

Bridgeport Ala A'gst 28/'64

Dear Ann

Sabbath morning has come again and to keep myself from being too lonesome I must try to write a few lines to you although I do not owe you one as I know of Sent you one on last tuesday with three rings in it. one of them was for Tommy. in this will send the mate to it what does he think of the Copperheads? I have another snake or something like one made for him. it is called the Hoop Snake because it does not drag itself along the ground as other Snakes do but rolls itself up in a disck or hoop and rolls along just like a wheel It not only can roll it self on the ground but also on the surface of the water. So when it wants to cross a river all it has to is to set it self in motion and wheel across.

I have never seen this snake but it is offten to be met with in these states and also some of the western states

May be you think as I used to that this country is infested with Snakes. it may be but I have not seen but one live Snake this Summer, and that was a very Small one I have lots of trinkets for the children, but how to get them home is the question. Suppose I Send a little box by Express would it pay to go to Hinsdale or Cuba after it? what do you think Maybe that some one will be going home this fall to that part of the country and I can send them that way. I do not think that there is much prospects of my getting to the Regiment very soon. Neather do I hear any thing of the Paymaster I feel bad because I am unable to send you any money but there is no help for it. it will come some time. I wish I could send you some of the fine Peaches that grows about here the crop is very abundant in this part of the country. there is an orchard not far from here where we can go any time and get as many as we can carry.

The owner of the Orchard is, or was in the Rebel army. his family moved farther South and his house tumbled down and its very ruins is now hid from view by the weeds!!!

There are hundreds of just such places in this part of the country!! Oh! the horrors of War! When will Peace return when Homes can be homes again

I am going now to the U.S. Christian commission to see if there are religious services today

Please give my love to Dacke & Mange & Father & Mother cheer the old people up as much as you can.= Tell Sissy that Dat expect a Big Sweet Kiss for that Peach Stone Ring. Does she not think that dat is very foolish to be whitling such things. but if she could see all the pretty shells I have she would be delighted----

I am very truly Yours  
W. Charles

Bridgeport Ala. Sep. 1st/64

Anwyl Ann

Last monday morning I sent a letter to you. Soon after putting it in the mail a couple of letters came from you dated Sandusky, 17 & 23.

I will try to answer them, but there is no knowing when you will get it, because the Rail Road is torn by the rebels between here & Nashville I know not how much of it is destroyed

We have been under arms here night and day since monday after noon Expecting that the enemy would attacked this place quite a force of them have have been within a few miles of us but as yet, they have kept away. Night before last every one thought it a certainty that there must be a bloody Battle early the next morning, for sixteen hundred (some said three thousand) were only six miles up the rivver!! Of course every thing was put in readiness as soon as possible to receive them. Every man was furnished with a gun and forty rounds of ammunition there are a great many workman here that are not soldiers.

As soon as I found out that it would be necessary for me to be in the fort all night, I went back to my tent and hid--not myself you need not think but my little tool box in the bushes so if the tent should be burnt, it would be safe And the little tin box I keep my trinkets in you see it is pretty near full now of Rings & shells, and for safe keeping I took it to the Christian Commission office I went in and found the little house pretty well filled with Laydies The wife of the Agent said "Good evening Mr.--she new my name but to think what in a few minnits might happen she did not say the rest I asked her if she would be so kind as to keep that little box for me to be sure she said I will lock it up in my own trunk but, she added if anything should happen would you like to have us send it some wheres. I replied by saying that if I did not call for it, they would find directions in side, what to do with it. very well she said and I hurried up to the fort, for the enemy was reported to be only four miles from us and advancing of course we expected every moment to be engaged in mortal conflict with the foe But it was not to be the Rebels came down the river this way as far as Battle creek then turned off to the left and passed us by!!

They will most likely do much damage to the R. Road between here and Nashville.

Bridgeport Ala. Sep. 15/64

Fy Anwyl Ann

Your letter dated the 2ond of this month came to hand to day, and also one from Jane Lewis dated Sep. 4th and one from Mary & Jane dated the 6th. Was very glad to learn that you were all well.

If some of the Freedom boys have run away I see that others are enlisting into the army I hope they will come into our regiment I should like to see them very much

Mary says that she is going to Lockport. poor child I know not what will become of her. I wish she would be a good girl and stay with father. I do not think that it will do her any good to go to Lockport. If she goes she will most likely get sick then who will take care of her! She is not on good terms with Lewis family and of course she can not go there and what posseses her to think of going to that city is more than I can tell. I am sure if she can not stand to do housework, She will not be able to earn her living by sewing

There is no news here worth sending to you. My health continues very good. My Regiment is in the the city of Atlanta and I am expecting orders every day to take the Baggage there Still I may be here for two months yet.

Do you ever hear from Brother Joel. I have not had a word from him this summer I know he has writen to me but his letters have gone a stray. So you did not give the ring to the Braned Parry. I have no fault to find. But you must not forget that it is our duty often times to "render good for evil" Nid taln drwy am thrwy That he acted mean towards Dack\_ is nothing strange, or out of his line. it was to be expected Some men cannot act other wise or at least they do not do it. For all that you know that Our Heavenly Teacher tells us to do good to those that spitefully use us.

The weather here is most beautiful the nights are almost as light as the day.

It is reported again this this afternoon that Wheeler and his cutthroats are only 20 miles from here and that he is determine to destroy this Bridge if he looses every man in the attempt. No doubt he would like to burn the bridge but it seems to me that he will not try it just yet. at least that is my impression

Please give my warmest love to Dack\_ & Ma\_g\_ and Father & Mother and my best respects and good wishes to all enquiring friends and receive much love and my earnest prayers for the welfare of thyself and little ones. Did you give that letter to Capt Cheney-----

Ever Yours

W Charles

P.S. Certain young Laydes by the names of Lydia Owens and Margret Roberts are hereby notified that a line from them is daily looked for by a certain soldier hereabouts.

Did my boy Tommy get that second copper head that was sent him. Tell him to be sure to vote for Gram Pa Lincoln

Bridgeport Sep 19 1864

Fy Anwyl Ann

Yours of Sept. 7th was received this morning. was very glad indeed that you are all blessed with continued health I do try to thank Him from whom all blessings flow, for the great mercy that He hath manifested towards us. But am fearful that I am not half thankful enough

you say that it is a time of sadness with you, for many of the boys have enlisted &c, &c. I think it ought to be a time of joy and rejoicings with you all to see men go to help their Brethern to gain the Victory, the Great Victory which sooner or later will crown our efforts. To be sure it is hard to go from ones family into the Army; to leave a comfortable home for the tented field, to leave the pursuits of peacefull domestic life for one of destruction and carnage Yes all that is hard and bad enough, but there are some things worse in this world than even that. To live a Coward at home or die a traitor abroad is ten thousand times worse!!

You may think that it is hard to die on the Battlefield or in hospital a way from friends It is not hard anywheres to meet death if he comes to us "heb ei golin" we shall be happy no matter where we may be but on the other hand if we meet death ai golin heb ei dyner, it will be sad with us no matter how many friends and kindred there are about us.

Dear Ann I am as glad as you can be that the time of our sepperation is shortning from years into months. May God preserve us an other year is often my most earnest prayers.

Bridgeport Ala. Sep. 20

So Dack\_\_ is still able to cut his oats and Ma\_\_\_\_\_ is able to rake and bind Tommy nockes the bundles into a heap. So the Grasshoppers did not destroy the Oats I should like very much to see Tommy gathering the bundles.

I have no news whatever to send to you all is very quiet here Please give my warmest love to Dack\_\_ & Ma\_\_\_\_\_ and Father& Mother &c best wishes to all enquiring friends.

Yours Very Truly

W. Charles

P.S. Please tell Zillah Roberts that I will write to her in a few days. I think the sample you sent \_\_\_\_\_ will make a very pretty winter dress if it will not fade and most likely it will not I understand that the Paymaster has gone to the front to pay the Army but my being here no body knows when I get my pay I wrote to the Quarter Master to get it if he could but I am afraid that he will not be able to get it

With good wishes to you all I remain

Yours

W Charles

Bridgeport Ala. Sept 24/64

Dear Ann

Yours of the 15th is just received with the good news that you were all well.----

Day before yesterday I received a letter from John H. Owens, dated the same day as yours-- It came through very quick, only about five days on the road tell Johnny to write again Will answer his letter in a few days.=

So Aunty Phebe has been to visit you well I am glad of it. I should like to see her very much. Of course you know by this time the cause that you were kept so long without getting a letter from me-----

Such interruptions will take place as long as we are down so far in Dixie---

It certainly is too bad that Soldiers and Soldiers families should be compelled to pay such a heavy tax to those that enlist now. I do not see any justice in paying one Volunteer a thousand dollars now while those that have been in the field two and three years only get from twenty five to fifty dollars. Every Volunteer should be paid the same amount from the town be that sum little or much then no one would justly find fault. There are many a soldier in the army that has a little property at home but it takes all he can earn and more to pay the taxes on it, in order to pay others large bounties to do that which he is doing for nothing.

I have no news to send to you. We have had heavy rains for the past few days, it is quite good tonight. It looks now again that I shall be here for some time yet, & yet orders to go may come before morning My health continues very good

You say that Aunty Ann is first rate. I am glad to hear that. Wonder if tobacco is plenty where she lives. Hope it is for I shall want to take a smoke when I go to make her a visit, as I intend to some day. Johnny says that he is going back with his Aunt. I should wait for a very pressing invitation from y Brand Davis before I would go and make a long tarry at his house.

We have preaching here every Sunday and prayer meeting every Wednesday night Last Sunday evening a man by the name of Armstrong preached but being Sergeant of the Guard that night did not hear him.

You will please give my warmest love to Dack\_\_ & Ma\_g\_ and tell them that I am very sorry that I am unable to send them any money, for I feel that I owe them so much that I shall never be able to pay them I was told last week that the Paymaster had gone to Atlanta to pay the troops but since I have heard contradicted.

Remember me to Father & Mother and where is Susan with that letter that she was going to write. I send Sister Janes crescent in this please give it to her

My respects to all enquiring friends Is there anybody in Freedom that will Vote for McClelland. I hope not. Freemont has gained a host of friends every where on account of he withdrawing his name and refusing to run for the Presidency

Say to Tommy & Sissy that Dats next letter will be to them, for he has much to say to them. Hoping as strong as ever that we shall meet some day I Remain Very Truly &c

W. Charles

Bridgeport October 5 1864

Dear Ann

The Rail Road has again been torn up between here and Nashville so that no trains could run for 8 days and of course we got no mail during that time

Monday evening the mail train came through & I got a letter from you dated the 12th of Sept. & one from Lydia & Hettie Owens dated the 13 of Sept. Was very glad in deed to learn that you were all well It is very lonesome with us when we get no letters from home you say that you and the children have been some what unwell but were better I trust that by God's blessing you will all continue to enjoy good health.

I did get Johnny Owens letter and answered it, & I did suppose that I had sent him a Ring in a letter that I sent him about 4 weeks ago I know I was thinking about it and was a long while making up my mind which one to send to him. but maybe after all that I did not put it in the letter. I will try and send him one some day.

An other letter has just been handed me by one of the men, from you dated September 23. I feel very sorry in deed for Mr Davis folks God bless them it is hard for them to part with their little ones

It is some what strange that Jane Ann has not heard of Williams since the last Battle that is a good while ago The last I heard from him he was not with the Regiment

I Bill Griffiths last June in Ringgold Georgia and wrote to you all about it that time. He is to work for the Goverment some where on the Rail Road between Chattanooga & Atlanta or at least he hired for that purpose. What David James has be come the husband of Jane Parry? David James county line. We are having tremendous rain storms now every day. there is no news worth sending to you from here

I sent a crescent for Sister Jane John Williams Wife

Tommy & Sissy

Fy Anwyl Blant

Dat is very lonesome some time when he thinks how long it is since he has seen you, and how long it maybe yet before he can come home. We must try to be very good and ask our Father in Heaven to hasten the time when Dat can come home & live at home with you- - - - -

You will please give my love to Dack\_ & Ma\_g\_ and Father & Mother-  
--- and best respects & good wishes to all enquiring friends

I do not feel very well to day. God willing I will write again in a day or two

Very Truly

W. Charles

Many thanks for the Steel pins

Bridgeport Alabama Oct. 24 1864

Dear Ann

Yours of Oct. 14 was received this morning stating that you had been to Hinsdale &c. I am very sorry that Mrs Allen showed so much selfishness towards you. both of those little Guns belonged to me Mr Allen was only to have one of them for taking them home and so of course you had a perfect right to taken one of them wether Mrs Allen was willing or not

If Mr Allen had been at home I am sure you would have met with better treatment.

If that old dress coat of mine is worth any thing you can cut it up and make a coat for Tommy of it, if you think best, and the over coat, if Dack\_\_ is in need of one let him have it That is give it to the one that needs it the most

I feel very bad that I am unable to send you any money there is no knowing when I shall be paid I understand that the Regiment has received 8 months pay. I wrote to our Quartermaster to try to get my pay too. I have not heard any thing from the Regiment for some time, but I do hope that he was able to get it because I know that you need some money by this time We have had some very slight frost here and the leaves are beginning to fall. The weather has been quite wet but now it is dry and very beautifull

We have got our new meeting house done and of course we are very much pleased with I wish you could see it. It would do you good--- We continue to have meetings but not every night for most of the praying boys have gone a way, but I hope that God will send others here to help us carry on the good work.- - - -

We have more to do now than when we first came here Still our duty is very light

It does seem to me that we shall be ordered to our Regiments before long. Still it maybe some time yet. If they would only pay me I would not mind remaining here untill my time was up.

I will write Mr. George Johns for I feel very thankful indeed, for the kindness he has shown to you, and in order to prove it I send him a little token of my gratitude It is only a little thing but I believe that it will please him. Tell him to wear it on his wach chain in remembrance of an old friend that is far away I have made six of them one I gave to the Christian Commission Agent, and one to the Rev. Mr. Raymond, and one was stolen from me and have two left. I have not made any trinkets now for a long time because there is to much Water in the River to get any shells But if I can get any more shells then I will try to make some more playthings

If George would like to have me make him a shell Ring let him send me the size of his finger and I will do my best to send him one that will suit him. I wonder what has got into our folks again I have not heard a word from them in a great while Please give my warmest love to Dack\_\_ & Ma\_g\_ tell them not to be discourage that my time will soon be up in the army then if I live I will try to repay them for what they are doing for me now

(continued)

(October 24, 1863 continued)

Give my love to Father & Mother & Susan and all good friends With much love and earnest prayers for the well fare of yourself and little ones I remain most truly

Yours

W. Charles

Bridgeport Ala. Oct. 25, 1864

Nothing new this morning I received a letter from Mr. H. Cheney yesterday with tickets in it for voting. We shall vote here tomorrow or next day I did not know untill a few days ago that we would be allowed to vote at all. If you see Mr Cheney tell him that the tickets were received in good time and that I will make good use of them and will write to him in a few days. I am very glad to see the name of Doctor Henry Van Aernam on the ticket for Representative in Congress. You know he is the Chief Surgeon in our Regiment He is a first rate friend to me I have sent his likeness to you I think it was from Alexandria I do hope that he will be elected.

Good By

W Charles

(Letter is written on a form, "Semi-weekly Report of Effective Force")

Bridgeport Alabama  
Nov. 2 1864

Dear Ann

Your letter dated the 23 of last month came to hand yesterday. was very glad to learn that you were all pretty well

You say that sister Janes husband has been taken prisoner do you know at what place he was at that time I know that there had been a fight at Pulasky Tennessee but did not know that the rebels took any of our men prisoners there. please let me know more about it.

It was to bad that Mrs Lyon cut her throat she must have been very unhappy indeed to have done it Doubtless her husband was unkind to her. and so my poor old father has fell down and hurt himself I hope he has not hurt himself very bad-- I feel very sorry for and am somewhat fearfull that he has hurt himself worse than you wish to tell me I will try to write to him in a day or two.

and sorry that Jimmy is so lame If I had the money I would send it to Dack\_ to buy an other one but there is no telling when I shall get any pay I was told yesterday that my Regiment Has not been paid yet and maybe I shall go to it before it is paid.

Are the horses very high there now it will be most impossible for Dack\_ to get along without two good horses I feel very bad because I am not able to send you money but I can not help it. The money will come some time

I am very well off for clothing the shirts you sent me are not worn out yet although I have patched one of them and the other has become allmost to small for me The socks too that you sent me are yet pretty good, and my shoes are first rate

The Christian Commission gave me a couple of Drawers so I am very comfortable indeed you need not trouble about sending me any thing be cause you live so far from the Rail Road If you lived near the Rail Road you might send me a little box without much trouble but as it is you must not think of it, for I am very comfortable

Give my love to Dack\_ & Mang\_ and to father & mother and all the family and friends

Will write to you again in a few days

Hoping that you are all well

I remain very truly Yours

W. Charles

Bridgeport Alabama Nov 6th 1864

Dear Ann,

There is nothing new or strange for me to write about today, only that I am well and enjoying all the comforts that a soldier in the field can expect.

Had a very good sabbath school this morning. I was the only white man there, those friends that labored with me having been ordered to the front or to their Regiments.

I do wish that you could come some sunday to our sabbath school, so that you might see how pleased and thankfull the little black boys and girls are, to have a white man come and teach them. Of course they think that I am the best white man they ever saw, and they wonder very much why a white man should wish to have them learn anything!!

You know it is, or was before the War, the law of this state that any white man proved guilty of teaching a black man women or child to read should be punished with death or imprisonment! That is it was against the law of the state for any one to learn any person of African descent to read!! so of course it is no wonder that it seems strange to these that were so lately slaves, to see a white man come oppenly to teach them. some of these children are very neatly and comfortably clothed but most of them have nothing on but rags, and nothing at all on their feet. It is getting pretty cold now too and I feel very sorry for them.

The weather to day is quite fall like night before last there was a frost, and yesterday was a beautiful day, but to day it is cloudy and windy with some rain.

I have not heard a word from the Regiment for some time only that it was in Atlanta.

It is all very quiet around here again. how long it will remain so, of course no one can tell.

Where Hood and the Rebels are I am not able to tell you but they are some where down the river in the neighbourhood of Decatur.

Say to little Tommy to continue to be a good boy, and to be very kind to his little sister. Please give my warmest love to Dack & M I have nothing else to send to them. I wish I had. I hope the time will come when I can do something for them. Remember me to Father & Mother and all good friends. What is the reason that Mary & Jane do not write to me any more Hoping that you are all well, & praying that the blessing of Our Heavenly Father will continue to abide with you, I am very truly yours

W. Charles

Nov 7th

P.S. This morning it is reported that a portion of the Rail Road is destroyed again between Chattanooga & Atlanta

Nov. 29 1864  
Bridgeport Ala.

Tommy Bach.

How are you and little Sissy? you are well I hope. Today a letter came from your Mother saying that you were well and full of play. It does dat much good to know that his little boy and little girl are able to play, and he lives in hope to live to come home to play with you

Little cousin does not play any more at home with his little brother and sister but he is just as happy up in Heaven where we shall all go some day if we are good. He can not come to us any more but let us be good, and be very kind to one an other, then we shall be sure to go him.

There is a very good little boy here. his name is chaley clough (cluff) he is the son of the Agent of the christian commission he has given me his likeness to send to you, and I will send it to you some day and I am going to put your likeness in a pretty little shell and will give it to him. I think a great deal of this little boy, for he very often brings me books and papers and also some thing good to eat. the other day he brought me a very good pie that his mother had made, and also a pair of mittens=

Dat is also very glad that you are learning the A.B.C.s A great many little boys and girls comes to dat every day and over thirty of them have already learned to say their letters and to spell and some of them have learned to read!! most of them are black. you have never seen any black children have you? Well they learn just as quick as white children and they are so glad that a white man is willing to teach them. Many of them have no shoes to put on their feet but for all that, they come no matter how cold it is because they wish so much to learn their books.

Yesterday Dat got a big bundle of Books, very nice ones, fifty of them. Dat does not know who sent these good books to him, but they were sent that they might be given to the little Balck boys and girls, and to day they were given to them, and oh how glad they were, they all said that they would be very good children and try very hard to learn them.

The fathers and mothers of these little children can not teach them the A.B.C.s because they do not know them.