Descriptive Summary

Creator: Ayers, Alexander Miller, 1827-1902.
Title: Alexander Miller Ayers papers, 1851-1921
Call Number: Manuscript Collection No. 276
Extent: 1 microfilm reel (MF)
Abstract: Microfilm copy of the papers of Alexander Miller Ayers of Ohio mainly relating to his Civil War service in the 125th Illinois Infantry Regiment.
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on access
Unrestricted access.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction
All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction.

Source
Loaned for microfilming, 1956.

Citation
[after identification of item(s)], Alexander Miller Ayers papers, Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Processing
Processed by MRD.

Collection Description

Biographical Note
Alexander Miller Ayers (1827-1902) was born September 28, 1827, probably in Ohio; attended school in Vermillion and Bucyrus, Ohio; completed two years of college and then taught school,
about 1857-1855, at Mansfield, Ohio. He apparently studied law on the side and was admitted to
the bar at Mansfield, Ohio, May 27, 1854. He married Mary Jane Glenn at Mansfield, November
22, 1855. In the latter part of that year the couple moved to Urbana, Illinois where Ayers
established a law practice. On August 29, 1862 he was mustered in as Quartermaster, apparently
in the grade of Captain, of the 125th Illinois Infantry Regiment. His first service was with Buell
in Kentucky. After Perryville the Regiment did garrison duty at Nashville. His Regiment was
in the Murfreesboro fight, but Ayers was in Nashville when the fight took place. The 125th was
also in the Chickamauga fight and the Chattanooga campaign as part of the 3rd Brigade, 2nd
Division, 14th Corps. Ayers from time to time acted as brigade quartermaster and for a period
probably acted as division quartermaster. He was in the campaign from Chattanooga to Atlanta
- his regiment was in the thick of the Kennesaw Mountain fight and lost heavily there - and after
the fall of Atlanta moved north to chase Hood. Ayers returned to Atlanta in time to go on the
march to the sea and thence through the Carolinas (he was in the fight at Bentonville) and on to
Washington for the Victory parade. He returned to Illinois in June 1865, became county judge of
Champaign County and for a few years was postmaster at Urbana. He died November 10, 1902,
in the Soldier's Home at Kansas City, Missouri. He had six children.

Scope and Content Note
The papers consist of a microfilm copy of 160 letters written while Alexander Miller Ayers
was in the Union Army; three small diaries, one for 1855 when Ayers was teaching school and
practicing law in Mansfield, Ohio, one for 1864 and another for 1865 while he was serving in the
army. Twenty-one miscellaneous items include an undated photograph of Ayers. The majority of
the letters are from Ayers to his wife but some are addressed to his children. They are concerned
chiefly with the scenery and the people he meets, the hardships of army life, his feelings about
the war, particularly about his enemies, and his longing to be at home with his family.