

EDITED TRANSCRIPTION – Original file: "Letter Jan. 3rd 1863.tif"
Edited to enhance readability. Added notes are *{italicized-bracketed}*.

{Page 1:}

Camp of the 23rd Regiment of Michigan Volunteer Infantry
Bowling Green, KY, Jan. 3rd 1863

Dear Wife,

I suppose that you begin to feel alarmed about me because that you do not get a letter from me every week. Well, you must not get alarmed yet for we are safe yet and the reason that I have not wrote before is that there was no way of getting a mail through to the north. The rebels that we were waiting for to attack us did not come here at all. They went around and by us and destroyed some of the railroad between here and Louisville *{KY}*, therefore cutting off our communication with the north by railroad for a while. How much damage they done we have not got any very accurate account of yet. It is hoped not much. As near as we can find out they partly destroyed a small bridge, tore up some of the tracks, and broke the telegraph wire completely, stopping us from getting any news or sending any. Troops were immediately sent after the rebels and have drove them somewhere and rumor tonight says that they succeeded in killing their General John *{Hunt}* Morgan, and if it is a fact we have got rid of one of the most troublesome of our enemies. He knows every inch of Kentucky and he has a force of cavalry and he goes where he has a mind to and has done a good deal of mischief one time and another,

{Page 2:}

and evaded pursuit although having been closely cornered several times and now it is hoped that his career is at an end. We have been on the watch for him here for some time to destroy the bridge here which could not be replaced very soon and would done more damage than has been now, but he has not disturbed us and we are in the same camp yet doing the same thing over every day as usual and nothing new except on New Year's Day we had the satisfaction of hearing how cannon balls sounded going through the air, the way of was that a battery on a hill close by us were target shooting and they meant to throw their balls over our heads into an old fort on another hill close on the other side of us, and instead of throwing their ball where they were trying to they were shooting right into our camp. One ball went through Major *{Benjamin F.}* Fisher's house and hit a chimney of a tent and stuck right in a bunk and rolled outdoors and three more struck in the camp and luckily hurt no one, but made a good many dodge. We have picked up the balls and sent a man on horseback as fast as he could go to find out what they meant. They thought their balls went beyond the fort and did not know that they were shooting us, so they turned their guns in another direction. Tonight we have good news from Nashville *{TN}*. Our army is victorious and have driven the rebels out of Murfreesboro *{TN}*, but not without the loss of some of our best generals and other officers

{Page 3:}

and many men. Tonight we expect three hundred wounded here from there as all the hospitals are full there at Nashville. I suppose you will get all of the news of the battle before this will reach you as the mail does not go from here yet and I don't know how soon it will, so I write this so as to have ready when it does go. There is over three wagon loads of mail here now awaiting to go north and that is nothing to what would have went if it had not been stopped. As soon as there is a mail goes north you will hear from me again every week. There is one thing more that I almost forgot. I may as well speak of while I have paper to write on is that there is a great scarcity of writing paper here and if I don't get any I can't write and you must not worry about me if you don't get a letter as soon as you ought to for I am in the best of health and as fat as I can be. I weigh 14 pounds more than I ever weighed in my life and my clothes are getting too small for me. I had to trade my overcoat off and get a larger one and I drew a new pair of pants and a fatigue coat so now I am well clothed and in the best of spirits. We were mustered for pay the last day of the year 1862 and will probably get our money as soon as the railroad is open again to Louisville, which I hope will not be long for you must need some by this time as well as a great many others. If it does not come soon Colonel Chapin will take our muster and payrolls to Louisville and get the money for us.

{Page 4:}

Jan. 4th 1863

I did not finish this last night as you see, but I will now. Today is Sunday and nothing remarkable has occurred and I have had a good rest today. Tomorrow our company all go on guard at the depot for 24 hours, then we will be relieved by another company. We have to guard the trains and let no one get aboard without a pass, so it is pretty hard for anyone to get away from here without permission by railroad or any other way, for every other exit is strongly guarded by pickets, and if a man gets through one line of pickets he will be brought up by another. Last Sunday we were stationed in Fort Baker, a large fort on a small hill named after the man on whose premises it is built. It is very strongly built and commands the approach from the north. It was built by the rebels but never was used by them against our army. It is on the same hill the General *{Ormsby}* Mitchel shelled the rebels out of Bowling Green from last spring and the rebels got out of here in a hurry, so the people here say. The fort is now occupied by two companies of the 111th Ohio Regiment of our brigade, so we are relieved of part of our picket duty. We now have new guns, or rather old ones fixed over, for some of them are dated back as far as 1776. They have been altered over so they shoot very well. We use an ounce ball and three buck shot to a cartridge and a close range is the best gun in use, at least so it is said by military men of experience. Turn to page 5.

Camp of the 23^d Regt of Mich Vol Inf
Bowling Green Ky Jan 3^d 1863

Dear Wife

I suppose that you begin to feel alarmed about me because that you do not get a letter from me every week. Well you must not get all alarmed yet for we are safe yet and the reason that I have not wrote before is that there was no way of getting a mail through to the north. The Rebels that we were waiting for to attack us did not come here at all. They went around and by us and destroyed some of the Rail Road between here and Louisville there fore cutting off our communication with the north by Rail Road for a while. How much damage they done we have not got any very accurate account of but it is hoped not much. As near as we can find out they partly destroyed a small Bridge tore up some of the track and broke the telegraph wire completely stopping us from getting any news or sending any. Troops were immediately sent after the Rebels and have drove them somewhere and rumor to night says that they succeeded in killing their General John Morgan and if it is a fact we have got rid of one of the most troublesome of our enemies. He knows every inch of Kentucky and he has a force of cavalry and he goes where he has a mind to and has done a good deal of mischief one time and another.

and waded pursuit although having been closely cornered several times, and now it is hoped that his career is at an end we have been on the watch for him here for some time to destroy the Bridge here which could not be replaced very soon and would do more damage than has been now but he has not disturbed us and we are in the same camp yet doing the same thing over every day as usual. And nothing new except on New Years day we had the satisfaction of hearing how cannon balls sounded going through the air and the way of was that a Battery on a hill close by us were target shooting and they meant to throw their balls over our heads in to an old ~~Fort~~ Fort on another hill close on the other side of us and in stead of throwing their ball where they were trying to they were shooting right in to our camp One ball went through Major Fisher's House and hit a chimney of a tent and smuck right in a bunk and rolled out doors and three more struck in the camp and luckily hurt no one but made a good many dodge. We picked up the Balls and sent a man on horse back as fast as he could go to find out what they meant they thought their balls went beyond the Fort and did not know that they were shooting us so they turned their guns in another direction. It might we have good news from Nashville Our army is victorious and have driven the Rebels out of Murfreesboro' but not without the loss of some of our best Generals and other Officers

and many men. No might we expect Three Hundred
Wounded here from there as all the Hospitals are full
here at Nashville. I suppose you will get all of the
news of the Battle before this will reach you as the
mail does not go from here yet and I dont know how
soon it will so I write this so as to have ready when
it does go. There is over Three Waggon loads of mail here
now awaiting to go north, and that is nothing to
what would have went if it had not been stopped
as soon as there is a mail goes north you will hear
from me again every week. There is one thing more
that I almost forgot I may as well speak of while I have
paper to write on is that there is a great scarcity of writing
paper here and if I dont get any I cant write and you
must not worry about me if you dont get a letter as soon
as you ought to for I am in the best of health and as
fat as I can be I weigh 14 pounds more than I ever
weighed in my life and my clothes are getting to small
for me I had to trade my over coat off and get a larger
one and I drew a new pair of pants and a fatigue
coat so now I am well clothed and in the best of spirits
We were Mustered for pay the last day of the year 1862
and will probably get our money as soon as the Rail
Road is open again to Louisville, which I hope will
not be long for you must need some by this time as well
as a great many others. If it does not come soon
Col Chapin will take our Muster and pay rolls
to Louisville and get the money for us.

Jan 4th 1863

I did not finish this last night as you see
but I will now. Today is Sunday and nothing remarkable
has occurred here and I have had a good rest to day
To morrow our company all go on guard at the Depot
for 24 hours then we will be relieved by another company
We have to guard the trains and let no one get aboard
without a pass so it is pretty hard for any one to get
away from here without permission by Rebel Road or any
other way for every other exit is strongly guarded
by Pickets and if a man gets through one line of
Pickets he will be brought up by another. Last
Sunday we were stationed in Fort Baker a large
fort on a small hill named after the man on whose
premises it is built & it is verry strongly built and
commands the approach from the north. It was
built by the Rebels but never was used by them against
our army. It is on the same hill the General Mitchell
skilled the rebels out of Bowling Green from last
spring and the rebels got out of here in a hurry so
the people here say. The Fort is now occupied by two
companies of the 11th Ohio Regt of our Briggade so we are
relieved of part of our Picket duty we now have
new Guns or rather old ones fixed over for some of them
are dated back as far as 1776 they have been altered
over so they shoot verry well we use an ounce ball and
three buck shot to a cartage and a close range is the
best gun in use at least so it is said by Military
men of experience) I turne to Page 5