EDITED TRANSCRIPTION – Original file: "Letter Jan. 6th 1864.tif" Edited to enhance readability. Added notes are *{italicized-bracketed}*.

{Envelope:}
Mrs. Susan M. Keeler
East Saginaw
Michigan

{Page 1:}
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

{Page 2:}

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

{Page 3:}

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.

{Page 4:}

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

Ho In 28" Mich Vol & Infly Strawberry Plains Bost Lenn January 6th /64 Dear Mife Yours of Dec 20th reached me to day and you may believe that I was glad to love from you for it was the first that I had got that you wrote since the seize of Monoy ville, and being an answer from the Draft that I sent you I am gad that I was able to send you enough to releave your self of your debts and make you comfortable this winter Thopeyou do not feel so lonesome since you got to house Keeping, and live at home against know that you must feel Comsons but can not help that now except what my letters will do which Dear Blusan is not my fault if they do not wich you regulars for sorite oftener theme once a well and will continue to willoften for know how glad it makes one feel to hear from absent friends you said it had been over four weeks since you hourd from me well Busan in was not because I did not write for I wrote defore Cake Raymond started for Mich and I have wrote seperal sin el Suppose

The Mail gotdelayed some while and moves slow and has not got through. However noill keep writing and you will get them sometime and yours geto along too after a long time Clarch that our mail facilities were better and more rapid but that is imposible while the roads are so musty and has to be carried on heavey was one and pack Mules. I am well as usual and in good comfatable quarters and busy voriting every day more or less when I get tered of writing De have my He orse Gladdled and take a side for exercise and takeep my health good, we have been having some cold weather lately and the ground is frozen quete hard To day it snowed a little and the ground is white just enough to say we had snow the will not last more than an hour when the sun comes out Our Men are at work every day on the fortify cations and nights they dance One of the Band has a feddle and furnishes music so we have passed the Hollidays and as but one company can be accomedated with music at a time they Hatelurns around und it takes ten days to get around to all of the Company. We go in for all the fun that presents it self and manage to live very well since we came to this place as forageing

is better on this side of the river aft costs us from three and a half Dollars a week to four Dollars We live as equinomical as posible but as are have to pay outrageous prices for what we buy of citizens which we have to buy or go hungry & guess have got money errough to last until next kay day as bhow hot & pent any uselessly nor do I want to . There payed for a suit of new clother which I got verry charge for the times down here My Coat Vest & Panto cost fifty dollars and paid \$25,00 for Dhoord and Lash. and have payed my depts which amounted to near \$ 4000, (hext pay day hope to be clear of deft and be able to send you about three Hundred dollars if we are not payed instit march Prill sendyou all & can spare from what Great to live on every - pay day and we can pay for the House and Lot by the time it is due one sooner for with my arges now we can pay for it in six months and live besides. There has several one an cies occured lately in the regt and a few more will put a bar in my strappe of am not in a hurry about it as I'm ding verry well mow Capt Moodruff is going to resign in a few days, one Capt went home

el wrote to Grannother last week and to you & father and now the mail hosnot gone out but once she show not to you suce last week It is reported here that It Davis was killed by Gurilleras while on his way over the Mountin to join us mo 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 geting along finely -I got an Enterprise with the letter which comes acceptable. although there was not much news in it. Fell Sant to write to me as often as he can I horote to him the other day you say that you want to see me more and more entry day land about me to get a furlough well Dear Susan of wish you could see me and I wish Devald get a lave of a beine but I can not. There is now two application in now for leave of sodays and have nosizes been accepted and evere fut in over a month ago do there is no sight for me at present and we will have to be purient and see if something will turn up next spring or Summer Prill andeaver to come. home as soon as I can. Of the get sich leur Pavill try and get a sick leave such as Davig had. I bdo nest want to get sich for that perpose for I had rather await my time out there to be sick in the army. you must be a glavel girl and peepup your species and if Genl Grants works will prove true the war will not last much longer He was here three days ago and mude some good peromises. Geolorday the started for by by the way of Combiland gap, We have to confidence in him and hope he will be retained in this confidence in him and hope he will be retained in this defeatment of the west, as it is geting late I will alove this for defeatment of the west, as it is geting late I will alove this for short existle and not loty another whet to fund this letter you must excuse this small sheat as it is all I could letter you must excuse this small sheat as the beablessing get this time Kies Frankey for me and may she be a blessing to four a Sonesome Mother while from helping Whale dam establish his authority in this rented states remainder Me to all ugureng freends so good night and pleasant Dreumo and blive me ever your mostleffectionate Housband 1 De Weeler To Susan M Weller East Olagman mich

ro Tusan In Kuler