

EDITED TRANSCRIPTION – Original file: "Letter Jan. 6th 1864.tif"
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{Envelope:}

Mrs. Susan M. Keeler
East Saginaw
Michigan

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Headquarters 23rd Michigan Volunteer Infantry
Strawberry Plains, East Tennessee
January 6th, '64

Dear Wife,

Yours of Dec. 20th reached me today and you may believe that I was glad to hear from you for it was the first that I had got that you wrote since the siege of Knoxville *{TN}*, and being an answer from the draft that I sent you. I am glad that I was able to send you enough to relieve yourself of your debts and make you comfortable this winter. I hope you do not feel so lonesome since you got to housekeeping and live at home again. I know that you must feel lonesome, but cannot help that now except what my letters will do which, dear Susan, is not my fault if they do not reach you regular, for I write oftener than once a week and will continue to write often for I know how glad it makes one feel to hear from absent friends. You said it had been over four weeks since you heard from me. Well, Susan, it was not because I did not write, for I wrote before Captain Raymond started for Michigan and I have wrote several since. I suppose

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the mail got delayed somewhere and moves slow and has not got through. However, I will keep writing and you will get them sometime and yours gets along too after a long time. I wish that our mail facilities were better and more rapid, but that is impossible while the roads are so muddy and has to be carried on heavy wagons and pack mules. I am well as usual and in good comfortable quarters and busy writing every day more or less. When I get tired of writing I have my horse saddled and take a ride for exercise and to keep my health good. We have been having some cold weather lately and the ground is frozen quite hard. Today it snowed a little and the ground is white just enough to say we had snow. It will not last more than an hour when the sun comes out. Our men are at work every day on the fortifications, and nights they dance. One of the band has a fiddle and furnishes music so we have passed the holidays, and as but one company can be accommodated with music at a time they take turns around and it takes ten days to get around to all of the companies. We go in for all the fun that presents itself and manage to live very well since we came to this place as foraging

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is better on this side of the river. It costs us from three and a half dollars a week to four dollars. We live as economical as possible, but as we have to pay outrageous prices for what we buy of citizens, which we have to buy or go hungry. I guess I have got money enough to last until next pay day, as I have not spent any uselessly nor do I want to. I have paid for a suit of new clothes which I got very cheap for the times down here. My coat vest & pants cost fifty dollars and I paid \$25.00 for a sword and sash and I have paid my debts which amounted to near \$40.00. Next pay day I hope to be clear of debt and be able to send you about three hundred dollars if we are not paid until March. I will send you all I can spare from what I want to live on every pay day, and we can pay for the house and lot by the time it is due or sooner, for with my wages now we can pay for it in six months and live besides. There has several vacancies occurred lately in the regiment and a few more will put a bar in my straps. I am not in a hurry about it as I am doing very well now. Captain *{Henry Heber}* Woodruff is going to resign in a few days, one captain went home today.

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I wrote to Grandmother last week and to you and Father, and as the mail has not gone out but once since I have not to you since last week. It is reported here that Lieutenant *{Oscar S.}* Davis was killed by guerillas while on his way over the mountains to join us. No particulars are given and I hope it is not so for we do not want to spare a him. There has some of our wounded died lately, but I hope no more will die and I hear that the others are getting along finely. I got an Enterprise with the letter which comes acceptable, although there was not much news in it. Tell Sant to write to me as often as he can. I wrote to him the other day. You say that you want to see me more and more every day and want me to get a furlough. Well, dear Susan, I wish you could see me and I wish I could get a leave of absence, but I cannot. There is now two application in now for leave of 30 days and have not yet been accepted and were put in over a month ago, so there is no sight for me at present and we will have to be patient and see if something will turn up next spring or summer. I will endeavor to come home as soon as I can. If I get sick leave I will try and get a sick leave such as Davis had. I do not want to get sick for that purpose, for I had rather await my time out than to be sick in the army. You must be a good girl and keep up your spirits and if General *{Ulysses S.}* Grant's words will prove true the war will not last much longer. He was here three days ago and made some good promises. Yesterday he started for Kentucky by the way of Cumberland Gap. We have confidence in him and hope he will be retained in this Department of the West. As it is getting late I will close this short epistle and not take another sheet to finish this letter. You must excuse this small sheet as it is all I could get this time. Kiss Frankey for me and may she be a blessing to you a lonesome mother while I am helping Uncle Sam establish his authority in this United States. Remember me to all inquiring friends. So good night and pleasant dreams and believe me, ever

Your Most Affectionate Husband,
D. D. Keeler

To Susan M. Keeler
East Saginaw, Michigan

No. 28th Mich Vol & Post
Strawberry Plains East Tenn
January 6th / 64

Dear Wife

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for with my wages now we can pay for it in six
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to you a Son some Mother while I am helping Uncle Sam establish
his Authority in this United States remember me to all inquiring
friends so good Night and pleasant Dreams and believe
me ever your most Affectionate Husband
J. D. Wheeler

To Susan M. Wheeler
East Saginaw Mich

Mrs Susan M Kuler
East Saginaw
Michigan