

Information Sheet

R Bushnell, Douglas Ritchie, 1824-1863.
675 Letters, 1861-1866.
One folder, photocopies.

This collection is available at The State Historical Society of Missouri. If you would like more information, please contact us at shsresearch@umsystem.edu.

These are the letters of an officer of the 13th Illinois Infantry, written during campaigns in Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee. Bushnell was killed in action at Ringgold, Georgia, in November 1863. There are also a few letters from his wife, Emily, and other correspondents.

Douglas R. Bushnell was born 17 June 1824 at Norwich, Connecticut. He was educated as a civil engineer, and moved to New Hampshire as a young man to begin a career in railroad engineering in that state and in Vermont. Bushnell married Emily Joanna Catherine Edson at Highgate, Vermont, on 16 September 1849. Shortly after the birth of his first child, Emma Louise, in 1850, Bushnell and his family moved Illinois, where he worked on several railroad projects. In 1855, the family moved to Sterling, Whiteside County, Illinois.

Bushnell enlisted in Company B of the 13th Illinois Infantry on 10 May 1861, and was elected captain. The regiment completed organization at Camp Dement and Camp McClellan at Dixon and Caseyville, Illinois. In July, the regiment was sent to garrison Rolla, Missouri, the railhead of the South West Branch of the Pacific Railroad. With the exception of Gen. John C. Frémont's advance on Springfield, the 13th Illinois remained at Rolla from 7 July 1861 to 6 March 1862. Among his other duties, Bushnell organized construction of an earthen fortification that was ultimately named Fort Wyman after the regimental commander of the 13th Illinois, Col. John B. Wyman.

The 13th Illinois remained at the railhead in 1862 when Gen. Samuel R. Curtis's army began the campaign into southwestern Missouri and northwestern Arkansas, but was ordered to reinforce the Union army after its victory at Pea Ridge, Arkansas, in March. The regiment marched with the Army of the South West as it ranged eastward along the Missouri border, made a futile attempt to capture Little Rock, and finally marched to the west bank of the Mississippi River at Helena, Arkansas, on 14 July 1862.

From Helena, Bushnell and the 13th Illinois became part of the Army of the Tennessee and participated in various movements against the Confederate stronghold at Vicksburg, Mississippi. Operations included the bloody repulse in December 1862 at Chickasaw Bluffs, where Col. Wyman was killed in action, capture of Arkansas Post in January 1863, and assaults on the Vicksburg lines in May 1863.

Bushnell received a promotion to major in January 1863 and served thereafter as a staff officer in the 13th Illinois. Following the capture of Vicksburg, the regiment moved to Memphis and Chattanooga, Tennessee, in the fall of 1863. After operations against the Memphis & Charleston Railroad in October 1863, the 13th Illinois embarked on the Chattanooga-Ringgold campaign. Bushnell was involved in the fighting at Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge near Chatta-

nooga in November, then joined the pursuit of defeated Confederate forces abandoning Tennessee. On 27 November 1863, during an action with the Confederate rearguard near Ringgold, Bushnell was shot through the head and died instantly. Fellow officers advanced the money to have his body returned to Sterling, Illinois. Bushnell is buried in Riverside cemetery in Sterling.

The Bushnell collection consists of seventy-two letters. Most were written by Bushnell to his wife and family from various camps. There are also five letters written to him by his wife, Emily, and a plea for leniency from the mother of a young soldier in the 13th convicted of a military offense, and other correspondence.

Bushnell's letters reveal a well-educated, conscientious officer who missed his family dreadfully. Although the 13th Illinois did not see any combat during its time in Missouri and Arkansas, the intensity of operations increased markedly once the regiment was drawn into movements in the Mississippi River valley directed at Vicksburg. Bushnell's awareness of the increasing danger is obvious in his letter of 10 May 1863, written before the battle of Big Black River, Mississippi. His letters also contain a considerable amount of camp news that would be useful in writing a modern regimental history, and details that will be useful for research on Missouri and Arkansas, as well as the Vicksburg and Chattanooga campaigns. Of particular interest are the plat of Camp Rolla (see letter of 11 July 1861), and sketch maps of the battlefields at Arkansas Post (13 January 1863) and Chickasaw Bluff, Mississippi (15 February 1863).

There are five letters in the collection written by Emily Bushnell from Sterling, Illinois, to her husband. They show the terrible anxiety she felt for her husband's safety and the burden she bore caring for two young children, one of whom was born while he was Rolla. Her last two letters were written after his death, but before notification had reached her. The last items in the collection are a letter concerning Bushnell's death from Lieut. Col. Partridge, commanding officer of the 13th Illinois, extracts from a private letter concerning disposition of Bushnell's remains and personal effects, and two letters to Emily Bushnell concerning payments due her husband by the United States.

Additional information on Bushnell and his family may be found in *Ringgold: A Civil War Story* (Santa Fe, N.M.: privately printed, 1999), published by Lawrence W. Wheeler, a descendant and the donor of the Bushnell letters. A copy photograph of Bushnell in uniform is available in the Information Folder.

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2 August 1999

Lawrence W. Wheeler

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Shelf List

These are the letters of an officer of the 13th Illinois Infantry, written during campaigns in Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee. Bushnell was killed in action at Ringgold, Georgia, in November 1863. There are also a few letters from his wife, Emily, and other correspondents.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>From</u>
1861	17 May	Camp Dement, Dixon, Ill.
1861	02 Jun	Camp Dement, Dixon, Ill.
1861	25 Jun	Camp McClellan, Caseyville, Ill.
1861	05 Jul	Camp McClellan, Caseyville, Ill.

1861	11 Jul	Camp Rolla, Mo.
1861	15 Jul	Camp Rolla, Mo.
1861	01 Aug	Camp Rolla, Mo.
1861	11 Aug	Camp Rolla, Mo.
1861	20 Aug	Camp Rolla, Mo.
1861	25 Sep	Camp Rolla, Mo.
1861	27 Oct	Camp Bolivar, Polk County, Mo.
1861	02 Dec	Camp Lafayette, Rolla, Mo.
1861	11 Dec	Camp Lafayette, Rolla, Mo.
1861	12 Dec	Camp Lafayette, Rolla, Mo.
1861	25 Dec	Salem, Mo.
1862	09 Jan	Rolla, Mo.
1862	26 Jan	Rolla, Mo.
1862	09 Feb	Rolla, Mo.
1862	03 Mar	Rolla, Mo.
1862	30 Mar	Camp near Cross Timber Hollow, Keetsville, Mo.
1862	07 Apr	Camp on Flat Creek within 1 mile of James River, [Stone] County, Mo.
1862	07 May	Camp near Batesville, Ark.
1862	23 May	Camp 4 miles north of Searcy, White County, Ark.
1862	01 Jun	Camp near Searcy Landing, Little Red River, Ark.
1862	04 Jun	Camp near Fair View [?], Ark.
1862	08 Jun	Camp near Batesville, Ark.
1862	06 Aug	Camp near Helena, Ark.
1862	12 Aug	Helena, Ark.
1862	31 Aug	Helena, Ark.
1862	28 Oct	Helena, Ark.
1862	15 Nov	Sterling, Ill. [Emily Bushnell to husband]
1862	no date	[Helena, Ark., to "my dear daughter"]
1862	12 Dec	Helena, Ark.
1862	18 Dec	Helena, Ark., to "Brother Frank"
1862	29 Dec	Walnut Bluffs, Vicksburg, Miss.
1862	31 Dec	In the field near Vicksburg, Miss.
1863	08 Jan	Steamer <i>John Warner</i> , mouth of White River, Ark.
1863	12 Jan	Post of Arkansas, Arkansas River
<u>Year</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>From</u>
1863	15 Jan	Arkansas Post, Arkansas River
1863	21 Jan	Steamer <i>John Warner</i> , Milliken's Bend, La.
1863	26 Jan	About 6 miles below Vicksburg, in State of La.
1863	29 Jan	About 6 miles below Vicksburg, in La.
1863	15 Feb	Near Vicksburg, Miss.
1863	26 Feb	Near Vicksburg, Miss.
1863	08 Mar	Near Vicksburg, Miss.
1863	23 Mar	Near Vicksburg, Miss.
1863	18 Apr	Greenville, Miss.
1863	27 Apr	Milliken's Bend, La.
1863	10 May	Big Black River, Miss.
1863	24 May	Vicksburg, Miss.
1863	23 Jun	Vicksburg, Miss.
1863	13 Jul	Jackson, Miss.

1863	15 Jul	Jackson, Miss.
1863	18 Jul	Jackson, Miss.
1863	20 Jul	Brooklyn, N. Y. [Charlotte Evans to Bushnell]
1863	02 Aug	Sterling, Ill. [Emily Bushnell to husband]
1863	10 Aug	Big Black River, Miss.
1863	24 Sep	Steamer <i>James Raymond</i> , Vicksburg, Miss.
1863	05 Oct	Sterling, Ill. [Emily Bushnell to husband]
1863	13 Oct	Iuka, Miss.
1863	25 Oct	Camp near Tuscumbia, Ala.
1863	26 Oct	Dickson Station, Ala., Charleston & Memphis Railroad
1863	02 Nov	Chickasaw Landing, Ala.
1863	03 Nov	Chickasaw Landing, Ala.
1863	25 Nov	Bridgeport, Ala.
1863	26 Nov	Mission Ridge near Chattanooga, Tenn.
1863	27 Nov	Sterling, Ill. [Emily Bushnell to husband]
1863	29 Nov	Sterling, Ill. [Emily Bushnell to husband]
1863	30 Nov	Chattanooga, Tenn. [Lieut. Col. Partridge to Mrs. Bushnell]
1863	11 Dec	Sterling, Ill. [S. S. Patterson, Sterling, Ill.]
1865	27 Jul	U.S. Treasury Department, Washington, D.C.
1866	10 Mar	U.S. Treasury Department, Washington, D.C.

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Index Cards

Alabama—History—Civil War, 1861-1865
Arkansas—History—Civil War, 1861-1865
Arkansas Post (Ark.)
Barry County (Mo.)
Batesville (Ark.)
Big Black River (Miss.)
Bolivar (Mo.)
Bridgeport (Ala.)
Bushnell, Douglas R., 1824 -1863
Bushnell, Emily J. C.
Caseyville (Ill.)
Chattanooga (Tenn.)
Chickasaw (Ala.)
Dent County (Mo.)
Dickson Station (Ala.)
Dixon (Ill.)
Evans, Charlotte
Greenville (Miss.)
Helena (Ark.)
Illinois—History—Civil War, 1861-1865
Illinois Infantry—13th regiment. **SEE** United States. Army. Illinois Infantry Regiment,
13th
Independence County (Ark.)
Keetsville (Mo.)
Iuka (Miss.)
Jackson (Miss.)

Louisiana—History—Civil War, 1861-1865
Milliken's Bend (La.)
Mississippi—History—Civil War, 1861-1865
Missouri—History—Civil War, 1861-1865
Partridge, Frederick W.
Patterson, S. S.
Phelps County (Mo.)
Phillips County (Ark.)
Polk County (Mo.)
Rolla (Mo.)
Searcy (Ark.)
Sterling (Ill.)
Stone County (Mo.)
Tennessee—History—Civil War, 1861-1865
Tuscumbia (Ala.)
United States--History—Civil War, 1861-1865
United States. Army. Illinois Infantry Regiment, 13th
Vicksburg (Miss.)
White County (Ark.)