

EDITED TRANSCRIPTION – Original file: "Letter Feb. 22nd 1863.tif"
Edited to enhance readability. Added notes are *{italicized-bracketed}*.

{The envelope may not be the original one as it is postmarked Bowling Green, KY, a week after the date of the letter, and not sent from Detroit, MI, as the letter states.}

{Envelope:}

{Postmark:} Bowling Green, KY, Mar. 2, 1863

Mrs. Susan M. Keeler
East Saginaw
Michigan

{Page 1:}

Camp of the 23rd Regiment of Michigan Infantry
Bowling Green, KY, Feb 22nd '63

Dear Wife,

I received yours of the 17th yesterday and one from Sarah at the same time. I am glad to hear that you are well. I am sorry that little Frankey is sick. I hope you will take good care and have her get well. You did not say anything about Hattie, whether she was any better or worse. I have felt anxious to know how she gets along. I hope that she is well by this time and also Frankey. I am sorry that you miss me so much. I hope that you won't worry about me, but keep up your spirits and I will.

{Page 2:}

I am doing better here than I could at home. I probably will be promoted again before the week is ended as there is vacancy now so that I will, according as I rank now, be included in the candidates for promotion to the non-commissioned staff, probably Quartermaster Sergeant. If I get to that position I will not have to go into any battle or fight. I will have a horse to ride on the march. Until I am promoted again you must not worry about me for I feel as safe here as I did at home. We have not had any orders to march yet. We are likely to go to Cincinnati *{OH}* as we are to go any farther south. We belong there and will probably be ordered back there unless some of our generals that has had command of us can prevail on General *{Horatio Gouverneur}* Wright to

{Page 3:}

have us transferred to the Department of the Cumberland. General *{Gordon}* Granger has sent for us and General *{Mahlon Dickerson}* Manson won't let us go and we are not particular which one gets us. Every other regiment around here is jealous of us because we have won the confidence of the generals. Tomorrow there is going to be a review of all of the troops here and we are brushing up and

scouring brasses so we will not be behind the other regiments. We have got our name up and we must keep it so. The other day General *{Jeremiah Tilford}* Boyle of Louisville {KY} sent an order to General Manson to have the 23rd turn all the n----- out of camp and for him to be sure and see the order executed himself. Well, the order came to headquarters and the officer of the day

{Page 4:}

was instructed to put all of the darkies out of camp. In less than a minute every n----- had hid and the guard had to hunt them up and turn them outside of the lines of our camp, but not to hinder them from coming in again, as the order said nothing about keeping them out. So they were let back in again and are still in camp yet. You ought to see the slave hunters around our camp watching for the n----- and see the n----- keep out of their way and get in camp again. They could find all the n----- but the ones that they were looking for. One n----- came in the other day with a log chain fast to his neck and said he had worn it seven months. General Manson had it broken off and gave it to ??? Pratt who has it now here in camp. It weighs 20-1/4 pounds. The n----- master put on him last summer because he told some federal scouts where there was some rebel pickets and our scout gobbled them up and he had to wear that necklace seven months and work every day besides and nights had to wear handcuffs besides.

{Page 5:}

Continued

We are to be mustered for pay again the last of this week and I hope we will get our money before long. I suppose you have got the forty dollars I sent you by this time and also the ambrotypes. I have not got any photographs yet for whenever I have had a chance to go downtown the weather was too cloudy to take a negative. I will get some taken as soon as I can and I will send you some of them. I wish you would send me yours and the children's ambrotype as soon as you can so I can see how you and they look. I would like to see you at home, but I can't yet so I must be content with only a picture at present. I hope the war will end before long and

{Page 6:}

the Union restored with the n----- freed according to the President's Proclamation. Then I will be satisfied to come home. Perhaps you will think that I am an abolitionist by wishing to see the rebels dealt with as they deserve. Its not that I like a n----- that I say so, but because the rebels have undertaken to destroy a government which guaranteed them the privilege of holding slaves. Now I say make them feel the effect of their villainy. I would swear a little about them if I were in the habit of doing it and the more we make them feel the power of the north, the sooner it will be finished up. They won't fight any harder for their n----- than they would if the President had not issued that proclamation in my opinion.

{Page 7:}

I write to you often and I write a great deal of nonsense which uses up paper to no advantage and as we have been here a long time and nothing outside of the ordinary line of camp duties to do it cannot be expected that I can write much news. I am well yet with the exception of a little cold which I am now most clear of. We have had considerable rain lately and by getting wet a great many of the men have caught cold. Otherwise, the health of the regiment is very good. If I was sure of staying here long and I could afford it I would like to have you make me a visit, but I can't as it is now and we must be patient until we can see each other. So keep up your spirits and I will.

{Page 8:}

The war cannot last always and we will have a chance of living happy again, so you must not give up. I can write and so can you and we must make use of the pen to keep our minds easy. I received a paper from someone, I think it was Sant. It contained more Saginaw news than I had seen in a long time. It has gone the rounds of the camp and is eagerly read by everyone. Lieutenant Ashly's father is here and will leave for Detroit *{MI}* tomorrow. He will carry this to Detroit and mail it there. Write as often as you can and I will always write an answer to every one I receive and oftener if I have time. Take good care of our little ones and also of yourself until I can come and help you. Give my love to Father and Sarah and also to the rest of our folks. So good night and pleasant dreams and believe me.

Your Affectionate Husband,
D. D. Keeler

P.S. Major *{Benjamin F.}* Fisher starts for home tomorrow. He will be in Saginaw this week.

Deck

Camp of the 23^d Regt of Mich^t Infy
Bowling Green Ky Feb 22nd 63

Dear Wife

I received yours
of the 17th yesterday and one
from Sarah at the same time
I am glad to hear that you
are well I am sorry that little
Franky is sick, I hope you
will take good care and have
her get well. You did not say
any thing about Mattie whether
she was any better or worse I
have felt anxious to know how
she gets along I hope that she
is well by this time and also
Franky I am sorry that you
miss me so much I hope that
you wont worry about me but
keep up your spirits and I will

I am doing better here than I could
at home I probably will be promoted
again before the week is ended
as there is vacancy now so that
I will according as I rank now
be included in the candidates
for promotion to the non commuted
Staff probably 2d Lt. Sgt.

If I get to that position I will
not have to go in to any Battle
or fight I ~~will~~ have a Horse to
Ride on the march, till I am
promoted again You must not
worry about me for I feel as safe
here as I did at home we have
not had any orders to march
yet we are as likely to go to
Cincinnati as we are to go any
farther South we belong there and
will probably be ordered back
there unless some of our Generals
that has had command of us
can prevail on Gen Wright to

have us transferred to the department
of the Cumberland Gen Granger
has sent for us and Gen
Manson wont let us go and
we are not particular which
one gets us every other Regt around
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have won the confidence of the
Generals To morrow there is
going to be a review of all
of the troops here and we are
brushing up and scouring brasses
so we will not be behind the other
Regts we have got our name up
and we must keep it so

The other day Gen Boyle of Louisville
sent an order to Gen Manson
to have the 23^d turn all the
muzzers out of camp and for
him to be sure and see the
order executed himself well
the order came to Hd Quarters
and the Officer of the day

was instructed to put all of the
Darkys out of camp in less than
a minute every nigger had hid
and the Guard had to hunt them
up and turn them out side of
the lines of our camp but not
to hinder them from coming in
again as the Order said nothing about
keeping them out so they were let
back in again and are still in camp
yet you ought to see the Slave hunters
are and our camp watching for the
niggers and see the niggers keep out
of their way and get in camp again
they could find all the niggers but
the ones that they were looking for
One Nigger came in the other day with
a log chain fast to his neck and
said he had worn it seven months
Gen Manson had it broken off and gave
it to Co Pratt who has it now here in
camp it weighs 20 $\frac{1}{4}$ pounds the niggers
master sent on him last summer because
he told some Federal secrets where there was
some Rebel Pickets and our souls gobbled
them up and he had to wear that necklace
seven months and work every day besides
and nights had to wear hand cuffs besides

(Continued)

We are to be mustered for pay again
the last of this week and
I hope we will get our money
before long I suppose you have
got the Forty Dollars I sent
you by this time and also the
Ambrotypes I have not got any
Photographs yet for whenever I
have had a chance to go down town
the wether was to cloudy to take
a negative I will get some taken
as soon as I can and I will
send you some of them I wish you
would send me Yours and the
childrens Ambrotype as soon as
you can so I can see how you
and they look I would like to
see you at home but I cant get
so I must be content with only
a picture at present I hope the
war will end before long and

the Union Restored with the Niggers
free according to the Presidents
Proclamation then I will be
satisfied to come home, Perhaps you
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Abolitionist by wishing to see
the Rebels dealt with as they
deserve tis not that I like a nigger
that I say so but because the Rebels
have undertaken to destroy a government
which garranteed them the privilege
of holding slaves, now I say make
them feel the effects of their villainy
I would swear a little about
them if I were in the habit
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in my opinion

I write to you often and I write
a great deal of nonsense which
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and as we have been here a long
time and nothing out side of the
ordinary line of camps duty to
do It cannot be expected that
I can write much news, I am
well yet with the exception of a
little cold which I am now most
clear of we have had considerable
rain lately and by getting wet
a great many of the men have
caught cold other wise the
health of the Regt is verry good
If I was sure of staying here
long and I could afford it
I would like to have you make
me a visit but I cant as it
is now and we must be patient
spaciant till we can see each
other so keep up your spirits
and I will

The war can not last always ~~too~~
and we will have a chance of
living happy again so we must
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so can you and we must make
use of the pen to keep our minds
easy I received a letter from some
one I think it was Aunt It contained
more Saginaw news than I had
seen in a long time it has gone
the rounds of the camp and is
eagerly read by every one. Lieut.
Ashly's Father is here and will leave
for Detroit tomorrow he will carry
this to Detroit and mail it there
Write as often as you can and
I will allway write an answer to every
one I receive and of course I'll have time
to take good care of our little ones and
also of your self till I can come
and help you Give my Love to
Father and Sarah and also to
the rest of our folks so good night
and pleasant Dreams and Believe
me Your Affectionate Husband

D. Weiler
P.S. Major Fisher starts for
Home tomorrow he will be in Saginaw
this week
Deek



Mrs Susan M Keller
East Okinau
Michigan