EDITED TRANSCRIPTION – Original file: "Letter Dec. 16th 1862.tif" Edited to enhance readability. Added notes are *{italicized-bracketed}*.

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??? ??? 23rd Michigan Volunteer Infantry, 2nd Brigade, 2nd Division, 23rd Army Corps

Blaines Crossroads, Tennessee, Dec. 16th 1863

Dear Wife,

It is with pleasure that I now answer your kind letter that I received from you yesterday, and this morning I am well and as healthy as I can ask although I have seen hard times. I feel as well and hearty as though I had all the luxuries and rest that I could think of, although I was in the saddle most all night and have not slept a wink in most 48 hours. We had a hard march last night over a rough and muddy road and arrived in camp early this morning, and are now awaiting the appearance of a force of rebels that was reported yesterday were trying to get between us and Knoxville \(77N \), which is only 17 miles west of us from here. Well, we have not seen them yet nor do I think we shall either. It was a month ago today that we fought them at Cambell's Station \(TN \) and they have not been out of sight from us but 10 days since. Our cavalry are skirmishing with them more or less every day yet. We left Knoxville the next day after the rebs left and followed them most to Rutledge \(\frac{77N}{} \) and what they are doing now I cannot tell. I suppose you get all of the news from the papers and that is more than we do here for until yesterday we had not seen a paper for over a month and they were from two months to fifteen days old. While we were penned up in Knoxville the rebels thought they had us sure and were going to starve us out and they would holler "Vicksburg" and "mule meat" at us and so on thinking they had us as tight as we had them there, but they were mistaken for reinforcements arrived in good time and they left and we are not starved yet but I never lived so poor in my life. Since they left we have lived better. We have taken a good many prisoners and they are worse off than we. Last night there was 150 of the with us and not five minutes ago another squad of 25

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more passed here under guard to Knoxville. We were paid off the day before we left Knoxville and I sent you a draft of \$100.00 dollars by Captain {Henry S.} Raymond. He will mail it to you and when you get it you can take it to the bank and sign your name on the back of it and get the money on it. I only got 2 months and 25 days pay yet and I have due me one month & five days sergeant majors pay due that I did not get yet because I lost my final statement when I lost my other traps so I had to make out new ones and before I could get a chance to get the rest of my pay we had to march. I guess I can get it when we get back to Knoxville, and in and 15 days more I shall have two months more pay due and if we get paid off soon after I will send you more as soon as I get it. I had to pay

my debts and pay for my rations out of what I saved also get some clothes and a pair of boots which I paid ten dollars for. I have now a little over one hundred dollars left yet to use, which will last me a long time. It costs a great deal to live here and to show what we have to pay for living I will give you the price of some of our living: butter \$1.00 per pound, brand bread 10 cents a loaf, coffee 40 cents a pound, eggs 40 cents a dozen, molasses \$1.00 a ??????????, apples from 20 to 25 cents a piece, tea 6 dollars a pound, potatoes 2 to 4 dollars a bushel, and hard to get at that. Meat costs in proportion. Our mess consists of six officers and it has cost us all together eighteen dollars for the last six days and we have had to eat Indian meal cakes for bread mixed with cold water and salt and fried. I tell you they are good when a fellow is hungry. Hardtack goes good when we can get it and is considered a luxury. As this is all of the paper I have got with me you must excuse a half sheet this time. I write this with a pencil because I have no ink. I have not been able to draw any since my desk was lost which was full of paper of considerable value to the regiment. Now I have to carry everything in my haversack and in my pockets which are now most full accumulated from day to day since we came to Knoxville. I have no tent nor anything else to bother me now so I roll up in one blanket that I saved and take the weather as it comes on the ground with the whole heavens open above me and I have not caught cold yet. So do not worry about me for I can stand it if I know that you are well and comfortable. Turn to general field orders for the finish.

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A little more on this piece of paper and away it goes to you. You wrote that you had wrote about Mother's boy. We I have not got that letter yet and do not know what you mean by Mother's boy unless ??? the old lady has been and gone and had a baby. If she has I did not know anything about it, but I am glad you have got a brother anyway and I hope your next letter let me know its name if they have named it. Tell Mrs. Shirley that Bob is well and with us and is not married again. He was with General {Henry M.} Judah and was in the fight he had with {General John Hunt} Morgan. Lutz Delavergne is all right and tell his folks not to worry about him. Quartermaster O (scar S.) Davis was to visit us yesterday. He is well. He went to Lexington (KY) a day to report to corps headquarters as disbursing officer for the corps. He has got a twenty days leave of absence but cannot go home at present. We have got a very shady camp and we do not feel the sun very much. Our brigade is all together now and is composed of 4 regiments of infantry and one battery and is called the 2nd Brigade of the 2nd Division in the 23rd Army Corps, so you see that we have had a new organization. When are they going to draft in Michigan? I hope it will be soon for our depleted ranks need filling up and if they will not volunteer they had ought to be drafted. I do not see what they need be afraid of for it is nothing so bad about being a soldier as to fear it so much. I hear no complaining with our boys. They seem to be contented.

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The mail has com and I must acknowledge the receipt of another letter from you wrote August 9th. It was only four days on the way here. I am glad to hear that Frankey is so well and that she is so full of mischief and fun. I would like to see her very much as well as your own dear self. I am glad you saw Captain Woodruff and I hope you made the acquaintance of Chaplain *{James Shirley}* Smart. He is a good man and a very intimate fried of mine and would be glad to give you my respects if he knew you. Tell Mr. Delavergne I shall not be able to buy that strip of land at present and he can do as he thinks best about keeping it. I should like to buy it but circumstances will not permit at present. And tell them that I am well and send my best respects. I am glad you write as often and here is a long letter to pay for it on two half sheets. I am in the best of spirits and I hope you will not despair about me but keep up your spirits and with God's permission I will return to you better than I went away I hope. As I want to write another letter today I must bring this to a close very soon. I hope Father will get over the ague and be able for duty again soon. Give my best respects to all inquiring friends and believe me.

Ever Your Affectionate Husband,

D. D. Keeler

The 20 23 min William 2 min Broads 2000 1 issen 230 9,6, Blance Roads Fern Dec 16th 1868 Dear Wife It is with please that I now answer your King Letter that I received from you justerday and this morning. I am well and as healthy as Fire ask although It have seen hard times I feel as well and hearly as though I That all the Tujurus and rest that I could think of allthough I was in the Saddle most all night and have not slept a work in most 48 hours We had a hard march fast night over a rough and mudy road and arrived in camp early this mining and are now awaiting the applearance of a force of rebels that was reported yesterday there trying to get between see and Knowselle which is only 17 miles west of us from here well so have not seen them yet nordo I think we shall either ift was a month ago been out of sight but 10 days since Our Cavelry are their shing with them more or less everyday yet. We left Knowille the night day after the rebs left and followed them most to Autholye and what they are doing now I come not tell tal supose you get all of the news from the papers and that is more there wede here for until yesterday we had not seen a peaper for over a month and they were som two months to fefteen days old while we were pensado up in Knownelle the rebels thought they had us share and were going to stard us out and they would hollow Vexturgh and Mule meat at us and so on thenking they had us as light as we had them There but they over medation for reinforcements arrived in good time and they left and we are not starved yet but I never lived so know an my life since try left we have lived better Whave taken a good many Prisoners and they are worse of than we Fast might there was 150 of them with us and not five minutes ago another squad of 25

more passed here under grand to Knownille. We were found off the day figure see left Knownille and I sent you a Draft of to to Dollars by Capt Baymond He well mail it the you and when you tred it you can take it to the Bount and sign your haml on the Back of it and get the money on it donly got 2 months and 25 days By get and I have due one get bore month & five days the of majors pay due that I did not get because I'm it my final statement which loss hong other traps of my Pay we had to march it suess Daan get it when we get Buck to Knowfille and in 75 hays more I shall have two mouths more pay due and if we get payed off soon after Burt send you more as soon as Boot it I had to pay lother and a pair of 1200 which I have which will last me a little over one hundred Dollars left get to over which will last me a long Time Boosts a great real to be here and to show what we have to peuf for pound Brand Bread 10 conto a Coof Coffee 43 ch a point Engla West a Diogen mobiles Bill a contint the a grant apple from 25 cents a reace Ten 6 Tollars a Round Potutoe 2 to 4 Dollars a Bushel and hard to get at that ment cools in proportion our meds consists of Six off cars and it has cost as all to gather eighteen Dollars for the Last six days and are have had to eat Indian meal cultes for Bread must with cold water and salt and fried I tell you they are good when a tiller is hungrey Heard look goes good when we can get it and is considered a luxury as this is all of the paper I have got with me you must excuse a half sheet this time I write this with a pencil because I have no with I have not been of considerable value to the regt now I have do carry every thing any from day to day side we came to Knowerlle , I have no tent our any thing else to Bother me now so I roll up in one Blan Kelthat I laved and take the weather as it comes on the ground with the whole Ceavens open above me and I have not Enight cold get So do not worry about me for I candlund it if I know that you well and comfortable, Vun to Best feld orders for the fine

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