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Edited to enhance readability. Added notes are *{italicized-bracketed}*.

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Headquarters 23<sup>rd</sup> Regiment Michigan Volunteer Infantry  
2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade 2<sup>nd</sup> Division 23<sup>rd</sup> Army Corps, Army of the Ohio  
Camp Pratt Michigan Ridge Near Knoxville, Tennessee  
February 9<sup>th</sup> 1864

Dear Wife,

I now take the opportunity of answering you kind and welcome letter of January 4<sup>th</sup> that I received the other day. I was glad to hear that you and Frankie were well and that Brother Frank was expected home so soon. I am well and comfortable and we have enough to do to keep me busy most of the time, and I am glad of it for I feel better when I have something to do. It keeps me from other things such as homesickness and helps to pass hours that would *{be}* long and weary only for having something to do. I suppose that the time flies fast to Frank now he is where he can enjoy all that a heart can wish for. I was not surprised at all when I heard that he was going into the veteran regiment for three years more, for most all of the old regiments are reenlisting. You said that you did not want me to reenlist again. Well, dear Susan, I have not nor can our regiment as we have too long a time yet to serve. Only those that have less than one year of their first term of

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enlistment to serve can reenlist. So as we have more than a year we are not in on that order. Now, dear wife, do not let that worry you, for I think that the war will be over before that our time is out. We have the welcome news received officially that the rebel authorities have sent in proposals for peace and that they had been amended and sent back again and that the rebels had accepted all of the amendments, but one and that one had been withdrawn, so now terms of peace were nearly agreed upon. I hope that the thing is a fact and that peace will soon be declared. The rebels are getting sick of their Confederacy fast. I was talking with a deserter the other day that came in to our lines from *{General James}* Longstreet's command. He said he read the President proclamation and thought if the President would forgive him he would quit fighting so he with another comrade of his left Longstreet and is now within our lines a happy man. He said that a great many more would desert the first chance they had and that they were more or less dissatisfied. I never saw a man feel so glad as he did about getting away. A flag of truce comes in occasionally. There was one in today and as we are on the direct road they always come to our part of the line. Their business does not amount to much, mostly about moving rebel families outside of our lines or to send north a little mail which has to be inspected before it is allowed to proceed. I helped to look over some

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last Saturday. It was not very interesting, containing nothing but family matters. They have a great hankering for coffee and offer two and three dollars a pound for it in greenbacks. But our boys do not let them have it but tell them that they left it all to camp and that we have lots of it and also any quantity of other rations. It is amusing to hear the talk that our boys have with them and some pretty sharp jokes are got off on both sides. The weather is very fine and the nights are frosty sometimes, sunshiny days times most every day. The mountains between Tennessee & North Carolina are covered with snow and looks beautiful. We are in sight of them and nearly forty miles distant. I saw a man today from Tuscola, Michigan. He arrived last night at Knoxville. He came for a discharged soldier who is sick with the consumption. The Tuscola man says that there is good sleighing up there and business is good. He offers to take any letters we may wish to send by him and if he goes soon I will send this by him to mail when he gets to Michigan. It is reported that the cars will be running from Loudon {TN} to Chattanooga {TN} by next Thursday and then a person can go from here to Michigan in about five days. And another report is that the 23<sup>rd</sup> Army Corps is going to Texas in the spring, but I do not believe is as I cannot trace it to any reliable source. I do not believe that we will go any farther south than we are now before next summer.

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They are recruiting a n----- regiment at Knoxville to be officered by white officers and several of our sergeants have made application for commissions in it. Some of them will make very good officers and I wish them success. I do not yet see any chance to get home very soon and if I keep well I cannot get a surgeons certificate that is the only thing that they grant leaves of absence on at present. I asked the major to make application to send me to Detroit to copy our muster in rolls and other records that are needed and he said he could not spare me and said I wanted that excuse to get home and also wanted to know how long it would take me if I would promise to get back in 30 days which I promised. I am aware that I cannot very well be spared at present as I am the only staff officer except the surgeon present and he is the only field officer present. And there is another consideration to look at, that if I should go away another officer would have to take my place and I might not get it again. And as the adjutant tells me that he is going to resign I want to keep the position and when the vacancy occurs perhaps I shall be the one to get it. I think that I stand the best chance and I do not want to lose it. The major and I get along first rate. We are both of us having us some log shanties built to live in and will soon have them finished. So do not worry about me when it storms for I am comfortable and I hope you are, too. Keep up good spirits and do not get lonesome. Remember that I am thinking of you and will return again as soon as I can. Remember me to Frank and all other inquiring friends and write soon and believe me, dear Susan. Ever

Your Affectionate Husband,  
D. D. Keeler

To Susan M. Keeler, East Saginaw, Michigan

No. 25<sup>th</sup> Regt Mich Vol Inftry  
2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade 2<sup>nd</sup> Division 23<sup>rd</sup> A.C. Army of the Ohio  
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To Susan M Kelly  
East Troy  
Mich

Wm. Kaler