

William Alexander Moore Letters

Background Information

Co. E 73rd Regiment Illinois Infantry

Mustered in service August 21, 1862

73rd Regiment was referred to as the Preacher's Regiment

Moore was a farmer, carpenter, and a rancher as well as a soldier.

Died February 9, 1904 at Warren, Indiana and is buried there.

In Camp 2 Miles South of Murfreesboro

January 18th 1863

Dear Father

I once more embrace an opportunity of sending you a few lines and I have great reasons to be thankful for the privilege [sic] and that I can inform you that my health is good. I sincerely hope these few lines may find you and mother enjoying good health and peace of mind and that they may reach you soon. It has been a long time since I heard from you, perhaps your letters have miscarried. I think the last I got was written about the first of Dec. I answered, but now disremember the date. The letter is lost. I have received but little mail matter for near a month. My last from home bears date Dec. 28th. My family were in usual health and doing as well as circumstances would admit. But it was hard enough I am sure. It makes me feel sad to think of their troubles. May God protect them and give them wisdom and strength to bear all. We all hope how soon the war will be over and that we may meet again in peace to enjoy the blessings of liberty. Yet I fear that the time is to be prolonged beyond this coming spring. It looks to me now that it will be necessary to make out a new levy for more men and that the policy of the war will have to be changed somewhat and a parcel more of our proslavery leaders and Generals will have to be dealt with and true patriots put into their places. Oh how I long to see our army perjured [sic] and made clear of all those rotten sneaking scoundrals [sic] who pretend to be Union men, while they are the worst and most dangerous traitors with whom we have to deal. I am inclined to believe that we was well nigh losing all here, in consequences of having a traitor to command a part of our forces on the right wing. I can't help but think him a blackhearted traitor or he would have done differently. It is true I may not know it all, but I think some.

Well I suppose you would like me to give you some items about our march and the battle at this place etc. Well I'll go back to about the time I wrote you last about the 25th of Dec. About that time our army was reorganized and made ready for a move, the morning of the 24th. We had orders to march and all was torn up and made ready and held in readiness some hours when we was ordered to pitch tents. We took our Christmas in rather a pleasant way and early the morning of the 26th we were ordered out again and that time we went. Our sick and camp equipage sent back to Nashville with all the teams except my old friend Watson's and mine. We went with the army J.

Watson to haul hospital stores and I to haul qrmasters [sic] stores for our regiment. The rebbles [sic] kept up a skirmish with our men every day. We could hear the canon [sic] roar at intervals through each day but the rebbles [sic] would give back and keep themselves out of danger. I suppose they done so in order to ascertain the strength and whereabouts of our army which went out on different roads and came together at or near Murfreesboro. We had some rain which made it a little disagreeable at times. We traveled one night through a cedar wilderness and over the ruffest [sic] roads I ever drove a team, we stopped within about 6 miles of Murfreesboro and camped without fires and our boys lay down to sleep as best they could in wet blankets, (for it was raining) The next morning Tuesday our division was put in motion by times and took position on the fields. That day some skirmishing and feeling was done for the enemy, to find their whereabouts and that was about all that was done. The exstream [sic] right was commanded (as you have already learned from the papers no doubt) By Gen. Johnson. The next division by Gen. Jeff. C. Davis and the next towards the center was ours, or Sheridan's division all this you will get from the papers.

Our train was kept some two miles in the rear (it should have been six) and that night as the night before we did not unhitch our team, but watched them all night and on Wednesday morning the fight commenced in good earnest and to our surprise the rebbles [sic] made an advance on Johnson's division when he was not ready for them and so our lines were broke and a lot of cavalry rushed on to our train and captured considerable of it. When it was known that we were in danger, we was ordered to haul out as quick as possible and led off through some old fields to the East towards the Murfreesboro pike, but the enemy was onto us soon after we got started and everything that could run was on the go. Many straglers [sic] came rushing by from Johnson's division, and they run for dear life all was excitement and confusion every teamster making his mules do their best, a great many passed me just tearing things endways. It was not [missing text] untill [sic] our little squad of cavalry gave way and they came on our retreat past us and the rebble [sic] cavalry after them firing into our men and yelling at every jump and so fast as they come up with the train they would halt [sic] the teams and turn them back in order to get them inside their own lines. They would draw up their revolvers on us and order us to halt [sic] swearing [sic] that they would blow our brains out some five drew revolvers on me and two with carbens [sic]. I as a matter of course obeyed [sic] and then was a prisoner I was ordered back under guard but had not gone over half a mile when I herd [sic] some new confusion behind me and the order to "halt [sic] that team." I called a halt [sic] and found that the rebbles [sic] were skedaddling as fast or faster than we had done. Some of our regulars had come in and commenced piling [sic] the secsh [sic] of [sic] their horses, some were taken prisoner and some five got away. So I with others were recaptured and drove off free again.

We got onto the pike and was ordered back some six miles where we camped for the night, and the next day we was ordered back to Nashville, our train got strung out and was about six miles long and on we moved slowly. I had got on so that I was within 14 miles of Nashville (and 16 from Mur-) about 2/3 of the train was in front of me. Well at that point I heard [sic] the report of a gun and soon a number more. I looked of [sic] to one side and could see the smoke and in a moment we was greeted [sic] with the report

of a canon [sic] which was repeated in quick succession for some moments that threw all into confusion again and got up a panick [sic] and such running and crashing and smashing wagons upside down and teams scared run off and among the rest my team ran off and after running near a mile they ran through a fence My line broke and the best I could do I got them stopped among some trees. The rebble [sic] cavalry were after us so close the best I could do was to mount a mule and leave while straglers [sic] took the rest of my mules and lost everything els [sic] except what I had on my back, so I barely escaped being taken prisoner again. The rebbles [sic] burned over 100 wagons out of that train mine with the rest. Our cavalry came up in the rear and saved the rear of the train and recaptured the prisoner. This was done [missing text] of some two thousand [illegible] (so said) and while this was going on a desperate battle was raging at Murfreesboro. Our regiment was engaged 5 times that day and once or twice nearly surrounded but they stood nobly and cut their way through many brave boys fell at their posts. It is almost a mericle [sic] that our regiment was not almost anihilated [sic]. All three of our Brig. Gen. were killed belonging to our division Gen's Schafer, Sill, and Roberds. Sheridan was at his post and Rosecrans is praised by all our men. It was by the hardest that he got Johnson's blunder covered up. But after hard fighting they took Mur-- and now we are camped 2 miles south and don't know when we will move. The rebbles [sic] are not far from us. They get after our forage train every few days and make us skeedaddle [sic]. We are to go out in the morning for forage. I have been driving an other team up to Thursday last when I was appointed Foragemaster which gives me rather an easier position but gives the rebbles [sic] some better chance to get me. I'll do what I can to keep out of their clutches when hunting forage. [end of letter]

[memo-The following letter written by William Alexander Moore to his father, Samuel Moore was written while he was stationed near Murphressboro [sic] in Tennessee during the War between the North and the South.]

Murphreesboro [sic], Tenn.

July 20th. 1863

Dear Father;

I embrace a few moments to scribble you a few lines to let you know of my where-a-bouts. I wrote to K.K. when I first came to this place and thought I would have written to you before this but have neglected to do so. I thought that you would get some of the particulars in K's letter and then I would give you some more at another time but now I have forgotten what I wrote. I am glad that I can say that I have my health about as good as usual and getting along as well as could be expected. I have had light work since I got to this camp so I have fleshed up quite fast. It was quite a satisfaction to me to hear from you. Glad to hear that your health is still improving. I have just received a letter from home but have heard nothing from the folks in Clinton or Fayette. Wife and children are well except for chills ocaasionally [sic] When enroute to this place I found James Darbyshire about 30 miles south of Murphfreesboro [sic]. He is in Company B of the 40th. Ohio Regiment. James said that John D., his father, was getting along about as

usual and maybe a little bit better as he had quit using strong drink again. We have had no news of importance while you, I suppose, came very near having a visit from John Morgan as he was going through the country to see his copperhead friends. I guess that some of them got a reward for their sympathy for I am convinced that Morgan or Lee, neither one would have made such an attempt had they not supposed they would have received aid from the Wallandingham [sic] Democrats. I guess that the Secess [sic] of the South will now conclude that their friends in the North are poor sticks to depend on for help. If the news is correct the Rebs [sic] have been badly used up at every point. As for old Bragg Rosie (Rosecranz [sic]) couldn't get a fight out of him but he has used his army up badly. I understand that we have taken over 5,000 prisoners since we left Murphreesboro [sic] and I guess a great number have deserted and gone back to their homes or are hiding in the mountains. We see them coming in every day. It is said that Bragg is at Chattanooga with 25,000 men. Our brigade is at Stevenson, Ala. and I hear that they have been skirmishing some with Bragg's cavalry. I do not think that Bragg will start to fight unless he is strongly reinforced as he ran and left his stronghold at Shelbyville. They had strong fortifications from which they never fired a gun. At Fullhome [sic] our Division found their works in perfect shape for a hard struggle but we have had no trouble in taking possession. The Rebs [sic] have run off leaving their tents standing. Some of them had their rations partly prepared and cooking. They just left all and skeedaddled [sic] for the tall hills. They said that the damned Yankees were trying to out flank them but when they got down South they would give them hell.

I was told by a Union soldier near Shelbyville that Bragg was all the time pretending that he was going to move on Rosecranz [sic] and would move a brigade or two to the front and at the same time withdraw some on the flanks. This was his stratedgy [sic] while he moved most of his army to Vicksburg but old Rosie could not be scared as through his spies he knew what and when to do and done it. Bragg's army is very much demoralized and I understand that he has got quite a lot of them under guard such is the report from deserters. A few days ago one of our boys was out in the thicket gathering blackberries. He sat down to rest and sleep, while taking his snooze some Rebs [sic] came up and called, "Wake up, old fellow, wake up, we want to surrender." So the Yank got up, fixed bayonet and brought his prisoners into camp. That's one way of taking prisoners. We are expecting to move up to the brigade in a few days with our train and equipage. The rail road is repaired and the trains running to Stevenson. A part of our Division is here yet and will perhaps remain here for several days. We have passed over some good looking country but it is now in a bad fix. Little in it for man or beast to live on. Well as duty calls I will close. Direst [sic] letter to Murphreesboro [sic].

As ever your affectionate son
William A. Moore

Letter to son Ben
Jan. 7, 1864

[illegible]
S. Moore

N.B. I did not get this letter wrote for the last week's mail, the 8th. Kizzie Kennedy got a letter from William A. Moore that day dated the 14th. of Dec. He was well and on his way to Chattanooga with a train of 52 wagons loaded with provisions for the soldiers and feed for the horses and mules. He had been kept busier the last four months than at any other time since he went into the service. Too busy to write to friends but was now detained at Shell Mound to let Gen. Sherman's train pass and would use the time wrighting [sic]. He said that Sherman with his men and the 73rd. Illinois included had been to help Burnside whip Longstreet which he would have done up clean if he had not run. Sherman is now going west again and William says that Gen. Bragg has a good deal of the Bragg knocked out of him and that the rebs [sic] are pretty much cleaned out of these parts and that the rebel prisoners talk despairingly [sic] as if they thought their cause was desperate. William thinks that when they got as far as Macon, Ga. their part of the war will be over and if Richmond was taken the war would be played out. William says that the soldiers are ready to do their part and with very little grumbling and although many of them have suffered much from hunger and cold since the taking of Chattanooga yet they have shown their patriotism and valor in the last battles notwithstanding their privations. They will soon have food and clothing for two boats will be running and the railroad is being laid into Chattanooga. Then I hope to get a little rest, He says, unless we move, then in that case the teams will have to keep moving. [end of letter]

Samuel Moore's letter of Feb. 19, 1864
Sardinia, Ohio

Dear Ben;

Again I lift my pen to inform you that through much mercy we still continue here and all in our usual health. We have had severe colds but are better. We have had days and nights of severe cold weather. Last week was warm and pleasant as spring so sudden a change as on New Years[sic] Eve. We hope these lines finds you and the family well. I wrote to you on Jan. 7th. and 16th. I trust you got it as you failed to get one I wrote in Dec. Hope you have it by this time. I received a letter from William on Feb. 5th, informing me of a great blunder I made wrighting [sic] to you and William at the same time. I somehow got the letters in the wrong envelopes or addressed them wrong, so William got yours and you got his. Well, I trust thare [sic] is no great harm done only keeping you out of your letters so long. William A. said he would inclose [sic] yours and send it on to you. He was well and at Louisville, Tenn. 14 miles below Knoxville on the south side of the river. He was employed hauling meat and flour with nine teams from there to Knoxville where it is sent on to the fourth army camps, Gen. Gordon Granger commanding, composed of Gen. Phil Sheridan Gen. Wood's division. William goes out and secures grain of the Sesech [sic] and hauls it to the mill where a lieut. and some 50 soldiers are who make it into flour. The supply of grain is scarce both with the army and people. I give you an extract from William's letter on a slip, a negro story. From the papers I fear that William is in a rather precarious situation. I received a letter the 22nd. of Jan. from E.J. (Elizabeth Jane Moore) She was well as common and at Mr.

Johnson's at Clinton, Iowa. She complained much of the way I wrote to her last when she was at Mr. Tombs and excused herself for not staying at William's and earnestly pleaded that if I was ever going to do anything for her to do it now. I wish to wright [sic] to her soon and refer her to you and William. I shall leave all that to you and him. I wish you to consult him. If you sell the Port Byron property, I think best to give her the \$100. Do so and it will be all right with me. It may not do her any good. I can't tell. I think had she stayed at home she would at this time qualified as a teacher as for some years we have had school one half the time in our district in Sardinia. They had last summer and fall a high or select school. The same man teaches this winter in one mile of our house and gets \$35 or 6 per month. You can wright [sic] to William if you sell. I think it best and it will benefit her. Let her have it as otherwise she will not get it as I cannot let her have it. See that she gives a receipt if she gets it. Wright [sic] what you think of these things but I must close now as it principally on E.J.'s account that I wright [sic]. I remain as ever your affectionate parent until death
S. Moore

Murfreesboro Tennc [sic]

June 15th 1865

Dear Father,

I can say with you that I am truly thankful that you have been spaired [sic] to write to me again and that the prospect was good for you to regain your [missing text] health, which I trust is the case before this time, and that you will be able soon to git [sic] your business in a good condition, and not be troubled on that account, I am glad that you can become reconciled to these things, and that your confidence is strong in God. Well may we say "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory." To have the victory over sin is a great consolation and to be victorious in the end O! how glorious, I am thankful that it is my privalage [sic] to testify that I feel that the victory, throug [sic] the grace of God, will be mine I find it not as hard to live a Christian in the army as some seem to think. I hope our faith may continue to be strenghened [sic] and that we may be able to live near our Saviour [sic] and if we should never be permitted to greet each other in this life, we have the assurance of greeting each other on the shores of immortality. There is quite a revival going on here in our Division, quite a number have been converted (I think near 100) and many more converted and seeking peace in believing. There is a Sabbath School established in our regiment which I hope will prove production of good. Each company is forming into from one to two classes, and elected their teachers. I think we will get along well. There is nothing strang [sic] going on here to us, generally [sic] quiet, far as I know. I hope you will write to me soon and often. I wrot [sic] to you about the first of this month. I have a letter from home [illegible letter]. had an attack of the Billious [sic] fever but was getting better. The children were well. May God protect them and us. No more.

As ever yours Wm A. Moore