

EDITED TRANSCRIPTION – Original file: “Letter Feb. 4th 1864.tif”
Edited to enhance readability. Added notes are *{italicized-bracketed}*.

{Page 1:}

Headquarters 23rd Regiment Michigan Volunteer Infantry
Camp Pratt, Tennessee, February 4th 1864

Dear Wife,

I am well as usual and have been all the time. I hope you get my letters more regular than I get yours. I have not had a letter from you in some time. The latest date was December 27th and it is now over a month ago. I have wrote to you several times during that time and I am sure that you have wrote a letter. I hope I shall get a letter by the next mail for I would like to hear from you very much. We are camped where we were when I last wrote only five miles from Knoxville *{TN}* and doing picket duty. We have not been attacked since I last wrote and everything is quiet on our front. Our brigade was out on a reconaissance last Monday to near Strawberry Plains and found no rebels, they having left the day before. So we returned to camp. Yesterday the citizens reported that they were returning and were only eight miles from here with infantry & artillery so we sent our baggage to Knoxville and prepared to receive them. At dark no signs of them were seen so we sent out our scouts which returned this

{Page 2:}

morning reporting no rebs anywhere near us except one or two small foraging parties & tonight we probably will send out another squad to gobble up some of them if they can be found. We are having more rations now and new clothes have been issued to the men so we are more comfortable than we were for a long time before. The weather has been delightful and not cold enough to wear an overcoat. I had my desk outdoors under a pine tree and could write all day without a fire. Our horses have all been sent north and we are now all on foot. Colonel *{Marshall W.}* Chapin has one and is the only officer in the brigade allowed one. His whole staff now go on foot which pleases the men in the ranks and occasions a few remarks. I can stand it to go on foot I think for I have done it and it don't worry me any. However, I do not anticipate much marching for some time and when we do our horses will be ordered back. General *{Henry M.}* Judah is now in command of our division and we get more orders now than ever before. He is a regular army officer and knows his duty and everything has to go just right. You spoke of me getting a leave of absence to come home which would delight me very much, but under existing orders I cannot so there is no use for me to apply. The order is none will be granted except on surgeon's certificate of physical disability and as I am well and fit for duty in the field none would be granted to me. If I get sick I will try for one, so as long

{Page 3:}

as I do not come you may think that I am well. I had rather not get sick for I assure you that there is nothing like good health in the army, for if a man is well he can take care of himself & if sick he has to go to a hospital and lay there until he is fit for duty again. I heard that the 6th Michigan Volunteer Infantry had reenlisted and were now at home on furlough. I suppose that Frank is now at home enjoying himself for a few days previous to another three years campaign. Our regiment would like to reenlist but cannot as we have not been in the service long enough. I hear that the cold weather in the north is very severe this winter. I hope you have plenty of wood and can keep comfortable. I wish that you could enjoy the fine weather that we do here. It is more like May than January February. I sleep very comfortable in my shelter tent open to one end and on the ground with only a few dry leaves besides my blankets. However, I think I could enjoy a good bed at home as well as anyone. I now only pull off my boots and coat and am ready for bed. Sometimes I do not even pull my boots off for we often go to sleep expecting to be waked up by the rebs charging on us and not have time to do much dressing. Last night I slept with my boots on expecting to be woke up by rebel shells from the artillery that the scared citizens reported coming. Well, we are all right yet and the rebels are now at a safe distance.

{Page 4:}

I wish that Sant would write oftener and nevermind about waiting for answers for I am situated so I cannot write when I would like. Evenings I cannot write at all now as I cannot get candles and as my tent is not large enough to get my desk in it I have to write outdoors and as I have so much regimental writing to do I cannot write for myself half what I would like to. I try to write to you often and do when I can and there is not hardly an hour but I think of you and Frankie and I wish the war would soon end as it is anything but pleasant to be away from home under such circumstances. As I have served one half of my time out faithfully I hope I can do as well on the other half. I do not want to forsake my country now for every man is needed yet, and I hope that the coming summer will put an end to the war, and sooner would suit me. I have seen enough blood already to satisfy me on that part, yet if it is necessary I can endure the sight of more. I used to think that the 23rd would not ever see a fight, but was mistaken for we have had our share of it since we have been in Tennessee. What we will see hereafter I cannot tell and what I would like most to see is you, dear Susan, with Frankie and if God is willing I will sometime but how soon I cannot tell. Keep up your spirits and be patient and time will bring me home to you to stay the balance of our lives which I hope will be happy ones and as I have no reason to think otherwise it helps to make the time between shorter. Take good care of the little one and by so doing you will merit the warmest thanks from

Your ever Affectionate Husband,

D. D. Keeler, Lieutenant & Acting Adjutant, 23rd Michigan

To Susan M. Keeler
East Saginaw, Michigan

Dec 23rd West Point Va
Camp Pratt 10th Regt 5th Inf

Dear Wife

I am well as usual and have been
all the time I hope you get my letters as regular
than I get yours. I have not had a letter from
you in some time the latest date was Dec 27th
and it is now for a week or more I have writ to
you several times during that time and presume
that you have recd a letter by the mail yet
I will by the next mail for I would like to hear
from you very much. We are camped where we were
when I last wrote only five miles from Knoxville
and doing pretty well. We have not been affect
ed since I last wrote and everything is quiet
on our front. Our Brigade was out on a recon
sance last Monday to near Strawberry Plains
and found no rebels they having left the day
before so we returned to Camp. yesterday the citizens
reported that they were returning and were only
eight miles from here with Infantry & artillery
so we sent our baggage to Knoxville and prepared
to receive them. at dark no signs of them were seen
so we sent out our scouts which returned this

morning reporting no rats any where near us except
one or two small foraging parties. At night we probably
will send out another squad to gobble up some of them
if they can be found. We are having more uniforms made
and new clothes have been issued to the men so we are
more comfortable than we were for a long time past.
The weather has been delightful and not cold enough
to wear an over coat. I had my desk out doors under a
pine tree and I could write this now with out a fire.
Our horses have all been sent north and we are now all
on foot. Col Chapin has one and is the only officer in the
Brigade allowed on the whole staff now go on foot
which pleases the men in the ranks and occasions a few
remarks. I can't lend it to go on foot I think for I have
done it and it don't worry me any. however I do not
anticipate much marching for some time and when
we do our horses will be ordered back. General Tubak
is now in our command of our Division and we get more
orders now than ever before. He is a regular Army Officer
and knows his duty and everything has to go just right.
You spoke of not getting a leave of absence to come home
which would delight me very much, but under existing
orders I cannot see there is no use for me to apply.
The order in more will be granted except on Surgeons
certificate of Physical Disability and as I am well
and fit for duty in the field none would be granted
to me. If I get sick I will try for one, so long

as I do not come you may think that I am well
I had rather not get sick for I assure you that
there is nothing like good health in the army for
if a man is well he can take care of himself & if
sick he has to go to a hospital and lay there until
he is fit for duty again. I heard that the 16th Mich^l
Regt had remitted and were now at home on furlough
I suppose that Frank is now at home enjoying himself
for a few days previous to another three years Campaign
Our Regt would like to remitt but cannot as we have
not been in the service long enough. I hear that the
cold weather in the north is very severe this winter
I hope you had plenty of wood and can keep comfort-
able I wish that you could enjoy the fine weather that
we do here. it is more like May than January & February
I sleep very comfortable in my Hutter tent open to one
end and on the ground with only a few dry leaves besides
my blankets. However I think I could enjoy a good
bed at home as well as any one. I now only pull off my
boots and coat and am ready for bed sometimes I do
not even pull my boots off for we often go to sleep
expecting to be waked up by the rebels charging our
and not have time to do much dressing last night
I slept with my boots on expecting to be waked up by
rebel shells from the artillery that the scarce citizens reported
coming Well we are all right yet and the rebels are now at
a safe distance

I wish that Bent would write oftener and never
mind about waiting for answers for I am situated
so I can not write when I would like. evenings I can
not write at all now as I can not get candles and as
my tent is not large enough to get my desk in it I have
to write out doors and as I have so much regimental
writing to do I can not write for my self half what I
would like too I try to write to you often and do when I can
and there is not hardly an hour but I think of you and
Frankie and I wish the war would soon end as it is
any thing but pleasant to be away from home under such
circumstances. as I have served one half of my time out faith-
fully I hope I can do as well on the other half I do not
want to forsake my Country now for every man is needed
yet and I hope that the coming summer will put an end to
the war and sooner would suit me. I have seen enough blood
already to satisfy me on that part yet if it is necessary I can
endure the sight of more I used to think that the 23 would never
see a fight but was mistaken for we have had our share of it and
we have been in Tenn. What we will see hereafter I can not tell
and what I would like most to see is you Dear Susan with Frankie
and if God is willing I will some time but how soon I can
not tell. Keep up your spirits and be patient and time will bring
me home to you to stay the balance of our lives which I hope
will be happy one and as I had no reason to think otherwise it
helps to make the time between shorter take good care of the little
one and by so doing you will merit the warmest thanks from
Your ever affectionate Husband

Wm. Susan Miller

East Regiment

Mich.

G. W. Kuler

1st A. Regt

25th Mich