

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 *{TN}*, 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 *{TN}* 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 friend 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

7th Inf 23rd Mass Vol Infy 2nd Brigade 2nd Division 23rd A.C.

Blair's Road Tenn 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 which is only 17 miles west of us from here well we have not seen them yet so I think we shall either. It was a month ago to say that we fought them at Campbell's Station and they have not been out of sight ^{from us} but 10 days since Our Cavalry are skirmishing with them more or less everyday yet. We left Knoxville the next day after the rebels left and followed them most to Rutledge and what they are doing now I cannot tell but 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 pinned up in Knoxville the rebels thought they had us shut and were going to starve us out and they would hollow Vicksburg and Skull 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 of than we. Last night there was 150 of them with us and not five minutes ago another squad of 25

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Affectionate Husband

D. D. Miller