

EDITED TRANSCRIPTION – Original files: “Letter Oct. 11th 1863 pg. 1-3.tif” & “Letter Oct. 11th 1863 pg. 4.tif”

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

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Headquarter 23<sup>rd</sup> Michigan Volunteer Infantry  
2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade 2<sup>nd</sup> Divison 23 Army Corps  
Loudon, East Tennessee, Oct. 11<sup>th</sup> 1863

Dear Wife,

I now go to work to answer your letters that I received last night. I received eleven (11) letters last night and 4 newspapers. It was the first mail that our regiment has received since we crossed the mountains and you may believe it came acceptable. We have been busy ever since, reading. We are still on our first camping ground and have been very quiet now for about a week. The weather is cool and nights and mornings a fire feel good to set by. I have very easy times now. I have my work all done up to date and it is very easy to keep it up while we are in camp, but on the march it accumulates and whenever we halt for a day or two I have to be at work all of the time to get it off of my hands. Yesterday when the mail come I had everything up to the minute done. That is more than a great many can say with their business. I like the duties of adjutant better than any other position in the regiment. I do not have to go on picket or fatigue duty or go on foot when we march. I have a good wall tent with a fly to it and upon the whole I consider myself very comfortable. I mess with the quartermaster and commissary and we have as good as the country affords to each. Today we had sweet cake for dinner, a luxury almost unknown to the part of the world. We, that is, the whole army, subsist now almost entirely on the resources of the country except coffee, tea, sugar, and very little of that. We hear nothing of the rebels here yet. I guess they have concluded to let us alone and let us stay here.

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We expect to go into winter quarters, for some of the other regiments are now building log cabins and we expect orders this week to build some to winter in. A great many seem to think we cannot winter here for want of supplies, which now have to come over the mountains in wagons from Kentucky. We are not suffering for anything except shoes for the men, some of which are now barefoot. A supply is expected soon and we shall be all right again. We expect to get our mail now regular. If we do it will make us more easy. I received one from Sarah and one from Lottie, two from Sant, two from Frank, and 5 from you, one of as late date as September 20<sup>th</sup>, and you may believe I felt better when I heard you were well. It was a long while to go without hearing from home. I hope you get my letters regular. If you do not every week you must consider me well as usual and let it pass along as though you heard from me, for in may be so that a mail

may not go out regular and we are getting short of stationary and as for stamps, there is none to be had and I am entirely out so I will have to serve it as I do others so it will go without stamps; that is I mark them Soldiers Letter and sign my name and they go, but the postage has to be paid on delivery to the one directed to. So you must pay my postage until I can get some stamps. In one letter you said you enclosed some but I could not find them. There is three officers and six men going home to Michigan for conscripts and if they are successful I shall get mustered when they get back. Jerry *{Jeremy H.}* Overton is one of the men that is going. I will send a letter by him. I wish I could been one of the lucky ones, but as I was home last spring and as I am situated so that could not be very well spared, the colonel would not let me go, consequently I will have to stay. I would like very well

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to go home to recruit for our regiment but I cannot and it is not my fault that I did not get the chance for I tried. Well, Susan, I have not two years to stay now and then I can come home to stay. I have put in over one year and have worked my way up from second sergeant and if I do as well another year it will not be very bad. I have now most four months pay due me and I wish you had the most of it to get you and sis some winter clothes with. I will send you some money as soon as we are paid, but when that will be I cannot tell, but I have heard rumors of a paymaster being on his way to pay this army corps. I now have only twenty-five cents left in my pocket and most out of tobacco, which is from six shillings to one dollar a plug. I am afraid I shall have to stop chewing tobacco very soon unless they paymaster comes around with some greenbacks. Lieutenant *{William A.}* Lewis is now acting quartermaster of the regiment and he tents with me, so you see I have good company. Lieutenant O*{scar}* S. Davis has not been very well and he talks of resigning on account of his health, which I am afraid he will find it a little difficult on account of a recent order issued from War Department. I heard someone say he was going home on leave of absence which I think is true as he has leave, at least I heard him say so. If he does go home do not fail to see him for he can tell you more than I can write in a month. I will try and see him and find out when he goes and send you a letter by him. I wish I could send you some present, but I cannot for there is nothing here to be had for any price. You must be patient and when I can send you anything I will. The next time I can get a photograph taken I will send you some in place of those pictures you sent me by Captain *{Henry Heber}* Woodruff. I would like to see little sis and hear her talk. She must be a great deal of company for you. I wish I could have a little of her company myself, for I have not seen much but little

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dirty ragged young ones since I have been here. And it is not very likely I shall again very soon for I have not seen any here that I would like to say a word to. I did see some girls while on the march that had traveled from 8 to ten miles to see the Yankees. They thought I looked better than any of the rebels, so I told them I was a single man and proposed marriage to see what they would say and as

they was not so fast as myself for entering into any such contract had to bid them goodbye and hardly thought of it since. You must not get jealous at this confession for you know that I would not forget that I had as good a wife at home as ever any man was blessed with and such jokes were only made while the column halted for a few minutes rest. You say that you are getting young again, well I hope you will not get much older before I can see you and if you are growing young instead of older you must not put on short dresses. I do not feel as though I was any older, but I know I have learned more during the last year than I ever did in Saginaw *{M}* and I think I have improved in morals besides. I have tried to be a better man than I was and I think I am improving. I hope I shall get no worse than I was before I came in the army, for the army is a hard place for a man to live as he should. And as I am expected to set good examples before the men I do not allow myself to do anything that would disgrace a soldier in any way. I find it rather hard sometimes to deny myself of pleasures that would lead to bad habits, but I have been successful so far and hope I may continue so hereafter. Write soon and direct as before and I will get them in time. Take good care of sis and yourself and believe me ever.

Your Affectionate Husband,  
D. D. Keeler

Head Quarters 23<sup>rd</sup> March V. L.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade 2<sup>nd</sup> Division 23<sup>rd</sup> A. C.  
Near Loudon East Tenn Oct 11<sup>th</sup> 1863

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I think is true as he has leave at least I heard him  
say so If he does go home do not fail to see him for  
he can tell you more than I can write in a month  
I will try and see him and find out when he goes and  
send you a letter by him I wish I could send you some  
present but I can not for there is nothing here to be had  
for any price. You must be patient and when I can  
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a photograph taken I will send you some in place of  
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A. K. Keller.  
Lt & Adj. 23 March 1864