

LETTERS OF CORPORAL ADOLPHUS PHILLIP WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

Fort Pickering Jan 1st/63

Dear Mother:

This being the first day of the year, 1863, I thought of beginning it, with writing a few lines to you not knowing how to spend my leisure time in a better way; thinking perhaps you would feel interested, how we are spending this the first day of the new year.

We have a grand holiday today if you call excused from drill such, for that is the only sign by which we can tell it. Otto is sitting near the fire reading, while I am trying to write in our cozy little shanty, away from the noise of the rest of the company. For all that this is new years day the men who usually cut up all kinds of tricks seem to be downhearted thinking perhaps as I do, of those left at home, how much they are enjoying themselves while they are sitting around in their tents or barracks thinking how much they would give to be a sharer in their sports. I assure you, dear mother, that christmas & new years have been the two longest days of any that I have spent since my day of enlistment. Not that I care so much for the parties and excitement in which those two days are mostly spent, but everyone I meet, seems to be more than commonly lowspirited. We are not allowed to fire off a gun or cannon, to indicate the day. My only hope is, that you have spent the hollidays, in a more pleasant manner, than I have. Perhaps next year about this time we will be where we can have a nice time to make up for this.

Fritz wrote me in his last letter, that he expected to go to the southern part of Illinois, after new year for the purpose of buying land for a peach orchard. I hope he will be successful in his undertaking; and turn out to be all & more than he expected. I agree with him, and glory in his spunk, and self confidence; but leaving father to tend to the farm by himself, is the only objection that I have, to his so doing. If Otto and I were at home, it would be different. The letter which I sent Fritz dated Dec 30th must reach you before this, and from it you can learn all the news of the fort. The expedition which I mentioned, has left for Grants Army. The train was 12 miles long when stretched. It consisted of 500 wagons, accompanied by seven thousand Infantry.¹ I fear they will not reach their place of destination, without being molested, by guerrillas. The men seemed to have more confidence in themselves than I have. They did not show the least bit of fear. I hope they will reach their destination, for their comrades are on quarters rations² now & have been for some time.³ We here do not know what privations are and may

¹ That 7,000 men and 500 wagons would stretch over twelve miles of road is probably no exaggeration. 2,400 infantry men on the march would take up close to 1,000 yards of road, so 7,000 would occupy approximately one and one-half miles. One wagon with a six-mule or six-horse team would be about forty feet long, 500 wagons, not even allowing for space between them, would occupy 20,000 feet or close to four miles. It has been noted that 10,000 cavalymen with six artillery batteries stretched over thirteen miles of road. (Coggins, 23, 51, 122, and 123)

² A "ration" was the amount of food allotted to one man for one day. Marching rations in the Union Army were one pound of hard bread, three-quarters of a pound of salt pork or one-and one-quarter pounds of fresh meat, sugar, coffee and salt. Camp rations were somewhat greater and more varied. (Coggins, 122-123)

³ Corporal Wolf refers to the fact that Gen. Grant's men were on quarter rations, that is, were receiving only one-fourth of the normal amount allotted them. This is in fact doubtful since when Grant's supply base and supply lines were respectively captured and cut, Grant ordered his supply wagons out to gather food from the surrounding countryside, and the men subsisted very well. To Southern complaints, Grant replied that

LETTERS OF CORPORAL ADOLPHUS PHILLIP WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

thank god, if we never experience them. Great many of the soldiers had lost their shoes in the mud, and come to the fort without them.⁴ It is a blessing that it is not very cold here; it has not been cold enough to freeze a persons feet, yet.

I wish to make a bargain with you, mother. If you will send me a lot of note paper, envelopes & Post stamps⁵ I will write one or two letters a week, provided you will answer some of them. The reason I make this proposition is, I have to pay 25 cents for the same amount of paper which you can buy for five. You can get a dollars worth of paper & pay for expressing it & it would come to half as much as if I get it here. Post-stamps we cannot get here at all. Perhaps you can send a lot by someone comeing down here; if not it can easily be expressed; or sent by the post office. If we remain here I shall have ample time to do all that which I promised, & it will keep me out of other mischief, besides improve my style of writeing of which I am in great need especially the penmanship. For all I do a great deal of writeing for the company, there is not enough to keep my hand in & as the saying is, practice makes perfect, I think it a very good plan.

I believe this is about all I know at present, so I must close with a wish that you may have a very, very happy new year. From your most affectionate son.

Adolph

P. S. Tell Grandfather, uncle & all the others that I wish them a happy new year, & that they may live to see a thousand more.

Answer soon.

he had tried to feed his men from Northern sources and that "it could not be expected that men, with arms in their hands, would starve in the midst of plenty." (Foote, Fredericksburg to Meridian, 72-73)

⁴ The shoes or "bootees" issued to Union infantry men were of leather, low-cut, about the height of a present day desert boot, and laced. A shoe could be lost in the mud, but it would seem that it could be retrieved unless a body of men was moving in haste. (Lord, 306 & 310; Yoseloff, 158)

⁵ At first soldiers used stamps on their letters, but in the later stages of the war they were permitted by the government to send letters without prepayment if they wrote on the outside "Soldier's Letter". (Lord, 333)

LETTERS OF CORPORAL ADOLPHUS PHILLIP WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

Fort Pickering Jan 17th/63

Dear Mother

Yesterday I received your much looked for letter, & must acknowledge that it revived my sinking spirits on one score that is to hear that you are all well, which is the most essential. But were again depressed at learning, the gloomy state of our present Government in Illinois. I had seen it stated in the papers but did not give it much credit because the papers which we get here are overanxious to publish all such reports. I am now fully convinced of the fact. This must certainly reach the ears of the rebels and add new hope to their infuriated hearts and urge them on in their unjust cause. Their hope of ever obtaining that for which they are fighting was fastly fadeing away. But now it again, springs up be fore their imaginary minds, in its grandest light, & there is no telling, how long it may take untill this unholy rebellion is put down, & peace & quietude is again restored, too our once happy but now bleeding country.

Shame on Illinois, the once model state of the Union. May her sons now in the army, forever remember the leaders, of this mutinous act. It is well perhaps that I am not at home now for I might be tempted to do violence to some of our leading Edwardsville democrats. I would not vouch for their safety if they were to attempt to polute my ear, with their treasonable tongues for we have a specimen there which would be hard to beat. Tell Father to buy a good revolver, & put an end to the existence, of any such cowardly traitors, that offer violence toward him. It would be a blessing to the country, to clear it of all such vile traitors.¹ My only hope is, that gov: Yates will do all in his power, to save Illinois; from disgrace.²

I do not know why the democrats want all Illinois troops recalled. I should think it would be the deathblow to them, that is if they are as well liked by all other soldiers, as myself; which I fear is not the case. My reasons for that I will explain shortly.

We have very easy times here; nothing to do, but two hours drilling daily; & two hours guard duty; which is at night. So you see we have plenty of leisure time; the most of which is spent in playing chess, & checkers, provided we have nothing to read or write. I must say, though almost ashamed too that I am getting fatter and lazier every day. Sometimes we have a short dispute on politics; some defending the presidents proclamation,³ while others try to run it down. I, of course, defend it as much as possible; the debate gets very hot sometimes. I am sorry to say that I find more opponents than colleagues, in our company. There are some, that are the next thing to secessionists, on account of the presidents late proclamation. Had they been reported as they should have been, (if our two highest officers, Kinder & Blake, were not of the same stripe.), they would now be working with a ball & chain, fastened to them. I will admit that I do not like to see the negroes armed but the president must know best, & I shall

¹ In reference to politics in Illinois, Corpora~ Wolf is probably referring, partially at least, to the fact that in the November, 1862 Congressional elections nine Democratic Congressmen were elected and only five Republicans. (Foote From Sumter to Perryville , 753)

² Richard Yates, a Republican, was elected Governor of Illinois in 1860 and served as such throughout the Civil War. (Boatner, 951)

³ The proclamation referred to is probably the Emancipation Proclamation freeing all slaves in those parts of the nation still in rebellion issued September 22, 1862 to take effect January 1, 1863. (Boatner, 265)

LETTERS OF CORPORAL ADOLPHUS PHILLIP WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

willingly submit to his orders, & obey them.⁴ Some of the men have gone so far that they have declared, were the fort attacked, they would not fire a gun, if they could save the fort from the hand of the rebels. This was said, not by one, but many, within the hearing of our officers.⁵ It is a shame, & disgrace to the company, too have such men as that in it. I have often wished myself, in some other company. But it is perhaps for the better that I am not. I may do some good by convincing them of their error. This class of men are composed of the most ignorant, who never read any thing, but are led on by a few of the lowest grade, such as Wm. Richards, who, thank god has left us. My opinion of him is that he is a traitor perhaps a spy. How he got out of the army I know not. Ben has also left, he owes me three dollars & a half. I think he will pay that as soon as he can because he is honest. I wish you would not mention what I said about the officers to anyone, but those whom we can trust. It might put me in an unpleasant position, if it reaches their ears, which I have no doubt it would.

For the passed few days we have had the worst weather. There is now twelve inches of snow on the ground & it purty cold. The weather has been rather severe, on the poor soldiers. We cannot grumble, for we are well provided for. But those on a march must have suffered badly. There are 4,000 prisoners in front of Memphis, which were taken at Arkansas Point.⁶ They will be sent north, tomorrow, to St. Louis or Chicago.

Today I had the honor of seeing Alfred Lusk Esq who was in Edwardsville lately, he starts down the river this after noon to rejoin the Staff. He looks as hearty as ever; and it seems to agree with him.

Otto and I are enjoying very good health, & I hope that you may be enjoying the same for that is worth more than all other things. I must now quit for the present, it is getting to dark. Give my best respects to all that may inquire for me.

Give my love to all at home, but keep a good portion for yourself.

From your Son

Adolph

P.S. Read this letter to grandfather & tell him I will write as soon as I can get some more paper.

⁴ After the Emancipation Proclamation was issued, Lincoln called for four negro regiments. (Boatner, 584)

⁵ A few white regiments from border states or from places like southern Illinois or Indiana where there were ties with the South came close to mutiny. (Ketchum, 418)

⁶ "Arkansas Point" is probably Arkansas Post, Fort Hindman, on the Arkansas River captured by Union Gen. John A. McClernand on January 11, 1863 with 4,791 Confederate troops "missing," mostly captured. (Boatner, 24-25)

LETTERS OF CORPORAL ADOLPHUS PHILLIP WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

[This appears as a postscript appended to a letter written by brother Otto Wolf.]

Dear Brother and Sister:

The last time I did not write because Otto closed his letter before he told me of it so I must beg pardon of you which I hope you will grant. I am happy to see that you take so much interest in the welfare of your brothers which you must continue as long as we are away from home. You have plenty of time to write once a week if you will only do so and am getting out of patience if the answer does not come at the regular time.

Otto wrote all the news so I am compelled to close.
Let me hear from you often.

From your brother

Adolf

LETTERS OF CORPORAL ADOLPHUS PHILLIP WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

Fort Pickering Feb 8th 1863

Dear Brother

It is a shame that I have not answered your letter sooner, perhaps you think that I want to let you wait for an answer as long as you did me, but that is not the case. I had taken a severe cold which put me out of sorts, for over a week, so that I have not been able to do any thing. You & Mother have also to complain about the soar throat. So I see the people at home have sufferings as well as the soldiers. But I was to blame for a cold which I caught. The boys were all out at a game of Romp; & enjoying themselves hugely; I of course had to be one of the party, we all got very warm during the play, after which we cooled off to fast. The consequence was the greater portion of us took sick. I think next time we will pay more heed to our health.

So you have at last bought a farm in Dixie & are going to leave home for good. All I can say is you have made a good bargain, & wish you all the success possible. The only thing I do not like about it that you have a partner. Why did you not buy it for yourself? In my opinion it would have been much better. If you are so sure that you can pay the notes before they are due, it would have been an easy matter. Partnership business is always disagreeable & in farming more so than any other for there it is required of every one to work his share, if he does not do it then you will have the muss. Now if you grow some tomatoes next summer, & make a \$1000 on them Mr Springer will come in for his share & you have done all the work, but on the other hand if he makes \$1000 in his law office I am certain you do not come in for your share. If you deem it fit, I wish you would explain to me how you and Mr Springer have made the bargain, for that is a very essential thing. You may have made it in such a way that it is all right; one thing is certain you cannot be too cautious & especially with a lawyer, they are as cunning as a fox, & know all tricks.

If you are going to remain down there I suppose you will get married, for you cannot well do without a housekeeper, but I hope you will wait untill I come home too eat a piece of the wedding cake, & I should like to have a dance at the party. Be carefull in your selection, & get a good housekeeper, while so doing, speak a good word for me, for fear the girls have forgotten me while in the army, & I may be left an old bachelor that would be rather hard, & I should not like it.

News I know of none, but that we are at our old business Infantry again, & will perhaps go to Vixburg with the next expedition, of which I am very glad, for I went out to fight the rebels & I want to do it, the sooner the better. Capt Kinder has gone home, whom I suppose you have seen before this, I think he went after some deserters. If you want to send any thing down with them you can do so, for there will be quite a number to come with him. I believe this is all that I can write today so you must excuse me.

Give my love to all at home & the sweet girls abroad, but keep a good share for yourself. From your Brother Adolph

I received a letter from B Richards the same day that yours come he is discharged on rheumatism

LETTERS OF CORPORAL ADOLPHUS PHILLIP WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

Fort Pickering
Feb. 9th/63

Dear Parents

It certainly is a very careless proceeding of mine to let you wait so long for a letter from me, you to whom I owe so much, for without you, god only knows what would become of us; what would I do without your kind advices, for that is all you can do for us, so far distant from home & friends, in an enemys, country, ever liable to be in danger. Those letters I receive from you always have some well meant instructions which I take great delight to follow to the utmost of my ability, or as circumstances will permit. I know that you will excuse my tardiness this time, when I tell you that I have been rather unwell for the last 8 or 10 days; if I had been well you should have received a letter ere this.

I sent a note to Fritz the other day, which I hope he has received. For he also waited some time, for an answer to his kind letter. He mentioned that you dear Mother had too suffer with the soarthroat; this is a very painful disease, for I have had it, I know how it feels. It is an every day complaint down here.

Father, Theodore & Mathilda & Grandfather seem to be very hearty this year, for I have heard no complaint from them so far. I hope you may all keep well, for that is the greatest blessing.

We are at our old trade again, Infantry; the siege guns have been taken away from us, & Muskets given us instead. I do not think that we are permanently changed, for my part I am tired of laying around in this fort, without doing any thing; I should rather be marching round so as to see something, & be of some benefit to my country, I hope we will go to Vixburg¹ so as to have a hand in that fight. I think it will be one of the grandest Battle yet, & I am confident we will win for Gen Grant has made good preparations & is still prepareing; they have taken 1000 Negroes from here to dig another chanel around it, which will be completed in 4 days, then old Vixburg will be laid high & dry. Our boats will be able to run through the channel.² The other day a boat run passed Vixburg without much injury to herself.³

Our Capt Jacob J. Kinder has gone home perhaps he has been to see you, at least I think he should do so.

I have run out of news, so excuse me this time, for sending so much white paper, I will try and do better next time. Give my love to all. From Your Son Adolph

¹ The proper spelling of "Vixburg" is "Vicksburg". This town in Mississippi situated on a hairpin bend of the Mississippi River and on top of a high bluff dominated river traffic with its artillery emplacements. (Foote From Fredericksburg to Meridian, 62)

² The channel referred to was probably a mile long canal which was to cut through a neck of land opposite Vicksburg so that troop transports could by-pass the city's batteries. High water forced the abandonment of this project in March. 1863. (Boatner, 871)

³ The boat referred to is almost certainly the Union Ram Queen of the West which ran past the Vicksburg batteries on February 2, 1863 and was struck twelve times but not seriously. (Long, 318) It was to disrupt Confederate shipping on the Mississippi River. A ram had a massively built prow with an iron ram and was designed to ram other boats but could also carry artillery. (Boatner, 677)

LETTERS OF CORPORAL ADOLPHUS PHILLIP WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

Fort Pickering
March 5th/63

Dear Mother

Some seven weeks have passed without receiving a letter from you, or father. For seven long weeks I have been daily disappointed, in hoping to receive those few lines, which afford so much pleasure & comfort to the distant wanderer in an enemys country. To him who does not know what his destination is one hour hence, those few lines are of great importance, & the pleasure he derives from them, no one but those under similar circumstances can imagine. I hope you will not take this as a gentle reproof for not writeing sooner. I did not mean it as such, for remembering that I have not exactly kept my promise, when I agreed to write twice a week. But I have written two letters to you & one to Fritz for which no answers have come. Besides Otto has sent one to you & father & one to Theo and Mathilda. He also has not received a reply. It must be that letters are miscarried, for I hear others complaining, as well as myself. At last the long looked for paymaster has honored us with a visit, & to the great satisfaction of the soldiers, left a few greenbacks in their possession. You can imagine that he was a very agreeable visitor. We received two months & a halves pay. It is not much, but better than none.

Not long ago we were on a scout in Arkansas, where we had a splendid time. There were more chickens killed than Rebels. Our company charged on a widow's pantry & smokehouse, while the officers were examining the interior of the house. This she rebel has two sons in the Rebel Army; one of them is a Captain that burnt two of our boats on the Mississippi. We did not leave the house until we had as many chickens & hams, as could be conveniently carried for as luck would have it, she had a good supply on hand. I think we will make another raid in that direction. If we do, her house will be set on fire & everything taken that can be of use to us. As soon as we get our new guns we expect to make an attack on a small town, by the name of Marion where we expect a nice time. I can assure you we have a great many delicacies to eat while out; if we get permission to subsist on the enemy; which no doubt will be granted.

Our captain has at last returned, from his late visit to Madison County; after a stay of 4 weeks. From him I learn that you are all enjoying good health & that Fritz has gone to his new home, in southern Illinois. My only hope is that he may be successful in this his first enterprise. In this tying time it is very difficult for a young man to begin for himself. I will advise him never to express his opinion on politics. I know the sentiments of those inhabitants too well for we have a regiment in this fort from Union & Jackson Counties¹ who threaten to destroy every orchard belonging to a republican & I have not the least doubt, but what they will do what they say. They are an ignorant set, very few who can read or write; & after they once get a thing into their knoddles, there is no getting it out, or convincing them of their error.

I was astonished to see the change in our Capt. & Lieut. of late. My opinion is that the Captain's visit North did more to change his politics than any thing else could have done, he returned a different man altogether. I will hereby recall all I have ever said against him.

Our Lieut Blake made a short but good speech just last Saturday while we were out at Muster. It brought the tears in our eyes as well as in his. Since then I have found a diferent opinion of him altogether. I hope they may remain so. There is no likelihood of this regiment leaving the fort soon. It is attached to the fort as garrison. I am not sorry for that; for all I should like to go to Vicksburg & help take it, if it will ever be taken. I fear there will be a great many dead there if a person can judge by those large hospitals in Memphis which are ready to receive, the wounded from that place. I never seen any thing to surpass it. It is enough to make a man wish that he were wounded if only to get in there. It is impossible for me to describe the preparations which are made. Whole Blocks of the finest buildings are made into Hospitals. I wish you could see it for yourself; without that you cannot form an idea of it.

I must now close my paper is giving out. Give my love to all. I still remain as ever

Your affectionate Son

A. P. Wolf

Tell Theo & Tilly to write a little oftener

¹ Union and Jackson Counties are situated quite far South in the State of Illinois.

LETTERS OF CORPORAL ADOLPHUS PHILLIP WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

Ft. Pickering
March 18th/63

Dear Father

Enclosed you will find \$25 which I wish you would dispose of to the best advantage. I have no use for it at present, but to give it to the sutlers, a class of people I do not like, well enough to be of any assistance to them in gaining wealth. They are the greatest enemies of the soldiers & should be expelled from the Army.¹

Mr. Springer is down here, & will go North today or tomorrow. He came after his Brother Joshua who has been very sick for the last 3 months & would perhaps die, if he remained here much longer. I will make use of the opportunity, & send this by him, thinking it would be safer than by mail. Otto has also written a letter to Theodore, which he will also send by him.

Last week I received a letter from Fritz in which he gave a good description of the country in Jackson County, Illinois. Mr Springer told us a great many tales, that happend down there. It seems to me that I should like it very well down there & wish I could help Fritz fix up his place. He says that he enjoys very good health at present & seems to like his new home very well. He only fears you cannot well do without him, which I suppose is the fact. But I pray that this unholy rebellion will soon be put down & let us return home to our friends & families.

Yesterday we drew new guns. They are a good quality, I suppose the best now in use by the Government; the Enfield Rifle.² The Regiment was in extacies about them. I never seen a prouder Regt. than ours was after they got the new guns.³ We also drew, Blue Blouse Coats, which are handy things in summer.⁴

The weather is very warm at present nearly as hot as in July or August up there. I am now as hot as a bear. I am afraid it will be very hot down here this season, & wish summer was over.

I must now close, my time is run out next time more.

I remain as ever

Your most affectionate son

A P Wolf

in haste

Please write soon and tell me all about the crops & how you are getting along.

¹ A sutler was a civilian and the Army P.X. of his day. One sutler was allowed to each regiment, appointed by the governor of the state or by the regimental or brigade officers. Many sutlers were accused of outrageous profiteering and could attach the money of a man up to one-sixth of his monthly pay. (Coggins, 124)

² The Enfield rifled musket, caliber .577, made in England, was an excellent arm and has sometimes been thought of as a purely Southern weapon. Actually the U.S. purchased 428,000 in the early months of the war, and the Confederates received some 400,000 in 1861-1862. (Lord, 247)

³ The 117th Illinois must have been well armed by the standards of Western troops. U. S. Grant stated that Western troops were generally armed with U.S. flintlock muskets converted to percussion and. imported Belgian muskets. About 60,000 Confederate muskets were captured at the surrender of Vicksburg, Mississippi on July 4, 1863, and Federal troops were authorized to exchange their inferior muskets and replace them with Confederate. (Yoseloff, 537)

⁴ The "blue blouse coats" referred to may have been fatigue coats which were of dark blue flannel extending half-way down the thigh and made loose without sleeve or body lining, a falling collar and four buttons down the front. (Lord, 295)

LETTERS OF CORPORAL ADOLPHUS PHILLIP WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

Fort Pickering April 6th/63

Dear Father

At last the long wished for letter has arrived, much to the satisfaction of Otto & myself. We hardly know what to make of your long silence. But we know that it was not owing to a lack of love for us. There you misjudged our feelings, for that idea never entered our minds. We knew the cares that now rest upon you. Our only thought was, how you could accomplish all, knowing that you were alone. I sometimes think it impossible. But there is no use in speaking on that subject, for it will not alter the case at present, but hope to be of some assistance to you before long. If not in one way, I shall try another.

I see you have received that small amount of money which I sent you through the kindness of Mr Springer. It was only a very small amount, but all I could spare at the time. We expect to receive 4 months pay today or tomorrow, if we do I can send you perhaps \$100, that is, Otto & I together. But the next question will be how to send it. It may be some time, before there will be an opportunity like the last. It is rather too dangerous to send by mail. So we must wait.

I am glad to hear that you have got a man to help, for it will relieve you of many duties which would otherwise, fall on yourself.

It is a good thing for the farmers that produce is so high at present; if not, I would not know how they would be able to pay their enormous tax bills. I see in your letter, that, yours has increased considerable since last year.

Of late, I have had hopes that we will all be at home by next fall or winter, that is if the federal army at Vicksburg is successful, which I have no reason to doubt.¹ Southern news have been very favorable of late, refugees constantly coming into our lines, and claiming protection, from the worst demon, hunger. It will intimidate the bravest heart, to see his family of little ones, suffering with the want of necessaries of life. Starvation stares the enemy in the face, wherever it may look. A man can stand fatigue & exposure & keep his spirits up. But put him on half or quarter Ration & he will soon submit.

Those northern copperheads may say there is no such thing as starving them out; but I say there is. I only wish they had to live on the same rations that the rebel army have to at Vicksburg. I am confident, in three months time, they would be convinced of the fact. The rebel General who was captured not long ago, (I have forgotten his name) acknowledged that they could not possibly stand it longer than August next. Their only chance is, to make a successful raid into Tennessee or Kentucky, & get a fresh supply of provisions & that will only last them about two months. All necessary arrangements have been made to prevent all such surprises; & give them a warm reception when they come.

We have the news here that Vicksburg has been surrendered but that is hardly creditable. If it should be the case, then goodbye Southern Confederacy and southern rights as they call them., it will be the deathblow.

Perhaps I speak with too much confidence but it seems to me, that it cannot be otherwise & we will soon enjoy the blessings of home and friends.

Syrus Daniels was here not long ago. He belongs to the 49th Reg't, which is stationed about ten miles from here. He said there were thousands of loyal Tennesseesians enlisting in our Army throughout this state. There are over 100 in his Regiment. He thinks they make good soldiers.² Unless this fort will be attacked, there is no likelihood of our ever seeing an engagement. We may go home without the honor of doing one bit of fighting. I have been wishing to get into a skirmish for some time. It may be for the best if we never do.

I must now close, for it is my turn on guard today. Give my love to all, & tell mother to write me a long letter as soon as possible. I know you wont have time to do much writing when Spring sets in, so mother will have to do it.

Now goodbye. From your son

A. P. Wolf

Give my respects to Mr. Springer

¹ The rumor about the surrender of Vicksburg was incorrect. It did not surrender until July 4, 1863. (Long & Long, 378)

² Eastern Tennessee had many Unionists, and 31,092 men from Tennessee served in the Union Army. However, 186,652 Tennesseans served in the Confederate Army. (Cromie, 283)

LETTERS OF CORPORAL ADOLPHUS PHILLIP WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

Fort Pickering April 11th/63

Dear Mother,

The answer to fathers last letter you must have received before this. You can see therein that we both enjoy good health. I can repeat the same in this. So rest at ease on that subject. I have been very uneasy about your health dear Mother, since we received fathers last letter; But the reception of your kind letter dispelled all uneasiness, for I see that you are again up & tending to the household duties. While speaking of housework, puts me in mind of my daily experience in that line. I am getting so that I can cook most any thing. That is any thing in our Bill of Fare; such as tea, coffee, beefstakes, rostbeef, soup, cornbread, biscuit, corncake, Jonneycakes, flapjacks, mush, (without milk) Homony beans & pork & pork & beans, then we have a few extras, such as hard tack, and sow belly. I believe that is what the boys call Bacon sides, the most important article in our whole Bill of fare.

Yesterday was a very welcome day to this Regiment, for we received pay, up to the first of March. The boys have plenty of money now, so they do not care for any one. Privates received \$52 while the officers received about \$500; which is a slight difference. It is very unfair, I think; there should not be such a vast difference in the pay of officer and private. I admire Gov; Yates sentiments on that subject. He thinks it not right, & recommends an increase of pay to the private soldier. I hope he may have some influence in the General Assembly, & induce them to raise the pay.¹

Otto and I will have about \$90 to spare, which I will send with some Photographs of him and me as soon as possible. Our 2d Lieutenant Cha's Treadway will likely get to go home. If he does I will send them with him. I told him to stop at our house & leave his horse and take dinner with you, which he promised, to do. Do me the favor & treat him kindly. He is a very nice man, religous and temperance. But no hypocrit. I believe him to be the most moral man in the company, so do your best to entertain him. He is very fond of music. If possible I should like to have some of your photographs, one of each, perhaps you can send them by our Lieut; those card pictures are not heavy to carry.

This is about all I have to say at present so I must close.

Give my love to all at home, dont forget Grandfather, & give him a picture when you get them I will try to write a few lines to him soon.

I remain as ever Your Affectionate Son.

A. P. Wolf

¹ In 1863 Union Privates received \$13.00 per month and, in contrast, First and Second Lieutenants \$105.⁵⁰ and Captains \$115.⁰⁰. Therefore, the payday referred to above must have covered four months. (Boatner,?)

LETTERS OF CORPORAL ADOLPHUS PHILLIP WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

Fort Pickering April 16th/63

Dear Mother.

But a few days have passed, since last I wrote to you; so this note may not be of as much interest to you as I may suppose. Taking it for granted though, that it will, so here goes.

We have had an exciting time of it, for the last two or three days, which was caused by changing camp-grounds. We really have the best place to camp, in the fort, & the best I ever saw. It is on the river bank, about 60 feet above the water; every thing can be seen, that passes, on the river below, without getting out of our tents. I thought we had a good place before, but it is no comparison to this. Our quarters at the present time are very good but guard duties are too heavy so we cannot enjoy it. It comes on us every other day; I wish we could be taken out of the fort and join Rosecrans' army.¹ But I fear my wishes will never be complied with. To tell the truth I am heartily tired of this inactive life. I wish to be out & doing something; something for my country. It is true enough if we are taken out, some other regiment must take our place. Eight months of camp life, satisfies me. Others are better satisfied than I am. I have never felt such a great desire, to do something as at the present time.

Our Colonel has the power to furlough five per-cent of the men in his command. I am uncertain whether to apply for a leave of absence now or not; this is a bad time of the year, for a person to find enjoyment for so short a time. It would be much better in a month or two; then the weather would be finer. I guess the first furloughs will be granted to sick ones for they need them worse than we do, (meaning those that are well).

Let us hope that the whole army will be furloughed home for good, in a few months. I have hopes, if our army does not meet with reverses, that this unholy rebellion will be wound up & its leaders meet with their just rewards, before many months.

At last the president has come to the conclusion, to stop newspapers in different camps. A short time ago we here in Memphis had all southern news two or three [days] sooner than you at home. Now we do not know what is going on at all. We live like any other beast, I cannot see the object in this, for all it may be for the best. Our only chance now will be to receive twice the number of letters, stating all that happens at the seat of war. So take pity on us & write often & long letters. I am at a loss now to pass my leisure hours. It is nearly impossible to obtain suitable books without buying them which it would not pay to do, at the rate we are making money. There is one that will not miss the newspapers much, that is Otto. I believe he could do without entirely if there were plenty of novels about. I never seen a person like him. He does not show any interest for anything. Our mess is always sorry when his time comes to cook, for he is too lazy to do it. He is about lazy enough to be a soldier.²

It is now near midnight, & I fear I have taked your patience long enough. Besides my paper has give out. I must now wake the corporal for the next relief, & then I can lay down to sleep about three hours.

Write soon and often.

Give my love to all. From your Affectionate Son.

A. P. Wolf

¹ The "Rosecrans' army" referred to was the Union Army of the Cumberland under the command of Gen. William S. Rosecrans which had fought the Battle of Stones River (or Murfreesboro), Tennessee on December 31, 1862 and January 2, 1863 until the Confederate forces withdrew but was not actively engaged again until June, 1863. (Boatner, 803 & 807)

² The reference to "our mess" and the cooking of Otto probably refers to the fact that in camp cooks were sometimes chosen by a rotation process. (Coggins, 123)

LETTERS OF CORPORAL ADOLPHUS PHILLIP WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

Fort Pickering May 20th/63

Dear Parents

It has been some time since I have written to you, so I thought it proper to let you know how we are getting along. Otto and I enjoy very good health at present; which I am very glad to announce to you, for no one but a soldier can tell the sufferings they have to endure while sick. He lies on his hard bed of boards, without the proper attendants & suitable food. But worse than all, if he has too stay in a hot tent, while suffering with a heavy fever. I know what it is, for it is not more than a week since I have had a fair trial of it. I do not think that I ever suffered more than in those five or six days. But thank god it is all over now.

I hoped that this war would soon be over, but it seems as if our chiefs were trying to keep it up as long as there is any prospect of getting the immense amount of pay, due them at the end of every month. I do not know what other reason to give; for we certainly have men enough in the field, to whip the rebels; it is an evident fact that the South has all their available force in the field, and if we have not men enough, to put down this unholy rebellion, then I say, hurry up the conscript act, and fill up the old regiments, I am sure it will not take long to drill & discipline them.

I have the honor to be one of the color guards. I do not know if you understand what I mean by that, so I will try to explain. The color guard is composed of 8 corporals and 1 seargeant, who are selected for good behavior and well drilled, their duty in time of battle is to protect the color bearers and colors, (that is the flags) for it is considered a great disgrace, to have the flags captured.¹ In time of battle it is one of the most dangerous positions a man can be placed in; because most all fireing is directed toward the center, where the color bearers are stationed & for that reason it is a very honorable one.² While we remain in the fort it is a very easy position, we are excused from all duties except drilling & Dress parade. What pleases me the most is to be excused from guard which is of no little importance, when your turn comes every other day.

Mr. Sydel has left our Regiment and accepted a position in a negro regiment as Q.M. Sergeant.³ I am sorry that he has to leave us, for I learned to consider him a friend, which I believe he was. I could have had the same kind of a position, had I applied for it.⁴ But to tell the truth I do not like niggers well enough too be with them all the time. I am not particularly prejudiced against the negro; for the poor fellows cannot help being black. I hope the time will come when they are all free. But I do not want to see them turned lose in the northern states.

I am glad to say that Otto has been more attentive to his duties of late; he is now one of our best drummers. I hope he will keep on as he now is doing.

What do you think of this furlough business; do you think it worth while for one of us to go if we should be fortunate enough to get one. It will cost about \$20. If you have an opportunity of sending me some cotton socks & undershirts I wish you would do so.

My paper has given out, so I must close. I remain as ever.

Your Son A. P. Wolf

¹ The position of color guard was one of honor but also dangerous. The flags "drew lead like a magnet," and color guards were frequently wiped out to a man. However, the colors were rallying points for a regiment and did mark its battle lines. (Coggins, 22)

² In at least one instance, a Union Sergeant bearing the colors saved them by harpooning a Confederate soldier with the spear head on his flag staff. ("The Massacre at Saltville", *Civil War Times Illustrated* by William C. Davis, 10)

³ A total of 178,895 negroes served as Union soldiers, about twelve per cent of the total force. There was a good deal of prejudice against negro troops among white soldiers, but this was not a universal feeling; some of abolitionist sentiments were delighted that negroes could become soldiers. ("Negro Soldiers in the Civil War", *Civil War Times Illustrated*, by James I. Roberston, Jr., 22, 23, & 31)

⁴ Of some help in popularizing negro regiments was the fact that white enlisted men could win officers' commissions in them. (*The American Heritage Picture History of the Civil War*, 418 & 419)

LETTERS OF CORPORAL ADOLPHUS PHILLIP WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

Fort Pickering
August 7th/63

Dear Parents

It is not much that I have to say, this time, but I hope it may be of some interest; & I know that you are always pleased to hear from us; if only a few words, for I can judge by myself, when we receive a letter from home.

I have expected a letter from Fritz for some time, but I fear that I must take it out in expecting for it seems, that he does not feel inclined to write. If he is at home yet, tell him that it would please me very much to hear from him, if he has time to write. I know it is not very pleasant to write letters, after being tired out with work, and I know he has plenty of that perhaps more than is good for him. Poor fellow I pity him, but am unable to be of any assistance. And you dear father must not work so hard, or you will be sick again. I think that was the cause of your last sickness. I think if you dear mother will trace it back, that your illness originated from the same cause I was very glad to hear that you are getting better, and hope that by this time, you are quite well. It is hard to be sick, I know it from experience. And a sad experience I have had, in the last three months. But thank god I have got over it now, and hope that it may be the last trial I will have, as long as I may remain in the army. It is bad enough lay on hard boards while well; but there is no name for it when sick.

It might be possible that one of us, & perhaps both, will get a furlough this summer or fall. I wish the time would soon come; for it wont be long until the first year of our services in the army are over, & then two long years more, unless we should be lucky enough to be discharged before that time. I have more hopes now of a speedy close of the war than ever. Some fear intervention, but I do not.¹

I should like to be at home to help you eat apples and peaches, which must be getting ripe about this time. We have peaches down here, but they are of an inferior quality, I have as yet not found a peach fit to eat. The boys go & get some that are half ripe, & we cook them then they will do very well, but no comparisson to those, at home. I must be partial to them, because they grow among friends.

Mr. Service is here & I was glad to see him. He told some of the changes about old Edwardsville, which were quite interesting. He expects to join the Marine Fleet as pilot as soon as it comes from below.

How is the draft progressing, in Illinois; & how is it with Fritz? is he to be conscripted?² I wish you would let me know about this in your next letter.

This is all for today. Write soon and often.

I remain as ever.

Your Son A. P. Wolf

Give my love to grandfather & others.

¹ "Intervention" was a will o' the wisp which the Confederacy followed during the course of the Civil War. It was the Confederacy's hope that the European powers, primarily England and secondarily France, would give open recognition, active aid and financial support to the South. After the Emancipation Proclamation was issued by President Abraham Lincoln on September 22, 1862 to become effective January 1, 1863 no European government could take sides against an American government which was trying to destroy slavery. By the date of Corporal Wolf's letter, August 7, 1863, although it could not be known for certain, intervention was no longer a serious threat to the North. (*The American Heritage Picture History of the Civil War*, 252)

² The conscript act referred to was the *Enrollment Act* passed by the Federal government March 3, 1863. (Boatner, 172)

LETTERS OF CORPORAL ADOLPHUS PHILLIP WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

Fort Pickering Tenn. August 16th/63

Dear Brother & Sister

It has been some time since I wrote to you, so I thought a few words might be interesting. Otto has told all the news, so it leaves but little for me to write, but I will try & do the best I can, hoping that I will be excused if it is not as good as you may wish.

In Theodores letter he says, that you are all enjoying good, health; which is the best news you could have written, I was very sorry to hear of the death of so many of our acquaintances & such nice men.

Next time you write let us know how the young ladies are getting along; if they are as good looking as ever. Tell them I send my best respects. I want you dear sister to write a few words, the next time to improve you in writeing; & besides you will know how to write love letters, if you practice a short time with us.

I wish I could see you all, once more, perhaps I can get a furlough, If I do we will have a nice time.

This is all I have to say this time.

I remain your Brother

A. P. Wolf

Give my love to all

LETTERS OF CORPORAL ADOLPHUS PHILLIP WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

Fort Pickering
Aug 26th 1863

Dear Brother

Yours of the 16th has come to hand and I would have answered it long ago; but I expected a furlough. And wishing to surprise you; & the rest of the family, I concluded not to answer your letter, before the meeting, which I have no doubt would have been a pleasant one. But the furlough business proved a failure, so I must content myself with the pleasure of remaining in the fort, until another time, hoping that I may be more successful. I have had considerable writing to do for the last two weeks, such as clothing rolls and returns, & making out each mans account of clothing, with the Government, which is a very tedious job.¹ But I was glad to have something to do. I will be quite busy this week preparing the rolls for muster, because next monday will be muster day and the rolls must be ready. Yesterday, was a day of rejoicing in camp. It was pay day. You can imagine that there was more than one smileing countenance to be seen. I do not believe there were ten men in the Regiment that had money enough to buy a pint of whiskey. Today there is more whiskey in camp, than I like to see. It is strange that some men cannot keep from getting tite when they have money. I have almost wished that pay day would come but once a year, for it is disgusting to see so many drunken men, almost boys in years ruining their constitution and health. There is one certainty, if a man has the least dislike to a drunkards life, that dislike will ripen into hatred, while in the army. But on the other side, it will work just the contrary. If he likes his drachm he will so on become a perfect in his likeing, & perhaps follow it up after they get home, & thereby spoil the reputation of those soldiers, who were quite innocent & moral in the army. Well, that is the way the world goes, so we must make up with it.

I have some money which I will send to father, as soon as possible. We got a letter from Theodore the other day, wherein he stated that father was broken entirely flat, as far as money is concerned, he also said that mother was getting along very well; god grant that she may remain so, for she has had a hard time of it.

I must now close to be in time for mail. Write soon, & as often as possible & I will do the same.

I will now bid you Good Bye.
From your affectionate Brother

A. P. Wolf

My best respects to the Messrs Springers & Tom Prickett

¹ Corporal Wolf seems to have occupied the position of a Company Clerk from what he says above and in other letters. The clothing account referred to was kept by the company commander in a company book since each Union soldier was entitled to a certain amount of clothing each year, as, for instance, one hat, three shirts, four pairs of shoes and so forth. (Long, 148 & 153.)

LETTERS OF CORPORAL ADOLPHUS PHILLIP WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

Fort Pickering
Aug 30th 1863

Dear Parents

You must excuse my long silence, which I know you will do, when you hear the reason for it. I have been very busy for the past two weeks, fixing up the clothing books for the company, which was a very tedious job. It had been neglected for a year; which made it rather mixed up. Then the clothing returns & rolls, to be sent to Washington, & last the muster rolls. I got through late last night, & was glad of it. You can see that I have had something to do, or I should have written, before this. I will have a little more to do tomorrow & day after. I do most all the writing for the company now. It is a good thing for me, if there is not too much of it; I have very little other duty, to do, but attending dress parade, which lasts about twenty minutes.

Last Thursday was a day of rejoicing in Camp. It was pay-day. I never seen so many pleasant looking men, at one time in my life; they looked as if arisen from poverty to wealth, which was nearly the case, there were hardly twenty men in the regiment that had money enough to buy a pint of whiskey; now there is more whiskey in Camp than I like to see. It is strange that some men cannot keep from getting drunk when they have money. I have almost wished that pay day would come but once a year. So many drunken men is disgusting to me, I know not how it works on others. There is one certainty, if a man has the least dislike, for a drunkards life that dislike will grow into hatred, while in the army. But on the other side if he likes his drachm, he will become perfect, if not closely watched, & they will keep up the practice when at home, & thereby ruin the reputation of all other soldiers, however innocent they may be, of that crime, intemperance. I hope it will turn out better than I think, although it has that appearance at present.

I think we will be able to send you some money soon, for we, have more than we need, & it is not safe to keep it here. If I judge rightly of Theodores letter, you will find a place for it; he said you were nearly strapt, as far as money is concerned. During my sickness I used more money than I should have done when well. I bought most all my food, before I went to the hospital & after leaving it.

Today I indulged in a good dinner for the first tme; it made me think of home to sit at a table, with something good to eat on it, & did not feel any the worse for it. Otto has not been very well for the past few days, but is better today. I wish we could get a furlough it would do both good; but that is nearly out of the question. I wish you would write soon & oftener than you have been doing & I promise to do the same. I got a letter from Fritz the other day. He was well. I must now close it is getting to dark. Give my love to all.

I remain as ever, Your Affectionate Son

A.P. Wolf

Write soon.

LETTERS OF CORPORAL ADOLPHUS PHILLIP WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

Fort Pickering Sept 24th

Dear Parents

As I have a little leisure time at present, I thought it best to let you know how we are getting along. For the last 8 days our company has been on a scouting expedition, in Arkansas, but as yet has proved to be of little benefit as far as catching guerrillas is concerned the trouble is they are mounted and we are not; & as soon as they hear of our coming, they are off in every direction; it would be of very little use to try to catch them except with cavalry. Last Sunday night about 9 O'clock we received an order to get ready for a scout. I thought we would be back in two or three hours, but it so happened that we got in camp on Monday night 10 O'clock after a march of about 38 miles. We expected to capture some 40 guerrillas about 15 miles down the river, camped on a large plantation, where we were also to meet a company of our cavalry, and then bag the whole crew. But it turned out to be a mistake, they were not there. So as to make the best of it, we stopped at the planter's for breakfast, & to judge by his looks he felt highly honored, to have 50 Yankees, all hungry as wolves at his breakfast table. But the best of the joke was, while we were sitting about the house, waiting for the long wished for breakfast a squad of rebels came to the same house for their breakfast, but they happened to come across our pickets,¹ who were stationed about sixty yards from the house, & fired at the rebels as soon as they came near enough, which put them to flight for they thought it best not to wait and take breakfast with us. All the damage we done was to capture a shotgun, saddlebag, saddle, and 4 hats which they lost in their flight.²

Our regiment is under marching orders, the supposition is that we go to join Rosecrans army. But it is uncertain when we will start.

Day before yesterday I was ordered back to camp, to make an Inventory of all camp equipage, Guns, and accoutrements & straiten the company Books, preparatory to marching, So I concluded to stay as long as I can.

I wanted to write Sister a little yesterday, as a birthday present, but I took a chill, which laid me up for the day. Tell her to read this one, which will answer the purpose. I hope she had a pleasant day & may live to see many more, Oh! how I wish to have been present. But I must banish all such thoughts now.

I must now close for I do not feel right well.

Please write soon & often.

Give my love to all, but keep a good share for yourselves. I remain as ever.

Your Affectionate Son,

A. P. Wolf

Direct your letters as usual, for they will follow

¹ "Pickets" in Civil War parlance were outpost guards used to prevent just such surprises as above referred to. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 991.

² Most Confederate guerrilla bands were semi-independent and in some areas drained able-bodied men away from the regular fighting forces. Their activities included robbery and murder which were little short of organized outlawry. Confederate General Robert E. Lee stated, "I regard the whole system as an unmixed evil." (The American Heritage Picture History of the Civil War, 518 & ?)

LETTERS OF CORPORAL ADOLPHUS PHILLIP WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

Camp East of Memphis
Nov 5th 1863

Dear Parents.

After a very pleasant trip of three days, I arrived safely in Camp, where I found all just as I had left it with the exception, that the Regiment had moved about a mile & half out from the Fort. I am well satisfied with the change, for we have a splendid Camping place, much better than the other, and our duty is not as monotonous as it used to be. It is mostly Picket duty. I for my part have not been out yet, for there was so much writing to do, that I have not found time to do much of anything else. I am now two months behind hand with my Books, so that it will take up all my time to catch up again. So much for going home. I am very well satisfied with my trip, but I must acknowledge, that I feel more at home, since I have come back to Camp, than when actually at Home. While away I felt uneasy, for I knew this to be my place, and that duty calls me hither. But I beg of you not to misconstrue my meaning and think perhaps, that I do not feel that love for you, which I should, was the reason; for I know the respect and love which is due to parents, from children. I wish we could once more be at home together, and live as happy as we once did; but that happy thought we must banish from our minds for the present, circumstances will not allow it. We did not leave St. Louis on Thursday as we expected, but were compelled to layover until Friday, 4. P.M. I thought it not worth while to go back for one night, so I concluded to stay in St. Louis, until the appointed time.

I found Otto enjoying good health and very happy to see me. He was well satisfied with his new Vest,¹ and a nice pair of Gloves, which I bought in St. Louis.² He sends his thanks to you for the Vest. I will not tell you of his adventures in Arkansas, for he has doubtless written to you about it, before this.

Our Regiment has been paid off, so Otto & I sent you \$80, with C. W. Cox, a Private of this Co. with instructions, to hand it over to you, & I wish you to appropriate it to your own use. It was all we could send at present. I have made up my mind to save as much as possible, for it may come to good use, when we get out of this scrape, & then I will be careful, not to get into another of the same kind.

This is all I know at present.

So good by.

I remain as ever,

Your affectionate Son
A P Wolf

Give my love to all, not forgetting Grandfather.

¹ Vests were not issued to Union soldiers. (Lord, Uniforms, 153.)

² Troops in garrison were required to wear white gloves, but mittens and gloves for warmth were generally purchased or knitted at home. (Lord, Collector's Guide, 114.)

LETTERS OF CORPORAL ADOLPHUS PHILLIP WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

Camp East of Memphis
Nov 22d 1863

Dear Brother

I am beginning to be alarmed at your long silence and do not know what excuse you have for keeping me in waiting so long. You all know the pleasure a letter from home creates and especially to one in our position. So why dont you write oftener than you do. It is not much trouble I am sure, if you only think so. Do not, I beg of you, feel offended at what I have said, but remember that nearly one month has passed, since I have seen or heard of those that I most wish to hear from. Otto wrote the day before I came to Camp; and I directly after, but as yet no answer. We sent \$80 by one of the men, & I am beginning to feel uneasy. I should like to know if you have received the said amount. Please let me know as soon as possible, not that I mistrust the person with whom it was sent, but you know that accidents will sometimes happen therefore my uneasiness. When the money arrives I want you and father to appropriate it, to your own use, for I know you can use it to more advantage than I. It would be satisfactory to both of us, if we could send ten times as much, but it comes in slowly, at the rate of \$13 per month. But we will not despair, for there may be a better day coming.

I was very happy to read in the papers that the Union Ticket has been elected in our old County, and the copperheads¹ badly defeated. That is right we can whip the rebels in front, if you can tend to the traitors in our rear. It has a good influence in the army; it will encourage the soldiers to know that there is not much danger of an outbreak at home.

How are you getting along with cider making? did father get a Press in Bellville?

Tell father I am sorry that I could not see him before leaving; but as it was, it could not be helped. I wish he would write soon.

I forgot my pen when I left, please send it as soon as possible. Send the pen in a letter, if you have no other way.

We have been busey prepairing our winter quarters. Otto and I finished our tent yesterday. I think it is about the best in the Company. We expect to buy a stove, when it gets a little colder, then we will be all right for the winter.²

News are very scarce here, so you must excuse this short letter, & I will try to write a longer one next time. Give my love to all at home, Father Mother Grandfather Sister & Brother.

I remain as ever

Your Brother

A.P. Wolf

P. S. I will direct this letter to Father for fear that you have left. N. B. Give my respects to the Springers & all others that may ask for me.

¹ Copperheads were anti-Republican, anti-War Democrats some of whom wore on their lapels the head of Liberty cut from an old style penny. The term "Copperheads" was one of scorn given to them by their enemies in reference to the poisonous reptile. (Foote, volume II, 632.)

² Since Corporal Wolf says that he expects to buy a stove for his tent, it is probably that it was a Sibley tent, which was conical and would accommodate a stove, or possibly one of the other larger tents used in camp or garrison. The small shelter half or "pup tent" was not large enough for a stove. (Coggins, 18.)

LETTERS OF CORPORAL ADOLPHUS PHILLIP WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

Memphis Tenn
Nov 27th 1863

Dear Parents

Yesterday Mr. Geers arrived in Camp, & to my great satisfaction brought news from Home. I was sorry that the note did not contain more welcome news than it did. I was almost prepared to hear such; as your long silence convinced me that something was wrong but did not know that it would be so bad. It is awful that you dear Mother & Fritz are doomed to suffer so much. Dear Mother I fear your illness is all owing to our absence; pray calm your fears, for our welfare, we are doing fine, would that you might enjoy as good health as we. It would be a great relief to us, & I could serve the remainder of my three years cheerfully. I would willingly sacrifice three years more of my life to the army (as much as I wish this war over) if that would add in the least to your health and happiness. But knowing this to be the cause of your bad health, it is nonsense to speak about it. All we can do, is to hope that this cruel war will soon be over, & we all go home to stay. I hope that that happy day will soon come, when the order for our Discharge will be read on Dress parade. What a day of rejoicing it will be, but let me not anticipate.

Poor Father, I fear you work too hard, since Fritz has taken sick, for you have so much more to do. Remember that there depends more upon your health, than on the price of a few barrels of cider. I hope you will soon be done for it is a disagreeable job & you must be tired of it. Apples must be a good price up there now judging by their price here. They cost from \$5 to 6 per Bbl. in Memphis. I wish we had a barrel of your Cider here, it would be a great treat for the boys. But it would be too much trouble & expense, to send it.

I wrote a letter a few days ago, for which I must apologize. I am sorry that I used the words therein, but did not know the circumstances you were in. So please excuse my harsh words, & I will be careful not to do so any more, but patiently await your pleasure to write, although hard it may seem. I can imagine your pleasure, when you receive a letter from us, so just think it is the same here, if not more, if that could be possible. I always count the days from our letter, to the time that I might receive another. Only think of our disappointment when the mail comes, & hear the mail carrier say, nothing for you! & when this is repeated five or six times, it is enough to make a person angry; I know that it has made me feel sick for hours afterwards. But there is no use to go on in this strain any longer, for it will not help the case. I know that you will write as often as possible; at least I shall think so.

Yesterday was thanksgiving.¹ We had a splendid thanksgiving dinner. Our officers, (god bless them for the act) presented each company with 4 Turkeys, which made a good

¹ The Thanksgiving Day celebrated on November 26, 1863 was proclaimed by President Abraham Lincoln as a national day of thanksgiving which would also be observed on the last Thursday of November in every following year. This proclamation was largely brought about by Sarah Josepha Hale, the editor of the magazine, *Godey's Lady's Book*, who had been campaigning for the selection of the last Thursday in November since 1846. Of course other days of thanksgiving had been observed when proclaimed by state governors and also on August 6, 1863 by proclamation of President Lincoln. (Comptons, 146; and Long, 395.)

LETTERS OF CORPORAL ADOLPHUS PHILLIP WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

dinner. It went better than sowbelly, I can assure you.² I guess our Colonel wants a new horse. That is only my private opinion, publicly expressed.

I have a very easy time here, nothing to do but write, very nice work, to what Picket duty is. Some days I am kept at the desk all day, then again I only write the passes to the City which takes about half an hour.

Of late I have had good health.

Otto is getting so fat again that all the boys have their fun with him, by calling him Fred Krafft. He eats so much that after eating the boys & even our officers take pity on him & make him run for an hour sometimes. You would hardly take him to be the same boy, he was two months ago. He favors uncle Charly a great deal, all that is lacking is corpulency & that he will soon have, if he keeps on. I doubt that you will know him in a year from this.

We have fine weather now and the boys enjoy it. But I far we will have to suffer for it this winter; I have one consolation, if we do not move, and that is we have good quarters.

I wish if father could so arrange it to come down this winter, you would enjoy the trip; but bring Grandfather with you.

I must now close for the present, it is getting later. Accept my best wishes for your wellfare, & all others at home.

Please write soon for I am anxious to hear how you are getting along. This is all I have to say. So good-bye.

From Your Affectionate Son.

A. P. Wolf

Answer soon

² It is interesting to note that turkey seems to have been the accepted dish even in 1863. "Sowbelly" is a slang term for salt pork. (The American Dictionary of the American Language, 1237.)

LETTERS OF CORPORAL ADOLPHUS PHILLIP WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

Memphis Tenn
Dec 13. 1863

Dear Brother & Sister

It has been some time since I last wrote to you, & as this is a bad day to be out, I thought of writing a few lines to let you know how we are getting along, I suppose you should like to hear some news, but that is impossible, for we have the dullest time imaginable, it is a wonder that we do not die of the blues. I wish we could have a skirmish or two a day so as to stir us up, & have something to think about. If this lazy life continues much longer, we will be to lazy to eat our meals, then we would be in a bad fix, don't you think so? He had a little scare last night and this morning; it was caused by some rebels firing on our Pickets, but it did not amount to anything after all the fuss that was made. It is strange that our Regiment is kept in one place, and others are sent from place to place. They have a little excitement and see fun. I do not believe that we will leave Memphis until our three years are over, they will let us mope out our time right here. I would not care so much about it, but I should hate to go home after my time is up, and have to say, that I never was in a battle, or skirmish even. But then it would not be our fault, for we cannot help it.

I got Theodores letter the other day, & was glad to hear that you were all well, & have plenty to do, I guess there is not much danger of your getting the blues, at least not from laziness. I wish I were at home to help - eat. I want you to send me a christmas present when the time comes, do not forget it, I shall speak in time, so as to be sure of it. I shall expect something nice from you Matilda, you will have a nice time up there, while your Brothers can only think about the times they used to have & be content. Christmas is always the worst day for the poor soldier. If he does not think of home all year, he will be certain to think of it on that day. When you are enjoying yourself right well think of me, & have a little fun for me. Well all I can do, is to wish you all much Joy.

I must now close. Give my love to all, but keep a good share of it for yourself.

From Your Brother.

A. P. Wolf

LETTERS OF CORPORAL ADOLPHUS PHILLIP WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. The same to all my acquaintances.

Memphis. Tenn
Dec 22d 1863

Dear Parents

Yesterday I had the pleasure of receiving your long and interesting letter, for which allow me to return my heartfelt thanks. Otto and I were so much delighted over it that we read it three or four times. And well we could, for it contained a great many news of interest, at least for us, so far away from home, in a strange land, and among strangers who wish us no good, but would do us an injury if the opportunity were given. If I could only receive such a letter once a week from either of you, my time of enlistment would pass off twice as smooth as it does. For I would not think of it as much, and only look ahead for the time to come when I might receive the next letter.

I was very much delighted to hear that you were all enjoying good health, and that making cider out of frozen apples, turned out to be a paying business; it must have been an act of divine providence so that you could make more money out of the apples, than if it were otherwise. I told you to take it easy, when you were all despairing, very near, that the loss might not be so great as may be supposed. It is true I did not think at the time, that it turn out so good as you say it will but said it more for a consolation than anything else. Let this be a kind of warning in the future, and never despair too soon, if it does look gloomy.

I am sorry that my poor Tafey is dead for she was too good. Only the other evening I had occasion to speak of her while in conversation with some of the boys, discussing the merits of different cows. Like all farmers, each had a favorite cow, so I made my brags about Tafey as being the best that ever was on the place. I think I told the truth.

I found an old acquaintance in Memphis and I hardly think it likely that you can guess who it is. Do you remember a school teacher by the name of Barbour? He taught in Edwardsville about ten or twelve years ago. He says that he recollects you very well. The way we happened to meet, was, our regiment is Camped close to the place where he lived, and he made inquiries about us and in that way found that I belonged to the regiment. He seemed to know me, but I did not know him. When I came in Camp he stepped up to me and asked if I knew him. I said I did not. Then he told me his name was Barbour. He is a very nice man and I am glad that we met. He invited me to come and see him which I did one evening. He introduced me to some ladies of his acquaintance, where I spend some very pleasant evenings. One of the ladies plays on the Piano very well. Besides she sings, an accomplishment at which all Southern ladies are very expert; in this way I have an opportunity to hear music as often as I wish, for I am always welcome at their house. If I do not come for two or three days they will send for me. When Mr. Barbour is away it falls to my lot to act as a kind of guardian, for there are no other men about the place. The lady that plays the Piano is single so you must not be surprised, if you hear some of these days, that I have enlisted for life. How would you

LETTERS OF CORPORAL ADOLPHUS PHILLIP WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

like to have a Southern lady for a daughter in law? You know everything is possible in this changable world, so why may not this be a fact? But rest easy dear Mother and Father, for I certainly will ask your permission, before reenlisting. I asked your opinion when I enlisted for three years to fight as many battles as it might be my lot to be engaged in. Therefore I will undoubtedly ask it again before enlisting for life, to fight battles perhaps ten times as dangerous, as those I may see during the next two years.

Christmas is very near at hand, Only three days. Oh! what a drear Christmas this will be to the poor soldiers. It has the appearance of being about as pleasant as the last. I hope you may all have a very pleasant time, the knowledge of which would satisfie me a great deal, if I cannot participate in the sports. I know the young folks always enjoy themselves on that day but you dear Father and Mother are too old to join in their sports.

I seen in your letter that you dear Father has has't seen your Fiftieth Birthday, and it was very thoughtless of me that I did not write you a congratulating letter for that day. But it is never too late to do good so I will do it now, for both Otto and myself. We wish that you may live to see a thousand & one more happy Birthdays. I would like to say more but I fear that I could not do justice to my thoughts, by writing them on paper. Besides it is getting late & there is not much room left on this sheet. I have plenty to do at present, making out the muster rolls, which is a very tedious job & will take some time & labor. I must now close so good bye for this time.

I remain as ever Your Affectionate Son

A. P. Wolf