

Robert H. Caldwell
21st Ohio Volunteer Infantry
Civil War Letters

The Robert Caldwell Papers consist of a series of Civil War era letters, primarily from Robert Caldwell of Elmore, Harris Township, Ottawa County, Ohio. The original letters are part of the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center's much larger William Caldwell Family Collection (LH-72). Photocopies of the Robert Caldwell correspondence were donated to the Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University, where transcriptions were prepared.

Robert H. Caldwell was born on June 14, 1841, the son of William and Jane (Davis) Caldwell. Robert was one of four children, with two brothers and a sister. William C., the oldest brother, served with the 72nd Regiment, O.V.I. as hospital steward and assistant surgeon. Charles, the middle brother, died in 1852 at the age of 13. Juliet, the sister, studied at Oberlin. Robert worked for his father, a lumberman, at the family's mill. At the age of twenty, Robert joined the 21st Regiment, Ohio Volunteer Infantry, and was appointed 3rd corporal of Company I. He was promoted to sergeant on June 7, 1862. In August, he was sent home on a recruiting mission. He rejoined the 21st in mid November. At the Battle of Stones River, he was wounded. He died in the hospital on February 8, 1863.

The Civil War correspondence of Robert H. Caldwell consists of 114 letters written by Caldwell to various family members from September 1861 to February 1863. Three of the letters are from his brother William, serving with the 72nd O.V.I., with one letter each from Robert's mother Jane, his uncle John Davis, and Amos Wood, also of Company I, 21st Ohio Volunteer Infantry. The letters after Robert's death are between various family members expressing their sympathy to each other.

TRANSCRIPTION OF CORRESPONDENCE

ROBERT H. CALDWELL

Sept 15, 1861-Jan 14, 1863

Arranged chronologically

A series of 114 letters to members of his immediate family, while he served with the 21st Regiment, Ohio Volunteer Infantry, Company I, during the Civil War

TRANSCRIPTION OF CALDWELL FAMILY CORRESPONDENCE

Jan 18-Feb 23, 1863

Arranged chronologically

A series of six letters from members of the Caldwell Family, expressing sympathy for the death of Robert.

Camp Vance Sep 15th 61

Dear folks at home

Thinking that a letter from Camp Vance might not be unacceptable I thought I would improve the present opportunity by letting you know how camp life agrees with me. Well as you are aware we left Elmore about 8 o'clock and run down to Fremont arrived there just in time to see the train on the F. & P. R.R. leaving for Finlay and so we were as we thought left behind but after waiting a short time we saw the train backing down again to receive us aboard the Conductor having noticed us and was so accommodating as to return for us We arrived in Finlay about 11 o'clock formed in the street and marched through town halted in front of the Reed House and pretty soon the boys might have been seen coming out of the different groceries with something under their arms that had very much the appearance of Gingercake and in a very short time I made a chance of becoming perfectly satisfied that it was the above named article without any of the modern improvements attached to it Well after satisfying our appetites we re formed and marched to Camp. Arrived received our equipment, pitched our tents, cooked our supper and then commenced, our camp life in earnest. You had just ought to have seen us cooking our supper, we are divided of for the present into messes of about 10 men in each[.] We drew six tents and the same number of kettles each tent having one kettle. And a plate, knife, fork and spoon also a tin cup to each man. At present our mess is composed of G. Claghorn, Ezekiel Rice, Norman Easterly, Wm Easterly M Runnels Russel Rice, myself and several others.

I enjoy camp life very much but our things are not cooked quite as nicely as I have been in the habit of having things but what of that we must get accustomed to eating some dirt. Last night the boys had a dance on our parade ground in front of our tents one of the boys played the Jews harp while the rest tripped the light fantastic toe most of them barefoot. They kept it up until about ten o'clock when the musician becoming tired of playing the dance broke up and all turned in for the night with the exception of Barnes, and a few more who were detailed for guards. To day G. Claghorn, E. Rice, R. Rice and Ingraham are detailed as guard my name not having been called as yet and it comes near the lower end of the list. I have just finished eating my dinner we had boiled beans, fried and boiled beef, boiled ham, potatoes good bakers bread, and what is more we have as much as we want, we sleep warm as our tent floor is covered with good new straw to the depth of about four inches and with the addition of our blankets it makes just as good a bed as one could wish for The boys drew each one single blanket and as soon as we are mustered in we will each draw a double one. This forenoon George Smith and I went down to Finlay and took a look about town it is a place of about 2500 inhabitants. The buildings are very much scattered and consequently the town covers a large extent of territory. There is to be divine service in camp this afternoon at 2 o'clock I expect to attend. Yesterday noon we elected our commissioned officers they consist of Captain Gibbs, first Lieut Vantyne 2nds Woods we are to elect our noncommissioned officers as soon as we are mustered in which we expect will take place tomorrow. There are at present about 600 men in camp parts of companies a large number having returned home on furlough. I must close as I have no more room. R.H. Caldwell

Camp Vance Sep 15th 61

Dear Sister

Thinking that a letter from the above named place might not be unacceptable I thought that I would improve the present opportunity by giving you some particulars in regard to my camp experience. Last Friday myself in company with about sixty others started for this place arrived at Fremont, exchanged cars by getting aboard of the train on the F. & G. R.R. destined for Findlay arrived at our destination at about 11 o'clock formed the company in the street marched through town, halted in front of the Reed House, the principal hotel in the town when most of the boys started for the groceries for ginger bread and after each one had stowed away a sufficient amount of that article we took up our march for the camp which is situated about 1 ½ miles from town upon a fine rise of ground. We received our tents and the rest of our equipage which for a whole company consists of 12 tents the same number of camp kettles, one plate, knife, fork, spoon & cup to each man besides we draw one blanket apiece for the present until we are mustered in when we are to receive a double blanket to the man. Perhaps you would like to know how I like Camp life well I can say I am satisfied, to be sure we have to eat a little dirt but that makes no difference with those who don't care and as for me I never was very particular and for that reason I can get along very well. There are about ten men in my mess the most of whom are good boys such as George Claghorn, Ezekiel Rice, Russel Rice, M. Runells, &c &c. We have just returned from dress parade (a parade of the whole regiment) the first in which I ever participated it was a very fine and imposing. The brass band is still playing while I am writing. In dress parade the different companies form in line of battle, that is the whole regiment forms across the grounds in two ranks or two lines when the Colonel puts them through some moves then the band plays marching up and down the lines. The Colonel then gives the command present arms when the whole reg raises their right hand to the shoulder then the Col then gives the order shoulder arms when the arm is dropped to the side. The first sergeant of each comp is then ordered to the front and centre of the reg and report their companies giving the name of the company and number of men in each company they then return to their places when the captains of the different comp march to the front and centre and salute the Colonel when he returns the salute. The comp are then marched to their quarters where they partake of their suppers, taking it altogether it is quite a sight. I suppose by this time you will think that the sabbath is pretty effectually broken but if you had been in the camp today you would have thought that Sunday had forgotten to make its appearance. At this moment while I am writing within six or eight feet of me in another tent there is a party of boys playing euchre and others are washing dishes while some are singing and nearly all swearing but perhaps you may think that is the case with all the boys, not so for there is quite a number of good civil boys in our company. But as it is getting dark I must close. Give my respects to Edith Willson.

Direct to Findlay, Ohio.
Care Captain Gibbs
21st reg O.V.

Camp Vance Sep. 17th 61

Dear Brother

When I wrote last Sunday, I forgot to state several things which I had thought to say, and among others I wished to say that Alfred Price asked me to send his guitar to him by somebody going to

Fremont or if not, to send it by express. It is at Mrs. Ryders and you will oblige me very much by attending to it for me.

We have fine times in Camp, last night it rained very hard and the guards were called in on that account and as a matter of course the boys took advantage of it and went visiting. About 200 of the boys went promenading and among the rest several from our mess and this morning about two o'clock a goose came into our tent which had been disturbed in its slumbers and as a matter of course we took compassion on and kept it from the rest of the mess but the poor fellow died some time in the night just because one of the boys out of mere sport placed the head of the winged biped in one place and his body in another and as we don't like to see anything go to waste we caused it to take the place of the beef with which we are supplied. This is a mere sample of what is taking place all the time in camp. Yesterday we had our Dress Parade of the whole regiment and we were put through the regimental drill for the first time. That is we were marched A round the grounds by platoons some of the platoons being composed of whole companies it was a very fine sight there being about 600 out on parade the rest of the reg being home or on furlough. The colonel is endeavoring to make arrangements so that he can take fourteen compys into the 21st regt. I don't know how soon the regt will leave here but as near as I can find out I expect it will take place in about two weeks[.] I expect to make a visit home before we move. Just about five minutes ago a guard was put in the guard house for allowing a man to pass his beat without a pass from a commissioned officer[.] At this minute while I am writing there are a lot of boys singing campmeting hymns in the tent next to ours. We have dances, foot racing, wrestling, jumping &c going on nearly all the time. Sunday eve Martin Bowland threw the Capt of Compy D. the officers mix with the privates at all times and taking everything altogether we have very fine times. Last Sunday morning a company came in from Defiance and they brought their Notebooks with them and when they have leisure time they all join in singing. I intend to make the acquaintance of some of them. In my last I forgot to tell you how to direct your letters.

You can direct
R.H. Caldwell Findlay Ohio
Care Capt. Gibbs 21st Regt O.V.I.

(P.S.) I wrote to Juliet last Sunday. Please tell me how you get along with the mile. Give my love to Father, Mother, Willie, and all enquiring friends. R.H.C.

Camp Vance Sep 25th [1861]

Dear Father

It is now ascertained beyond a doubt that we are to leave this place early tomorrow morning via Carey We have received orders to pack up and be ready to start by 2 o'clock.

We are all glad to think that we are going to move. I heard with pain that our respected Captain was worse again and that it would impossible for him to meet us at this place, but that it was possible he might overtake us at Camp Dennison. It is now ascertained that we are going to Louisville, Ky we are all well pleased to think that is to be our destination. Today Charley brought Wm Buffington and Gillson to Finlay with the understanding that they were to be mustered in but when the officer was ready they began making complaints saying they were not able to go, and upon the testimony of James Easterly the officer was willing to accept them anyway but the cowards refused to be mustered and they will have the pleasure of walking home as Liut Vantyne would not pass them home. It is the wish of the boys that you will give them a reception that will be a warning to all other milk and water men. To day we were visited by several of the Elmore and Fremont ladies among whom were Mrs. Ryder Strong Woodworth, Mrs. J.S. Tyler, and Mrs. Claghorn. Also Toot Tyler, Charleys wife and Mrs. Woodworth and Mrs. Geo Claghorn are going to stay to see the Dress Parade which is to come off at four o'clock. As it is almost time to turn out for that purpose I must close by saying that as we are not going to receive our uniforms until arriving at Columbus I shall be obliged to take my sachel along with me and when we do receive them I will send my clothes home. I will write as soon as possible again perhaps from Columbus, if not, from Camp Dennison at any rate as soon as possible. I will write to Juliet as soon as we get settled.

You must excuse me for using a lead pencil as it is very difficult getting a pen

Camp Dennison Sep 27th [1861]

Dear folks at home

We left Camp Vance yesterday morning about ½ past 6 oclck took the train for Carey and arrived there in time to connect with the train on the S.D. & C. R.R. Arrived at Kenton about four oclock and were regaled with a supper by the citizens for which we were all truly thankful. The next town of any importance at which we arrived was Bellfontaine a town of about 3000 inhabitants. We also passed through Urbanna the town near which cousin Martha lives. I got off the train at that place and enquired for the whereabouts of James Caldwell and was informed that he lived about four miles out of town. Just about dark we passed through Springfield atown of about 7000 inhabitants. The next place was Xenia a town of considerable importance. We arrived at camp about 2 oclock this morning and slept in the cars until daylight when we were transferred to our barracks which consist of houses made of pine lumber capable of accomodating about 20 men they need some repairing but when that is done they will be quite comfortable. We have just finished drawing rations. I don't see how government can afford to supply her men so liberally We this morning received sugar cured hams in the shape of meat the nicest meat I ever saw, and we received everything else in proportion. This morning the noncommissioned officers were appointed the boys had the privilege of electing the orderly and when it was given out that those who were going to run for that office should step out in line, about 6 or 7 boys stepped out and I soon saw how the thing had been worked and I refused to run. George Claghorn and James Bumpus had been electioneering privately for some time and when the rest of us understood how the thing had been worked all those who had contemplated withdrew with the exception of James Bumpus, G. Claghorn, and Ezekiel Rice. Among those who withdrew were Michael Rice Russel Rice and myself. When the votes were counted the

result stood James Bumpus 29, G. Claghorn 17, E. Rice 5 and so Bumpus was declared elected. And then commenced the appointing of the rest of the officers which I think was done very unfairly for some of those concerned and myself among that number. The officers were appointed by Lieut Bantyne and resulted in the appointment of Claghorn as 2nd sergeant Mike Rice 3rd Russel Rice 4th George Smith 5th and myself 3rd corporal. I believe if Cap Gibbs had been present the result would have been different but I must abide by the decision of the superior officers. As it stands it is better than being a private as the wages are \$15.00 per month and I am exempt from guard duty and have a better chance for promotion in case I am deserving, and I intend to do my duty in every respect and if at the close of the war I am still 3rd corporal I intend to have it said that it was not on account of incompetency. Camp Dennison is situated in a vally which is entirely surrounded by high hills the Miami river runs along the south side of camp. The R.R. runs through the centre of camp which is very handy for transportation. This morning I visited a battery of rifled 6 pound brass guns the battery consists of 6 pieces and is commanded by a Cleveland man I don't remember his name. I believe they are going to practice this afternoon. We are going to receive our uniforms and arms tomorrow. It is said we are to leave this place next Monday morning for Louisville, Ky. If we do I will write and let you know. When you write direct Camp Dennison, care Lieut Vantyne Co K. 21st O regiment. Charley sends his respects to you all.

Robert Caldwell

Camp Dennison Sep 29th 61

Dear Sister

You must excuse me for neglecting for so long a time to answer your letter but the fact is I have been so busy moving for the last few days that I have hardly had time to think about writing to any person. Last thursday morning we left Camp Vance for this place had a very fine ride through the finest country I ever saw arrived at Camp Dennison about 2 oclock friday morning and remained in the cars until daylight when we were marched to our quarters which consist of shanties capable of accomodating about 20 men each, ours has a butry, two large bunks and three tables, besides a writing desk and several benches. I think they can be made more comfortable than the tents[.] There is at present about six or eight thousand men in camp and I doubt if there is a sick man among them. The camp is situated among a lot of high hills and is in as picturesque a place as the most romantic individual could wish for. On the outskirts of the camp the is a hill from the top of which a very fine view of Kentucky may be had. Last friday I visited a battery of rifled brass cannon six in number they throw a round ball of six pound weight and a slug of twelve and one half pound a distance of three miles one of the guns was at the fights of Philippi and rich mountain in western Va[.] We received our arms yesterday they are rifled muskets. We have not yet received our uniforms but expect to in a short time. We expect to be ordered to Louisville Ky in a few days and if we do I will write from there in the mean time you can direct to Camp Dennison care of Lieutenant Vantine Company K. 21st O. regiment. Since receiving your letter I have been home I went home sat and stayed until tuesday I had a very pleasant time. You may send the Oberlin papers if you please. I have got that likeness of yours on

[remainder missing]

Camp Dennison Sep 29th [1861]

Dear Father

Thinking this a suitable opportunity to let you know what is doing and what has been done in camp I seize the present time for so doing. I wrote last Friday upon arriving at camp but as all was confusion and disorder upon our arrival that it was almost impossible to collect one's ideas but at present the condition of things is greatly improved. Our camp (that of the 21st) is situated upon the eastern side of the C.C. & C. R.R. it is very finely situated entirely surrounded by high hills there is one hill close by the camp from the top of which a very fine view of Kentucky may be had, distant about five miles from this place. There are at present about six or eight regiments in camp at this place. I wrote in my last that close to our regiment an artillery company was encamped. I could not think of the Captain's name who was in command but have since learned that his name is Sanford the company came from Cleveland. I wrote on our arrival at this place that it was expected we were to start for Louisville on Monday next but I doubt it very much as we have not yet received our uniforms but are expecting them every day. We received our arms and accoutrements yesterday afternoon, our guns are rifled muskets with the exception of those received by the two flanking companies (A and B) who received enfield rifles[.] It is quite comical to see some of the boys since they received their arms, this morning I had leave of absence from camp and nearly every one that I met with was rigged out with everything that Government allows them and the great heavy musket atop of all and as they strutted about (as they thought) among the greenies no doubt they thought they would pass for veterans, but the fact is it takes something else in addition to being able to carry a musket to become a good and efficient soldier. I needs time to discipline a regiment so that they may be of service upon coming into action as when such a time arrives we expect to dance to a different music from that which we have in camp, but I doubt if there is a man in our company if offered the privilege or returning home would accept it we are bout to see the thing out if we are allowed to live through it. There is not a sick man in our camp at present and I doubt if there is one in Camp Dennison it is so very healthy at this place. There is a Railroad bridge about seven miles west of this place which is guarded by Government and last Friday night there was two men shot while making the attempt to burn it. I don't think much of this part of the state as farming land it is so hilly, but on the way to camp we passed through some of the most beautiful farms I ever saw but I did not see such nice corn anywhere on the route as can be raised in the Black Swamp. When you write I wish you would state how Cap Gibbs is getting[.] I am anxious to know as we would all like very much to have him with us as soon as possible. As I am using George Claghorns pen and he is anxious to take my place at the writing desk I shall have to bring this latter to a close. I wish you would tell me if William has gone yet and whether Jerry has taken the mill. But I must close give my love to Mother, William, and Willie and tell Willie to be a good boy and when I come home I will bring him something to remember the war by.

From your son, Robert Caldwell

(P.S.) I will write to mother next time when you write direct it to Camp Dennison care Lieutenant Vantine Comp K. 21st Ohio reg and if we have left it will be forwarded to me

R.C.

**Nicholasville K.Y near
Camp Dick Robinson
Oct. 4th [1861]**

Dear folks at home

We left Camp Dennison wednesday morning and started for Cincinnati at which place we arrived about two o'clock, got aboard of the ferryboat and was ferried across the river to Covington, K.Y. We there formed and were marched through the city to an open lot back of the place, where we were allowed to break ranks and make ourselves as comfortable as possible. While we were lying there half asleep I was waked up and asked if I did not want some warm coffee and warm bread and upon looking up I saw a lady and gentlemen going round with the aboved named articles which they were distributing among the soldiers free of charge and as a matter of course I did not refuse. But as I am called as corporal of the guard I must close at present as I must get the guard together.

Since named camp Norton

Saturday Morning Oct. 5th

Dear folks at home

I have just been relieved from duty and hasten to finish writing. I have been acting as corporal of the guard for the last 24 hours. We left Covington about 10 o'clock at night and rode all night, the next morning we passed through Lexington and I there saw the monument of Henry Clay. It is the nicest thing of the kind that I ever saw it is build of gray stone and is about 45ft. high and on the top is placed the statue of the honored statesman. The next town at which we arrived was Nicholasville the town near which our present Camp is situated. We are encamped on the side of a dry hill in a large field. On the opposite side of the town the 38th Ohio is encamped it is expected that we will remain over Sunday at our present Camp and Monday morning take up our march for Camp Robinson, but to day I have heard it hinted by some that we are to go to Missouri but no one places any dependence on the rumor. It is said that there is at present about 15000 troops in Camp Robinson there are also twelve full batteries at the above camp numbering in all 72 guns, It is expected that the enemy will make a stand a Cumberland Gap they have quite a number of troops at that place. I suppose you have heard of the death of Breckenridge he was shot by some union home guards not very far from this place he had the top of his head shot completely off by a musket ball. In the town near which we are encamped the citizens appear to be all sound on the union and in fact it has been the case on the whole route. There are a great number of slaves owned in this town one lady living opposite Camp owns about 40 they appear to be very well treated in these parts. We yesterday received the remainder of our uniforms and we decided to send all our old clothes home together. I have drawn one hat, two shirts two pair drawers, a pair pant, one blouse, one great coat just like the ones the American soldiers used to wear it comes below the knees and has a large cape on it, but I must as the boys are going to close the box in which our things are placed. I also drew one pair shoes two pair socks &c

I am well

You had better not write until you receive another letter from me. When you write direct to me in care Lieut Vantine 21st Ohio regiment we don't know as we will get the position of Co K as yet.

When we get settled once more I will write and let you know . From Robt Cald

Love to all we are in the best of spirits

Camp near Nicholasville K.Y.

Oct 9th [1861]

Dear Father

Hearing that one of the officers was to return for the purpose of recruiting I thought that I would embrace the present opportunity to say something in regard to the clothing that I have sent home, When we received our knapsacks we no longer had any need of our satchels and concluded to box them up and send them home in connection with our superfluous clothing and accordingly we did so and directed the box to James Easterly, according to his request and he promised to see that the different things reached their destination. I sent one of my old shirts home as I have no need of it as I have three others which will be sufficient under any circumstances. I find that the less weight a person has to carry, the better a he is off. If I were to choose my own clothing I could not be better suited I have my oiled cloth blanket besides a blanket that I have drawn and no matter how cold the night I can sleep as warm as I could choose to sleep. You can tell Mother that when we left camp Vance I lent that comforter to Higgins, a relation of Unkaters, who had no blanket and he has used it ever since and used it so roughly that it is not worth sending home and as he has not yet drawn a blanket I let him keep it. I will gie it to some person who needs it better than I.

Direct to Co. I. Nicholasville K.Y.

R.H. Caldwell

I received that money, for which I am very thankful

Camp near Nicholasville K.Y.

Oct 11th [1861]

Dear Sister

Thinking that you might be anxious to know what I have been doing all the time since I last wrote to you I concluded to improve the present time by giving you an account of our travels since leaving Camp Vance. We left that place thursday Sep 26th travelled all day and arrived at Camp Dennison next morning at about two oclock remained in the cars until daylight and were then marched to our quarters which were wooden barracks built in rows with streets between, they were quite comfortable we remained at the above place until Wednesday of october third when we were ordered to K.Y. Packed up and were marched to the cars and started for Cincinnati at which palce we arrived at about three oclock were ferried across the river into Newport K.Y. formed and were marched through the city to a vacant lot, situated in the rear of

the town, where we were allowed to lie down or otherwise make ourselves as comfortable as possible, we remained at this place until 10 o'clock at night when we took passage on the Kentucky Central R.R. for the interior of the state. When we were about three miles from Covington we passed through a tunnel about a half mile in length and indeed nearly all the road is below the surface of the ground from three to fifteen feet as the country is so hilly that it is necessary to dig through the hills in order that the track might be level. Between Camp Dennison and Cincinnati on the route of the C.C.&C. R.R. we passed hills that must have been at the least calculation 200 feet high and that of the condition of the country throughout nearly the whole of southern Ohio and northern Kentucky. We travelled all night and in the morning arrived at Lexington. At this place the state lunatic's asylum is located[.] I saw several of the inmates within the enclosure those that I saw were perfectly harmless, one of them appeared to have been a minister at some time or other as he continually kept up a harangue to the soldiers about the day of judgement &c At this place I also saw the monument of Henry Clay it is a very fine thing. It is about 40 feet square at the base and runs up about 20 feet upon which is placed the statue of the honored statesman. It is said that the statue is about 175 feet from the ground.

We left Lexington after staying at that place about 2 hours and arrived at Nicholasville the termination of the Railroad we marched through the town and encamped in a large field where we have remained ever since. Our camp is situated on the side hill and is a very fine place. This is the finest country I ever saw. It is no wonder that Daniel Boone was delighted with this section of country. I expected when we arrived in this state to see a large number of secessionists but I find that the Ohio regiments have a very salutary effect on that class of persons. We are about 130 miles from Cincinnati at the termination of the Kentucky Central R.R. It is thought that we will be ordered to Camp Dick Robinson situated about 15 miles from this place there are at present about 15000 troops encamped at that place, yesterday a battery of rifled cannons passed this camp en route for the above named camp. I have not yet received an answer to the last letter I wrote you but I expect to receive it with the rest of the letters from home as I believe they have been forwarded to this place. You must excuse all mistakes in this letter as I am writing in my tent with all the boys talking and laughing around me and it is almost impossible to collect one's ideas. When you write direct to me in care Lieutenant Vantine, Co I. 21st Ohio regiment. Oh yes, you may direct your to Nicholasville K.Y. also, in connection with the above direction, our camp has been changed from Co K to Co I, a much better position in the regt[.]

From Robt Caldwell (P.S) I will write from our next (camping?) place

Camp Tom (Letcher?) K.Y.
Oct 13th [1861]

Dear Mother

As it is Sunday and all is quiet in camp I concluded to embrace this opportunity to let you know how I make the time pass while in the service of Uncle Samuel. In the morning at precisely five o'clock reveille is sounded on the bugle which is a very unwelcome sound to a large number of the boys as it is the signal for the opening of eyes and the turning out of the boys for roll call and you had just ought to see the commotion when that time arrives, boys falling out of the tents and

boys falling over each other and everything but falling into line in order, and when at last order is restored, the roll is called by the Orderly and if any unlucky fellow has failed to awaken at the sound of the bugle and fall into line in order that he may answer to his name he is marked for extra duty or elected for the guard house[.] At six o'clock the breakfast is sounded upon which occasion you may be sure that none allow themselves to be marked as delinquents. at half past eight the call for guardmounting is sounded when the guards that have been detailed from each company are marched to an open space in front of the tents, formed in line, arms inspected &c, when they are marched down to the guardhouse where they are to start from. (the guards are divided three reliefs 1st 2nd & 3rd and each relief takes its turn in standing guard, there are in all about 60 guards detailed each day each relief consisting of about 20 men, they are posted around the camp and also placed over the camp stores. After guardmounting comes the drill call, when the different companies are called out for drill they are obliged to drill two hours in the forenoon after which call for dinner is sounded. At half past one the call for drill is again sounded, when we have Comp drill and also noncommissioned & commissioned officers drill for the space of two more hours, when a short time for target practice is allowed, each company is allowed one round and as a general thing most of the boys are satisfied with that as the kick of a two year old colt is as nothing compared with the recoil of the musket. The first time that I fired mine I had quite an astronomical view consisting mostly of stars we fired at targets distant about 30 rods and I believe my ball struck the ground at the distance of about 25 rods from me and consequently my ball came within just about 5 rods of the mark which I consider pretty good shooting for the first trial. I wrote to father that I had received the position of Color guard in the regiment which is considered a much more desirable position than corporal in the company as I retain the rank of corp and have much less duty to perform. Yesterday we had quite a stir in camp on the announcement being made that General Anderson was to make a visit to the 21st whereupon the regt was called out and formed receive the General and Col Neibling had us give the hero of fort Sumter three cheers and then the General responded very briefly saying that nothing but the poor state of his health prevented him from going with us. We then gave him nine counts and (as Col Neibling says) a great big tiger, and he then left the ground. But I am digressing, where was I? Oh! yes firing my musket. Well after target practice we return to quarters and at precisely four o'clock dress parade is sounded and the rest is formed in line of battle and the preliminaries having been gone through with Battallion drill commences, that is a drill for the whole regt which generally occupies us until evening when at six o'clock the supper call is sounded and we all pitch into Uncle Sam's (provender?) with a relish. At nine o'clock the call is sounded for roll call and we are obliged to turn out for that purpose. And immediately after we have what is termed taps, that is the measured strokes upon the base drums, which is the order for all lights to be extinguished in the regiment, and thus you see everything is done in order. We have a certain kind of call on the bugle to represent each order, and the bugle can be heard at any part of the camp and as a matter of course no excuse can be taken on account of not hearing the call. But perhaps you would like to know how I spend the sabbath, well today in the forenoon I attended terian church in the town of Nicholasville. And this afternoon on dress parade we had divine service by the Rev Mr Skinner the chaplain of our regiment. Last Sunday I attended Baptist Church in town. Nicholasville is a town of perhaps 600 or 700 inhabitants. It wears the look of most southern towns. The houses are mainly old and weatherbeaten and with one or two exceptions there are no improvements going on. It is the county seat of Jessamine County and contains a courthous, three or four churches, two hotels, and a couple of schoolhouses. The remainder of the town is composed of black smoky looking dwellinghouses and one bay look in

vain for the enterprise and thrift of our northern villages. We have constantly a large number of visitors in camp. You can see the wealthy planter and family riding in his nice Coach driven by a black (slave) coaching and at nearly all times of the day negroes male and female are in camp selling cakes, pies, and fruit. It is said that tomorrow morning we are to start east for a place called Olympian springs situated within a few miles of western Virginia distant about 65 or 70 miles, but we have sent for our horses and wagons and expect them tomorrow but in case they do not come Col Neibling says that we will not go, but we expect to go tomorrow or next day and I will write as soon as I arrive.

Give my love to Father, I wrote to Julie yesterd

**Camp near Hazelgreen
Morgan County Kentucky
Oct 24th**

Dear folks at home

We arrived at this place this afternoon and have not had a fight either, as I told you in my last letter might be the case. But the 2nd Ohio of this Brigade that was in advance of us, a few miles had an engagement which resulted in the defeat of the enemy, and a loss on their side of 7 men, and 35 prisoners. The 2nd Ohio lost only one slightly wounded, but the enemy was nowhere to be seen upon our arrival. The 33rd arrived yesterday afternoon and arrested 40 men, and also quartered their troops in the houses of the inhabitants. I never saw such a country in my life, it is in the midst of the mountains, and the hills are so steep that the farmers have to stand upon a ladder in order to plant their corn. The houses look as though they had been built for Noahs occupation after leaving the ark. The road a part of the way is in the bed of a creek and the water is also running in the creek. We are encamped upon a hill overlooking the town, which is composed of about 20 houses, if they are worthy of that name. I don't know how long we are to stay here but it is possible that we may remain here a week or two, and we may also be ordered away tomorrow. This brigade is under command of General Nelson[.] I send this letter by one of the teamsters who are to start for Mount Sterling in the morning for provisions, as we have not yet made arrangements to have our mail carried[.] I don't know of anything of importance to write as there is hardly anything going on in this out of the way place. There is an artillery battery of four cannon at this place which came with our regiment. Perhaps you would like to know how we live. Well yesterday we had chicken for supper and this morning we had the nicest kind of potatoes and everything else that we could wish for. We have had some pretty severe marching lately, but I stand if very well, we are all in the best of spirits and longing for a brush with the enemy. I wrote to William the other day but have not yet had an answer as the mail travels very slowly over the mountains. I have not received a letter since Cap Gibbs arrived but expect letters before long. I cant think of anything more that will interest you and will close. I am writing this with the paper lying on a plate

From your son Robt Caldwell
Direct 21st regiment camp near
Hazel Green &c &c

[Dear Mother?]

If you could have been up to the Capt tent just about 10 minutes ago, you would have thought I had gone crazy by the manner in which I acted but perhaps you may ask what could have occasioned this grand gymnastical display upon my part, well the fact is I had just read a letter from home. You can hardly tell in what good humor it places a person situated as we are, to receive a letter from the ones at home. Why as for myself I believe if any person but a secesh had struck me in the face I could have forgiven him. You wish to know how camp life agrees with me, well I can say that if I were unwell and were asked what I thought would be beneficial to my health I would answer, a dose of camp life by all means. You appear to be apprehensive that some of us have not a sufficient... [torn page] ... overcoat furnished by the same fatherly gentleman. I also have a good supply of shirts and socks and in fact I have all that I could wish for at present. In future if our company should be in need of anything in that line our Captain will make application to the good people of our town who no doubt will promptly respond to the call. We were all very sorry to hear that that box of varieties which you sent us was detained on the route as it would have been very acceptable. But as it now is, it would cost it weight in silver to send it and consequently we shall be obliged to do without it. But we are willing to take the will for the deed and are just as thankful as though we had received it. I was very glad to hear that Aunt Mary was with you and that she was going to stay with you all winter. I was glad to receive a letter from her. She expressed the desire to be the wife of a General tell her if she was in the army she would at once find the romance taken off if she had to travel through the Cumberland Mountains as we have had to do. Although we have a lady in the 21st who has been with us through the whole campaign so far and as far a(s) I can find out she appears to like the life very well. Her husband is a private and she cooks for some of the officers But tell Mary to live in hope and when this little fuss is cleared up there will be lots of soldiers wanting wives, and who knows but she may be the wife of a General yet. (but enough of foolishness) I was also much pleased that Mr. Vetter was boarding with you. You wrote that Alfred Rice had enlisted in the good cause, I was very much surprised to hear that, but he will make a good soldier if he is able to stand the fatigue, but he is pretty strong and I guess he will stand it.

Father wrote that he had had an offer for his mill and wishes to know what I think of it. Well I do not know the condition of the land that he was offered whether it was improved or not but father knows all about that doubtless[.] He says that he is not able to run the mill and as he is offered what I think a middling fair price considering the times, and that he might be able to get into something that would be easier for him until I get back to take hold once more I think that he had better accept it, that is if my opinion is worth anything. The frame will need considerable repair if he keeps it, and sawmilling at the present time is not a very paying business to say the least, and if there is any kind of business that ought to pay, considering the amount of work to be done, it is sawmilling. I was much pained to hear that our good old Grandfather had departed this life, but it was what I had been expecting to hear, as he was so infirm at the time that I was at home. But let us hope that he is better off now than when he was with us. But I must close as our cook is called to stand guard and I must take his place and cook the supper just think of that will you. imagine me cooking supper is it not laughable. Give my love to all, tell Aunt Mary and John Vetter that I will write to them shortly.

(P.S.) Indian Summer is in full blast among these mountains, the finest of weather

R H Caldwell

Prestonburg Nov 13th 61

Dear Mother

As I have written two letters to Father since arriving at this place I thought it no more than fair that I should now write to you and let you know how the 21st in general and Co. I in particular were fareing at the present time. Well as I wrote to Father there had been a skirmish between our forces and those of the enemy at a place a considerable distance up the river in which the rascals were routed. Mr George Jones of Co I was present during the brush and received a ball in the calf of one of his legs, he was the only man of the 21st that was wounded He says that the 21st was ordered round the hill to take the enemy in the rear and he says that about the time they arrived at their position the firing ceased and probably that accounts for the small number of our boys being wounded We cannot get the correct report yet as our boys have not yet returned to this place but we are looking for them daily.

In the letter that I wrote to father I explained the reason why I was not with our regt. At the time of marching I was sick with the chill fever contracted by exposure and over exertion, the last day that I marched we were put on a forced march of over 23 miles and I was sick the day before but my mottoe is to never complain as long as I can lift a musket to my shoulder, I got wet that night as it rained after our arrival at the river and we were about two hours crossing as we had but one flatboat upon which the whole regt had to cross. But I am now about well once more, I have an appetite like a bear, but I am very particular about what I eat. I received a letter from father last night dated nov 2nd and was very glad to hear from home. I also received one from the same source while we were lying in a camp some distance this side of Hazel Green it was dated Oct 27th and I received it upon the evening of the first of November He spoke of N. Willsons Co in that letter. I immediately answered it. I also received a letter from you while we were lying in H. Green in which I reed the news of Grandfathers death I also answered that within 15 minutes after receiving it. I wrote several letters home while we were at the above named town, and when we were at the Licking river I sent two letters to Father and (as I said before) I have already sent two, since arriving at this place and this will make the third. And taking it altogether I think I have done pretty well in the writing line, and if you fail to receive my letters the fault is in the mail[.] I am quite certain that I don't get all your letters as I am confident that you write oftener than I receive, however I shall not complain as I have been over the roads and know what they are and it is no wonder if the mail fails to make a connection now and then. When you receive this letter and find yourself obliged to pay the postage don't be surprised and think that I am out of money for such is not the case. But the case is this, hitherto the rules have been that we could pay the postage with money, but of late the orders are, that if a person has no postage stamps to place upon their letter they will have to get it marked soldiers letter and it will go free until its arrival at its destination when the postage can be paid by the one receiving the letter. But as I shall need my money to purchase writing material it will still be very useful[.] When you write I wish you would send me four or five stamps to be used on special occassions. It is not known positively where we shall go after leaving this place, but is rumored that we are to go either to Cincinnati or Louisville but that would be too good news and I cant believe it. Tell Father I will

answer his letter shortly. I should like above all things to get a leader now and then, as we receive no news whatever

R H Caldwell
love to all

Prestonburg Floyd Co
Ky nov 15th __61

Dear Father

This is to let you know that I have lately received two letters from you one dated the 2nd and the other the 5th and I was very glad to hear from home.

I was sorry to hear that Nat Willson was obliged to give up his Co as I should have liked very much to have had Nat turn out a full company I was glad to hear that Bucklands regt was prospering so finely. I am in hopes that Al Rice will succeed with his Co. I am very glad to think that Aunt Mary is to stay with you this winter. I suppose before this time that Juliet has arrived at home and taking things altogether I guess that you will have a plenty of company as John Vetter is a lively fellow indeed

I was sorry to hear that the man who was going to buy the mill failed to come but there may be better chances yet for selling

I was glad to hear that business was in such a prospering condition in Elmore. You say that the ladies of Elmore have formed themselves into a soldiers aid society, may they meet with good success. James Bumpus is not 2nd Lieutenant of Co I. As has been reported Wood is still Lieut and as far as I can judge will remain as such. There was some talk of putting Bumpus in his place while we were lying at Lexington, but it was never done and I am glad of it as Wood has made a good Officer since leaveing that place

When I last wrote I wrote that I had been sick, but I am now almost a(s) well as ever. Our regiment is still at a place called Picketon a place situated about 25 miles up the river, they are to remain at that place for a few days I believe, and in the meantime we (that is those who were left at this place) are to remain here until they come down, we have once more taken up our quarters in houses. Co I. is quartered in a large brick house with three fireplaces in it

I hardly know what to write a(s) news is very scarce with us at present. I should like to know something in regard to the movements of the army on the Potomac we have heard but little news since leaving Lexington You wish to know if I would like to have you send me the Leader occasionally, do so by all means as we receive no news of any account in these mountains and a paper from home would be a treat indeed. As the Postmaster will take nothing but postage stamps in payment for letters and it is impossible to get stamps I send my letters in future as Soldiers letters and you will find it necessary to pay for the postage upon the receipts of them

You may still direct to
Prestonburg Floyd County K.y
&c &c &c
R H Caldwell

Prestonburg Floyd County
Nov 17th [1861]

Dear Father

We have received orders to leave this place for some point upon the Ohio river, probably Cincinnati. We are to leave tomorrow morning and it is likely that we will be taken upon steamboats. The regiment (the 21st) arrived from up the river last night and we are now altogether once more. The boys marched a distance of about 30 miles and when they arrived they were pretty well fagged out.

The rumor is now prevalent that we are going to Lexington by the way of Cin, and we are to stay at Lex until we are recruited sufficiently in point of health, when we are to go to Camp Dick Robinson and join another Brigade when we are to commence active operations against the rebels.

Another rumor, which I think the most probable, is that we are to go into winter quarters not far distant from Cincinnati. Day before yesterday Col Norton told Cap Gibbs that he was just ready to start for Ohio for the purpose for finding suitable quarters for the 21st and he has since left for that purpose. And for that reason I consider this last rumor (if rumor it can be called) worthy of the most credit I wrote in one of my letters that in the late engagement Mr Jones received a slight flesh wound in one of his legs he is doing well and in fact you would hardly know that he was wounded by the way he carries on He is perfectly happy, as it is said he will be allowed to return home until he is well again.

This is the poorest place in the world for news and consequently I shall be obliged to cut this letter short. I guess you had better still direct to Prestonburg Floyd County K.y &c &c &c and the letters will be forwarded to the 21st wherever it may be.

This is the fourth letter that I have written home from this place and as I said in my last, I received two letters a few days ago dated the 2nd and 5th of this month, but I must close

From Robert H. Caldwell

(P.S)

We are all happy as larks on account of receiving orders to leave these mountains, which I can truly say we have never yet fallen in love with
RHC

Catlettsburg) Kentucky
Nov 20th __61

Dear Father

Hurrah! We are once more within sight of old Ohio but I suppose I had better go back a day or two and commence there and let you know what has taken place since that time. While at Prestonburg I wrote that we had received marching orders, and that it was expected we would start in a day or two for Cincinnati. Well at the appointed time we broke up camp and started for the ferry for the purpose of being ferried across, there were four regiments of us and it occupied the whole day in putting the wagons and men across, I had been excused from duty in the morning by the Surgeon on account of not yet having recovered from the effects of the chill fever of which I wrote to you, and as we were sitting by our campfires talking over the prospects for wintering in Ohio, when an express came from the Doctor desiring all those who had been excused in the morning by him to report aboard of the steamer Sandy Valley then lying at the pier and as I happened to come under that category you may believe that it did not take me very long to get my things together and myself aboard the boat. There was about 50 of the 21st aboard besides a like number from each of the other regts. The steamer started sometime in the night destined for the mouth of the Big Sandy a distance of 60 or 70 miles, but I had forgotten to say that the remainder of the 21st was to go by land down the river a distance of about 40 miles when they were to take boats and join us at this place. When daylight made its appearance we were going down the river with Virginia on one side and Kentucky on the other, that being the first time that I had been allowed the privilege of looking upon the Old Dominion so famed in song and story. But I looked long in vain to see something about those everlasting mountains and log cabins with the neverfailing accompaniment of a dozen or two of dirty ragged children running about that was calculated to awaken the romance of any writer. It was nothing but rocks and mountains, log cabins, dirty children, lean pigs, starved chickens, dirt, and poverty upon every hand There that is my opinion of what I saw of the far famed Old Dominion Well we kept on down the river and passed the town of Louisa, a town of considerable importance. We arrived at the Ohio river at about 3, o'clock and went up into to find quarters, which we accomplished after a short search. We are quartered in a good warm house situated upon the bank of the Ohio river, and we are favored every now and then with the sight of a magnificent steam plowing her way either up or down river, and for one to see such a sight, who has seen nothing for the last month except a wilderness, it is quite refreshing. The town of Catlet[t]sburg is situated at the mouth of the Big Sandy upon the banks of that stream and also that of the Ohio, it contains a population of perhaps 700 inhabitants the houses are well built and the place has a very thriving appearance. There is considerable shipping done here. I visited two large steamboats this morning and it is surprising what an amount of freight one of these boats is capable of carrying. They are literally stowed from bottom to top with boxes, barrels, and bales of cotton.

When we arrived here we were without rations, and no means for drawing when a citizen of the place brought the boys of the 21st a good warm supper consisting of warm bread and butter,

chicken, jelly and applebutter warm coffee and tea and now perhaps, things in general and the chicken in particular did not take to themselves wings and fly away, just ask the boys of the 21st. And this morning the same good man brought down a plentiful supply of warm Steak mashed potatoes good warm rusk with the best of coffee with milk and sugar in it. We all felt as though we could not do enough for that man. Shortly after this we drew our regular rations with a few additions and we are going to live like kings, you never saw a happier set of boys in your life than we are, We expect to lie at this place for a few days when we will be joined by our regt and proceed in boats down the river to Cincinnati, and there my information stops but I think in all probability we shall go from that city to Lexington, as all indications of late seem to point to that conclusion, However I am as happy as a lark no matter where I am just so long that I keep my health. I have not yet seen the time that I could truly say I was homesick, I cannot account for it. It must be caused by the never failing excitement of cam life, the looking ahead and expecting one hardly knows what, the ever varying scenes which present themselves to ones view, these and a thousand other things taken together tend as the French would say to keep one on the gui vive and serve to keep off the blues, I think if any person should get homesick that person ought to be myself, as I left the best home that God in all his seeing wisdom ever provided any person with, and was blessed with parents that I believe were never willing to place a (burden?) upon my shoulders that they were not willing to carry for me should they think it best for my welfare. I often think of these things and they make a deep impression upon my mind, and i now see that I never full appreciated the endeavors of my parents to promote my welfare, and I believe that if there is any one thing that is calculated more than another to keep one steps from the paths of vice and immorality, it is the memory of that home that I cheerfully left, to take up arms in defence of the best government the World ever knew. Tell Aunt Mary to not get tired waiting for that letter (there goes a steamboat right past our door, and here comes another) as I intend to write her a long letter when I get into a place where we have accomodations for writing. I am writing this letter sitting flat upon the floor with my knapsack lying across my knees and my paper lying upon it, I have written a large share of my letters with my paper lying upon the bottom of an inverted tin plate, such as we use in eating, but who would not be a soldier, From this point we can see three states Virginia, Ohio, and Kentucky, they all three center on this point. Virginia is just across the Big Sandy and Ohio across that river. When you write direct to Cincinnati and in case we go elsewhere it will be forwarded on to us.

Give my love to all from Robert H Caldwell

Camp near Louisville
Dec 3rd [1861]

Dear Mother

Since writing my last letter I have received three letters from home, on from Juliet with Wm letter enclosed and one from Aunt Mary, also one from you. We have had a fine snow storm, or rather two of them since arriving at Louisville it snowed about two inches deep a few nights ago and last Sunday night and Monday morning it snowed again and while it was snowing, we received orders to strike tents and prepare to move to a better camping ground situated about two miles from the city as the one in which we have been camping for the last week had become almost untenable on account of the wind and consequently while it was snowing violently we

struck tents and took up the march for our new quarters where in due time we arrived and found it necessary to take shovels and clear the ground of the snow where our tents were to be pitched, which was finally accomplished, when the boys [s]tarted for the straw piles and rail fences, the once to furnish bedding and the other fuel, as Nelsons Brigade always makes it a point to not allow a fence or straw stack to stand within its reach. Our present camp ground is very finely situated upon a dry piece of sod ground, with water handy by to be used for cooking purposes. You wrote that there was a considerable amount of improvements going on in town, I was glad to hear of it, I was also glad to hear that John Ryder was going to build and that he had given Father a bill of lumber to save. The health of the 21st is fast improving. But I have some news to tell you, the paymaster is around and we are to receive our pay in a few days. This morning George Claghorn and myself were detailed to report at Headquarters for the purpose of making out the payrolls, there is two men detailed from each company for that purpose. There is at present near this camp about 20 regiments of infantry artillery, and cavalry. It is not positively known how long we are to remain at ar present quarters, but it is thought we will remain at this place something like 10 days. Our destination is not positively known but rumor says we are to go to Bowling Green however we may yet be ordered to Columbus Ky. We receive the daily papers in camp regularly. We get the Louisville Journal and Democrat and of course we are posted in regar to the news Perhaps you may have some fears in regard to our comfort, these cold nights, well I can say for one that I never slept more comfotably than I do in my tent[.] I have two blankets one of which I place upon the straw (which is about a foot deep) and the other I place over me and I have a bedfellow who also has a blanket and so we have one under and two over us, which keeps us very warm. We are to have a stove in each tent this winter. Each mess is to furnish its own stove, our mess consists of 10 men and as the stove costs \$3 it will cost each man but 30 cents. Tell Aunt Mary that I will answer her letter shortly I have not yet received Veters letter and am looking anxiously for it, Tell Father when I receive my pay that I intend to make him a present of a Government Order as I am not in debt one cent ot any man this side of home.

Love to all
R H Caldwell

Camp near Louisville
Dec 4th [1861]

Dear Father

I write this letter to let you know that I received a letter from Mother last evening and enclosed I found one dollar which proved very acceptable as I was just out of postage stamps having placed the last one upon the letter that I sent to Mother by this mail. The one great topic of conversation in camp at pressent is the arrival of the paymaster, I worked nearly all yesterday afternoon on the payrolls of Co I. and it will take the greater part of to day to finish them, and when that is accomplished we are to receive our pay. But I suppose that some great lover of his country who makes it a point to stay at home and continually urge others to fight the battles of the Union, would say fri? upon you for making such great calculations upon receiving the paltry sum to which you are entitled by law, you should never stoop so low as to take into consideration the pay that you are to receive but if needs be you should be willing to wade throug[h] mud, snow,

water and blood and to endure all sorts of hardships for the good of your country. Unto all such Union men I merely wish to say that I properly appreciate all such sentiment but the Paymaster is a great institution. As I have but little time to write I shall have to close by saying that Johnny is well and hearty and looks as though he were able to endure almost any amount of hardship, so healthy is he.

I have not yet received Mr Vettters letter but am looking for it by every mail, I answered Aunt Marys letter the other day, but I must close give my love to all

From Robert Caldwell

Camp near Louisville Dec 8th__61

Dear Father

Since I finished my letter I have heard the order that we are to start upon a march for, goodness knows where. We are to start at eight in the morning, we have drawn Three days rations, I suppose our (destination) is to be Camp Nevin near Bowling green

I suppose you have heard that Gen (Nelson) has been promoted to a Major Generalship and ???Col of the 33rd Col Sill has been made a Brigadier General he commands our brigade

[New Page]

When I arrive where I can get a chance I will write. But it is bed time and as the boys want to go to bed I must close

From Robert Caldwell

[Note at top of page]

I answered Mr Vettters letter at Louisville

I received a letter from you while at the above named place that was directed to Catlettsburg

Dec 12th

Camp Harris, Elizabeth town Ky

Dear Father

I received your letter last night of the 7th and was very glad to hear from home. I wrote to you last Sunday from Louisville and stated that we had just received orders to march early in the morning destination not known, but we found out after starting that we had been ordered to Elizabeth town distant about 40 miles. We left Louisville Monday morning at 8,oclock and that day we marched about 16 miles and encamped for the night on a farm belonging to the notorious Buckner the General in command of the rebel troops stationed at Bowling green[.] It is situated upon the bank of the Ohio river. We started on the march Tuesday morning at daybreak and after marching 3 miles we were all brought up standing upon the salt river, and as there was no bridge

across the river at this point we were ferried over in hand ferry boats we were detained about 3 hours by the river. The Salt river empties into the Ohio at this place and the town of West Point is built upon the banks of both rivers. The 49th Ohio was stationed at this place sometime ago. The town is built at the foot of Muldroughs hill upon which the 9th Michigan has built a fortification, it mounts several guns, and directly opposite the town on the Indiana shore there is another fortification, they are intended to stop Buckners fleet that was expected to move up the Ohio and destroy Louisville. The hill upon which the larges fort is built (Muldraughs) is perhaps 150 feet high and is almost perpendicular and it would be almost impossible to storm it successfully[.] There is also an old deserted fort upon the bank of the Salt river opposite the town, that was built by the home guards of West Point it formerly mounted 5 guns one side of the works is built principally of sand bags but that portion of the works fronting is more substantially built of timbers and earth and is about 6 feet in thickness. I forgot to say that the 2nd Ohio marched with us as it left Louisville at the same time we did. We left West point about 12 oclock and marched a distance of about 9 miles when we encamped for the night. The next morning we pulled up and started and marched 12 ½ miles in the forenoon and pitched our tents in the present quarters where we arrived yesterday at noon. we are 1 1/2 miles of the town of Elizabethtown which it is said contains a population of about 4000. It is not known how long we will stay at this place as it is thought a fight with Buckner cannot be delayed much longer, as 20000 United States troops made a forward movement from a camp situated 10 miles in advance of us There are 5 regts at this place. The 2nd 21st 33rd Ohio and the 10th Wisconsin besides the 24th Illinois a german regt. The first four form our brigade. I was a little surprised to hear that James Broggs contemplated matrimony. We expect to receive our pay in a short time. I wish you would tell ??? Willson to write me and tell me the color of her eyes and hair[.] Mabel is a pretty name. I received the gold dollar that you sent me for which I was very grateful Tell Mother I have bought a pair of mittens Give my love to Mother, Aunt Mary, Juliet Vetter & Willy

R.H.C.

Camp Jefferson Dec 22nd __61

Dear Father

Morning broke in Camp Jefferson dark and cloudy threatening rain or something equally disastrous, and while breakfast was being prepared the clouds opened and the rains commenced descending in torrents, but as a soldier cannot live without eating, our cook found it necessary to stand and take the rain as it came. Our breakfast having been dispatched we all (that is our mess) returned to our different occupations when, as I was engaged in sorting some of my effects happening to look I found a nice little stream of water making its way through our tent, when up I jumped and made my way through the tent to the kitchen tent where the tools of the company were deposited and having secured a spade I commenced enlarging the ditch that I had digged round our tent at the time of pitching it which I found had proved inadequate for carrying off the extra amount of water that had fallen. The whole camp was alive with the soldiers engaged in the same occupation and the manner in which the dirt flew in the 21st for a short time was sufficient to make a railroading son? of the Emerald Isle tremble for his credit. I finally finished the ditch and got back into our house which was by this time clear? of water once more, But as such an occassion rarely occurs we concluded not to get mad about it. I wrote to Juliet a few days ago,

but since then we have moved on to Bacon creek where the water was better and more abundant. The 21st is encamped upon the Louisville & Nashville R.R.. The bridge across the creek at this place was burned by the secesh some time ago, but has been rebuilt by the government There are eight regts within sight of our camp at the present time in addition to three batteries that are planted upon the hill overlooking our camp. we are within eight miles of Green river, where as doubtless you are aware there is a large force of our troops encamped. Our troops are stationed on this side of the river but as the bridge over that stream had also been burned by some of Buckners agents it was found necessary to reconstruct it and a whole Brigade is thrown across each day for pickets. Our troops had an encounter a few days ago at that place. Three regts of U.S. troops had crossed for the purpose of camping, and while they were engaged in marking out the grounds preparatory to pitching tents, they were attacked by a surprise force who had come across them unawares from the opposite side of a high hill. Our troops had but two minutes warning but they made the the most of it and after a sharp contest succeeded in driving them off. It is said the loss of the enemy consisted of something over 100, our loss was but 13 killed. I know not how soon we may be ordered but we are expecting marching orders every day. I received a letter from you day before yesterday, I also received one from Mr Vetter and Willie, which I will aswer shortly.

Direct to Camp Jefferson, Leesville

&c&c&c, Love to all R H Caldwell

Camp Jefferson Ky Dec 26th 61

Dear Father

Christmas has come, and gone and I now propose to give you a description of the manner in which some of the boys of the 21st passed the day.

On the afternoon of Dec 24th while on dress parade, an order issued by Gen Mitchel was read, in which the Gen had kindly given us the ensuing day off for a holiday. We were to be allowed the privilege of leaveing camp for the purpose of visiting our brother soldiers in the neighboring camps, also the privilege of visiting the different natural curiosities in this vicinity. Accordingly very early in the morning of the 25th in company with seargt M. Rice I left camp for the purpose of visiting a noted cave situated about a mile from camp. We had provided ourselves with matches and candles before starting. Having arrived at the place where the cave was situated we proceeded to strike a light and after that was accomplished we commenced the work of exploration. The place of entrance is situated upon the side of a bluff of high rocks which form the high hill under which the cave extends[.] We had no guide with us but concluded to trust to providence and our own common sense to guide us through for through it we were bound to go. Perhaps I should have informed you that this subterranean passage led completely through the above mentioned hill a distance of about 500 yards. At its entrance we were obliged to bow the head and bend the knee slightly, but after proceeding a short distance we found ourselves in that portion of the cavern where the ceiling rose to a considerable height and we were once more able to hold our heads up as good soldiers of Uncle Sam should always be proud to do. The walls presented a very uneven appearance as there were several small rooms that made off from the

main passage. We endeavored to explore some of the rooms, but were forced to desist, on account of the roof which in some places came in contact with our bodies as we were crawling upon all fours. The roof of the main cavern was studded with stalactites formed by the constant dropping of water and in some instances they reached from the ceiling almost to the floor[.] Some of them were of a milky color while others presented a darker appearance doubtless caused by the nature of the soil through which the water had passed on its route to the cavern. In some places the action of the water had formed pillars upon the floor, which made quite comfortable seats upon which the adventurer might recline for the purpose of resting himself. The water was constantly dropping from the roof which mad[e] it somewhat disagreeable on that account, the water stood in pools in every direction and on account of our poor light we found it necessary to keep a sharp lookout, but notwithstanding our vigilance I managed to get into one of the numerous pools that beset our path. After having gone about half the distance through, we heard shouting on our front and presently we saw a light and several soldiers coming toward us who, like ourselves, were not satisfied with a description of the place, but had concluded to give it a personal inspection. We at last arrived at the opposite side of the cave and once more found ourselves above ground and well satisfied with what we had witnessed. After remaining outside of the lines nearly all day we once more passed the guard and found ourselves subject to military rules, the privileges and immunities to which we had been subject during the day all taken away, but such is the experience of a soldier. I received a letter from Mother this afternoon for which you may believe I was very thankful. You also wrote in the same letter as also did Willie. Your disposition of the money that I sent you meets with my hearty approval and I will send all that I possibly can, which you can apply in the same direction. I myself would be glad to be able to say that we did not owe one cent[.] If you meet with an offer for my cutter you may sell it and apply the money the same direction, or any other that you may see fit. I wish to do all that lies in my power to clear up our debts, as I am aware that you put yourself to a great deal of inconvenience when you allowed me to enlist[.] I trust that I properly appreciate the sacrifice and hope that I may be able in part to repay you. Tell Mother that I will answer hers & Willies next love to all Robert

Camp Jefferson K.y Dec 27th __61

Friend Vetter

As we have just returned from Battallion drill and we will have about a two hours rest before we are called out again I thought I could not employ my time better than to answer your interesting letter which came to hand a few days ago. We have been having some pretty wet weather for some days past, but today the sun is out bright and clear with a fair prospect of remaining so for the remainder of the day.

I wrote to Father yesterday and gave an account of the manner in which I spent my Christmas, but as my paper gave out before I was through I did not give him the whole particulars. I gave or endeavored to give a description of a cave that I visited during the day[.] I also visited a noted hill situated within about two miles of camp called Frenchman's Knob, from the top of which a fine view of the surrounding country may be had. The hill rises far above any other in its neighborhood and from its top I saw the finest sight that it ever was my privilege to behold[.] This portion of the State of Ky is quite mountaineous and one could behold range after range of

mountains each one farther off and rising above the one in its front, until nothing was to be seen in the distance but one blue line with peaks rising one above another until they reached almost into the heavens, as it seemed. Oh! it was the grandest sight I ever witnessed and I shall never forget it if I live to be a thousand years old. Descending from the hill, we next visited a large and deep sinkhole which some people in this neighborhood pretend to say has no bottom, a statement which I very much doubt. The place is known by its name of blue hole and after I arrived at its brink and peered into its depths I concluded that it had been very appropriately named. The hole measures about 30 feet across and gradually decreases in size until it is about 15 ft in diameter when it descends almost perpendicularly to a depth of about 150 feet and then branches off in different directions and probably forms the main entrance to some extensive cave. There was a tree across its mouth that had been placed in that position several years ago by an adventurer who by means of a rope had descended into the hole to a depth of about 160 feet, when he arrived upon a large pile of stones in its center and after ascending gave the above description of its interior.

But as I looked into the black and dangerous looking (concern?) I concluded to be satisfied with that, and not risk my valuable neck in an attempt to explore it[.] I threw in several large rocks and after descending perpendicularly for quite a space of time they would strike against some projecting rock and after breaking into a thousand different pieces would go crashing on its way, until the sound died away in the distance. After satisfying our curiosity Seargt. Rice and myself started for camp, on our route we came across a farmer with a yoke of oxen and a cart, and as every man that drives a team in this country has something to sell to the soldier, we marched up to his cart and found he had turkey and chicken for sale, they were finely cooked and stuffed and after purchasing a fine chicken and a price of corn bread Mike and I proceeded to partake of a Christmas dinner. You would have laughed could you have seen us sitting in the grass by ourselves walking into that devoted fowl. I have often heard of chickens taking to themselves wings and flying away, but never before had I seen a chicken legs and wings fly as did those of the above mentioned fowl. I had my overcoat with me and as you are aware, they have got quite a long ____ (I am very modest) story, well after spreading that part of my coat upon the ground for a tablecloth we just imagined that there was a table underneath and as before mentioned put things away as fast as possible. I shall always remember that Christmas dinner as being the first that I had partaken in this state[.] But you see I must close. love to all from Robert.

Camp Jefferson Ky Dec 29th 61

Dear Mother

I received your very welcome letter a few days ago, and you cant imagine how much good it does me to get a good letter from home. I wrote to Father two days ago, also to Mr Vetter and Willie yesterday and consequently I shall be somewhat bothered for ideas, but as Father, in one of his letters told about His and your trip to Fremont and visit to the Fremont camp and of your feelings when he saw the filthy manner in which some of the boys lived in their tents, for fear that I might be living in the same style, I will endeavor to quiet your fears that nothing of the kind is allowed in the 21st[.] Each mess is required to have an orderly whose business it is, to see that his tent and grounds around his tent are thoroughly policed every morning and oftener if necessary. As I am the orderly of my tent I do not wish to brag on it, but I will say that it has the

reputation of being an a no. 1 mess, in point of cleanliness and order. Mr Barnes is the cook and if you could only see some of the meals that he is in the habit of getting up you would wonder that he had never hired out as a cook in some restarant instead of comeing to war, we live top top. Yesterday, by order of the Coronel all drill was suspended for the purpose of allowing us time to ditch our street that runs between our tents, a squad of boys was sent ot the wood to get our puncheons and the remainder of the Co was set to work on the ditches two long ditches were dug the whole length of the street and covered with puncheons which mad a good and substantial sidewalk we run our tent ditches into the main ones and that keeps the ground round our tents nice and dry. Co H. had plank to cover their ditches their street made the very best appearance, but the Surgeon gave Co I the credit of having the neatest quarters.

We have got our stoves and they are just the thing. they cost each man from 25 to 30 cents a piece they keep our tents as warm as we could wish for, and often we are obliged to fling open our tents on account of the heat. Doubtless you have heard by the letters of some of our boys that we are not allowed a sufficient amount of food. now in regard to that, I merely wish to say that there has been times often and often when we refused the crackers that we were allowed, on account of having several barrels on hand at the time[.] There was a time when we had 4 1/2 barrels on hand. The only time that I know of where the boys could not get enough to eat was when we were comeing down the Big Sandy, the way of it was that the boys drew their rations for one day and started on the march and the provisions were put aboard the boats to go by water, with the expectation that the regiment would overtake the boats at night and be able to draw rations but on account of the boats starting in advance and the troops being detained they were short of rations for one day. In my estimation that is the only time that the boys could find fault about their rations. I wrote in the forepart of this letter that Co H. had the credit of having the best street. I was mistaken. I have just returned from dress parade, where a notice was read giving the praise to Co I of having the best looking street there what do you think of that.

I guess that we will remain at this place 3 or 4 weeks until the bridge across Green river is repaired[.] it was blown up some time ago by the rebels. it is built of iron and is 1000 feet in length. the piers are 150 feet high[.] but I must close.

1862

Camp Jefferson Bacon creek

K.y Jan 3rd

Dear Sister

I had the pleasure of receiving a letter from you yesterday and I need not tell you that all of your letters are trully interesting and welcome

We are still in camp at the above named place awaiting orders which we expect in a few days, when in all probability we shall move on Bowling green. The bridge across Green river is almost completed, and I believe the destruction of that structure was the principal cause of our detention at this point, but now that the bridge is about completed you will doubtless hear of some stirring events in this part of the State ere long[.] It is said that Buckner is in command of a very large force, report places the number at 6000 and it is also said that he has 105 pieces of cannon which

he expects to bring to bear on us, and should the above report prove true, which doubtless is the case, it will in all probability prove one of the most sanguinary battles ever fought upon this Continent, and what an honor it will be to those engaged upon our side, should our arms prove victorious. I don't know exactly the number of our troops that are in this department, but I think it is fully equal or perhaps greater than that of the enemy. We have, at this camp, 12 pcs of artillery and there is also at Green river 66 pcs some of them of large caliber, There is one battery of 10 pound Parrot guns camped at this place, this battery has just arrived from western Va where it has been doing good execution. At the battle of Greenbrier where it was engaged, a projectile was fired from one of the guns, a distance of three miles which dismounted one of the enemy's guns, The Parrot gun is made of steel and is very long gun, and for that reason its accuracy is considered greater at long range, than that of other guns, I was glad to hear of Alfred Rices success in being elected 1st Lieut it is as you say a trustworthy position, and one that he may fill with honor to himself and Country, but it will require a great deal of care and judgement on his part to become an efficient Officer. He will be constantly called upon to use judgement and moderation in all his actions toward his men, and constantly bear in mind that He is no better than a private so long as the private is a good soldier, and on the other hand he must not be slow to command their obedience in all things that are just and right, as an officer without command is a poor concern indeed. I have no doubt that with proper care on his part, and being under the eye of his brother John he may make such an one as will be an honor to his company and regt[.]

You spoke of the Mason Slider case as giving great dissatisfaction to the people of the North, well we must take some insults from old England during our present difficulties, no matter how galling they may be, but just wait until the present war is ended, and I know of one that would not be backward to enlist for the purpose of giving her a sound thrashing for her meanness for interfering at this time[.] I recd a letter from Aunt Mary short time ago which I will answer in turn.

Love to all[.]
Robt

Camp Jefferson
Bacon creek K.y Jan 10th

Dear Sister

I received your letter last night and was truly glad to hear from you, as it was the first letter that I have had since Lieut Vantine arrived in camp.

We have been lying in this camp for so long a time that I find it very difficult to write anything that would be calculated to interest you[.] you wish to know whether we had a cold day on the fifth, well it rained nearly all day and the mud was almost over shoetop,

In this portion of the State we generally have rain, about the time that it is snowing finely in your pleasant town and while you are listening to the chime of sleighbells we are wading through the mud, but that is not always the case, as we sometimes have the roads frozen pretty solid.

We have got our new tents and they are much better than the old ones were[.] Those that we have now have are called the Sibley tent and are calculated to hold 20 men, however we have but 15 men in ours I believe the Fremont regt has the same kind. Last New years day, I went out into the country and took dinner at the house of a Kentucky farmer, while the principle part of our mess had an oyster dinner. I may mention one thing that will probably interest you At the house where I took my New years dinner a young lady presided at the dinner table which made it quite interesting, and for that reason perhaps the dinner was prolonged for a greater length of time, than it would otherwise have been.

While dinner was being prepared I entered into conversation with the old gentleman but of course my eyes and thoughts were directed toward the aforementioned young lady while I appeared to be very much interested in the conversation of the Farmer. But dinner being over I was obliged to start for camp and did so casting many a lingering look behind. I have never heard whether I created an impression or not, but if I failed, it cannot be charged to me. But as I wish to write a few lines to Willie I must close,

From Robert

Dear Willie,

I received your long and interesting letter and was glad to hear from you. I think you are a pretty good scholar to do that example as there are lots of boys older than yourself that would have been puzzled with it. You wish me to give you a harder one here it is, How many men are there in the 21st regt there are 10 companies and each Co has an average of 90 men, besides 3 commissioned officers each, and there are also 5 field officers 2 surgeons one commissary one quartermaster and one wage master, now if you get this one right I must say that you are a good scholar indeed.

But I must close when next I write I will write you a longer letter.

Robert Caldwell
give my love to all

Camp Jefferson. Bacon creek K.y Jan 15th

Dear Mother

Well I declare, what shall I write, I hardly know what would be most interesting to you, but thinking that you will be glad to hear that I am enjoying good health I make the remark and back it up by telling you that I weigh just 170 pounds and never enjoyed myself better in my life, than I do at the present time.

There is hardly a man in Co I but what weighs more at this present time, than he did at the time of enlisting, notwithstanding the poor board that some of its members have been obliged to put up with, poor fellow [trails off] But Tattoo is just sounding and I must close for tonight.

Jan 16th

Yesterday morning we received to pack knapsacks and be ready to march at half past eight o'clock, and the camp was all on the quiver to know what was up, some said that we were going to cut off a train of supplies that was being sent to the rebels, and some said one thing and some another, but the time arrived and we all marched out, with the artillery in advance of us and after going about a mile we came to a large field, and we then found out that we were to have a sham! battle. Our whole Brigade finally arrived and one company of Cavalry from the 4th Ohio which is camped alongside of our regiment and then commenced a real! sham battle, the cavalry would charge upon the Infantry and then wheel and retreat and make an attack in a different place while the different regiments were firing upon each other with unloaded! guns, and all this time the artillery was rushing here and there wheeling and firing with empty guns, with terrible effect upon the imaginary enemy and thus the fight raged for upwards of half a day, when thinking that the foe had been sufficiently chastised for the present, with tired limbs but fearless hearts we changed our mode of attacks and charged upon our dinner with equal effect, and after having Battalion drill for an hour or two we were ordered back to camp, where we arrived without any further adventure, and thus terminated our first great fight in this part of Kentucky, I believe our loss consisted of one barrel crackers, nothing more.

Day before yesterday it blew up cold and rained and toward night it commenced snowing and fell to the depth of about one inch, when it held up and remained cold for the remainder of the night and a part of yesterday but, the wind shifting the snow went off and as it rained last night we are once more in the mud. I recd a letter from Juliet last Sunday, and yesterday one from Al Rice their regiment is almost full,

But I must close, love to all from

Robert

Camp Jefferson Bacon creek Jan 19th

Dear Father

Thinking that you might be anxious to know how I am getting along at present I improve the present time by writing a few lines to let you know that I enjoy the best of health, I weigh 170 pounds at present, which is about 15 pounds heavier than I was at the time of enlistment, so much for scant rations and hard living that some of our boys have taken delight in telling of so often in their letters that they have from time to time sent home. Such persons are to be pitied, as they are forever making themselves miserable, and never willing to contribute to the happiness of others. I received a joint stock letter last Friday from yourself, Mother & Willie, and in it Mother stated that you had lately, or rather Elmore had parted with a young! lady that used to be known by the name of Ella Ryder. Well I suppose the above named lady was born to be Lucky at some period in her life. That they may pass a long and happy life together is my wish.

I know not what kind of weather you are having but last night our camp was visited by a fine thunder storm it thundered and lightened the same as though it were an april shower that had burst upon us, For the last week or two we have had nothing but rain and mud with an occasional skift of snow, but I guess that our winter is about gone in this part of the State at least that is the

opinion of those who are considered to be competent judges. I wrote to Wm as soon as I received your letter. The Green river bridge has been finished some time, and we are expecting to be ordered forward before many days, but it is difficult to tell how long we may be obliged to remain at this place. We are all very impatient to move onward and close the war as soon as possible.

Our drill ground is so cut up that all drill has been suspended for the present, and consequently time passes rather heavily on our hands, The health of the regt is improveing, there is but little sickness in camp at the present time, compared with the fore part of the winter. Please tell Mr Vetter that I should like very much to hear from him. Give my love to all

From Robt Caldwell

(P.S) It appears that Ely Eoff is tired of singe life. Perhaps he has taken a hint from Jim Luckey.
R.C

Camp Jefferson Bacon creek K.y Jan 21st 62

Dear Father

I have just received a letter from Juliet and, as I have a little leisure time I propose to improve it by giving you the news of the camp.

Yesterday morning a member of Co A. accidentally shot himself dead, while attempting to remove a loaded gun from his gun rack, eh had been out on picket the day before and yesterday morning returned to camp and very carelessly neglected to remove the cap before putting his gun away, and when the old guard was ordered out, to fire off their guns, in attempting, (as I said before) to remove his gun from the rack, the hammer was caught in some manner or other, and the piece was discharged, the ball entering his breast, and he fell dead without uttering a groan. I am in hopes the rest of the regt may profit by this sad accident, so that we may never be called upon to chronicle another such event. The most staple article now in camp is, mud, mud, mud, the wagons are covered, the horses are covered, the drivers are covered, and in fact everything about camp is deluged with the same sticky substance. It is almost impossible for those with shoes to get about. Yesterday, Gen Mitchel ordered out 800 men to work the roads, between the Depot at this place, and the 2nd Ohio's camp distant about one mile from this place, He had a new road graded and puncheons go out, and made a Cordurouy road, and they are to work on it still and intend to keep at it until they make a road, upon which teams can pass without miring, you have no idea how muddy the roads are in this vicinity. Last Sunday night, (or rather Monday morning) at about three oclock, our camp was visited by a most terrific Thunder shower and J__e__h__w how it rained, tent number 4 of Co I was flooded insomuch that the mess pans were floated out of the tent and the boys were obliged to climb upon the boxes and everything that was above water, in order to keep dry, The reason that no 4 suffered more than others was on account of our having thrown up a ridge in the middle of the street and neglected to dig a ditch through it,

and as no 4 happened to be in a low place the water backed up into the tent to the depth of six inches.

Very early this morning we received the joyful intelligence that Zollicoffer & Co had been completely whipped and routed by Gen Thomas, and that the old thief of the world had received his quietus, which he has richly deserved for a long time, Hurrah only think of it, 12 pieces of cannon, 80 wagons all their horses camp eqippage. Commissary and Quartermaster stores why it is the greatest victory yet won on our side since that is only the prelude to still greater achievements to be made by our forces, It may be that it will have an effect to hasten our departure from this place, which is greatly to be desired as we are all anxious to have a hand in, I have found it necessary, on account of the wet weather and bad roads to buy a pair of boots for which I am to pay when we receive our next pay, they are a good pair and come almost up to my knees, I am to pay \$5.00 for them. I bought them one of the boys, and they are the same kind for which the Sutler charges \$7.00[.] I considered my health to be much more consequence than the price of the boots, I can now have dry feet which is a very desirable thing, Juliet said in her letter that she and Mother had a discussion in regard to a certain oyster dinner, Well tell Juliet that Lieut Wood gave Co I. and oyster dinner something like four weeks ago, of which I had the pleasure of being present at, and last Newyears, day my mess had oysters for dinner but I was not present to help eat them as I was better employed, taking dinner at the house of a Farmer. There it is and now you may figure it up and if you find any difficulty in getting the answer, just ask Willie and I will warrant He can give it to you. Please tell Willie that I will write to him next time but I must close

from Robert Caldwell

(P.S) I forgot to say that my mess kept perfectly last Sunday night during the thunderstorm,
R.H

Sat 25th__62

Dear Father

I have just received your letter of the 19th and was surprised to hear that you failed to receive my letters. I write regularly two or three times a week and if you fail to receive them, the fault is in the mail line. You appeared to that I had been sick and that perhaps on that account I had delayed writing but when you have received my last two letters that I have already written, you will see at once that I am enjoying the best of health, You wish to know when we are to advance upon Bowling green, well I declare that it is hard to tell, at one time, appearances will indicate a speedy movement, and we will think that the doom of Buckner is about to be sealed, when, presto the indications of a forward movement are immediately reversed, and the aforementioned Scoundrel is once more allowed a new lease of life, We, that is the members of Mitchels Division are not allowed the privilege of knowing what is going on in the inner Sanctuary, and therefore we are obliged to draw our inferences from what we see going on around us, and to judge from present appearances, I should say that the prospects of a speedy forward movement,

are rather limited[.] Gen Mitchel is having all the camps of the regts in his Div thoroughly ditched, and he has also lately been engaged, in roadmaking in this vicinity, He has had a Corduroy road of two miles in length, constructed, running from the Depot at this place, (Bacon creek) to the camp of the 2nd Ohio, He had a force of 800 soldiers at work for several days, which shows that in case of an emergence the indomitable Yankees can handle an ax or spade equally as well as that of a musket, But you may rest assured that when Gen Buell orders an advance, that it will be with the determination to keep his army in motion toward Dixie until the last vestige of treason shall have been removed from our once happy and beloved Country. Gen Mitchel has the confidence of every man in his Division, you can see him at all times upon his horse riding through the various regts of his command, superintending the drill of his men &c&c&c, and this forenoon He took command of the 21st while on Battallion drill and put us through sever new movements, he gave us great praise, for the promptness and accuracy with which we performed these new and difficult manouvres, He is a strict disciplinarian and insists upon having everything done in a soldierlike manner

But I will close upon a different sheet of paper.

(To yourself and nobody else)

You said that you had heard, by the way of Lieut Vantines letter that Capt Gibbs had resigned and was coming home in a few days, &c &c &c. Well as to his resigning his commission, I guess it is true. Capt Gibbs has not in reality made a very efficient Commander, on account of not having confidence in himself, and also on account of his voice which is very poor for a commander, and most of the boys, also thought that He did not take sufficient pains to inform himself in regard to the tactics which doubtless is true in a measure, but the fact is He was not cut out for a military man as he don't appear to take an interest in military matters. About two weeks ago Lieut Wood and some others of the Co got up a petition to have the Capt resign and circulated it through the Co and got I believe 66 signers, which was nearly all that was in camp at that time, and Wood presented it to the Capt when, coming over A.W. Luckeys favorite phrase he put it into the fire, I took a very lively part in opposing the measure and took the part of the Capt to the last, as I thought it would be a very serious matter to send him home in disgrace as I thought would be the consequence if carried out, and I also thought that if someone would go to him and tell him plainly what his actions were bringing him to, that he would take hold and take more interest in the affairs of the Co& c&c, but I could do nothing with them, and it turned out as I have told you. And ever since that occurrence he has been or appeared to be rather downhearted, which I cant blame him for, as a man in his position is in a very unpleasant situation indeed. But if the boys had acted fairly in this matter I think that the result would have been far different. Now I will just give you my opinion to this matter, and I know full well that you will not say anything about it, to anybody[.] Lieut Wood is very anxious to be first Lieut of Co I and Bumpus also anxious to wear the Shoulder straps of a second Lieut, and Bumpus and Lieut Wood and also Vantine have got a favorite by the name of Veon a corporal of our Co and I believe it is their intention to promote him irrespective of merit, as he was one to suddenly turn against the Capt and make great demonstrations in favor of the above named gentlemen (1st & 2nd Lieut & Bumpus) for which he will doubtless receive his reward, as soon as Vantine is elected Capt, which will certainly take place as soon as Capt Gibbs resigns. Lieut Vantine is a general favorite with all the boys, and I must so say that there is not a better Officer in the regt

than Charley. But I believe that the love of promotion is at the bottom of it all, and therefore if I stand any kind of chance I shall be very much surprised as I was not carried off to drill with the popular tide. But never mind, there will be a day of retribution when Cap Gibbs will stand as high as some others in the estimation of men of Judgement, when some of the members of Co I, will be ashamed to look Capt Gibbs in the face. Yesterday the box that was sent to the 21st regt by the citizens of Elmore arrived and was taken to the Hospital where it was opened, and Capt Gibbs went and got the things that were sent to Co I which consisted of a jar of plumbs sent to Capt, by Mary Luckey and two jars for Mike Rice, and a box of hickory nuts, which was divided among the Co. I got the Weeklies...[page tear]... we had a fine time with them, but I don't believe that Co I got its...[page tear]...after all the apples were nearly all rotten.

But I will write more of it next time.
From Robert

Camp Jefferson, Bacon creek Jan 28th [1862]

Dear Sister

As I have a few moments to spare I propose to improve them by writing to you. As we expect ere long to march from this place or are liable to, at any time, and as we have got more clothing than we stand in need of, we concluded to send our spare clothing home, in Lieut Woods trunk. It is to be sent in care of G. Wight, of whom you can get mine by applying to him.

I send my blouse, one shirt and one pair of drawers. I do not need them in the least, and don't wish to carry any extra clothing, through the coming campaign. I send some crackers to be divided among a few of the girls, you will see the names of these, to whom the crackers are to be delivered, written upon the crackers, Perhaps you may be led to sympathies with us, on account of the toughness of our bread, but I don't want you to be concerned about us, as our teeth are good and we are all getting fat upon them, I hear that the Fremont regt has left, good luck to them. I wrote to Aunt Mary last Sunday and yesterday I wrote to Uncle Ezekiel Rice, I also wrote to Father a few days ago, and taking it all together I think that I am doing my share in regard to letter writing I am now sitting close by a large box of crackers, and this evening at supper, I intend to place myself outside of about a dozen of them. But I must close, give my love to all. Lieut Vantine sends his respects to all, from Robert.

Oh! Yes, I almost forgot to speak of that large box, that the citizens of Elmore sent to the 21st, about two months ago, by some mistake or other, the box did not arrive, until a few days ago, It was sent to the Hospital of the 21st and Capt Gibbs went up and got a can of plumbs that was sent to him by Mary Luckey and Mike Rice received two jars of canned fruit. There was also a box of hickory nuts, which were divided among the boys, The apples had become rotten, with a few exceptions, The papers have proved quite an acquisition as we have but little reading matter in camp. Please tell Mr Vetter that I should like to hear from him.

From Robert

Bacon creek, Feb 2nd 62

Dear Mother

I wrote to Juliet day before yesterday and promised to write to you today, and here I am endeavoring to fulfill my promise, but what shall I write, that would be likely to interest you, I declare I hardly know what. Oh that I had a patent letter writer and then I should not be obliged to send so many prosy and stale letters home, but as I have not such an article I am willing to do the best I can believing that you are ready to give me full credit for all that I do be it ever so little.

The weather to day is cool and bracing and the everlasting mud has had to dry up for once during the last month, I hear by the different letters that I receive that you have been for some time having good sleighing, and Father stated in his last letter that he was waiting for the frost to leave the timber, when he was going to commence sawing. I seems so curious to hear you tell of sleighing and frozen timber, when for the last month we have had nothing but rain instead of snow, and sunshine in lieu of frost, and indeed when you were enjoying a fine sleighride, the boys of the 21st were in some cases, running round barefoot, and very comfortably too at that. Thus you see the difference of climate between the two places. We occasionally have thunder showers, when it will thunder and lighten equal to any april shower in Ohio.

I have never yet written anything in regard to the inhabitants of this section of country, and I will endeavor to describe them the best I can, but I am afraid that by reading the description alone, you will be unable to form a correct opinion of them.

In the first place, they are as a general thing very ignorant as the free school system is not very well patronized in this vicinity and since the war has broken out, the schools have been discontinued entirely. Perhaps, you may have read, that the poorer clap of the South on account of being brought up in company with the slaves, have adopted their brogue and in common conversation talk very much like to the colored population, well that is just the case, with the inhabitants of this district[.] They all, both high and low, dress in K.y jeans which gives them a very rough appearance. The boys say that the men all look alike, as they generally wear a straw hat during summer and winter, The men in going round the country, as a general thing are mounted, and I must say that they have some splendid horses. If you should go into one of their houses and ask the occupant the distance to a certain place you would in nine cases out of ten receive the answer, w-e-l-l, it's a right smart peace down thar I reckon. or if you were to ask the size of a certain town you would receive the answer, w-e-l-l it's a right smart town, I reckon, and thus you see, they never appear to be sure of a thing, but always reckon. But a I wish to write a few lines to Father, I will close. from Robert

Dear Father

I received your letter of the 26th which you sent at the time Juliet last wrote. and since that time we have been having some stirring times in Co I. Capt? Gibbs left for home yesterday afternoon, without so much as bidding us goodbye, I at least expected to see him and speak to him before he left, but he did not so much as say bad luck to you. I had intended to send word home by him, and left my dinner for that purpose, and the first that I saw of him he was least 20 rods from our quarters going almost on double quick to the cars, and when the train left, we were out drilling

and he stood on the the platform of the car and saluted us, which was returned by myself and a few others, I was a little vexed, as he had almost an hour to spare before the train left. After drill we held an election of commissioned officers, and the result stood, for Capt Charles Vantine, unanimous first Lieut A E Wood unanimous then came the tug of war, Bumpus was to run for 2nd Lieut and some of the boys were determined to defeat him if possible, and consequently Mack Reynolds was put up in opposition, and after a due amount of canvassing on both sides the election came off, and the result was that Bumpus received 46 votes and Reynolds 25, which of cours gave Bumpus a majority of 21 votes, which was sufficient to elect him over anything his opponents could do, and Bumpus was declared elected 2nd Lieut, and then the place of the Orderly being vacant the 2nd sergeant was promoted to fill his place and so the different non commissioned officers were all raised a notch Corporals as well as sergeants and a corpl was elected by the Co to fill the place of 8th Corpl and resulted in the election of a man by the name of Brett. Ezekiel rice being first Corpl of course became 5th sergeant and I being 3rd became 2nd corpl. I am in hopes that we will have no more trouble with our officers in the future. George Claghorn received a telegram last Friday evening announceing that his wife was very ill an desiring him to come home immediately, and consequently after getting a furlough of 48 hours, from Gen Mitchel, which was the greatest length of time that Mitchel could give him one for without the consent of Gen Buell he started for Louisville to get the furlough extended if possible and as we have not yet heard from him, I cannot tell whether he obtained it or not, but as dinner is ready, I must bring this letter to a close, from Robert[.]

Bacon creek, Feb 5th __62

Dear Father

I write to let you know that I received a letter from home to day, in which you stated that William had come home, with the intention of going into the service, and that he intended to leave for Camp Chase upon the following monday, and consequently he must have arrived at camp before this. Doubtless it caused quite a sacrifice of feeling on the part of you all, to have William enter the service also, as without doubt it will be quite lonesome after Mr Vetter leaves, but I think it was about the best thing he could do, considering the circumstances under which he was placed, as he will now have the practice as well as theory. In your letter you did not state where the destination of the 72nd would be but I suppose, as a general thing, that the Ohio troops now at Camp Chase and those that will in future be sent to that place are to be sent to Western Va.

The opinion is gaining ground that we will soon be ordered forward, and I judge from the workmanlike manner in which our new Secretary of War has taken hold that something will soon be done on the side of the Union forces, both upon the Potomac and in this State also, that will tell with killing effect upon rebellion. The late call of the Secretary to the Governors of the eastern States to know how many 30 days men they can furnish to man the forts, in and around Washington, for the purpose of allowing the present forces in that quarter to move upon Cecessia, looks like business and we now have something to hope for in that direction. I am in hopes that the forces in this State may make a speedy movement and close the campaign at once before warm weather is upon us, which is more to be dreaded than secession bullets, for if the present warm weather is a correct specimen of the southern climate, it must be scorching indeed,

during the summer months. The weather to day was a good specimen of a very fine Spring day in Ohio the sun was shining so warmly, that it was quite uncomfortable for one to wear a coat.

I received a letter from Juliet yesterday. I wrote to Juliet a few days ago in which I stated that I had sent my Blouse, a pair of drawers, and a shirt, home in Lieut Woods trunk, which was correct, with the exception of the trunk not being sent, as Wood agreed to do, and I will keep them until I get an opportunity to send them.

I wrote to you last sunday and gave you the result of the election in Co I. which in one respect did not result as I anticipated, that is in unfairness about appointing non commissioned officers, it was all fairly and honorably done and no person I believe has reason to complain of partiality on the part of Capt Vantine. I intend to do my duty in all respects and endeavor to merit promotion if I fail to receive it, Capt Vantine and myself are on the best of terms contrary to my expectations. I will pay attention to your instructions that you gave me in regard to taking advantage of circumstances &c, &c,&c

I should like to hear from Mr Vetter.
love to all, Robert

Bacon creek, Feb 8th 1862

Dear folks at home

Feeling in pretty good humor, to night I concluded to improve a few moments by writing to all the folks at home at the present time. Matters and things, go on in about the same ration as ever, Roll call early in the morning, then breakfast, after that comes Guard mounting, Drill, then dinner, then dinner, a little more drill, then Dress Parade, and so on day after day, with no excitement whatever if I except a camp rumor now and then of an impending battle between the Such and such forces, and that we are to be immediately ordered forward &c. but a large Camp without an occasional rumor of that description is almost a moral impossibility. Speaking of drilling, puts me in mind of the fact, that Major Strong 21st O.V has undertaken the task of making a model Co of Co I. and to that effect, he is taxing all his energies to perfect us in the drill, and I may say that he is meeting with pretty good success. I don't wish to boast, but Gens Sill and Mitchel, both declare that the 21st has no superior in his Division, which is saying a good deal, as the 10th Ohio is in his Div. In a former letter, I spoke of the Battery of 10 pound Parrot guns that was attached to our Div[.] Well a few days ago they were out practicing throwing shells at a target a distance of upwards of $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile, and out of a number of shots fired, five penetrated through the bulls eye, a spot of about two feet in diameter, now what do you think of that don't you think that they will do well to depend upon? Such firing as that cant be beat by Buckners artillery every day, I opine. We are daily expecting the Paymaster along this way, and I think it about time he was making his appearance, as we have already something over three months pay due us. When I look back, I can hardly realize, that I have been in the service almost six months, but such is a fact, but time appears to pass much faster in the service than elsewhere, I received a letter from A. H. Rice, written from camp Chase, he says the mud is some in that camp, which doubtless is very true. I will write to William on sunday, Wm had not arrived when he wrote but Al said he was daily expecting him. St Valentine's day is close at hand

if one might judge by the large number of Charicatures and pictures of gilt winged Cupids that are being sold in camp both by the Sutler and new boys. I wish some one of you would tell Mose Willson I am waiting for an answer to that letter I wrote him some time ago. I received a letter from Washington Boggs, and also one from E. Haynes from Camp Dennison a few days ago. W. Boggs said that in all probability their Regt would be disbanded Why don't Mr Vetter write to me any more, I am anxious to receive a letter from him. Tell Willie to write to me This letter is to all, in fact is to be considered a family letter

from Robert

Camp Jefferson, Bacon creek K.Y. Feb 9th __62

Dear Sister,

I have just received a letter from you, and as you say, a good letter from home is a sure preventive against the blues. Yesterday I received a letter from Mother, and you also wrote in the same letter, which was very gratefully received, and taken in place of blue pill, Yesterday I went up to Division Headquarters (Genl Mitchels) on business for Capt Vantine, for the purpose of procuring a discharge for Andrew Harrison who is to be sent home shortly on account of disability for duty.

While there I had the pleasure of seeing a dog, that was brought from The Arctic regions by the celebrated Dr Kane, the dog is owned by Dr Swift, Div Surgeon of our Division[.] he was recently offered, (it is said) \$300,000 in gold for the animal and refused to sell it for that amount[.] It was without an exception the finest animal of the canine species that I ever saw, the hair was about five or six inches in length, and of a black and white color. He had a very intelligent look and in fact, was just such a dog as I should like to have, and he looked as though he was capable of drawing a very heavy load.

In your yesterday letter you spoke of a certain young man by the name of Kelly, that ahd lately made his appearance in E. by the description that you gave of him, I should judge that Keightsly had better keep his eye open or fall behind.

I was sory to hear that old Sols fierce rays had cheated the young folks of E out of that contemplated sleighride, but never mind winter is not yet over, and there may yet be a plenty of chances for pleasure trips ere the spring arrives. George Claghorn was just now in our tent taking the names of those who were in need of knapsacks, canteens, &c I ordered a canteen as I lost mine while at Prestonburg and shall need one on the march. Col Norton says that the bad condition of the road is the only thing now that delays our march, and as soon as the roads will permit, will pull up stakes and march for Dixie.

Yesterday we recd the news of the fall of Fort Henry and of the capture of two rebel Generals, good news. Tell Father that Johny is now out on picket and will not be home before tomorrow, when I will see him and find out about that bill from Frohnes and write immediately. I will also write to mother at the same time, As I must write to William this afternoon I will stop (PS) I

listened to a very able sermon this forenoon preached by Capt Gaddis, Chaplain of the 2nd Ohio. It was the best sermon I ever listened to.

Give my love to all. When you write direct to AL direct Lieut Rice Co F 72 o.v

The Advance Divisions of Buells army

**Camp in the woods one mile in advance of Green river and Munfordsvill K.y.
Feb 10th 1862.**

Dear Father,

Last night just after having gone to bed, and as I was lying on my back, talking to some of the boys, We heard tremendous cheering in the upper end of our Division and while we were wondering what could be the matter, the cheer was caught up by the neighboring Regts and as the sound was borne along on the breeze, it extended to the 4th Ohio Cavalry as well as both of the Artillery Batteries, and it appeared to be contagious as, the next moment, the 21st broke out into one long, loud, hearty, ringing cheer, by this time I had grown quite curious to know what was up, and got up for the purpose of ascertaining, when in rushed one of the boys, explaining, boys have you heard the news? Marching orders for Mitchels Div. be ready to strike tents at 7 oclock tomorrow morning, so there at last the cause of the commotion was explained, now perhaps there was not some stirring about, rations were to be cooked and all things put in order for an early start in the morning. Morning at last came and we marched out of camp, the 2nd Ohio leading and the 21st immediately behind the 2nd and the remainder of the Div bringing up the rear, We arrived at Munfordville at about 12oclock and after stopping about half an hour or so we started to cross the river[.] We crossed upon the top of the R.R. Bridge which had been crossed over with plank. the Cavalry crossed over on it, as well as the teams and wagon. There is a low rail of of about two feet in height up both which prevent on accident by falling over the edge, which would prove a very dear fall for a person, as the track is about 125 feet above the water. How shall I describe that bridge, I am aware that I cannot do justice to it and therefore will not attempt a description of it, but will merely say, that the bridge is mainly constructed of cast iron, but when it was rebuilt, the new portion was constructed of wood. The main part of the bridge is 1100 feet in length and I believe there are three piers and two abutments, built the whole way up. I should say there was about 250 or 300 feet rebuilt, the new portion of it, looks rather slim, in comparison with that portion that is constituted of iron, but I suppose it is strong enough for all practical purposes. After crossing the river we marched about one mile and a half and camped in a very fine spot in the woods. We are about one mile from the river. The pickets of one of Gen McCooks regt are stationed but a few rods from our camp, but I think after this they will be pushed a little farther as we are now encamped upon the ground lately occupied by them. It is said that one of the pickets was shot dead about forty rods from our camp, a week ago last Sunday, and since that time the pickets have been doubled. I saw the place where the soldiers of the german regiment were buried, that were killed about (four?) weeks ago during their engagement with the Texan Rangers, there were ten graves, and there was a nice picket fence built round their graves. We passed over the ground where the fight took place. The U.S. troops have thrown up fortifications on this side of the river for the about a half mile in length, for what purpose [I] know not, as I don't believe Gen Buell intends to move before he is ready and I don't

think he intends to make a backward movement either after starting. I don't know how soon we are to be called away from here it may be tomorrow, or it may not be fore a week or month, but I think in all probability we shall start southward before long, as every thing at present is tending that way. Munfordville is a small town of about 200 or 300 inhabitants I should say, and does not possess a very prepossessing look, but I must close

Love to all I will write to mother next time I would write to night but it is almost time to turn in and after 1/2 past eight we are not allowed to have lights burning. Direct to Munfordville camp, care Capt Vantine &c

Robert

Camp Madison, Green river Feb 12th [1862]

Dea[r] Parents

We have just received marching orders once more, awe are to leave in the morning, I suppose it is to be an advance upon Bowling green at last. God grant it may result prosperously to our forces, but of one thing you may rest assured, our entire Army will, I believe to a man do its duty in the hour of trial came when it may, and now for once since entering the service we are in a position to strike a blow for the defence of God and our Country, I think I may truly say. Oh hasten the time when we can say the Cause of the good old Stars and Stripes have at last been vindicated and we can prove to Jealous Nations and England especially, that a Republican Government can sustain itself successfully against the machination of all the Devils, in human shape that can be brought to bear against it. But as great preparation are to be mad between this and morning and two days rations drawn and cooked I will close by saying that our Div is top take the advance, as Gen Mitchel said that in case he was not awarded that honor, he would immediately resign, ours is to be the second Regt in the advance the 2nd Ohio leading. You will hear from me on the first opportunity. Give my love all my friends and tell them I hope they will never be called upon to blush at the mention of my name, as I am determined by the help of God to do my duty to my Country if I perish in the attempt.

From Robert

Bowling Green Feb 16th 62

Dear Parents

As a train of wagons is to leave for Bacon creek in a few minutes I seize this opportunity to let you know that we are at present on the banks of the barren river, directly opposite Bowling Green, We arrived here last night after having made forced march of 42 miles in two days. Yesterday afternoon we made a march of 16 miles in 4 hours without stopping once to rest, it was the hardest march I ever made. Our advance occupied the town yesterday aft at 2 oclock and the town was shelled by (Loomis'?) battery of Parrot guns, the citizens fired about 12 houses and they were burned to the ground. I will write tomorrow and give you the particulars as I will have to close.

From Robert

Bowling Green, Feb 16th 1862 [17th?]

Dear Parents

I wrote you a short note yesterday and on account of not having sufficient time I was obliged to cut it short, but I now propose to give you an account of what has taken place since we left Green River. We left Green River last Thursday morning and marched 19 miles that day, We found the road obstructed in many places with fallen trees and all manner of obstructions, and the road for miles had been plowed up, for the purpose of delaying our Artillery and wagons, but it was of no use, the Yankees would not be balked, we had a corps of Sappers and Miners in advance all the time clearing the way for us. But now I must tell you of one act of the Devils that surpassed all others in point of meanness. The road led past several ponds of water situated, at from one to two miles apart, and to cut us off from using the water, the rascals, had driven in mules and stock of all description and deliberately shot them down, for the purpose of poisoning the water, which as a matter of course made the water exceedingly scarce, and we had to suffer accordingly, but what of that we were after them with a good prospect of overtaking them in a short time, when their chastisement was to be meted out to them in proportions to their mean actions and to judge by the conversation of the boys, it was to be terrible indeed. We arrived at Bells tavern in the evening after having marched 19 miles and encamped in a field at that place. The Station had been fired by a company of Texan Rangers the day before, and was still burning, which was another exhibition of meanness on their part. In the morning we were up early and off after them, expecting to come up with them during the day, the distance from camp to B. Green being 28 miles, and after having gone about 7 miles, we could see smoke rising in dense clouds, in the direction of the city and concluded that our advance must have arrived and engaged the enemy, (but here let me say, that I wrote from Green River, that our Brigade was to lead the Division, I was misinformed, as there was two Brigades ahead of us both belonging to our Division as, ours was the only Div that left Green River,) we were then at a distance of 16 miles from the enemy, and a Courier was sent back to hurry up the Batteries, and then the Brigade ahead of us started upon double quick for the scene of the fight, and we started on a quick time, and kept it up for 16 miles without once stopping to rest, we carried all our effects upon our back knapsacks and all it was the hardest march I was ever called upon to make. We arrived at the river at dark and pitched tents for the night, and their found out what had been done. Loomis's Battery had arrived at the rivers bank opposite the city, in time to see it being evacuated by the enemy, there was about 20,000 Rebel troops in the place when He commenced shelling it He threw about 150 shells amongst them and he saw a large number of them at the Depot engaged at loading provisions, they had the train about loaded and steam up ready to start, when he sent a shell amongst them hitting and disabling the locomotive attached to the train which of course put a stop to their operations in that quarter, the rascals then set fire to several other Locomotives, and also fired a lot of cars and the Depot, besides a lot of houses in the town and then left altogether. But I had forgotten to state that before our army arrived, the enemy had burned the wagon bridge, and destroyed the R.R. Bridge so that we could not get at them. The city was indeed well fortified, they had seven different fortifications, several of them were very strong, one or two in particular, the one on the side of the rover opposite the city being one of them, and one upon College Hill, the walls are bout 12 feet in thickness and including the sides of the ditch about 15

in height. That one upon College hill is principally composed of hewn stone, but doubtless you will have the dimensions &c of them in the papers. The rebels burned about 20,000 stand of arms, besides destroying a large amount of corned beef and sugar. We captured several hundred barrels of beef, flour, and sugar &c&c. There was but one rebel killed, the engineer of the locomotive, that was disabled he was killed by the shell that struck the locomotive. We are now encamped within the limits of the city upon the site of a rebel camp, there are several of the houses in this part of the city that have marks of shells upon them. The second shell that was fired struck within 10 rods of the quarters of Genl Hardee. The ground in the vicinity of our camp is torn up in all directions by the shells of Loomises battery. A portion of our Division is still upon the other side of river, but our Brigade is now (as I said before) camped close to the city we crossed yesterday. To sum up the whole thing one Division of U.S. troops has at last occupied the far famed , and strongly fortified city of Bowling green.

You spoke of Capt Gibbs having arrived at home &c.&c. well I must not omit saying that Co I. Has of late been rapidly coming up, in point of strength and discipline and Col Norton now rates our Co as second to none in the Regt. About a month ago to do our best, we could not get out more than 35 to 40 men on drill or parade when we now are able to turn out from 60 to 70, quite a change is it not, in the short space of four weeks. The boys all declare that it is all owing to having a commander that possesses their confidence. I understand by some of the letters that have been received by our boys that Cat Gibbs has been misrepresenting Co I most woefully, if such is the case or not the boys are all well satisfied with the change that has been wrought in it. I have just received three letters by mail one from home, and one from Wm and Lieut Rice from Columbus but I will write again in a few days and give you the rest of the news. We are to start for Nashville in a few days

Robert

Camp J.L. Adams near Bowling Green Feb 20th [1862]

Dear Mother

Doubtless, long before this letter reaches you you will have heard of the capture of the famous Bowling Green,. We, had long been expecting a hard fight at the above place, but it has been captured without a struggle on the part of its defenders, To judge by the number of its fortifications and of their strength I should have supposed that they would have made a stand, but confound them I believe that they are afraid of the irrepressible Yankee. I have no doubt you will read in the papers the particulars in regard to the capture of the city and of the large amount of stores that have fallen into our hands. The importance of this capture can hardly be over estimated, as it opens the whole of this portion of Kentucky to our forces, This district of the state is very rich indeed, there is a large amount of wheat raised, and in fact, I never saw finer land in any part of K.y Bowling Green is situated in Warren County B. Green being the County seat, it is a town of perhaps 4000 inhabitants and in general is well built, the houses are principally built of brick and there are some very fine ones in the city. Before leaving, the Rebels set fire to the Depot, a very extensive building, it covers at least 2 acres of ground, The building at the time of being burned contained locomotives, they were all partially destroyed, but a part of them are capable of being repaired. We captured one piece of cannon, a six pounder, and all its

appertainance. The R.R. over Big Barren river, was principally constructed of iron, and just before our forces arrived, was blown down by the rascals. They also burned the wagon bridge, which impeded our progress very much, We are expecting a bridge every day, it is to be framed and sent from Louisville, we expected it to day, but it did not arrive. Yesterday afternoon we broke up camp, and moved down to this place, situated at a distance of 7 miles south of the city directly on the L.& N. R.R. The pike at this place, runs directly under the R.R. and there is a small bridge over the pike, which the Rebels burned, on their retreat from B. Green. The Mechanics are busily at work reconstructing it, and it will be completed by tomorrow evening. Last night our Cavalry captured a small town on the Memphis R.R. besides killing 6 of the enemy and captureing 2 locomotives, which will be very useful in our next forward movement, which will take place in a few days. Yesterday Gen Mitchel brought the news, that Fort McDonald, in connection with 15000 prisoners and Genls Buckner, Johnson, & Pillon had been captured. You should have heard the cheers with which the announcement was received I am in hope the report will prove true, as it will lend in a great measure, to shorten the rebellion, Oh! What a happy time it will be, when the war shall close, and we be permitted to return home once more. I cannot help thinking of that happy time, and the thoughts of it, tend to cheer me up, and encourage me to do my duty, hoping that the time will soon roll round when I shall be enabled to behold the faces of all the dear ones at home, and you all have the pleasure of shaking the hand of
Robert

Father, I wish you could send me a few postage stamps as I am out and there are none to be had in this part of the country
R.C

**[Camp] Andrew Jackson
Nashville Tenn March 9th 1862**

Dear Parents

Last Friday I received another letter from home dated march 2nd and I cannot describe the feelings with which I behold one of thos yellow envelopes with that heavy plain direction of Fathers as it is handed to me, as I know full well, that I have once more received a letter from my dear home, I am glad to think that you are so punctual

[GAP (Torn page?)]

you spoke of X(?) Captain Gibbs intentions I make the assertion, that he will be entirely broke, at the end of one year from this time poor man, he should have acted differently[.] I have lost all confidence in him, since his arrival at Elmore, and the assertions that he has made in regard to Co I. however I bear him no ill will. Mother spoke of the U.S. Brethrens success of late, I am pleased to hear of it, there is quite a chance for a reformation in E. We have received news of the evacuation of Columbus K.y. I hardly know whether to credit it or not.

I begin to think that the back of Rebellion is broken and that a few more victories on the union side will terminate the struggle[.] The main body of the Rebels has fallen back upon Chatanooga

Alabama, distant from this place about 100 miles, doubtless we will be called upon to advance upon them ere long. There is a small force of Secesh Cavalry in this vicinity in command of the notorious Morgan that are constantly putting us to a great deal of trouble, by firing upon our pickets and committing all sorts of deprectations, and, and yesterday afternoon while a number of horses and wagons were out on the road about two miles from camp for the purpose of foraging Morgans men made a dash on them and succeeded in captureing 100 horses and a number of teamsters, the wagons they undertook to destroy by fire but could not make them burn, Genl Mitchel came very near being captured himself, but got to camp and immediately ordered out the 2nd and 33rd Ohio and 10th Wis in pursuit of them, besides a large force of the 4th Ohio Cavalry they pursued them and succeeded in recapturing all the horses and teamsters besides getting 3 of the seces, and they are still after them with a fair prospect of capturing the whole of them. You can appreciate the audacity of the rascals when I inform you that our Cavalry pickets extend a distance of four miles from camp, and consequently they had to pass our pickets in order to surprise our men, but never mind they will run their head into a halter one of these times or I am much mistaken The country is now being scoured for miles in the direction from whence they came. Mother, as you say, I have seen the Elephant and have had an opportunity of viewing him in his different positions and can say that it is well worth the price of admission. The prices of everything in Nashville would astonish you, boots \$20.00 per pair, coffee \$1.00, Saleratus .65 cents and everything else in proportion. Ephrain Rice is going to Elmore and I will send \$20.00 by him, I would send more but I had to pay \$5.00 for my boots, and we only drew \$26.00 two months pay.

whenever I need postage stamps I will write for them as they are not to be had in the Southern Confederacy

Camp Andrew Jackson
Nashville Tenn Mar 14th 1862

Dear Parents,

Thinking you might be anxious to hear from me, I seize this opportunity to inform you that I am still in the land of the living, and with the exception of sore feet, occasioned by blisters caused by marching, I am enjoying the best of health. I have not received a letter from home for some time, but expect a letter to day, I received a letter from Juliet yesterday, she wrote from Oberlin. You will remember, in my last, I spoke of the notorious Morgan, that was prowling round in this vicinity, committing all manner of depredations, Yesterday afternoon, quite a force of our troops were sent out in pursuit of him, Genl Mitchel had a large number of wagons ordered out for the purpose of carrying our boys, the plan was to proceed up the road to a point some 20 miles from this place, where it was supposed the scoundrel would be overhauled, Well after proceeding about 10 miles, they were met by Morgan and 20 of his rangers bearing a flag of truce, Morgan gave Mitchel to understand that he wished to see Gen Buell and have a conversation with him, whereupon, in company with Gen Mitchel, he went back to the headquarters of Buell, Mitchel leaving the wagons and soldiers in the road to remain until he should return, in due time they returned (Mitchel and Morgan) and the troops were ordered back by Genl Mitchel and arrived in

camp this morning at one o'clock I have not yet heard what disposition they have made of Morgan, but doubtless they will hold him prisoner[.] Day before yesterday, Genl Nelson moved up the road with a Brigade and it is thought he will have an engagement at a place distant from this place about 20 miles[.] That affair of Morgan's is enveloped in mystery, this same fellow has been cutting round in this vicinity ever since we arrived, and it is said he daily enters our lines, in the guise of a citizen and spies out everything that is calculated to forward his cause and hinder ours should he act upon information gained, I am in hopes Gen M____ will not allow the rascal to outwit him, We have received the news of the evacuation of Manassas and the defeat of Price, in Arkansas our affairs are still gaining in brightness and I look for a speedy reinstatement of Uncle Samuel's authority in what is termed the Southern Confederacy I know not how soon we are to be ordered from this point but I am of the opinion that our stay is to be of short duration, I think our next move will be to occupy Chatanooga and take possession of the R. Road at that place. Genl Buell's whole force is concentrated at this point, said to consist of upwards of 100000 men. But you see I must close as I am going to commen[ce] working on our pay rolls I have been detailed by the Capt to make them out.

From Robert

In my next I will write to Willie

[March 14th 1862, to Sister (Juliet)]

[TORN PAGE]

I received your kind letter of the 6th inst, it came to hand last evening, and I can assure you, it was a truly welcome visitor, you can hardly imagine the amount of good that a good long letter from home! does me. home, did I say. well I suppose you call Oberlin your

[TORN PAGE]

to a great extent, as doubtless you are aware, in this vicinity the rule is, that a mans respectability is measured by the number of Slaves owned by him. During our late march a large number of contrabands had from time to time joined our army, with the intention of leaving their (much loved!) masters, when these facts became known to these afore mentioned amiable gentlemen, they immediately saddled their horses and started in pursuit, and without a single exception, they were returned to their lawful! masters. I pitied the poor fellows, as they appeared to feel so bad, doubtless anticipating a score or two of lashes upon the bare back. But the Capt of Do D. is in possession of a fine little fellow, that he captured in Bowling Green. the owner of his property not being on hand to prove property and pay charges, and consequently, the little contraband will, if no unforeseen event should take place, see Ohio and breathe free air for the first time in his life. Such are the chances of war!

We are now in the midst of Secessionists of the most violent character, the city of Nashville as you are aware, having been a counterpart of Charleston S.C. but there are some Union citizens in the city also. When we arrived here the city was partially submerged on account of the recent heavy rains and presented a sorry appearance indeed. Yesterday we received the intelligence of the evacuation of Manassas, and the defeat of Price, McCulloch & Polk, in Arkansas. victory

follows victory in rapid succession, and I now begin to believe that the war is to be of short duration. Have no fears in regard to the soundness of my heart, as I am not, nor have I yet been troubled with the heart disease but there is no telling how long I shall be able to say it with truth, as I see some very fine girls during my travels. but I must close

Robert

Camp Andrew Jackson, Nashville Tenn Mar 16th/62

My Dear Mother

I received your long and interesting letter last Friday, dated the 6th and 7th, and I was truly grateful, on the receipt of it. I also received those Postage Stamps that were in it. I also received those stamps that were sent in Juliets last letter, that she wrote before she left for Oberlin. I mentioned the receipt of them in one of my former letters I will not be in need of any more for some time but when I do I shall not hesitate to write for them, as they are not cometable in the Confederacy. We have been having considerable rain for the past few days, but it has concluded to dry up for a short time, and I am in hopes we shall have better weather as the Spring advances. I suppose to judge from the tenor of your letters that you are still having cold weather in your region, well as for this vicinity I must say that the weather is rather on the summer order, we, as a general thing are having very warm weather, the boys run round in their shirt sleeves, and barefoot and very comfortably at that. The plumb trees and peach are out in blossom and present a very fine appearance This is the finest country I ever saw, it is just hill enough to make it dry, and pleasant, and then the climate is delightful during the winter months, but I am of the opinion that we will get singed next summer if we remain south during the warm months. We are encamped upon a high hill, overlooking the valley, and the country is cleared up in most part, and there are some splendid residences within sight of camp. The Cedar grows wild on the hills, and the Planters can furnish their dooryards with the finest kind of shrubbery at small expense. The State Lunatic Asylum is located at a distance of about three miles from camp, we passed it a few nights ago, when we were rallied out for the purpose of reinforcing the Cavalry at the time they were attacked by the Rebels. It is a very large and fine building, The principle part of the building is four stories high and it is built of brick, it is the finest building of the kind that I ever saw. I have received a letter from William and answered it, he wrote from Camp Chase and I directed my letter to Paducah. Yesterday we received, (that is the 21st Regt.) 800 French Rifles, with their accoutrements. They are a fine little rifle, and in a trial that was made, they made better shooting than the Enfield rifle, with which the Flanking companys have always been supplied. I believe ours is the only Regt in the Division that is supplied with the French rifle. It is a much smaller and lighter gun than the musket, and of much smaller caliber. I hear it stated that in the next march, we are to have the advance, but it wont do for us to believe every camp rumor, and that would be too good news to be true as we have long been promised that position. I suppose long before this, that you have read all the news in regard to Nashville and its surroundings, in the papers and therefore I shall say nothing in regard to it. I sent the Nashville Patriot to Father the other day. There are three papers printed in the city at the present time. In one of my former letters I stated that I had sent some of my superfluous clothing in Lieut Woods trunk, and as he neglected to send it I informed you of the fact and stated that I would send them the first opportunity that offered, I left them in his trunk and thought they were there still, until

yesterday when I went to get a shirt for Johnny Caldwell to wear, he having all his shirts in the wash. When Lieut Wood told me that he had sent all the clothing some time ago, and had directed the box to Gen Wight, and if the box ever arrived you can get my package by applying to G. Wight. Give my love to Father, and all the rest of the folks.

from Robert

I suppose Ephrain Rice has got home. if he has, mention it in your next

Camp Van Buren, Murfreesboro Tenn March 23rd

My Dear Parents

Thinking you might wish to know something of my whereabouts &c and thinking I had better keep a letter written, so as to be ready in case an opportunity occurs for sending I write. The arrangements have not yet been made for sending mail, but I thought I might possibly have an opportunity of sending it to Nashville by a Teamster, or otherwise, I wish to keep you posted as far as possible, in regard to our movements. We broke up camp near Nashville on the 18th and started for Murfreesboro[.] We were told that it was 30 miles distant from camp, and intended to make it in two days easy march, consequently we made what we considered to be about one half the distance on the first days march, and encamped for the night, intending to occupy the town the following day. Toward morning it commenced raining with a fair prospect of keeping it up for some time, things looked quite dubious I can assure you, as we struck tents in that most unamiable rainstorm, ugh it was chilling but there was no use to give up to it so, and with the rainwater running down our backs and into our boots, and threatening to submerge the whole of us, we marched out into the road and took our way to the superannuated town of Murfreesboro, distant (it was said) 12 miles. After having gone several miles we asked some of the citizens how far it was to town, and were told, fifteen files, that was encouraging to say the least, but after going a few miles further and then being told that we were, seventeen miles from our destination I declare, I began to get discouraged, well we trudged on and on until we had the distance reduced to nine miles, and began to congratulate ourselves that we had got the road fastened at last, and were overhauling it finely, when happening to meet with a planter, we risked the question once more, how far to town, when oh! horror we were told, just twelve miles, I confess I felt very much like giving vent to a little profanity, but managed to check the unlawful inclination. Well to out the matter short after having marched just 21 miles, we camped within 5 miles of the town. I must say it was a hard march indeed as our overcoats had become completely saturated with water, and one of those coats it is said will hold something less than a barrel of water, That night we slept without tents, and in the morning after having shaken ourselves, we marched into town through another delightful rainstorm, ok it was so refreshing to feel that water running down our backs, why should we grumble, it was all ordered, for the good of our country, and if uncle Samuel ordained that we should be washed occasionally without soap, whose business was it, not ours I am sure, and if some of us were drowned in the operation, what matter, it was to be classes with the casualties of war, and let go at that.

During the march, we passed several cotton fields The cotton had been picked, but the stalks were standing, it is planted in rows, about two or three feet apart, and hilled up, something like

corn, A field of growing cotton must be a very fine sight indeed, as the plants are planted in perfectly straight rows, and not a weed is left standing, I saw several cotton Presses I don't know whether you have ever seen such a thing or not, but I will endeavor to describe one.

In the first place, a large and strong box, the size of a cotten bail, is placed upon timbers and a frame is erected over it, with a large crop beam, and through this beam a hole is cut, with a thread cut in it, and a very lage upright shaft runs through this, also with a thread cut upon it, and on the top of the shaft, there is a long sweet reaching down to the ground, where I suppose a horse, or probably , a gang of Negroes is hitched and after the cotten is placed in the box, the whole thing is screwed down, and thus the cotten Is packed into bales, The whole thing is clumsily gotten up, but answers the purpose very well.

Murfreesboro, is a very old town, and contains a population of perhaps 5,000. It is situated upon Stones River, and in a direct line, is about 30 miles from Nashville. Before leaving, the Rebels burned both wagon bridges, and also the R.R. Bridge. Our forces are at present engaged in rebuilding the R.R. and one of the wagon bridges, there is a face of about 1000 men engaged daily, in getting out timber for the bridges. There are two pikes running into town, and one R.Road. On the same night that we encamped back 5 miles from town, the pickets of the 3rd Ohio, a few miles back on the road to Nashville were fired into, by Morgans Rangers, and had one man wounded in the arm, the 3rd Ohio Pickets fired three volleys into the rangers, when the latter fled, I did not hear the loss sustained by the Rangers but doubtless it was considerable, as they left a large amount of blood behind them, scattered in every direction on the road. The citizens of Murfreesboro are all undisguised Secessionists, and brag of it and declare that their troops will yet get us, but we are prepared for them in any shape whatever Charles Vantine, or Captain rather, wishes me to say, that he received that Power of Attorney, and that he received it to late to draw the pay when we were last payed off, but he will attend to it and draw (Jones?) his pay for him and send it when next we receive our pay, which will in all probability be in 30 days He would have liked very much to have drawn it for him but the Paymaster had left before it came to hand. Probably you will have the pleasure of seeing Geo Claghorn home in a few days, in the capacity of a Recruiting Officer, in case he should happen down your way, we all want you to help him all you can, as we stand very much in need of the men. Capt Vantine sends his respects to you all. I have experienced no bad effects from that wetting and don't expect to

Give my love to all, from Robert

Camp Van Buren
Murfreesboro Tenn Mar 30 1862

My dear Parents

I seat myself to inform you that I received a good long letter from Mother today, and that I also had the pleasure of receiving 3 day before yesterday, one from Aunt Mary dated the 17th, one from Father of the 13th and also one from Juliet of the 13th. I received all of those stamps, in four different letters nearly \$3.00 worth in all, I acknowledged the receipt of a part of them in former letters, I disposed of \$1.00 worth of them as you wished me to do. Mothers letter of the 23rd was written upon (Foolscap?), and you wished me to excuse you for not writing upon note

paper, I would just say, that in future have no scruples in regard to writing upon Foolscap, as I had rather have long letters written than short even if the paper is not quite so stylish. You cant imagine how much good a good long letter does one. I am glad to think that you are all so punctual about writing. In several of you last letters, you have mentioned that you were having very high water, and one of Fathers letters stated that that pile of white ash lumber had capsized, which caused me to fear that he might lose some of that Sycamore, but in Mothers last, she stated that the water was falling, and I am in hopes that the lumber is out of danger, for the present. Capt. Vantine received a letter form his wife today, that stated that you lost about 2000 feet of Walnut, but it must be a mistake as you mentioned nothing about it in your letters, I was sorry to hear that the fence went off, but it can be again replaced. I suppose the engine is very badly rusted, if so, there is a good job for somebody to clean it up once more, I shall expect to see the engine bright and shining upon my return home. I received that three cent piece and intend to keep it and probably give you a chance of overhauling it once more, I was glad to hear that there was a prospect of business opening briskly in the spring. The 3rd O. Cavalry is this side of Nashville some of our boys have seen several of the Elmore boys, but as they arrived after we had left I did not get to visit them[.] Mothers last letter said that it was quite muddy in Elmore. There is quite a contrast between the weather at this point, and at E. I declare, I never saw anything to equal it, if there is any fault to be found, I think it is a little too warm. I guess we will catch it this summer down here, I am of the opinion that McClellan had better hide his head, if those wooden guns were sufficient to keep his vast army in check for so long a time. I don't wish to brag, but I am of the opinion, that had Buell been in command upon the Potomac, they would have left long ago. I am well pleased to see the western army taking such an active part in crushing the life out of the rebellion. Mother wishes to know something in regard to our Chaplain, Well I can only say that during the 7 months that he was in the service he did not average one sermon to the month, and those few, were so execrable, that the Officers of the Regt signed a petition, requesting him to resign, and he did so, and went home he left us at Nashville. He was a good man but not the person for Chaplain of a Regt. We have prayer meeting twice a week, Chaplain Gaddis of the 2nd Ohio of our Brigade preaches occasionally to our Regt. He is a very smart man. Mother you promised (in your last letter) to send me a Leslies upon the event of our forces capturing island 10. I shall look for it daily, but am afraid according to latest news, that it will be some time before that important event transpires as it is very strongly fortified. I will answer Aunt Marys letter next. Poor Athenia. She is left a Widow. As Brown has left for the west.

Camp Nashville Tenn [February-March 1862]

My dear Parents

We arrived at this place this forenoon, and I hasten to acquaint you of it. We broke up camp 8 miles this side of Bowling Green last Saturday morning. Co I. Had been ordered out on Picket, and as I had nothing else to do, I went with the boys, it commenced raining shortly after dark, and put in for the remainder of the night, and as a matter of course, we got completely soaked, and all things were progressing finely! When at about 2 oclock in the morning, a Corporal came out with the order to proceed immediately to camp, as we were to march by daylight, we immediately started for camp, where we arrived in due time, wet enough I can assure you. Rations were to be cooked before starting which occupied the remainder of the night. We left

camp at daylight and marched through a drenching rain a distance of 16 miles and arrived at Franklin at one o'clock, a town of about 1000 inhabitants where we took possession of the public buildings for quarters. In company with Mr Barnes, I visited the house of the Town Marshal for the purpose of drying our clothing, and were invited to take dinner with the family, and did so, While our coats were drying, we got well acquainted with the folks, and it being about supper time, we were pressed to stay to supper and we could hardly refuse such an offer and sat down to an excellent supper and after that had been discussed we remained and spent the forepart of the evening very pleasantly. I shall always remember their kindness toward us. The gentlemans name was Murphy, although I am confident, he was not an Irishman. The citizens generally, advocated the Union sentiment, and appeared to be well pleased with our advent. They stated that the Rebels went through that place upon doublequick, a few days before our arrival. We left Franklin next morning and marched 13 miles, Monday morning we again started and made 22 miles, and were then just 11 miles from Nashville. We camped in the open air without pitching tents, as we were to start in the morning at 4 o'clock. We slept very comfortably as the weather is very warm where we now are. We left camp this morning at 4 o'clock, and marched about 6 miles before daylight, and when we had arrived within 2 ½ of the city, we were ordered back 2 miles where we are now encamped Some of our boys went down to the city and brought the news that Nelson arrived with his Division this morning, by steamboat but he did not have the pleasure of capturing the city, as our Cavalry had already done so before him. It appears to be the height of his ambition to get the start of Gen Mitchel, as he had said that we should never have a taste of Bowling Green until he had taken it. And he has lately been straining every nerve for the purpose of arriving at Nashville before us, but how sadly has he failed in both instances, poor old fellow Genl Mitchel is one too many for him The enemy has retreated back 30 miles from Nashville and I expect we will soon be ordered to take another foot race in pursuit of him. Most of the Farm houses along our route had been deserted by the inhabitants, we met large numbers of them returning to their home. We are in hopes that the enemy may soon make a stand somewhere and put a stop to this infernal foot racing in pursuit of them. There is hardly a man in our Division but what had rather fight than chase them all over Gods creation. We crossed Ky. & Tenn line last Sunday afternoon at about one o'clock P.M Direct to Nashville Tenn& c&c&c I will answer Juliets letter next.

Robert

**Somewhere in the vicinity of Murfreesboro, Tenn;
between March 30th and April 12th, 1862**

Dear [TORN PAGE]

There is little going on in camp at this time, and I hardly know what to write, that would be likely to interest you. The R.R. Bridge at this place is completed, and I believe the one situated 5 miles from this point, upon the same stream is about, if not quite finished. I am of the opinion that we are to move on in a few days, as I...

[TORN PAGE]

...all leafing out, and present a fine appearance, and no doubt for one to come from the North, to this point at the present time, he would be quite surprised to see the forwardness of vegetation. The Planters are having their land plowed and some of them have had their corn planted for nearly two weeks. We are quite anxious to hurry on and bring this fuss to a final settlement as soon as possible, we are afraid of the hot weather. This part of the State, that is, that portion lying immediately in the vicinity of Murfreesboro is quite heavily timbered. The timber consists of Oak, White ash, Hickory, and some Walnut. There is a Grist, and Sawmill (Steam) close by the camp, so close that we can hear the exhaust quite plain from our tents. Most of the Sawmills are circular mills. I don't think much of their land around here, it is too gravelly. There is considerable cotton raised around here, but I have been told by those capable of judging, that the cotton is very poor, it appears to have suffered very much from drouth, and has a stunted appearance. I don't see any cotton being planted, and I understand the Planters have been advised to plant corn and sow wheat instead as they begin to find out that cotton is not quite King yet. In company with Lieut Wood I attended church in the town last Sunday, and listened to quite an able sermon[.] The minister undertook to impress upon the minds of the Congregation that this war was brought upon them as a judgement, and that if they did not repent, and humble themselves, they were soon to be stripped of all their property, &c &c . The meeting was closed by prayer from one of the Brothers who prayed, that the time might soon come, when the foot of the invader would no longer press their soil and he also prayed for their sons and brothers that were on the field of battle. I admired the old fellows grit, even if I could not endorse his sentiments, there are few union men in this vicinity. Love to all

Robert

Huntsville, Alabama Apr 12th 1862

Dear Father

You will see by the heading of this letter that we are at last on the last tier of States and consequently in one of the Gulf States. Hurrah! For our side, who would have thought that our Division could possibly have marched through two belligerent States, without so much as seeing a fight, but such has proved to be a fact. Bowling Green, Nashville, and several other important points have fallen into our hands, but where are those tremendous resources of the Rebels that were to be brought to be against us with such telling effect, where are all those numerous and well equipped armies with which they were going to impede our march and put our forces to flight, echo answers, where I can tell you where look at Fort Donelson, that was the wedge that wrought destruction among them, it split their forces asunder and scattered them to the four winds, and they have been pursued so constantly, and untiringly for the last month, that they are at a loss, which way to turn, and I am going to tell you how close we were upon their heels, at this point. I wrote to you from Shelbyville and told you that we were expected to march in the morning for Corinth but was mistaken in regard to our destination, we left Shelbyville the following morning and arrived at Fayetteville that afternoon at (3:40) making in all something over 25 miles marched that day, a pretty good march for us as we carried knapsacks, and everything that we had we remained in camp all night and until noon on the following day, and then started for this place[.] After marching about 10 miles, we camped, and slept in the open air, as our teams failed to arrive until midnight. Gen Mitchel, in the meantime had gone one with another

Brigade, and was at that time about 10 miles in the advance. Gen Mitchel sent back an order for our Brigade to march at 2 o'clock in the morning, but we were delayed some and did not get on the way until 3.30 after marching a short distance we distinctly heard cannonading in the direction, and concluded that something was being done, (we crossed the state line at sunrise) we hurried on and arrived at within about 1 ½ miles of town, at a little after noon having made about 18 miles since morning, and that over the worst kind of roads, in one place we came to a creek where there was no bridge and we were obliged to climb across upon logs, it took an hour to cross. after arriving here we found out the cause of the cannonading, our advance arriving found the enemy still here, and engaged in running off Army Stores, and Simondsons Battery opened on one of the trains and succeeded in stopping, and capturing it, as they also did with some 15 other Locomotives 17 locomotives and 40 cars with some 200 prisoners were taken. most of the locomotives are new and in the best condition. at first we heard that the number of locomotives captured was 15, but the facts are that we took 17. It appears that the Rebels were taken completely by surprise. You are doubtless aware that this is the Memphis & Charleston R.R. and what might be called the Jugular vein of the Confederate States. They have always had complete control of the R.R. and it has proved of incalculable benefit to them. If we had arrived 12 hours sooner we should have intercepted 6000 of the rascals, who were passing through by R. Road for the purpose, it is supposed of reinforcing the Rebel army in the direction of Corinth. Mitchel has been very active since we arrived he has several of the Locomotives in constant use, he places a cannon upon a platform car, with the Locomotive shoving it and with a train of soldiers in the rear of the Locomotive and in that manner is scouring the road in both directions, day and night. He is expecting an attack every hour and I am writing with my cartridge box on, and my rifle stacked in front of the tent, as is all the rifles of the Regiment every man is ready to fall into line at a moments warning. There has been an expedition sent out for the purpose of burning bridges and tearing up track and if it fails to accomplish its purpose, it is expected we will see some fun. well let them come The train carrying the men and cannon going on the expedition, passed our camp a few hours ago. The cannon was in front and the soldiers on the train behind the Locomotive. I believe it consisted of one Regiment. Three companys of our Regt. A.F. and C. went on a secret expedition shortly after arriving they have not yet returned and I dont know the result of the expedition. I have not yet been into the town but it is in sight from our camp and I can see several large buildings and conclude that it is a town of considerable importance. We hear several reports from Corinth one is that a battle has been fought in which we (lost?) in captured 6000 men and several pieces of cannon, our forces then fell back to the river, under cover of our gunboats, and the Rebels were forced to fall back in turn, I dont know what is to believe, and am afraid that we have met with a disaster in that direction. I don't know how this matter is going to terminate, there is only one other Brigade here beside that of ours, but Gen Mitchel has sent a courier back to hasten on another Brigade to reinforce us. I have no means of knowing where Genls McCook, Thomas , and Nelsons Divisions are but they should be somewhere in this vicinity at least in supporting distance It is almost impossible to compute the importance of this last move as it places us in position to control this R. Road running from Memphis to some point in the east, some say Richmond but I dont know where it terminates in that direction. I received a letter from William while a Shelbyville he was well, and expected to make a march inland in the direction of Corinth, it was dated March 23rd. I am very anxious to hear something definite in regard to the Corinth affair.

Huntsville, you will perceive by examining the map is within about 15 miles of the Tennessee River, and doubtless our supplies will reach us from that direction coming up the river by steamboat. Since coming into this State I have seen some of the finest country I have yet passed through, it even surpasses Tennessee, The trees are all in leaf There is not much heavy timber, There are some very high hills. We passed quite a lot of cotten, in bales, so you see the Rebels have not yet decided on burning their Staple. There is any amount of wheat raised in this vicinity. Love to all from Robert Caldwell

Huntsville Alabama Apr 13th /62

My dear Sister

Thinking you might possible feel anxious in regard to my welfare I seat myself to let you know that, although we have been for some time past doing some pretty tall marching yet I am happy to inform you that I am still in the land of the living, not yet having run my legs off, in pursuit of the fleeting rascals

If you will consult a map of the Southern States you will see Murfreesboro is situated upon the R. Road about 30 miles south of Nashville. That was the first town at which we arrived, after leaving Nashville. We lay there something more than a week and then started for Shelbyville, where we arrived after marching 30 miles. We made that march during a portion of two days, we lay at that town 3 days, and then moved on Fayetteville distant 25 miles where we arrived that same afternoon at 3.30 which I consider to be a pretty good march considering we carried knapsacks and all our accoutrements. The next day we left camp at noon en route for Huntsville Alabama, distant 30 miles. We marched 10 miles that afternoon, and slept without tents, on account of our teams not arriving with our baggage. Next morning we received a dispatch from Gen Mitchel, directing us to hurry on and consequently we broke up camp at 3.30 and marched to reinforce him. We arrived at this place a short time after 12 oclock and found that our advanced Brigade had succeeded in captureing 17 Locomotives and 40 cars. Also some 250 prisoners[.] The enemy were engaged in running off provisions not expecting our forces on so soon. Simondsons Battery opened out on one of the trains that contained several hundred Southern Soldiers, but failed to hit it and the train escaped. Shortly after arriving a strong force was sent up the R. Road in both directions on cars, with a cannon on each train. The one that went east proceeded some 60 miles in the direction of Chatanooga and captured 3 Locomotives and 20 cars, and as we were only about 8000 strong at this point, with no other troops within supporting distance, and fearing an overwhelming force might be precipitated upon us at any moment from the East by R.R. our General was obliged to destroy one bridge to break the connection between this point and Richmond or some other point in that direction from which the might send an army. The expedition that went down the track in the direction of Corinth met the enemy 2000 strong at Decatur and drove them from the town. You are aware that we are now located on the Memphis & Charleston R.R. running from Memphis to Richmond, there are several branches intersecting this road from the South and it is one of the most important Roads in the Southern States. W have been expecting an attack ever since we arrived and yesterday we had orders to keep our Cartridge boxes on and guns ready to fall in at a moments warning Yesterday we received the news of the Battle of Corinth. I was glad to hear of the defeat of the

enemy, but am almost afraid to receive the particulars for fear that some of my friends may have fallen. The (72nd) was in the Battle I understand and possibly Wm may have been wounded.

Give my respects to all my friends
Robert Caldwell

I read your letter

Camp Taylor. Huntsville Alabama Apr 14th/62

My dear Parents

As I have some spare time I propose to improve it by writing to the dear ones at home. I wrote day before yesterday and gave you an account of our late march and arrival at this place. Those expeditions that I spoke of in my letter effected considerable. The expedition that went east proceeded some 60 miles and captured 5 locomotives and 20 cars and returned safely to camp. That one going west proceeded as far as Decatur 20 miles from this point and drove 2000 of the enemy from town they having set fire to the town before leaving it, our forces (beat?) the flames out for the citizens.

We have received the news (since I write last) that Corinth has fallen into our hands and that the Rebels have been whipped out completely with great loss of life on their side, it is also stated that our loss was very severe, I have heard that the Lieutenant Colonel of the 72nd was killed[.] I am afraid that when we receive the particulars, we will hear of the death of some of our friends. I heartily hope that such may not prove to be the case. Oh that our Regt. Could have been in that fight, it must have been glorious. We no longer apprehend an attack at this point, since receiving the late news

We also heard of the surrender of Island 10 and of the capture of 6000 prisoners and a large number of Siege Guns. We have also heard of the capture of Richmond, but I don't credit the report, that would be too good. I cant say how long we may lay at this place, there are all sorts of rumors in regard to our moving and one hardly knows what to believe. The prisoners at this place are daily taking the oath of allegiance, and returning home. I saw 3 men of that persuasion that were wounded at Corinth on the first and second day of the Battle, they were sent up here to the Hospital and of course fell into our hands.

The last time I received a letter from home was while we were lying at Murfreesboro, and I am quite anxious to hear from home. I received a letter from William, while lying at Shelbyville, it was dated the 23rd I believe. We are expecting letters every day by the Division Train. I don't know when you will receive this but I am bound to write often, as I know how much good letters must do you, I judge by my own feelings as there is nothing in the world does me so much good as a letter from home. This country is quite mountainous there are some hills near camp that in the morning and evenings extend into the clouds, I don't mean that the hills are higher at one time of day than another, but the clouds are lower at certain times than others, and they look grand indeed as they [roll] down the sides of the mountains, it is the first time I ever witnessed such a scene[.] This is a very fine Country indeed and I should enjoy living here if it was not for

the accursed institution of Slavery. I declare I am actually tired of seeing their black countenances but I must quit as paper has given out. I wrote to Juliet yesterday. Give my love to Aunt Marie and Willie

Huntsville Ala. Southern Confederacy Apr 17th 1862

My dear Parents

I have not yet received any word from home since leaving Murfreesboro, and am getting quite anxious to hear from home, of course the fault lies in the Mail arrangements not yet having been completed as I know full well that you write regularly, and I don't know whether or not you receive my letters, but I endeavor to keep you posted in regard to our movements[.] We are now getting to be quite a long distance from home but every march we make brings us still nearer the end and that thought cheers us up, and nerves us to endure the fatigue of long marches, and exposure of all descriptions The Town of Huntsville has been placed under Martial Law and Col Norton is Provost Marshal, and of course our Regt is used as Provost Guards, that is they act in the capacity of Policemen, and constantly patrol the Streets picking up all unruly persons, who are then brought before Col Norton to be examined, and if found guilty of any misdemeanor, punished accordingly[.] Genl Mitchel hearing that a force was collecting at Florence for the purpose of surprising us at this point took it into his head to turn the Surprise in a different direction, and consequently he sent a force by R.Road consisting of 4 Regts of Infantry and 3 Batteries of Artillery[.] The 2nd Ohio went from our Brigade. The plan was to go within 15 miles of Florence by R.Road and make the remaining 15 miles on foot by daylight. The expedition started night before last and consequently if the plan worked well, our forces engaged them yesterday morning at daylight. We have received rumors of a fight, but no particulars. We have not yet received the particulars in regard to the fight at Corinth, but at last accounts our forces were, a little ahead[.] This morning we moved our things to a new camping ground, situated just on the outer edge of the city[.] Our forming camping ground was on an island in the creek that runs out of the city. The boys called it Island 10, and this morning, witnessed its evacuation.

You will not have to strain your imagination much to believe that we are in a Secesh community, when I tell you that five different Churches in the city gave up their Bells to the Southern Confederacy for the purpose of having them cast into cannon, and hereafter I suppose they will, (after they have been transformed) give a much louder and sharper sound. It was said that they would furnish a sufficient amount of metal to cast two Batteries of cannon. They were sent to Richmond for the purpose of being transformed into Shooting irons[.] They must be getting short of material in the South. A few more such affairs as Island 10 has proved, will set the rascals to running up their Car wheels into cannon well let them work, the more they manufacture, the more we will capture. There was several cannon manufactured in this city, at the machine shop of the Memphis & Charleston R.R. I saw several today that had not yet been mounted. The Shop formerly furnished employment for some 200 hand, but since our arrival business is rather dull in that line. The enemy was taken completely by surprise as they said we would never trust ourselves in this direction but the result speaks for itself. I wish I could hear from William. I am anxious to know how fighting agrees with him. We expect our mail tomorrow and I am looking for a good time, reading mine. I am in the best of health

Love to all
Robert Caldwell

April 21st /62
Camp Taylor, Huntsville Confederated States of America

My Dear Mother

At last I received a letter from home it came to hand yesterday, dated apr 6th. You can imagine how much good it did me as I had not heard from home for more than two weeks. You stated that you received five letters from me that week I thought they would arrive at some time or other. I have been informed that we have only a weekly mail, although the mail leaves the Regt every morning, yet it goes no farther than town until the Division mail leaves. I have written several letters since arriving at this place. I wrote to William yesterday. I have heard that the 72nd was among the first to receive the fire of the enemy, I am anxious to hear from Wm. I also received that letter of Wms enclosed in yours. He is kept busy enough to judge from his letter. I do wish I could meet with the 72nd and I think such a thing is possible, as a portion of our Division now occupies Florence, and we are on the R. Road running to Corinth. I wish by some means or other that we could be placed in the same Division, but I am afraid no such good fortune will ever befall us. Ours is a marching Division or at least it possesses that name, as it has never had the good fortune to get a ride since leaving Louisville until we arrived at this point, and I sincerely hope on the event of our being discharged that we will be called upon to march home. Last evening as the Pickets of the 3rd Ohio were returning to camp on the cars they were fired into from the side of the road and a Capt and a private both received a heavy load of shot, in their shoulders, they both fell from the cars, and the train stopped in time to pick them up, and capture one of the rascals, The wounded men are both doing well at last accounts.

Today (Sunday) is easter if I am not mistaken. It is a wet, rainy, day, and it may be that you are having snow, as we generally have a snow storm upon easter. Eggs are an expensive luxury just at this time, as I have seen them sell at 30. and some of the boys have even paid as high as 60 cents per dozen, so anxious were they to obtain them, that they were willing to pay even 5 cents apiece. I suppose Willy is just about killing himself eating eggs today, I am of the opinion that Government will not discharge any of her volunteers until the close of the war, as the Government is in as much need of Soldiers at present as at any other time, and a volunteer is equivalent to a Regular in my eye, so far as fighting is concerned. The Rogues are not all in the Army it appears, as John Ryder can testify.

From late accounts I am brought to believe that Genl McClellan has already taken dinner in Richmond, as I hear that city is in his possession. You spoke of a natural well, in the vicinity of Nashville, I did not see it, but head some of the boys speak of a natural well that they had seen. We were kept so close to camp that it is almost impossible to visit any of the curiosities in the vicinity. This side of Bowling Green about 6 miles I saw quite a large stream, that emptied into a large cave and disappeared in the darkness, I went into the cave as far as I could with safety. There was the ruins of a Grist mill in the cave, the Cave serving as a roof over the machinery. It was the greatest curiosity I ever witnessed. I was glad to hear that Father had at last got clear of Nellis, and nearly out of debt so far as others are concerned

Love to all
Robert H

Camp Taylor Huntsville Ala Apr 26th/62

Dear Father

To day being a rainy day, I concluded to improve the time by writing to the dear ones at home. And now for Ideas wherewith to make a letter interesting. A few days ago (as I wrote in a former letter) a Capt and Private were fired at and wounded, by a concealed Rebel, at a place about 30 miles to the east of camp and that one man was taken prisoner and that another escaped, Yesterday Co. I. was ordered to take the cars and proceed to the place and institute a search in the neighborhood and if possible effect the capture of the rascal.

In due time we arrived at the place, and switched off at the town of Woodville, (The boys declareing it was a shame that they could not be allowed to visit home, when within four miles of it) A squad of men was detailed as Scouts to scour the country, and while they were out the remainder of the Co loaded some cedar Telegraph poles[.] After the poles were loaded we waited for the train to arrive on which we were to be taken to camp[.] In the mean time the Scouts returned without having effected anything of importance, and while we were waiting for the cars, several of the boys ransacked some old Groceries that had been deserted by the owners, not many valuables were found however and the cars arriving we all piled in once more and were soon whirling in the direction of camp, I say whirling because we did go whirling on account of the numerous short curves in the Road. We passed through several deep cuts excavated through the solid rock. also crossed several large Bridges that the Rebels in their haste had neglected to burn.

The Road ran through the Mountains, or rather through the valleys, and through some of the finest country it was ever my fortune to travel through. There is any amount of wheat raised in this vicinity, and some fields that I saw were already headed out, The cotton crop will be rather short this year, as the Planters sow wheat, and plant corn instead. The Planters hold quite a large amount of old Cotton I have seen several large piles of it stored in sheds and some lying out in the weather, which does not appear to spoil it. This is a poorly timbered country, and of course a poor place for Saw mill. I suppose you have heard of the promotion of Genl Mitchel he having received the appointment of Major General as the papers say, for gallant services in Ala so much for us, good for our Division it shows that our Services are being appreciated. Oh that I had a dollar for every weary step that I have taken since our Regt was assigned to his Division[.] I could then buy off these Southern Leaders, that still agitate the thing, and will continue to do so so long as they can make it a paying institution[.] It is my opinion that if our leaders had to take it afoot, and be subject to all the hardships that we undergo the war would very soon be brought to a glorious close. This dallying with the South dont suit me, instead of gaining a glorious victory at Corinth as we should have done, our Generals allowed themselves to be surprised, and after all barely sustained themselves, Genl Mitchel has scouted the country for 70 miles in almost every direction this may seem almost impossible but never the less it is true, he goes a part of the distance by R. Road and then the Cavalry take to their horses and Scout the country for miles in

every direction[.] I will risk the enemy ever surprising Genl Mitchel enclosed please find one of His orders

I am in the best of health and Spirits

Huntsville Ala Apr 28th /62

Dear Parents

The mail arrived yesterday, but I did not receive a letter, I was very much disappointed, as I was almost certain that the arrival of the mail would bring me at least one letter. I have received but one since leaving Murfreesboro and you may judge that the present finds me quite anxious to hear from home. However there was not a very large mail this time, and it is probable that mine has been detained in some way, or possibly captured. I heard (by some of the letters that were received) of the death of Franky Luckey[.] I cannot tell what my feelings were on that occasion[.] It seemed to me as though we have all met with a great loss, as Frank was universally known and beloved, and it was so sudden, but the Scarlet Fever is no respecter of persons, It is my opinion that Frank, had he been spared, would have been an ornament to society.

He will be missed very much in Elmore.
Poor Frank

In my last letter I informed you of the promotion of General Mitchel, I understand he is to be placed in command of two Divisions, and assigned an independent command, that is to use his own judgement in regard to his movements, and be subject to the orders of no other General with the exception of the Secretary of War. It is rumored that he will soon move in the direction of Chatanooga, if so, I suppose we may at once get well shod preparatory to climbing the Cumberland Mountains once more, after the style of Eastern Kentucky, but who cares, or what would it avail us to care, Genl Mitchell is bound to make another strike in some direction, but he Lord only knows where it will be or how soon it is to take place if we once turn our faces in that direction, that land of Hills, Mountains Burned Bridges, Secessionists, and rascals of every known description and color. But I have almost any amount of confidence in our Commanding Genl.

Genl Mitchel is now concentrating his forces at this point preparatory to moving upon Chattanooga. We expect Genl Wood's Division to day, who is to join us and be subject to the orders of Genl Mitchel

Dumonts Brigade has had a little Skirmish in the direction of Tusculumbia, but is now coming in this direction. He succeeded in capturing one Parrot Gun at Tusculumbia a 10 pounder it is now laying in camp adjoining ours, Capt Somonson captured it, and it is now attached to his battery.

You would be surprised to see what expedients the Southerners resort to, to make change, Each Business house, or in fact any person that posses capitol enough can issue tickets of any small denomination subject to be redeemed by the person issueing them, when a person will present a sufficient number of them to amount to one dollar and upward That was the only kind of change

in circulation in Huntsville upon our arrival, But since our advent silver has become quite plentiful, I saw a Citizen in camp a few days ago, endeavoring to exchange Southern money for U.S. Script, they seem to think a great deal of the Green Backs, notwithstanding it comes from what they term the Abolition Government. They are gradually acknowledging their Greater and confessing their sins, Well as Dow says, So more it be
from Robert

Give my love to Aunt Mary and all the rest and tell her I would like to have her answer my letter that I wrote to her some time ago
Robert

Huntsville Ala Apr 28th /62

My dear Parents

Since sending my letter that I wrote today, to the office, I noticed a piece in a Cincinnati recommending that those wishing to send letters to any Regt in Mitchells Division, to direct in this style.

R.H. Caldwell
Co. I . 21st Ohio
Genl Mitchels Division
Nashville Tennessee
To be forwarded

We have just received orders to cook rations and be ready to take the cars at 7 oclock tomorrow morning, we go in the direction of Chatanooga The Division that we were expecting to arrive today did not make its appearance..

Gen Mitchel has built a floating bridge of (Cotton?) across one of the rivers in our route, but it is so dark I must close,
from Robert

Direct to Nashville
Mitchels Division
To be forwarded
Huntsville Ala May 4th __62

My dear Parents

I hardly know what to write as I have lately written so many letters home, and as yet, received but one since arriving at this city, which occurred nearly one month ago, but that Confounded Morgan is the cause of all our trouble in regard to our Mail matters[.] He lately captured our mail that was going north, and as I had several letters on the way at that time I presume they were all read by other persons than I intended should peruse them, And as I wrote in my last the enemy, burned a whole Division Train of ours upon the R. Road, a few miles to the west of us, and all of

the mail for Mitchells Division was destroyed and of course I have been cheated out of one or two letters but the worst of all is that that Prince of Rascals Morgan lately captured 265 men of our Division, who were on their way to join their respective regts, they were principally Convalescents that had been lately discharged from the Hospital, I am somewhat inclined to doubt the Statement in regard to the number captured, but Capt Ewing of Co D. 21st Ohio was taken prisoner, and released in Parole of Honor, also Fred Mitchel Aid to Gen Mitchel was a son of the Genls and was immediatly exchanged We having a brother of Morgans in our possession [.] Capt Ewing had been home on Furlough and was returning to his Regt. There was also 11 of Co Hs boys of the 21st captured, so you see they have been dipping into the 21st pretty extensively of late. Capt Ewing is now with our Regt waiting I suppose to be exchanged. It is feared that Capt Cating Co H 21st Ohio was burned to death on that Div train that was lately burned by the Rebels, as he was aboard of the train at the time of the disaster and he has not been seen since. As I wrote in my last letter, the enemy had set fire to the R.R. Bridge with the expectation of cutting it off, and as the Engineer was attempting to run the train across the burning Bridge it fell and the whole train with the exception of one car was destroyed by fire, as was also their contents.

In my last I gave you a description of our late movements in the direction of Chatanooga, and of the Prisoners captured, and of our hasty return to this city in anticipation of a big fight and also of our disappointment in not getting sight of the enemy, he having commenced falling back before our arrival. The notorious Price had a force of several thousand with which he made great calculations upon retaking this point, but the result shows that Genl Mitchel is not to be surprised and that with one Division he is capable of controlling 100 miles of R. Road in the very heart of the Confederacy to say nothing of the country for several miles in other directions. I don't see why that other Division has failed to arrive that I had been informed was coming for the purpose of reinforcing us at this point.

One of our boys received a Fremont paper to day by some means or other, that stated that Surgeon J.B. Rice of the 72nd Ohio was taken prisoner at Pittsburg Landing, as was also the Assistant Surgeon. I am afraid that William has also fallen into their hands, When you write let me know if you have seen Geo Claghorn and if you received that \$20.00 that I sent you, I sent it with Capt Vantines package addressed to you. The other Recruiting Officers have returned to the Regt excepting the Sergeant of Co K. I understand that Claghorn is sick which delays his coming to the Regt. I am in hopes of getting letters before long but cant tell how it will turn out, the whole county is literally swarming with the enemy, fighting Guerilla fashion. The 3rd Ohio was fired into day before yesterday at a point 15 miles from this place as they were passing a little town by the name of Painted Rock and several men were wounded[.] The Colonel stopped the train, captured the men, and burned every house in the town, that is the only way in which to stop these depredations of the enemy, they have often fired into our trains as they were passing near that point. Love to Aunt Mary, Will and all of my friends.

Robert

Huntsville May 7th /62

My dear Parents

Hearing that one of the boys of the 21st leaves for home in the morning I take this opportunity of sending a letter to the outposts of Civilization in order to have it mailed. I am afraid that you have failed to receive several of my last letters owing to the capture of our mails by the notorious Morgan, I am somewhat puzzled to know what to write on account of having written all that I thought would be anyways interesting to you In my former letters I gave you an account of our recent trip to Stevenson, a town situated upon the M. & C. R.R. distant from this city about 60 miles. Genl Mitchel had sent an expedition in that direction consisting of five or six Regts and our was among the number, but our Regt did not arrive in time to take a hand in the grab for prisoners that took place, The advanced Guard had a slight brush with the forces of Gen Ledbetter, but of course as might have been expected, the Secesh Skedaddled as soon as they received our fire, we captured quite a number of prisoners a part of whom have been sent to this point, the remainder being yet back, some 44 of them have arrived here. The Rebel retreated across the Tennessee River, burning a portion of the Bridge adjoining the other side of the river. The Bridge crosses the river where there is quite a large island, and consequently there is what might be termed two Bridges the Island laying between them. The Rebels in their haste to burn the bridge, did so leaving quite a number upon the Island, our men picked them up, they appeared to feel quite satisfied with their situation after being captured, one of them declaring, that he would not exchange situations with Jeff Davis preferring confinement in a Yankee prison to a Seat upon Jeff's Throne, well honor his Judgement.

The route for the most part led through a great Swamp the water being almost a foot deep upon an average. We had an eight mile march to make after night, and I tell you it was gloomy enough, it was so dark that we could hardly get along, and with no music but the song of the frog, and whippoorwill, it was what I call dismal marching, but as everything must have an end so had our march, After staying at Stevenson for a day or two, we received orders to return to Huntsville as Price was then advancing upon the city with a large force, and driving our forces before him, when we arrived we found the tables turned, Price in turn being obliged to fall back, our forces following with a prospect of capturing a large number of his forces[.] I have not yet heard what success they met with but I presume Price has escaped with his force. The Citizens of Huntsville were quite jubilant over the prospects of our forces being driven from the city, and openly proclaimed that now they had the Yankees just where they had long wished to have us, anticipating that we were all going to fall into their hands, but now imagine the length of their faces, when they still see a Yankee Guard placed at their doors, The Screws are now drawn even tighter than ever upon them[.] The Women even spit upon our soldiers, I consider it quite a lucky thing for them that they have never used me in that manner, there is a point beyond which I cannot control my temper, and that would be quite a piece beyond that point. I hear that New Orleans, Yorktown, and Mobile, are captured, good news, We will soon have peaches down here, they are now as large as quail's eggs, Wheat will do to cut in 3 or 4 weeks. Capt Vantine sends his respects,

[MISSING PORTION]

Camp Taylor, Huntsville Ala May 21st/ GA

My dear Parents

Knowing that a letter no matter how old, will be acceptable to you, I will, although there will be no chance to send it until the Division Train arrives, and departs once more, which in all probability will not occur for at least one week[.]

I sent two letters by the last mail and doubtless you have received them by this time. I also received a letter from home about ten days ago, which brought the pleasing intelligence that you were all well. Father mentioned that some certain men that had taken the mill, were running it and that they were well satisfied with it[.] That being the first intimation that I had received of Fathers disposing of the mill in any manner I am rather curious to know what disposition has been made of it. In your next, please explain the whole matter, as I am confident you have already done in your former letters, that I failed to receive an account of that rascally Morgan's band of Marauders. But never mind there is a plan on foot to capture him and his whole command[.]

An expedition consisting of 1000 Infantry a considerable number of Cavalry, and 4 pieces of artillery left this point last Sunday morning for some purpose or another I could not exactly find out Genl Mitchels intentions and its point of destination &c. but we are daily expecting to hear from it. I was very glad indeed to see by your letter that William was save, as I have borrowed considerable trouble on his account but now it is all set right once more.

I hear good news from the Eastern Armies and expect that ere this reaches you Virginia will be numbered among the redeemed Prodigals. We have of late received cheering news from almost every point, only think of New Orleans, and Norfolk being in our possession and Richmond will surely follow next. I think I can begin to see through this little matter, and the future looks quite bright to me, although I don't expect to be able to celebrate the 4th of July in Ohio. Yet I am in hopes that glorious anniversary may find us celebrating the downfall of rebellion throughout the whole United States. That it may witness our Flag flying over every fort, and foot of soil of the South that it may witness the reunion of our lately distracted and unhappy Country, and last but not least, that Arch Traitor, Jeff Davis suspended by this neck from the tallest tree this side of Jericho, then can I truly say that the time has come for us to lay aside the musket and return once more to civil pursuits Then Oh what a time will that be, the reunion of broken and separated families, Then will us wanderers be able to experience the blessings of home, that I fear too many of us have heretofore experienced without so much as one spark of thankfulness on our part.

I suppose Juliet has once more taken up her residence in Elmore. I want her and Aunt Mary to write to me also Willie. Excuse this short letter. I will write more at length when I hear from home. Your last letter that I received was dated April 18th more than a month ago. R.C.

Huntsville Ala
May 23rd/62 friday

My dear Parents

The Mail arrived yesterday but brought me no letters. You can imagine my disappointment _____ If there is one thing more than another that is calculated to cheer one up when far

away from all that he holds dear, it is the receipt of a good long letter, announcing that all goes well with the dear ones at home.

The last letter that I got from home was dated Apr 18th and what might not have happened at home during that long intervening month.

Only think what good fortune has attended our arms during that time[.] Yorktown, Norfolk, and N. Orleans have fallen into our hands and there now remains but two places where they will be at all likely to make a desperate stand, Richmond and Dorinth, and if good fortune attends our cause at those places, then is the back of the rebellion effectually broken. We receive Louisville papers almost daily, and I see by them that the foreign powers begin to talk as though there was a probability of Uncle Sam still asserting his authority, in such a manner as to bring his unruly children once more under his paternal roof.

Let England beware how she comforts herself in future[.]

I believe I have never yet given you a description of Huntsville and will now endeavor to do so.

It is situated in a valley enclosed surrounded by high mountains or hills, that are covered with a growth of quite heavy timber. The city is watered from the finest Spring I have yet seen, it bursts from underneath a high ledge of rocks just at the edge of the city. The water is then elevated by means of water power (obtained from the Spring) into a Reservoir and then distributed by means of pipes through the city. There are numerous Fire plugs at the corners of the streets, piped in such a manner that in case of fire a hose can be attached and water thrown to a considerable distance. The dwelling and business houses are lighted by gass. before the rebellion broke out the streets were also lighted but that has been discontinued[.]

There are several large business houses in the city also a large Seminary, that usually accommodated from 100 to 200 Ladies students, but I believe it is closed for the present. Huntsville has the reputation of being the finest city in Alabama. The streets are well shaded, There are numerous fine residences in and around town, and some of the finest gardens and yards I ever saw.

The houses are literally imbedded in trees and flowers, and such roses, I thought I had seen some roses in our front yard at home, but that is as nothing compared with some of the yards in this city although I would give more to see our pleasant front yard, than to own all the flowers in the South. And such evergreens they are trimmed to grow in all sorts of shapes and present quite an odd yet pleasing appearance Strawberries and cherries have been in market for some time, also new potatoes. Peaches will be ripe by the latter part of June, and then wont we live on peaches they grow wild one might say, in this country. The R.R. line is almost covered with peach trees how they came there I cant say, but they all hang full of fruit. And not being fenced are free to all, and for that matter they would be free to us if there were fourteen fences round them, we confiscate all such property, our onions, radishes, &c. cost us nothing, draw your own conclusions

Hurrah for our side, we are bound to live well, Officers as well as privates.
Love to all
Robert

I have received no letter from William since the Battle.
Please tell Mose Willson to write me.
Don't forget that
R.C.

June 1st/62
Upon the R. Road 8 miles from Athens

Dear Father

I received your letter last night containing that poetry, I must say that the poetry was first the thing, and takes well among the boys, it reflects great credit upon the author. I think that as I can detect some familiar phrases in it, that I can come pretty near guessing the name of the author it will be the most popular song of the Co for some time. I suppose you are aware that Co I. Turns out some good singers. Co I. Is at present guarding a large R.R. Bridge, 8 miles from Athens, it is the largest bridge upon the line of the Decatur & Nashville R.R. it is 70 feet in height and 500 feet in length and spans a deep gully between the hills. We have got the finest kind of quarters, built of boards and rails, we are upon a high hill overlooking the bridge. We have fell timber around one side of the hill, and are engaged in constructing a Rifle pit and have got it almost finished, it is to be 30 rods in length. The ditch is about 3 feet deep and the bank about the same height which brings it up to an ordinary sized mans shoulders the bank is encased with rails and timbers and is from 3 to 4 feet in thickness, which is considered bullet proof. The Bridge is of great importance as there is only one that at present is destroyed between this point and Nashville and when that is reconstructed communications will be open clear through from that city to Huntsville by R. Road. A train passed here this morning containing a force of Mechanics that are going out for that purpose[.]

In your letter you stated that the peach trees were in bloom, and that there was a prospect of a good crop &c well speaking of peaches puts me in mind of telling you that I never in Ohio saw one 40th part of the amount of peaches that I have seen in Tennessee and Alabama. They grow right in the woods, along the roads and in nearly all the fields peaches are to be seen in abundance. I never saw peach trees hang so full, we will just live in clover in a short time. As a general thing they will begin to ripen the latter part of June. Wheat is ripe and ready to cut I have eaten new potatoes of good size larger than hens eggs, Mulberries, the woods are full of them and we have just as many as we could wish for, cherries are ripe, but not very plenty in this state, like apples they don't flourish well This part of the country is pretty well timbered, there is some whitewood, on our way down to this place we passed through a Pinery there were some very fine trees among them, and would turn out some very fine lumber. But dinner is ready and I must go for a while as my appetite is quite sharp on account of having been at work upon our Breastworks. _____ I have just finished eating a good dinner. We had some very fine fresh mutton that did not cost Uncle Sam nor ourselves anything for that matter. Where did we get it you ask? Don't be too inquisitive, this is a Secesh country and some things are now and then

declared Contraband, by way of variety we substitute fresh pork. We have on hand at the present time a barrel of corned beef, mule meat the boys call it and as we have no particular relish for that kind of meat, why we _____ well at the present rate of consumption the mule meat will be in existence 100 years from this time. _____ I suppose Juliet has got home long before this. I wrote her a letter the other day, in your next, write something in regard to the mill, I would like to know what disposition you have made of it. Tell Mose Willson I would like to have him answer my letter I would like to hear from him. Capt Vantine sends his respects to all. Your letter was dated May 7th[.] please write often. I have only had 3 letters since arriving at Huntsville[.] what is ex-Capt Gibbs engaged in[.] Did you get the \$20 that I sent you by G. Claghorn[?] I sent it with Capt Vantines money package, and his package was sent to his wife. Mine was enclosed with his and directed to you. Claghorn has not yet arrived.

Fort McDonald near Athens
Ala June 3rd __62

My dear kind parents

You can hardly imagine how overjoyed I was to receive a large number of letters from the loved and loving ones at home. I received one day before yesterday four yesterday and four to day. also from home and from Wm I also received one from G. Wight. They were dated Apr 13th, 16th, 13th, 30th, May 7th, 19th, 20th, 22nd, 18th. a part of them were from Juliet, some of them written from Oberlin. Oh you cant tell how much better I feel now that I have heard from home. next to seeing ones friends is to hear from them in the shape of letters. You will see by the heading of this letter that we have named our fort, we named it after the man on whose farm we are at present encamped upon. day before yesterday I wrote to you and informed you that our Co was at present guarding a very large R. Road Bridge near Athens, and it had become necessary to throw up fortifications. Capt Vantine gave it the above name, we have got some very extensive Rifle Pits one of them 30 rods in length. we have also fell timber all round enclosing several acres of ground and are now ready for them to come on. Father in one of your letters you said that you could not congratulate us upon not being present to take a hand in the late great battle. I can glory in such a Father and feel proud to think that I am blessed with a Father that is so imbued with patriotism that he is not only willing to allow both Sons to leave him in his old age, but if need be give them both up to die, if by that means he can further the interest of his country, if all men were as patriotic this war would soon be brought to a glorious close. Rest assured that as far as I am concerned, you will never have to regret having done as you have, and I trust that before long we may again be united, to remain so until an occasion of the present nature once more turns up (is such a thing is possible) when I trust I shall not be deaf to the call of my Country. Please accept my thanks for that Leslie. I am pleased to hear that business is so brisk in Elmore. Mr Gibbs (engine?) turns out just as I told him it would. I told him it was to light to saw shingles I guess he will not glut the market with that article. I received those Lilace blossoms, also the rose, nearly every person had to smell of them I will answer Aunt Marys letter before long, John Ryder and A.W. Lucky will make admirable nurses. I see that Mudenol is still at Elmore, as good a cracking a joke as ever. I must say that Craiglorn and Beach are fine soldiers, Beach has not got a discharge but we think ourselves well rid of such poor timber. We have just received the news of the taking of Corinth and 30000 prisoners good news if true Mitchel fired 34 guns in honor of the event. I trust it is true, a big thing it is. Dixie for the times, is just the

thing and takes well some pretty sharp things in it. I was glad to hear William so well spoken of. You wish to know what I think in regard to your selling the mill, you say that you think you will be able to effect a sale at a low figure I would say that taking every thing into consideration I think if you can get any thing near its value you might let it go. I think if you could sell the mill and retain the lots, it would be better than to let all go. You know it is quite uncertain about when I shall be at home, timber is also getting scarce, and the frame is very unsound also the boiler is getting old and unsafe under a high pressure. Therefore if you can get what you think to be a tolerable fair remuneration you had better let it slide. There is also great danger to be apprehended from fire, when controlled by renters, as they will not be so careful as though they were more interested in it. I am well pleased to think that you will have an opportunity to rest this summer as I know full well that you are not able to work in the mill. I received a letter from G. Wight and will answer it today. You may expect me to write after and I know that you will do the same. The mail runs regularly now 3 times a week. We receive the daily papers and keep posted in regard to what is going on. I am enjoying the best of health.

from Robert

Camp near Athens Ala Jun 3/62

My dear Brother

I received your long and very interesting letter this morning and need I say that I was much pleased to hear from you. I take all back that I said in my former letter about some certain things relating to the conduct of your Div[.] Immediately after sending it I was sorry that I did so for fear that I had judged too hastily, The first reports that came in were not very complimentary for some of the Ohio Regts but later reports contradicted the foul slanders, and went on to state that those very Regts mentioned so disapprovingly had done some of the very best fighting of those memorable days, and the 72nd was mentioned in particular as acting the part of heroes in that struggle. all honor to the brave 72nd I have since read of the part taken by your Div. and Brigade Commanders and must say that it reflects great credit upon them they deserve it all. I am inclined to think that it will not be the good fortune of the 21st to meet the 72nd at Corinth[.] I heartily wish it might. Our Regt is very much split up at present on account of several of the Cos being engaged in Bridge guarding. Our Co is guarding a very large bridge upon the Decatur & Nashville R. Road. We have thrown up breastworks and felled trees taking in a space of several acres of ground, we have digged one Rifle pit 30 rods long and another of smaller dimensions we expect to have some fun at this place. we have a plenty of fresh pork running round camp and frequently a fine hog is confiscated and brought upon our table[.] We live like Kings and enjoy ourselves amazingly.

We hear that Corinth has been taken with a large number of prisoners 30000 report says, but that would be too good and I fear it is exaggerated. Gen Mitchel fired 34 guns in honor of the event. Bully for you boys[.] Oh that we could meet with some such good luck, as to be ordered in the direction of Corinth, then there would be a possibility of eventually meeting with a much loved Brother. It would tend to soften the rigors and privations of a soldiers life to have those around us that we love, but news is scarce and I will close Please present my respects to Doctor Rice, and also Lieut Rice, and all that I am acquainted with.

Your Brother Robert

(P.S) I received that Fremont Journal, and read it with interest R.C

Fort McDonald June 10th 1862

Dear Father

I received your kind letter of May 29th and was very glad to hear from home. The weather as you seem to think, is quite warm, but our Co is located upon a high hill, and we have a fine breeze nearly all the time. You seem to fear that the health of the Regt is not good and that there is danger of our not standing the heat of summer &c Now I am glad to be able to inform you, that the health of the Regt at present, is excellent, there are very few in Hospital at and near Huntsville to be sure there are quite a number back in hospital at Nashville but they continue to form the Regt from time to time, there are very few getting sick and so you need have no fears on account of sickness. Our Regt of late has generally succeeded in securing a good camp ground with good water, which is always a very important matter The warm weather makes the sweat run pretty freely, but you know that it is healthy to sweat. You will remember that I have been accustomed to a pretty warm place in the mill, and I have now no fears for the result. The weather is not so extremely hot down here, but the season is of greater length. the nights are quite cool sometimes uncomfortable so. I suppose somewhat similar to the nights in California. In one of your former letters you stated that you thought you would be able to effect a sale of the mill, but upon low terms, and asked my opinion in regard to it: I answered it and told you that I thought if you could get any thing like a fair remuneration for it, you had better let it go[.] You know the frame is unsound and will not last much longer, and the boiler also is getting quite old and unsafe under a high pressure. if you could dispose of the mill and retain the milly and it would be much better, but if necessary I should not hesitate to let all go, if you could get into business of some kind that would be easier for you I should like it very much. The hardware business would be a good thing in Elmore, and something that would not require much labor to carry on[.] Elmore is growing and the man that starts in that business in E is the one that will prosper without a doubt. I should be pleased to hear of your going into it. I was pleased to hear of your renting the mill as you have done.

The best thing that can be done with that Beuch is to ride the coward on a rail. he is unsound timber he has not got a discharge. Geo Claghorn has not yet arrived at the Regt the Capt received a letter from him written at Pittsburg Landing, he did not know when he could get to his Regt[.]

I was glad to gear that you received the \$20.00 and glad to hear that you had almost cleared up you old indebtedness, a few more payments will clear it up entirely. The Pay master will be hear in a few days. I don't know what kind of a chance I shall have to send money this time, but will not risk it by mail unless you say so, probably somebody will be going home before long. I shall seize the first good opportunity of sending it.

Hereafter my pay will be somewhat larger than it formerly has been, I now receive a Sergeants pay to date from the 7th of this month. The Capt has kept his promise. I was raised over the head of the 1st Corpl. I don't know how he likes it, but it matters not.

Lieut Wood sent you a \$5.00 Confederate note it is worthless in this locality and that is the case with the trash wherever our Army has a foothold Greenbacks go at par in this vicinity

Capt Vantine sends his respects to yo[u]
from Robert

June 1862

Dear Mother

You cant tell how glad I was to receive your short but interesting letter as it is so seldom that you write, that I am So glad to see that ever welcome fine hand writeing that I could tell at a glance among ten thousand letters.

You need have no fear about the sun and warm weather affecting my health, the only effect it has is to make me sweat, and that I was used to at home. If I should happen to get very sick if it is your wish, although it will be quite expensive I shall if possible obtain a furlough and visit Elmore, but I am inclined to think that I shall have no occasion to apply for one. it is quite difficult to procure a furlough unless there is something very urgent pending. I dont expect to see E__ until this little family quarrel is settled. God speed the day that sees its settlement. According to your advice, I have commenced bathing regularly every other day. There are several large springs in this neighborhood that form quite a stream, the water is as clear as crystal and cool as any spring water. I mean to be very careful in regard to what I eat. I get my washing done by the negro women nearby. I had been troubled some with the headache but not much of late, Green Tea cannot be had at any price here Black Tea is not fit to drink, consequently I drink but little coffee as I prefer good water. I change shirts at least once a week and sometimes oftener. Mother positively I dont sweat as much as I used to when firing in the mill, I have less work to do, but when it comes to marching I expect to perspire pretty freely. I don't blame you for feeling so solicitous in regard to my welfare, I wouls not be natural if otherwise and my only wish is that I may merit all your kind wishes. I am much pleased to hear that William is so well situated and suited.

We have received news of the evacuation of Corinth and of Gen Halleck being in pursuit of the fleeing rascals, we have also heard that our forces succeeded in capturing 10,000 prisoners, pretty good that[.] We also received news of the defeat of the rebels before Richmond. McClellan is doing something after all that his enemies have said against him.

Capt Vantine lately made me a present of a nice set of what do you call it, a knife, spoon & fork, made so that you can close them like a knife. they are of German Silver, there is also a nice case to put them in and I can carry them all in my pocket just like a pocket book[.] They cost \$4.00 in Cleveland I take good care of them and intend to take them home with me. Charley says he is in hopes that we will be at home in time to eat some of those grapes. Love to all

Robert

Do you know that I will be 21 next Saturday, feel age creeping on very perceptibly ...ha, ha, ha good for 80 years yet I hope

Fort McDonald near Athens Ala Jun 14/62

My dear Sister

Your welcome letter of June 5th was received on the 12th and I can assure you, read with interest. You need have no fears about my failing to receive your letters in the future, as the mail now arrives regularly three times a week.

I guess that I have received all of you back letters now, as I have received several. Shortly after arriving at this place, the back letters commenced arriving and continued to do so until I have now had something like 15 in all. You know how much good it does one to get good letters from home.

I am glad to hear of the continued prosperity of Elmore, and hope it may continue until it becomes the chief town of that section, which it is bound to do, if it continues to improve in the same ration that it has for the past two years[.] Ryders block will indeed look grand and imposing, but you had ought to have been with me at Nashville, to see some of those Marble front Business houses in that city, I cant describe them on paper, wait until I get home. I have got a thousand things to tell, when that happy time arrives. But of course the business of our little city wont justify Marble fronts at present. I am glad to hear that the citizens have at last concluded to build sidewalks upon Main Street, many is the tumble that I have had on those old shin breakers that used to revel in the Sobriquet of sidewalks, but now all old things are to become new old fogyism must stand aside and make room for the more enterprising youth, Young America.

Ah. ha. new house. Mary White. Just what I have expected of Eli, good luck attend them.

I was much pleased to hear that Mose was having blinds put on his house, just tell him if he don't answer my letter, that when I get home I will be under the necessity of putting a blind on his eyes, just tell him that, hell know what I mean. Tell him to set out lots of strawberries as I intend to wade through his patch next Spring. Strawberries are all gone here, so are cherries, plums are ripe. Oh how I wish Mose was with me, if the sacrifice would bring him I would be willing to go barefoot, the rest of the campaign for the pleasure to be derived from his company. Other folks as a general thing are dull in comparison with him, his company would be such a good antidote for a tinge of homesickness or anything of that nature. don't forget to tell him to write a good long letter, as he knows so well how to do.

Don't indulge the thought that I am homesick as I am not, as dearly I would love to be at home but not until this fuss is settled, but the fact is I am 21 to day, and that thought sends my mind back so many long years, imagination pictures in my mind the scenes of early childhood passed on the farm, when without a thought or care for the future I whiled away my childhood days, never for a moment allowing any thing to mar my happiness. and then a change came I was sent to school to the H.E. Clark in Fremont, and I distinctly remember those feruleings that I received

at his hands, merely for wishing to continue in my practice of idleness, but I cant blame him in the least, and only wish he had put it on a little more frequently, if I was really to derive any advantage from its application. Next came the most momentous period of my existence, I who had always remained at home surrounded by the influence and good teachings of a kind Father, Mother Brother & Sister and who had never for a moment been thrown upon my own resources, I say I was in a moment to break all those fond ties and throw myself in the seething maelstrom that was at that moment threatening to engulf our own beloved Country, if happily by my sacrifice the blow might be warded off and our divided and distracted Union, once more be brought within the folds of peace and happiness

Oh can I picture the intense anguish with which my very Soul was racked when the parting moment arrived, and for the last time probably for years, and perhaps forever I seized those loving hands that had ever done their utmost to promote my welfare and as I wrung them in silent grief I was obliged to turn my head to hide my emotions, for fear that this outward show of grief might add to theirs, but enough, the deed was one of my own free will, and I am thankful that through the long intervening months, Surrounded by toil, exposure, and danger I have never for a moment regretted my choices, and I am thankful that I had a brother, in whose bosom burned the fires of Patriotism to such an extent, that he too forsook everything dear to his heart, and became a wanderer, in support of the same holy cause, and again I am doubly thankful that I am possessed of parents that were willing to make the sacrifice, how noble and good in an aged Father and Mother to cheerfully send their only sons, that doubtless they had often looked upon as the staff upon which to lean, when their steps should become feeble, Oh if any body is worthy of praise it is that Parent that willingly offers his children upon the Altar of his Country. Who can tell of the sleepless nights that are passed by them thinking of what might be the fate of the absent ones. Then do not wonder that I am in a thoughtful mood to day, and that this letter may appear somewhat lifeless, but let me hope that another anniversary of my birthday may find our family once more united.

I am enjoying the best of health
Robert

Fort McDonald June 19/62

My dear Sister

Your welcome letter came to hand to day, dated June 9th. I can assure you that it received a warm welcome, as do all of your letters. I am happy to state that I am enjoying an almost fabulous amount of good health in fact I just more than enjoy myself down here in Secessia, the land is flowing with milk an d honey, I was almost going to say, but it is a fact, honey costs 12 ½ cents per pound, and the milk, well_____ we don't trouble anybody for that, we are all adept in the art of milking. I cant say that I have any great or important news to communicate, sufficient to say that Fort McDonald is still in possession of the Federals, with a fair prospect of continueing in that state during the remainder of the war Our worth Capt is well, as are nearly all of the men. The health of the 21st is quite good.

Oh you had ought to see and taste of some of those almost magic pies that I made to day, We had drawn flour, and as the country round about camp is teeming with berries of all kinds, some of the boys went out and gathered some whortleberries & blackberres and with a slight turn of the wrist, I brought forth some of the most delicious pies that have yet been eaten in the Confederacy[.] I took four out of the Capt's oven but a few moments ago, and positively I do wish that you could reach down here and get one of them, but doubtless the effect would be to make you ashamed of your own baking and that would be cruel indeed. I also made some biscuit for dinner, they were amazing fine ones, but I will own that I forgot to salt them, however that difficulty was overcome by Salting the gravey that I ate upon them. hurah for me I get along where others will complain of starving Mr Rogers is eating one of my pies at this moment, and declares that they cant be surpassed. John Anderson is looking on and just now made this quaint and characteristic remark, well I tell you boys laying jokes all on one side those pies are just a leettle the nicest thing that I have yet seen in the South, I am sufficiently flattered[.] Well I declare I shall have to leave some white paper this time. I received letter from Father to day and propose to answer it in a few days, (next Sunday) I will look for Mothers letter every day, I am sorry Aunt Mary has left, she was so good and kind and such good company. I received those roses in Fathers letter, was much pleased to see them. In my imagination I can see that bush of yellow roses in the front yard, I hope I may see those dahlias before the frost cuts them

Well I believe I am done.

(P.S) Please tell Mary Luckey that it is also a very pleasant day down in Alabama, also that I am well, and do as my Superior officers tell me to do, Tell her that I received a letter from her dated apr 23rd and a few days ago, and almost immediately answered it. Please present my compliments with this message. from your loving brother

Robert

Camp near Athens Ala June 22/62

Dear Father

Thinking that a letter from the land of Secessia might not prove uninteresting to you, I propose to occupy a few moments by glancing it some of our recent movements in Northern Ala, and also note the effects produced by the advent of Genl Mitchel among the fire eaters of the above mentioned district. In order to take a comprehensive view of our operations since that important event took place, it becomes necessary for me to go back for a period of something like nine weeks, which will bring us up to the time that the famous Lincolnites first menaced the Sacred soil of Ala[.] You will remember that in one of my former letters, I stated that we crossed the Tenn & Ala line upon the morning of Apr 10th I shall never forget what my sensations were, upon that lovely spring morning, We had been hurried from our slumbers at midnight to enter upon a long and tiresome forced march. our way led through swamps and over some of the worst roads imaginable, we were also obliged to ford streams and undergo all the different privations, incident to the life of a soldier, all of which was cheerfully met, as we had been informed that

there was fun ahead[.] Daylight found us emerging from this dreary waste and entering upon one of the finest countries that it has ever yet been my fortune to witness. Extensive and well tilled plantations, met the eye upon every hand, with the splendid and majestic residence of the wealthy planter rising from a pleasant knoll, surrounded by natural and ornamental trees of every known variety. Cast your eyes a little beyond, and you will see what at first light strikes the beholder as being a fine and flourishing village, upon questioning some of the knowing ones, you will receive the information that you are gazing upon the negro quarters of a well regulated plantation. there are perhaps 25 huts in all, built in regular order, of one story each, all whitewashed and producing a very pleasing appearance, in the morning sunshine. In the distance are seen the everlasting hills, with the different ranges rising above each other and piercing the very clouds that are seen circling around the summits, each successive range farther in the distance, and growing more indistinct, until nothing is to be seen but one uneven, blue line outlined against the heavens, with here and there a sharp peak shooting up ___ up until its summit is lost to human observation among the morning mists. It was indeed a grand sight but in this case distance lent enchantment to the view when I called it to mind, the many weary miles that I had traveled over the Cumberland mountains in Eastern Kentucky during the famous campaign of Genl Nelson in that locality. We continued on in our rapid march, passing on through some of the finest scenery imaginable, until the church spires of Huntsville began to be visible in the distance, but the particulars in regard to the capture of that beautiful city are familiar to all, and it is needless for me to occupy space by repeating them here, suffice it to say that by this master stroke of his, Genl Mitchel was placed in possession of what might properly be termed, the great Artery of the Southern States, namely the M. & C. R. R., the route by which the Rebels had been constantly engaged in conveying troops and munitions of war, between their two great armies, By this movement of our worthy General, communications were completely severed between their Eastern and Western forces. By the aid of the rolling stock captured, He was enabled to control a larger amount of territory than he otherwise should have been.

Mitchel now entered upon several brilliant and successful movements, by which he became possessed of much valuable information, relative to the designs of the enemy[.]

An expedition was sent against a large force of the enemy concentrated at Bridgeport, after a sharp engagement, the enemy was scattered in confusion we captured a large number of prisoners, also two pieces of cannon[.] And now we have assurances that after a desperate conflict of two days duration Chattanooga has fallen into our hands, our forces were completely triumphant at that place driving the rebels back in great confusion. Thus you see that our worth Genl is not content after striking one brilliant and effective blow, to lie supinely upon his back, and allow an active and vigilant enemy by well concerted movements to counteract its effects but victory follows victory in rapid succession until at the present time, not only northern Ala, but Eastern and Middle Tenn are freed from the oppressive yoke of Secession rule and all this has been accomplished within the short space of ten weeks, with a force not exceeding 12000 effective men. I notice that his services are thoroughly appreciated in the proper source as Gen Mitchel now sports two stars upon his shoulder straps. His cars are now in constant operation transporting army stores for Gen Buell, who is said to be crossing the Tennessee River at Decatur[.] large trains heavily loaded are constantly passing over the Road from Elk River. The goods are shipped by the way of Columbia, and are transported from the latter to the former place by means of wagons, where they take the cars and are shipped to their destination[.]

Communications by telegraph are established between Buell & Mitchels lines There is considerable speculation going on among the knowing ones relative to the future movements of the former Genl

There is a class of men in the army known as Grumblers, who are disposed to find fault with everything that does not exactly suit them They appear to never enjoy themselves so well, as when finding fault, either with the quality of their rations or the quantity allotted to each man, and frequently over that they are just on the verge of starvation &c when it is a known fact that we are supplied most liberally with everything necessary to our comfort and well being Too be sure there are times when by a chain of circumstances unavoidable, rations will for a time become a little short but I have never yet seen the time when I could not obtain a sufficient amount of food. There are others that are continually imagineing themselves to be sick, and who, are hardly ever ready to do duty, when ten chances to one there is nothing ailing them but homesickness to such I would say better stay at home, the army is no place for men that are not ready and willing to undergo the privations that are at all times incident to the life of a soldier. Now as for my self I believe that I can truly say that although I left one of the best homes that man was ever blessed with, surrounded with everything calculated to make life pleasant, blessed with kind Parents, a loving brother and sister yet I forsook all willingly, to battle in the cause of my Country and I have yet to see the time when I can say that I regret having done so, and look forward with cheerfulness to the time when we shall once more be a reunited and happy family

Camp near Athens Ala Jun 22nd/62

Dear Father

I write to let you know that I am in the employment of good health, with a fair prospect of it continueing so for some time to come, I read a letter from Juliet to day dated May 29th it had been delayed as also had one that I got from William dated Apr 2nd. We were payed off to day for three months receiving \$39.00 apiece I don't know what kind of an opportunity will present itself for sending money home but I shall avail myself of the first good opportunity It is very much with me as it was with the woman that bought the new handirons and so on through until she had a new set of furniture throughout, but I hope not quite so bad. After being to the post of Sergeant I found it necessary for me while on duty as Sergt of the guard, to keep the exact time, in order to know when to post the reliefs, it all falls to the duty of the Sergt to see that the reliefs are posted at the proper time, and in order to do so I found it necessary to have a watch, and I soon found out that very few men were willing to keep a good watch to lend to others, so I was obliged to make a purchase of a watch, and as such I regretted it, as I have always been very anxious to send as much money home as I possibly could. I did not wish to buy a cheap one as that would be the most expensive in the end, so I bought an American Lever Hunters Case watch for \$20.00 such an one as A.W. Luckey paid \$35.00 for that he gave to James, the watch has been running for about four months and given the best of satisfaction I bougt it much cheaper here than I could have done in Ohio. If I am to pay for it so that I would feel it so very heavily, I can send about \$25.00 home this time and as I now receive \$17 per month, when we draw our

next two months pay I can send about \$20, and after that I shall be even once more. You may do as you think best with that letter I never was cut out for a letter writer.

from Robert

Fort McDonald, June 24th/62

My dear Sister

I received yours of June 15th this morning and hasten to answer. I am really glad that you are so prompt, in writing, as there is nothing under the sun, does me so much good as letters from home, Yes indeed I did enjoy myself reading those letters, when they came, it matters not how long a letter may have been upon the road, so long as it conveys the tidings that all goes well with those at home, it is interesting to me.

Your last letter indicates that you have your hands full with your large family of Young Americans. u_g_h I am glad that I am not in that branch of business, teaching the young ideas how to shoot, but perhaps I did not better myself in coming to a place where we are taught to engage in shooting of an entirely different character. but I like it much better. every one to their taste you know.

That was a very characteristic answer of yours that you made to that Port Clinton Home Guard, and one that he merited, if he had half an eye, on the welfare of his Country, during the last twelve months, he would never have made the enquiry that he died. You used him just right, I like your spirit.

Speaking of that Boquet of roses that was presented to you, puts me in mind of Huntsville, beautiful City, I can never tire praising its beauties, I don't mean its confounded female population, no, not by any means, I can never admire anything in the shape of a Secesh, be it ever so comely. Darn the tribe, how many, many, weary miles over mountains and glen, have I helped to chase them, consequently I cannot look with the least degree of allowance, upon any of the Genus homo Quite a breeze disturbing the Methodist wing of your society at present, never mind a large portion of the Angels fell from their exalted position, once upon a time, which but had the effect to render the remainder more pure, a thorough purging now and then would be a good thing for all the different branches of the Church, there are black sheep in every flock. You say Mother has a new bonnet, well I am even with her, I have bought a brand new McClellan Cap, you had just ought to see it, they are all the rage now nearly all the non commissioned officers of Co I have bought them. We have been having delightful weather for the last few days, very warm with a cool breeze blowing which makes it very comfortable in the shade, we have as yet experienced no evil effects from the heat, all that is necessary is to keep within the shade and you are all right. There is a white Sulphur Spring close to camp. This used to be a Summer resort, a few years ago. The ruins of an extensive hotel are yet visible destroyed by fire a few years ago, but you see I must subside or more (but gaily?) speaking, dry up[.] How is Willie, please have him write, I like his letters, they are so good and honest, perfectly characteristic of him.

Robert

I forgot to mention that I stand in need of a few stamps, don't send many at a time they are liable to miss carry.

RC

I am well and hearty

Fort McDonald July 4th/62

Dear Mother

Wishing to hear from you, in the shape of a good long letter, I thought the only Sure method to insure such a desirable thing, was to write to you to let you know that your letters are just as welcome as ever, and Oh how welcome they always have been[.]

We have lately just more than been in luck, the 3rd O, Cavalry lately arrived at Decatur, and the other day, as I returned to camp, after a shooting excursion, judge of my surprise and pleasure to stumble over Wash. Boggs, Yes, the immortal Washington, looking just as natural as ever, only a great deal rougher, why I caught him by the hand and almost twisted it off, in the exuberance of my joy at seeing a new Elmore face although He had been absent from that place almost as long as myself, yet you know how I felt, as it was a change, and he also could tell me all about William, having lately seen him. Wm was tough and rugged he said. Wash staid until evening, and Capt Vantine, Mike Rice, and I took the train with him and started for Decatur to see the rest of the boys, I saw Ed Haines, and Biduel Hull, and Ed came back with us and is spending the 4th with us to day, he goes back this evening. He looks as natural as ever, has never seen a sick day since entering the service. Biduel Hull also looks well. I did not see Wells Wilson as he was lying sick in hospital at Tuscombria I was sorry for him indeed, as it would have afforded me much pleasure to have got a glimpse of honest Wells. But the saddest of all was to find that Devereaux, good, kind, brotherly fellow that he was, had died, died in a Southern State, far from friends that he held most dear, died in a strange hospital, He who had always appeared to me like a brother, and who was in every way worthy of our love and esteem [.] Oh it was hard, when I heard of it, it just broke me down entirely, and I felt like giving right up, it is impossible for me to describe my feelings, imagine what your feelings would have been had you received the news of the death of a near and dear relative. I loved Ralph like a brother. His whole Co . shed tears when they read news of his death. poor fellow, but he is now better off than before, having gone to receive his reward.

Genl. Buells Grand Army is now lying in this vicinity, preparatory to marching upon Chattanooga, where it is said the enemy is concentrating in great force. some say 15000 but I doubt it, that is too heavy.

Last tuesday Genl. Mitchel started for Washington City, upon business, it is said he is to have an important command in front of Richmond, but of this I am assured. just as he was leaving to take the cars, for Washington he made a few remarks to the 21sters and told them that he was going

east, and would use his utmost endeavors to have his Division join him on the field at the earliest possible period. I am in great hopes that we will Yet see the Rebel Capital who knows, Man proposes, God disposes. The remaining 3 Regts. of our Brigade the (9th) are at present staying at Battle Creek situated beyond Stevenson, not far from Chattanooga[.] The boys on our side can har the sound of the enemys Bugles, very distinctly. Oh that we could be down there with them. Col. Sill Comd. our Brigade has sent for our Regt. twice already, but Mitchel wont have us relieved from our present duty. we are all so anxious to be in at the fight to come of soon before Chattanooga. Our forces once took the place, but owing to not receiving sufficient support, were obliged to abandon it to the enemy and now they will once more dispute our right of possession . we will teach them a lesson at that place. Just wait to hear of something heavy in that direction before long.

They will catch it in both front and rear at once, and then it will be fight or surrender and most likely both, on one side, or the other.

I saw Genls Nelson & McCook yesterday old Nelson looks as natural as ever.

There are 4 Divisions now moving upon Chattanooga, Nelsons, McCooks, Woods, Thomsons and very likely a part of ours will bear a hand[.]

We are not doing much in the way of celebrating to day, but I heard a salute being fired down at Athens this morning at sunrise.

In your letter tell me how you passed the 4th it will interest me very much last 4th passed o very pleasantly to me, but to day proceedings in this direction are very dry.

no Basket Picnic, nor smiling faces, of the female persuasion, but a Soldiers life is variable you know, sunshine one day, clouds the next. Hurrah news has come of the surrender of Richmond, don't believe a word of it.

Robert.

I got a letter from Juliet a couple days ago will answer it soon[.]

(P.S)

got those stamps in Juliets letter

thanks

R.C

Camp near Athens, Ala July 8th/62

My dear Brother

Your interesting letter of June 21st was received last Sunday and I was very glad to hear of your good health, as I have had some fears for you on account of the unhealthiness of our late camping grounds[.]

You spoke of our tardiness about writing to each other &c . well I also plead guilty to the charge, and promise to do better in future, but by the way you write, I am confident that you have failed to receive all of my letters. I have written to you several times since we came to Huntsville, but you have failed to receive them, but that was to be expected in part, on account of the uncertainty of mail communication between our lines and yours. We are all greatly depressed in spirit on account of the recent war news from McClellans Army, we were (?) of success in that quarter, but I fear that our arms have suffered a severe reverse in that quarter lately. I fear that the result of the fight will have a tendency to prolong the war to a still greater length of time than we had thought for. however McClellan knows what he is about, and I am willing to trust to his sagacity, to carry us through safely. Is not it a shame, the way that Fremont has been treated, if I were in his place, I think I would resign. Our Division is very much scattered at present, The rest of our Brigade consisting of the 33rd, 2nd Ohio & 10th Wis is at present lying at Battle creek, about two miles east of this place and not far from Chattanooga, the bugles of the enemy can be distinctly heard from their camp. Our Regt is mostly scattered along the Decatur& Nash R.R. engaged in bridge guarding, very easy work, but not exactly suited to our taste, Col Sill comd our Brigade, has telegraphed to Mitchel twice already to have him send the 21st to his assistance, but here we are yet, and doubtless here we will remain, for some time. Gen Mitchel received an order a few days ago, to immediately report to Washington city, and he immediately obeyed the order, and in all probability reached there some time ago, what his business is in that direction I know not, but before leaving he made a short speech to a portion of the 21st stating that he was ordered to the Potomac, and also, that he intended, if possible, to have his old Division with him. So you see, there is a prospect of seeing Richmond yet, perhaps too before it falls into our hands. The Hd quarters of the 21st is at Athens, Col Norton started for Washington City last sunday, some say he had never yet been exchanged, and was now going for that purpose. The health of the Regt. is remarkably good at present, The 21st can muster about 800 effective men which cannot be beat by another Regt in the Div. Our Co reports 69 men for duty and is in a flourishing condition, We are guarding a large Bridge 8 miles north of Athens. You wish to know what my prospects for the future are, &c . I suppose that you have heard by the way of home, that I am now a Sergt. I was appointed the position of Orderly as soon as a vacancy occurs, which will take place before long, as G. Claghorn is to be discharged on account of physical inability, howeve the Capt may alter his mind before that occurs. I do all of the Capts writing, make out his reports, and also his Muster Rolls, besides discharges for his men that are unfit for service, and in fact, I do all of his writing and figureing and he says he is going to reward me for it. time will prove all things I was glad to hear of your promotion, quite pleasant to have a horse of your own. give my respects to Maj and Lieut Rice. has Alfred got to his Regt again I heard he had resigned.

(P.S.)

The 3rd O Cavalry is camping not far from Huntsville had a visit from Ed Haines& Wash Boogs I also visited their camp while they were at Decatur had a good time I can assure you[.] I don't know when I have felt so bad as when I heard of the death of Lieut Devere and I felt as though I had lost a brother, poor fellow

R.C

Fort McDonald July 12th/62

My dear Mother,

I had the pleasure of receiving the letters, day before yesterday, one from Juliet, one from Father, with one of Wms enclosed, and one from Mose Willson. I was glad to hear of the good health of the Elmore friends. We have been very much excited for the past week, relative to the news from Richmond and vicinity. McClellan, it appears had had to fall back, which doubtless causes great rejoicing among the Secesh. I was in hopes that our Commander in Chief would deal the rebellion a death blow in that direction, but it has turned out otherwise[.] I got a letter from William a few days ago, and answered it immediately after receiving it.

Craiglorn, it appears, got as far as Columbus, Ohio where he procured a Discharge, and in all probability is now at home. I wish he had come, I should have liked very much to have got that tea. He wrote to Capt Vantine, and I made out his Descriptive Roll, and Clothing account, and sent it to him. So he is satisfied at last, and obtained what he has long been working for, a Discharge. Father expressed a wish that our Regt would remain in this vicinity during the summer months, I cant tell how soon we may be called away although we may remain here for some time. I got a letter from Juliet a few days ago, and will answer it in turn. While you are Luxuriating upon Strawberries and Currants, we are doing the same eating ripe Peaches, they will be quite plenty in a few days. I got those stamps in Fathers letter, I also got some a few days ago, in one of Juliets letters. please accept my thanks for them. Tomorrow Capt Vantine, Lieut. Wood, and myself intend to go to a Barbecue over to one of the Planters houses in the neighborhood of Camp. We are expecting to have a good time. You know what a Barbecue is. The main feature of the entertainment consists of a roast Pig on a big scale, or more properly speaking a roast Hog. To say nothing of the rest of the Chicken fixings to be on hand upon the occasion. We have some very good neighbors I am 4th Sergt with the promise of Orderly's position with the promise of Orderly's position,, as soon as G. Claghorn comes to the Regt. He is to have a discharge on acct of sickness. Capt. has promised me the above position time will prove whether or not he keeps his promise. You need not mention this out of the family. The health of our Co. is good at present. Gen Buells Army is still lying in this vicinity. Gen Mitchel has not yet got back, it appears he is to have an important Command in the vicinity of Richmond, and has promised if possible to take his old Div. with him. There is no news of importance in this vicinity

Give my love to all. from your affectionate son
Robert

Fort McDonald July 15th/62

My dear Sister

You must forgive me for neglecting your letter so long, but the fact is, letter writing is getting to be a stale business on account of the scarcity of news to communicate. You must not think that I find it a hard task to write to the loved ones at home, far from it, it is a pleasure to me and a task that I am ever willing to undertake, but when I write to you I do it with the wish to furnish something pleasant and profitable, but as matters stand at present in this vicinity I fear I shall be able to do neither, so if you don't get a long and interesting letter this time, please overlook it.

Capt Vantine and Co is well and in a flourishing condition. I never enjoyed better health than at present, owing no doubt to the healthy location of our camp. It was rumored yesterday that Genl Crittenden and Staff were taken prisoners at Murfreesboro, Tenn. on the day before, I dont know how true it is, but upon the receipt of the news, Genl Nelson started (it is said) with his whole Division for that place I cannot say as I believe that Nelson took his whole Div. to Murfreesboro, as I am of the opinion that such an expedition would terminate in a wild goose chase, but I think he has his eye on some other point, but I am certain that he moved with his Div to some point or others, as he left Athens with it, (where it has been encamped for the last three weeks) day before yesterday[.] Probably we shall hear from him in a few days.

Peaches are ripe and you had ought to taste of some of the pies that we make, they are perfectly delicious, but I need not tell you what a peach pie is you are perfectly competent to judge for yourself[.] There are several large orchards in this vicinity and of course we are no ways backward about wading in, Roasting ears are becoming quite plenty but I intend to be quite shy of them, and not endanger my heath by over indulgence. There is a large amount of corn, and but little cotton raised down here this season. Craiglorn did not come to the Regt he went as far as Columbus, where he procured a discharge. I should have liked very well to have got that tea. That Beach, has finally got the papers for his discharge made out, and (thank goodness) he will be with us no more. I don't see how in the world he managed to get them but he has pulled the wool over the eyes of the Surgeons in some way or other good luck to him, he was of no possible account to us any way. You wish to know something in regard to the duties of a Sergt. Well, when the Regt is together and it is necessary to have a guard round camp, There is an order issued for one Lieut, one Sergt, three Corporals, and a certain number of privates, denominated as Guards. The Lieut is called the officer of the Guard. It is the duty of the Guards to remain at the Guard quarters at all times of the day, but in case the Officer of Guard should be called away the Sergt takes his place and assumes command of the Guards. The Guards are divided into three Reliefs, the Reliefs often consisting of 20 men each, there is a Corporal appointed for each relief. they are called 1st 2nd & 3rd Reliefs. It is the duty of the Sergt of the Guard to keep the time and at the proper time call out the Relief, when the Corpl posts it. Guards as a general thing are relieved every two hours, and there being three Reliefs, a man is what we call, on two and off four. It often becomes necessary to send a squad of men to a certain place on duty, and in that case they never go without either a Lieut Sergt or Corpl whose duty it is to take command of them and for whose conduct, that is of the men he is held responsible then there are other duties that a Sergt is called upon to perform, but Father can explain it to you more at length, than I have. The train is right here new and the mail has come, Capt is undoing it wonder if I will get any, you will soon see. Yes here is one with Fathers hand writing on the wrapper, wait till I read it. The letter was from Mother and you, and both such good ones. they are dated the 8th new I guess I can fill another page. I wish you would always write on foolscap, as you can then write larger letters. How did I spend the 4ths? well I was on guard upon that day, but notwithstanding all that I spent it very pleasantly. There were some of the 3rd O. Cavalry boys here with us. Ed Haines was one of them. Ed took dinner with me. I made some light biscuit and we had blackberries and Sugar. (the cow did not come up or we should have had cream) and everything else good. we had a fine time. we had no firecrackers or torpedoes but the boys fired their guns some. You must have had a fine time at Genoa[.] I am sorry you could not attend supper at night. Yes I know you , if you had only had a handsome gallant, to beaux you to the supper your headache would have vanished instantly now don't get mad. I wish you had sent that letter of

yours and Mary Luckeys, it would have been amusing to me. I suppose ere this you have heard of the death of Wells Willson, poor fellow. our best men are being cut down by disease. but whenever I hear of the death of a friend in the Army of the Union, it only serves to put more nerve into my arm, and I feel more and more like wishing for a chance to avenge their death.

McClellan has lately been doing some hard fighting with but little punishment to the Rebels, although our Chief claims a victory, its results appear rather barren to me. Gen Mitchel has gone to Washington and has received an important command under Pope. Our Div is now commanded by Gen Smith. I don't know how good a Genl he is, but time will show. We were sorry to lose our old Commander.

I will answer Mothers letter next time I write. I wrote to Mother a few days ago. I am glad you got the money that I sent. You must excuse me for writing on this soiled paper, but my paper was short I will get some better, before writing again. I get a letter from William a few days ago and answered it. He was within 30 miles of Memphis at the time of writing. Give my love to all from your affectionate Brother
Robert

I got all of those stamps 8 in one and 10 in another letter.
R.

Fort McDonald, July 17th/62

My dear Mother

I received your kind and interesting letter last tuesday, and I think I need not say that I was glad to hear from you.

Juliet also sent a letter in the same envelope, and I answered it as soon as it came to hand. It appears you have failed to receive the letter that I wrote to you some days ago.

I suppose you have heard of the death of Wills. Willson he died at (Tuscumbia?) several days ago. Poor Mose, what will he say when he arrives and hears of his death, it is so hard. I suppose that supper and dance on the 4th was a grand thing, should liked to have been on hand myself to shake my foot and partake of some of the refreshments.

Washington Boggs told us all about the death of Ralph Devere (aw.?). I have not heard any news that affected me half so much as the news of Ralphs death.

I was much in hopes that the citizens of Elmore would effect something lasting and beneficial in their pursuit of the Liquor sellers. I should have enjoyed that

[FADED INK]

of the full articles. You wish to know if Geo Claghorn arriving would make any difference with me. not in the least. I took the place of Ezekiel Rice. In case Geo Claghorn gets a discharge

(which he is anxious to get) I will stand a good chance to get his position, that is if Capt Vantine keeps his promise with me. I wrote to William a few days ago, his letter was written from Moscon. I believe dated 22nd June. He was well. I was pleased to hear that he had a horse to ride as marching afoot during the warm weather is not very pleasant to say the least of it. I got a letter from Moze Willson a few days ago. I was much pleased to get a letter from him. News is very scarce at present consequently I shall be under the necessity of quitting with a short letter this time. The Rebels have been cutting up some capers lately by tearing up a portion of the R.R. track beyond Pulaski. I don't know whether or not the mail communications are cut off, but I intend to risk this letter any way. Genl Michel is needed in these parts once more very much it takes him to keep them down[.] Tell Father I will write to him next. from you affection Son Robert

**Camp McDonald
July 21st 1862**

Dear Father

There is but little news to write to day, but thinking a few lines might be interesting to you, I propose to occupy a few moments by writing. Lieut. Wood came from Athens this morning and brought the order for us to hold ourselves in readiness to move at a moments warning[.]

Our Brigade lies at Battle creek about 30 miles this side of Chattanooga'.] Gen Negley is going to relieve us at this point. Our Brigade I am told is to take the advance in the forward movement. However this order may possibly be revoked there is no knowing what may turn up. We are ready at any moment. I cannot learn what is to be our destination, but Atlanta Georgia, very likely. My health is excellent, never was better. I suppose you are having exciting times once more in Ohio, on account of the recent call, for additional troops.

How does recruiting go on in the North. I understand 40,000 is Ohio's quota. Wont it put the Buckeye State to her trumps somewhat, I hear that she is only allowed 40 days to raise them crowding aint it, But very liberal inducements are now offered to volunteer and I sincerely hope Ohio will not be found wanting[.] The 21st Regt. can muster about 800 effective men at present that cant be easily beat for a Regt. that has been out as long as ours. Col Norton has not yet got back don't know when he is expected[.] Our Div is now commanded by Gen Smith, I don't know what his qualifications are as a commander, time alone can tell, but I very much fear we shall often miss our old Genl. We were yesterday reinforced at this post by Co. H. 21st Regt. We have now about 100 men here[.]

There was quite an excitement at Athens lately owing to the news of the capture of Murfreesboro by the Rebels.

There was quite a number of boys from the 21st in hospital at that place, at the time of the capture. W. Barnes of Co I. was among the rest. in all probability he is now a prisoner in their hands[.] Gen Nelson has gone to pay a visit in that direction doubtless we will hear from him before long. I wrote to Mother and also to Juliet a few days ago. Are you running the mill at

present, write me the news and let me know what you are doing, from your Son
Robert

Dear Father

in regard to sending any of my letters to the Editor of your County paper, you will act in accordance with your own judgement if you think that any of my scrawlings are worthy of publication you may do so. I don't possess quite so high an opinion in regard to my humble merits however.

I will answer Juliet's letter in a day or two, I got a letter from William today of July 12th. he was well. Give my love to all. I read and answered Mother's letter the other day.

from Robert

Athens Ala July 27th/62

Dear Father

Your interesting letter of July 20th was received this morning, and I think it is needless to state it met with a warm welcome from one that knows how to appreciate the worth of letters coming from far distant, but loving friends. I am still in the enjoyment of good health, with a fair prospect of a continuation of the same, and he who has ever had the misfortune to be put upon a diet of sheet iron crackers and salt pork, can fully appreciate the blessings of good health. Your letter indicates that in view of the recent movements of that audacious scoundrel Morgan, in K.y. and Tenn. that you felt somewhat concerned in regard to the welfare of the 21st. Although the force stationed at this point at present is not a very formidable one, consisting of a small force of Cavalry, one Battery of rifled cannon, and the 21st O.V. all under command of Lieut. Col. Neibling of the 21st o.v. yet I think that you may entertain no fears on our account, as we are fully prepared for him should he take it into his head to pay us a visit, and nothing would please us better than an opportunity to measure our strength with that of his thieving crew, and I am free to say that my past experience with the 21st prompts me to state that in case of such an event occurring you will hear a good report of the doings of the 21st.

When will this Lavender water policy of our commanders be done away with, I declare I am heartily sick and tired of it, Oh for some General, that while in the discharge of his duties, will entertain no pious notions in regard to harming the sensitive feelings of some of the high bred sons of the chivalric South.

Only think of our commanders furnishing soldiers for the purpose of guarding the property of the very men that heretofore have been our most bitter enemies and it is often the case that they take that very opportunity to wound the feelings, of and insult our brave boys, by tauntingly mentioning some Rebel victory and chuckling over it in high glee, and openly proclaiming their sympathy with the rebellion, and the cases are of frequent occurrence wherein the guard, in direct disobedience to orders has left his post, and went to his company, because he possessed too much spirit to allow himself to remain in a position where he was openly insulted without a prospect of redress of grievances. I admire the spirit of such a man, and blush for that officer

who can so far demean himself as to attempt to curry favors with the contemptible puppies who style themselves one superiors in everything relating to moral worth. Good God has it come to this that Federal officers have allowed themselves to become the tools of these miscreants, and are willing to sell their men merely to obtain the good will of these hemp deserving villains? excuse me for allowing myself to use such strong language, but my feelings get the upper hand of me and I cannot control them. It appears that our leaders are endeavoring to win back the traitors, by acts of kindness, and in repay for acts of the most vindictive, and uncalled for cruelty committed on the part of the rebels, are literally smothering them with roses, so to speak. and their plea for such conduct is that they are gaining friends for the cause much more rapidly than they otherwise should by pursuing a more rigid policy. I need not state that the experiment has proven a failure in every case where this lavender water policy has been resorted to, Our past experience in Ky. and Tenn. speaks for itself, Guerrillas consisting of the citizens whose very property has been so zealously guarded by Union soldiers, have ever hung upon our rear doing an almost uncalculable amount of damage to the cause. Halleck made short work of that call of men, during his occupation of Missouri a few more Hallecks in our midst would result very beneficially to our cause.

There are rumors to day of important changes in high places, we hear that Stanton is superceded by Halleck, but rumor says so many strange things, that it is almost unsafe to believe any thing that one hears. I suppose that great efforts are now being made in the North to encourage volunteering. I am in great hopes that my native State may not be found wanting in patriotism, for if such should prove to be the case, there will, undoubtedly be a heavy draft made upon the young men of our noble Buckeye State. But I am looking for such n uprising of the people of the North as will forever convince the traitors of the South that their unholy cause is doomed to defeat, and that too in a very short space of time. That such may prove the fate of all conspiracies against our glorious Government is my constant prayer.

from your affectionate son
Robert

Athens July 31st/62

My dear Sister

Today is a rainy day and the gloom of the weather, casts a corresponding gloom over my spirits, and consequently you must not expect a very interesting letter this time. I have been somewhat elated for the last few days, but it is all over now and a reaction has taken place which puts me in quite a bad humor, The case stands this way. It appears that Gov Tod has recommended recruiting for the old Regts in order to fill them up to their maximum number, and Lieut Col Neibling sent for an order for recruiting for the 21st there was to be two commissioned officers, and four Sergeants, sent home in the capacity of recruiting officers. also, in the first place it was said that a Sergt. was to be sent from Co. I. and I was picked on for that purpose, but alas for human hopes Neibling changed his mind and when he sent for the order, there was no mention made of our Co. and so my hopes were immediately blasted wasent it too bad, I had counted so much upon seeing you all once more, When I was told by Lieut Wood that they had concluded to send me home, my expectations ran up to an amazing height, but when I learned how it was to

terminate, they fell in a corresponding ration. The order has not yet come and we are almost in hopes that it may not come at all, so angry are all of Co Is men because I could not go. The most of them had some little article to send, such as miniatures and letters, but the game is up and I have lost. but never mind better luck next time there is nothing to gain by repinning, but much to lose.

I suppose you will soon return to Oberlin once more to pursue your studies is it your intention to take a Ladies course at the Oberlin Institution? I suppose when I return home at the close of the war, I will find you quite an accomplished Lady, well, success attend you,

Athens is quite a lively place at present, owing to the large amount of Army stores being shipped through here en route for Gen Buells grand Army. Every thing has got to be reshipped at this point. You have no idea about the amount of stores it takes to subsist a large army, even on half rations at that, There is the forage for the teams consisting of Oats corn & Hay. there are stacks of it almost as large as our mill, lying at the depot, piles of Hard Bread equal in size to that of the forage, Then comes the ammunition. consisting of Shot & Shell and common musket and rifle cartridges, a large amount of 10 inch shells were shipped through here en route for our army now threatening Chattanooga. These Shot and Shell are put up in boxes, the same as musket cartridges, only upon a much larger scale. Before we got Contrabands to do the fatiguing at the depot, our boys used to groul considerably when they came to those 10 inch fellows, however Government now employs that class of persons to do all the hard work, and it makes it much easier for our men. I got your letter that you sent with Fathers. George Smith& Capt. Vantine have both heard of Ellen Smiths conduct. Give my love to all I will write to Mother next time

Your brother
Robert.

(P.S) I forgot to mention that my health is excellent
R.C

Athens Ala. July 31st/62

My dear Brother

Your long and interesting letter of July 12th came to hand a day or two ago and I must say that I was glad to hear from you. The 21st is stationed at this place but no one knows how long we are to remain here, but in all probability all summer. The Regt. has again been called together, and our Co. had to leave its pleasant quarters at Fort McDonald, and come to the more busy scenes of Athens, The force now stationed here consists of several Companies of Ky. Cavalry, a Battery of Steel guns, and the 21st O.V. all under commend of Lieut Col. Neibling, Col Norton having gone to Washington City to be exchanged, and not yet having returned Col. Neibling of course assumes command he being Sen. officer at this place[.]

There is a mystery attending the conduct of Col. Norton. It appears that he had not been lawfully exchanged, but serving in the U.S. army all the time notwithstanding all that , and about four weeks ago he left for Washington City to be exchanged, and there are rumors of foul play on his

part, it is said that he has never yet reported to Washington City, but gone somewhere else, and an order has been issued instructing any officers to arrest him wherever he may be found, The citizens of Athens appear to know of his whereabouts, they say they have heard from him and that he is now at Richmond.

It is thought that Col. Norton has been figuring for the position of military Governor of Alabama. he is very popular with the citizens having shown them more lenity than he does his own men. it is the opinion of all, that Norton is a used up man (rumor says all this)[.]

All of Buells Army stores pass through Athens and are all reshipped here, being brought a part of the distance by wagons, and being put aboard of the cars at this point, it makes quite lively times as a large force is required to handle them. I should not be at all surprised if the enemy should watch their opportunity and make a clash at this point, as the large amount of Gov property now lying here, might tempt them You wish me to give you a history of Co I. from the time of it organization to the present time. Well the Co organized at Camp Dennison the result being thus, For Capt. D. Gibbs, 1st Lieut G. Vantine, 2nd A.E. Wood, Orderly James Bumpus, 1st Sergt G. Claghorn 2nd Michael Rice 3rd Russel Rice, 4th George Smith, 1st Corpl Ezekiel Rice, 2nd Maxwell Reynolds, 3rd R. Caldwell, 4th John Rice, 5th W. Barns, 6th J. Frederick, 7th W. Perse, 8th A. Veon. The Co. consisted of 86 men rank and file. At the close of our campaign in the mountains last Fall as we were coming down the Big Sandy River, one of our Privates, (Glinn Bromley) committed suicide by shooting himself with his musket, reason not known. he was buried on the banks of the B. Sandy. While lying at Bacon Creek last winter, by request of his own men Capt. Gibbs resigned, and Lieut Vantine took his place. Amos Wook becoming 1st and our Orderly (James Bumpus) 2nd Lieut. G. Claghorn Orderly, and Ezekiel Rice being 1st Corpl became 4th Sergt and so on through the whole line of Non Coms. Private Brett becoming 8th Corpl by the voice of the Co. The health of the Co continued good while at B, Creek (lot?) having lost a man while there, While lying at Nashville Audrien Harrison received a discharge on account of a rupture received at Prestonburg K.Y.

During the course of events we found ourselves at Fort McDonald , a place on the R. Road 80 miles north of Athens, while at that place one of our men Shoemaker by name died very suddenly, his death supposed to have been caused by eating too much fruit that being the first death by disease that our Co had sustained since its organization. While we were yet at that post Ezekiel Rice, (having taken sick at Nashville and at that time at home on sick furlough) was reduced to ranks and I was appointed to take his place, Private Joshua Rogers was then appointed 2nd Corpl in my place, and J. Frederick being sick and absent was put into the ranks and Mathew Culican, appointed to his place. That is all of the changes

(Excuse me for leaving this white paper, I made a mistake in calculating about the amount of news that I should have to write, R C)

that have taken place. The health of the Co is excellent, there being but few sick, and those are old cases, non behind in hospital all doing well. I forgot to mention that G. Craiglorn and S. Beach have applied for discharges with very fortunate since entering the service, most of the other Cos averaging about 3 deaths to the Co ours only losing one, We report 65 men for duty at present[.]

Our Regt musters over 800 effective men I came very near obtaining a chance to go home in the capacity of recruiting Sergt. but was disappointed in my expectations. Give my respects to Lieut Rice also Mj. Rice, I hear that Lieut Rice has tendered his resignation how is it.

Your affectionate brother
Robert

(P.S) I forgot to mention that Private Logan Mizner of our Co was taken prisoner at Winchester Tenn about two months ago, and is still in the hands of the Rebels

R.C

Athens Aug. 4th/62

Dear Father

Your letter of July 27th came to hand to day, and it brought the welcome news of the good health of all.

I also got those two numbers of the Cincinnati Gazette. They were very interesting indeed, especially that account of the recent actions of Col Norton, we have been kept in the dark somewhat, in regard to the true state of affairs concerning our Col we were told that he had gone to Washington for the purpose of being exchanged, but now the true facts of the case are out, and we can only pity our over ambitious Colonel, and hope his example may prove a warning to others, that expect to further their own aggrandizement by endeavoring to undermine the well earned popularity of others, We are all very sorry indeed that the thing occurred as it did, as little Jesse was beloved and respected by all his men as a commander. No one can say when or where he will again turn up.

I am pleased to hear that Lieut Luckey is getting along so finely, it is possible that I may have the pleasure of seeing him, if he should come by this route, in going to rejoin his Regt[.] I was much pleased to hear of the continued prosperity of your brisk little city and cannot help comparing its marks of improvement with the villages of the South. We will take the town of Athens as a sample of most Southern towns through which I have passed,

It is what may be denominated a finished town there are no improvements whatever, going on, and the buildings for the most part look very much weather beaten and decayed, the streets are covered with filth of every description and it is a wonder to me that the Cholera has not broken out among the citizens and soldiers long before this, There are a few fine buildings in the place, principally, the residences of wealth planters, who prefer town life to that of the country.

A great many of the dwellings are deserted, and with the yards growing up to weeds, and fences broken down they present a very dismal appearance, taking it all in all it lacks the freshness, and thrift of our northern towns[.]

There is considerable cotton purchased at this point[.] I noticed a considerable quantity piled round the Square consisting of something over Five hundred Bales, and was informed that it was

the product of one plantation for one season, it brought the owner the snug little sum of \$45000 in gold but a few days ago. The average production of cotton in this vicinity is, about one fourth of a Bale to the acre, and when we consider that the staple commands from 23 to 30 cents per pound I consider the raising of it to have been quite a profitable thing for the planter, The cotton burners have lately been scouring the country in this vicinity endeavoring to commit their deviltries under the very noses of our forces and have succeeded in burning a considerable amount, notwithstanding the vigilance of our men, There will be but little cotton raised this season, owing to the small amount planted, the farmers preferred putting their ground to corn which yields about 10 bushel to the acre, the average yields of wheat is about 4. Lieut Col Neibling has just received a despatch to have three days rations cooked and hold his command in readiness to march at that notice, I don't know what is in the wind, in my next you will hear. Love to all your affectionate son Robert I wrote to Juliet a few days ago, also to Father We are once more on full rations having been on half rations about 15 days, communications are now open by R.R. to Nashville
R.C

Athens Aug 6th/62

Dear Sister

I have just received your kind letter of July 28th and hasten to answer it. It is extremely warm to day, the sun is almost melting to a person that is obliged to be out of doors. You don't know what warm weather is in the North, and could you but come down here and be present upon, what we call a tolerable warm day, your first exclamation would be Oh get out South, give me the cool and invigorating North[.] We that have become accustomed to the climate stand it very well. but there is one article of luxury that we miss very much. that is Ice Oh what would I give for a glass of ice cool lemonade just at this present time, or even a Palm leaf fan would be quite an acquisition, but us poor fellows are obliged to take just what is given us and be contented with it and most happy is he who is the best Philosopher[.] Oberlin is doing well in sending recruits, but I think little Elmore surpasses even that loyal city in sending strong armed defenders, of your country to the field,

You say that your fellow! has enlisted as a private, well so much the better for him, if he is worthy he will certainly rise and if he is not, he don't deserve to, them's my sentiments,

Now a days commissions can be obtained by merely sending for them, that is while at home, but once in the service and how different, a man has got to work his way up by degrees, the progress is slow, but if persevering, in his efforts, he is bound to succeed in the end, The service tries what a man is made of, if he is a natural born rascal he will not be long in showing it to his comrades, but if on the other hand he proves himself what I call a man he will not be without his reward, you said it was a pity that all could not be Generals now I don't agree with you, exactly, although Genls are very good in their place, yet I am of the opinion that, did our Commanding Genls but receive the pay and rations of a Private, this war would not last one month, it is to the interest of those receiving large salaries to prolong the contest all long as possible[.] We have to many Genls already, just light some of them out and put men in their places, and Jeff Davis will soon sing another tune,

Why confound your little Elmore what a magic news box it is I never thought of you or any body else for that matter getting married, well curious thing will sometimes happen

Oh I had liked to have forgotten to tell you of a little matter of a rather romantic nature that occurred in our Regt lately, one of the boys of Co C was engaged to be married to one of the blackeyed Susans of Athens and yesterday was the day that was to witness their nuptials. the music was already engaged for a grand dance at the house of the lovely Bride, quite a number of Blue Jackets had been honored with an invitation to be present at the festivities, and all were counting on a grand flourish of trumpets, when lo! a cloud appeared to darken the summer heavens, and the cloud assumed the proportions and shape, of Lieut Col Neibling who at once forbid the baus and of course upset all calculations for a big time in Alabam I believe if it had been my case, I should have then married the lady for mere spite, to show Neibling that some things might be done as well as others you know. Your description of Miss Murray, just suits me, I should like extremely to become acquainted with her please present my respects to her.
from your loving brother
Robert

Juliet you never told me who Miss Murray is, did she drop from the clouds to fascinate the young men of E_ or is she a loyal member of Uncle Sams dominions,

Tell Mother to look for a letter next time,
R.C

Elmore Ohio aug 17th/62

My dear Brother

You will doubtless recognize my writing at a glance, and wonder at the heading of my letter, but the fact is I am now in the pleasant village of Elmore, surrounded by all of the dear ones at home, Think not that I have deserted; far from it, I have come home in the capacity of a recruiting officer, In accordance with a late general order issued by the War Dept. there has been a non com sent home from each Co for the purpose of recruiting for their respective Regts, and I was the lucky fellow that was sent from my Company. I left Athens last monday morning and reached Elmore, last friday night at 10 oclock

I met Juliet at Fremont, she had just got aboard of the train when I espied her, and you can imagine what followed, as it had been eleven long long months since I had seen her, We had a thousand things to talk about, and you may be sure, that we made good use of our vocal powers, When the train stopped at Elmore Juliet got off first and who should she meet there but Mother, who was there waiting for Juliet (Juliet having gone to Fremont in the morning) She broke the news to Mother as gently as possible, but when I stepped from the train, and Mother saw me, I thought she would go crazy almost, but as joy never kills, she survived it, and after our first meeting was over we started for home, and Juliet went in and told Father, and he got up (he being in bed at that time) and I can assure you that we had a joyful meeting, Oh how good it seemed to be under our own roof once more, we remained up, talking until almost midnight, and our joys would have been complete could you have been with us, but that pleasure was denied

us. I found Father Mother, and Juliet all well, and doing well, Fathers beard is about six inches long, it is quite grey and makes him look older than he otherwise would. Cousin Martha, and Aunt Rice came our from Fremont yesterday, and to day Uncle and Aunt Sharp also came out, and we have enjoyed ourselves hugely. Our Regt lacks about 200 men of being full, but we want 300 new recruits, in order that we may discharge those that are unfit for duty. I expect to get about 20 men in this vicinity as there is quite a number that are anxious to joint he 21st.

I found Elmore altered very much in appearance from what it was when I left home, John Ryder has built quite a brick building upon his lot, it is two stories high and the upper room is left full size to be used as a hall, for dancing, lectures, &c .&c , The mill looks as natural as ever, Father has shipped his Whitewood plank. He only had three or four culls There was something over 23000 feet of it. The sycamore has not yet been moved, I don't know how soon Head intends moving it. I cant say how long I am to remain here recruiting, but in all probability until the first of September. Alfred Rice is now in Columbus Ohio awaiting his discharge I did not see him when I cam through that city not knowing that he was there at the time. Cousin Martha Caldwell sends her love to you. I will write to you again in a few days.

Your Brother
Robert

Elmore Aug 31st/62

Dear Brother

Father and Mother having written to you I thought best to send a few lines, after commencing, how to write anything that would be likely to interest you, but you must take the will for the deed. Last night we had a Picnic given to the Soldiers of this vicinity, It was a decided success in every particular, there was perhaps in all about thirty soldiers present, and then the Ladies, it was truly refreshing to see them. The supper was given in Ryders hall, and the Ladies had trimmed the room with flags, which made a very pretty appearance, and then those tables there were two of them, one extending the whole length of the hall, and another about twenty feet long, They were literally bending with every thing eatable, and I assure you that no person went away hungry, there was enough for all and to spare, and the remnants are to be distributed among the poor of this neighborhood. I got your letter day before yesterday, it was on the way only six days, quick travelling, I agree with you in regard to the effects, that will be seen immediately after those 600000 men are brought into the field, and it is my opinion that if nine months from this time don't witness the downfall of the boasted Confederacy, we will never live to see it. it has got to be accomplished speedily or never, and I am one of those that is willing to believe that Government is going at t he work in earnest at last. I really hope so at least.

from your Brother
Robert

Camp Kirby Smith Columbus
Sept 11th/62

Dear Father

I arrived at Columbus Tuesday noon and proceeded immediately to business I made out the necessary papers, and drew the uniforms for the boys, and now they are well pleased, There is a great deal of business to be attended to yet before I can come home, and it is possible that I may not get permission to come home at all, as Wash Bogg went to the office of Capt Dod for transportation home and he was told that all recruiting officers were required to remain with their recruits as fast as they arrived at camp, but I don't believe all that Wash says, and to day I will go and see for myself. I should feel very sorry indeed if I cannot get home as I left all of my things lying round loose and there is my trunk if I cant get home. Some arrangements will have to be made so that I can get it, but I will go and see Capt Dod to day and I think I shall be able to get through. I have been taking that medicine, but I don't need to take any more of it, as I am about well, once more

If possible I will be home tomorrow night. I believe I have no news to write the boys are all well and doing well.

Your affectionate son
R.H. Caldwell

Elmore Sept 14th/62

Dear Brother

What, still at home, you exclaim, yes, still at home, and yet not so still either as I am on the go, most of the time attending to business connected with the recruiting Dept

I have been in Columbus for the most part of the last week, where our recruits are in rendezvous awaiting orders to go to the regt[.] I was ordered down to Columbus to draw uniforms for the men, also to attend to whatever business that might present itself in our line, I was kept quite busy for about three days, and last Friday evening started for home once more, where I arrived the following morning, being obliged to remain over night in Perrysburg to transact business with the Lieut Comd this District.

I leave for Columbus again next Tuesday for the last time, as we are expecting to join our our Regt in a short time, We will in all probability be in Columbus one week, and from there we go to Cincinnati and so on to the Regt Col Norton is exchanged and is again to take his old command.

I hardly know where the 21st is, on account of Buell's late Crawfish movement, but I think it is not far from Nashville. You will now have to keep your eyes open at Memphis, as Northern Ala is evacuated and the enemy once more holds possession of the M.&c . R.Road. Bully for Buell who, with a force of fifty thousand, could not hold what territory Mitchel took with ten. I see by the papers that Buell is watching Bragg. He is good on a watch, but not much on a bite, but hold on I am talking treason and you know that wont do at these times, when every traitor is being punished so severely for that crime, when taken, they are actually made to walk arm in arm with

some of our highest officials, to say nothing of the fine dinners that they are forced to partake of, The thought of being taken prisoner must be awful indeed to a rebel officer.

Mother has made three shirts for you and is going to send them to you by Capt Poe Chaplain 72nd O.V. It would make such a large package by sending you the drawers also, that Poe would not like to take them as he had expressed a willingness to take a small package to you, and Mother thought you would rather have the shirts than the drawers and so she acted upon it. If you need the money to buy the drawers Father will send it to you, in your next let him know.

When I get to the Regt I will write to you once more.

All are well. You[r] affectionate Brother
Robt

Columbus Ohio Sept 18th/62

Dear Mother

I arrived here to day and have commenced soldiering once more, I feel very well indeed, as good as I ever felt in my life. The boys are all well and enjoying themselves finely. I must cut this note short as there is a man waiting to take this to the office,

direct Camp Kirby Smith
Columbus Ohio
Care Capt Sage

write and let me know if Father has got home yet

Robert

Columbus Sept 19/62

Dear Mother

Since writing yesterday, I have been told that we are to leave to day for camp Dennison, I understand we are to leave at half past nine Well I am well pleased with the exchange as we will have much better accomodations at that place than at this camp.

When you write let me know if Father has got home

As we are to leave in about an hour everything is in confusion and I wont write a very long letter. I will write as soon as I arrive at Camp Dennison[.]

But pishaw! I have heard so many camp rumors that I don't quite believe this rumor, however if we go, I will write as soon as we arrive,

I will also write to Juliet from there, as I have got a great deal of business to attend to before leaving I must cut this letter short

Your affectionate Son
Robert

Camp Denison Sept 21st/62

Dear Mother

Here I am once more in Camp Denison after an absence of twelve long months, Just about one year ago to day, the 21st took quarters in this camp, We numbered at that time about nine hundred and fifty effective men, and now here are about one hundred and twenty fine recruits destined to fill the decimated ranks of our once full ranked regiment. The question very naturally arises, where are those absent men? the answer comes back mournfully enough, the plains of Tennessee, the crowded grave yards of Alabama, if they could speak doubtless they would say, here lie countless number of brave and loyal men that willingly forsook their pleasant and happy homes, to sustain the Government that had so long protected them. Yes, an hundred noble men have fallen from the ranks of the 21st within the last year, and I cant help asking myself who, and how many are to be the victims of the comeing year, These men now in camp, left home with high hopes, but how few may ever return, I declare it almost makes me feel melancholy to think of the probably chances of (liar?), but poshaw what's the use in feeling bad, it wont help the matter in the least. We left Columbus last thursday morning, and arrived in camp the same afternoon, We are quartered in barracks capable of accomodating about one hundred and fifty men each

We live very comfortably and enjoy ourselves amazingly. I don't know how long we are to remain at this point, but in all probability for several days, we are not yet mustered into the service, but expect to be in a couple of days.

I wrote to you twice while at Columbus and in my last, I stated that it was rumored that we were to start for Camp Dennison that day, the rumor proved correct, for once, Washington Boggs has not yet got back, neither has the rest of the boys that left for Elmore on furlough, but we are expecting them tomorrow. I heard that Wash was in Columbus, in company with several ladies, I did not learn their names, but suspect that Mary Boggs and Mary Luckey are with them I should enjoy very much being with them my self, but that is impossible[.]

I have written to Lieut Rice and am looking for him down here, on a visit, if he comes we sill have a good time.

I will write to Juliet to day, My health is excellent

The old camp looks quite natural once more, we are in about the same position that the 21st occupied last fall

If Father has got home tell him to write also, and let me know how he relishes soldiering

but I must close

Your affectionate Son
Robert

direct Camp Denison care Capt Sage

If any letters come to me, please forward them to me at this place
Robert

Camp Denison Sept 21st/62

Dear Sister

Hurrah! once more in old camp Denison, just one year ago the 21st took up quarters here, on about the same grounds that we now occupy. We are enjoying ourselves amazingly (line?) high, and but little to do, although for myself, my time is almost all occupied with writing, as we have considerable business to attend to, preparatory to the mustering of the men into service. Wash Boggs has gone home on furlough and I bet a cooky he is enjoying his visit, doubtless he will return a married man as it was whispered in E. ___ that he was about to commit matrimony. Well success to him.

How are you getting along in Oberlin, guess you are having a rather dry time, as I understand there are but few students attending the institution this fall.

I suppose Father has got home by this time. I hope he enjoyed his visit to Cincinnati. I wonder how he likes soldiering, guess he is satisfied with the service am glad he went at any rate[.]

Oh _____ pishaw there is no news to write There is about 3000 troops in camp at present, mostly recruits for old Regts

I wrote to All _ yesterday and expect to see him down here on a visit in a few days[.]

I enclose a friends photograph I got it in Columbus

I declare I shall have to leave some white paper this time, will try to do better next, dirct camp Denison

Care Capt Sage

Your affectionate brother
Robert

Camp Denison Sept 26/62

Dear Father

I saw Washington Boggs to day, and he told me that you had got home once more from your squirrel hunting expedition.

Well, how do you like soldiering, as a general thing is it not a fine thing? lying out without tents, exposed to wind and rain? I have often found it so, so very fine that I could not see the point of the joke. however I am proud to be able to say, that the Caldwells turned out to a man in defense of their Country. We are as you perceive in Camp Denison Will in all probability stay here some time. We are engaged in making out the rolls to enable the men to draw their bounty, will in all probability draw the bounty next monday. My men all passed examination, with the exception of C. Vandyke who is to be sent home in a few days,

I see by the papers that Genl Buells army is in Louisville, also that the 21st is there, so we will have no trouble in joining the regt I am quite anxious to do so as I had much rather be with the boys than in this camp. I wrote to Mother soon after we got here but have got no answer as yet. when you write simply direct

R. Caldwell
Camp Denison

don't direct in care of any officer, as in that case there are a great many preliminaries to be gone through with before a person can get his mail, as he will have to get an order from the Commanding Officer before the P.M. will deliver it to him.

I believe the 3rd Cavalry leave for Louisville tomorrow morning, at least so says Wash who is going back to Columbus where his wife is now staying[.]

There is no news to write so please overlook this white paper. tell Mother to write also, as I am quite anxious to hear from home.

I have written to Juliet I am enjoying the best kind of health

Robert

Camp Denison Sept 28th/62

Dear Father

I received your letter of Sep 24th day before yesterday and seize the first opportunity to answer it. I have not yet got the letter that you wrote immediately after arriving home, but it will be forwarded, no doubt.

Washington Boggs is married and was down here last friday and returned to Columbus same day where his wife now is.

I have not yet got that letter that you wrote to me giving a description of your adventures while in K.y. I have had but the one letter since leaving home, but expect to get them more regularly in future. You state that Wash Boggs told some of his friends that all recruiting officers were to be sent home again there has been some such talk and a few have been sent back to their respective stations, but I am of the opinion that the officers of the 21st are to remain in their present quarters for the present.

You say that you have once more commenced sawing, I am in hopes that that man may come on that spoke of taking the mill. I don't think I shall stand in need of any more money as I still have enough to carry me through, if the 21st is not too far distant, however if I should stand in need of any I will borrow it as there will be considerable risk in sending money by letter, as there is no telling how soon we may leave here, The Pay rolls of the recruiting officers of the 21st are made out, and we expect to draw our pay in a few days.

The 115th O.V arrived in camp to day. I cant see why it is o lie in this camp while its presence is so much needed in the field

I have been told that the 21sst is in Nashville, and Col Norton has started to join it. there is not a very large National force in that city and we may look to see it gobbled up at almost any time[.] We had heard that our Regt was in Louisville and were in high glee over it, as we were all very anxious to join it but now our hopes are all dashed and there is no telling how long we will be absent from it

When you write, direct to
Camp Denison Ohio

don't direct in the care of any Officer as it takes too long to get mail when it is so directed. as I have to get an order before I can get my mail

I enjoy good health, and to day am going to eat an oyster dinner with Lieut Wiley Give my love to Mother and Willie

Your Son
Robert

(P.S) I sent a letter by Wash Boggs he said he intended to visit Elmore (will?) away from camp R.

Camp Denison Octo 2nd/62

Dear Father

I received you letter of Sep 28th in which you acknowledged the receipt of one of my letters written on the 21st I also got that letter containing a letter from Capt Vantine. I have just finished writing a letter to the Capt I was very sorry indeed to leave home before first seeing you, but it was unavoidable, and I had to obey orders. I don't think I shall be able to make arrangements to make you a visit, as I understand we are to leave for Louisville on the 5th but that is only a camp rumor, but Lieut Wiley says we are to move at that time. I should like very much to make a visit home before leaving, but fear it will be impossible. There has been a great deal of business on our hands since coming here, and I have had but little spare time to my self.

The men are mustered in and will receive their pay to day or tomorrow, Vandyke went home on account of being rejected by the examining Surgeon, Daniel Wight accidentally shot himself in one of his great toes a few days ago, he was playing with a loaded revolver and it went off wounding him as I have state. He is now in Hospital and doing well, will be left behind if we move from this camp at an early date,

I will take your advice in regard to securing the good will of my officers and men, it is as you say, there is policy in war as well as politics. I have been in the service just long enough to see, and understand it, and as I said before, I shall endeavor to cultivate the esteem and good will of both privates and officers, as it is all depending upon that, I shall be very careful about expressing any thing derogatory to the character of Col Norton, I believe He also intends to pursue an entire different line of policy, in future, as he cannot continue to uphold the conduct of Buell. Of course you take the papers, and they in a great measure express the sentiments of the people, and I see b the papers that there is a growing dissatisfaction among the masses so far as the continueing of Buell in command is concerned. It is the opinion of most men with whom I have conversed on the subject, that Nelson received his just deserts, at the hads of Davis[.] If Davis had failed to resent the insulting conduct of Nelson, he would have deserved the just contempt of the whole army, and of being kicked out of the service in the bargain. there is hardly an man to be found to sympathise with Nelson, I went down to Cincinnati tuesday morning, and stayed all night with Lieut. Rice had a good time, I shall long remember that visit. Al is still in the Provost office, but is looking for a discharge, he has not been well all the time, but was enjoying good health when I saw him.

Love to all, from
Robert

Camp Denison O. Oct 5th/62

Dear Sister

Your long looked for letter came to hand yesterday, dated Sep 28th for som unaccountable reason it has been detained on the road some time and that accounts for my not answering it sooner, as doubtless you have been looking for an answer long before this.

You will oblige me very much by saying to those (Lady) admirers of that photograph, that I have always considered the Ladies of Oberlin as being good, and just critics, and of course any decision made by the fair inhabitants of that city immediately becomes orthodox. Oh

No doubt you are just more than enjoying yourselves in O. only think of it, fourteen gentlemen and eleven ladies boarders at one house, it isnt every house that is so blessed with the sterner sex. Ask Jennie if she intends making her cousin Jeff Davis a visit this fall, perhaps she may have mistaken the man it may turn out that the Indiana Jeff is her cousin instead of Jeff of Richmond although our Indiana Jeff has lately proven himself quite as blood thirsty as his rebel namesake, although by that one act he has proven himself worthy of the esteem of every true Soldier, and had he acted otherwise upon that occasion would have deserved their their unmitigated contempt instead

You certainly have quite a number of correspondents, seven letters in one week. You surely have some correspondents in the Army, well no lady should hesitate to write to one of Uncle Samuels adopted, so long as he conducts himself properly.

It has been rumored that we leave for Louisville tomorrow but I don't believe in rumors you know, The 21st is now in the city of Nashville, Tenn[.] we will doubtless join it there. I have been informed that Gen Morgans Cumberland Gap Army is coming to camp Denison tomorrow to recruit up once more, He has from ten to fifteen thousand men, and will fill our camp to overflowing, Why he should come to this point for that purpose is more than I can conceive of as there is just as good camp grounds in Kentucky as this but it may be on account of the facilities for obtaining supplies at this point. however I also doubt this story in regard to his coming here I have been to Cincinnati twice since I came to this camp. I was there yesterday, and had a fine time with A M Rice. We that is the recruiting officers and recruits, of the 21st raised \$40.00 for the purpose of presenting Lieut. Wiley with a sword and sash, I went to the city and made the purchase, it is an elegant sword, I am to make the presentation speech this afternoon wont I spread my self some perhaps not. We have also made a purchase of a flag and banner for the 21st they are to cost one hundred and forty dollars (140.00) aint we sons a plenty of money you know, just paid off your brother,
Robert

Camp Denison O. Oct 5th/62

Dear Mother

Having some spare time I propose to write and let you know what is transpiring in Camp Dennison. The recruits of the 21st having received their pay, thought proper to do something for Lieut Wiley and as his sword was pretty well worn they thought it would be a nice thing to present him with a new one, an consequently \$40.00 was raised and I went to Cincinnati and made the purchase, I got an elegant sword and sash for the \$40.00 and this afternoon it is to be presented to him[.] I am to have the honor of making the presentation speech wont I spread myself some on the occasion, perhaps not, however I intend to do my best.

Then thinking enough had not been done to show their generosity, they raised \$140.00 for the purpose of purchasing a set of colors (a flag and banner) for the 21st, they will be perfectly splendid when finished! there is no end to their generosity, the recruits, 109 in number furnish one dollar apiece, and us recruiting officers, 10 in number, the remaining 31 dollars, it will please Col Norton very much, to say nothing of the Regt we have been carrying an old three months colors, heretofore[.] and the new set will be a great acquisition to the Regt

It is reported that Genl Morgans Cumberland Gap army is coming to Camp Denison to morrow I cant vouch for the truth of the statement, Morgan has about fifteen thousand men, He is bringing his men here to recruit up once more, before entering upon another campaign

I wrote to Father the other day, I received his letter, in which he gave a description of his adventures in Kentucky

I also received a letter yesterday from Juliet written Sep 28th I answered it to day, It is reported that we leave for Louisville tomorrow don't believe the story however

I have heard that the 21st is in Nashville, I am just going to eat an oyster dinner There I have just finished that oyster dinner, it was splendid I opened a can of that honey and we had bread and honey, we enjoyed it hugely I can assure you.

I fear I shall have great difficulty in getting through with my trunk and sachel, as Gen Buell has prohibited the transportation of trunks, or anything larger than a valize, and when I get to Louisville I will learn something definite in regard to it, if I cant get it through, I will have to send it back home, and have the contents given back but I shall take it through if possible. The Officers in this camp talk of sending their trunks home and buying valicas instead

Love to all, your affectionate son
Robert

Camp Dennison Oct 11th/62

Dear Mother

I am happy to inform you that this fine morning finds me enjoying good health and spirits. I received your kind letter a few days ago, with a short note enclosed from Father, and I wrote to Father, with the promise of doing the same by you, and I am now doing my best to fulfill my engagement

We are still nailed to this camp unable to get away

why it is so, I cannot find out, but there appears to be a screw loose somewhere, and that (too?) of pretty good dimensions by the manner in which things swing round in this camp.

O, I am so anxious to start for the Regt! I declare I get so tired lying in camp I hardly know what to do with myself, but I am still encouraged with the thought that perhaps tomorrow, or next

week at farthest, will find us on our way. I am anxious to see Capt Vantine and the Company once more, I wrote to Capt a few days ago, but am fearful that the letter will never reach him.

The recruits of Gov Todds are coming in quite plentiful and the prospects are that he will soon be able to form a Regt in this camp. if not a Brigade, I believe Genl Despondency is to command the Brigade. Col Draft, the Regt now in this camp. The other Field officers are, Lieut Col Substitute, and Major Bounty. The whole command to be under the supervision of Quarter Master Hard Bread.

Great calculations are being made upon the fighting qualities of the laid Brigade as it is composed of a hard looking set of fellows, doubtless its members will be able to endure a large amount of hard marching &c .&c .

I have just received the news of the late battle in Kentucky in which the old 3rd Division was engaged it covered itself with glory and how could it help doing so if it only got a chance, good for the old 3rd.

I have got a great deal of writing to do for Lieut Wiley and I must close, Give my love to all, and write often

Your affectionate Son
Robert

P.S. If we leave this camp I will write from our first stopping place
R.C

Camp Dennison Oct 14th/62

Dear Father

Your interesting letter written on the 12th, came to hand to day, and I was much pleased to hear of you continued good health. I am still in the enjoyment of good health, and expect no change for the worse.

I received Mothers letter last saturday, just after I had sent my letter to the office I suppose you are having some exciting times to day, as it is election day. what a pity it is that I could not be at home to day to poll my vote, declare it makes me feel insignificant to think that after having lived in this country upwards of 21 years, and one year of that time spent in the service of Uncle Samuel himself[.] I say it makes me feel as though I were small potatoes. It appears to me that there ought to be some arrangements made whereby the soldier, absent from home, could send in his vote, what a shame, here I am two things at once, and good for nothing either side. namely, a voter and yet not a voter, never mind if our Generals will do as well by us as we are willing to do by them[.] I will be at home in time to help the six hundred thousand more to send Father Abraham back to his chair again.

Mother wishes me to send her a copy of my speech delivered upon the occasion of the Sword presentation. Well I dont know as I can get it in, word for word, as it was an extempore affair and I have no copy of the wonderful and flaming address, but it was something after this style,

Lieut Wiley,

In behalf of the Recruits of the 21st Ohio, I take great pleasure in presenting to you this beautiful Sword & Sash, as a slight token of their regard and esteem for you, and if I may be allowed to judge of the future by the past, I hesitate not in saying that I believe it is to be given into good hands that the wearer will never yield it up to an insolent foe, without first baptizing its bright blade in the blood of that foe, then in the name of the recruits of the 21st, I present to you this sword and Sash, that you may long live to wear them with honor and credit to yourself, and Country, is the sincere and heartfelt wish of the donors.

Lieut Wiley then made a short and pithy reply, when the boys all gave the cheers, nine counts and a tiger and dispersed, it was quite interesting to me at least, who had never before been placed in a like situation, but I am just vain enough, to say that after the affair was over, I received the congratulations of all the boys, they thought it was splendid, but I didnt tell them what I thought[.] O no, papers scarce and I must close, will write to Mother in a day or two

Robert

Camp Dennison Oct 16th/62

Dear Mother

I wrote to Father day before yesterday and I promised to write to you in answer to your letter that was thankfully received, You wished me to send you a copy of that presentation speech that was made upon the occasion of the sword presentation.

I did so in the letter that I wrote to Father. I am well and was gratified to hear that you were all getting along so finely. I have not had a letter from Juliet for almost two weeks, and in fact only one since I arrived at this camp. I wish when you write to her you would mention it to her[.]

The boys that I recruited have decided to send home for some nice things to eat such as butter &c &c or anything that their friends might think fit to send[.] I told them to have the articles brought to Fathers house and he would put them in a box and have them sent by freight. We will pay the freight upon receiving the box. You may have the box directed to me, and I will get it for the boys. If you send the box, write and let me know so that I will know when to look for it.

We dont know how soon we may be ordered to the Regt and we may remain here a month. there is no telling how the thing may turn out. We have received election returns and are overjoyed to know that that arch traitor Vallandigham has at last learned the true sentiments of the Union loving men of his Dist. three groans for the old villain. The papers state that Negley has had quite a little brush with the enemy at Lavergne Tenn and that the 21st participated in the exercises[.] I wish I could have been with the boys, it does seem as though I am always to be counted out

when there is any fun on hand. I have written several letters to Capt Vantine since coming to Camp D and have not heard from him once, with the exception of the letter that Father sent to me that he took out of the office at Elmore for me. I wish we could [ILLEGIBLE] for our men [ILLEGIBLE] willing to start on foot from Louisville and go through to the Regt. You have no idea how anxious I am to be with the boys.

You must excuse me for writing with a pencil but the pen that I commenced with was good for nothing and that is my excuse.

You[r] affectionate son
Robert

Camp Dennison Oct 18/62

Dear Father

I yesterday had the pleasure of receiving a letter from Mother, with a short note from you, and it is needless for me to state that I was much pleased to hear from home[.]

I was pleased to know that you had engaged the services of Mr. Crane, as sawyer,

I should like very much to hear that you and Dr White had gone into partnership in the hardware business, but it would be much more satisfactory if you could start business entirely upon your own hook as you would in that case be entitled to the entire profits. however I leave it to your judgement to say.

So Wash Boggs is to have a commission in the 9th Cavalry. pretty good for Wash if it is the truth. but I don't doubt it in the least, as I see no reason why it could not be effected.

Mother appears to think that Wash is going to obey one law of the old Testament namely, "He that has got married should stay at home the first year. I don't know whether that is his game or not but if it is so that he is trying to get out of the service I am done with him, as I have no faith in any man that is willing to desert his Colors in this hour of our Country's extremety, however I don't wish to impute any such dishonorable motives to Wash. Well we did not get off on the 5th after all as it was reported we were going to, and it would be something of a task for me to tell when we are to leave

Mother wrote that William sent you and Willie something that came from Helena, I could not quite make out what it was, it has excited my curiosity somewhat to know what it really is the name of the article was blurred in Mothers letter, and that is why I could not make it out.

The drafted men have commenced comeing into Camp Dennison, there is about 500 here at present and more comeing in daily. They are a heavy set of fellows nearly all large men. They appear to be rather depressed in spirits, although I saw quite a number of them those spirits were rising somewhat under the influence of another kind of spirits. They are offering a pretty good premium for substitutes, paying from three to five hundred, and in one case, as high as ten

hundred dollars, so anxious are they to get out of the paws of the venerable Uncle Samuel. The Volunteers are ever teasing them by hallooing at them and making all sorts of exclamations, as I say old fellow where have you been all summer, You are pretty birds, what will you take for your bounty &c&c. and in one case there was a squad of Clinton County drafted men, passing along and one of the volunteers asked another who those fellows were, and he sung out Clinton County Hardware by ____ R.C. direct as before I will write to Mother next time

Camp Dennison Oct 19/62

Dear Father

I seat myself to inform you that I am still in the land of the living, and that we have about made arrangements to leave the Buckeye State, and start Dixie ward. Lieut Wiley thinks that he can make the arrangements to get us off in a few days, He counts on getting arms, at Louisville[.] We can go within eighty miles of Nashville by rail, and then we intend to take it afoot the remainder, although the intervening country is swarming with the enemy ready to out off small parties of Federal troops, about one half our men are willing to make the venture, the remainder preferring to remain within the borders of Ohio where the old Women can protect them, rather than running the risk of capture, in endeavoring to join their comrades in Nashville[.] Lie upon such craven hearted fellows, I am proud to say that my recruits to a man will follow me, as I intend to start if I can get a man to follow. that is if we can obtain permission and I doubt not we can.

This lying in camp and doing nothing to benefit the Government is not what I enlisted for, and I am happy to see that my recruits are in the same mood

I wrote to Mother a few days ago, and told her that several of the boys had sent home for some nick nacks in the shape of eatables, You may send the things and in case we are not here to get them we will leave word with the Post Surgeon (Dr Prentice) that he can take the box and make use of the contents in the Hospital, but possibly we may be here to get them, as we may be unable to get off. The boys instructed their friends to take the articles to our house and that you would then put them into a box and send them to me I will receive the box pay charges and collect the same from the boys. There is nothing of interest transpiring in camp at present. I will write more at length, when receive a letter from home. We have got that set of Colors, and they are perfectly splendid. they are the finest thing of the kind that I ever saw. and if we get them safely through and into the hands of and under the protection of the 21st, I have no fears for them, as I feel satisfied that no other Regiment would do more to protect them than the 21st O.V. At Cincinnati a day or two ago, he resigned the day after the fight at Nashville, and in coming home was captured by the enemy, and parolled Adjutant Band 21st O.V. has been missing since the fight, and it is supposed he was killed or taken prisoner

from Robert

Camp Dennison Oct 24/62

Dear Father

Yours of the 20th has come to hand, announcing the agreeable news that you are going to send our boys a box of eatables, We will be on the lookout and ready to overhaul those nice things as soon as they come. We have been disappointed in regard to getting off from this camp, as soon as we expected to and now there is no knowing how long we may remain here, Noah Jones brother came to camp, yesterday, with several Recruits for the 57th. We were much pleased to see him, I am having my hands full of business now a days, it is just write, write, write, all the time and no end to it. I have to do all of the writing for Lieut Wiley, and there is a great deal of it to do. There is no news of importance to write. I saw Alfred Rice yesterday, he was going through here on his way to Columbus where he has been assigned to duty, He thought some of visiting home before entering upon his duties. I received a letter from Juliet a day or two ago, I will answer it on sunday. I am enjoying good health, Tell Mother I have drawn two woolen shirts, two pairs Drawers, and two pairs socks, I have found out that I cannot get that trunk through and I will send it home before we leave I will dispose of the eatables as far as I have been authorized to. The remainder of the things you will see that they are given back to their owners, Lieut Wiley has got to send his trunk home, and also Lieut Lamb has got to do the same thing. You must excuse me for not writing more at length, but next time I will try to write a long letter

Robert

Camp Dennison Oct 26/62

Dear Sister

Your letter was received a day or two ago, and I seize this as the first good opportunity to answer it. It was written on the 14th and I got it on the 21st it was delayed in the office at Oberlin almost a week

It snowed here last night and this morning the snow is 2 ½ inches deep quite an introduction to winter I think

There is nothing interesting transpiring in camp at present and this lying still within the friendly lines of Ohio is not exactly what I volunteered for, and don't just come up to the mark

There is some prospect of getting away from here before long, but it is rather slim

O, if I could but see the Regt once more, it seems as though I would be satisfied but that pleasure is denied me for the present and I must be satisfied with whatever falls to my lot. I received a letter from Father, in which he stated that he was going to send a box of eatables to us here at camp, we are looking for it every day, but it has not yet come. perhaps it will be here tomorrow, if it does come wont we have a time? perhaps not. I had taken a trunk full of articles along with me for the boys of Co I. and have got it with me, but Genl Buell has lately issued an order prohibiting transportation for anything of the kind, and I have got to send my trunk and contents home again.

The boys will be somewhat disappointed but I cant keep it[.] How soon are you to return home from oberlin, and when are you going to commence your school

I have heard that Jennie Rice has gone home, it didn't take her long to get her education, what a curious girl Jennie is. I saw Lieut Rice at the Depot the other day, he had been ordered to Columbus for duty, and was on his way for that city. He thought he should visit home before entering upon duty. I believe there is no more news. Your affectionate Brother
Robert

Camp D. Oct 28/62

Dear Father

I read your letter of the 26th and hasten to answer. In one of my former letters I told you that we expected to leave this camp in a few days, well we have again been doomed to disappointment, as we failed to get transportation for our men, and now, I cant tell you when we will leave. Lieut has written to Col Norton who is Provost Marshal at Frankfort, to see if he cant do something for us, with the hope that Norton may send for us, to join him at Frankfort, perhaps we may be able to do some good there, we are so anxious to be at something that will count, as the saying is. We have not yet recd that Box, but are looking for it every day. How did you send it? by Freight, or Express, but I expect it will be here to day, and when we do receive it, the contents will doubtless repay us for our patience in watching its coming. When does Wash Boggs join his new Regt. We had a fin Snow storm last Saturday night, in the morning the snow lay 2 1/2 inches deep quite a snow storm for the latitude[.] To day the sun is shining and we are again having summer weather.

I was some what surprised to hear that the Helbing Bros had gone into the Hardware business in E. that stroke will as you say cut you out completely for the present, but perhaps there may yet be a chance, when you may advantageously step in.

Tell Mother that I have got a couple of Woolen Shirts also two pair Drawers, and that I shall be comfortable in point of clothing, I am going to try and get some of my boys to carry those shirts through for the boys that I had in my trunk, but I am afraid that I shall be obliged to send the heavier articles such as boots &c home, however I will do the best I can to get them through, the trunk I will send home, at any rate, as it is impossible to get it through. I will take the shirt for Capt Vantine, also his tea the tobacco I will send home in the trunk[.] I will label the articles so that you may deliver them to the proper owners. I enjoy excellent health.

Your Son
Robert

Camp D. Oct 30/62

Dear Mother

The box came this morning, and four of us went up to bring it down, We went into the Freight office and was rather surprised to see its dimensions, but when we took hold of it we could properly realize its weight, it was just as much as four of us could do to carry it out of the office

I went after a Dray and had it hauled to our quarters where it was soon opened and the contents brought to light and such a light, the boys just fairly jumped up and down when those fine apples were exposed to their admiring gaze and going deeper into the box we were more and more pleased as each article was raised. Such butter I declare I never saw its equal, and those cakes and cheese, but when I came to those Sweet potatoes well there is no use in attempting a description of my antics. I told the boys long before we got the box, that I knew I should get some of Fathers Sweet potatoes, and sure enough there they were, that jar I have not yet opened, the bread, we had for dinner and when I say that I recognized it as Mothers baking I have praised it sufficiently, as you know full well that I have always been able to do justice to your good bread[.] That paper of Nuts that Willie sent are just the thing and I want you to thank Willie for me. Most of the boys got something, and we have made common stock of the whole contents of the box, There was one lot of articles in a Pillow slip that had a name on, but it had become obliterated and we could not make out the name, however the contents were just as acceptable, and it went into the general stock.

I got that large apple with my name pinned to it, and now it is among the things that were, I got that note of yours, and I will get a pair of boots. the shirts I have already drawn and am prepared for winter weather.

Lieut Wiley got a letter this morning from Col Norton, He wrote from Cincinnati, he was on his way home from Frankfort K.Y. where he had been on duty under Gen Dumont Col thought we could move for the Regt in a week or ten days I have not yet sent that trunk but will before we leave.

I wrote to Father Yesterday and to Juliet Sunday

Your Son Robert

Camp D. Nov 6th/62

Dear Father

I have not heard from home this week but am looking for a letter to day. I expressed my trunk home this morning. I did not pay the express charges on it (\$1.00) on account of being a little short[.]

I have purchased a pair of boots, good ones, I paid \$5.50 for them, I have also bought a Rubber Blanket for \$3.00 and am now prepared for wet weather. I could not get a pair of boots at this place that suited me, and had to go to the city for them. While there I visited the Gunboat that is building there. It is to mount ten guns four eleven inch Columbiads and six 24 pounders.

Those guns were some, the round shot weighs 180 pound I thought I could lift one with ease, but upon trial had to let out the job. The plating for the sides is 3 inch wrought iron, the decks being covered with one inch plating.

The side wheels are driven by two powerful engines. In addition to the side wheels, there are two Propellers, driven by two propeller engines. Those engines were splendid.

The propeller engines were about two foot stroke, and 18 inch bore. There was three boilers about the size of our boiler in the saw mill. The Smoke Stacks are about 10 feet high above decks. The whole concern is protected by plating with the exception of the Wheelhouses. I also visited the Waterworks. The machinery is driven by four engines.

Two, perpendicular ones of about Six feet stroke and three feet bore, they were the most splendid engines I ever saw. The other two were horizontal, and twelve feet stroke by two feet bore, they were of the old style of Steamboat engines, but very powerful. The works are being extended, and another engine of still larger dimensions erected[.]

There was a fire in the city and I had an opportunity of seeing those famous Steam Fire engines work. There were five of them on the ground and all read with steam up by the time that they arrived on the ground. The fire caught in an Oakum house, and spread to a Lumber yard, and destroyed a large amount of lumber, it was finally subdued, as what fire could withstand the deluge of water that was thrown by those engines. Enclosed find the key to that trunk, those check shirts are mine, the tobacco Capt Vantines, the Tea is Bumpuses, those cants of fruit, Mrs Paynes the empty cans speak for themselves, I got the boys to carry the rest of the articles. We will probably leave in a few days as the way is now open to Nashville

Robert

[FIRST PAGE MISSING]

[Early November, Camp Dennison]

notice the Flag pole that stands in front of Head Quarters.

Those long dark buildings to the left of Hd Qrs are the Quartermaster & Commissary buildings[.] That cluster of small ones contingent to the Pole, are the Officers of those belonging to Hd Qrs. That two story white frame building in the background is a boarding house, and that long low one to the left of the boarding house is a stable for the horses used in camp by Government.

You will notice the Guard House a little to the right of the pole with the cross on it. You know what a guard house is used for and I will not have to explain its use. It takes four pictures to complete the set, but I only got two, the others are very much like the two that I send you, with which you can form an imperfect idea of Camp Dennison.

The Hospital Wards, are being plastered so as to be comfortable during cold weather

Your affectionate Son
Robert

(P.S) I wrote to you in a former letter that the box had come
R.C

Camp Dennison Nov 9th/62

Dear Mother

Your long and interesting letter was recd yesterday afternoon, I had about made up my mind that I should not get a letter that week (as yours was the only one I got during the week) but yesterday afternoon the mail came and I was fully rewarded for my patience by receiving your long and very interesting letter. I am so glad that you and Father intend having your pictures taken to send to me, as I always wanted them. Yes indeed that is news in regard to the marriage of Fred & Lizzie A good match indeed in my opinion neither will be much the gainer by the operation.

That was truly an awful affair. The murder of those two young ladies. The gallows was cheated of its lawful victim by his committing suicide[.]

Lieut Wiley has gone home to Perrysburg, and we are looking for him back tomorrow. he sent word by one of our boys that had been home on furlough, that we would leave for the Regt next wednesday, but I dont place much reliance in the report. however I am both ready and anxious to be moving but you may still continue to direct your letters as before and they will be forwarded if we have gone.

I was glad to hear that Father was getting along so well with his sawing. I am still in hopes he may be able to sell out to Mr. Crane.

Yes the Country will suffer greatly in the loss of such a General as was Mitchel and it will be difficult to replace him. Oh how glad I am that old Buell has been removed from the Dept of the Ohio and a good fighting General put in his place, and one that we know is a loyal man.

Now don't fail to have your pictures taken and sent to me.

I expressed that trunk home the trunk belongs to Mrs Vantine

Dress parade and I must close
Robert

Camp D. Nov 12/62

Dear Father

You must excuse me for writing with a pencil but the pens are all employed and for that reason I use a pencil.

I recd your letter containing Yours and Mothers likeness and I can assure you I was very glad to get them, They are very natural and I prize them very much indeed[.] I shall take good care of them

You wish to know if I get any letters from William. Not since I left home I have not even had an answer to the letter in which I sent William my Photograph and I think it is no more than fair that he should write first. That likeness of yours it is lying before me, and I can hardly keep my eyes off from it. those spectacles of yours look so natural, and Mothers picture is just as natural as can be. I see that Nashville is at last relieved and now the Mail will go through once more. I wish I could get a letter from Capt Vantine & Lieut Wood, I am so anxious to go through to the Regt and don't see why we are detained, now as communications are again open O! I had rather go to Nashville, and live on pork & crackers, than lie in this camp, with soft bread and chicken fixings. You said that Gesshart and Bennett had got home, I have got two Shirts for Bennett that I was taking through for him[.] I will now send them back to him at Elmore by express and he can get them by paying express charges O! I am so glad that our army is not going into winter quarters[.] I want to be moving all the time, it is perfectly galling to me to lie inactive. Buell is to stand a Court Martial, bully that the way to use the Confounded old Fogey with Rosencrantz at our head we are going to accomplish wonders this winter.

The 4th Tenn Regt came into C. Dennison this morning

The Regt is an Infantry Regt and is going to be turned into Cavalry so I am told. The Colonel of the Regt is a Son of Gov Johnson of Tenn the Lieut Col is a son of the noted Parson Brownlon[.] I was over to see the Regt they are a good lot of men they were at Cd Gap, under Gen Morgan, and have been lying at Gallipolis for some time. I am going over again to see them and will endeavor to get a sight at the Col & Lieut Col as I did not see them this morning.

Lieut Wiley is at Columbus and we are looking for him to day, and are in hopes we may start as soon as he comes. I will express those Shirts before we leave if I don't get any different orders. I sent you \$20.00 by express several days ago.

Camp D. Nov 15th/62

Dear Father

I seat myself to acknowledge the receipt of your two last letters.

One of them was one of Williams letter with a few lines from you

What a good letter that was of Williams I wrote to William last and he owes me a letter, but I wont wait for him to write first but will write to him. I read that letter containing \$5.00 for which receive my thanks[.]

I am happy to be able to announce at last that we leave camp D this afternoon en route for Nashville. The boys are perfectly wild with delight, and none more so than myself[.]

When you write you had better direct Nashville, Via Louisville, if there are any letters on the way for me they will follow We leave Daniel Wight in Hospital, he being unable to go with us[.]

I sent James Bennetts Shirts home by Express, they go this morning, they were directed James Bennett, Elmore Ohio

I of course did not pay the Express charges on them, he will have to do so when he gets them. Weather is very fine and I hope we may arrive at Nash in time to join the 21st in case it takes the field once more, a campaign this fine weather would suit me exactly

No news to communicate and you will have to excuse me if I don't fill this sheet

I never enjoyed better health than at present

You affectionate son
Robert

P.S. I will write the first opportunity
R.C

Nashville Tenn Nov 21st/62

Dear Father

We arrived at this place yesterday and I hasten to communicate the fact to you

We bade good bye to Camp Dennison last saturday and came as far as Mitchelsville Tenn by R.R. and from there to this city on foot. Mitchelsville is about 40 miles from Nashville[.] It went pretty hard with some of the boys, marching. On the second days march it rained nearly all day, and the overcoats of the boys becoming saturated with water, it made heavy work for them, We made 25 miles the last day. The boys thought it a pretty serious introduction to Tennessee. Their feet became blistered and I will own that mine were not much better.

Nashville is indeed a well fortified city, but it is useless for me to attempt a description of its fortifications, and I will not attempt it.

I found the boys all well and in a flourishing condition

We got to Edgefield, (a town directly opposite Nashville with the Cumberland dividing the two places) on Wednesday night, and took up quarters in a building, on the following morning we crossed over and took our way to the Regt[.] Lieut Col Neibling met us half way, and when he saw our Colors and Banner flying he was pleased I can assure you. Old Co I. was overjoyed to see new Co I roll in, and with a few, very few exceptions manifested the greatest delight, You

know well enough who the exceptions were, and I need not tell you their names, but it is enough for me to say that the Privates all welcomed me and my recruits with open arms.

I have reported for duty, and expect to take hold again and resume my accustomed duties. Parson Brownlow speaks here to night, and of course I will attend. I had the pleasure of seeing the renowned Preacher, but mail closes, in a few minutes and I must stop[.] I am enjoying good health.

Robert

Nashville Tenn Nov 24/62

My dear Brother

This long continued silence on Yours as well as my own part, why is it. I wrote to you from Home, and sent you my Photograph which you neglected to answer, or in answered I failed to receive[.] I should be happy indeed to carry on a regular correspondence with you, and why should I not, I feel satisfied that there has nothing transpired between us that is calculated to create a coolness between us, far from it, I can only lay it to our confounded carelessness laziness, or what shall I call it, and in future, for my part I intend to do better, as the penitent says.

I just more than enjoyed myself while at home, among friends, I was at home just for weeks and then left for camp, We lay in C. Dennison almost eight weeks, but finally left for this place, where we arrived last Thursday morning. I brought fourteen Recruits to Co I. and left one in Hospital at C. Dennison. He will doubtless join us in a few days.

The prevailing opinion now is that the 21st is to winter in Columbia Tenn. If I could have my choice between the two places I should stay at Nashville, as I could enjoy myself hugely this winter.

I heard Parson Brownlow speak a few evenings since[.] He is a perfect trump and hard to beat, if he isn't capable of abusing the Rebels, then they are entirely above abuse, that's all.

He is going along with our army into E. Tennessee and He says He is bound to cry aloud and spare not.

He made the expression that he wanted to see Hell greased for five miles with the Gut fat of his enemies.

O, he is a regular rip roarer (an elegant expression, can you interpret its meaning)

We had a visit from Lieut James Luckey & Sergt Major Maines 3rd Cavalry, this morning[.] They look well, Jim is almost as large as his Father.

I believe I have no important news to communicate. Nashville is still being fortified, and is not pronounced almost impregnable. The 21st is now attached to Gen Negleys Div We dont expect to find a Mitchel in Negleys uniform. Poor Mitchel. When you write direct to 21st O.V. Nashville Negleys Div &c&c

Please present my respects to Maj Rice.

Your affectionate Brother
Robert

Nashville Tenn Nov 24/62

Dear Father

I wrote to you upon our arrival at this city, and told you of our safe arrival.

I was on Piquet guard last night and feel very dull this morning, and therefore you must not expect much of a letter from me this time.

This morning I was much gratified to receive a visit from E. Haines, Lieut James Luckey & Dewilton Wood 3rd O.V they are to remain with us all day, They look well James Lucky in particular Jim is almost as large as his Father. I was some in hopes that our Regt was to remain in this city at least a little longer but it is finally decided that the 21st is to winter in Columbia Tenn I went to hear Parson Brownlow a few evenings since. Oh I do wish you could have heard him. He just beats any thing I have ever heard.

He can abuse the Rebels if any body can. If I wanted to have any man abused according to Hoyle I should employ old Brownlow by all means

He is just the man that I expected to find him. Rough! Rough dont begin to tell half the tenth.

He is a medium sized man, with long dark hair without any beard whatever. He appears to be about forty five years of age. Your first glance at the old Hero will satisfy you at once, that he is a man clear through. He takes nothing back that he once asserts, and shows the utmost contempt for the threats of his enemies, who, if they could gain possession of him would tear him limb from limb.

Brownlow is a perfect trump in my mind, and just such a man as I should like to follow into East Tennessee. The main body of the army of the Cumberland is encamped in and around the city of Nashville. a part of Rozecranzes army is, on the Murfreesboro road the advance being about ten miles from this city.

Murfreesboro, from all I can find out is, still in the hands of the enemy. Fortifications are still being erected in this vicinity. Fort Negley, is quite a formidable structure and is to mount ten heavy guns.

There are several Forts of that description all mounting heavy Siege guns. We are expecting marching orders daily. I am ready to go at any moment.

Love to all
Robert

Nashville Tenn Nov 30th 1862

Dear Father

To day is the first leisure time that I have had for several days past, on account of being called upon to make out Pay rolls for the Company, besides a lot of other writing that I have had to do for Capt Vantine. I have not had a letter from home, since I left Camp Dennison[.] Why it is I cannot say, as most of the Recruits have received letters from home, but I am confident you have not failed to write, and that in time they will arrive. This makes the fourth letter I have written since arriving here, one to William, and three home.

In one of my former letters I wrote you that I had heard Parson Brownlow speak I also heard the Hon. Horace Maynard the same evening, it was a rich treat, I can assure you. I never listened to such an interesting Speaker, as was Brownlow. He gave the Rebels a sound dressing out. and if there is any person on earth capable of doing it effectually, that person is Brownlow.

Our Camp is very pleasantly situated in the edge of the city, we have breastworks thrown up on the outer edge of our camp, The whole Piquet line is enclosed with breastworks, and felled trees, and consequently piqueting is not very dangerous[.]

Our Regt comes on Duty about once in five days One Regt goes out at a time on Piquet. Our Forces still continue to forage upon the surrounding country. the train is usually escorted by two or three Regts Infantry, a battery of Artillery and a battallion of Cavalry. I suppose before this you have read a notice in the papers about the late fight at Lavergne, between the forces of Gen Sill, and the Rebs[.] of course our side was victorious as usual in these parts. I have not yet heard the particulars

There was also quite a smart skirmish down in the vicinity of Fort Zollicoffer. about 75 of our Cavalry attacked and routed 175 rebel Cavalry. It so happened that, in their retreat the Rebs ran into the rear of our forage trains, and the Battery accompanying the train opened on them and just more than scattered them.

We had Brigade inspection yesterday, everything passed off in order, and to the entire satisfaction of all concerned

I heard that we had a slight engagement at Murfreesboro a day or two ago, but I cannot vouch for the truth of the statement. Those Colors have not yet been presented to the Regt we are awaiting the arrival of Col Norton who is expected daily. Capt Vantine is well pleased with my success in recruiting, but I fear that Claghorn will be unable to get a Discharge, as the surgeons have decided to give no more discharges, but Camp Vantine has promised to give me the full benefit

of any change that may occur in the Co The 21st Regt. numbers over 900 effective men at present, Butter \$1.00, eggs .75cts, Apples .05cts a piece, Turkeys \$2.00 and chickens in proportion. Capt Vantine says it costs him \$5.00 a day for living, quite expensive living.

The weather has been splendid for the past two weeks, warm and dry. Just the kind of weather for campaigning, but here we are and I dont know how soon we will move. We are frequently visited by some of the 3rd Cavalry, James Lucky was here again yesterday, and also Bidwel Hulls. but I must close

Give my love to Mother, Juliet, and Willie

I suppose Juliet has got home has she not

Robert

Nashville Tenn Dec 4/62

Dear Mother

I hardly know what to think about the mail, there must be something wrong, as I have not yet had a letter since I left Camp Dennison. why it is I cannot say. Most of the boys get letters regularly, perhaps you dont direct them right. when you write, direct, to Nashville, Tenn Co I. 21st Regt O.V. 7th Brigade, Negleys Div

I am enjoying the best of health at present and indeed I have not been sick since leaving home.

I went out Foraging day before yesterday. I had charge of the Regimental train ten wagons in all There was over four hundred wagons in the whole train we loaded all of them , in some instances taking the last bit of forage the owners possessed. After loading a part of our train with corn I went to the house of the owner, to receipt for it, and I got the most terrible tongue lashing from one of the women of the house that I ever got in my life. However I gave her a piece of my mind in return, telling her that if the citizens didnt return to their allegiance, we were going to take everything they possessed even if they had to starve in consequence.

I also informed her that if her husband couldnt make it appear to the authorities that he was a loyal man, he would not get a cent for his corn, when with a sigh, she exclaimed then it will be a long time before he (her husband) gets his pay.

Oh! how I did sympathise with them. You know

Well news is scarce and I will close, hoping to hear from home soon and often.

Robert

P.S.

I know I know you write regularly, but perhaps direct wrong.

R.C

Nashville Tenn Dec 7th/62

Dear Mother

Your long looked for letter arrived yesterday and I need not inform you that it met with a warm welcome. I recd one from Juliet, dated Nov 27th which I will answer in turn.

Capt Vantine, Lieuts Wood & Bumpus were highly pleased with my success in recruiting, but, Mike & Mack had but little to say upon the subject. All that have seen that set of Colors pronounce them as being a little ahead of any thing of the kind that they ever saw. They will be presented upon the arrival of Col Norton, who is looked for every day

I was highly pleased to hear that J. Easterly A.W. Luckey were going to make a visit, to their sons.

I was glad to hear that the School marm is boarding at our house, how unfortunate that at this particular time I should be absent from home, wonder if I cant get a furlough for twenty days.

No doubt, Juliet will enjoy herself this winter as that Piano will just suit her. Doubtless that wedding of Fred & Lizzies was a brilliant affair. Long life to the happy couple.

We had quite a streak of Winter in this latitude. Last friday night it snowed in pure winter style, the snow fell to a depth of about one inch, but to day the sun is shining brightly, and the snow is fast disappearing.

You but echoed my sentiments when you expressed a wish that the war might be prosecuted with vigor. I believe that the Commander of the Dept of the Cumberland has the Stamina about him that will carry death and destruction into the opposing ranks of the eneny, and I believe his command is composed of men capable of backing him up.

Mr Barns is again with us and he and I talk some of having our picture taken together, to send to you, I found my knapsack all right, and every thing safe. Capt Vantine told me that he was glad that G. Rice & Dewilt, Wood, & Epharin Rice did not come with me, as he said that they being old acquaintances of his might ask some favors of him, that he as an officer could not grant.

Please present my respects to the School marm.

Robert

Nashville Tenn Dec 7th/62

Dear Sister

Your kind and interesting letter was received day before yesterday and I hasten to answer.

You stated that you had got a beau in the person of Mary Luckey, I do envy you indeed, she is as you say, a splendid girl, and indeed I am of the opinion that the North can hag over the South in point of the beauty of its fair ones[.] I have looked in vain to see the first beautiful woman in Nashville. The School marm is boarding at our house is she? aint it unfortunate that I cant be at home, this winter. I suppose the way you will make that Piano talk wont be slow. I shall expect to hear some fine music when I return home.

I suppose you must have had a fine visit while at Uncle Thomas's house[.] should have enjoyed myself amazingly could I have been with you, but pshaw I am soldiering just now, you know, and visiting is not in my line. I had a visit from Lieut Lucky 3rd O.V.C. a few days ago, had a fine time

I intend to make them a visit in a few days, I saw George Rice Ephrarim Rice& Dewilt Wood, they were all well and well pleased with a soldiering life.

We have fine times here in Nashville, we have the freedom of the city, that is if we can dodge the Guards, which we manage to do, by being what the boys call sharp

I visited the State house a few days ago, and went through the entire building, it is a fine structure and one that the State of Tennessee ought to be proud of. Andy Johnson holds forth at that place at present, in place of Isham Harris. Decamped James K. Polk was buried in this city, and I visited the residence of his Wife, in the dooryard of which he was buried. His Monument stands about thirty feet from the front door of her house.

His wife is still living, but I did not see her, She is a secessionist of the most violent kind. Well Nashville is full of the same kind of vermin. there is hardly a union man to be found among the citizens of Nashville, confound their pictures

Well I must close.

Tell Mary Luckey I was highly pleased to receive that short not from her. please present my respects to her

You[r] affectionate Brother
Robert

Camp near Nashville
Tenn Dec 12/62

Dear Father

Really you must excuse me for neglecting for so long a time to write to you, but I promise you that I will endeavor to be more prompt in future.

I wrote to Mother a few days ago, and acknowledged the receipt of her letter, also one enclosed from Aunt Mary, I also recd the one from Juliet and answered it.

We left Nashville yesterday at 10 oclock and marched out six miles on the Franklin pike, where we are now encamped. The Whole of our Division is encamped in this vicinity. Our Brigade occupies the extreme left of the Div and our Regt the left of the Brigade, so you see we occupy an important position in the Div but I am of the opinion Should occasion require it, that the 21st will be able to stand against at least an equal number of the Grey Jackets

Genl Negleys Div was reviewed to day by Gen Rosecrans[.] The Genl comdg complimented our Div very highly. After review he inspected quarters, and as he passed through the different company parade grounds each Co saluted him with three hearty cheers which appeared to please him very highly. He had a kind word for nearly all the boys.

And he is extremely popular with them. He is quite a common place looking man. he looks very much like a farmer.

Our Regt now numbers nearly one thousand men. We have got fifty more recruits. Capt Alans Co F 21st O.V. went home shortly after I got to the Regt He went to camp Mansfield and got fifty of the chasted men of Hancock Co. they are all good men, and make quite an addition to our numbers. Gen Rousseau has two Divs on this pike they are on our right. Our old third Div is with him, formerly Gen Mitchells.

Our Piquets are constantly skirmishing with those of the enemy, and a few days ago two Divisions of our troops had quite a little fight, and were apprehending a general engagement, but our troops fell back a short distance, and the enemy for some reason did not follow. I am at a loss to know how soon a general advance will be made but in all probability it will not be delayed much longer[.] There is a large force of union troops on the Murfreesboro pike, consisting of several Divisions, I tell you we are strong, and when an advance is made look out for a fight or a foot race. The weather today was uncomfortably warm, in fact regular summer weather. You must be having rather rather mild weather in the north, just at present. We have had a few cold days, during the last week, but now it is changed. There is nothing so changeable as a Southern winter
Robert

The last letter I have had from home was from Mother dated Nov 30th

Capt Vantine wishes me to add that he is of the opinion that Mary Vantines comeing to Nashville is about played out, that we are now in the field and wont be in any place in particular, just mention it to Mrs Vantine. Capt Vantine Mr Barnes, and myself had our pictures taken together and sent it to You, and Mother[.] Now you and Mother must consider that as being a joint stock concern, as it is intended as a present to both[.] Mr Barnes's eyes did not take very well, but otherwise it is a pretty good picture[.] When Ed gets home he can tell you all about his prospects I did not get to see him I being on Piquet, when he left our camp.

Ed expects to get a Commission I believe. I hope he may get it as he is deserving.

I am enjoying good health.
no more just now
Your affectionate son
Robert

I wrote to William a good while ago
R.C

Camp Hamilton Dec 14th/62

My dear Sister

Your interesting letter of Dec 7th was received yesterday, and I hasten to answer.

Without doubt you and the school marm are just more than enjoying yourselves this winter[.] Yes indeed I am just the fellow that could enjoy myself at home during the holidays, but it won't do to think of such a thing. I listened to an eloquent discourse today, delivered by the Colonel of the 74th O.V. perhaps you may have heard, or read of the rev Mr Moody the great Methodist minister, well he is now the Col of the 74th and it was to him that I listened. He is quite eloquent. I wish you could have heard him.

I received that letter that you wrote to me and directed to camp Dennison. I also answered it shortly after receiving it. I shall use proper discretion in regard to that matter you cautioned me about. There now I will venture a bet, that I have raised all of the womanly curiosity of Mothers, that she is so proverbial for.

You must be having fine times in E___ this winter, so many parties, it appears that you have got a new installment of young Gents in your pleasant city[.] Aint you and Mary Lucky ashamed of yourselves to (foresmitten?) the same fellow. I should fear to trust myself to ask you for your Company for fear you might serve me the same.

Oh I expect you are both getting to be regular flirts, how I do pity the poor fellows that are so rash as to trust their destinies to your keeping. You said you had got a letter from Thene and that she sent her love to me. when you write to her, please present my respects in return.

Olevia Bartlett is coming to E_ is she. I believe I did not get to see her while I was at home. I suppose she is still unmarried. I wish she could get a husband worthy of her. She is a splendid girl, but pshaw what am I talking of girls for, my duty lies in a different direction. but for all that I guess it won't do a fellow any harm to stand off and adore if not permitted to enjoy their society. We are now encamped on the Franklin Pike, Six miles from Nashville, our camp is very pleasantly situated in the woods[.]

We have been having some very fine weather for the past few days, in fact, perfect summer.

I believe I never told you in any of my former letters that my Mess (nu 2) has a contraband cook, did I? well we just have that, and one of the best cooks you ever set your eyes on. His name is

Killis, he used to work in a bakers shop, and he is tip top. Oh yes I sent my likeness with that of Capt & Barnes to Father & Mother[.] Ed Haines has doubtless got home by this time.

Write often, love to all
Your brother Robert

Camp Hamilton Dec 19/62

Dear Father

I recd yours of Dec 14th and was much pleased to learn that you were all enjoying good health. I never enjoyed better health in my life than at present. To day the weather is very fine with the sun shining a la summer[.] We have warm days and cold nights, with occasionally a shower of rain. I am of the opinion that if Rosecrans is starting a rise of the Cumberland before making a forward movement he will in all probability lay idle during the entire winter as there is but little prospect of a rise in the Cumberland before spring. We have received the news of the repulse of Burnside at Fredericksburg, and I am now confident if Rosecrans dont move forward and gain a decisive victory at Murfreesboro the cry of Foreign intervention will again be the cry. I am expecting great things of our General and only hope I may not be disappointed in my expectations. Certainly Rosecrans has the material for giving the Rebels their dues and when he does move look out for some big tracks. Col Norton arrived in camp a few days ago, and it is rumored that he has tendered his resignation. I dont know how true it is, but in all probability the rumor is correct.

Property has of late been changing hands to a considerable extent in Elmore, I see by your letter.

I am in hopes that you and Eli Eoff may effect the trade that you mentioned, as I am anxious to see you rid of the mill, as it is too hard work for you to carry it on.

I wrote to William quite a while ago, but have recd no answer as yet. I see by the papers that Grants army has come to a halt for the present. Christmas will soon be at hand, and my Mess are talking of getting up a dinner on the occasion. if we do get up a dinner I sill send you a bill of fare, and also the price list.

Has Isaac Sharp gone home yet? it is a little curious to me that he did not enter the army,. Such a fiery fellow as he used to be, I should think its exciting scenes would be suitable to one of his temperament. Capt Vantine, Lieut Wood & Bumpus and in fact the entire Company is enjoying good health at present. it is wonderful how our Company stands the service we have not a man in Hospital. but come to think, I must except one George Billings one of our Drummers he has applied for a Discharge on account of Consumption.

Well new is about played out with and so I will dry up
Robert

Camp Hamilton Dec 22nd/62

Dear Sister

Being Rather lonesome to night I thought perhaps I might pass the time a little more pleasantly by writing to you to let you know of something in regard to my welfare and whereabouts at this particular time.

Well then to begin, we are still in the same position that we have been occupying during the last two weeks, with but little to relieve the monotony of camp life, excepting a slight skirmish now and then.

Yesterday our Regt was ordered out to guard a forage train, we went out in the direction of Murfreesboro about eight miles and while the forage was being loaded the forces were so distributed as to guard the teams[.] There were four Regts, and a section of a Battery acting in the capacity of Guards, the 19th Ills was in the advance and threw out Skirmishers on both sides of the road and advanced in the direction of the supposed enemy. A part of the 21st was deployed as Skirmishers, and Co (I) with others held in reserve presently, we heard sharp firing on our left in the direction of Cos F & D, and soon the news was brought in that two of the enemy had met merited punishment in the shape of a few pills from Uncle Sams boys that acted very finely upon them and indeed I fear the dose was too strong for their constitutions as it brought them upon their backs almost instanter, and I have not yet been apprised of their restoration to health.

and that was not the only result of the firing. but inasmuch as the health of the two above mentioned persons was not in a fair way to improve very soon Six of their comrades concluded to stay, and minister to the wants of their afflicted brethren, so we brought them into camp with us, but the two first mentioned ones were left behind, and at last accounts were sleeping very comfortably in the arms of Mother Earth. While the Skirmishers were employed in taking care of our enemies, Co I was actively employed in skirmishing with a flock of turkeys that belonged to a neighboring family. The result stood twelve turkeys, and one duck for Co I. My mess got three turkeys and the duck and to day we just more than lived. You must excuse me for this poor writing and composition and I promise to do better in future. Well now I am one letter ahead of you and I shall look anxiously for an answer soon

Love to all
Robt

Dec 1862

Dear Willy

Your nice letters came to hand and I was glad to hear from you. You write good letters, better than some boys could write that are much older than you.

You spoke of your Snow Fort and how the sun melted it. I have seen some Forts that the sun would have a good time melting and the only think that could knock them down was cannon balls handled by the Northern sons. I suppose you would like to see some of the big Steamboats

that I have seen, here in Nashville[.] I saw one, the General Anderson that the Rebels used to have that they left behind when they ran away from our soldiers[.]

There are a lot of cannon in Nashville that the Rebels left here, some of them are so large that you could stick your head into their mouth. Before they ran away they tumbled the cannon into the river and left them, and when the river fell our men got them. They burned a Gunboat and all of the cannon that was on it, but I guess we will soon put a stop to their burning things in that way. Mother said that you was working in the mill, I guess you find it cold work but never mind it will soon be warm. The peach trees are in blossom down here and some of the trees are leafing out and the boys run barefoot. but I must close

Write soon from Robert

Battlefield near Murfreesboro, Tenn Jan 3rd, 1863

Dear Father

I seize the first opportunity to let you know that I am still in the land of the living, but still a little the worse for wear. I went into battle Dec 31st at 7 a.m., the 21st was on piquet and had the honor of opening the ball. Shortly after, we were relieved by the 78th Pa. and went to cooking breakfast. Just after I had finished my breakfast, we were ordered to fall in, and Negleys entire Div. began to move. By this time the engagement had become general on both sides. It was truly sublime, the fierce roar of the Artillery and sharp rattle of musketry made an almost indescribable din. Our position was in the centre and it was that ground occupied by the right and centre that was the most fiercely contested. I had the pleasure of firing about 10 rounds, and I flatter myself that I never pulled trigger without first getting good sight. The 21st was opposing a battery and we were opposed to a large force of the enemy that was posted about 40 rods in our front. The battery fired grape and canister and did fearful execution. A prisoner taken says that their loss in that very spot amounted to hundreds and that the first discharge of the 21st killed 16 in his own company. As for myself, I took a regular squirrel sight on them before firing. Our Regt was finally overwhelmed by numbers and forced to retreat from a most destructive fire of shot, shell, and musketry. Our company did not escape scot free, there was three wounded that I know of, James Reynolds, Eli Sams, and now don't be alarmed when I tell you that I have at last bled for my country. After having fought about four or five hours, I was obliged to retreat from the field in consequence of a wound received in my left shoulder. The missile was a round musket ball and entered the front of my shoulder (not the back recollect) and ranging through lodged directly under my shoulder blade. It was taken out by a surgeon and I have preserved the ball. It is but a slight wound and in all probability I shall be roving again in a few weeks at farthest. Fighting is still going on with varied success. Capt. Vantine and Lieut. Wood are safe. I am in a large brick building with a good bed and fire. I expect to go to Nashville in a few days as all those slightly wounded are being sent there.

I will write again soon and tell you where to direct mail. Don't let my condition cause you any uneasiness, as I am doing well.

I expect to send [illegible]

please give my love to all my friends and tell them I am about as anxious to go at the enemy again as ever.

Robert

Tennessee [illegible]

[illegible] R.

Nashville Tenn Jan 7th/63

My dear Parents

Doubtless you are very anxious to know something concerning my welfare. I wrote to you on the 4th inst and informed you that I had recd a slight wound in my left shoulder, but I dont know as you will get it as I sent it by one of our boys and he may have failed to take it to the office I know what your anxiety must be, and I would have written oftener but I was told that the mail communications were broken with the north. but now I believe the mail commences making regular trips. I came to Nashville night before last and was brought to this hospital where I receive the best kind of treatment and I am progressing finely When I wrote to you before I told you that I thought I would be able to go round in a short time, I can walk already with ease. I believe I could walk off five miles if occasion demanded it. but this morning the doctor told me that it would be full nine months before I could have the entire use of my arm, it looks like a long time to me, but I will bear it if I die trying, as the saying is. perhaps I may obtain a furlough and visit home. I am some in hopes that I can I have a good nice bed to lie on, and a plenty of good food with kind attendants and all that goes to make up the paraphrenalia of a first class hospital.

I dont know how many were killed and wounded of my company, but I know of three in my mess that are wounded, namely Eli Sams James Reynolds and myself

I have been told that Mack Reynolds was killed but I dont give it to you as being certain, therefore you had better not mention it to any of his friends. they will learn the truth soon enough.

Lieut Wiley of Company (C) was mortally wounded and has since died. Capt Vantine Lieuts Wood & Bumpus are all right I believe.

Now Mother I dont want you to worry at all about me as I am doing well, and not at all dangerous. You know I am strong and healthy and will weather almost anything except losing my head.

Direct University Hospital No 2 (Two)
Nashville Tenn
Ward (O)

Give my love to all

Father you need not send me any money unless I should write for it, as I have sufficient to supply my present wants

Your affectionate son
Robert

Hospital No 2 Nashville Ten
Jan 9th/63

My dear Sister

Does the heading of this letter shock your nerves? doubtless it does, as heretofore nothing in this world was so abhorrent to my mind as the thoughts of one day becoming an inmate of one of the institutions but dear Sister, since coming to this most admirably governed hospital and becoming accustomed to its scenes, my mind has underwent a great change as regards hospitals in general, and I now look upon them as humane institutions, founded for the benefit of the afflicted, and not as great pest houses as we were most of us led to believe they were.

The hospital that I am now in was built for a College building and is large and commodious, well ventilated and heated, it stands upon a high eminence overlooking a great part of the city, and taking it all in all I think that I have cause to be thankful that my lot fell in this place.

Well, how did you spend christmas and new year's You can easily imagine how mine was spent. I thought my Christmas was dull enough but when it came to my New year, no dullness then. but a Sharp pain instead, not much of an improvement on the christmas you would say. well as the southerners say, I reckon you'r right thar

I suppose you would like to know when I am coming home, well my answer must be somewhat indefinite as it is hard telling about it. I have heard it said that some of the Surgeons said that as fast as the wounded were able to bear the trip, they were to be sent home, but I dont place much confidence in the report. Perhaps you would like to know how I am getting along at present. I am gaining every day, and am getting so that I can almost enjoy myself, if such a thing were possible in a hospital

I will be so that I can go round town in a few days, and then I shall be the same lively fellow as before. for you know that it takes a good blow to (spin?) my whistle, and I am bound to be merry, come what may

I see by the papers that Sherman has fought a great battle near Vicksburg and suffered a defeat I have some fears for William as doubtless the 72nd participated in the engagement. Oh that old granny of a Sherman, it takes our Rosy to do the business for them. He is the only General that we have got left, it appears

hurrah for Rosy

Love to all, and never fret about
Robert

direct,
Hospital No 2
Nashville Ten

I forgot to say that our company wagon was burned and as all of our Knapsacks were on the wagon I lost all of my things, but worst of all, I lost all of my pictures, wasn't that too bad
Robt

Hospital No 2 Nashville Jan 14/63

Dear Mother

I am still improving I no longer have any great amount of pain and my wound is healing nicely

Perhaps you may think that I am homesick, I answer, not at all. Still, I would like to be with the dear ones at home, and I think it quite likely that at no very distant day, I shall have the pleasure of clasping you all by the hand once more[.] I believe there is something being done towards sending the wounded to their homes. Wound'nt I more than enjoy myself at home this winter, Juliet and I could go sleigh riding almost every day and the bracing atmosphere together with the invigorating sport would soon bring me round once more, but if I am doomed to lie in the hospital I will bear it like a true soldier should, but then I cant help thinking that they might send us home for a short time at least

I am getting somewhat anxious to receive a letter from home, as I wish to know how you are progressing in that latitude.

I have not heard a word from home, since our army moved on Murfreesboro, and that was Dec 26th

I spent my New years rather lonely I can assure you as I was lying in a field hospital at the time but now I am (as I said before) doing well, I can go round the room without assistance and will soon be able to go round town, Day before yesterday quite a number of wounded men were sent by Steamboat to Louisville I came very near going myself but the Surgeon thought I had better wait a few days

I have to pay 60 cts per pound for butter but am glad to get it even at that price, as it is quite a luxury, The 21st is still at Murfreesboro, I dont know how soon the army may move on, Phillip Jackson is here in this hospital he is sick, not wounded[.] He recd a letter from Capt Vantine, Capt is well[.] Lieut Bumpus is wounded in the leg, but doing well I believe.

Direct, Hospital No 2
Nashville Tenn

Give my love to all
Robert

Elmore January 18th (63)

Dear William

I just write a few lines to let you know that we are all well Juliet appreyed you of the fact that your Father had gone to Nashville to see after Robert well we got a dispatch from him last night that the (lall?) was extra bed and that he was resting well[.] I send you the 3 letters we received from Robert this week. The 21st have lost about 25 out of their company[.] you can hardly tell what a relief it was to me when I got those letters as the news had come in the Paper, that he was seriously wounded. I am in hopes his Father will bring him home with him[.]

oh William when shall we have an end to such a state of things it is sickening indeed there were 2 killed out of Co K and several wounded[.] I think we may be truly thankful that it was no worse with Robert[.] if I can get him home again hel not leave un till he is sound again. in the dispatch last night your Father said he would be home in 12 days. we have been having rain rain mud mud till we have got almost mixed but yesterday it turned cold last night snow fell to the depth of 1/2 foot and it looks fair now for good sleighing I hope when I hear from you you will be at Memphis I would rather have you there than have you dragged around the country.

Mother

Corinth Miss Jan 27th/63

My Loving Sister

I received your very kind favor of the 18th inst. to day. The day before yesterday I read an envelope full of letters from Robert, with a note from Mother.

You will imagine my feelings on learning that Robert had escaped so much better than I had feared.

I trust by this time that our Dear brother is at home and enjoying the society and kind attentions of loved ones.

I shall write to him at length when I learn that he has arrived. I am compelled to take exceptions to his views of Gen Sherman, who is the idol of his Army. No one can have a higher admiration of Gen. Rosecrans than myself. I can "Hurrah for Rosey" as heartily as any one, I can assure him, but I must also (gain?) my voice for the "Hero of Shiloh" if not the Hero of Vicksburg.

He fought well but was overpowered by four times his own force and was compelled to retire from the bloody field without accomplishing what he sought. The fault was not Sherman's but Grant's who failed to support him by way of Jackson, according to a prearranged plan when

Sherman left for Memphis from (Horncane?) Creek Miss. I wrote you and I believe told you all about what was expected of the two Armies. You know as well as I do what followed.

Juliet your desire for me to visit home is measured only by my own. I can scarcely imagine any greater happiness than would be afforded by a short visit to the Dear Dear Ones at Home, But Dear Sister, I fear that cannot be as soon as either of us may desire. But let us live in hopes for this good time coming and hope that it may come soon. Our Regiment will probably leave for Memphis, or near there tomorrow. We will go by cars, and anticipate a fast trip. We go by way of Jackson Tenn. I sent you by Capt Blain, a copy of (Scotts "Sabley of the Lake"?). You told me sometime since of the pleasure that you had in reading "Evangeline". I read it a short time before leaving Home, and with intense interest and delight nothing can be more touching than the simple story of Evangelines love her constancy, and her perseverance under trials, the most sever in following the lost one as he (?) to flee from her approach. How touching the last scene, when she found him (?) on his (?)

The Prologue contains much fine writing and is worth all the rest. I suppose that you have read "Hiamather". If you have not you will not fail to do so. It is Sam Gillian's best effort and will (full?) repay your attention "The Famine" cannot be excelled. I am glad that you have got to reading Dickens. I want you to read the Waverly Novels by Scott. You will not fail to love the (brink?) of the series. The "Heart Mid Sothian".

I send you Photographs of the new Com. Staff, rather inferior pictures. taken on a rainy day with a bad light. write often and about everything you can interest me[.] love to all[.]

love from your loving Brother
William

White Station Feb 17th/63

To the Dear Ones at Home

In what words can I convey to gain an idea of the anguish that I experienced to day when John told me of our Dear Dear Roberts death. How can I find consolation for you My Dear Parents and now more than ever precious Sister, when I find none for myself.

John had been to Memphis and came back this afternoon, he came into my room and showed me a (?) Paper of Thu 14th which contained in one short line the sad story. Oh how thankful we aught to be that He had a Kind Father with him to the last, to perform those kind offices that only a Father, Mother or a Sister can, To receive his last words, His parting glance, and to receive his hands final pressure, as He stepped into the Cold, damp Stream.

Our Brave, Noble Robert has gone to join the glorious band of Heroes Who have gone before us, Among the many Thousands O brave hearts who have received the summons on the battle field, which bid them "Come up higher", no nobler Soul has answered the summons than our own Robert.

Among the Thousands who have offered themselves at their Country's Shrine, none did so more willingly than HE. May we not Cherish the (?) that He has been transferred from the Army of The Union to that Glorious Army above. Let us believe this with all our hearts, and be comforted.

John considers it almost providential that Robert was permitted to visit home at the time that he did. It would have seemed so much harder to have parted with him had (?) not seen him since he left Home the first time.

Eighteen long months ago I grasped his hand for the last time, and little did I think then that it was so. But "God's Ways, God Makes our ways".

May it be some comfort to you my Dear Parents and Sister to know that I am coming Home before long, and to stay at Home I am arriving home honorably too. I have had the matter under advisement for some time and had thought of coming sometime during this coming summer but now I will come sooner. The exact time I cannot name now. I cannot say too much of John Rices friendship He is everything to me[.] Hoping that God's Grace may be sufficient for you in this dark hour I remain your afflicted-
William

**Camp at (Smymoo?)[Smyrna?] river
Feby 18th 1863**

Dear Robert

I promised you when I wrote you last, that I would write you again someday, but the fact is Robert, a soldier has no business making promises for he makes them only to forfeit them he cannot tell what a day may bring forth, but what he may be on duty or something of this kind, I hope by this time Dear Boy, that you are much better and have arrived safe in Elmore (as I was informed that you were in Cincinnati when I last wrote you I thought you were at home until after I had written). You cannot imagine how surprised I was this afternoon upon hearing the death of Geo Rice. I was up to Murfreesboro the other day and he was there so much better I thought he would soon get well, but poor Boy was taken away while far away from friends and home. How many many young men who left home buoyant with hope that they would live to see the time when peace would sustain them to their loved friends, are now gone to their long homes, and their remains left to bleach in the blood stained ground upon which they fought for their Countries freedom.

How hard it seems Robert to have they whom you love and respect, shot down by your side and then you forced to leave them to the mercies of an insolent foe, and while breathing their last to be stripped and damned by them. After the battle, I walked over the battle ground and there saw poor (Leon?) and others stripped of their clothing as if some uncivilized being had sauntered over the ground, and perpetuated this barbarous act. And this I thought, "why" this was done by men who profess to be educated and refined, how can men who have been (sired?) in a Christian land act thus? surely it is as "Burns" says, "Mans inhumanity to man, makes countless thousands mourn". Robert how much I have thought lately about being a Christian I would give anything to

be a good Christian, an honest one I have thought since the fight, more about this than ever before. I was and for during the fight, and brought out without a scratch, and to whom should I be thankful but to God who has watched over me and supplied my every want this far in life I am satisfied that I shall never be happy until I am an honorable Christian. Robert will you think of me in your prayers? ask that I may become better. I will endeavor to become better by daily watchfulness and prayer[.]

I am well pleased with the place I now have. though it was quite hard for me to leave the Regt, Michael Rice is with me, he send love, and says tell Robert to hurry and get well. I think the army will soon make another sound move for Chattanooga (or perhaps this site) If so, you can look out, for Rosecrans is sure to win. Our Army has recruited quite a large reinforcement since you left and they are good men, all of them old troops at least much of them. Robert you must write me and give me all of the news. Write soon for I shall be writing untill I hear from you[.] My Love to all enquiring friends, especially to your Father and Mother

Your Friend as Ever
Amos E. Wood
1st Battalion Pioneer Corps
Murfreesboro
Tenn

Burns Feby 22nd 1863

My Ever Dear
Sister Jane

How sad to us was the news that wrung your mother heart. How can we comfort you & yours in your bereavement. The ways of God are mysterious & past finding out. But my Sister you have this to comfort you, that Robert in all his bearings to you was a most affectionate boy well disposed and kind.

You have been called to part with one of your 3 Jewels. Remember they were only lent to you, and that at sometime the master would call for them

Again my sister another source of comfort to you, is the fact, that he died in prying his dear country from the worst foes that it ever had and in doing that he was warring not only for our common country, but for his own fireside& home

Cannot you be comforted in this sad loss? Is there no value in silence to heal the wounded spirit? Is there no physician near?

Yes dear Jane there is[.] Look with me in the dim future, and you may find you will believe that Robert was snatched away from you perhaps to prepare a way for you in the Great future to come. Yes Jane I do firmly believe that although unseen by you, yet he is around and about you for good.

Watching you and yours protecting you from harm[.]

I am no spiritualist. But I piously believe that our friends are ever near to us. What better proof have we than this solitary fact, that when immersed in the cares of life, and not conscious of thinking of the loved ones taken from us, all at once some fragrant spot in the memory of our loved ones come uppermost in our thoughts, and we almost again hold communion with the dead[.] Peace at present to us Sister. But alive with the hopes of once more seeing them again face to face

Is it not a happy thought Sister Mine, that our separation from our loved ones is only for a brief time?

If I could how cheerfully would I restore your Robert to you alive.

But God can & will give you faith believe that you will again with all your family see him face to face where there will be no wars, no grief nor no parting

Sister Mary feels for you much very much. She loved Robert much. She has wrote you

Accept the assurances of a Brothers Sympathy in your Bereavement

Believe me ever yours
John (Davis?)

Whites Station Feb 23rd/63

My Dear Father & Mother

It is natural that in writing to you that I should continue to speak of our own Dear lamented Robert.

But what can I say? What can I say that can comfort those whom God hath not comforted. I can realize in a measure the feelings that (sound?) our heart strings. I feel that the blow is a heavy one, crushing in its weight but I trust that you may not be overwhelmed by its power, but that you may be enabled to roll off the burden of sorrow that obsesses you and look upward to Him who alone is able to bind up the broken hearts. May We not ever from the depths of sorrow into which we are placed look upward and hear the balm of consolation poured into our bleeding hearts, even from the hand of our Heavenly Father. May we not all learn a lesson from this, our great trial. Have we not as a family, placed too great an estimate on the things of this life? While we have (rendered?) unto Caesar the things that are Ceasars, have we rendered unto God, the things that are Gods! Our treasures are taken from us one by one and placed. we now reason to believe in a far better land than this. May this bring about the result of turning our minds and hearts from the (Purest of all?) things of Earth to the enduring (niches?) of Heaven,

You know not what a source of consolation it is to me to know that my Dear Brother had so kind and loving a Father with him to the last. When I compare his fate with what I have seen at

different times since I entered the service, I cannot help feeling very, very Thankful that it was as well with Robert as it was, How many how very many have I seen enter the dark valley alone, no eye but a stranger's met their gaze as the cold waves dashed over theirs, they met the King of Demons alone, but with our Dear Robert how different. How Thankful we ought to be. At Shiloh, how many hundreds did I see who without Father, Mother, Brother or Sister near them to secure their last token, breathe out their last on that bloody field.

It was however on Sunday night that I saw a marked example of paternal affection. The fate of our Army on the close of that (?) day hung upon a thread. The Rebel cavalry at sundown came up to our force and fired on our hospital where we had five or six hundred wounded. We were situated on a high bluff direct above the river and our only escape from the showering of bullets that was being rained upon us was in descending the bank to the river's edge. This was terrible work for the poor wounded men, one (?) attracted my particular notice. A father and son were assisting each other down the bank, both were wounded severely. The son however had a leg shattered and torn by a caisson shot and was well nigh helpless. His father however stuck by him and assisted him all that his own crippled condition would allow[.] I lost sight of them during the excitement that followed when the Gun boats commenced throwing their storm of shell over our heads. Only one other instance did I see of this nature and that was two Rebel Brothers wounded and lying side by side on the same (?) ministering to each others wants to the extent of their (relative?) abilities.

I recd two letters from home to day in one envelope one from Juliet. I did not receive any letter containing stamps, but did secure those letters written by Robert from the battle field. I do not think that you secured all the letters that I wrote from Corinth. I sent my Photograph from there[.] I trust that I shall be able to come home before long until then write often and at length Same to Juliet.

(?) your affectionate Son William

