

Austin Wallace

Austin Wallace was a member of the 22nd Massachusetts Regiment (a volunteer infantry) from the time of his enlistment on Sept. 23, 1861, until he was mustered out on Aug. 11, 1862, due to illness.

This lot consists of 15 letters. Of these, eleven are written by Austin Wallace to his wife, Lizzie. Two of the letters as well as their accompanying envelopes feature colored patriotic cachets. These letters include an encounter with the Merrimac near Fortress Monroe and being fired upon by a rebel battery at York Town. In two letters he talks about the optimism of Gen. McClellan and defends McClellan against his critics. One letter describes the gruesomeness of the hurried burials at "Bull Run". He mentions Gen. Martindale addressing the troops in one letter. In another letter, written while on a march and about 6 miles from Fortress Monroe, he watches a steady stream of passing support troops and 40 – 50 cannons requiring 2 hours to pass. Most of the letters provide brief accounts of battle related incidents and circumstances. All of the letters reflect Austin's particular concerns for the well being of his wife and family at home.

Of the remaining letters in the lot, one is a personal letter written on August 23, 1843. Written from Malone county, Franklin, N.Y. to Mrs. Milicent Lawrence in Bolton, MA, it discusses difficulties at the family farm due to illnesses, such as rheumatism and typhus. This letter provides a personal look at daily life in the mid 19th C.

One letter, written on Feb. 13, 1862, was sent by a friend thanking Austin for his condolences regarding the death of his wife.

Another letter, written in April, 1861, and sent to Mrs. Wallace by her friend, Jennie, provides a very interesting glimpse into public sentiment at the start of the Civil War years.

A letter written on Feb. 24, 1852, is a personal letter written to Miss Elizabeth (Belloore ?) from a school friend (C.J. Brown). Assumed that Elizabeth is "Lizzie" (future wife of Austin Wallace).