

EDITED TRANSCRIPTION – Original file: "Letter March 30th 1863.tif"
Edited to enhance readability. Added notes are *{italicized-bracketed}*.

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East Saginaw *{M}*, March 30th 1863

Dear Brother Deck,

With feelings of regret I sit down to write the sad news of your George's death. Yes, George is gone, he is no more for the cruelties of disease to torture. He was taken some four weeks ago with the croup out at his Grand Pa *{Daniel Lanning}* Reading, but he was relieved of that so that he was all around playing. Then he was well enough until the next storm. The croup symptoms would return, they always relieved him immediately, and he would be playing all right. He was well and hardy up to last Tuesday. Then he had some fever and a worm fit, the doctor was called

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and the next day he was well and Susan brought him down here to Father's to doctor for worms. And Thursday evening he had some symptoms

(the doctor came and prescribed)

of the croup, which he was relieved of as usual. The next morning he was playing around with Father & Frankie. This was Friday morning. About 10:00 he gave up again and went to bed. The doctor was called for him but did not come immediately. There was nothing alarming about him up to this time. When the doctor came he said that he had the croup, with the diphtheria in the worst form. Everything was done that the skill of a physician and power of man could do but of no avail. Disease was the strongest, it had the battle and carried the day. He suffered everything for 24 hours more than 40 deaths by the ball or bayonet.

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Yesterday morning Susan asked what she should tell Deck. Says he, "Oh, Ma, tell him I'm so sick." That was about all he said until noon he had a fit. When he came out of that he says, "Oh Ma, I'm afraid I'm going to die." "Oh no," she says, "Georgy is going to get well and Deck is coming home." He says, with a smile on his face, "Is he coming home to stay?" "No," Susan, "he is going back again." Then he drew his face down and said, "Oh shaw," as if he was very much disappointed. He had two more fits in the afternoon but not so hard as the one at noon. He did not talk much he was so distressed for breath. Sometimes he would lose his breath and it would seem as if he never would catch again. The when he caught he would ask for his mother to help him.

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Poor little sufferer stood it until six o'clock and 45 minutes when he breathed his last after a short illness of 48 hours. God giveth and God taketh away. How little we know what to expect with midst of life we are in death. The funeral is tomorrow, Monday at 2:00 p.m.

Deck, I know it will be very hard for you. It seems to me like losing one of my own & is hard for us that are here, and you are away. When the news gets to you it will be so sudden. Something that was least expected, more so to you than to us if possible. 12 hours is short notice, but you may always remember that you have all the sympathy of loving wife to bear the trouble with you. You may feel that that is no consolation, but remember it is harder for a mother to lose a child, one that she has brought up, been with every moment of its existence then to be

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a witness of its sufferings in its death bed, with no power to relieve it. It is hard, I can't but feel, to mourn with you as though it were my own boy. It is torture for me to know that you must hear this news and stand the grief. I understand the affection existing between a father and child. I know of the tender cord it touches when the child is suffering. And you may look to me & feel that you have all the sympathy of an affectionate brother & all of the family feel deeply to mourn his loss. Everybody sympathizes with you & Susan.

Now, dear brother, do not despair and feel that you have nothing

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left to live for. You have another beautiful child and wife to live for and cherish the thought when this war is ended you may be spared with them to return and enjoy the privilege of living with them as well as for them. Frankie is well with the exception of cutting teeth, which makes her feel a little cross. Susan is also well. Your mother *{-in-law Rachael (Mead)}* Reading is here, she is well. Also the old gent an Tiss. Sarah Lester is a little under the weather, not sick a bed, but not able to be out. I don't know as it is any more sickly here now than it always was, but it is all or has been in our family for the last 8 months. You know how we have been afflicted.

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Mrs. Eastabrook is not expected to live. She has had another babe and has not gotten over the confinement. I have not heard from her today. Other than that I don't know of anyone who is very sick except Jane's little boy about the age of George. He has the consumption & can't live long. Hattie is improving every day. Lucy *{M. (Nelson) Keefer}* is well & so are Father & Sarah.

I am remarkably well & weigh 185 lbs, the most I ever weighed. Deck, I must close this sad epistle with the hopes that it may meet you and impart this sad news in such a way that you may feel that everything has been done that could have been, and as long as I live I always stand ready to help you to anything in my power.

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Susan is going to have George's likeness taken today. She will send it to you.
Must close this now.

While I remain Your Affectionate Brother in You affliction,
Sant Keeler

East. Saginaw March 30th 1863

Dear Brother. Deak

With feelings
of regret I sit down to write
the sad news of Your George's
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is no more for the cruelities
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but he was relieved of that so that
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symptoms would return, they all-
ways relieved him immediately
and he would be playing all right
He was well and hearty up to last
Tuesday. then he had some fever
and a worm for the D^r was called

and the next day he was well
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a Thursday eve. he had ~~some symptoms~~
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of as usual. the next morning he was
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this was Friday morning, about
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& up to this time when the Dr
came he said that he had
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in its worst form every thing was
done. that the skill of a physician
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Yesterday morning Susan asked
him what she should tell Deck
says he Oh Ma, tell him I'm so
sick. That was about all he said
until noon. he had a fit when he
came out of that he says Oh Ma
I'm afraid I'm going to die, oh no
she says Georgey is going to get well
and Deck is coming home, he says
with a smile on his face, is he coming
home to stay, no Susan, he is going
back again. then he drew
his face down and said Oh show
as if he was very much disappointed
he had two more fits in the afternoon
but not so hard as the one at noon
he did not talk much he was
so distressed for breath, some times
he would loose his breath and
it would seem as if he never
would catch again. then when
he caught he would ask for
his mother to help him

Poor little sufferer stood it
until 2.00. P.M. and 4.50 M when he
breathed his last after a short
illness of 48 hours.

God giveth, and God taketh away
How little we know what to expect
in the midst of life we are in death
The funeral is tomorrow, Monday
at 2.00. P.M.

Deak. I know it will be very
hard for you, it seems to
me like losing one of my own
It is hard for us that are here
and you are away, when the news
get to you it will be so sudden
some thing that was least
expected, more so to you than
to us if possible. 12. hour is short
notice, but you may always
remember that you have all the
sympathy of Loving wife to bear
the trouble with you you may
feel that that is no consolation
but remember, it is harder for
a mother to loose a child, one that she
has brought up, been with every
moment of its existence, than to be

a witness of its sufferings on
its death bed. with no power
to relieve it it is hard,

I can't but feel to mourn with
you as though it were my own
boy. it is torture for me to
know that you must bear
the news, and stand the grief
I understand the affection
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and child. I know of the tender
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is suffering. And you may look
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brother. & all of the family
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Every body sympathizes with you
& Susan

Now dear Brother do not despair
and feel that you have nothing

left to live for. You have
another beautiful child and
wife... To live for and cherish
the thought that when this
war is ended, you may be spared
with them, to return and enjoy
the privilege of living with
them as well as for them
Frankie is well with the
exception of cutting teeth,
which makes her feel a little
cross. Susan is also well
Your Mother Reading is here she
is well, also the old Gent and
Topsy, Sarah's Sister is a little
under the weather not sick
a bed, but not able to be out
I don't know as it is any more
sickly here now than it always
was but it is all or has been
in our family for the last 8 months
You know how we have been
afflicted.

Mrs. Eastabrook is not expected
to live, she has had another babe
and has not gotten over the confinement
& have not heard from her today
other than that I dont know
of any one that is very sick
Except James's little boy about
the age of George he has the
consumption & cant live long

Hattie is improving every day
Lucy is well & so are Father
& Sarah.

I am remarkably well. & weigh
185-lbs the most I ever weighed

Dearest I must close this sad
epistle, with the hopes that
it may meet you, and impart
the sad news in such a way
that you may feel that every
^{thing} has been done that could have
been done, and, as long as I live
I all ways stand ready to
help you to any thing in my power

Susan is going to have
George's stamps taken today
She will send it to you

I must close. This is now

While I remain your
Affectionate Brother in
your affection.

Sant Hill