly relating to land holdings, of James Parker, 1785-1805, William Tappan, 1787-1823, Abraham Mortier, 1764-86; Let-

- ter of Joseph D. Bedle (governor of N.J., 1875-78), 1875. *Mrs. Miriam J. Cannel.*
- Smith, William. Papers, including deeds, estate items, militia commission, etc., Monmouth Co., N.J., 1793-1836. *Mr. and Mrs. Joseph E. Conover.*
- Suffern, Edward. Papers, 1808-59, relating chiefly to his legal career; Andrew and George Suffern tavern and general store accounts, 1792-96, Rockland Co., N.Y.
- Vanaursdalen, John. General store accounts, New Brunswick, N.J., 1811-50. *Bergen County Historical Society.*
- Voorhees, Oscar M. Papers, including articles (published and unpublished) on New Jersey history and religious subjects; Schamp, Whitaker and Voorhees genealogical data, New Brunswick, N.J., 1833-1933. *Miss Helen M. Voorhees.*
- Waley, Arthur D. Papers, chiefly letters received, 1938-62, and drafts of published writings concerning Chinese Civilization; also the papers of Beryl de Zoete, English literary critic and authority on the folk dance, including: letters received, 1912-61; travel journals, 1951, 1957; prose and poems of English literary associates (among others Edith Sitwell) and drafts of writings, London, England, etc., 1912-61.
- Wills, Zebedee M. Business papers: auction accounts, 1812-60; receipts, promissory notes, orders for payments, conditions of sale, guardian and estate executor accounts, bank books, survey books, 1814-64; sawmill accounts, 1837-46; cider mill accounts, 1772-1801, Evesham Township, etc., Burlington Co., N.J., 1772-1864.
- Wright, Helen M. "The Forgotten Church of Mt. Freedom, Mendham, later Randolph Township, Morris Co., N.J., with copies of Two Books of Early Trustees Minutes, 1792-1832" (typescript copy, 1963), Montclair, N.J. *Miss Helen M. Wright.*

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