

EDITED TRANSCRIPTION – Original files: “Letter Jan. 11th 1863 pg. 1.tif” & “Letter Jan. 11th 1863 pg. 2-4.tif”

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

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Camp of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of Michigan Volunteer Infantry  
Bowling Green, KY, Jan 11<sup>th</sup> 1863

Dear Father,

As I have time this evening I thought that I could not improve it to your satisfaction better than to write you a few lines and let you know that I am well and hope you are enjoying the same blessing. I find that good health is the greatest blessing that a soldier can have and it is worth taking the care to preserve it for the army is a poor place for a sick man the best you can make it, and if a man gets sick here he is put into a military hospital with a room full of sick and if he does not keep up his courage and have good care he is pretty likely to go in a junk box. The health of our regiment is improving and we turn out with more men than we did some time ago, which is encouraging to the men as well as officers. Our colonel is with us now and commands the regiment. Major *{Benjamin F.}* Fisher is acting lieutenant colonel. There is nothing transpiring in camp more than the ordinary line of daily duties which I have mentioned before and I have not much to write about unless I give you an account of a little scout we had last week Thursday which may interest you a little although we did not accomplish much, but it served to convince our officers that they had men that they could depend on and they were well pleased to see the promptness and desire the boys expressed when they thought they were to have a chance to distinguish ourselves. We were, that is six companies of us were, ordered last Wednesday evening to get ready to march immediately with two

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days rations somewhere unknown to us. Well, we were ready as soon as we could fill our haversacks with hard bread, which did not take long and then we started and the whole battalion commenced to sing. When the major rode up and wanted to know what made us feel so well, we told him the prospects of a fight. Well, says we, want you to keep as still as possible and not make any unnecessary noise for the success of our expedition depends on our keeping still. We were marched down to the cars which were to carry us and not until we were under way did we find out our destination, which was the town of Keysburg *{KY}*, a small out of the way place of no importance of 50 miles distant from here and eight miles from the railroad, and it was reported that there were three hundred cavalry there collecting together to make a raid somewhere. So we were to go and catch the buggers. We got off the cars about 2 o'clock and started at quick time and as still as possible, and we went pretty still too when we got most there we took more precautions so as to surprise them. Company A

was thrown out as skirmishers and prevent our being caught in ambush, which could easily been done if there had been anyone to done it if we had not thrown out skirmishers. Nothing opposed us and we took possession of the place and searched all around it, placed pickets out on all the roads and thought we had them. Then we went to waking the people up to see what they had in their houses and met with like success. And come to find out the rebels had left two days before. The people were quite surprised to find us there in full possession of the town and not knowing where we come from nor when we come for we did not

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even wake the dogs. We then marched to an open spot and we then bivouacked there until noon on Thursday and searched the county around for a mile or so and found six rebs which we took prisoners, only one of them of any account he being John Morgan's secretary paroling our men that Morgan had taken. We found that most all of the inhabitants were secessionist but had taken the Oath of Allegiance and as they had enough to eat and drink which we were made welcome to we did not molest them, but for all they could say or do we could see that they were not as sound as they might be. Most Union people seem glad to see us and cheer us, but they did not even shake one hankerchief as I see and neither did they seem glad to have us go away. One little circumstance that was quite amusing I will mention, which made quite a laugh in the time of it, which you ought to have seen to appreciate. Three of our prisoners we caught at and near one house about a mile out of town. One had a sister which was pretty smart and thought to make fun of us and told the major she was as pretty a little rebel as he ever see but we humbled here before we left town. Before we left she come to see her brother and uncle and another chap which she seemed to be interested in. All three we had prisoners so we let her talk with them a while until we started. When told them to fall in they was a goodbye to be spoken. She bursted out crying and told them to take the Oath when they got to Bowling Green and come back again. Then her lover or whoever he was bursted out a bawling and answered "I'll be G-d d-'d if I will" and marched off with us most broken hearted. After 2 1/2 hours march we reached the cars again. Were soon speeding back to Bowling Green again,

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which we reached about 10 o'clock that night all safe and pretty tired, but none of the worse for our excursion. The country that we went through is the best I ever saw and the most handsome farms that can be imagined, only the roads are nothing to brag of. The farmers were plowing. That is something I never saw done in January before. The weather is pleasant and is worth a trip here to spend the winter. The grass is green and is growing quite fast which I noticed very often lately. I wrote to Frank today and I sent a letter to Susan yesterday by Wm. Herron, one of our sergeants. He was discharged on account of his health which has been very bad since he has been *{in}* Kentucky. He lives at Birch Run *{MI}* and will mail the letter there. I told him to go and see you when he got well

enough to get to Saginaw *{M}* and he said he would go there as soon as he could and he would call on you and Mr. Davis. He can tell you more than I can write and do it quicker. Our mail is very unregular since Morgan made his last raid into Kentucky and it put us in no very good mood towards him. When this will go is more than I can tell, but I will have it ready when the mail does go. Consequently you must not get alarmed about me if you do not hear from me very regular. Tell Sarah I was glad to hear from her and she must write again. Give my love to Sant and Lucy and also Susan. Tell her I am well and not go get discouraged but be patient until the war is over and she shall never have occasion to regret my absence when I get back. Answer soon and remember me to all inquiring friends.

From Your Affectionate Son,  
D. D. Keeler

Camp of the 23<sup>d</sup> Regt of Mich Vol Inf  
Bowling Green N Y Jan 11<sup>th</sup> 1863

Dear Father

As I have time this evening I thought that I could not improve it to your satisfaction better than to write you a few lines and let you know that I am well and hope you are enjoying the sum blessing I find that good health is the greatest blessing that a soldier can have and it is worth taking the care to preserve it for the army is a poor place for a sick man the best you can make it and if a man gets sick here he is put in to a military Hospital with a room full of sick and if he does not keep up his courage and have good care he is pretty likely to go in a grave. The health of our Regiment is improving and we turn out with more men than we did some time ago which is encouraging to the men as well as Officers Our Colonel is with us now and commands the Regt Major Fisher is acting Lt Col. There is nothing transpiring in camp more than the ordinary line of daily duties which I have mentioned before and I have not much to write about unless I give you an account of a little scout we had last week Thursday which may interest you a little although we did not accomplish much but it served to convince our Officers that they had men that they could depend on and they were well pleased with to see the promptness and desire the boys expressed when they thought they were to have a chance to distinguish ourselves. We were that is six companies of us were ordered last Wednesday evening to get ready to march immediately with two



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rode up and wanted to know what made us feel so  
well we told him the prospects of a fight well says we  
want you to keep as still as possible and not make any  
unnecessary noise for the success of our expedition depends  
on our keeping still we were marched down to the cars which  
were to carry us and not till we were under way did we  
find out our destination which was the town of Weysburg  
a small out of the way place of no importance of 30 miles  
distant from here and eight miles from the Rail Road  
and it was reported that there were Three Hundred Cavalry  
there collecting to gather to make a raid somewhere & we  
were to go and catch the bugers. We got off the  
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a letter to Susan yesterday by Wm Heron one  
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you more than I can write and do it quicker

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Sarah I was glad to hear from her and she must write  
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