

EDITED TRANSCRIPTION – Original files: “Letter May 13th 1865.tif” & “Letter May 13th 1865 envelope.tif”

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

{Envelope:}

{Postmark:} NEW BERN N.C MAY 17

Mrs. Susan M. Keeler
East Saginaw
Michigan

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Office of Acting Assistant Quartermaster Supply Train, 2nd Division 23rd Army Corps

Salisbury, North Carolina, *{Saturday}* May 13th 1865

Esteemed and much loved Wife,

I received yours of April 30th this evening and glad was I to hear that you both were well and I hasten to answer immediately ~~yet~~ tonight. I am well as usual and comfortably situated to take it as I can the balance of my soldiering.

The 2nd Division of the 23rd Army Corps is now stationed here at Salisbury, North Carolina, and will probably remain here the balance of the time we are in the service. We arrived here on the 11th and have now been here three days. I cannot say that I like the place, yet it is a very pleasant town to live in as far as looks goes, but I am sorry that the war did not last long enough for us to get here and destroy the place, burn it and hang a lot of the villains that live here. I never yet saw a place that

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I would like to see destroyed as I do this. I would give what little I am worth to be in command here for only one hour, then if I did not raze this town I would quit. What makes me feel so is the sight of the rebel barbarities that have been committed here upon our soldiers that have been imprisoned in the Salisbury prison. The prison has been destroyed but enough remains to give an idea of the sufferings of our men. I have visited it this very day and such a sight I did not believe could be made. The men were kept in a large yard with a tight board fence all round it with guards posted all round on platforms built for that purpose. The prisoners were allowed no shelter except such as they could make in the ground and the whole place is dug full of holes or burrows that men lived in to protect themselves from the weather and cold, and the most inhuman treatment that can be imagined they were subjected to and they were also starved nearly to death and no doubt that some were starved to death as the graveyard testifies to their inhumanity. I counted sixteen rows of trenches over 100 yards long where the men were buried four deep and estimated to contain from six to eight

thousand men, all starved to death or died from disease contracted from starvation,

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and exposure and ill treatment received in this damned prison. The rations sent by our government for these men was sold and otherwise used by the inhuman commissary who is now here and asks protection from our hands no longer ago than yesterday. As he has been paroled and promised protection as long as he does not break it we have to let him alone, but I would not be surprised to hear of his getting shot pretty soon, for our boys cannot see him running at large after such conduct. He went to General Cooper yesterday and he would I believe have hung him had it not been for his parole. He gave him the greatest talking to I ever heard a man get. We captured here some of the very same rations that were sent for our prisoners by our government and they were issued to our teamsters today, the same that had ought to have been eaten long ago by our prisoners confined here. I could not begin to write an the scenes of misery enacted here as it far exceeds anything I ever imagined or ever read of and will leave it to abler pens than mine.

Tomorrow is Sunday and I intend to go to church and will report to you my opinion of it in my next. I have my tent in a shady grove on a little hill about 1/2 miles from town and near good water and am as

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comfortable as I could wish. I had permission to occupy quarters in town and take the best place or rooms I could find and find me a couple of good nice rooms and as pleasant as any in town, but I made up my mind that a tent was the pleasantest and I did not move in town as I prefer my present quarters to any house as it is the healthiest and I had rather finish the balance of my time in a tent for I am used to it and it seems more at home to me now. I am now only 3 months and 28 days to serve and a month of that will pass before I get an answer to this as I see it takes 13 or 14 days for a letter to come here. You say that you was going to stay in Illinois until the middle of this month and by this time you probably are about starting for home again where I expect soon to hear of your safe arrival. Give my best respects to all and believe me as ever

Your Affectionat Husband,

D. D. Keeler

Captain and Acting Assistant Quartermaster



Office of N. N. D. M. Supply Train ^{2nd} Div. 23rd A. C.
Salisbury N. C. May 13th 1865

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C. A. Miller
Capt. U. S. A.



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