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Transcribing the Past: Civil War Manuscripts

[Transcribing the Past](#) was a crowd-sourced transcription project to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the U.S. Civil War. The project (2013-2015) was made possible with funding from the [Amigos Fellowship and Opportunity Award](#).

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My Dear Mary: The Letters of Lt. Lyle Garrett and Mary Garrett

These letters were exchanged between Lt. Lyle Garrett of the Twenty-third Iowa Infantry and his wife, Mary Garrett, in 1862-1863. They primarily describe Lt. Garrett's experiences in the Civil War, including camp life, attitudes about the South and slavery, and troop movements in Missouri, Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. These letters are from the [Western History Collections'](#) Charles Evans Collection.

Lyle Abraham Garrett was born March 18, 1823 in Highland County, Ohio. He married his third wife, Mary A. Hamilton, in 1858 in Iowa. She was born April 16, 1840 (or 1841?), in Illinois, and was a schoolteacher. The 23rd Iowa Volunteer Infantry was mustered in September 1862 and Lyle was one of the first to enlist as a private. He was assigned to Company "C" in which he served for the duration of his enlistment. He was promoted to lieutenant in late 1863 after the death of one officer and the resignation of another. The bulk of the correspondence in the Charles Evans Collection is between Lyle and Mary Garrett during the three years of his enlistment in the Union Army. Lyle rented his farm to tenants during his absence and Mary lived with his parents at Cottage Home when she wasn't traveling or teaching. In 1867 the Garretts moved to Kansas City, Missouri, where they had a fruit farm; and in 1879 they moved to Allen County, Kansas, where they continued farming. He died September 4, 1901, and is buried at Mount Hope Cemetery in Humboldt, Kansas. Mary died April 5, 1915, and is buried alongside Lt. Garrett.

Lyle Sept 26th No 1 Keokuk Sep 26t 1862 My Dear Mary: I am sitting in the shade of a tent trying to write you a few lines. I should like to say a great many things but how can I compose my mind enough to write to you amid such scenes of confusion. There are a a great many sick & wounded here, all over the citty. some on crutches with crooked limbs There are three hospitals here I visited one yesterday, it appeared to be kept verry well. The floors were washed & rubed clean every thing was neat airy & comfortable. We expect to start for St. Louis tomorrow or some place south I do not know where There are two regiments here besides the 23 (from Des Moines Valley) They look like stout & rugged fellows. There was one regiment at Oskaloosa. They all are in the finest of spirits

Well my dear little wife I have been walking around the camp The officers are all gone off into town. The men are mostly gone to the river to bathe. I should have been with them, but I am now at the highest enjoyment I expect to have, "writing to my wife" Capt Gregg thinks we will go direct to Louisvill Ky. I would like to tell you about our trip down here but there were so many incidents of interest that I do not know what to say. I shall never forget the scene of out last seperation the memories of that morning when we mingled our tears together The memories of that morning shall be dear to me for ever yes my dearest amid the confusion of the camp, & under all circumstances I can find time to think of you

I find it impossible to write to you as I would wish. as an instance since I commenced writing the last half doz lines I have been collecting, 5 cent piece for the mess. to buy a box to keep our dishes in & to buy apples for the mess then a little by comes up with cakes. "Want to buy some cakes five for five cents" No, I write a line. A little girl came in with corn bread, three or four of the boys speak out at once "wheres Lyle Garrett, when I came around they discuss the propriety of buying it. one says "I don't eat corn bread, & another, I go back & write another line or two I am now in the rear of our tent but men all around me talking all manner of things we took our first dinner down by Bill Depews on the same ground where we took a picnick

when you was Mary Hamilton I sat down a few minits & thought all over the pleasures of that day we camped for the night on the old camp ground by the little Brick Schoolhouse. The place even then had a sacredness to me But now I hope you are enjoying yoursilf in your new place my eyes are still somewhat sore but I think they will be better in a few days. It is now noon I will write some more after dinner -

Well dinner is over. Col Dewey will exhibit us this evening at 4 oclock on dress parade on main street Keokuk Mary my girl you must excuse me for writing such a scroll, as this for I never was plagued so, I have not enjoyed one minits quiet since I commenced I have written on my knee & on the dinner box in the tent & out of the tent, amid all kind of confusion. I have the best of health & good spirits. I will write as after as I can good bye my dear girl L A Garrett

Direct L A Garrett
Co. C 23 Iowa Regiment
Via. St Louis Mo

Give my love to all
We leave to morrow morning
at six oclock for St Louis
again good bye my Mary

St Louis Oct 7th 1862

My Dear Mary, I received two letters from you yesterday, Empson B. brought one about 10 A.M. I am under many obligations for the mittens, I consider them a precious present, one that will often bring to mind the dear hands that knit them. It is verry warm & pleasant yet

Now my dearest I will not have time to write as we are under marching orders. we may start at any moment, we do not expect to start however until 2 P.M. I wrote to Austin yesterday & last night. I have to write as I can catch a few spare moments from duty, but I know you will excuse me if I do not write connectedly. I will try & express my sentiments and facts. We are ordered to Pilot Knob S.W. about 100 ms. We are now going into the enemy country, & it is altogether likely that we may see some hard fighting for that appears to be the order of the day now
We will try to do our duty

Well Mary we have just been to breakfast and I tell you it is pretty hard fare Our bread is the best bakers bread I ever saw, but we have not variety enough While ever we keep well it will do, but It is hard on the sick, I shall not murmur, but it seems hard after having undergone the fatigues of the day, to sit down to bread poor coffee & old rusty bacon, sometimes potatoes, or onions, or rice. I cannot help thinking sometimes of our little kitchen table, with its white cloth & good wholesome bread & milk butter, honney, & a great many things that we never get but I must not indulge in such reflections, It don't help my relish for our fare a bit. Those who have not been in the army can never know what hardships a soldier has to undergo, But I have hope that this disgraceful rebellion will soon close, in disgrace to the originaters & that the thousands of heave hearts may be returned

to their happy homes & families

O my dear girl, I begin to long for that day, But if you are getting along pleasantly & my family are well I will bear up, I have generally felt verry cheerful, & happy I think I am enjoying the confidence & esteem of the best men in the Regiment

Last Sabbath I went to church in the citty & heard a good Presbyterian sermon, from Matthew 5 - 4 Ye are the light of the world, In the eve I & Lieut Henry went to the Baptist Church, I think he (Henry) is a good man he appears to take quite an interest in my behalf, particularly since the late disgraceful conduct of some of our Officers, I wrote to Austin the particulars of I did not intend to say any thing to you about it, for I know it will be no pleasure to you, but I will give you a brief statement of facts I must just say here that the

boys are scuffling & shaking the table so that I cant depend on my pen, but I will try & go on. I witnessed but little of it, but I have the testimony of Marion, John Stewart & other good men.

Last Friday morning Our Co went out on Provost duty. It was our duty to keep down riots, guard property taken on suspicion of being Contraband of war to catch up stragling soldiers &c & I was assigned to a large steamer with seven others, We did our duty. The rest of the Co were sent about the Citty headed by the commissioned Officers, Jenings did his duty. Capt Gregg conducted himself in a most disgraceful manner

In the afternoon Gregg passed a counterfeit \$3or bill on a woman in a house of ill fame, & acted the rake generally, drinking Logger Beer & Whisky until he was considerably drunk, things went on in this way until in the after part of the night when when he told the rest of the guards on the street, or by the door of one of these houses, he told them to go where they pleased & went in & locked the door after him. Now my Dear wife how do you think we can stand such disgrace. & how fearful must be the responsibility & the retribution for such conduct. I scorn him with contempt.

as for Hull he is young but did no better I have no confidence in them.

Now Mary these facts will startle you
and I know that if they were not written
over my own signature you would
it but I know that you will believe
every thing that I write, will you not?
I had all all confidence in his religious
integrity. The miserable hipocrite!
His wife & friends will know all
about it, before you get this, his
wife is said to be a good & true
woman. How will such news rend
her poor heart. God have pittty on her
But my Dear wife I wish you to know
that such things do not shake my
confidence in the truth of genuine
religious for we are told in Holy
writ that we are to be tried as by
fire, there is much dross in all kinds
of society. The Army is the furnace
in which the pure Gold will make
its appearance, I pray God that your
husband may be kept from the contam
inating influences of such society

There are quite a number of men that have done what would have made (if had have been me,) me miserable for life. and O! how could I look away into that unfathimable future, No my own dear girl I want you to know that your husband has registered an oath in Heaven that I considder above all othrs that he will be true to you.- You may hear rumors for guilty sinners love company, believe nothing of the kind, for God being my helper I will never disgrace the fair name we have at home I start in a few hours for scenes of Carnage & bloody conflict, I cannot foresee what awaits me, but I will say to you, put your trust in your Heavenly father He will never for sake you, Trust not man because he may make loud professions, of piety they are the most dangerous of all enemies

for you cannot see into their hearts Trust mankind for their manhood There are many men in this regiment that were devout & zealous crhistians at home men respected & reveranced at home, that can now swear with impunity & without provocation While there are others that never made any pretensions to religion, men who were looked uppon as good moral men, good citizens, but were looked on by these loud toned hypocrites, as reprobates, who are the same steady good men they were at home. But I will change my theme to something more pleasant Mary I must close & leave a part of my sheet blank I am sorry for it. Tell Cy I will write to him when I get to Pilot Knob Your affectovate Heusband L A Garrett

Sunday eve Oct 15th

My Dear girl. I am happy for another privilege of communicating my thoughts to you. I have been buissy since yesterday evening. so that I have not had time to write. This morning we had inspection drill. Then church then dinner. and this evening we have Batation drill & dress parade so that you can see that we are kept pretty buissy indeed soldering is a hard business. I think that the exercises to day had a good effect. I hear the boys all round talking that they intend to quit swearing. the Col after we were marched to the place of holding meting took the bass drum & stood on it. & talked to us beautifully for nearly half an hour. Then Burton preached a short sermon Some of the boys refused to go and were compelled to go. They generally appeared to be glad that they had gone. One poor fellow, about the hardest case we have came to his tent from church & took the likenesses of his wife & child from his valise I saw him appear to be in trouble & went over to him & he was looking at them & crying like a child the tears runing down his cheeks he said he had not looked at them for two or three weeks. I told him to look at them every day, that it would have a good influence on him

there are so many things I wish to say that it is hard to quit writing I have nothing better to write on than my knee
good by My Mary

I think there is nothing that a man that who loves his family prizes so highly as a fair likeness of his wife & children, I value mine above all things else, I take your & Cyrus likenes out often & look at them, & wish the war was over so that I could be with you. But I must not dwell on this subject. I would be glad if I could tell you something about where we were going to but I have no idea. one rumer is that we are going to Little Rock another that we are going to Galveston Texas There is one thing certain there is a considerable force collecting here. I know that you will watch with interest the movements of this Brigade There is one thing with regard to this Brigade that is unpleasant. We are under a tyranical Dutch Colonel, Col Dewey has written to Gen. Curtis about it & we are in hopes that there will be a change in favor of own Col. He is growing more popular with his soldiers than when at Des Moine. There was one regiment of cavelry came in to day, There will be a battery here in a day or two in adition to the one here now. the Cannon are drawn by six horses one rider to each span of horse. It is a pretty sight to see them on a quik turn. I must close & go out on drill I will try & write some more this eve

Sunday eve 7 o'clock Well Mary I have went through a very buissy day. Batallion inspection, Church Dinner Battallion drill Dress Parade, & Camp duty generally. In fact it is one buissy day after another, not much hard work except on the march. That is verry fatiguing. I have always been abel to march with the fastest. I have not missed a meal when I could get it, & I have always been ready at roll call. I have never been censured by an officer I mention these little items that you may know that I am getting along first rate

And now my own dearest Mary I expect that before I write to you again that we will march further south & that we are in the enemys country and a prospect of meeting the enemy on the field when foe will grapple with foe for the mastery and for that great principle of universal liberty, bequeathed to us by our Fathers, cemented by their blod. It must be perpetuated by ours

And now my Dear girl if your husband should fall I promise you that I fall at my post in the full discharge of my duty as a soldier, & that my last effort shall be for my country & my last thoughts on you

Now Mary I want you to write to me often Marion is complaining of not having received a letter from Mary Jane yet. I know that I will have no cause to reflect on you for negligence in this respect, for I can recollect those noble wife-like letters I used to receive from you while absent on another ocasion. I want you to write all about how you are getting along and how you enjoy yourself with your school and how you are all getting along in the church O how I should enjoy one sabbath with you

in that little brick church under the preaching of of our dear pastor. I pray that you may all live as children of the same Great Heavenly King should live. And that you may see the outpouring of the Spirit such as was witnessed last winter But the drums will soon beat for lights to be be put out & silence will soon reign over the thousands who are around me singing some hymns, other songs & some talking, loud & others in squads seated around a little campfire or in their tents talking of their friends, others writing letters & others reading letters from their wives & & I must finish & mail this to night or early in the morning, as the mail goes out then. The Senior Col has promised our Col to let him have 30 of his Cavalry to morrow and go out out on a scout through the country, to see & forage. I do not know how many the Col will take with him but I have the promise of a place with them It is the calculation to "subsist & forage on the enemy" you may read portions of this to Father & Mother & any others you wish. I would be happy to write to all of them, but I find I have not time. I will try & write Father & Mother soon I have written to you from KeoKuk, St Louis & to Austin from either St Louis or Pilot Knob & Cyrus from Camp Davidson. I hope to hear from you soon And now my Dearest Mary I must bid you an affectionate good bye I am ever your affectionate husband Lyle

Tell little May & Ida that I think of them & hope to see them

Give my love to Brother & Sister Rheinachr (spell the name for me) Brother & sister Nash & all friends.
I will write to you in two weeks or sooner"

Head quarters 23rd Iowa Infatry Sat Oct 18th /62 near Patterson Wayne Co. MO 30 ms. S.E. of Ironton

My Dearest Mary: I embrace another opprtuntty of writing to you. You will see from the heading of my letter that we are still working south I am in the best of health, in fact the most of the regiment are enjoying good health & fine spirits. they all endure the hardships incident to camp life like soldiers I think we are a No one regiment. We have some officers I shall respect & esteem while they & I shall live And among them I would mention in particolor Capt Roach & Lieut Henry Capt Roach's men have had measels to a considerable extent. At Ironton he took posession of a good house with sword in hand for his sick. & on the march down here he pressed a wagon & two yoke of oxen into service to draw his knapsacks & last night when we came into camp without tents (except his Co.) and without anything to eat he & his men killed a two year old beef

It is warm & pleasant, good Mountain water, but a poor country

& divided with Lieut. Henrys Co. then they went to another regiment & borrowed a box of crackers & gave to their companies then after they were all comfortable they went to bed themselves. Our teams did not come up until the a[f]ter part of the night. Lieut Hull with 50 men was detailed with the teams as guard. Our Capt. went off to a house near by & got supper for himself while we were without anything except what corn we parched. I went to Henry & Roach and borrowed 20 crackers for our men that were out on guard. I tell you my little wife we were all very mad Well now I have to quit. I must write as occasion will permit.

Well I am ready to talk to you again It seems to me that I could write one sheet every day if I had time, for when ever I am not busy & when I am on the march & particularly when I am out on guard duty, I am almost constantly thinking about you & what I wanted to tell you There are so many things of interest, or what would seem to be that I cannot write about for want of time

I suppose it to be a matter of more interest to you to know that I am well & getting along well with the Co than any thing else. I must tell you of one little confiscation spree I was in, The morning we started down here from Ironton. some of the Captains gave their men power to go out and take teams to haul their knapsacks &c. (I would say here that our load altogether will weigh over 50 lbs) I watched our old Captain and when I thought the excitement was about right I went right up to him and said "Captain give me authority and I will get a team for Co C." he said for me to go. I called for the Mitchetown boys and there were eight of us took our guns and went out four or five miles & found an old secesh who had two sons in the rebel army he was dressing a hog, we told him our buisness, he kept scraping away at the hog, did not seem communicative we told him we had no time to talk to him, but to get us the best team & wagon he could, I suppose he thought it best to obey orders & he went to work

& gave us two horses & what a team I must describe it. The one on the nigh side was a small grey about like old Fly the other 4 years old we took from a colt they were barefooted. The harness consisted of very old, old fashioned haims, old collars trace chains narrow backbands, no lines we told him to go to the bedstead, he brought us out the cord. We made checks out of it, & all kinds of straps &c__ We had considerable sport over the grey team but they always came up to time. The next day, some others of Co C went out & took another team, the two could take on all our knapsacks, we still had to carry our muskets cartridge boxes, have-sacks canteens &c with 40 rounds of ammunition which was load enough, To day they are sending our teams back. I do not know what we are to do on the next march. We are Brigaded with a Dutch Regiment & under a Dutch Col. he swears that we shall carry our knapsacks, from here to Littlerock Arkansas, in a proportionately shorter time than we cam down here in. I dont believe we can do it. Now Mary, I dont want you to think that I am complaining of hard times. but you know I promised to tell you all about it. - When I give out there will be many more I must close & go on dress Parade. I will try and write some more to morrow Good bye my Mary L A Garrett

you can see by a good map what our latitudes is

Nov. 3d /62 Head Quarters 23rd Iowa Inf Camp Patterson Mo

My Dearest Mary

I have just return a fatiguing march into Arkansas. a distance of about 78 miles & back. Companies A C & H of the 23 Iowa 2 co of 24th Mo and a portion of Stangs Battery (2, twelve pounders) constituted our force. We were to form a Junction with a Wisconsin Reg of cavelry at Pitmans ferry on Currant River a few rods south of the line between Mo & Arkansas. when we were to march on Pocahatus (I will state here before I forget it that I enjoyed the best of health at all times, & was able to march in my place in the front file the whole trip whilst a great many had to fall back to the wagons.) You will doubtless before this reaches you see statements in the papers with regard to our rapid march & the rout of the enemy. I should like if I could give you a clar

I do not remember exactly what No this letter should be but I will call it No 5

Idea of the whole affair. I will give you some items, On Fryday night Oct 24th we were called out in line about 11 oclock & ordered to be ready all of us that felt able for a rapid march by 2 o clock to have one days ration cooked & in our haversacks, & to pack our blankets in our knapsacks, the quartermaster to load up six days rations, so we cooked, & packed rubed up our guns & talked & eat breakfast about 1 oclock when it began to mist & get quite cold & a little before daylight we got under way. It began to snow about daylight & continued until near noon, about 3 inches, we marhed that day to & across Black River 24. ms. We used fences for fuel, that night was pretty hard on us, we had no tents, we scraped away the snow & spread one or two blankets under us & 3 or 4 on top & slept tolerably comfortably, in the morning I saw some of the boys tearing their blankets loose where the had frozen to the ground, W started on the march early

& We had plenty of Apples Peaches Percimons, Grapes Black berries &c while on our trip south

& met with nothing of particular interest until in the after noon when we routed the enemys pickets and took one fellow that had lied to us about not having seen any pickets when he had just seen them, we took him prisoner & went 2 or 3 miles & camped with or on the premises of a Secesh Captain. we took a considerable quantity of Comisary stores, that they had stored away for their pickets. That night one of our pickets took one of theirs & brought him into head quarters.

After supper - Since writing the above I have been on dress parade & eat supper & I guess I will tell you how I have occupied the time to day. I was around a while this morning among my friends greeting & receiving their congratulations. Then I went to washing & washed all my clothes except one shirt & drawers. even my pants they had got so greasy & dirty. I made them look like new ones. then there was one half our regiment started off on a 3 or 4 days march at 2 P.M. with a regiment of Cavelry & you know I must see them start & bid my friends that were going good bye. for it is like brothers leaving each other.

Then I commenced writing to you, so I will co where I left off. This prisiner was one of the 4 that we surprised in the afternoon he got separated from the others. I must say here that the boy that took him was a member of our company by the name of John Bull he has the honor of disarming the & taking captive the first Secesh that was taken by the 23rd Iowa.

we built good fires from the fences & made beds
from his haymows & stacks & cooked & eat & slept
until one o clock in the morning when we took up
our line of march & by 8 o clock we over took their pickets
we took sixteen of the poor Buttrnuts. some of
them were dressed in in red linsey other striped with
red & ther favorite (butternut) We then marched
rapidly towards the ferry. some of the cavelry
in front then Infantry then the two cannon the
balance of the cavelry in the rear. Col Dewy rode
in front with the advance guard. & when they came near the ferry he waved his hat to us. we were about 12 miles
off we started on double quick then the Artilery came dashing by
with six large grey horses to each wagon one rider to each
span then the cavelry in the rear came ratling by with their long
swords. They went on to the ferry the rear guard of the enemy were just in
sight, the cannon sent four rounds after them but they
were too far off for them to take effect, we ran until within
1/4 of a mile of the ferry, & formed in line of battle. It was somewhat
amusing to see some of the boys about the time the cannon
commenced firing. We were looking every moment for the
enemys shell & shot to commence raining among us. It was
somewhat exciting, yet I think that I was cool & acted delib
erately. there were many that did the same some did not
The rebels overestimated our strength or I suppose they
certainly would have stood their ground for they had
according the statement of the prisiners we took about
three thousand men two thirds of them well armed. the
rest with shot guns &c with 4 pieces of artillery 6 pounders
while we had only about four hundred men in all
but they were picked men 50 or 60 from a company
we crossed Currant River the next day & marched
for Pocahontas we fell in with our cavelry 700 strong
with two 12 pounders. we sent scouts to Pocahontas but the
rebels had fled. It was the rapid movement of our troop
that won the victory. we came down on them like an ava
lanch we took 40 or 50 pisiner & a numbe of horses (our
division in conection with the cavelry) we all returned
home yesterday evening, amid shouts & greeting of the rest
of our regiment, nothing of interest ocured on our return trip
I will write some more to morrow good night

I have Just now found the other letter among my envelopes which makes the whole No (5)

Tuesday 11 oclock, AM. Nov 4th My Dear Mary: I fear you will think I am neglecting you but I am kept so buissy that I have not time to wirte as much to you as I could wish. I wrote one sheet yesterday & might have sent it away this morning but I was not half through with what I had to say. There are so many things taking place every hour, movements of troops &c that might be of interest to you that I feel like I ought to tell you all about it but, have not the time & must content my self with giving you only a few, Just now Co A have returned from the funeral of one of their Co headed by the martial band. There is considerable sickness in our Regiment mostly measels. &. colds. There is quite a large force colecting here at this time I think there are about fifteen thousand here. There are ten thousand on the way from Pilot Knob. I see a large amount of telegraph wire accouterments lieing near a fort they are building here I am told they intend to build forts from here to Virginia & garison them with troops. & conect them by telegraph There are a great many ways by which this rebellion could. be crushed out. But the quickest & most effectual way would be to quarter & subsist. destroy &c all that could be destroyed & confiscate the balance The present manner of conducting the war will not do It is not the purpose of the Rebels to stand or fight but to feint a stand until they get us drawed out on a long & toilsome march, then run. then we have to either hold the position & send for army stores &c or retreat they can carry on such a

mockery of war almost indefinitely

What we want is commanders who will "quarter and subsist" on the enemy as much as possible and destroy crops, take their cattle & horses, drive their slaves north & compel the men in the field to come home & take care of their families this would be war & such as they could not stand sixty days,

I conversed with one of the prisener we took at Pitman's Ferry freely on this subject

. I told him we held them at our mercy. the he knew that if we were determined on their destruction that in six weeks we could desolate the whole southwest

he acknowledged that we could but "why dont you do it" But it is useless for me to speculate upon the destinies of this nation while it is playing war. I would rather talk to you about our own home affairs

What I have written you may read at your discretion to my friends the other leaf I will write to you

Now my Dear girl you asked my advice about going into business in DesMoine. Now all I can say about it is that if you can get the money at a reasonable percent & you think you could enjoy yourself better & have as good health & make it pay. I should be pleased to see you go into it you must use your own Judgement in this matter. Now tell me all about how you are getting along with your Juveniles

How Fathers folks are getting along. & all you know about what is going on on our farm

I hardly dare to think about home & what I might enjoy in the society of my family & friends compared with the hardships & privations of a life in camp, but you would be surprised to se how cheerfully a majority of us bear it We marched off on this last trip south over a rough and stony road during a severe snow storm as cheerful & gay as though we were going on dress parade. We are all much pleased with Col Dewey, & Col Kinsman, Major Glassgow & in fact with most of our officers

Capt Gregg still hangs on, a nuisance

I was somewhat disappointed when I came back not to receive any letters. I have not had any yet from Austin or in fact any one but you. I have received three from you & my Dear little wife you cannot imagine the pleasure it gives me to get a letter mailed in that well known hand. no matter how much noise & confusion then, I can sit down & shut out the noise of drums & pipes & the loud Jokes & mirth of my fellow Soldiers & enjoy the rich treat. as though all was quiet.

When you write tell me how often you have written & the date &c and whether Austin or Cyrus or any one else you know of that have written to me so that I may know whether any letters have failed to come to me or not. The mail is on the way here from Pilot Knob hemed in by the force on the way here. with about 3,000 in front & 7,000 behind We are looking for it in every minit. I will quit writing until it comes in hoping to hear from you when I will finish. I will write oftener hereafter - if not so much. O I do hope to get one of those dear letters.

Wednesday morning 5 Oclock. I received your of Oct 25. & how happy I was in reading it. Your letters are so full of tenderness & womanly affection. I have received only four (4) letters & the last one is No. 5 how is it the first one is dated Sept 28; No 2 Oct 6th; No 4 Oct 12; No 5 Oct 25. There are a great many things I want to say but will not have time. Bird Frederick, Evan Price are all well. Frederic is still growing & is a good soldier. Bird is a good boy & I think we can get him a position in the post office he is hardly able to endure the fatigues of army duty as it requires the strongest of men. I must close for want of room. I will write in about six days again & now my dearest continue to remember in your prayers LYLE

I wish you could send me the Weekly Register, often papers are a great rarity here & it will be quite a treat to look over its contents

Lyle Nov 23rd 1862

No. 7

Camp Patterson Mo. Nov 23d 1862

My own Dear Mary: I received yours of Nov 12th & 13th yesterday. I am happy to know that you are well & enjoying yourself so well. I am enjoying excellent health. The health of our Regiment is improving very rapidly. In fact, had it not been for Measels & Mumps there would have been but little sickness among us.

You must not feel so anxiously about me. I am doing well while my health continues so good. There may be times when I cannot write as often as I could wish particularly when we are on a march & there might be weeks that you might not hear from me, be not discouraged. I have an abiding trust in Him Who rules our destiny as well as the destiny of Nations. We had preaching this afternoon by the Chaplain. Rev Captain Roach followed him. How I should enjoy it to be with you this winter & attend church with you & sit in our own church & hear our own dear Pastor. How often do I think past privaleges And how little do we aprciate present blessings while they are being lavishly showered uppon us. When we absent ourselves from home then it is that we appreciate the blessings of domestic & social life. I would not have you think from what I have said that I regret having enlisted under the flag of my Country to help fight her battles. NO, NEVER What I have sacrificed I do from conscious duty.

I can endure privation & toil with a cheerful heart while ever I cant keep out of mind the swindles that are being [placed?] off on the Government & its soldiers. But when I see in all the clothing or nearly all that we draw & all other contracts. how unprincipled men are swindling us. & that a large proportion of Government officials must be cogniscent of & interested in many of these things. it is then that my heart almost fails me, & I "tremble for my Country when I reflect that God is Just". But the greatest difficulty to settle in my mind is this. how can our Government hope to succeed with honor to itself when it has been only loping off the branches of the great root of all the difficulty. But the first of Jan. 1863 is approaching. We shall soon see what that day will bring forth, I hope that the songs of Jubille on that day may be heard above the roar of cannon. & the clash of arms. Yes that the songs of the liberated thousands may on that day pierce the skies, and that Rebels may tremble in view of their "inhumanity to man". I am looking forward to that day with no little curiosity (& you can imagine with some anxiety too) to see what effect the emancipation proclamation will have. But I need not speculate on these topics, you are I have no doubt, watching the signs of the times as closely as I am, for I know that you are interested aside from the patriotic devotion with which you love our country.

I have neve in my letters dwelt so long on this subject but I may as well work off my wrath while I am at it. I don't like this stand still & do nothing idea - Here we are now & have been for 6 or 8 weeks some 10 Regiments of us. I have never done any thing but frighten away two or three thousand "Butternuts" from Pitmans Ferry. We only got a glimpse at their retreating rear guard. & one more demonstration of the same kind at Dalles. In each case as soon as they ran we turned around & came home. & the newspapers call them victories, such warfare don't suit my notions of what war ought to be. I would follow them & either annihilate them or drive them clear out of the country, but that would not be carrying on the war scientifically. My plan always was if I had any thing to do to do it & quit. This may look to you as though I was out of humor, the only excuse I can give for it is that last nigh I eat butter cakes fried in grease & I may have eaten to many of them for they were a rarity & I was hungry, & it may have somewhat deranged my digestive organs, for I remember that in my dreams I passed through many of my boyhood scenes - I was all over the Cedar Cliffs on Fall Creek & fell off a time or two, & climbing into the top of the old cherry trees & large apple trees in Grandfathers old orchard, & my! how high they were, I thought several times the ground would catch me! But to day I have been dieting on potatoe soup & feel first rate this evening. I must go to roll call good night - Lyle

Monday Nov 24th 2 o'clock P.M. It is a beautifully clear day. This morning the ground was frozen quite hard, the nights are chilly & cold. I feel very well to day. I have been washing my clothes to day & I could not but remember that monday is also your favorite wash day. Marion, Billy & I borrowed a tub & washboard & went to the creek & washed & rinsed & brought our clothes up to camp & hung them on poles around our tents to dry, These little items I will give you as they occur to my mind that you may know what we are doing & know how we spend the time, To day there are one hundred of our Regiment gone out on picket. I am writing in Mr Burtons tent, & back in the rear The Contrabands are at work, & I assure you they are a hard set. I have made up my mind after some experience with them that the less I have to do with them the better. My description of what I have seen would be that they are sharp, lazy, treacherous, honest when it is policy, filthy [illegible] & all of them profane, we have had some as cooks & thought it a great thing but we were glad to get rid of them I would treat them humanely but want them away off south To day we are sending Wm Butler out in the country to stay a while. R Stockdale goes out with him as nurse he is quite low with lung fever or something of that nature he has been spitting blood, & I fear he will not be able to endure the hardships incident to a soldier's life, I have been trying to get them (he & Smith Robinson of Mitcheltown who is in about the same condition except that Robinson does not cough up any blood) a discharge from the service, but have not affected it yet. I have no idea yet when or where we will go to, we may winter near this place. I verry much dislike such monotiny but must submit to the powers that be I will write

some more and a separate sheet you must excuse this great coarse paper it is
the best I can do at present

Good evening my own Dear Wife & like you how I do wish -"I could say it instead of writing it". It is now nearly roll call. I have been down & spent a part of the evening with Lieutenant Henry. He is a No. 1 man in my estimation, & then I have been talking a good while with the Chaplain. Mary he is a good man "by their fruits ye shall know them" He is exerting a good influence in this regiment, particularly with the Officers, with whom he is quite popular. He Just preaches right to them "thou art the man" about their profanity. I tell you his influence is seen & felt. How I enjoy my evenings in such society instead of cards or checkers or songs even. I have hopes of getting up on this row of tents, but do not be elated over it. I may fail. I am trying to do something for the cause for which I sacrificed home & loved family for The Lieut Col. is a moral man, & Barton told me this evening that his Father & Mother are very pious Babtists. I am satisfied that he is a true friend of mine. & by the way we have some hopes of his being our Col., But now my little wife I wish you to keep every thing that I write to you about our manuvres here, excuse me for asking this for we have heard (from Des Moines?) that I was to be 2^d Lieut in Co C & I think that it worked against me. & you know that I would be sorry if anything of the kind should be traced back to me. I find that my paper is almost done. I must close. I will try & write oftener if I cannot write so much. And now my dearest I must bid you good bye. How I do love to write to you. give my love to Mr. & Mrs Reichmaker & all other friends. Empson bird is getting along verry well. Corwin 2 Lt. is a first rate boy. Tell Mr. Frederick that he is as good a soldier as we have in Co C., he is manly, he & I often go down to the creek together & enjoy a good bath [illegible] I must bid you good night my precious. Lyle

Give my especial regards to Mrs. Frederick F. Hedge is the same Hedge yet

Monday about 4 PM. (Nov 24th)

Now My Dearest Mary I will write expressly for you. I did not know but that Fathers or some others might want to hear my letters read. so you will see that I have been more cautions than usual. Our Own affairs concern us only. Now with regard to your idea of going into business. I have studied this matter over carefully & have thought that there were only a few objections to your plans, the first would be (to my mind) that it might not be a healthy business for you, the second I cannot see as certain that I can render but little assistance, the third I do not want my wife ruled over by any one but myself (you know I am a little inclined to tyranny in this respect) now don't laugh at me) But to be serious, if you think that you can manage so as not to injure your health, & can borrow the money, & think you will not be ruled over too much, why then I would most gladly concur, for I think you could carry it on if you were manager with profit & honor too. & I know that you would be happy in rendering me assistance in riding ourselves of debt. I would sugest that you take a room in some part of the citty where the fashionable portion of the people do "most congregate" & commence in good style, don't be to modest in putting on prices. I know that you will do your work well, let them pay for it. If I could only talk with you about it. it would be so much more satisfactory but I have the fullest confidence in your judgment. You had better act accordingly. Yet I love & esteem you all the more for counseling me on your plans even if you have to do it by writing to me. But I think that in my last letter I gave you about the same advice. There have been a geat many dispatches to our headquarters to day & Just now the bugle is calling the Officers around the Colonels tent. There will in all probability be some move made soon.

Nov 25th good morning Dearest Mary

I thought I would write a few more lines this morning. Just one month ago to day we started for Arkansas. That was a cold snowy day & it looks this morning like it might snow to day. will you please to keep a memorandum of the weather, I do not mean every day, but sudden changes & cold days &C & send it to me each time you write, it will be a satisfaction to me & others to know the state of the weather. We sent Butler out to the country yesterday. R. Stockdale went out to take care of him In the afternoon Gen Davidson issued an an order to have all the sick brought back into camp. We think it cruel & tyrannical. It seems that these Missouri Officers have a dislike to sow troops a kind of jealousy. Billy & B Risin are getting breakfast. & Marion is cutting a Fox & goose board or a bushel board or something of the kind - he appears to be verry much in[illegible] over such games, it collects so many loafers in our tent that it is a verry great bore to me. I would rather spend my time reding newspapers, particularly if I liked to argue as well as he does he has got his marks cut & is teaching some [illegible] hand out side of the tent. He is explaining it out to him as carefully as you would an urchin - his ABC's. We have dried beef, coffey, crackers & some buiscuit, I would rather eat one of the buiscuits than have one of throwed at me. well I must quit & try some of them, it is [illegible]

Well we have had a very good breakfast. We are now comfortable, we have a little fire place in front of our tent. No, Mary you must not trouble yourself about me you know that I am well & that I have naturally a strong constitution & I am naturally cautious about my diet & we have our tent floored with small boards. Cracker boxes &c. Marion is out again explaining Morris? every one to their tastes you know don't forget to send me the Register & a Tribune occasionally - I have sent home some cane & percimon seed by Henry Busick he will leave them at Mr. Birds the cane seed is for Austin, the percimon seed for Cyrus, will you ask Mr Smith some time how will be the best way to plant them (Percimon).

I would like to make sure work with these for they were large & as good as I ever eat. They would be quite a luxury in Iowa if they would bear. give them a trial. I will have to go on guard to day. I don't know whether it will be camp guard or picket., if I would go on picket I will have to be out about 30 hours. there will be 100 of us. We go out 50 picked men of two companies. I have always been one of the picked men & I suppose they will take me this time. Now I must close this time. I hope to hear from yo soon. Give my love to Father & Mother, & Cy & Stewart, Jeny & all the friends, your husband with tender affection. Lyle A. Garrett

Soldiers Home St. Louis Mo Dec 3 1862

My Dearest Mary. You will be surprised to find that I am in St. Louis. You will not be so much surprised as I am disappointed: My mind is reeling with conflicting emotions. I am so disappointed but your curiosity is becoming excited. & I must explain. Col Dewey is dead. he was taken sick one week ago yesterday & died on Sunday. Typhoid fever & erysipelas. his remains started for Iowa on Monday morning. Just as it was starting & our Co. with all the others Were about falling into line to escort it out a short distance when I was detailed as one of eight as an escort "to Des Moines". I was taken on surprise. but O how my heart bounded with delight I ran & got my knapsack & blankets gun &c, on the way that same evening there was an order overtook us for all but three to return from Pilot Knob. The Young Deweys requested that I be allowed to go with them. The rest consented so there were three of us came on here & went aboard a steamer for Keokuk with the Col. & his effects - Charley Dewey went to General Curtis Head quarters to secure our transportation to Des Moines & back - He refused, Said it would cost our government too much!! I can't forgive him, I was so happy. I am now -- well not miserable but I feel so badly - I had already anticipated such a good time. I could almost see your eyes sparkle.. I was going to take you on surprise - I was almost walking the streets, greeting my friends. I intended to take "Mary & hurry out to Fathers" O! I was to have such a good time! - "But there is many a slip between the cup & the lip"! The boys felt verry badly over it & it really seems too bad that the Government could not afford three as an escort to Our brave Old Col. But I must cheer up it is not soldierly to complain & I do not wish to lower myself in your estimation & I know that you could not love me if you thought I lacked manhood or the qualities requisite in a soldier. I am in a lively crowd. There are about twenty men & boys here. with their papers. regular discharges.. They are talking over Old times & then about home. They are happy

You will excuse me if my ideas are somewhat confused & if this should be badly written. I am anxious to write to you & I have not much time to do it in, as I did not commence until after supper. I have to be up & take the cars in the morning at six, & have eat nothing since yesterday morning before day, except hard bread & raw ham, two apples, & five cts worth of cheese, until since dark this evening. I had a good supper, & left Camp Patterson with 50 cts, I bought three little song books this afternoon that I intended to present one to Cyrus one to May & the other to Ida, I sent them by Mr Lyon, to Mr Birds, will you get them and present them in my name, It is a small gift but tell them each that it is a token of affection. I have two little ten cent shimplasters left, & but little prospect of "payday". It has been a source of annoyance to me for some time, that we were receiving no pay, I am afraid you will need some funds. You know I left nine dollars per month for you to draw at the State Bank I suppose of course you have not received any yet. If you have or if the hogs are sold & you could spare it I would be glad if you could send me 5.00 with Mr Lyon or some other reliable man, it would procure me many little comforts. But now my dear wife do not trouble yourself about me for I have the verry best of health, good spirits. I am sometimes disappointed, & I thought I could have an opportunity of talking it all over with you. O it is so bad isnt it? I can hardly realize the disappointment yet, but it is so. The steamer is away up the River. I am to realize the disappointment. by going back at R R Speed in the morning to Join my Regiment, away down in S E MO. O my own Dear little Mary it grieves me. I could shed tears over it, I almost know you will

been a grand sight to have seen that portion of the Rebel army in their terror-stricken flight. It is said by citizens living on the road that they went in great confusion. They had not time to hitch up their teams properly and that their Artillery horses balked. that if we had have known their condition. that we could have taken their entire baggage train & artillery. I would have been a great feat, but Col Dewey, acted with proper caution in not letting us after them, he supposed they were only making a feint to draw us across the river & then cut off our retreat. All the prisoners we took told us that we would have an opportunity of testing our bravery & skill. Well I must begin to close up as it is getting late & I have to be up early & away. I must say a few words about the house I am stopping in. It is kept up by contribution of charitable persons. every thing is comfortable & neat the Hostess a Lady. her husband untiring in his efforts to render assistance to unfortunate soldiers from any Regiment. If a discharged soldiers is not able to walk to the boat or cars or to carry his baggage they are taken in carriages. The Lady is now in the room making arrangements with the wounded about their beds. She reminds me of Mrs. Cranshaw. she makes them stand around. Those who are able to walk well have to go up stairs. she is Just the kind. I have Just been talking a while with two Cavalry soldier one of them from the 1st Iowa. They have seen hard times. We have no right to complain. I will write to you again in about one week if I have an opportunity. I was in hopes I could see you & tell you of my disappointments. & prospects & C. I could speak of them more freely than I can write. I wanted to talk with you about your speculation, but I believe in my former letters I have said all that I could say if I saw you. I am willing to risk your Judgement. Write to me all about the funeral of our Col Give my respects to all the friends. & remember my dear wife that, that my thoughts & affections are centered on you, write often I am your affectionate husband. Lyle

There are 16 hospitals in this Citty, 2/3 of the patients are convalessant

No. 10 Camp Patterson, Mo. Dec 14th 1862

My Dearest Mary:

This is Sunday & I am seated in my little tent for the purpose of holding sweet communion with you & O my dearest if I could only spend this day with you at home how happy we would both be. It is Just now raining terribly hard. the ground is getting like a pool of water. It has rained a good deal for the last 48 hours. the creeks & branches are much swollen I should like to know whether it is snowing up in Iowa to day or not. when you write tell me about it & how deep the snow gets to be at any time this winter. get the depth from Austin or Stewart or some reliable source as folks in town are often mistaken or deceived by drifts Others will get news with regard to the weather, temperature &c I want corect information. If it should be raining up north as it is here it will the put the Mississippi River in good stage for navigation so that our forces on the river can operate with more effect. I must say here before I forget it that I am in the best of health. The rest of the boys are well except Billy he has a cold & sore throat but is better this morning. Marion is verry healthy he is our Co Comissary. he is liked very well. He performs his duties impartially & promptly. his duties are to draw provisions from the Quartermaster & divide it out to the different messes. It is a dificult & unpleasant buisness. I would not do it. My! how it rains it is so dark I can hardly see to follow the lines 11 o clock AM

Empson Bird & C. B. Frederick are well. Empson is a very stout little soldier. Corwin is a good big soldier grown fast

I think I shall not mail this for a day or two as I know as I know that the creeks between here & Pilot Knob will be swollen so that the mails cannot pass in safety & I do not wish you to miss getting this for I have neglected to write to for a few days longer than I intended. I wrote to Cy, Stewart Father & Jenny a few days ago I suppose you will hear by them or more likely you will read what I wrote as I have an idea that you will want to read any thing that emanates from the pen of your humble husband Now my little wife you must excuse me for this foolish way of writing for I write just as ideas come into my mind & it may sometimes sound to you as not very interesting. But it seems that I can write with such freedom to you I know that if any thing should be uninteresting you will look over it The last I wrote you was from St. Louis. I was then very much disappointed. I learn since coming down to camp that the Dewey boys were mistaken, the leave of absence was for Charles Dewey Robert Dewey & L A Garrett. how they made the mistake is more than I can tell as I am satisfied they wished me to go with them, but strange as it may seem to you I am glad I returned, why? Because as you are aware there will sometime in the course of human events be a vacancy in our Co by the resignation of Gregg, his papers were sent to headquarters "not correct" & I returned, It was thought by all that, about the Saturday after I left They

would come on, his resignation accepted. & that there would be an election immediately. my friends were sorry that I had left, for as soon as I was gone Orderly Downs, who is a candidate commenced a crusade against me, with low undermining lies, such as this, he would get into a squad of the boys & say, "There is a certain man in Co. C that has been trying to get office, first he tried to get into Co E. as 2nd lieut, & then he tried to be wagonmaster, & now he is trying to get to be 2d lieut in Co. C. & that's no body else than Lyle Garrett". & many other ways he almost quit calling the roll & when he did he dared not to put delinquents on duty, he was every where insinuating & fawning to the boys so much so that many of them are disgusted with him, I have said nothing to him about it, I have chosen rather to let him break his own neck, Now I know that you will feel an interest in this matter, I do not know that Capt Greggs resignation will be accepted, & if it should be there are many interest against me, the other sargents of course will want to all go up by regular promotion. They will have their friends & you can readily see that I have to work against odds. & besides all this I am not much of a man to wirework & electioneer. I have told the boys that if they see fit to elect me to that position I shall aim to do what I consider to be my duty

I could succeed better if I would promise to do this for that one. & something else for another & promise the same thing to a dozen. as some men do. I will do no such things, others may, I will see my wife & family with a clear conscience & a character unscathed or not at all.

The news you received that I was elected Capt of my Co vexes me, as I am not aware that such a thing was ever thought of by any one,, never mentioned by me or to me. I enlisted in the service of my country from pure motives as my friends verry well know, not for office. & further I cannot look uppon officers with that respect that I once did, for I am perfectly satisfied that if officers were all in good earnest & honest this war might to day be ended. There is too much of a looking for the spoils & office & not enough of honest, patriotic exertion made.

But I shall not despond for the destinies of our country. Yesterday, I read the St Louis Democrat of Dec 12 through giving an account of Burnside's splendid victory over the enemy at Fredericksburg. He is in earnest & if not removed as Fremont was, for whipping them too fast, will yet take Richmond & thus cut off the head of the green eyed monster. The news is good from all parts of the country, God rules & will not permit this luminary to the opressed millions in all lands to go out in darkness & obscurity. I must close. Lyle

lights have to be put out at a certain hour, or the inmates go to the guard house. I have never had to go yet for any cause

Monday morning. 15th Good morning my pet. I expect you are enjoying a snow storm, as we down in Dixy are having quite a rain. It commenced raining Friday & has rained pretty near all the time since except last night, it slacked up a portion of the night the creeks have run down considerably, but it has commenced again. Col Kinsman has not yet returned with his Quinine Brigade as he calls the 120 sick he is bringing down from Arcadia poor fellows, how they will get along through rain & mud is more than I can tell. It has been said by some who have come down that he (the Col) has 3 or 4 on his horse at one time then taking on foot. wading through the mud as lively as a school boy. encouraging them along he is a verry cheerful & lively man. I suppose he has his men in houses if they can be had if not he will stay out with them. Our armies would soon come off victorious if they were lead by men of as pure motives as he. We are looking verry anxiously for the news from Burnside's and his orders we got no papers. We get news here very soon after any movement is made, for instance Burnside's crossed the Rapahannock on thursday & on Saturday morning we were reading the particulars of the fight that you see is pretty soon considering the distance. How I should like to have been there & have heard that terrible cannonade The first fire was opened by 143 guns, & then afterwards when Burnside commanded to concentrate the whole force of Artillery on the Citty (Fredericksburg) How the doomed city must have trembled & reeled under such rounds in all into the citty setting it on fire in many places. But the Rebels retreated to their fortification on the hill in the rear and they may be hard to dislodge

Write with black ink if you can & plain as we always get our mails after dark

Sometimes we get our letters so late that we have to read by fire light

But here I am telling you thing that you have read before I did in all probability & have forgotten in the rush of other news, for I suppose that you keep posted on the news of the day in regard to war items, you cannot but perceive that we as a nation are on the eve of important events I know that the political horizon in the east is overcast with clouds, but surely the great heart of the people is right on so momentous a question as a Nations life. It cannot be that we as Americans have become so besotted by political gamblers, or so sordid from the the lust for gold or from any other cause - O, I was forgetting that black Demoniactal word Slavery until I began to write the word - cause. This is what has degraded us as a nation. We have not become sordid - We aim at enterprise. It is not ignorance, we are an inteligent people. I was about to say that it cannot be possible that we as a nation although our government is of short duration compared with that of some others, will let our free institutions with all the blessings that flow from them be swallowed up by that monster Anaconda which has for an age been entwining its slimy folds around us, no it can never be, I will yet hope for better things. There are a great many of my fellow soldiers desponding. They think the war will never end. & that we are elected to remain in the service "our three years". I tell them to cheer up & hear the canons roar at Fredericksburg. & now listen to the word as it is spoken by Burnsidess 186 guns, "On to Richmond" & other impertantant victories we are achieving, every where, some will

look cheered others, look at the idea as vain, & appear to think it very foolish in me to talk about being at home by the 3rd of July, so as to go up to Des Moines to take dinner the 4th. I do not know how these speculations will come out, but you know there is always a bright side to every thing, & it is Just as well & more healthy to live in bright sunshine than to grope our way in darkness. But I am running away on subjects foreign from home affairs. You must not think from this that my mind is entirely taken up the scenes around me no my Dearest even while my pen is occupied in taking down these items, my mind will run away to Iowa where my loved ones are looking for any "token" that indicates the return of peace when I can again return to the bosom of my dear family & friends. When I shall have no need to learn the barbarous arts of war any more & when we can again settle down & be disturbed by no more by the clangor of arms. & then I promise you that no such cruel separation shall ever take place until that "King of terrors shall speak whose voice must be heard. The boys are waiting for me to get up so as to set the table for dinner, for we have dinner even in the army & we have a board for a table.

Well dinner is over. We have what we call dinner every day about noon. I do not know what you might call it if analized, it usually consists of coffee, hard crackers, & bacon, sometimes we vary it so as to have bacon & coffee & crackers. & there again we try crackers & bacon & coffee. Sometimes we break up the crackers & put in a pan & pour some water on them & stew them awhile until they get soft & put in a

little grease this dish we call an extra, or "nicknacks" It is hardly as high living as you have up in Iowa but we seem keep in pretty good health on it. we sometimes get a spoon ful of melasses. some of the boys inquire of the Comisary "how many melasses do you allow me" You have folks call it "Mess" & "how many" haven't you? We have also a little sugar.- Well I must quit talking about what we have to eat for fear you might think I was complaining of our fare. We get along first rate, & when ever you have an oppertunity to, you may eat a dish of oysters, or any thing good for me. it does me good to hear of you or any one else having a good time There is a brass band of 12 trumpets & 2 drums that play on dress parade & at guardmounting. it makes fine music & then our own Martial band, & the Regimental buglers who sound out their shrill notes for bed time & other calls It is all verry fine to have such music. but how gladly would we exchange such music for the calm sweet music of our wives & the prattle of our children, & the music of lowing herds & the woodmans axe, in a word all the peaceful pursuits of peace - But for things at home you speak of going into buisness as a miliner, & of first going into the shop of Mrs Otis You ought to know best but I do not like the idea of my wife going into a [set?] up as a hired girl. I did verry well as Miss Hamilton - but I don't like for Mrs Garrett have to do it. this may be one of my whims. do what you think is best. I think that we will be paid of about the 1st of Jan. & I don't know whether the papers have been made out in such a way as that you can draw any money at the state Bank of Iowa or not. Gregg made so many mistakes. if so you will draw \$9.00 per month of my wages. if not I will send you as much as I can, & as far as it will go I wish you to make yourself comfortable We have plenty, & you know that it is & should be my highest earthly wish to make you comfortable & happy you will use it as you need it regardless of my debt this is my wish, but I must close for the present I have much I wished to say, but two such sheets as these are about as much as one envelope can well carry. Give my love to all, good bye my own dear Mary, light of my life. L A Garrett

Tuesday morning 16th The Quinine Brigade has come in. They are all enthusiastic in their praise of the Col They had quite a hard time of it & some of them had to wade creeks waist deep. others rode deep creeks on swimming horses

16 This morning is clear & beautiful. The ground frozen, a little wind from the north how is it in Iowa

Camp Vanburen, Carter Co, MO Dec 26th 1862

My Dearest Mary: You will see from the heading of this letter that we have made another move. It was a pretty hard march. It is about 60 m's from Patterson here, the rout we came. I stood it tolerably well. I contracted a slight cold on the way. Otherways I am verry well. Many of the men gave out & lay down by the roadside, some of them came up at dark, others not until later & some have not came yet. I am too fast with my story. I will state that we started on the march from Camp Patterson on Saturday last. We marched Sat, Sun, Mon, Tuesday, & Wednesday we had to cross creeks & ravines, & wade through mud.

My Dearest wife. I know that if you could have seen me toiling under my great pack & could have seen the perspiration dripping from my face at times, like rain, that you would have felt sory that I had ever left my cheerful & happy home. But I know that you sympathise keenly enough with me. I do not regard a march were it not for the knapsack. The loads the solders have to carry kill more men than bullets do. There are so many talking to me & so much noise that I can hardly write & then I have to write on my knee, not even a board, to write on. I have only a piece of newspaper. I should have written yesterday, as the mail went out this morning & it will not go now before tomorrow, I received yours of Dec 10th with your picture. I could not immagine who it was intended for, until I read your letter, you have certainly changed much in appearance, some how it don't look like my Mary. I thank you for it, it was kind in you, but why have you grown so fleshy? why? O I want to see you so much. When I wish to see you as you were when I left you I look at the locket after supper the mail has came in but no letter for me. I am writing by fire light, we have no candles. & the mail will leave early in the morning, so that I shall have to curtail this. I would wait & write tomorrow but I know that you will be anxious to hear from me. My own dearest you can Judge from your own feelings how anxious I was to hear from you although I received one only last Saturday. I am sitting in the front of Birds Corwin's & Ben Wests tent writing in the light of pine knots. I believe it is the first time that I have ever been so hard run for light.. & there is a crowd around the fire talking every thing, so you must not expect a very interesting letter this time. So you can read it & know that my thoughts are absorbed in my waking hours in thinking

of my own dear wife & friends. Yes, my dearest, you may know that, in my waking hours, no matter how much confusion, & more particularly in the silent watches of the night when out on guard & alone or when lying awake in my little tent, how sweet it is to reflect on past happy times with my precious wife, & friends. I have no news to write you more than that we are here in a wild, mountainous country with about 3,000 or 4,000 troops, 23 Iowa, 1 Nebraska and 18th Ind., 33 Inf Ill. with 3 or 4 Batteries all ready for the enemy. The pontoon bridges has been put across Current River to day. We are putting up Telegraph wires as we go. We are much discouraged by the news from Burnside's Army. We feel confidence in our strength in the West, but the eastern army appears to be unable to cope with the enemy in the east. When you write to me, give me your own opinion about the way the war is conducted & what Mr. Nash & Father & Stewart & Austin & Cyr & the opinion of others. I would be a pleasure to me to know what well informed persons in Iowa think. I think it is the most pusillanimous war, the greatest humbug of a war & the most rascality, considering the resources & power that we might exert, that probably was ever carried on by any nation. Now my dear little wife, I would not have you think that as we call it here have my back-bone broken or feel like giving it up. No never.

it is no use to talk. You will see that I am out of humor. The whole army is in the same humor. There are not 100 men in this Regiment that would enlist today if they were out of it. Now, my Mary, I wish you to keep what I say to you on this subject strictly to yourself. I do not wish others to know what I think or say on this subject. I mean it all for you. Please keep it to your self, for if I had not such implicit confidence in you I should not write this, as I feel Rumors are coming in tonight that we are to be attacked in the morning. That there are 15,000 Rebels on the south side of Current R., and say that if we did not link up our Bridges they would would.. Now there is something singular about a soldier life. Most of the boys (when I say "boys" I mean soldiers) are discussing the matter as coolly as if they were going out on a wolf hunt.. Corwin is sitting up beside me a great big man. I think he will make a good soldier, away above many who Jeered at him at the Picknick at Uncle Johns' & other places. Bird is not very well but is better. he don't want me to say anything about it. I am satisfied that he had better be at home, but keep this as strictly as any thing else. he would think very hard of me - Hedge has came in from Pilot Knob this evening with a large train of wagons 8 ms. back, with provisions. I am sorry to send such a letter

The post master is around for letter & I must close. good bye my own Dear Wife. Lyle A. Garrett
PS. Direct your letters as before.

I believe this should be No 12. I am not certain

Lyle Dec 29

Camp Vanburen Carter Co Mo Dec 29th 1862

My Dearest Mary: I received your precious letter of 14th & 17th inst I was delighted to learn that you are still enjoying such excellent health. And you appear to be in tolerably good spirits. I am in the best of health. How thankful I am that I can always say to you that I am well, & that I always receive such good news from home. We are to move across Current River to morrow & I will necessarily have to write you a shorter letter this time than I wish. I got up yesterday morning away before day & cooked my breakfast & rations for 24 hours 3 meals. & started out on Picket about 2 1/2 ms. away up in the Pine mountains. it looked quite stormy in the morning but by noon it cleared away beautifully. There were about 70 of us. we all had our rations, in our Haversacks, some had Camp Kettles, others coffee pots to make coffee in & some had only tin cups. Coffee, crackers & meat, & sugar. We would have had a nice time of it, if it had not been so cold. I stood on one post from 4 PM until 12 M. without fire. & then again from 4 A.M. until after daylight. My Dear little wife how I did suffer with cold. we were not allowed fire as it would reveal

hiding places to the enemy

I have Just been on Dress Parade. & have a few minits to write. O' my Mary how happy I was to get this last letter from you, it is like all the rest so full of the true wife & of love. I have read it over 3 or 4 times. I always read your letters often. I love to read them when I am away out on guard or some where away from the noise & confusion of camp yesterday I read this last & at night when I was sitting by a large Pine tree, the moon was shining throug the tops of other pines from a clear sky. & the stars twinkning, through the boughs. I was in hopes that you might too be out looking at the moon at the same time. & that your eyes might follow in the same round among the stars you speak of keeping late hours. & I see from the hour you are writing that you keep verry late ones. Now my little girl I do not wish to chide you, I cannot "scold" you, but as you value your recovered health, & my wishes, do not sit up so late You know my Dear that it is contrary to all, maxims on the theory of Hygene Go to bed at 9 o clock my wife, I do It may be inconvenient, but it is expedient be contented & as happy as you can

You speak of being discouraged, with your prospects, "do not be discouraged" but persevere. And I am afraid that milinery will not agree with you health are you not? But I intend to assist you in your plans, all that I can, I know that it is quite an undertaking in you. & shows a spirit of enterprise rarely met with in a woman situated as you are, left alone, your husband in the Army, & involved in debt My girl it will take energy I assure you. But I know you have it, But I must proceed to business. I have written to Austin to sell All our property (real estate) He will council you on the subject, as to terms, & price length of time on payment &c together with Stewart & Father. I have directed him to sell the farm one third or at least 1/4 down the balance in yearly payments with interest (I will here say ten per cent). I cannot say as to the price, among you agree on that. I think it will bring \$16.00. per acre, however if it will not bring that sell for less, but get more if you can. there are many advantages about the old place. Take mortgage on the land, or which would be better perhaps let him give bond for deeds when the last payment made, I don't know Just how I could give Austin

a power of Attorney here in Dixy, but that matter can be arranged some way, Tell him to arrange it so that the person he sells to cannot cut but little timber until the second payment is made. I have been out on Picket in company with Tom Saylor & we talked the matter over some. He told me that if it is the same old man Coons that has lived there the longest, or the one that Austin used to know in early times that he is a hard case. & will be hard to manage. The other one, his brother, the one that moved out from Indiana last, is a better man. Tell him to look out for sharps. But to go ahead & not to fear but what I will be satisfied, for his Judgement is as good as mine on business of that kind. Saylor tells me of two 80 acre lots of Prairie land adjoining him, with two 20 acres lots of timber making in all 200 acres. that he thinks can be had for 7 or 8 dollars per acre. It belongs to Williams the Williams that owns the water mill at Des Moines Tom wants me to try & get it. We thought that it might be that we could get a deed from Williams & let him take a mortgage on our old place, I would be very glad to do this if it can be done. for I want to have a farm & now is the time to invest, the difficulty in this arrangement will be this, that I could not pay the boys as I could wish. & probably, Williams would want more down than we could spare him. You will want considerable to start on if you should go into business. From what Saylor says about that land I should like to own it, if I should get back. The lot in town had better be sold any how. it is too much expense, sell it. If I could only see you & talk instead of writing we could arrange things so much better, but I have been thinking that if this arrangement could be made with Williams & you could rent a room & go on a small scale it might be better. But I know that if you go into it you will wish to do it on a respectable scale & I would prefer it so. All the advantage there would be in investing in land now would be that Real estate near Des Moines will soon bear a high price. I will go out & see whether there will be an opportunity to send this out in the morning or not if not I will write some more, if there is a chance I will send it as it is

I have just been out to see the Post Master, the mail is made up & gone., will not go out again until the 2 or 3, of Jan 1863. O, while I think of it. New Years gift my girl.

I will write some more before this will have an opportunity of going out. & in the mean time I will study the matter over & if I have omitted any thing I will try & remedy it. I think I have written plainly & so that you can understand me.. You have no doubt heard before this time that Charly Hepeburn is lying verry low, as Capt Houstin has telegraphed to his friends his situation. I know it is a gloomy New year to his friends, I feel gloomy over his almost certain death. In his death I loose a good friend. Well my dear I must close for to night as I have not slept but little since night before last. I feel verry dull, good night my own dear Mary

Jan 2 1863..! How time flies. How did you spend New Years day? We struck our tents & moved across Currant River & pitched them about one mile west of that most beautiful stream. I have seen many Rivers, but I believe, that Currant is the most beautiful one I ever saw. We crossed on Pontoon bridges. they are constructed in the same way

Give my love to all the friends , Mr. Reinacher & all.

that floating bridges are, with this difference, in place of the boats, we have four small canoe shaped - thing made of Gum elastic & blown full of air, 4 side by side thus ||||16||||16||||16||||16|||| 16 feet of a space between each section, 6 mules teams can cross with safety, Charly Hepburn died yesterday. I called on him after during his sickness. Shortly before he died. I went in to see him, he seemed quite easy I asked him how he felt now he answered "O first rate" his answer was very cheerful. I asked him if he knew me he looked up in my face & said "I hardly know that I do" I then said "don't you remember Garrett" his answer was "O yes, yes" he appeared for a moment to be conscious, he looked me straight in the face awhile & then appeared to lull in slumber. I did wish to speak with him with regard to how his mind was in view of death, but I knew it would only bring curses from the surgeons. I said mentally good bye friend Charly & left his tent. I have been looking over what I have written. & do not think of any thing more in reference to buissness matters, more than this, that if you should lease a lot & undertake to build on it, you can get the sills & any other timber you want out on the old place, but keep a correct account of any timbers or lumber or furnished. You will find many who will not hesitate to take advantage of a soldiers wife as well as the soldier himself in his absence. Tell me Just how you are getting along, you might send me a slip in each letter containing some things you would not wish to write in a letter & I could burn it, tell me all your trials, &c please write once a week. I must bid you good bye my precious wife. L. A. Garrett

I have received only two papers (Register) I dont think I receive them from the office

Friday evening. I have but little to write, but it seems as if I wanted to say some thing more, for I love to hold communion with you, even if it is only by writing. & there may be a few items I may think of, one thing I have no stamps. & have to borrow. I have no money, no paper or envelopes You will think me a verry poor man, well I have credit but don't like the idea of going in debt! I get nothing but my clothes & board. Uncle Sam is not a verry prompt paymaster. Well the amount of all this talk is that I want you to send me a few stamps ocasionaly, about two each letter you write if you can. & it is too bad to ask you to do this but I don't know any other way to get them, they are verry scarce & you know I must pay up what I have borrowed, & I want to write to you quite often, but here I have written a dozen lines when one would have answered the same purpose with you. Please send them. They have brought the corpse of Charly Hepburn over on this side, it is in a coffin in the hospital, or his own tent. I do not know whether, it will buried here or not. I am much pleased with our new location here. & tomorrow I think we will move onto higher ground. We will stay here likely a good while. I think it is a healthy place

I has been storming for two-day, not much rain

Now my Dear write to me about once a week if you can if it is too much for you or you have no time, you need not write so much, but every line you can write to me is precious tell me all about your prospects, & whether you enjoy yourself in town as well as you could out on a farm. or not. I feel anxious to get on a farm once more The news to here is that. New Madrid has been evacuated by our forces, the Magazine blown up, &c. I don't know whether there were any prisoners taken or not, 6 companies of the 32^d were there. it may be that T.C. McColl has been taken, the papers say also that we have taken Vicksburg. & that the Mississippi is open clear though, if it be so the rebellion is pierced though & must die. O I hope so, how happy I should be to know that by early spring the war would be over & I could go home & take you in my arms, again & let you nestle your head on my breast as you used to do, may our Father speed the happy day, again good bye my precious Mary

"I am your affectionate husband until death shall separate us " Lyle

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No 13

Camp Chase Near Vanburen Carter Co Mo Jan 7 /63

My Dearest Mary: I received your precious letter of Dec 28th to day, (14) & this evening I recd No 13 so you see that I have had reading matter enough for one day. I am very well. My health is good almost all the time. This evening I have a slight headache this evening owing I presume to the anxieties of the day. We held an election to day for 2nd Lieutenant & I was defeated, yes my dear wife after all that has been said, I have to bear defeat. I might say we for I know that you will feel as keenly the defeat as I will. for I can almost see the sympathising tear fill your womanly eye. I do not know that I can say any thing to allay the pang of disappointment. I will briefly state the facts. knowing that you would prefer these to any thing thing else. There has been considerable talk about the matter for two months, quite a number of my friends. kept at me to run for it when the time came, many promised to vote for me. but when the time came they failed me, Sunshine friend. The old story that I had

tried to get into Co E. & Wagon Master &c. injured me a good deal, but the main difficulty was with Sargents & corporals, so many of them, & if I had have been elected no one of them would have been promoted, & you know that each one of them had his friends. I am satisfied that almost all the Co. thought me better qualified for the office than Downs & if I had been in his place & he in mine an election would not have been thought of. But my Dear wife you must bear this with womanly dignity. I will as a soldier. don't be discouraged. I intend to perform my duty, as heretofore & who knows what may turn up in our favor. I say "our" for that, that is of interest to me is to you & I know that you will sympathise with me in adversity as well as in prosperity, I know it, & O how pleasant is the thought to me that while you will be reading over these lines your heart will be beating true to the heart that is dictating them. & that the prayer "God protect my husband" will ascend from the soul of my true hearted & Christian wife

My Dearest I have much to comfort me that the world knows not of, I have a hope that that in that upper & better Kingdom that I may wear a Crown that will outshine the gaudy trappings of military etiquette. The sun may shine behind the clouds. so God may amid apparent frowns be hiding a smiling face. Since writing the above I have been out to roll call. We have Just received an order to march in the morning at 8 oclock with 5 days rations of sugar & coffee in our haversacks, our crackers are to be hauled & we are to forage for our meat. We have to pack our knapsacks, guns & equipage &c. we have the promise that we may pick up teams to haul our things, when we get through I will tell you how we got along. We will have to leave some who are not able to carry their burdens. I feel able to carry mine. I must say here that the drums have beat for bed time & am writing verry fast, so that it may be difficult for you to read what I am writing, I am out of paper & the Sutler has none. I have neither paper, envelopes or a stamp, could you send me 2 or 3 stamps in each

letter for a while as I am owing some
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I received the greenback (\$5.00) to day. I thank you a thousand times for it my Own Dear Wife. I will use it only as I stand in imperative need of some thing. that the government does not furnish. I sometimes fear that while I am telling you Just what I think & how I am getting along that I overdo it sometimes. It is owing to the fact that as you know I can confide all to you. most men I think write some kind of news to their wives, & keep back most of their hardships & trials. I can't do so, I always feel like it was cheating you or deceiving you & I cannot do that. Sometimes I almost regret what I have written for fear you will think it is not manly, but I know from the happy days we have spent together & from your dear sweet letters to me that you love me & will excuse me for almost anything so that I am true to you & candid in all things. & now I expect you would like to know Just how I feel about the war. & how the soldiers generally feel. I mean the intelligent, sober & substantial portion of our little army here. We think, we are helping a set of unprincipled leeches who are sucking the verry lifeblood of our government & will run the government to ruin unless this thing is stoped. We are not paid off as agreed upon. We are swindled in every way. & our General (Davidson) in an inhuman man for instance, night before last there were about 200 men as pickets. forming a chain of about 11 miles around the camp. We started out at 2 P.M. & were out until the next day at 4 P.M. it was a cold windy night, freezing cold. We had no fires, no sleep, & had to patroll 2 hours, over roughest mountains, then lay down & stand 4. the same yesterday & last night, O we almost froze, my dear it is inhuman

well it is now growing late & I must close. I am sorry that I have not time to write more, but you will excuse me I know, we are to march about 45 miles to where we are going, to Doniphan, Co seat south of this. I do not anticipate a verry hard march, we are bound to to take it slow. Well good night my dear little wife. I cannot now answer you question. I wish I had time, I am afraid that Marion & Billy will not be able to pack their knapsacks & keep with us. Yesterday Billy hurt his back carrying a log. & this evening Marion has a head ache. I will tell you in the morning how they they are. good night, may God bless you

Good morning my precious wife. O how I wish I could see you & say it. I am getting more anxious all the time. I am afraid I will get homesick. It seems as if we were gaining so slowly on the rebels. & yet they are defeated verry after according to the papers. It seems now that if we can get posession of them at Vicksburg that the rebellion will be at least cut in too. & after they are [illegible] there will be much trouble with Gurillas! but we will not despond altogether for God rules. & if we are right He will bring us out. if we are wrong we deserve to be punished

I believe that I have no change to make in reference to the buisness matter contained in my other letter, with reference to your prospects for going into business, you will understand better than I can, I think that 40 dollars per month is pretty heavy rent, you will have to engage in a lucrative business for it to pay, & as for my furnishing you any thing you know it is uncertain, as I have not been paid anything since we left Burnside, & it is uncertain when we will get anything; it is now the 8th of Jan, we have understood that they dare not defer payment later than the 1st but we begin to think they can do anything. We are in a tight place. Well I must quit writing & eat breakfast. We have fried mush, sassafras tea, boiled beef & crackers, breakfast over, & I hasten to close they are Just about electing our orderly sargent. I do not intend to try for it or any thing else. I have not the respect for office or officer, that I had before. I knew them. Afternoon, we were called out this morning by Gen Davidson on review, he kept us out until 1 oclock parading around with our knapsacks on. O what a bore it was to us, too much show & parade. We have Just got a dispatch stating that Vicksburg is taken by our forces & that they took 15,000 prisiners. O if it is only true it will certainly shorten this wicked rebellion. I hope it may be true, then if we can take Fredericksburg & Richmond, it must soon wind up.

I was surprised to hear of the wedding, (Mr Curran & [Harriet?]).

I must close. Give my love to all the friends, tell Cyrus I am anxious to receive a letter or two from him. has he received my letters, I have written 2 - 3 to him, I am your Lyle

No 19

Near Camp Chase Vanburen Jan 11th 1863

My Dear Mary. We are on a march somewhere I do not know where, we suppose to Springfield some report to Pocahontas Arkansas. We have been marching around for 2 weeks. one day across the river & camp, & then the next day move a piece then we go to work & build a little house about 4 feet high & stretch the tent over it & split puncheons & floor it & build a fire place. Our little shanties are 6 1/2 feet square usually 5 of us to the tent. we built one at Patterson one on the other side of Currant River, & one on this side & cut the timbers for another. they make a verry comfortable little house, but verry much crowded. I don't think we will build any more of them unless we are certain of staying, longer in a place. This is sunday. I got up early this morning & learned that we would not leave this camp before 2 or 3 oclock & may be not until to morrow, so I went to a creek & bathed & washed my clothes, now my little wife you will think that I did wrong perhaps not to have washed some other day, but let me tell you how I have spent the last week or two. since we came out here the Regiment has been nearly all on duty all the time, often every other day & night on picket. I have stood picket one day & night out about 30 hours with out sleep, the next day on prison guard, & the next day on picket, last Saturday & Sabbath I was guarding prisiners, & what hurt me most, the poor butternuts had to work all day sunday chopping & working on the [illegible]. O what a miserable day it was to me. I had to stand around among them with my gun & bayonet fixed. O how earnestly I prayed God to deliver me from such a position & now to day I have to go out on picket at 1 oclock & it must be nearly that time now I think I will keep my paper along & write some while out if I am in a place where I dare do it, we are not allowed to read newspapers, but may be I can write some while not directly on duty, I am anxious to write to Bea Nash, but it seems that I can't get time. & I don't know that he would relish my disgust for the way this war is carried on, for I certainly consider it the greatest humbug of a war that we read of, but if I should write to him I will give him the benefit of my private opinion. I know that you are all deceived with regards to the manner in which this war is going on

I received a letter to day from Cary Garrett he is at Springfield he was New Years day

Friday morning. We were ordered to march, we started & crossed the River to the East we went a few miles on the Pilot Knob road, some thought we were going there, then we turned to the right, then we were going to Pocahontas. We went on about 12 ms S.E. & camped for the night. (well I had to quit & go out on picket & I am now sitting by a big pine tree. I will not have to go on guard for 4 hours. I am on the 3 relief so I will have a chance to write some, I was telling you you about one of our marches, the next morning we were ordered back. We all got up early & cooked our breakfasts & started before daylight, without understanding the countermanded order to go on S.E. so we filed to the right, & marched back over the same road that we went down on the day before, we came back on rather a forced march, & came into our old camp about 1 oclock P.M. rumors were current that the rebels were about to take Springfield, & that we were ordered there, we halted an hour or two & started west, there were three Regiments of us & 8 pieces of artillery on the S.E. march, so we all 3 started west after we had started there were two Regiments of Cavalry filed or rather galloped past us. We thought from appearances that we would likely be put on a forced march to Springfield. I do not know the distance exactly the Butternuts say it is over 200 ms. & a rough country, & I see from maps that the Ozark Mts are on this side of it so it must be a rough country, for I see from the maps that there is no portion of Mo that we have marched over yet is marked as a mountainous country except about Pilot Knob. & we have generally been marching over a barren waste of rough hills & not the whole country has the appearance of once having been a seething furnace, both hill & valley is a mass of burnt quarts & cinder, very barren except the timber, which is generally good. there are thousands of acres of pine timber, that would be valuable if it was any where else than S.E. Mo. The country is very sparsely settled, indeed it is "my opinion. & the opinion of others of more experiences that one Reg & a Battery which is composed of about 30 or 40 men & six cannon could not march through this country & subsist. They might get feed for the horses & mules, but could not get it for the men. Just think of the millions \$ of money & the lives that are sacrificed to hold such a desert waste & what profit is it?

write to me what all you sent I do not expect now that I will ever see them, but I thank you a 1000 times

Barton preached to us this afternoon. Mr. Goodman followed in remarks & prayer. Corwin Billy & Mayer are all well.

why if we were to leave the state & abandon the whole of S.E. Mo, to day from Pilot Knob & Rolla & all south of the Ozark Mts the Rebels could not stay here only to rove about, & eat out the substance of the country what little there is & who would that hurt but Rebels for there are none others here & what damage it be to our cause? I know that such statements will not be gratifying to you for I know that when you gave up your husband to the service of our country you thought you were giving a man whose arm was strong. & whole heart was in the cause & one who would strike for his country. My Dear girl your sacrifices are in vain if this war is to be carried on as I have seen it so far. But I think each time that I write any thing about the war or give you my views that I will not do so again, but it has got to be such an intolerable bore to me & our Regiments are nearly all the same way that I cannot help expressing my contempt for the way things are carried on. I have heard a number of the best men in the Reg say within the last few weeks (well I must stop right here & give you an incident. I am sitting on the side of a mt & some boys & dogs started a rabbit on the hill it came Jumping down at full speed & sprang against my my side, it made me fairly grunt it fell & Jumped around, but before I could catch it it ran away) that if they had have had any idea of the way we would have been treated & to no good effect, but the reverse, & only to keep up a set of government swindlers that they never would have enlisted, neither would I. Yes my Dearest well as I love my country & it old flag, I cannot but regret that fatal day on which I enlisted, will you my own dearest think less of me for this frank acknowledgement, will you? be frank with me. I do not know where or when we go from here, but there is one thing that you may be sure of, that no matter what may come I will never do any thing that ought to make my wife's cheek blush with shame we are under a noble Commander (our Col) my honor is bound up with that of the 23rd its destiny shall be mine, if we have an opportunity I know that we can sustain the reputation of Iowa soldiers but it is now nearly time I was going on guard & I must scratch away fast or send you blank paper. Marion rec 3 letters to day & Billy one all I believe from home. I had not time to learn any thing they contained only from Billy, that Capt Roach was lying verry low at home. Marion had to go out on a foraging expedition he took his with before

empson Bird went to Pilot Knob I expect he will stay at Mr. Hedges, if he does he will do well

he read then. I wrote you a few days ago giving you an account of me defeat in the election for 2nd Lieut. It is true I was defeated, but there is one thing I have heard men say that it is not likely that a private in our Co or any other could one half as many votes against an orderly sergeant as I did. I think that I will come out right yet. & out live my enemies or their slander, I Just let them pass & treat all such things with the cold contempt they deserve [deleted:] Col Kinsman is looking out for me, & will do me Justice) I think he is a true & good man, now write something on top of this when you read it so no one else can. I have done my duty so well that I have never been censured by an officer unless it might be by Gregg. (don't call him Capt Gregg he is not worthy of such an appendage. The old hypocritical wretch.) I am always ready for duty & do it cheerfully. & enjoy I know the confidence & respect of the best men in the regiment. I make these statements to you knowing that you will believe me & that you may know that although I have been defeated that it is not for misconduct on my part but you know that where there are 75 or more men collected together there are a great many of them whose evil passions can be worked uppon to the detriment of a good man. Now I would like to answer a great many questions you ask me but I forget now what they are & I will look over them some day when I have time & note them down & try & answer them do I generally wrie plainly, & distinctly so that you can without dificulty understand my compositon &c? Now my Dear I dislike to send so small a letter & one so poorly written, but I have had to write on my knee & it is dificult to write so, & know you will excuse, write often your letters are dear to me. I keep them folded up neatly & carry them on every march & read them over & over good bye my Mary. Lyle

I will write again the first opportunity. I expect we march toward Springfield tomorrow.

No 15 Alton Oregon Co Mo. Jan 20 '63

My Deares Mary: I am again writing in my tent to my loved one; I do not know which I enjoy best to write to you or read one of those dear letters, so full of womanly love & devotion. I feel happy in either case, I am very well although I have Just passed through the hardest march since I left you. I rained Tuesday night 13th we started from Camp Chase on Wednesday morning, it rained all day, & snowed in the after part of the night, we slept without tents in the snow, the next day we lay in camp. Our march from that place was a cold one & on frozen ground, we all stood the trip well in fact it seems that we are becoming so inured to hardship, that we can spread a blanket on the frozen ground & 3-4 over us & sleep well. I received yours of Jan first, on Sunday evening. the same eve we came here. I think I enjoy reading your letters better than to write one for I read them over often. I received the \$5.00 But now my dear I expect you will think hard of me when you learn the way I used it, but I will explain. W. B. Butler has been sick a long time & was about getting his discharge, & had but little money to bear his expenses. Gregg owed him some. He took Gregg's sword & sold it to a lieutenant on time. & there were some others owing him he gave me the notes &c to collect. & I let him have the \$5.00. I regreted to do so, but, I assure you that a sick man away from home & especially a soldier neds money. I only regrett it only on your account for I know that you needed it yourself. But I belie I never asked you to forgive me any thing but what you did it.. My dear girl how anxious I am to see you once more. O that this foolish & wicked rebellion was over. I am tiered of it already, & the prospect for its termination is no better than it was a year ago. I do not like the way this thing is carried on now we have been in an "enemies land" as they call it for months & not allowed to destroy anything, every pig we kill or ox or anything else we take to eat, we take

under potest of our general, he threatens terebly but there are many hogs & beeves & chickens taken notwithstanding, yesterday one of our mess went out with a foraging party & brought in six chickens, we have had them fried, & stewed, sometimes we have a feast & at others a famine, for the last day or two we have had nothing but meat & boiled corn & potatoes, parched corn &c. To day we have crackers, I did not know that I could do so well on meat, some of them made bye morning others Just boiled it in clear water, but we are nearly all enjoying the best of health & must not complain. Now Mary I must say that I have a poor pen & ink & it may be some trouble for you to read what I am writing, I am writing close for the sake of economy as I have no stamps or envelopes & they can hardly be had at all. I may send a letter I am writing to Stewart & Austin with this & you may hand it to them. There are a great many things I would like to write about that I cannot for want of time. O it seems to me that if one of them was in my situation & I in theirs that I would write often to him, but I suppose that they are hurried with their work so that it is not convenient, but you do not neglect me, & this is a source of pleasure to me more than any other. I always look with a degree of certainty for a letter from you in that well known hand writing. & then I have a feast, to day I went away out by myself & read your last over O my precious how the warm tears rolled down my cheeks while reading the pure sentiments of a true wife, not tears of sorrow but those of I trust manly appreciation for my loved wife. Sometimes when I see how this war is going on I almost regret having enlisted in my countrys cause, there is so much rascality & treachery going on that I sometimes feel almost disgusted

Now I must say a few more words about my chances to write, now at this time I do not know what minit I may be called on to go out on duty of some kind, so that I hardly know what to write about. Now if I could sit down as Stewart or Austin could by a good fire & know that I should not be compelled to go at any minit but could sit & write my thoughts without being anoyed in any way I should like to write every day or two but as it is you will all excuse me if I say but little for it is the poorest place to write I ever saw.

I wrote to Austin some time ago with regard to my buisness, if he got that it will explain about my plans. I requested him to see William, & if he could make arrangements to get a piece of land & I should like it much. I do not care, particularly, if he can sell let the land go for the present, I would like to have a good sized lot in Des Moines

such as the south half of Reichenekers or a few acres back further if it could be bought for a reasonable price, if you should succeed in buisness I would like to live near enough town so that you could carry on buisness, maybe I could get into some thing that would pay well enough to that we could get along without going on a farm. you know if I had a few acres so that I could work among fruit trees & vines I think I could enjoy myself with my family verry much. I may not have an oppertunity of writing soon, as I think our destination is Little Rock by way of Batesville & it will take us a good while yet. The defeat at Fredericksburg & Vicksburg has discouraged us verry much, it seems of but little use in running Rebels all over Mo & Arkansas if the heavy divisions of the great Union army in the East cannot succeed but we will hope for better things. We have passed out of the mountains & pines & it seems as if we were getting into a better country. Now my Dearest I must say good bye remember me still in your prayers, tell Cy to write to me as soon as he gets well. I am uneasy on his account. Write me how he is getting along. I am your husband in love until

death shall separate us Lyle

Lyle Jan 24th

No 16. Alton or (Aldon) Oregon Co Mo Jan 24 1863

My Dearest Mary: Last night I received your precious letters of the 4th & 6th inst. They found me enjoying my usual good health, how cheering are such epistles from a devoted wife, while reading your letters I am always thrilled with delight at the thought that I who am trying to fill the place of a soldier have such a devoted & true hearted wife at home who can sympathise with me in all my hardships & disappointments. Yes my Dearest I read your letters with a conscious pride. You enjoy the right spirit, I have enjoyed myself very well for a week or two, I had a conversation with Col Kinsman on the way to this place, he told me that it was his opinion that we would form a Junction with Fitz Henry Warren who is in command of about five thousand troops in Arkansas & that we would likely form another Junction with Herron & Blunt & then march on Little Rock with force sufficient to take the place & further that we would pass from under the command of Gen Davidson who we detest, for his tyranny

I believe I have received all your letters. have you received all mine? give my love to all especially to Father & Mother. Tell them I will never for get them

Where is Cy going to school & how is doing. Why does he not write to me

and pompous ways. Why I have no idea that Gen Burnside or Fremont or even old Abe could put on half such airs. & then we have but little confidence in him. These are some of the reasons why I have been some what discouraged, it seemed Just like this, a farmer, employs a man who he supposes to be competent & faithful, to oversee a distant farm. He goes to his post & employs a number of hands to work & keeps an appearance of doing his duty, he has his men runing here & there doing but little if anything to advantage, but on the contrary eating up the substance of their employer. The agent all the time deceiving his employer by "strategic moves"! into the belief that he is a verry good man, so it has been with us, it has always seemed to me until lately that we were undergoing all these hardships & privations to no purpose only to fill the pockets of these government leeches. But I think now unless there is a disgraceful retrograde movement that the prospect of doing something to break up this most wicked of all wick rebellion is favorable, we certainly will march on Little Rock as fast as we can

I feel such confidence in the success of this expedition if the forces in the SW can be concentrated that I should almost feel willing to risk the destiny of this nation on the result. From all that I can learn of the Geography of the country & of the defences at L Rock that we can take it in two months from to day & by having Gunboats to cooperate with us much sooner. If we could only hear some good news from the Army of the Potomac & Vicksburg the latest we have heard from either place is that we were repulsed. I would say here that I have not received but two or three Nos of the Register you may as well have it stoped. it will not reach me. & it is useless to be at the expense you will see from the commencement of this that your letters were about 20 days on the way. & the course we are going they will be still longer on the way. I dislike this part of the program verry much for I enjoy your letters so much We have been drawing rations to day for eight days. It would be amusing to you to see us with our haversacks standing around some one we have chosen out of our mess to divide it, to day we got almost a tin cup full each.

Gen Benton's Division moved south today. We expect to follow to morrow. There is one thing I do not like. Co.s A & B are going back to Vanburen for what purpose I do not know. We all dislike to leave any portion of the Reg. The Division train has not all came up yet & it may be they are going back to escort A up. I have not heard from Hedge for a good while. He may get to stay at Patterson, he may have to follow us, then what will "Molly" do. I have not heard from Empson since we crossed Currant River but presume he is at Aladid Corwin is well, in fact the health of the Reg is good. Marion, & Billy are both well. I was on picket this week 30 hours. I am becoming so enured to hardship that I can wrap a blanket around me & lay down on any the rocks on the cold ground & lay my head on a flat stone & sleep 2 hours at a time well. In fact it seems as if I am proof against taking cold from any exposure, within the last two weeks, I have stood picket several times & we stand 2 hours on duty at an outpost & 4 hours at a relief post, where we tumble down anywhere & sleep. These facts will seem verry strange to you. I have just learned that Gen Davidson has ordered Col Kinsman to go back to Vanburen with two Cos. he refused to go, & he is now under guard for it. O how my blood boils, I would like to go & release him even if it had to be done at the point of the bayonet, for I would fight for him the same as if he were my brother, we all love & esteem verry much. I think he is at heart one of the best of living men, warm & big hearted

Tell Stewart & Austin how difficult it is for me to write to them & get them to write to me all the news of the Country. Tell them I wish them to do so it will help me to while away many lonely hours to read their letters. Tell May & Ida I think of them very often

I have Just been out & have seen a soldier standing at Col Kinsman's tent door guarding him as though he was a criminal, the whole Reg is indignant. They have no right to ask a Col to go with less than 8 Cos. Lieut Col with 6 Major with 4, when 2 Coms are ordered out they are under command of the sen. Capt; so that Col is right & can if he will have redress by military law, but he is magnanimous to a fault. We could in 20 minits have his own Reg & one Battery of 6 canon & the first Nebraska turned in his favor, but he is to big hearted for it, But I must close soon for the mail will be made up this evening & while I am writing I have but little faith in this ever reaching you. for I learn that Gen Davidson has had all the mail burned, since we came here, that is the mail going out. I do not know whether it is so or not, if it is it is cruel. I am glad to learn that you have a prospect of going into buisness. I hope you will do well at it.. I understood from a former letter that the Hays house would cost you \$40.00 rent pr month it seems to me that that is a verry heavy rent, but you know best. I have not drawed any money yet & have learned to do without it, you know I made arrangements for you to draw \$9.00 dollars per mo. of my wages, if I should get the other \$4.00 I will not know what to do with it, as I can not buy anything from the sutler only at an exhorbitant price. I think I will send you a part of it at least, knowing that you can use it to a better advantage than I can. Now I do hope that if

you start you may succeed. & if you should. I think I shall not go on a farm but get a few acres near Des Moines. So that you could carry on your buisness & I could keep a team or two of horses & work a small place to profit. You say you will not let me work so hard I will second the motion for I know that I have worked too hard for a year or two & I intend if it should be the will of our Heavenly Father to spare my life until I reach home to take it more easy & try & enjoy the social & religious privaleges that Des Moines affords. O my own dear sweet girl how happy we might be if I were at home & would be contented to settle down in this way I would wish an elevated piece of land, dry & nice such as it is about Reicheneker or Bro Nash & I have sat while away out on Picket alone & looked away under the North star when you were probably asleep or looking to the South & I have laid out many plans for the future, many perhaps that we may never realize, but my precious let us hope & pray & trust that God will soon bring about a peace to our country & that these hopes & other long cherished hopes may yet be realized. let us hope that there are many blessings yet in store for us. And now my Mary I must bid you good bye, I do it reluctantly, for I love to write to you. please send me 2 or 3 postage stamps every letter I owe the boys some & feel bound to pay them I cannot get them here. forget me not Lyle A Garrett

Saturday eve after supper, if you are thinking of to morrow & its privaleges & duties & I have no doubt that a though will well up in your bosom & from the depts of your warm heart for one far away, & O my own dear Mary how cheering the though is to me, that in all my disappointments, & toilsome marches you would gladly share them with if it wer posible, I think there are few men here who have so faithful a wife as I have in this respect, or any other for I do not see such long & well filled letters, & the boys often remark "did you get all that at once, why it is equal to the Tribune"? but don't think from this that any one but myself have the privalege of reading them, your little confidential notes are read & burned immediately, so that any thing you will confide to me shall only be known by me, send something in every letter confidential, tell me all about your health. And now my girl you will most likely go into buisness & I would caution you in some things, for although I am reckless myself in buisness matters, & often miss it by being too lenient, yet I know pretty nearly how it ought to be done, & I would say have every thing fairly understood & put down in writing. I know that this advice is as little needed in your case as in probably almost any other, but be cautious particularly with friends & above all look out for your health, for you verry well know that it is a verry unhealthy buisness, be cautious, Keep me posted in all matters pertaining to your health, & remember that you have more energy than muscle or constitutional vigor, & if you find your health will not permit of your perseverance, quit in time. Now it is likely that you will not hear from me for a good while & before you get this you will be uneasy you must not be too anxious it cannot be expected that while we are away off in a hostile country & among enemies that we can have mail facilities equal to those in times of peace, we will still be marching on further South & of course we will not hear from each other as often as we could wish. let us think there is a better day ahead

I intended to close this side up double but will not have time as it is now about roll call time & I the boys are all making down their beds, if I had a room or even a tent to myself I would like to write to you much longer, & I should like to have written to Austin & Stewart & Father & Mother, for I expect this is the last chance you will have to hear from me for a good while. You may read portions of my letter to them. And now my dear girl I again bid you good night. And whether it may ever be our happy lot to meet again or not we cannot tell, May God give you grace to help you to stand. I am your husband in love

L A Garrett

No 17

Camp near West Plains Mo Feb 1st 1863

My Dearest Mary

I have this day recd your Christmas present, all safe except the vest was mussed some, I thank you over & over again, for such testimonials of your affection & love for me. Tell Mrs. Reichineker the catsup came safe & is No 1. Tell her to accept my sincere thanks for so nice a present. I suppose all that you sent me came. I do not know as they had been opened. There was "the fine toothed comb" at the top, then the tooth brush, & the other comb pen holder & pencil, scissors, five bunches of paper 15 envelopes stamped 4 or 5 not stamped, pens, thread, buttons these things came in here day before yesterday. Marion was down & got his things & Hedge told him he would bring mine up. I kept waiting until to day when I went myself, & got them. I would again thank you for them & for the spirit that prompted you

My vest fits me first rate.. may heaven bless you for your kindness to me

I cannot say this time as I always have said when I wrote to you that I am in perfect health for I have not been well for 4 or 5 days. I have had something Jaundice & inaction of the liver. I was not able on the last march to carry my Knapsack, I am getting better. Marion & Billy are both well. The health of the Reg is pretty good. I have had no letters from you since No- Jan 6th I received it at Alton & Answered it about one week ago This is the first opportunity I have had to write to you since. I would like to give you a little sketch of our marches It seems to me we have been spending our time so foolishly. & I learn from men in other Regiments that it has been the same with them. You will remember that on the 25 day of Oct we marched for Pitmans Ferry & Pocahontas. when we came back to Camp Patterson it was to spend six weeks in inactivity. Then we started

for Vanburen. Then across Currant River & camp for two days, here we spent our New Years day, then we moved back on the bluff near Currant River & camped for a few days, then we marched down the River on the East side 12 miles & camped & on the next morning we started back & came through Vanburen & halted an hour & then came out S. 3 - 4 ms. & camped a few days, then started for Alton on that march we had the hardest time yet rain, snow, quite hard freezing. Sore feet, smoked eyes &c. I stood all that verry well until we came to Alton we were put on short rations & in fact for 2 or 3 days we had no bread, we boiled corn & some of the boys made verry good hominy, we did not get a good "scald" on it or from some cause the brand stuck to the corn & I think that eating such stuff is the cause of my not feeling so well as usual. You know my girl that I am a little particular about my food & I assure you it is pretty hard in the army, we do not get our Rations -

Our march from Alton was south 15 ms this was on last Tuesday, the next day I went with a foraging party, about 8 ms on our way back we were fired on by 2 or 3 sculking gurillas from a hill & timber. We were in the rear as Red guard under command of a Lieut. We Jerked up our guns to fire, he ordered us not to fire I was the only one that fired. I aimed at the brush they went behind, & I intend to fire on all such sneaks irrespective of orders, from this on, we came in all safe the same evening the whole Division came past our camp both Gen Bentons & Davidsons with all the artilery, Baggage wagons & all the next morning at daylight they commenced going back past our (23d Iowa) camp & bore North West to this place something over 20 ms. & now right here I wish to show you how inconsistent "great men" may sometimes be. At Vanburen we had out from 8 to 1200 men as Pickets. A Alton there were From our Division 586 & from Gen Bentons enough to make 1300 pickets, each 24 hours. The chain of pickets was generally from 10 - 15 ms in circumference. Then on last Tuesday to start the 23d right off south 15 ms. without any artilery, all alone & then the next day we went foraging & were within 30 or 40 Rods of the Arkansas line how inconsistant. I there was, a necessity for keeping out such a strong picket force at Vanburen & Alton, why risk the 23 away off by itself, well thank the fortunes of war we are now Brigaded with the 21 & 22 Iowa under Gen Fitz Henry Warren

This is Sunday a bright clear day. & O! what a Sunday; The whole of the Army of South East Mo is out on Parade. Cannon are roaring. & musketry & all the noise & confusion incident to the Army. The division teams are all in & they too have to be inspected, the train that Hedge came with had 280 six mule teams, then there are the Baggage & supply trains Regimental teams &c. You have but little idea what a large amount of mules & horses it takes to move even this small Army, for there are not more than ten or twelve thousand soldiers here now. I think from all that I can learn that we will march from here to Batesville in Arkansas, we may not go directly there but that our ultimate destination is Little Rock via Batesville I have no doubt. & I know that you will watch with deep interest, movements in that direction & when we start in that direction we certainly will go more rapidly than we have marched yet

And now my precious wife what anxious days & nights I will pass from this time on for I expect that communication will be cut off for a while at least. there will be a mail or two from Rolla & then it is thought that our next mail will come down the Mississippi & up White River or possibly Arkansas I know that you will feel a good deal of anxiety about me for it will be imposible for you to hear from me as regularly as you have done, but you must keep in good spirits & I will try to do likewise. We feel ourselves able to carry on the war in Arkansas successfully if we are let alone but how discouraging is the reports from all or nearly all parts of the north. that the traitors are saucy & impudent . & some states refusing to give us any more men or money to carry on the war. Why not rush the matter through & be done with it & let us go home to our families. O! the though of home & family! I feel as though I could sacrifice almost every thing but my country & my honor to be again with my family at home.

But I must not think too much about home I cannot without getting homesick I expect that I think too much about home & its inmates to be a good soldier. I cannot help it I read & reread your letters & I love to write to you. My thoughts are with you continually. I could enjoy the society that I should naturally mingle with so much better than this wicked place. I pray God that we will by some means bring this wicked war to a speedy close. I can see no honor in it. I am more & more satisfied that the war is prolonged by wicked & designing men for the benefit of contractors & men high in office & they may prolong it indefinitely. although it would seem that for shames sake they would carry it on more to fight & win that to make a show of it & to make money out of it. Tell me what you think of it & what others think of it We can get no papers & in fact we know nothing about what is going on away from camp I wish you would write to me

all about how you are getting along. You must not be discouraged even if I am. I expect it would be better for me to write that we are doing big things, that we are making the Southern Confederacy tremble & that we will take Little Rock in a few weeks &c., but some way I fancy writing the truth to you, & I will always write Just as I feel, & I do feel that the way that this was is now being carried on under my own vision will never conquer I ought not to despond for who knows but what this will be answered & find (the answer) find us a victorious army in Batesville or Little Rock. I expect that we will have fighting there as the Rebels are said to be fortifying in each of these places. I will try to do my duty, & do hope that with what force we will have by cooperating with Gunboats on the River to effectively whip them out of these places. I am sorry that I am going so far away from a line of communication, as I would now have a good opportunity of writing to you, these envelopes & stamps came in time. Indeed I think your presents show that you had an eye to the useful, I shall cherish them & your letters above all else here. Write me how Cy is getting & the rest of them with measels. And now my own Dear wife I must say good bye let us each pray Our Father to bless our country & restore peace Lyle

There is a cold north wind this evening 1500 pickets out

Camp near West Plains Howell Co Mo Feb 4th '63

My own Dear Mary: It is but a few days (Feb 1) since I wrot to you, but as I am not on duty yet & enjoy writing to you so much that I will write again. The latest I have from you is Jan 6th. I know that there must be 3 or 4 letters on the way from you & perhaps some from Father & Brothers & Cy. O! how anxiously I am awaiting their arrival. I stated in my letter of the 4th that I had received your Christmas present, all safe although "Molly" had the curiosity to open them, I suppose she read the precious note you sent with them. There is nothing contained in it that could be considered secret, yet I do not like to have others peering into our private affairs, do you? I have not felt so well for a week as I had formerly, but have not been to say verry sick, but I though best to take some blue mass & calomel, salts & oil. I am better but do not intend to report for duty until I feel quite well for it is hard on a man to stand Picket & all kind of duty. We are now having quite a snow storm today. I expect you

Give my love to Father & Mother & all the friends. I should be happy to hear from them oftener Send me papers. I guess there has only one missed coming Send all the Tribunes & registers, some of them will reach me Lyle

Your presents are considered the nicest that have been sent by any one, I am proud of them. The little portfolio is such a neat & snug little thing & so verry convenient.

are having a regular Iowa storm. When you write to me don't forget to write about the storms & weather generally. We have had severe weath for the last three weeks, snow & cold then rain & mud then cold & snow. This is not the mild & pleasant winters of California & the poorest & most miserable looking country I ever saw. The whole country is covered with a kind flint & cinder or melted flint. There are exceptions on the River & Creek bottoms where there is some verry land & the setlers raise good corn & wheat a poor quality of small potatoes & turnips. But as for chickens they cultivate a good quality of which we appropriate very freely. We have some splendid messes of chicken soup. The 21 & 22nd Iowa are here, & will be Brigaded with the 23rd under Col Stone, & Brigadier Gen Fitz Henry Warren. They are from Rolla here & from what they say of the country it is if posible a more barren country than we have seen, you have heard a great deal said about cheap lands in Missouri. From St Louis as far as I have seen & from St Louis to Rolla & in fact all of the south East half of the state is a poor barren, rocky, worthless country

except for the mineral that may be imbedded beneath its surface, & for the Pines that would be valuable in a Prairie Country, so when you hear any one speaking of cheap lands in missouri you may know that they talking of something they know nothing about. There are cheap lands, on Humbolt & in the goose creek Mts & on the great Deserts of "Africa & I suppose that the Northern & N. W. portion of Missouri is a pretty good country, but I have no desire to emigrate to any portion of Dixy where the African flourishes. I would remark here that "contrabands" are growing beautifully scarce in the Iowa Regiments. Now I have to be cautions with regard to speaking of the number of troop here as the Gen has given orders, for no one to speak of that matter. But we have we think force enough to march anywhere in Arkansas. Gen Benton has gone South with his Brigade & we expect soon to follow. The Paymaster was here a few days since & has gone on to overtake Benton, when he will return & I suppose he will pay us something, some say only two months, I do not know how much we will get, & I don't know what to

do with it when I get it. If the arrangement I made at Desmoines for you to draw \$9.00 per month it will not be much, but I would be glad if you had it for I cannot think of spending it with the sutler, for every thing they have to sell is so very high that it would seem like paying so much for so little. For instance you sent me 5 bunches of paper which would have cost me \$100 here, & for every thing in proportion, & to go to the Bakery, (for we have all kinds of sharps following the Regiment) I would have to pay 25 cts for a poor lank pie, one such pie as you bake would be worth at least four such, & everything else they have is about the same proportion, you will readily see that all the money a private would get would not last long, so I intend to content myself with buying paper & envelops & stamp, & write with your present of these indispensables. I will not have to buy for some time. Last night I slept with the Vandalia boys in the 22nd Wash McColl is in this Co he is quite a brave looking fellow & has a good deal of the McColl about him 21 & 22nd have the large Sibly tent with stoves. Ours are the small ^ wedge tent without stoves. It is generally thought that the 18th & 23rd have been verry much imposed on. Now it may be better I have some hope it may

Page 5

Feb 5th 1 Oclock P.M. O! My Dearest I have rec two more of your precious letters, yesterday eve. O' how happy I am to learn that you are so well & you appear to be in such good spirits too that I am almost ashamed of myself for betraying tokens of discontent, discontent does not express my meaning either. I would say rather anxiety to see the war progressing more rapidly. If I could see that in all departments there was vigor & an honest determination on the part of our leading Officers to push forward this war to a successful & an honorable conclusion I would not repine at hardships. You know that I am constitutionally constructed in mind & by habit that if things do not go my way that I do not enjoy myself as I might otherwise do, I believe the best soldiers for all purposes are those who are passive under all circumstances, men who are willing to be cogs in the great machinery of Government without asking why this or that move or caring, men who are at home wherever they have their hats on, & you know that I have a home a once happy home & I trust that I have a home the hearts & affections of kind friends, whom I hope someday to greet

But your letters how they cheer me! I have not been so well for a week & you may expect that I would naturally turn my thoughts homeward to my Dear family & kind friends. Your letters were Nos 18 & 19. They were full & plump & so full of kindness & true wifelike and womanly love. I also received the papers two Tribunes & two Registers together with Marions & the stamps also you may if convenient send 1 or 2 in each letter although I will not need any more for 2 months from this time, I was much amused at your graphic account of Henry Herrs encounter with the Ethiopian. Now with regard to contrabands I would try all kinds of white men first & if I could do no better I might employ a darky I should consider that I had a perfect right to although it might or would not suit my taste. You may think me hard on the darkey I think not I am willing to have a few of them in the north & let those whose tastes are congenial to their natures employ them until the proper time when I think they will mostly migrate southward, Let birds of a feather flock together is my doctrine & I think it is sound

Friday Feb 6th I am still getting better. You must not think that I have been verry sick, for I have not & had you been a nervous or desponding woman instead of the brave & cheerful wife that I know you to be, I should not have said anything about it, for I have been able to, all around, each day. It is nothing more than what is termed yellow Jaundice, a verry nauseous & disagreeable complaint. I am using wild cherry bark tea, I think Austin had it once, he can tell you about how I have felt. Well I have read Gerrit Smith's speech & think it the true doctrine & it is the slow progress of his doctrine that makes me almost despond & then there is so much corruption in all the departments of our Government. But the great drawback at present is the sympathy the Rebels have in the North & even in our own Army I was perfectly disgusted while at Camp Chase where we received the news that Indiana & Illinois had by a vote of their legislatures said that they would not furnish any more men or money to carry on the war & also that they had or would call home their troops already in the field. I noticed in our own Co many eyes began to brighten & sparkle & when they said they hoped Iowa would do the same thing

It was more than I could bear. It raised that passionate spirit that you know is always ready to ignite & burn in my bosom. Although they bore the name of soldiers I looked on them with contempt. I thought of what Iowa soldiers had done & suffered of the glorious achievements her soldiery had won My state pride swelled in my heart & I had to talk. I told them that sooner than have Iowa disgrace herself by such a step, or that the government should at this stage of the war make a compromise that would disgrace it in the eyes of the civilized world. I would willingly spend my best energies for years & go home a worn out & decriped old man & give to my family & friends a government free from disgrace. This was was about the time of the election, it might have had a bad tendency you know I have but little "policy" in such cases. I always must express my opinion no matter how unpopular - There is one thing that "bores" me verry much. The profanity & low vulgarity a person is compelled to hear. There is no avoiding it. The fellow that can swear & get off the most vulgar songs, is the one to get along here. You can Judge whether such society suits me I do not form many acquaintances, but aim to mingle with the best I can. Capt Henry is still my friend & I think a true & an honest one too. There are others who are good men but O how many who have put on the name of Christ & were devout christians at home. Ministers & Classleaders & church members in "good standing" who are now base blaguards & profane swearers. The moral & Religious community at "home" ought to be watchful when this strong element of vice returns. It is enough to poison a Nation. I pray God continually to keep me from such influences. My paper is about covered & there are many things I would like to speak of but cannot for want of room. Your precious letters I shall try to keep unless I have a good opportunity to send them home. We expect to receive \$52.00 each tomorrow. I must commence on another leaf L

Page 9th If we get our pay I will try to send it home some way. I do not know Just how, I will keep a portion of it, I am owing the sutler \$6.10 cts for boots & paper. I will send \$35 or 40 dollars, if I can. rumor is that we will march to morrow or next day. & it is said we will go North! What do they mean? I supposed we were in earnest about going south this uncertainty plagues me, I have always been in the habit of going pretty much where & when I pleased & it grinds me the worst kind to be led about not knowing where, but it is said that there is not enough feed or provisions to subsist on in the country south of us & you can see that it would be no pleasant thing to go down in Dixy & starve. The trains from Pilot Knob to this place have taken nearly everything that man or mule can eat & it is the same way from Rolla here, so you will look on the map & see about where we are. I often wonder if you look over the maps to see where we are & where we have been if you do you must imagine that we are among rocks & hills & clear sparkling brooks & rivers. & the most magnificent springs of water I eve saw. There is one spring at Vanburen or rather 4 miles below that place that comes out of the rocks from under a mountain that it is said it can be heard 6 or 7 miles. I heard it myself while on picket above Vanburen, a distance of nearly 5 ms. Another rumor there has about teams came in from Rolla yesterday & it is said that they are ordered back without unloading. They are loaded with provisions, so there must be something in the wind. We have only drawn half rations for a week, now they are issuing full rations

I suppose that if Gen Davidson knew that I was writing such news that this particular letter would never reach its destination, but I will risk it. We are drawing two barrels of flour to the Co. & this will have to be baked up & carried in our haversacks & our Co teams, I think we will march back North. The Commander of Armies should always know best what to do & I suppose that ours are posted. One thing with regard to your business you say that you have been thinking of carrying on the military department of Mrs. Reichenekers establishment. I believe that under all the circumstances for the present at least that it would be best, as rents are so high & interest too, & in going into business you should have some "backing" & you know all about my business affairs & unless I should succeed in selling some of my property I could not assist you much for it will require about all that I can raise as wages, to carry on the incidental expenses of the farm & pay taxes. And I am almost determined that if I should get back home again in good health & the old home is not sold to commence on the hill and try to make us a home worthy of our tastes. There are so many fond memories cluster around that dear spot of earth. I have had so many day-dreams while standing on the orchard hill. There we have stood together with your arm linked in mine & viewed the the same grand landscape before us, O, I envy you that visit to the old place. I can almost see you when halted. I know just about where you stood & can almost divine your thoughts. I should have liked to have been coming up the hill & met you there. I think you would have rushed right over "Kits" head & then what sparkling eyes, but I must close how are the Bees doing & how many young Bees will there be in the spring. And now my precious Dear girl, I must bid you good bye I am yours while life shall last LYLE

No 20

Iron Mountain Mo Feb 26 '63

My Dearest Mary:

I am again back in a land of civilization, near the R.R. where the Cars are runing. & where we can hear the cheerful whistle of the engine. It was amusing to hear the cheers of the poor weary soldier when we came within the sound of of the Engine Whistle; When we came in from our long & very sever winter campaign. I had not heard from you since yours of No 19. I first rec No 22 then No 21, then No 20 & next No 24 so that 23 is not received. I also received two Registers, please continue to sen me papers. I guess they will find me. I am enjoying very good health considering the verry severe ordeal my constitution has passed through. I do not feel that my constitution is materially injured, but I would not be hired for money or lands, not even for Round Prairie much as I love it. Indeed I do not think I could carry my knapsack &c & march as I have & stand the picket duty I have

great injury. But I hope never to have it to do or to be under the contrroll of such a miserable tyrant as Gen Davidson. You will find a communication from V of our Reg I think in the Register that is a fair statement of his maneuvers. & I have given you in brief some of his imbecile movements. I cannot tell you where we will go from here, but the talk is that we go down the Mississippi R. if so we will not have such severe marching. I have sent to day with Dr. Hull forty-three dollars to St Louis. he will deposit there & send you a check to Allens Bank if he can & if you fail to receive it send me word Marion sent \$35.00. He said "I will not go quite so steep as Lyle I am going to make myself comfortable while I stay in the Army"! It is all right I will do what I think is best with my \$13 per month. It does not seem like getting much but it will pay our taxes & leave a little for my wife & boy & I can get along verry well with but little

I can get along without candy & pies & such little fixins. I am looking forward to a time when we can enjoy ourselves again at home, some home. I want a good comfortable & neat home. I am not so particular as to the place so that I can have those that I love with me.

Thursday eve after supper. The officers have given us an oyster supper. It was quite a treat, since writing today I have been around over this Iron Mountain & to the furnace where the ore is melted. The Mts is a mas of iron. I will send you some specimens of the native ore, it is about 90 pe cent iron. The iron works & furnaces both here & at Pilot Knob have been very extensive, & will be more so at some future day. Capt Hull was down to Arcadia day before yesterday, he saw Mrs. Hedge, he says she is looking verry well. & wished me to be sure to come & see her. I do not know whether I can or not, it is 8 ms from here. If it was her cousin I would certainly go, if I could only stay "one hour". But I would not wish you here, much as I wish to see you, you asked me how my mittens wear, they have worn first rate, & I have loaned

them to quite a number of men who were going out on picket, cold nights. They have helped to keep a good many comparatively comfortable I shall not need them any more this season & they are so good yet that I will send them home & hope that by next winter I can wear them at home. O' if it can only be so how happy will we be, sometimes when I get to thinking about, home & my buisness affairs, I almost wish I was free to go and yet I wish to see the end of this wicked war. There are many questions you ask me that when I am reading them I think I will answer, but when I get to writing I forget them, you will excuse me, won't you? The drums are beating for roll call & I will close for to night, good night my Dearest Mary you sleep sweetly & have pleasant dreams. Good morning Dearest Mary

The 27th of Feb 1863 finds me at Iron Mt the morning is a beautiful one like a fine April day in Iowa. I am verry well. I do not know yet when we will leave here. The talk is that that we will go to St Genevieve (I believe that is the way it is spelled) 43 ms from here on the Mississippi river. I do not think we will be likely to go far down the River. I should dread somewhat to go far south at this season, but am willing to go any where my country needs me provided we are not humbuged & sold & tyronized over by imbecile officers.

see page 5

p5

Now My Girl, you say in some of your letters that you think I am much discouraged I know that I have written in that mood. for I felt so. & I think I have had cause to. You are verry well aware that I enlisted from pure motives. with an honest desire to serve my Country with all my energy. I am sacrificing too much to be spending my time & energies in useless marches. & cruel & unnecessary Picket duty. I have stood Picket untill from 11,00 to 1,500 men & two canon when there was no enemy near. every other day & night. It took us about 30 hours to get the rounds & back to camp. without sleep or fire. I eat frozen victals when too tierd to stand or walk my lonely track (we had to go 2 hours) then we lay down on the frozen ground & roll up in a blanket. & almost freeze in 4 hours when we had to go again. our limbs benumbed with cold. O! I do not wish to think of it. You ask me whether I keep a Journal or not. for two months I have not for I could not think of any thing

that I could think of in after years that would give me or any one pleasure. & now in writing, or reciting over a verry brief sketch of the past I am hurrying to get over it. I do not wish to remember things so unpleasant. Rather let the toils & hardship of the past be buried in oblivion & look forward with an eye of hope or faith. to more happy scenes. I will however recur again to this subject & then no more of it. After so much sever Picketing. & while we were at Alton (that is a portion of our forces. & the balance on the way from Vanburen) Gen Marmaduke a Rebel G. passed between or rather in our rear 3 mos, a part of our Army were still further back. It is said that Gen Davidson sent a flag of truce to Marmaduk & proposed that if he (Marmaduke) would not attack. Our supply trains that he (Davidson) would not molest him. & so he passed without being molested. between our main forces & supply train! & was gone before any but a few of the Gen's officers

knew any thing of it. When we had double his number & could have surrounded him & taken his entire force, O what perfidy, & how such a commanding Officer's soul must be perjured before God & his Country; We might have won quite a victory, & thus have done some service to our Country, Then if I had have been one of the survivors my little almost blank book would have been brought into requisition. But I cannot remember such scenes of disgrace with pleasure. Now I do not know whether I have written a plain enough style of diction to be fairly understood or not I hope that the war will soon end & then I can go home & tell you all about it Yesterday the Telegraph told us here that our Gunboats were throwing shells into Vicksburg, & that we were getting in their rear by the canal in the Yazoo R I think the place will be taken by siege We may yet be engaged in it. I think not

I will send a description of what I sen with the goods, you will pay over

the descriptive papers, if you should fail to receive them write to me soon

In yours of No 24 you say that you will have to know in a week whether you go into buisness or not, the week will be out before you can receive this, so that my council will do no good. I am willing to risk your Judgement. If you have not gone too far I would prefer that you teach, for these reasons. 1st you incur no risk financially, 2" you would have better health & spirits, & 3rd from a long experience. I have a horror of partnership buisness, & particularly with irresponsible parties. You will understand me & right here, I will give you some advice. It may be profitable, If after you shall have entered into a partnership buisness with any one & find you are sold or do not get along pleasantly, take the first good opportunity to sell out. But do not be discouraged by anything I may say. I think you are equal to the under taking, & I will back you in it with all I have. I need not caution you for I know you are cautious, but you know that a burnt child is afraid of fire. I must close I have bought a blanket & will send it & one other with my dress coat & pants & cap the pants do not fit me verry well & I will send them to Cy, they are somewhat abused you can wash them verry easy & it will not soil them. They wash easier than a shirt. I will write in a few days, remember me to my friends & to Our God good bye Dearest Lyle

I will express in a box by Adams Express Co to "M A H Garrett ++ Desmoins Iowa"

Lyle March 3d /63

No 21st

Iron Mountain Mo. Mar 3rd 1863

My Dearest. I have received your of No 25 And by the way you are several Nos ahead of me. I did not write to you from the time we left West Plains until we came to near Pilot Knob for the reason that there was no certainty of an outgoing mail. I however wrote to Cy - I believe at Thomasvill, & I think more than likely the letter went out, tell me whether he has recd it or not & try & get him to answer it. My health is now verry good. I am growing quite fleshy. & I guess that after all my talk to you about "my hardships & toils & privation &c, I am unhurt. I guess I will recover at any rate. Yet I should dread to undertake the same trip over. I am verry happy to learn that you are so well. my dear you ought not to indulge in any "hearty cries" about our separation, the war must go on & some wife's husband must go. I am pleased to learn that you have given up the idea of going into buisness. I think it is better for you to teach, on many accounts -

Yesterday was quite cold & windy: last night it snowed about 1/2 inch but it has all disappeared in the clear sunlight of today (Now noon) we have just come in from "drill" Burnside reenacted Jennings' Commander, Capt Hull is down to Pilot Knob. We go out this afternoon on Battalion drill. We keep up some of the forms of war yet. I think there will be no more great battles in the south. I would say pitched fights or bloody charges. Vicksburg will most likely fall by siege so will other strong holds. Our attention will most likely be turned to traitors in the North. I think from what I can learn that the Copperheads of the Northern States will have to be compelled to stand the Conscription act of Congress. It is the universal wish of the soldiers except such poor specimens as "want to go home" & let the "war go to thunder" to see Northern traitors put through. All the best soldiers are anxious to see them put down. Southern traitors are ready to give up were it not for their sympathizers in the North.

You cannot imagine how it makes our blood boil to hear of such disgraceful compromise meetings, & conciliatory resolutions of these Northern Tories. Down with them is the watch word. While we are enduring all manner of hardship & many a brave man has suffered martyrdom, & are dying in loathsome prisons in the South, others worn out on the march & in hospitals, aside from the thousands who have given their life blood on the battle field, & breathed out their lives amid scenes of carnage & the roar of fierce battle, with no kind hand to alleviate their sufferings, or even an opportunity to send a last farewell to loved ones at home. Our neighbors are doing all in their power to defeat the cause for which we are fighting. I tell them there is a day of fearful retribution, & it may at the point of the bayonet let them see to it. We would rather fight them than these poor deluded Butternuts Southern rebels, sinned in ignorance. Traitors in the North have sinned against much light

They may go on with impunity now while they are in the acendency, but if you could see the fire flash in the eyes of my sun burnt & hardened companions in arms, when this subject comes up, you would guess it meant something. They say "never mind we will get back some time" & then to see, the clenched teeth, & hear the awful curses, O, if we only had them in front instead of in our rear where we cant get at them. Well you can guess their doom. After supper. We had a fine Battallion drill this afternoon, the 21-22 & 23 Iowa & 1st Nebraska. Our Col is at St Louis on his trial the Lieut Col & Major are both up with him, so Capt George acted as Col for the 23d. Col Stone is commander of the Brigade. We feel more at home with Iowa Regiments than with those of other states. We are having a verry pleasant time of it here. I guess we will soon forget our hardships during the past winter's campaign. As yet I do not know where we will go to from here. There is a rumor this afternoon that the rebels are evacuating Vicksburg. If the report is true, I suppose they will be permitted to go & fortify somewhere else. Why not hold them in Vicksburg until they would be compelled to surrender unconditionally & thus take the whole nest, & thus kill rebellion in the west entirely. It is well that men of my belief or rather my impetuous nature have not the controll of this matter. I would run "the machine" in the ground or put it though

Wednesday morning. 4th Good morning my dear girl. & pleasant it would be to see you & say, the good morning to you instead of writing it, but so it is. We must submit to our fate. It is a real April morning here. I expect you are having March weather in Iowa. I was down to Pilot Knob last Sabbath to see the Hedge family: It was the first real quiet Sabbath day I have spent for a long time. I walked down on the R.R. in the morning most of the way by myself, although there were crowds on the way. I spent the day quite pleasantly considering the circumstances. Mrs Hedge does not look very well, she supposes the cause to be "Nursing". I is paying \$10.00 per week for their board, he says he is getting \$60.00 per Mo. I think by the time incidentals are all paid off, & if he pays the board bill he will not have much left. I started up to this place about 4 in the afternoon. I had quite a pleasant walk. When I came within almost a mile of home, came to the ruins of an old cabin the foundation stones of the "jambs" were as they had evidently been place by the architect, the corner stones also & a pile of broken bricks

You will pay $\frac{3}{8}$ th of the expense on box of blankets Mary you $\frac{3}{8}$ & Federicks $\frac{2}{8}$ the expressman said here that the whole cost would be about \$4.00 or \$5.00 I should not be surprised if it was \$5.00 the things will pay even at that

all over where the dooryard appeared to have been the ground was white with the bones of wild animals, suggestive of the caranivorous habits of the proprietor. The old orchard lay along a small brook, in an irregular shape some of the trees were verry large, say 20 inches in diameter. Before I was aware I was standing on the spot in a meditative mood. I was asking myself the question, where is the original ocupant of this rude mountain home? why did he leave it? with its many natural pleasant surroundings. When I started from my revere & steped again on the R. R. track, the answer came. The Iron horse with his shrill whistle came too near his domicil & brought with him the usual accompanaments of civilization & Mr "early settler" had went away in disgust with the wild animals into more remote regions, & may be his flesh-fed sons are the "Copperheaded Butternuts" I have helped to chase all winter. I came on up the R.R. in the early twilight, steping from one "tee" to another enjoying my own reflections, only regreting

that my Mary could not be with me to enjoy the fall shades of evening, & the bright moonlight scenery that began to be visible around me before I reached my present Mountain home. Then I came in hearing distance of the noisy 3 Iowa Regiment of soldiery I was happy at the thought that my loved ones were at home. Where they can at least enjoy the sweets of civilized society, & here let me say that it requires a person to be deprived of these social & religious privaleges to rightly enjoy them. Never let me so far forget my duty to my family as to wish them with me while in the army. No my dear girl, enjoy the sweets of virtuous civil & social & religious society while you can. But I need not ditate on these topics, you are surrounded by good & I trust true friends. But you will not take offence when I again caution you to be cautious. Do not trust any one because he or she may profess to be verry good, my faith has been very much shocked by the base conduct of "professors" Incidents I will not stop now to detail, I do not fear the results when you act on your own discretion

But I tremble for the too confiding. I will give you my reasons for thus writing when I see you. I am on my last page & I must briefly allude to some items as they may come to my mind, by mistake I sent home your likeness, with the package of letters. I did not look at it so often as I did the one in the locket as it did not look like you did when I left you & only confused my mind as to your appearance when we parted. I take many a long look at the picture in the locket. I sent two blankets, one dress coat, pr mittens, cap a military book, & some specimens of native Iron ore - the blankts I intended for horse blankets, the coat Cy may wear if he wishes, the book give to Cy, the specimens keep with our other specimes from Pikes Peak &c. Austin says you did not get enough for that ox, as he was well fated & would have weighed over 1700 lbs. If he is what he professes to be he should pay you the full value of the ox. I take it that Austin is competent to Judge. I shall not allow any man to enjoy my confidence or esteem who will take advantage of my absence. I hope you will succeed in getting a school in Smith's district. I think you could occupy your time pleasantly there - Well I must stop writing & eat dinner & then go on Battallion drill. good bye for the present. 4 Oclock P.M. We have had a fine drill. You say that they are talking of having a concert or festival for the benefit of the soldiers, do you suppose that one can of port or bottle of wine or anything good would ever reach the common soldier? You need not try it. You would only be the victims of Jeers & Jokes in some "festival" in the army. send nothing of the kind unless you should send it by some verry reliable man you know. There are a great many little incidents I would like to relate, but must wait as to the destiny of this nation. You verry properly say "our Heavenly Father Knows" & I trust it is not His design to let this great beacon light go out in disgrace. give my love to all I am as every your affectionate husband Lyle A. Garrett {Mary}

I do not know yet where we will go from here, rumor is current that we go to Minnesota
I have no faith in the rumor

No 22 Lyle March 8

1863 Iron Mountain Mo March 8th /63

My Dear Wife:

I have received your dear letter, so full of tender, wife-like love & affection. No 26 Feb 24 - 28th. My health is first rate, indeed I am growing somewhat fleshy, yesterday I weighed 157 lbs, so you may know that I am doing verry well since we came in from our severe winter campaign. Yesterday I was reading Gen Sigle's speech at N.Y. when I came to that portion of where he speaks of the duties of the lonely picket, & his duties, how he counts the minits as they pass. I could not help sheding tears. I brought afresh in my mind the Picket scenes of last winter. I have often heard soldiers talk of Picket but I did not understand the real meaning of the word. Now I can for I have endured its solitude, its

dangers & hardships in every respect. We have had the most easy time of it here of any place since we left Camp Burnside. To morrow we march for St Genevieve on the Mississippi R. N.E. from this place about 45 Ms. As you are probably aware before this I have lightened my knapsack so that I do not dread the march. I will here again state what I have sent home so that if my other letters should fail to reach you, you may know what I have sent, C.B. Frederick, Marion & I have sent from this place to your adress, a box containing blankets coats &c. I sent two blankets, one dress coat, my mittens & about one lb of native iron ore & a package of letters & by mistake or in my hurry, I sent your picture. I did not send the pants. It is agreed by us that you pay $\frac{3}{8}$ th of the expense & Mary Jane $\frac{3}{8}$, & Fredericks $\frac{2}{8}$ th. The express man here told us it would cost us about

one dollar or one dollar & fifty cts

\$1.00 or \$1.50 cts, from what others have sent I think it will cost more. I suppose you will have to pay what they charge, but they should not use deception. I sent you forty three dollars by Dr. Hull to St. Louis, he bought a draft on N. York, & sent to your address You will know how to use it. We have had quit a disagreeable storm here, not severe, but wet & damp, considerable rain some snow & a good deal of mud. There is one thing about the mud here which makes it not so bad as in Iowa in the winter. I may rain ever so much & you can walk about with shoes on & not mire unless you get where stock have tramped it up. The same as in California. You know that in Iowa in winter when we have mud it is so very unpleasant. Yesterday I had a long talk with a verry inteligent man living at this place. He says that the "oldest inhabitant" has never seen such a wet & cold winter & so backward a spring

he says that by this time they always have their garden made, & their fruit trees & vines planted. This spring there is nothing of the kind done. Well just as I finished the "done" the drumbeat for us to fall in for inspection. I went of course, & then I thought as we would leave to morrow, I would go down to town & have my picture taken & send it you. You will see from the date of this that it is sunday & perhaps I did wrong to do so. I will explain, I have been waiting on a man here to pay me some money & he has not paid it yet, & we were not aware that we were to leave here until late yesterday eve so I thought that I would go & have it taken as it is the last chance at least for a good while. It is taken & the boys say it is a first rate one, a true likeness. I will put it in a separate envelope from this as it would be quite bulky. Well since writing the above there has been a draw for tickets, to go home on furlough. There were eight selected & four drew blanks. Mr Christie of Desmoines, Warnock of Allen Township, Yolkham of Story, & Owens of Polk.

I believe I will send this letter with the picture with him, he will take it to you. Now if I thought you would be out at Fathers I should send this letter by mail, but I believe I will risk your being at Mr. Reincnaker, & send by him, he is a good man & can be trusted, And I would say here that you need not send me anything as I have enough to make me comfortable, & any little item would only add to my burden, which is now quite light. Mr Warnock & I have marched at the front of our Co ever since we left Camp Burnside, or St. Louis except while I was sick, since then he has been as sick & I in turn marched without him. We have had a pleasant time together, I respect him very much. I do not know when it will fall my lot to go, as we draw cuts for the chance. I don't like any such a way of doing buisness, too much lottery. I would rather take the list as the roll is called & the way all other details are made. I would prefer to go in about one month from this time, as it will be more pleasant weather. I would like O so much to see you but cannot now & have no idea when I can. Well my Dear girl I have been trying to write to you all day & every few minits I am interrupted in some way. Just now Dr. Hull sent for & gave me the note you sent him acknowledging the receipt of the money I sent you. Why my little wife you appear to have quite a business tact. That is the way to do it, prompt, & with dispatch. I told Dr. that you said Mrs. Hull & Eliza were coming to St. Louis, he said it was a verry foolish move in them. There are few men here that wish to see their wives, in the army. Now you may think it a strange idea in me but I should consider it verry mutyfyng to my feelings to see you here. You could not be in sight of a soldiers camp, no matter what your appearance might be or whether you were alone or with me you could not escape insult. There is no man officer or private who could save his wife from insulting insinuations, And under no circumstances could I wish to see you here, unless I was able to board you in some respectable village, & out of the common gaze of these low & vulgar soldiers. It is humiliating to me to make these frank state

ments to you, a soldier in the true sense of word, or a man that is a real soldier is worthy of respect, but they are not all. I am making these statements to you so that you may know that not all the men who wear blue coats are worthy of your respect. I am striving make myself a soldier & to retain my self respect, & I know if I can do this that you will both respect & love me. I think that I enjoy the respect & confidence of all with whom I am acquainted, & I feel very well satisfied that this respect is not diminishing. Not long ago, while we were on the last march during a snow storm, some of the boys were talking about whisky & how well they would like to have some to drink. Dr. Hull said, "yes and Lyle I think with all your known strictly temperance principles you certainly would drink a little brandy this evening. I told him I had never yet seen the necessity for it & I have not. I told him a good warm supper with coffee or tea would answer a better purpose, he thought, a good drink of brandy would be very good, now I am aware that your keen sense of propriety will see that it would look better for some one else than myself say these things, but I feel like giving you my views & experience. There is a great deal of drinking & gambling going on all around me, yet I feel no temptation whatever. I know that you will have no fears for me in this respect, but we all have our weaknesses & I do not write to you as I do in a boasting spirit. No my dearest I trust that the hand of our Heavenly Father leads me & will guide me through all these trials & difficulties. I feel the need of His guiding hand & I think that I can feel here the comforts of the religion "we profess more than I did at home, God has promised that he who trusts in him he will in no wise cast out, & he that calleth on him will be heard. I have an abiding trust in the precious promises contained in the scriptures. I have not heard a sermon or a prayer for nearly two months, when we were at Vanburen I think Barton has preached to us only 3 or 4 times since we left Burnside. Now I wish you to keep all this strictly to yourself, for I do not wish

wish to circulate any thing that would be calculated to injure any one or to wound their feelings, but I can trust you with some things, which I will state. As for Barton his course while in the army has been - moral & in some respects hardly that. I am told by good authority that he used to while at camp Patterson stand by & see the officers play cards for oyster, peaches, &c & help eat them. & he said that he did not consider it out of the way to play cards to see who should pay for the treat. I have seen him stand over a crowd of loafers that you would be mortified to see me associate with & appear to enjoy the game verry much & he boasted what a good player he used to be, & now I have no faith in such men, he rides along with the Col on the march & is verry sociable with both officers & men, & is quite popular & would make a very good Aid De Camp for a general, but he is Chaplain & is receiving considerably over \$1200 twelve hundred dollars a year as Chaplain. It is so much thrown away. I believe I wrote you once about the conduct of one of our Capt, a Methodist minister who organized a church at St. Louis while we were at Schofield Barracks. He is a shrewd man & an eloquent, pathetic preacher one who can reach almost any heart. I have sat almost entranced under his eloquence & pathos. In a word his equal is hard to find. The evening we left St. Louis, & after we came out on the street, in front of an elegant mansion, surrounded by beautiful shrubbery & a fashionable, licensed house of ill fame the soldiers many went in to the well to fill our canteens with water (we stayed in front of this house 2 or 3 hours). I noticed this good! man! amusing himself with a girl at the gate, there were 3 or 4 girls she had his sword, keeping mimic guard he appeared so much taken with her that it disgusted me with him. I think he went into the house with her. I have since heard him preach some of the best of sermons

8th

& in the midst of his pathetic & eloquent appeals to sinners to seek an inheritance that will not fade I have sat & shed tears, & almost forgot what I had seen but when I had time for sober reflection what faith could I have in him? Now my dear It certainly is not my purpose to shake your confidence in good men but that you may know what I have had to disgust me. I have a much higher regard for a man after I have seen him tried & come out right than one who has never been tested, but enough of this - It is almost dark & I must get supper. Well my Dear supper is over & within time comes its events. The general commanding refuses to grant furloughs to more than two at one time, & my friend Waroe does not go. He feels quite disappointed. I will send by Mr. Christie at Desmoines. He is getting his papers. I he should fail, I don't know who I will send it by. I don't know when there has been a day fraught with so many incidents. One Regiment Nebraska 1st started on the march to day for St Genevieve & had not been gone long when there was an order sent after them to come back. The order for our march has not yet been countermanded, it may or it may not be. O this uncertainty I don't like it. Capt Hull came up to day from Pilot Know he saw Mrs Hedge. He says she is going to Desmoines shortly to keep house. Charley Dewey was at Hedges a few nights ago, he said they sat up until 11 oclock & played euchre, I don't think Mrs Garrett would have done so would she? Charley appeared to be much taken with "Mrs Hedge"

p 9th

It may be all right but I should verry much dislike to have young chaps jesting about my wife, but I believe that Mrs Hedge is constituted to enjoy the society of almost any gay, fine looking man & particularly an officer. or any thing light & showy. I would not have my wife do so. I have but little afinity for such women & cannot say that I fully respect them, I notice one word in your letter that must have become verry common, "I'll Bet" you will remember you used to catch me on slang, this is about the first opportunity I ever had to catch you & could not resist the temptation to do so, you will excuse me & not take offence, will you? I received yours of March 4th to day. No 28 I have not yet received No 27, or one other I think 23. I am sorry they do not reach me for I prize all your letters verry much & do not wish to miss any of them

Try & expend what money is necessary to put out fruit trees &c on the old farm

I also received one from Stewart & Emma, Stewart said that Cy was gone to a spelling (Monday eve) & that he is going to try for Mills prize. I feel verry anxious to hear from him. I should feel much gratified if he should be successful. One of the boys is singing "my native home farewell" & putting on the most solemn airs with it, then the rest all laugh, when some, wild & foolish song, comes up or some clownish remark. Well my dear little wife I believe I have written more now than will be of interest, for I know that I have written without reflection & must have said many indiscreet things. I feel like writing all night but will close. I would be happy to be the man to hand these things to you & hear "many a question" & answer them as fast as you could ask them, but I must wait my time. Tell Mary Reicheneker I thank her for her letter, & would write some to her, did she get the one I wrote her & Juddy while I was at Patterson? give my love to all the friends & now my own precious wife good bye tell me all the news May heaven bless you with a calm & peaceful mind, & may you spend a pleasant summer. Your Husband Lyle

No 23

St Genevieve Mo March 12th 1863

My Dear Wife:

I am happy this beautiful morning to be enabled to say that I am well in the verry best of health & spirits. We left Iron Mt on the 9th & came through in the days. I have never stood a march so well. The road is graded & a portion planked the rest Mcadamised. We passed over some verry fine country, Farmington 15 ms. from Iron Mt is a very fine village, there appears to be considerable wealth there. Valley Forge a few ms further is an old Iron manufacturing place there are no more villages on the way. This is a verry old place, was settled before St Louis but is an insignificant place. The country is well improved, the people are French & Dutch - they have fine orchards & vineyards, fruit rarely if ever fails. They have the grape in many varieties, pears, peach, cherry, plum & I suppose that all kinds of fruit will flourish. It almost spoils me from being a soldier to be in such a country. I march along gaping

Tell me how you prosper all about your prospects for a school & where, & all you
r

hopes & Just how you enjoy yourself, keep nothing from your husband. I feel a great anxiety about you

continue to direct you letters as you have. They will find me. I have now Recd all yours but one I think it was No 23

ove the fences, looking at the grape vines & Peach trees & taking items of their method of cultivation, pruning &c. Almost forgetting that I belong to Uncle Sam yet for 2 1/2 years. I am almost constantly thinking about how I will manage affairs when I get out. I do not dream of defeat. Our success is in my mind a fixed fact. Well my Dear what are you doing this morning & where are you, have you got a school yet, & where & where are you boarding, tell me all about it. I shall not oppose your teaching, because I think it the best thing you can do, you will have better health & spirits than at almost anything else & it will help us both along a little. O how I do wish this unhappy state of affairs was settled. I would so much rather be at home with my loved ones. I would so much rather be carrying on the peaceful arts of husbandry than this everlasting, march, countermarch, shoulder arms, fix bayonets, right dress. I would rather be commander of a good span of horses & gee, haw, & wield the plough, & at noon & evening & morning be looking ove our strawberries & vines

There is a large amount of wine made here & those who do not wish to make up their wine, sell the grapes at six cts per lb. I think that if, ever I get through the present engagement, & our country is blessed with peace (I believe it will be sooner than most people think) that I will do my best to have a large orchard & vineyard. I have always had an ambition to do so & I cant feel satisfied to give it up - I have written to Austin to plant out all the fruit trees that there is room in the orchard for & to dig up some of the old peach trees, & I want all the Concord grape vines planted that can be. & I wish you would get a vine or two from Mr Smith of the finer varieties & have father or Stewart take care of them. We have all too long neglected the cultivation of fruit, it will pay to attend to it. But you will no doubt think it looking away ahead in me to feel so anxious about these things but I do not we may as well have these things growing as not & when we settle we can take them up & set them out on our own place wherever it may be. I received a letter from B. Nash since we left Iron Mt. I am happy to learn that the

church is prospering. I should love O, how much, to be with you but as you truly say that cannot be, at least for the present. I do hope that before another year shall have passed away that I will be permitted to enjoy all these blessings with you. My Dear Wife you can Judge by your own feelings how anxious I am to get home again, sometimes I get almost homesick & then I look at my country, & its condition, & when I hear so many talking about wanting out of the service & when I hear of treason at home in my own state & all over the North, I feel like standing the firmer by the old flag, now while it is insulted on all sides. Yes I want to see the stars hung out when there is none who dare insult it. Our stars are the only ones that decorate the national emblem of any country. We were the first people to paint the stars on a national flag. Our fathers founded our government, on a solid basis, & looked up for the blessing. We will bless their memory & perpetuate the blessings their sacrifices secured for us. I see that before Congress adjourned it conferred great powers on the President an almost unlimited amount of money & all the men that are necessary to speedily terminate the war. O, if the president only had honest men to execute his plans, how soon could they wind this thing up. Well I must walk around & see the country & this mighty River, whose bosom will yet swell with the riches of the great N.W. I will write some more before I close. good bye Dear

I feel anxious to know whether Cyrus contended for the prize & if he took any of them

P.5 After dinner. I have not yet learned anything with regard to our destination. We are camping in a verry fine place, a thick forest of young oak. There are some verry substantial buildings both in town & in the country. Their orchards & vineyards are what take me. I would not wish to live among dutch & French, but I would like verry much to live in a country where I could raise all kinds of fruit. But we can raise Apples & Grapes in Iowa & I guess I will not talk any more about fruit in Mo. I have a notion to tell you something about our time in camp among our selves. You know that Marion is a great fellow - to argue, he has been an annoyance to me all the time, it seems that he takes a particular delight in it. There are so many little instances of this kind, he will listen to loafers talk awhile about "the Niger" & after a while he will begin to ask them questions, then snap them up & get animated, & he thinks it sharp, & then if any of us say any thing about, the war that it will be done as god wills it &c. Then in his time, he will say "then you don't think that man has anything to do with it", then there will be a discussion on the decrees & foreknowledge of god, becomes animated, face gets red

steps around, picks his teeth, & has a hacking cough, "then - you - make - God - the - author - of - sin - " looks earnest then I interpose & tell them to talk about something they can all agree on, does no good he will have the last word. We go to bed, he keeps muttering away about it, his argument is to this effect, that God has but little to do with human events doesn't know or doesn't fore know a decree but makes a kind of partnership, buisness I tell him that. I love to contemplate a great God, a God who carries on all the machinery of the whole universe, a God who will not allow the puny arm of man to interfere with any of his plans. In a word I believe in God, a Being who is a God, not in something whose plans can be frustrated by the wishes of man. -- "Well now answer me don't you - make - God - the - auther - of - sin. It is a fortification to him. I tell him that if it will be a particular gratification to

him I will give it up without further argument, he don't feel satisfied, will have the verry last word. I tell him I would rather never spring that question again, he thinks, it is right to convince people of their "errors", he talk about being convinced". The other evening, he got up a discusion about where, Pittsburg Landing is, he contended that it was on the Miss River, became animated - the boys, got a map & pointed it out to him on the Tenessee R., when he came in I suppose he thought he would catch me, he says Lyle where is Pittsburg Landing, I said promptly, on the Tennessee North of Corrinth,, he said - yes, - it seemed to hurt him, & when we were ordered to this place he got a map & learned how to spell the name of this place, he came in & asked me how I would spell it, I spelled St Genevieve yes, that's the way, he dont try me often on Geography, unless he has Just seen the map. I cant keep any plan if I tell him of it, unless I charge him to keep it, then he will do it. I have learned to keep my own council. Now I don't know that it is right to talk so about him, we

get along verry well. You are so well acquainted with him that you can understand me & I merely mention these little things, so you may know how we get along, he & I are in a tent with eight others, a large tent. Capt Hull promises to get a tent for C. B. Frederick, Billy, Marion & I a small one, we can then cook more to our notion & it will be better in many respects. Now My Dear you will burn this sheet, as you are all the one I wish to see it, & it might get out of place, I am determined that this arguing, shall cease in our tent. I you do not wish to burn it you can deface it by writing over it. Well now my girl, I dont know what to say, I have, exhausted all the materials in the way of news that I have, sometimes I feel like I could write all day, & I am afraid sometimes that I write more than will be really interesting yet I know that anything I write you will be interested in. I dont know when the mail will leave here & I will leave a short space until near it departure. I sent you my picture by Mr Christie of Des Moines. He with a number of others started home on furlows & were detained in St. Louis. I do not know whether he will get to go or not. I suppose if not he will mail it to you, it was a verry good one. I hope you may get it. I would like to have you get a new one of yourself, taken in plain dress, without your bonnet & send it by him or Mr. Warnock who will go home in a few days, his mother lives on Keokuk Prairie. I will get him to call on you at M. R. or if you should be any where else you might send it one to him by some one - well I must stop a while. eve after supper. I have had crackers & coffee, my health is first rate. every thing has a good taste. I have been strolling over the country among the orchards & vineyards, & about sundown I came across a walnut tree, the walnuts were dry & nice I sat down & cracked walnuts until dark. I have no idea yet where we will go from here. some think we will go to Tenessee, some to Vicksburg, & others to the Arkansas River. I will write before we go if I can. These walks over the country over quiet farms & orchards &c almost makes me homesick, but I must be a soldier if I can. I hope some day to be a citizen. well my dear wife I must bid you good bye may god bless you & keep you from all harm Lyle

please send me 2 or 3 postage stamps each letter & the Register every week.

No 31

Camp near Carthage Louisiana April 19th 1863

My Dear Mary: Although it has been but a short time since I wrote to you, the same desire to hold that sweet communion of thought and sentiment is constant. There is one thing that is a constant source of congratulation: viz. I believe there has nothing that I have written that has ever come back to the Regiment: My Dear girl you can imagine knowing as you do my somewhat sensitive nature what a source of pleasure this affords me: I hear almost every day some one teasing & Jeering at an old neighbor about something he has written home to his wife or a friend; Now such things would annoy me! I am happy that I have no such annoyance. No my precious wife my confidence in you has never been betrayed, even in matters of small moment, I prize your esteem & love for me above all things earthly, And may I never prove unworthy of that love & esteem. What pleasure would it be to us to write to each other if we expected our letters to be handed round to any one to be read & criticised. I would not wish you to think that I would wish you to keep all that I write to your self. There are many things that I write to you that I expect & wish you to read to my Father & Mother & Cy, & in fact all our family - & I have written portions of letters that I would not care to have you read to your own intimate & confidential friends. What makes me feel proud of you is that you know what is prudent & safe to entrust to others. I think that I have written as much & confided as much to you as any one in the Regiment, & it has been sacredly kept. I am not vain but I feel that I have a right to feel proud of it. I would not write in this way to you if I did not know that you can understand me better than any one else - Yes my girl I must consider that you have penetrated the somewhat excentric nature of one that even my Mother could never understand. I have always thought that my own Father & Mother and even my brother & sister, with whom I spent the happy young years of innocence, never could [see?] the inner workings of a nature that to them was a mystery. I think you have & on this account I can speak & write to you with an unreserved confidence. But enough on this subject You will pardon such a long digression from the usual routine of letter writing

I believe I have spoken to you when at home with you during a thunderstorm of my admiration & awe of these grand exhibitions of Divine power! I have stood & gazed at the vivid flashes of lightning - & the awful roar of thunder following while every sensation of my soul vibrated to the "Music of Heaven" yes when others trembled in fright I have stood enraptured at a view to me the grandest connected with earth - Last night we had an exhibition of this kind. I could not help thinking as I lay under an open tent or [illegible] during the darkness of the night when the heavens seemed almost in a blaze of livid light, how futile the attempt of man to mimic nature, and the comparison seemed the more disparaging from the fact that for the last week, we have been daily & nightly treated with music from Colerbrids, Dalgreens, & all kinds of gunpowder music. I have been thrilled by the music of these Vicksburg monsters as ther loud breathings reverberated far up & down the shores of this majestic river & when the sound died away I have listened anxiously for the next report. You may think this strange enjoyment, I have sometimes myself thought strange of it & sometimes I find myself [illegible] during a thunder storm, that I have feared it might be a want of reverence in the Great Auther & Mover of all things. If so may God forgive me. This love of the awfully grand is inherent, instilled in my nature. I have often in your presence & in the presence of my father & mother & others, when I had a different view of the goodness & majesty of the Supreme Ruler, to what I now have, studiously suppressed my admiration & delight at witnessing these scenes of awful grandeur. I would even now suppress these emotions were it not that in the last letter (written at Fathers in the kitchen) you unveiled your [illegible] freely & seemed to enjoy my [illegible] thoughts that I have given loose reins to my pen. But as Corwin has got dinner ready & it is corn soup I must quit for the present & when I write again I will tell you what I am doing & what I have been [illegible] instead of so much about what I have been thinking if that will be more soldierly. I do not know that this is the place to sentimentalize, Stewart, Robinson, Corwin, Marion & I mess & tent together & we now have a verry pleasant & quiet time

Sunday evening - April 19th Now my Dear wife I will try & write although there is so much noise & confusion that I can hardly think. We are all very much elated over the news from Charleston S.C. The rumors we have been receiving for a week or two that Charleston is taken is officially reported. We believe it whether it is so or not. Another rumor is to the effect that the commissary stores at Richmond Virginia are burned - supposed to be the work of negroes. The siege of Vicksburg goes on slowly owing to the want of transports. Thursday night or Friday morning there were 8 gunboats & one steamer run the gauntlet successfully - one other transport tried it & was sunk. The one that came through, came up a bayou to our camp yesterday & is loading today to go out to the river at Carthage, the soldiers have built 8 or 10 flat boats & are busy transporting supplies, Artillery, ammunition &c

I thought when I wrote to you from Richmond that we would get over in about a week & be ready to make the attack on Vicksburg in a few days from this time, but it is I find a tedious & slow business to move large armies. I should not be surprised now if it was 10 days yet or perhaps longer & there is some talk that we will go to Port Hudson 225 miles further down & [reduce?] that place before the attack on Vicksburg. The boys are going to lead & I must follow, a pleasant night rest to you my dearest. The nights here are cool, days are comfortably warm - good night my pet.

Good morning My Dear Wife: this is such a bright, clear & pleasant morning, hardly a cloud in the sky, the pure air is moving in zepher breezes, bearing on its soft wings the fragrance of a great variety of flowers - But the desolation that surrounds me is sickening. I am told by men who have passed over the road from Millikens to the place since we came through that the country is laid in ruins, great fine mansions, richly furnished some & almost all furnish with the best, Piano Fortes, & many other costly fixtures - all consumed by fire. "The Cotton gin" a large building with usually about four gins run by steam power with all the machinery for packing & bailing cotton - costing thousands of dollars, men passing by coolly walk in & set it all on fire, last Saturday there was one burned in sight of us - what a fire! The people of the south are so completely at the mercy of the soldiery, that it is alarming to contemplate the consequences, were it not that our army is made up from a humane people the consequences might be appalling - as it is the rights of women are scrupulously respected, (there has been some awful exceptions not however by Americans) There has been heavy canonading all the morning at Vicksburg, it makes the earth fairly tremble even at this distance (about 20 miles) Their wilful stubbornness in not giving up when they are so badly beaten will cause the ruin of their country more complete, as it keep our our armies scattered over more teratory. This beautiful & rich country would not have been molested had they given up

Page 5 Vicksburg one month ago - here is a stretch of plantation from Milliken to Carthage about 40 miles - well improved worth millions - besides the opulent owners, being rendered homeless - The Queenly Mistress with her bright eyed children with a few poor old servants thrown upon the cold charities of an unfeeling army! I must acknowledge my incapacity to do the sad picture Justice; I pity the women and children, but when I look at the other side of the question, & turn my mind to a more northern clime, where the mother is sorrowing over the loss of a son slain in battle. The doting wife weeping over the loss of a loved husband - Little children whose lives were one all sunshine in the light of a fathers presence Yes they will look in vain for the return of homes bright treasures. Their dust is mingling with the dust of an enemies country - My tears for the Rebel Mother are dried. Let my weeping be for the friends of the noble dead & for the friends of my bleeding country & the friends of humanity. When I see the stocks & the lash & other hateful instruments of torture to these poor blacks, with their backs all gashed & scarred & to hear these poor defenceless, people tell of a brother being whiped to death, or some poor fellow tell the sad story of his young wife having been whiped, while her babe was so young & she so weak, from her late confinement, because she could not perform her task, that she went crazy & then whiped until she finally died, my heart sickens to hear those sad stories told in their simplicity, my blood boils in its veins, I cannot but say in my heart let the wrath of God rest & abide on the wretched authors of such wicked cruelty - But I am sentimentalizing again. I promised to tell you what we are doing

We have had no news from Vicksburg since the gunboats ran past, last week, but from the firing that is going on there this morning there must be something of interest going on perhaps more gunboats - We have but little news news of any kind. I have not yet received your Nos 31 & 32, & none since No 33. I am verry anxious to hear from you, I want to know Just how you are getting along - whether you have taken a school or not & where & where you are boarding: & how you get to Church & all about how you are enjoying yourself. I have no doubt but that you will be treated well & kindly if you should board with Mr Robinson - but you know my opinion of him & my sentiments with regard to associations with people of doubtful character. I would be happy if the memory of the past with regard to him was obliterated from my own mind & from the mind of others. But memory will never die & the poisoned fangs of envious malice will continue to pierce the privacy of social life. From my heart I pitty the victim. We find from a retrospect of the past that in all ages & in every phase of life that life is a warfare against prejudices & passions - The present is no exception to the past, O! my dear wife how I miss your intelligent society, here more than perhaps any other situation in which I could have been placed, here where there is so much that is light & foolish how my heart yearns for the society of home with its charms. There I confine my thoughts to my own mind, with the exception of the few I catch as they pass & send to you. What a pleasure it would be to have the quick response from a loved wife. Let us unite our humble prayers to our Father in Heaven for a speddy reunion & that the necessity may never again ocur to separate minds so congenial. I look forward to that happy day with confidence - Let us not doubt the kindness of the Being Who has guarded the dangerous paths of an eventful life to each of us.

7" Well my dear girl I have received your No 31 - 32, but nothing later than 33, which I received at Milliken - Now there are a great many thoughts in these two letters that I would like to respond to, but if you are like I am you have forgotten before this time - so I must write as though I had not received them. Any improvement you can have made on the orchard will meet with my hearty approval. I would be sorry when I return to find it in any worse condition than when I left it. If I should get home & we concluded to keep the old place I want to make it a good farm & build us a neat cottage on the hill - It seems to me that if we were out of debt I could have a fair start that we could keep ever & live well & enjoy life together on our own place & in our own home as well - I have rambled about so much that I am anxious to settle down - Although I feel lonely here without your sweet society. I am happy - everything goes by suits me now only it seems so slow - I think we will get two months pay in a day or two. I wish you had the money I don't need it & I know that you can put it to good use. There are two great fires in sight of us tonight - it looks bad but let it go anything to alarm them & convince them that we are in earnest & that we can ruin them if we are in earnest - it is nearly roll call & I must hasten & finish

Well the roll is called & the drums are mostly hushed - The moon is fast sinking away in the west, & shedding but a feeble light over these contending armies - sentinels are far out from each camp watching with a Jealous eye the movements of each other - the last bugle has Just sounded tattoo & soon where all has been noise & frolic - a dead quiet will reign - & I too must seek my couch (some boards laid on the ground & one blanket spread over this & another over us). My health continues very good - I am more cautious about what I eat than I ever have been confining my diet principally to crackers & tea & coffee, some beans, bacon, &c the water we drink is cool yet, but not such as we had in the mountains of Missouri - Billy & Bird have both been discharged & are I suppose on their way home: I think of it I forgot to pay Billy for a plug of tobacco I got from him, will you pay him 35 cts, you can Just imagine it was for some thing to eat - yes I chew a little yet. Well I must gather up these scraps & see if I can get them into an envelope. give my love to all & remember that your husband will think of his dear wife far away in the north. good bye my precious wife

Lyle A Garrett

No 2

On board steamer Continental Oct 19th /63

Dearest Mary. I did not have an opportunity to write at Cairo but will improve the present as well as I can under the circumstances. I had a verry pleasant trip to Cairo. I left Davenport at half 9 A.M. & arrived at Cairo next morning (sunday) at at 7 1/2. The 8th cavalry were embarking on the cars for Louisville Ky when I left them at the depot. They are by this time at Louisville. I cannot well describe my feelings when bidding adieu to all that I love when I crossed the River & began to speed away to the south. My family scatered - one left at home - lonely & in suspense the other going away to Join in scenes of conflict under a daring & fearless leader - Whilst I am being borne rapidly away to scenes not less peaceful. We cannot tell what the future of our family may be. we are much divided at present. but let us hope & pray that the time may soon come when we will be reunited.

I expect we shall have a tedious trip - the river is verry low & we have Just now run on a sand bar. The Continental is a large boat. has a barge on each side. there is quite a number of soldier on board - all the N W states are represented. The weather has been beautiful since I left you except on Saturday, it rained from 9 oclock until about 3 - since that time the weather has been as fine as can be desired

Wednesday 5 PM. - We are about 1/2 way from Cairo to Memphis the whole distance is 225 ms. at this rate it will take me a long time to get to Orleans - but I am in hopes we will get on faster as they have been taking on freight & wood. this evening is quite cool & misting rain. yester while the boat was tied up I went up to a house & called for corn bread & milk after I had eaten I found from conversation that the lady was from Highland Co O. & a daughter-in-law to "Old Dan Hare" of H. Co notoriety, before he became a Methodist preacher he was a great rowdy, & around at public gatherings was often bantering "who will or who dare swap horses with old Dan Hare". This womans first husband was a brother to "Hare from the Forks" Father & Mother will remember the Hare family - I believe the people along the River here are nearly all loyal & appear to rejoice at the prospect of a return of peace. The gurias trouble them a great deal - I did not write to you from Cairo, as it had been so short a time since I had written & I had but a few minits leisure, but if I had known that I should be so long on the way to M. I should have written a few lines. My health is real good so much so that meat, crackers & coffee (clear) tastes good. I am off on shore every day eating pawpaws & apples &c. I am enjoying myself verry well only I feel so lonesome there is not one on board that I ever saw before - well I must quit & get some tea or coffee made & eat crackers & meat

& call it supper. I wish I had some buiscuit & chicken - but a soldier mustn't think of such things - good night my dear, dear Mary

- Lyle

Wednesday Oct 21st 4 P.M. My dear girl how lonely I feel - On board a great steamer & all on board strangers. yet they are quite social, for we are all soldiers. They will begin to scatter off at Memphis some to the army of the Cumberland - some to Little Rock, others to Vicksburg &c, only a few are going to Texas. - I cannot help thinking of home & you & I would not if I could - O' those happy days I know that the fifty days I spent with you will live green in our memories for ever - It has been the happiest part of my life - I am thinking nearly all the time about you & where we are at different times - We will probably get to Memphis some time to night - if they should not have to lay up to night

last night whe tied up at dark & put out 25 pickets to watch for gurillas. they are quite saucy along here but we have not been molested - I will get my letter ready to send with the mail - & it may be that we will not get to Memphis to night - if not I will be happy to confer with you a few minits in the morning. I wonder where you are this evening - have you a school yet - & how are you enjoying yourself? & when shall I see you again are questions that will press themselves on me O I do hope we will not be separated an other whole year - but if so let us submit - cheerfully - The White Cloud has Just met us bound for Cairo - it is the boat that carried us to Millikins Bend last spring - I met Capt Henry at the depot at Davenport a few minits before I left - his hand is not well yet - the Drs say that he will never have the use of it. his arm is shrinking away slightly - well my dear I must close I think I will write again at Vicksburg - but if I should not do not be uneasy. my health is good & my spirits tolerably good. yet I feel lonely. I wish the boat could go on double quick to Texas or where ever the 23 is -- Well my precious wife I must say good bye - give my love to Father & Mother & all the family - I remain your husband ever. L A Garrett

good morning dear one. (Thursday 22nd) We landed last night at 8 1/2 - I came up to soldiers home. I find it kept in good style & it is quite a treat to have a warm breakfast. It is principally furnished by Government. Soldiers home at Cairo the same way - partly by the sanitary commission. (I did not see much sanitary - I feel quite well this morning & in fine spirits you know a good meal always sets me right. This is a great mansion owned by Rebel Gen Hunt, he has "runed away" & his property is

being used by his Uncle Sam for a better purpose than sheltering a rebel - it is 1 1/2 ms from the river. Well I must go down to the Comisaries & draw enough ration to take me to Vicks. I expect to start some time to day. I will write to you again on the way good bye my own dear wife - may God protect you is the prayer of your devoted husband. Lyle A Garrett

Tuesday Oct 27" 3 P.M. My Dear wife - I had intended to have written to you from Vicksburg, but we will not be likely to stop long - so I will merely say a few words & write on the way to Orleans. We are a few miles only above Millikin Bend - I am almost in sight of the fields of bloody strife & terrible carnage in which I took an active part - O what memories cluster around these fields of conflict - "Vicksburg" That word has a terrible meaning to the soldier - there the blood of the patriot & traitor are mingling with mother

earth. Over that word shall the tear of the orphan be shed. The widdow mourn the loss of all she held dear on earth. The fond sister, the loving mother & doting father - all mourn the loss of friend - but I must close. I am sorry to disappoint you with a mere note - circumstances prevent me from doing as I could wish. I am enjoying myself verry much, in the best of health & a prospect of a speedy trip to my Reg. The weathe is remarkably cool. There are quite a number going through to texas - ever your loving husband Lyle Please hand this to Mary Lyle

No 3" On board steamer Continental 25 ms below Batenrouch Louisiana Oct 29th 1863

My Dearest wife: Again I am at the pleasant occupation of writing to you. This is a rainy, gloomy day - but my health is so verry good. & I am so elated with the prospect of soon meeting my old comrades of the 23rd that I feel in fine spirits. We will get to N Orleans by morning. & if not detained will come up to the 23rd in a few days - I have formed the acquaintance of three soldiers. One from Kentucky, one from Ind.,the other from Wisconsin. we all mess together - representing four states. Wiscons - got off at Natces. the other two are going on to the 13th Army corps. The country, with its improvements is hardly surpassed for beauty in any portion I have ever seen. The improvements on the plantations are magnificent beyond description Nonwithstanding the georgous magnificence & splendor of these princely palaces. the facts press themselves upon our minds that they have been changed from a howling wilderness waste to what they now appear by the unrequited toil of the poor manicled slave. Batenrouch presents a fine appearance from the river - the statehouse - a large & showy structure although all that is combustibile about is burned has certainly been a work that would have given credit to the test of any people

I cannot describe my feelings yesterday while passing one landmark after another, that were familiar to my last spring, while on the march around Vicksburg. particularly when we passed Grand Gulf. here I witnessed one of those grand spectacles so rarely witnessed by the Land forces of our army. The terrific canonade at Grand Gulf on the 29th of April 1863 will live in my memory while the power of recollection is given me - Then when we passed the landing - below where our Division stepped boldly on the shore of the enemy & marched off toward Port Gibson the large mansion on the hill is in plain view from the river - & as its cupola faded away in the distance I gave myself up to my own sad reflections - how God in his kind Providence had spared my life through so many perils, while others have fallen like leaves in the storm all around me. Although I may shed the fraternal tear over their memory, it will not bring them back or soothe the anguish of those who mourn their loss - many of them lived the life of a soldier & died like heroes - Yes my noble, brave dead companions, let me cherish your memory with the love of a soldier. You did the work assigned you on earth. may you rest in Heaven O! when will this cruel & unnatural war end, "when men shall cease to learn war any more"

3- PM. Well it is clearing away, & bids fair to be anoth beautiful moonlight night. Last night I stayed up quite late looking at the scenes along the way, & the moon mirored in the clear waves of this glorious old river. & to day the clouds are mirored on the chystal wave. O my dear girl how I wish our means would Justify us in traveling in company. There are so many fine scenes that I could enjoy so much better with you. And yet when I think of my own dear Iowa with its rich scenes of grove & prairie - & the home I hope we can make I feel like I didn't wish ever to go from home again. I notice in the papers that Gen A. J. Hamilton Military Governor of Texas has arrived at N. Orleans. & is on his way to Galveston, &c. I wonder if he is our uncle. He is a loyal Texan having been driven away in exile. He was formerly from the north. Well the boat has stoped to put on wood & I must look around. Well I have been ashore looking around over the beautiful gardens & grounds surrounding these princely mansions - now you mustn't think because I admire the beauties of improved nature along the Mississippi that I covet any of their -rich & well improved plantations - No after all the native scenery will not compare to the view from round top and many other points in Iowa. But here we go on towards the Crescent Citty - This evening is verry warm -

Friday evening - Well here I am at Camp Carlton. I arrived at N Orleans this morning about 10 & took the 1 o'clock train for this place. I found the Regt had nearly all gone west - of our own Co. there are here. Fred Campbell, Terry Swift, Gilbert Wilcost, Wm Gregory - J. Morgan - P Darling - Wm Woodrow - John Harrison. They are some yet up the River - the health is improving. my health has improved verry much since I left home. I do not know when I will get to the Regt - as they do not allow us to go only in pretty large companies. you know I feel somewhat disappointed, for I had hoped to get up with them before they got so far away - I have not learned yet whether there has been any change in Co matters or not - Our Reg left Brasure Citty about three weeks since and are now about two hundred miles beyond Brasure. I cannot give you any information respecting to our movements in Texas - I heard Lieut Houston say this evening that he thought the whole force would be recalled, but this is mere speculation - as we can have no correct idea of what will follow the recent union victories at the ballot box in the north - Saturday morning - Oct 31st good morning my dear pet - only two weeks this morning since I left Davenport - & yet I am almost homesick this is a cool chilly morning - yesterday it rained & it has made it damp. I would be glad to have a letter from you to day. some of the boys got letters yesterday written the 7th. If it should take yours so long to come as that I may look a good while. Marion went out to the Reg about a week ago. he is quite hearty. There are only about one hundred & seventy-five with the Reg. & at Brasure. & about 75 here - I don't think the 23 will ever get to be a verry large Regt again unless we are recruited in some way - well I have Just paid a dime for a qt of good new milk. - we can exchange our surplus meat, coffee &c for onions, potatoes, &c, so that we can live pretty well. Apples - from one to four or five cts. oranges the same. I must indulg to some extent. Now I am anxious to hear from home. I want to hear whether you have succeeded in getting a school & where you are boarding, & how you are enjoying yourself & if you hear from Cy. I am in suspense about him. The mail will start north this morning - & I will close hoping that you are enjoying yourself firstrate. Tell me all about your health. give my love to all my friends - Direct your letters to the 23 via Cairo the same as you did before I we came down here. the mail is stoped here & the mail belonging to the here is taken out - good bye dearest. remember me in your prayers & may our Heavenly Father guide & protect my dear wife Your husband ever. L A Garrett

No 25

Memphis Tennessee Mar 23d 1863

My Dearest Mary: I have leisure to write you a few lines this morning. I am in the best of health & spirits. News from Vicksburg is very encouraging. The Yazoo pass is now open for the largest size steamers & our boats have passed through for cotton: speculation in cotton will go on whether the war does or not Faragut's Fleet has passed Port Hudson & reported at Vicksburg ready to the great conflict about commencing, we have possession of Yazoo City everything is going on as well as could be wished. We cannot tell what a few days may bring forth. They may bring forth disaster, but I cannot well see how it is possible in the course of human for us to fail this time of defeating the Rebels there. I have no doubt but that you will feel considerable solicitude about me. When I wrote you last from New Madrid we expected to start the next day, We did not start until the 21st. We expect now to start for Vicksburg to day. We are waiting for the 21 & 22, the rest of our Brigade

I have not received a letter from you since yours of the 4th inst. I am getting quite impatient to hear from home. I suppose that the P. O. department understand that we are at Vicksburg as our mail has gone below, I asked Charley Dewey to pass me by the guards this morning he did it verry cheerfully, indeed I ask favors only ocasionaly & always have them granted. I went out through the citty & had a verry fine walk. It is a very fine situation, & well built. I visited the Citty Park, & saw the statue of the Old hero of Orleans, on one side is the well known mottoe "The Federal Union it must & shall be preserved". The Statue is in Marble & a splendid one. Some wretch had tried to efface the words "Federal Union" But the stern visage of the old Hero is so lifelike that no matter how much is immortal words may be defaced it must be a thorn in the flesh of this rebellious people. The soldiers

stationed here say that the people are nearly all secesh, & are only kept in order by the big 100 pounders in the fort nearby. The Park is a verry nice affair, with its old trees & evergreens, & all kinds of shrubery., flowers &c. There are a number of grey squirrels, skiping around over the short cut grass. There is quite a lot of cotton on the wharf & I saw considerable ariving from the country. All confiscated, as to who will get the money for it, Our venerable "uncle sam" or some shark I will not pretend to say. In these times the larger the shark the deepr he swims. We are yet on board the steamr White Cloud & crowded so & so much foolish talk going on that I can hardly write any thing I wish to. There are some men among us that are so very verdant & silly that I can hardly immagine what could have been the object of their mothers in raising them. Well without Joking, there are so many ignorant fellows

among us that it is pitiful to hear the talk, & ask such questions, about the locality of different places. There are a great many that don't know which course any point is from from any given poin. For my own part I feel perfectly at home on Geography, this is boasting a little, but I get time almost every day to consult maps & make the geography of the Mississippi valley & more particularly the S. part of it a study. It is a verry great pleasure to me to know what course we are going when we start on a march. Just now there has a girl came on board & stoped right before me with a basket of apples she is about 15 & very sharp the boys are trying to snatch them from her, she has eyes like a hawk & a tounge that goes at both ends. she looks about as sausy as Virginia could if she was to practice a year or two. I looked at her & thought what a pitty that her lot had not fallen in some other place, for if not already, how soon will she loose all self respect, & be a ruined girl. There are a good many fine looking women here that offer every inducement to our soldiers to desert, they will give a suit of citizens clothes & fifty dollars in "greenbacks, & pass them beyond our line, some are thus led to desert, but there is not much disposition on the part of our soldier, to desert. I must stop & get some dinner & if I get time I will write some more, if I should not I must say good bye my own dear wife. I am O how anxious for this wicked rebellion to be put down so that I can again enjoy the sweet society of home good bye Dear Mary Lyle

No 10 - Ft Esperanza Texas Dec 18th 1863

My Dear Wife - Through the blessing of that Providence Who has watched over us & has protected us in all our past lives. I am enjoying the best of health & pardon me if I say I am happy; I cannot say I am contented. How could I be really contented away from those I hold so dear: But we are surrounded even here, on this low barren island which is almost baptized every day by the tide with many blessings. The greatest trouble with us is the want of mail facilities or rather the long distance from home & the length of time it takes to get mail. To day I received your 3rd letter of Nov 15th - I have received no papers. I am afraid Mitchel has forgotten his generous promise to send me a club of the "Register". I see from the tone of your letters that you are not contented, & in fact you are frank to admit that you "are not contented long at any one place". I know that by my own voluntary act I threw myself & family out upon the great sea of life "for three years". But was our country not reeling - staggering - & bleeding under the blow of traitors - Could we fold our arms in our own happy & tranquil home & say "we have no interest in this struggle for nationality?" No! my dear girl I know that my wife has a heart too big to stand in sight of the toppling temple of liberty & see it crumble to dust for want of strong arms - while her husband is capable of wielding the battle axe, And now as the murmuring echoes of treason are almost hushed amid the shouts of victory - like the low murmur of the sea after a tempest - I say that now when rebellion is almost dead & when victory is heard on every breeze comes the great danger. We are now like a ship out on a rough & troubled sea, drifting toward the shore - the inexperienced crew look away with glad hearts to the firm land - but see not the breakers that intervene - so with the weather beaten & war scarred soldier. He in all the innocence of his honest heart looks at the redened field

baptized with the blood of heroes - fields whose crimson hue the tears of millions can never wash away. he hears no more the roar of Columbiads & the shrill-fierce crash of the terrible Parrot - 100 pounder has died away in the distance - The sharp rattle of musketry is hushed. & he looks away toward the Polar star & sees a careworn & weary soldier wending his way across his own prairie to his own N W. home or to his own dear New England hills. Already he is seated by a blazing fire surrounded by the "loved ones at home" telling his "hair-breadth 'scapes on many a hard won field" Yes now after the storm comes the deep - still sea of diplomacy. Politicians will take the sword from the strong hand of the soldier & with a goose quill may undo all that has been done, but if we are allowed to have the "Old Patriarch" at the helm the ship is safe. I cannot give you much news from here as we are yet in camp & the army has not moved forward yet & the news we get from other parts is stale to you long before we receive it here. for we are away out from the rest of the buissey world. We have some interesting times here - I might give you a brief history of the past few days. Last Sabbath I attended church with the 18th Ind. Chaplain McDonnald of the 18th Ind. preached to us - a practical & verry appropriate sermon. I could'nt tell you all I thought of while he was preaching, but my mind turned away to the churches of the north - how you were situated. You have warm houses to meet in & seats to sit on - shut in from the storm - & I could not help thinking as we sat on the sand with a thin coat of grass, some of it the - "sand grass" with sharp burs so that we could not put a hand to the ground without having them stick to us - & the wind was blowing cold from the north driving sand all over us, so that we could hardly see the venerable gray-haired man as he endeavored to proclaim the word of God. The thought would keep coming in my mind. how many of our church at home would sit here among these sand burs with the sand drifting in our eyes & hear a sermon throug & still wait to sing the closing hymn & hear the benediction - was I wrong in thinking that Bro Nash "or any other man" would have finished his sermon & pronounced a benediction to heaps of

sand - & a retreating crowd of soiled "harness" I thought he would - in the afternoon Barton preached his 9th sermon to the 23 costing U sam about \$170.00 each. query among the boys will a gun of so small a caliber - & so long between discharges pay? Last night we were called together by the Martial band of the 18th Ind. & then Hail Columbia by the brass band. then prayer by Rev Barton, then a lecture on temperance When he wound up Rev. McDonnald gave us a no one. practiced. right to the point & to the conscience speech on the evils of intemperance in the army, next came Col Washburn of the 18th. He was pithy & to the point. He said he didn't know what the Rev Gentlemen meant by flattering his men that they were so good & sober & he said "boys I tell you, you drink too much - some of you get drunk & I want you to quit it. You give me trouble &c. I thought if the "Rev Gentlemen" had have pulled off their gloves & had handled the ugly demon with hard knocks it would have looked better at least - We were all much pleased with the effort.

sunday - after inspection. a beautiful - clear day - I wonder my Mary is to day are you at church to day listening a discourse from our dear Rev Nash? I expect you are as it is now a little past 11 A.M. I hope ere this you are in a measure contented . And now my dear wife I wish to speak to you frankly & plainly my mind I know that while you are going from one place to another you cannot be contented or or happy - & I do wish you would make a permanent home either at Father's or at Austin's - I know that you are thrown out uppon the world without a home & my heart aches at the thought - but when I look through the past & cast my eye to the bright future, when our country will be free from the clash of arms & peace a glorious peace shall spread her wings over our homes - then we will reap the reward of our past sacrifices. Until then I know that Austin will with open arms receive to his quiet, happy home & protect & cherish the loved wife of an esteemed brother - or if it is not convenient on account of others I know that my Father & Mother will gladly receive their adopted & loved daughter with that tender affection that has characterized their treatment of me when misfortuned frowned. Not for my sake alone for I know that they all (with the little exceptions of Ev---) esteem & love you. It will be a source of pleasure to me to know that you have made one place or the other your home. It is not best to have so many places as temporary homes.

I have been looking over what I have written & I see that I have not given you much news for I have but little to give - and you will pardon me for indulging in my own thoughts for when I get to writing to you the task is so pleasant that I sometimes loose myself in my wild speculations - for I feel such a freedom of thought - & I sometimes close without giving you many little items that might interest you more - you will excuse me for it wont you? I have heard nothing yet from Cyrus - I have written to him & shall continue to do so. If you will write to him - directing by way of Louisville Ky - I think his Co is M - it will surely reach him. I hope you will write to him, give him items from home write in such a way as will make him think of home with some anxiety - it will have a good effect on him. I have the plan of interesting him & of inspiring him with a love for home to your tact - I wish they would all write to him - he thinks some of them don't care any thing about him some of the small ones don't - neither do they for you or I - but there are those who do. - I have sold my watch for 25 dollars by my absence I have not drawn any money yet - There will soon be six mo due me. I will most likely need part of it to get clothes &c with as I deem my promotion as almost certain the Col told me a week ago that my commission would be here in 2 - 3 weeks. but it is best not to "count the chickens before they they are hatched" don't make calculations on as absolutely certain. for if I fail we would each feel much disappointed - It cost me all except \$8.00 - of what I had to reach N.O. I loaned \$1.00 to each of three of the boys - the other 5 I ate up at Carlton at the Convalescent Camp. Convalescent Camps & hospitals where men are half fed - & no sanitary is no place for me unless I had plenty of money - & this reminds me that the benevolent societies are to meet or have met in Des Moines - to council Ostensibly for the good of soldiers but some of really to fill their own pockets. & you say you have never Joined any of them yet - I don't wish my wife to take part in any such humbugs - I could collect enough evidence now as there are many of the 23 who have returned from the hospitals - to fill the Register with stronger doses than I gave before - the facts would astonish every one I may at some future time but not Just now - John Sherril came to the Regiment - last Friday night - he & F Campbell, Marion & I are tenting together - nearly all the men in the Reg are in the best of health Barton will preach at 3 P.M. it is nearly that time now & I believe I will stop writing & walk down on the beach awhile & watch the waves lash the shore good bye my dear one, well I have been out on the shore with T Saylor & sunday as it was I picked up a few sea shells - I wish I could hand them over to you, some of them are verry fine - I have at different times collected quite a variety & intend to take some of them home to help adorn our center table, when we build our cottage. I have been think more this last week than usual about building & about home. I have drawn several plans for a house. You will think this is premature but I have to be employed at something - & building castles in the air or on paper is a very good thing to keep children out of mischief. When you write tell me all about how you are getting along - keep nothing back & your health how is it with you -- has the weather turned verry cold? - is there good sleighing - did Mr. David take Bert & how is Wickham doing - & any news you get of the movements of the 8th Cav I am anxious to 2 - 3 more letters from you as there must be some due here now - it will take the mail about - 16 day to come from DesMoines here direct & sometimes it will be delayed - I know that you must have been in suspense to hear from me after we left Algiers. for it must have been at least a month before my letters would reach you from here after you recd mine written at Algiers - dress parade. I must go, dress parade & supper over - Two steamers have Just came in loaded with soldiers - I hope to get letters from home. if I should I will put in a slip & risk the extra postage - for I have more to say - although I have written quite a long & closely written letter if there is not much in it. ever your husband Lyle

Tuesday 19th We have Just finished a good dinner. Buiscuit - Butter Coffee - Boiled beef, stewed apples - & sweet cakes-. & the beauty of it all is that we were all able to do the dinner Justice. The arms & Equipments of the 23 were inspected to day & every thing looks as if we were to start on an expedition to the interior. The men are drawing clothing - blankets - shelter tents amunition &c. Gen Dana is in command of the expedition & sent an order around to day - "that this expedition is expected to fight on foot & not on wheels" as though the 13th Army Corps had been acustomed to do our fighting on wheels. This army has no confidence in its leaders & will never stand the hardship it would under more favorable circumstances - We will try & do our duty faithfully but the 23 will never be driven. We have as a Reg - won a name that we prize & we know that the people of Iowa appreciate our efforts - & now after all our hardships - & in view of the noble dead of our comrades we are about entering on a campaign fraught with toil & danger led by men we have no confidence in & that the soldiers all hate. What can be expected of us under such circumstances? more than all this - we are to go on foot - officers & all except the Generals & their staff & the field officers, Cols &c, we will have to carry our valises & blankets & clothing &c. This is a rather gloomy picture & I wish it was not so & I must repeat a request I have made before, viz - that you keep all such communications such as reflections on the conduct of the officers in the army - as much to yourself and tried & true confidentials as you well can. I might be considered hard to please, but this is the general feeling pervading the entire expedition

I bought a blouse to day for \$12 & will make that amount of clothing do me for the present (with what I have on hand) I have more now than I like to carry. Now my Mary you must not let my complaints annoy you - I ought to write to you in a cheerful mood but I am writing "Just as I feel" & I cant like the arrangements but you know that I can get along where others can - & I don't dread it much but would like to see things go on more in accordance with the feelings of those who do the fighting & have to endure the toil & fatigue of the march. I pity new recruits who have to go into the field & endure what we have to. I do hope that Austin will not have to go, he could not stand it, he had better Pay \$300. I feel very anxious to hear from Cyrus. does he write to you? send his letters to me or some of them at least, & I would be happy to get the Tribune often. I have not received any papers yet except the Register (The Club 2 packages) Marion is well & on picket to day. I must not forget to tell you of the good things of Indianaola, first we have good cistern water; a dry soil to camp on & plenty of oysters in the bay - without wading more than half to the knees, don't you think I will feast & grow fat. There are some very fine looking winning folks here but you know that married men who love their wives must not ever look at a pretty woman so far from home for fear he might fall in love. Well I must quit such foolish talk or you will get disgusted - I cannot tell when we will leave here, perhaps not for weeks & may be not at all - there is all kind of rumors afloat. Keep up your naturally lively spirits - & remember that your soldier husband thinks of his Mary under all circumstances & that he loves her above life itself - Lyle A Garrett

(No 15)

Old Indianola Texas Jan 24th 1864

My Dear Wife: It is with pleasure I tak an opportunity this beautiful Sabbath day to respond to your precious letter of the 25th Dec. I received it a few days since but had written a short time before. This is one of your finer letters & I prize such missives above all other papers I have - your letters all exhibit the true woman to such a high degree that I feel a conscous pride in being the possessor of such a heart. And the Photograph!. Do I recognize it at once? I most certainly did, for it is true to the life & I thank you many times for it as well as for your kind & wifelike letter.

I attended church to day at 10 1/2 & enjoyed an excellent discourse from the 138th Psalm 7th verse by the Chaplain of the 21st Iowa. He is a Baptist Miister. He says he is well acquainted with Bro Nash - I had an introduction to him to day but do not Just now remember his name. I will give his name befor I close. He was followed by a venerable Old Gentleman resident here in appropriate remarks - O how I wish you could have witnessed the calm & quiet scene. He rose with a slow & humble yet dignified appearance, he is a verry old man with long - white flowing beard hanging quite over his breast his hair whitened perhaps by four score years, & combed smooth hung in waves over his shoulders - in contrast with his flush and health countenance, his keen blue eyes sparkling with that peculiar to those who have the love of God & good will to all men. I wish I knew more of his history. I have seen him walking about his garden with two fine looking young women, either his Grand daughters or Great Grand daughters. Altogether I have enjoyed this Sabbath verry well & this evening I will attend church at the same place, if not hindered by buisness

Such days as this are to me like an oasis on the desert. A respite from toil, & the noise of camp life, & then to hear a sermon from a man whose capacities are equal to the occasion. Although the speaker makes no claim to what the world calls greatness, yet his earnest & simple manner charmed me - & his thoughts as they clustered around the Cross were sublime. At times during the quite lengthy discourse I could not help acknowledge to myself that I feel a partiality for those of our own sect & beliefs - The tenets of the gospel as proclaimed by ministers of the Baptist church are so plain & simple, that I wonder at myself for not embracing them long ago. But as the Old man venerable said to day after he took the stand & stood with fixed eyes on his congregation until all were as still as the grave - "The human - heart - naturally - how - wicked -" How long I have carried this wicked & stubborn heart! And yet even now how naturally rebellious, that I am led to exclaim "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death." - Were it not for the gracious promises all through the Scriptures - what would poor fallen man do; But there is a fountain opened in the house of David for the cleansing of sin - Yes blessed be His Name the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. And although clouds may obscure His face - & thorns & dangers - sorrow & pain may beset our pathway through this world of disappointments Let us look away beyond the present scenes to that mansion He is preparing for those who trust in Him. Let us look up to Him as to a Father trusting our all to His care - for we doeth all things well - There is no condition so alarming as when we rely on our own strength - to appease the wrath of an offended God. O that we knew our duty & would perform it

I was happy to learn that you are enjoying yourself so well at "Cottage Home" & that you esteem my (our) people so much - you have spoken in several of your letters of them. Yes my dear one I can surely commend you to their confidence. They may not have the polish the world calls refinement - & to the casual observer there may appear to be a lack of gentility you will discover the mettle to be pure - & I am proud of this, there is no bogus aristocracy - This trashy polish paraded everywhere I have seen enough of it - It displays itself especially in the army. There has but little transpired since my last. except skirmishing with the enemy occasionally by our mounted scouts, last Friday about 100 of our men went up the bay toward Lavaca & had called at a house for dinner, while they were eating the Rebs came on them with a dash & captured five of the number our men took two of theirs, so we had the worst of it in that case, although no one was hurt. We have very fine times here. Yesterday I took three men (of our Co) & went out in a small boat on the bay for oysters, we had rakes for the purpose & took from the beds six or seven bushels - There are acres of them under water from 3 - feet - to - I don't know how deep - I thought while using the rake & bringing up loads of the bivalves of the song of the "Old Virginian" Raking among the oyster beds to me it was but play &c." You like Oysters don't you? I know you do. Well Just imagine great dishes of the critters fresh from the shell - The labor of getting them gave me an appreciative appetite & being in the best of health & high spirits you can Judge whether I did the supper Justice. They are very large & fine. real fine fellows. I wish you could have some of them without having to come to Texas for them

I am getting along with my new duties verry pleasantly & find that although I sometimes feel a little dashed - you know I am easily embarrassed, but my presence of mind get me along verry well - & I am confident that I can so conduct myself so as not to give Col Glassgow or any one else cause to regret having placed me in my present position. I feel myself equal to any emergency that is likely to follow. The Officers are all verry cordial & Co C appears to be well satisfied. Although my competitor (Mr Austin Warnock) is one of the finest fellows in the 23d & it affords me great pleasure to know that he is one of my warmest friends & it is a fixed matter in my mind to do him Justice as far as I may have the power. dress parade calls for me -

Monday morning: a bright clear morning too, I am sorry I did not finish this yesterday, as the mail left this morning at 4. After dress parade yesterday evening, our Co clothing came & had to be distributed & an order to have the pay rolls all signed up. I attended to having the rolls signed & had it done I believe in advance of any other Co. Then there were other rolls to correct & make out so that we were kept up late - what a way to spend the Sabbath! Our books & papers are a confused mass. Cap Hull was very careless. If it should so happen that I take command - I'll see that papers are signed up properly - some of the officers will loose heavily by their carelessness. I get along verry well with "Capt Ben" & all the Company, most of the Regiments in Texas have gone into the Veteran Corps. & are some of them if not all going to N.O. I don't know what they will do with the 23d. Well my dear my paper is full & I had many things to say yet - but will wait & write in a week. Give my love to all the family & especially to Father & Mother. Tell them I would like to have letters from them (if they have not forgotten me Mary) I am ever your Lyle

No 31

Morganza La June 10th 1864

My Dear Wife: Although I have not received a letter from you since I wrote last, & there was a small mail to day I will write to you any way. I have read your last letters over 3-4 times & to day I read your verry last one again. O my dear wife such a good letter as it is if it was redated it would to to read once a week & the sentiment and devotion it exhibits all the way through is good at all times. This last letter has if posible increased my esteem & devotion to one aready as dear to me as life itself - What would life be to a broken down & war-worn soldier even amid the songs of Jubilee borne on the breeze by the noise of the thousands of hearts made happy by the sweep of our arms - if the kindly, heart of those we love does not beat in response to our efforts. But I look forward to that happy day with the brightest anticipation. I know that the warm & devoted heart of my wife beats in unison with my own on the great question of the day & that her prayers have followed me amid all the dangers of the camp & field and that when the din of war shall be hushed & the dust of battle shall have been shaken off - her arms will be stretched out to receive & cheer the heart of one who sometimes - will in spite of all considerations - notwithstanding a preponderanting characteristic of hope - building castles in the air &c. Well I know sometimes I do see too many bright sides to "the question" but never mind - you'll see - things go if we

should live to ever get settled again. But here I am beginning to speculate on the future again - I'm afraid you'll see that I'm a little homesick - I don't wish to exhibit any symptoms of any thing of the kind but I must confess that sometimes when I look over the past of our lives & what our prospects were - I do long to get home again & I don't believe I will go into the Veteran service. I think that I must rest three years & then if the war is not ended I may try it again. We have news from the Potomac army up to the 27th of May & from Gen Sherman to about the same date - Sherman will take Atlanta & drive Johnson's army somewhere else - & he will have an army able to follow him - Right here I want to make a remark - not that I consider you so ignorant as the masses on this subject but you even with your keen perception & with all you read you cannot realize how utterly prostrated the physical energies of an army are after a great battle. Men go into battle like Giants but after they have marched & fought for 2 - 3 days & lain on their arms & slept a few hours & roused by the roar of canon & the shrill whistle of minie balls & then for hours in the fiercest contest. I am a strong man but I have lay down to rest when our Regt was relieved for an hour when a boy could have disarmed you will often hear the remark after an army has won a great victory. "why don't they follow up the advantage". Not realizing the fact that by the utmost exertion the victory has been won - I trust that you will understand me. I would have my wife understand all about things as they are

There is a verry dark cloud coming up. I think we will have a hard rain. It has rained every day since the 30th of May inclusive & between showers the sun is scorching. There has been several cases of sunstroke, some deaths from it

The rain cloud has passed over & the heavy thunder is muttering away on its retreat & as I sit here on the bank of the "Father of waters" & see the fierce glare of lightning I am reminded of the dense clouds of conflicting men as they are massed for the deadly conflict in front of & in the "wilderness" before Richmond & Atlanta. This cloud has poured out rain, to refresh & cheer the parched earth - They have poured out blood to desolate the homes of patriots & traitors. Now the sun is shining as brightly as though the stormcloud had not passed over - That storm of Lead & iron hail will cause hearts to bleed & tears to flow long after the sun of national peace shall have shed its benign & happy influence over the bereft, & those who have not felt the pangs of bereavement. How long O how long must this dark cloud of treason - hatched out of the depths of Hades lower over our land. how long until the wrath of an offended & an indignant God shall be assuaged. Truly our gold has become dross. Years of desolating war will not suffice - our Government Officials many of them are as corrupt as corruption itself. The love of Greenbacks has perverted the aims of an honest headed administration. Seekers after cotton have led our armies to defeat & smoothly penned official reports conceal the facts & so the war goes on. My mind has been irresistably led to draw this ugly picture. but after all it is real as far as it goes, no pen will ever picture the rascality practiced on the soldier & the people - I will "subside"

I received a letter from Austin a day or two ago. May & Ida had diphtheria, the rest were all well. Judge Tumly had sold some of our claims on condition for \$800. but property, had fallen & the parties backed out. Austin had sent to you for the certificates of our right &c, if you have them they are promptly sent forward & I will not trouble my hand about it I should be glad to realize all there is in those claims, but can hardly expect it, I often find myself laying awake thinking over how much money it will take to set us up right - but I see many around me with money plenty who are unhappy - It is true as you say that happiness is wealth - Conscious innocence & a willing hand brings cheerfulness & competence. & happiness will follow. We are as you have seen by the heading at Morganza Bend on the Miss River & I don't know how long we may stay here. This place is about half way between the mouth of Red Riv & Port Hudson (on the west bank -) Gen Warren is at Baten Rouge. We have been shifted about so often that I hardly know who are our commanders - Gens Emery, Lawler, Warren - Dana, Ord, Washburn, &c. have been our commanders at different times, Ours is the first Bigade - 1st Division 13" A.C. at present. I think we will go to Baten Rouge. Since the spring has opened in Iowa & I find that they have not all frozen to death I feel like I could be contented there - I feel like I could be happy if we were in a home of our own - I feel a kind of an assurance that if we live we will yet have a nice home. I expect I think about it too much. but cant help it. When I get a Tribune I look over the war news a little & believe all that looks reasonable & then turn to the proceedings of the "American Institute Farmers Club" & study Horticulture in preference to tactics - Well my dear girl I have written more than I intended to to day - I thought this morning that I would write a good, interesting letter this time & studied over what I'd write & sat down to it & I don't know that I have given one sentiment as contemplated - but have just let my pen run wild - I am enjoying the best health verry robust for summer, give me notice in time if you should conclude to go home soon - so that I can mail my letters direct to you -- put your real estate through & when I get home we will sell out our estate & locate on some fine site - & enjoy the benefit we are earning by our present sacrifices - & our Father keep & guide my dear wife is the prayer of your Lyle

No 32

Camp of 23rd Iowa Morganza Bend

June 17th 1864

My Dear Wife: I have been impatient for the week to go by so that I may write again. I don't want to write every day for fear that you may discover that I am home sick - Well with out Joking I do begin to look forward to the expiration of my term of enlistment with anxiety - Three years is a long time for a man to be absent from home & those he loves so dearly - I received yours (No 29) nearly a week since - & I assure you that I can sympathise with you in not getting mails regularly - We are poorly situated here or have been to get mail matter - Our mail goes to Orleans & then we are not in our old Brigade & this makes it worse. I think we are now permanently located here (until further orders) which may be a week - a month, possibly longer. There is just about that much certainty about military matters - Our mail will at least be sent here as long as we stay. It is said that Gen Banks changes his "Orders" every few days - I have when writing guessed at different times where we would go & sometimes I have been correct. I think now the policy of Gen Grant is for the forces in the west merely to hold what we have & act on the defensive, keep the Mississippi River clear. But there are so many aspiring men, some of them like your humble husband with only one bar on their shoulder - others with two - some with the oak leaf, or Eagle, some with a star, that want two so that they appear to be very anxious to go "where there is fighting to do"

I have seen these same gentlemen who talk so valiantly when the time came to move "to the front" no keener to face the music than the man with the musket on his shoulder, yet their eager talk sometimes causes the Regiment or Brigade to move & I don't know but we may go to the army of the Potomac or to Sherman yet. there is some talk of it. We are very pleasantly situated here so far as our camp is concerned - Day before yesterday we moved up the river about 1/2 a mil & are now the upper camp on the river. Officers tents are close on the river bank there is a fine breeze & to day we have put up forks & poles in front of our tent & have green brush over them so that we have a cool pleasant site our tent is beautifully carpeted--! with a nice bluegrass sod--. We (Cap & I) have a writing table (not mahogany but poplar) & I have two poles set up a foot from the ground & barel staves laid across for a bedstead - O I tell you we are getting aristocratic at our tent, we are Then we are living well too & I oughtn't to talk about getting home sick ought I? But how can I help it when I think about my little wife anxiously looking forward to the end of the war as a time when we will be restored to each other. I know that even with your shrewdness and more than ordinary intelegence you are looking forward to the final crushing out of this rebellion - & the 3 years, yet in the future - I sometimes hope so myself - but this is a stupendous rebellion - a terrible war - We are waring with a people

had they have been - organized & free from the Government one year longer - or even had they have had Buchanan & his cabinet one year longer to have used so that they could have had a government revenue - systematized so that their currency would have been acknowledged - There are several iffs in the way - & they came pretty near it too. Well what I want to get at is that they would have been hard to handle I don't want you to think that even with this advantage I doubt the ability of the Government to finally triumph - but at a more fearful cost - The resources of the south are not understood or appreciated at the north - you will be surprised when I tell you that away down here nearly at the mouth of the Mississippi there are great fields of corn in tassle, heavy, fine looking corn, as fine potatoes as I ever saw the last of May - new potatoes as large as your fist, yes larger. Beans, Peas, Lettuce, Onions, & every thing else & more than you ever seen in a garden, fruits of all kinds - except apples. We underestimated their strength & resources. We have handled them with gloves on & lightly too when we take a proper view of their wickedness - We should have rolled up our sleeves & went at them in earnest - But Unconditional Grant is at them in earnest & "proposes to take the sumer if necessary - Last night I read the Chicago Tribune of the 11th, There was "much valuable information" in it. The unanimous nomination of Lincoln for the presidency & Johnson of Tenn for Vice P, Gen Oglesby for gov of Ill. the position of Grants and Shermans armies - new soldiers rushing to the rescue

every indication is in our favor - & it really looks as if we might safely predict a speedy overthrow of this Giant rebellion. The renomination of Lincoln will be a heavy blow. They will now know that there is to be no let up - but rather a more stern perseverance on the part of the government. The unanimity & dispatch that characterized the Baltimore Convention is better than a victory on the field & was won without loss of life or treasure which is for better - I have said nothing about my financial affairs - I was sorry when I read your last letter that I had overlooked your need of money - you must overlook my mistake, you know that I know Just about as much about what a lady will require to fit her to travel & visit as I would to dress myself to go before the Court of the Sultan of Turkey, or how to behave were I ushered into the presence of the ladies around the throne of her Imperial Highness the Queen of all the British. I directed Austin to send you \$20. I might have sent to your adress \$50, or \$100, but I was hurried so & really did not think - Just consider it my mistake & I will make it all right when the war is over - or may be this fall - may be I'll get to go home & that will cost me at least \$150.00. Sometimes I don't know what to do about it - If I were not owing any thing, I should not hesitate - but I want to see you so verry much - that I shall go - duty or not duty if I can. I am as equinomical as I can be in order to aford it - If you need money & can borrow it do so - I will be paid I think again the last of August & will promptly foot any bill you make. Make this proviso when you borrow - that it may be so that I cannot pay at that time. The paymaster may not come around. If you borrow from cousin "Jo" & Austin has not the money, to send you - tell me so that I can send it to him - make every thing plain. I am looking anxiously for the mail. The river is geting so low that the gurrillas have great advantage of our transports. They appear at diferent points on the river with artilery & Infantry & do much mischief - yesterday evening a boat came down & reported that they (Rebs) had a batery planted about six miles above here - about 11 P.M. two gunboats passed up & about midnight there was some canonade up the river - no boats have passed down since - Two Gunboats went up today - I see smoke away up in the distance & imagine I can hear canon - am not certain - O these miserable - cowardly Gurrillas. I should be glad to see them dealt with - severely - all that can be caught ought to be shot on the spot & everything for twenty miles destroyed - make it to the interest of the planters to use their influence to stop it & it might be safe to pass up & down the river - I must get more paper

(No 41)

Morganzia L - a Aug.t 21st 1864

My Dear Wife: You will see that We are yet at the old camp, though not at the same locality we left for St Charles. We are about two and a half miles below - I have not received a letter from you since yours of _____ anouncing that you would stay two weeks longer. But I suppose you are at home by this time I will immgine so at any rate. I have no word from Cyrus since the 8th of July - A. Mr Stevens of Co H 23d has a brother in Co M 8th Cav. He wrote to his brother here under date of Aug 1st The new it contained has cast a shadow of suspense over me. he states that the cavalry Division (Mr Cooks) to which the 8th atatched were surrounded while on the way to release union prisiners and all but five of the 8th were either killed or taken prisiner. Col Dorr was wounded & taken. one of the Majors was killed. Only five had come into camp. My mind is tortured with aprehensions of the fate of our boy. He may have been killed on the field. or if not he may have been captured and may have to linger in loathsome southern prisins for months - Col Brownlow of the 1st loyal Tenn Cav was in the same engagement. He escaped with 16 of his Regt by cutting through the Rebel lines. He stated that the last he seen of the 8th Iowa they were trying the same desperate feat. & it is posible that more may have acomplished the design. I can only hope & pray to our Father who doeth all things well that the life of our solder boy may be precious in his sight. We are looking for the steamer Grey Eagle. to day with mail when we may get further news of the disaster and I almost dread to hear the details; The drums are beating for church - The Chaplain of the 37th Ill Veterans is present & I think will preach - I will atend -

Sabbath afternoon: Preaching to day by the Rev _____ 37th Ill He is of the O S Presbyterian and an exhortation by the Chaplain of the 7th Ky. the meeting was held in the shade of a large pecan tree. Barton was present but did not take part only to give out "a few verses". The 21st is at the bend about five miles above us - I have not seen Mr. Hill yet - One of our men will start home on furlough the first opportunity probably to morrow, his papers are ready - I hope he may recruit and have as good a time as I did a year ago. But it rarely falls to the lot of any one to have so many oppertunities for real enjoyment as I did during my visit, almost every incident or circumstance tended to make my sojourn agreeable and happy - I am not enjoying the best of health neither have I for two or three months as you are aware from my frequent complaining - but as I am somewhat better now and have not missed a day duty yet. I'll try and bear up as cheerfully as posible - I was talking to day with the surgeon about getting a leave unless I improved in health soon. He told me that any time I chose he would atend to it. He recommended me to use quinine every morning as a stimulant. To alay any uneasiness on your part on my account I will Just say that I am suffering slightly from dyspepsia, ocasioned by hard and innutritious and illy prepared food and exposure incident to camp life. My liver and digestive aparatus generally is slightly deranged - somewhat afecting my back - all of which I think (and so does the surgeon) would be remedied by about rest and good living somewhere in a more northern climate, I think about Lat 41 [degrees] 30' - 5 1/2 miles east of Desmoines - how would that location suit my better half? I will let you know more in about two weeks - as I have a prospect of a change in afairs that I think will be more pleasant to me and where I can live better & have less arduous duties - but increased responsibilities. Now my precious say nothing about my complaints - or prospects, and don't think

less of me for complaining - I tell you all my troubles when it might be better perhaps to quietly keep them to my self - but I know that in your breast I have sympathy. What a blank would my life be without that sympathy and congeniality of sentiment. My imagination dwells with rapture at the prospect of a quiet life in future store if our lives and health is spared - But I must not dwell on a subject so near my heart - I often question whether it is right for men of the mental organization of the Garretts - with such an intense love for home and family to ever leave home at all. but then the same answer comes up that did before I enlisted if my home and family are so dear to me they are worth fighting for. Gen Canby is reorganizing the 19th A.C. and I think consolidating the 13th with it. We are in the 3rd (Gen Lawler's) Division and will most likely remain here for some time yet - The rebels have been threatening us here for two or three months but retreat about the time we get ready to give them a good whipping - As for news I presume you will get it by the papers before it would reach you from me. The accounts from Atlanta are thrilling. the rebels there are fighting with a desperation that gives evidence of despair for their cause. The Naval fight in Mobile Bay was somewhat amusing, if indeed any fight could be so. Mr would-be Admiral Buchanon Commander of the Rebel Ram Tennessee was so mortified that he had to go into the fight in such a hurry that he had not time to "get shaved" as great crowds of the elite ladies & gentlemen of Mobile had come down the bay in steamers to witness their proud old "Admiral" gobble up & sink the savages of Admiral Faraguts fleet - Well he got snugly taken in & if his beard really annoys him he can surely find a "Barber" among so many "Barbarians"

Monday afternoon: My dear one: Yesterday evening I received yours of Aug 4th. I was happy to learn that you was well, and that you was able to take care of your aunt in her sickness: I was disappointed to learn that you was still in Ill - and here probably it would be better to stop. I am so awkward in my way of expressing my mind that you might misaprehend my meaning - You have written to me & set two diferent times to start home. & have allowed yourself to be persuaded out of your purpose - This is what vexes me - but I am satisfied that you have a reason for it. I can not think that my wife invariably of so firm a purpose in her arangements that I used to know the hour of her return, has become vacillating and without her former firmness - it can not be so. You are doing right in this instance in caring for your sick aunt. She has been a friend to you - But if she should be better & you can arange your buisness so as to go & feel that you can enjoy life as well in the quiet of our father's home as in the society of your friends in Ill. I would most certainly be better satisfied to hear of you from Des Moines. Your remark that "of all men I am the least calculated to be away from home" I feel to be true. Although not by any means flatering to me as a military man - A man may have military capacity and ability and have such a love for home and family - that he is -- I hardly know how to express it but he cant amount to much - His mind is dwelling in suspense for the welfare of his family or looking forward to the day of a happy reunion at home. The soldier should have no wife or children to occupy his sleepless nights have no home to look forward to as his final earthly paradise, when when human gore shall cease to crimson the field of battle. His tent and blankets is his home, any woman he can aproach will be his wife for the hour. The present is all he cares for - such is the life of the contented soldier - But I must close this harangue I know that you are looking forward with an eye of faith to a bright future - I too shall not cease to think on the happy past and hope for brighter days to come. May Our Father bless you my dear precious Mary is ever the prayer of your husband
Lyle A. Garrett

(No 42)

Morganza L. a Aug 28" 1864

My Dearest: Yesterday I received yours of Aug 14th (No 36). It found me in better health & consequently in better spirits. I don't know that I have reason for complaint - & if you will excuse me for my former complaint about matters & men & things generally in the army I'll say no more about it, but if necessary act. I do not know where you are - whether you are yet in Ill or where & as there is a verry great dearth of news here I hardly know what to say - Our branch of the army of the trans Mississippi department - has been reorganizing. We are now in the 3rd Division 19th A.C. Brig Gen Lawler Commanding division. I expect I have told you this before, perhaps often. Well did I ever give you a description of Brig Gen Lawler? Did you ever see Judge Napier, ex Esqr? They look as much alike as two fat old Swine of the gender called feminine a week before the No. of small stock swine is increased by about two doz. Lawler is a Catholic - Judge Napier is almost any thing else (except a loyal man). The Citizens within Gen Lawler's command are Catholic French and as asumed religion can be abused or rather abuses are perpetrated under its guise - SO with Our commander. He certainly is prostituting his power to a base

This is a verry thickly settled portion of L. a. and there is but one or two men in all this district who pretend to be loyal to the U S Gov. and yet there is not a family but what has from one to 3 or 4 union soldiers detailed as "safe-guards" to their property - no soldier dare molest any thing on the premises. What do you think of that my little Abrahamic wife (I believe you would vote for uncle Abe if white ladies of American descent were allowed the elective franchise wouldn't you?) Well I will any way under all the circumstances, but I'd like him better if he would convert some of his "little stories" into orders sustaining such men as Gen Canby, of this department. Gen Payne at Paduca Gen Washburn of Memphis & all of their stamp & ship such as Brig Gen Lawler. Maj Gen Banks, & all such uncertain & unprincipled men to Central or South America along with Mr. & Mrs. Eaker & the one hundred other families from Graves Co Ky. Gen Lawler is known to have sent all kinds of supplies outside of our lines under guard under pretense that they are for union people, the 21st Iowa were sent out as guard at one time & while the goods were being transfered from our wagons to the carts of the negroes some of our men asked a darky where he was taking his load to answered "O, to Massa Dick Taylor" What do you think

of Lawler or how long would it take to "starve the C S out by guarding their fields of corn & cotton suggar &c. Their cattle, sheep, goats, geese & chickens &C and never fight them, how long will the rebellion last - But I have learned to day that Gen Canby has his eye on Lawler in particular. I think (& you know a soldier is supposed to know all about it, that when the Government gets in real earnest and commence on the plan of some of our Generals & keep it up by subsisting as far as posible on the enemy & quit guarding their crops - I have little doubt that the war with all its horrors would soon be over. But as the mail has gone out and will not likely go for a day or two I will bid you good bye for the present. I have written to day to Cy. I hope to get news from soon.

Monday morning (Augt 29th B Arnolds birth day - a fit time for the enemies of our country to meet in concert to plot treason against the government). Last night we had a heavy rain had to get into our bunks to keep out of water - Sleeping with so much water in the tent rather wasted me I awoke during the night with a pressure or pain on my breast - I cannot stand the hardship I could a year ago. Last night I read in the St Louis Democrat a long account of Gen McCork's & Gen Stoneman's great raid south of Atlanta - The 8 Iowa Cav 1st Tenn & 4th Ky composed the advance of McCork's & have nearly all been killed or captured - My mind is in a fever of suspense for the fate of our boy, he may posibly not have gone with the expedition

as it was to be composed of picked men & horses - none were allowed to go but the very stoutest as it was rather a desperate enterprise. I suppose that few expeditions ever underwent so much fatigue and hardship - some of those who returned rode 70 miles in one day & had not slept for four days & nights - but few men have the physical ability to endure such hardships - I can only hope that God in his mercy will spare an only son - There were 21 Commissioned Officers of the 8 killed or wounded & taken prisoners - from this the Regt must nearly all be taken. The idea of weary months spent in loathsome southern prisons haunts me with forebodings for the future of a boy with all his faults so dear to me - His love of Country & bravery is beyond question with me, But hope yet shines but to cheer me & he may be safe. There was a Brigade left here for Port Hudson 5 or 6 days ago & returned last evening. They found a rebel force in the rear of Pt Hudson & defeated them & took 1,000 prisoners. The news up to the present is very favorable from all points. It is reported that Gen Hancock took steamers on the James River & started down in view of Reb lookouts - in day light as if he were going out to sea & during the night returned & went up & captured Ft Darling. If it is so he has cut Lee's armies in two & Richmond is surely ours - Mobile is bound to succumb to superior force & skill. Atlanta the same. The hopes of the enemies of all mankind are waning. They now look to harmony in the Chicago convention to day for something to be done in their favor - There are too many elements of discord there to fraternize. But I must close where are you to day my dear wife - my hope for future earthly bliss - One thing I do hope that where ever you may be those around you will respect me enough to allow you to have a quiet hour in which to write to me without subjecting you to answer questions & carry on a frivolous & light conversation.

There are many things I would like to speak of with regard to our financial or home affairs. but will wait until I know where you are - give my love to any friends - I had like to have forgotten about the little orphan boy you mentioned. You ought to have taken him. We could have given him a home & our affection - I tell you if I find such an opportunity I'll take him in - good bye my own dear girl - may Heaven bless you is the prayer of your husband L A Garrett

P.S. I have had no table to write on & have made rather a hard looking scribble of it L. A. G

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Wednesday noon Aug 31st. We are about starting off on board transports - I have no idea whether we go up or down the river. I will write as soon as I have an opportunity ever yours L A Garrett

(No 43)

Army of Trans-Miss. Dt - 23" Iowa

Morganzia L a Sept 8th 1864

My Dear Wife: I have been waiting for the mail to bring me letters. but will wait no longer. I have not recd a line from you since yours of Aug 14th (No 36) There has been a steamer boat arival this morning from above & I shall hope to hear from you. I wrote to Austin a few days since. I have no word yet from Cyrus. I believe before I mailed my last to you we were ordered to be ready to embark on board steamers at a moments notice. Well about a week ago at 10 P.M. we were ordered to be "ready to embark at 6 O'clock to morrow morning", we were up & had breakfast over before day-light. we are here yet. Three Regiments of our brigade left & the 35 Wiscons & 23 Iowa are left here for want of transportation - We expect to follow in a few days - I guess we will either go to Gen Steel or establish a post somewhere near Napolion Ark. There is nothing going on here of interest - more than the fact that Gen Canby has sent for a few Officials some of them of the 23d Iowa to report to him at N. O. Capt Ballard has gone at the polite request. He has been acting Provost Marshall at this post. Jester Hedge Sutler to the 23d & his clerk, Ex Capt R H & Ex Adjutant C. O. Dewey (each having resigned & figuring around Hedges) are all at N. O. These names are all mentioned in conexion with cotton - passes or permits to take mules to O. & of selling shoes to "our C S A sisters" outside the lines - There has been a pretty free use of ink & paper in the way of forged permits &c

This piece of gossip to be kept by you my girl

Gen Canby is correcting abuses (and they are legion) as fast as he can - What a fearful mass of corruption he has been grapeling with since taking command of this Division. There are some things to cheer us amid so much corruption and infidelity to the Government. There are men of genius whose acts will shed luster on the history of the present. Men whose honest untiring energy is already dispelling the sickening gloom of the past - When we look at the thousands - yes millions of dollars worth of supplies that have been furnished the south within the past year at the diferent posts along the Miss R. from Cairo to N O and think of the perjured - blackened souls, engaged in this illicit trafic & high officials who for the sak of a part of the spoils have permitted these things to pass unnoticed until the actions emboldened by success have carried these things so far that it was imposible not to be caught - yet while many of them are expiating their crimes on ship island or the Dry Fortugus. Others will pass through the world unknown as rouges - The glitter of gold hides a multitude of crimes. But as I shall not constitute myself a court-martial I will drop the subject - & let Justice overtake as many as posible. Yesterday we received the glorious news that Atlanta has fallen into Shermans hands - This news came through rebel sources & may or may not be so. They claimed to have evacuated it & lost eight hundred men in the opperation". If they get off with the loss of eight thousand they may thank their stars for it

We had a report also not confirmed that Richmond has fallen. These reports may be premature, but these strong holds together with Mobile & all other rebel dens will have to succumb to the Justice of our cause & the invincibility of our armies & unless God is against us the day is surely not far distant - Yet it may be that He has yet to punish us yet further for allowing that Old Arch Fiend & hideous monster - the democratic party to stalk abroad with curses & poisonous breath all over the country of our homes - Why the John chinaman or the turbaned Turk may well charge us with imbecility. Their taunts should not provoke our ire. but cause the cheek to tinge with the blush of shame & nerve our arms to wipe out the foul race of reptiles. Gunpowder well & properly applied is the best remedy for poison there is - If we only had the wretches who have assembled at Chicago to mature plans of treason - if we had them in the Saltpeter works, some where like Sherman has their brethren at Atlanta, they would soon bawl a different tune. There would be some howling to "Father Abraham", "or any other man" But I need not be preaching a war sermon and if I should seem bitter - you must not consider it a bore for every soldier considers that he is licensed & regularly installed to preach & give lectures on Copperheadism - every where & under all circumstances & it has been so long since we have had an opportunity to administer the shafts of Justice to the enemy in the field that we must be content to let gass suffice

Well my dear wife this is the last page & it seems that I have not said any thing that will either interest or instruct - & I feel almost like tearing it up & try to say something sensible - but as I have tried that before & failed to see wherein the improvement consisted I will send it as it is & trust your magnanimity to excuse any deficiency in the way of taste or interest - there is really nothing to write about & I can only do as too many are already doing - look forward to the time of my release from this thralldom - for I do assure you that it is getting to be a monotonous & unhappy life to me - My health is tolerably good at present - but has been rather poor all summer. I am stimulating some on bitters & have been able so far to drive myself up to duty without missing a day yet although I have felt at times like giving up - the surgeon has told me two or three times that if I said so he would have me excused from duty - I still told him to wait a few days - & finally I feel better - it don't do to give up I am determined to keep going as long as I can consistant with my duty to my self & my family - I cannot endure the idea of being a half soldier - I'll wear myself out first. We are looking every day for the paymaster - he will pay us two months wages if he comes - & I will send you a part of it - as pocket money - I will draw nearly two hundred dollars & it will take half of it to pay my debts then I must have some to keep on hand to keep up expenses & it may be posible that I will get a leave of absence before we are paid again - If I should or can I am determined to go regardless of expense - anxious as I am to cancel my debts - I do wish to see you so much if only for a week or two - I have written to Austin to sell our horses & lot in town & land on Agency & if posible get out of debt - now while Greenbacks at 40 cts to the dollar will pay then you can see the importance of this step: I learn that stock feeders are paying high prices for corn & I think it might be well to sell our corn in the field or have it cut so as to sell it to feeders - you will do all you can I know to help me out of these dificulties & when I get home we can start out in the world again unencumbered by debt - If you can effect any thing by urging these things I will be happy to have you do it - I had hoped to get mail before sending this, but it has failed to come & the mail will close in a short time & I know that you will be anxious to get No 43 I will close give my love to father & mother & all. Marion - Dewey & all the friends here are well, & may our Father protect my dear one is the prayer of your husband L A Garrett

(No 44)

Morganzia L. a Sept 15th 64

Dear wife: Day after day I have looked in vain for your cherished & precious letters, until the suspense is becoming unpleasant - yet I cannot think it your fault. Yours of Aug 14th is the last I have received from you - We receive a mail almost every day - & I have always received your letters so regularly & promptly & they are all so plainly mailed too that I cannot imagine why it is that I have been disappointed so long - But I am willing to believe that by some means - the mail has failed to do its duty. Capt Walker returned to the Regt a few days ago. he says he seen you & some other lady in a wagon crossing the the river - with father that is all that I have heard of you for over a month - was he mistaken in the woman? Where are you my dear girl?

I received a letter a few days since from Cyrus - He was with McCook in his great raid three days when his mule played out & he made his way back to Marietta: & remained there about a week & came back to Kingston - where he wrote from on the 24th Augst his health was good - weighed 140. One Batallion of the 8th had gone back to Nashville. He expected the rest to follow soon - Shermans recent victories & the fall of Atlanta has caused great rejoicing throughout the army & in fact every where except in Copperhead circles. We have a report that Petersburg has fallen - it is not confirmed however - but we are prepared to hear its confirmation

When I last wrote to you we were expecting to go up the river to some point in Ark but it seems now that we are to settle down here & pass the present at least in idleness - except so far as picket & a kind of camp or garrison duty is concerned - such a monotonous life don't suit me. I can neither enjoy health or good spirits at it. We have been looking again & again for the paymaster for a month or two but that verry popular individual - when present, has not made his august appearance - & we are in a great straight for means to supply our table - We are drawing our rations now from the Q. M. department. Hard tack - bacon &c. There is great complaint among the men on account of their scanty rations. There is no vegetables to be had - the consequence is that Scurvy is begining to make its appearance - in our Regt. There have several Regt came up from N. O. & Mobile They are suffering verry much from this cause - some of the men (of an Indiana Regt) have great sores over their boddies all this is for want of antiscorbuties of any kind whatever. The mail has Just came in - nothing for me this time what can be the cause! I see some of the letters are as late as the 6th of sept from Nevada. I hardly know what to say further. I am afraid you are sick & not able to write, but you would surely in that case get some one to write for you - I cannot write further at present & the mail will close in an hour. I will go & see Marion it may be that he has letters from home. News this morning from Faraguts fleet in Mobile Bay is that the fleet is in line of battle in front of & in range of the Citty - next news we have will either be a surrender or a fight.

There were no letters to day for Marion - some of the men have letters from DesMoines to he 8th. They look cheerful while I most certainly look down my nose & feel quite chopfallen. but I will try & take it as philosophicaly as posible & wait not knowing what a day may bring forth - Our Brigade is being reorganized. We are now under command of Col Wm M E Dye of the 20th Iowa - he is a regular U S officer & very rigid in his discipline more so by far than any thing we have ever endured. There is a provost guard around the Brigade - & we are penned inside - can get out only by registering our names at head qrs. on going out & on returning - three Com officer of the Regt at one time - the men (privats) can go out 3 from a Co - at a time by getting a pass from Co Commander. We are encamped behind a Levee - about 150 yds. The Provost line is about midway between our camp & the Levee. It has been my custom heretofore to walk out to the levee in the morning & evening while it is cool & promenade up & down or look over our army as it lies on each side of the Levee up & down the river - That pleasure is now denied me

The sight of the majestic "Father of waters" is denied me. I can only see the smoke of its floating Palaces or hear their shrill whistle - Pent up in the narrow limits of a military camp after having spent a long & eventful life with liberty unrestrained - I feel indignant & almost desperate, a life in the army for a man of my temperament & former habits is bad enough at best - but when I am brought down to such a rigid discipline as this it is a little more than I am prepared to endure without complaint But O, happy day! in the bright future when the necessity for these things will have passed away & peace shall have been conquered. I am somewhat nervous to day & have written a verry poor letter - I hope to be able to do myself Justice next time - I don't like to complain of ill health every time - I had felt much better for a few days than I have for months - but do not feel so well to day - I have been on heavy duty for 3-4 days and the sun is so verry hot that it has rather worsted me again Well dear Mary I must close - give my love to all & remember me in your prayers & may Our Father be your God is the prayer of your husband ever L A Garrett

I forgot to say any thing about money matters & it would be useless as I have no idea when we will be paid - if you should need money & I know you will you will have to sell some of the horses or land - It is not my wish that you should want. do the best you can my girl. the war will soon be over surely when we can enjoy the fruits of

of our efforts, in behalf of our country. News from Sherman to day is that Hoods army are deserting by scores & coming over to our lines. I hope the whole of them will either do so or be annihilated. I think the S.C. will collapse with a crash. the people - not Jeff. or his leaders, will take the rule - We are much disappointed that the draft has failed to come upon the 5th, Lincoln will loose votes by it whether he is right or not

(No 50)

Duvalis Bluffs Ark. November 3rd 1864

Dear Wife: Here I am, surrounded by a gloomy atmosphere and somewhat low in spirits. I have received no letters from my loved one since yours of Oct 6th received while at the mouth of White Riv. near three weeks ago. I have no letter from any one since. (except on buisness) and this is decidedly the poorest place to get news, we have ever been in. Why I'm afraid if, they keep us here and the war should close sudenly that we would be forgotten and left out in the cold. Now Mary you must allow me to growl a little to day under such a multiplicity of evils. Then too I was roused up early and sent out with a detail of fifty-four men to work on a fort, and kept out after it had been raining all morning, the men growling biterly. The Capt in command finally relieved us. But it is still raining a little and the wind is surging up through the almost leafless and faded forest. Some of our men have been over to Little Rock. They say it is a fine place, and the Soldiers are well provided with winter qrs. I suppose that you will have read in the newspapers long before this reaches you any war news I might send you. There is a "Camp rumor" that Gen Davidson has moved on and captured Tyler in Texas, and released over 2,000 Union prisiners and armed them. It is a great feat if the news is correct. There are two men of our Co now with us having been exchanged, taken from us in Texas, that were taken to Tyler and kept in the "Stockade". They give horid accounts of the way the rebels treat our men there. It makes my blood boil to think of such indignities offered to the true friends of our country, God grant that their release is sure. I heard from Cyrus a few days ago but have no letter from him since the 24th of Aug, he was well, and the Regiment was going (it was thought) to Nashville. If you will direct your letters via Nashville they will reach him. I wrote to him last night. I would recommend you to write to him often, I think that his negligence is owing to the fact that he cannot write a good hand

& he dislikes to write

Now Mary I have given all that I can think of that will be likely to interest you, with reference to what is going on here, so I will turn, where my treasure is "for there my heart is also". I have written to Austin and requested him to hand the communication to you so that you are fully acquainted with its contents, and have probably passed your Judgement on the merits of my proposition. I will say in this connection that as another reason why I would be willing and anxious to go in with him as a partner, his ideas and mine, so well accord in so many respects about farming, particularly in reference to plowing, as to depth and the manner of doing it. I am more convinced, from observation on these southern plantations, that the main secret of successful farming is in deep and thorough plowing, and that too as far as possible in autumn. There is no other man that I would feel willing to go into a stock or farming business with except my brothers or father, The want of confidence in others owing to our natural selfishness would be an objection, But in this case there is no lack on my part and I don't think there is on his. My object will be to go into the business with energy.. and my theory that where there is union, there is strength, I know that one head ought to be able to carry on the business of a farm and I have no fears to embark on as large a scale as our means will admit. You may think and it may be so that under all the circumstances these calculations are premature, But I think the rebellion is fast drawing to a close, and at the farthest I expect to return to private life and my former associations and occupation in a little over ten months, and as I have decided not to commence again on the old farm, I feel anxious to have it sold - and a new one secured. These are fast times, and now is the time to sell improved farms & to buy raw prairie, which I would rather do than to buy improved, unless the place was new & the improvements of a proper kind, we could then build to suit our taste. I have mentioned three different sections of country - there are others equally as good, perhaps better

The country over between Coon and North rivers is good and would suit me first rate, for instance up about Devins I am not particular, as to place so that we get a high, sightly place & good land. You will be an excelent Judge as to the site and Austin's Judgement as to quality of land & site will be satisfactory, So that if the place can be sold You know about what will suit me, and I am anxious to hear of, the consumation "so devoutly to be wished". Now my little wife you above all others know me best and are most directly interested in these matters, and you are fully capable to manage these things with Austins council. While he is by appointment, my atorney to transact buisness in my, I will expect you to take an active part, knowing as I do the confidence he has in you, and that you will be likely to agree on most matters, In one of his letters to me he said that he was really afraid to undertake to sell and buy for me again, I promptly answered him to go ahead and have no fears on that account and I would say again, sell at the best price that can be got and have the payments sure, buy on the best terms posible and see that the titles are sure, and have no fears but that I will be satisfied. Well my paper is nearly filled, and there is much yet that I wished to say, but I have probably said more already than will be interesting I will, ask a few questions & quit, you will remember that we got some little red berries at Smiths & I planted them in the garden at fathers, did they grow? Has father many grapevines growing - (I mean in the summer it will be winter I expect before you get this). Have they sold any of the horses yet, or the crop? What do you think about the propositions and plans I have been making? My mind, naturally turns homeward, as soon as I awak, and instead of studying tactics, which have become dry and irksome I am studying and reading all I can find on stockraising and fruit-growing, &c, I we should each live, I hope that we will yet be able to occupy a good & comfortable home, don't you? There was a small mail to day, (one Story Co Reg is for J J Harrison was all our Co received), Well my precious wife may our Father keep the & protect thee is the prayer of your husband
L A Garrett

I have Just discovered that I have verry awkwardly commenced writing on the wrong page to be in strict acordence etiquette. But under all the circumstances I shall not expect severe criticism. Had I commenced writing so before the days of "Romance" were over I should certainly commence on a new sheet, but I will go ahead. I have seen a late copy of the State Register, giving an account of the great scare in Iowa, It was somewhat amusing, but there was nothing done that was not necesisary, and I presume that if "Bill Thombson" or any other gurrilla had made his appearance he would have met a warm reception, It is well to be prepared for any emergency, I am proud of Iowa's soldiers in the field and I think a majority of the State Militia would aquit themselves with honor, in case the state should be invaded. The vote to be taken next Tuesday will tell of what material, those at home are composed, There are but few McClelenites in the 23rd, as the vote will show. They are mostly quite illiterate. We are still in Mc E Dyers Brigade, & if money or fighting would take us out, we could soon do either. He persists in keeping up a strong Camp guard, cold or wet, which is a nuisance an an insult to soldiers, such as the 23d, But we are commanded to be subject to the powers that be. We are on duty both Officers and men about every other day, exposed to about the most changable and disagreeable climate there is.

My health is very good with the exception of a sore throat, causing a severe cough, which I have not been able to get rid of for two or three months, I have been verry cautious and shall take the best posible care of my self as I can under the circumstances. I have been afraid sometimes that so much exposure to night air and lying out on the ground would materiall injure me but I require but little sleep and lay down & take a nap any get up and move around or sit by a fire when it is safe to have one. We usually have a fire back at the "reserve" when there is no enemy in our immediate front as is the case at present. The enemy have mostly gone north to help their friends to elect

"Little M"

Two of our men have Just returned from a visit to friends in the 29th Iowa at Little Rock every thing quiet there. The 33 Iowa had Just started out to Ft Smith to guard a train through That is a good oppertunity to get taken in by gurrellas. Some of the Iowa boys at L. Rock had recd letters from home to the 20th They say it had been snowing 3 days & was quite cold I am anxiously looking for 2 - 3 letters due from you

No 52

Camp of 23rd Iowa Brownsville Ark Nov 25 /64

My Dear Wife. I have as you will see by the date of this neglected to write longer than usual. I have not been feeling well for a week & kept waiting until I should feel better. Yesterday I tried to write, but found that the influence of of opiates, my pen failed to perform its duty. & kept putting words wrong end first & then again it would say things I did not intend. These little steel pointed missiles are wicked instruments if not under proper controll. And if this morning it should commit some freaks, Just excuse your husband & attribute it to the pen, will you? I will not tire you with a long complaint, but I have been suffring to some extent for over three months with a slight cold & sore throat, until about ten or twelve days ago. I was taken with diarhea, & in a few days, runing into a kind of flux which lasted for five days, discontinued, but diarhea kept to me. I had during this time been taking, pills, salts & opiates from the surgeon. He finally told me to take nothing for a few days. I did so, until three or four days since I commenced on the drug I brought with me (Mr Nashes prescription). I am getting better & will be able for duty to morrow, I have missed one detail, the only one since I came to the Regt more than a year since, I have performed duty often when I felt worse than I do this morning, but shall guard against in in future

Yesterday I received your No 44. Yesterday, it was a surprise as I had made a mistake in the Nos & thought I had received all the back Nos. The latest date I have from you is the note of Oct 30 sent with Austins, I am anxious to hear from you. We have received papers from Chicago in five day, since the election. Why is it that the mails are so slow. There are at least two letters due me from you. But we must learn to wait with patience.

We have glorious news from the north, Union victories every where [illegible] Delaware, N Jersey & Kentucky, such a unanimous victory over the enemies of freedom has never been won before, Such a victory at such a time is verry cheering to us in the field. This is a rainy gloomy day. We have had some quite hard rains within the the past three weeks, & some quite cold weather. Though the ground has not frozen more than two inches, but after having spent the summer in Louisiana the cold is the more severe, I don't know how we could stand such winters as you have in Iowa. I hope we may have an opprtunity to try it next winter, I would be willing to risk it even now if the war was over. I have some hope that when the Southern people see the unanimity with which the people of the North support the administration & the cheerful support of the soldiers, and their expressed determination to put down the rebellion at the point of the bayonet at all hazzards, all this

will most certainly cause Jeffs and his people to become quite weak in the knees. Already they are begining to discuss what course they will persue in case they should at any time think it a military necesity to evacuate the Capital, a good idea isn't it? Best to be prepared for emergencies, Massa Jeffs! Nothing like it, as the evacuation might posibly be brought on prematurely Unconditional might insinuate himself with his gallant army - in such a shape that the matter would have to be hurried, I am all anxiety to hear from Sherman. The latest we have from his is that he was about starting in three columns, one to Charleston, one to Savanna, & one to Mobile. This is certainly a verry bold move, but it is to be presumed that he knows what he is about. Hood has crossed the Tenn River & was at (our) last accounts, about midway between Memphis & Nashville. If there should be force enough in Tenn to attend to him, as well as Price has been in Mo. matters will soon asume a diferent aspect. But I am a little fearful. Time alone will develop the wisdom of Shermans strategic movements. It is reported here that Gen Canby has died from his wound. If correct we have lost one of our best Generals, his place will be hard to fill at present. He was fast bringing order out chaos in this Department. I have not heard who is to succeed him

Well here I am on the last page already, I must leave you to glean news from, the press, and talk of home O home sweet home, when shall thy welcome greet me, when shall I be permitted to greet those loved ones beneath thy friendly shelter! Echo answers, only ten months, scant. This time will soon roll around & let us hope with it the funeral knell of rebellion. Then the thousands of hearts now pining for the the love and sympathy of home will swell with the glad shouts of a disenthralled people, The emaciated frames of the brave thousands languishing in loathsome prisins, will stalk forth to the sunlight of liberty with (illegible) hearts. O! what Joys await millions on that day. But with what anguish must other thousands be wrung when those who left their homes for the last time buoyant with hope never to return, but let us turn from so sad a picture. My mind sadens when I think of our own dear boy, that we cannot even hear from him. I do not know whether he is one of the fifteen thousand Cavalry with Kilpatrick under Sherman or whether his Regt is in Tenn.

As to our buisness affairs at home I will say nothing at present having written I believe in all my letters on that subject for six months. I was amused at Ems. style of submission to my criticism on her Style of writing - I will answer her in a few days. The clouds have broken away to some extent, and I feel better to day than I have for quite a while, I am in hopes that I will enjoy good health from this forward. The great dificulty is to get provisions suitable to keep in health, variety is verry small - Too much hard tack & bacon, coffee &c. But by being cautious I think I can endure it - ten months (Scant) as the boys say)

It gives me pleasure to learn that your health is so good - and that you are enjoying yourself so well. I know that you are with true sympathizing friends & those too congenial. Give my love to father & mother & all the friends to Aunt Sarah & all my cousins, & may our Father keep & guide the my own dear wife is the constant prayer of yours, Lyle

(No 53)

Camp of 23rd Iowa Inft Brownsville Ark. Nov 29th /64

My Dear Wife: Since writing on the 25th I have recd yours of Nov 4th. It does me good to receive your cheerful & loving letters. The warm hearted sentiment pervading all your letters is cheering to me in my loneliess & buoys me up to duty, O' how could I cheerfully bear up under all my arduous duties, amid privation, & at times in poor health were it not that I know that in the breast of my precious wife beats a fond heart ever true to me. One who "would gladly share my hardships", But my own dear wife you cannot share them with me now only in your sympathy, This is enough only let me know that I have your sympathy & I am happy, in contemplating the bright future that hope points to. Now I would not have think me homesick, or that I brood over my fate in being kept so long absent from those I hold so dear, but I cannot help thinking almost constantly - of home & home scenes & our prospects in future, As you remark in your last "I long O' so much for a home" & if I were to follow my inclination I would write of nothing else, & I feel as if I could harangue on the subject every day, I find myself often when on a march or in going about the country, passing a cottage or dwelling of any kind especially if the surroundings are neat & in taste, after passing such a place my mind becomes absorbed in speculation as to the way we will have our cottage surrounded by shrubery & all that is beautiful. O' I get up fine pictures, I wonder if we will realize them?

My health is gradually improving. Yesterday I walked over to the R. R. station & back 2 1/2 ms I was quite tired when I got home, I have a severe cold & feel weak on that account, but I am better this morning, my throat is clear of soreness for the first time for 3 or 4 months. I was on picket from Saturday morning last until Sunday morning, lay out in the open air, on some brush & leaves, suffered no inconvenience, except taking cold. I think this a very unhealthy country. Weather very changeable. some times freezing cold then in 24 hours raining, then a few warm days To day the house flies are as saucy as in summer! an other cause of bad health is that the country is almost a level & when it rains the water hardly gets away, & only settles about 18 inches below the surface on high ground, as we call a slight elevation, such as our present camp. We have little wells all over camp, from 12 to 18 inches deep, tolerably good water. The soil is a poor yellow & on the flats, the soil is a kind of white clay, tough & compact, on the higher ground the soil is porous or spongy & the water being so near the surface causes the air in the tents to be very damp & the atmosphere at night cold & damp both in & out of doors. And for all this except during a wet season, wells have to be dug fifty feet & water scarce at that. There is said to be a better country over on the Ark River, "but its sickly over thar" as if it were not "sickly" here. I can't see why any one can see any attraction here, Prairie soil is worthless, timber soil is very poor, poorly watered, climate changable & unhealthy as the sallow complexion of the natives will atest. But it is a great place for wild game of all kinds. Bear, Deer, Turkey, Squirils &c & there are always those who will live as best they can if they can subsist by the chase

Tuesday eve: Well the order came this afternoon to march to morrow at 1 P.M. We commenced taking down camp & have sent a part of our equipage over to the station to be sent down on the cars, I think we will go direct to Memphis & will reach there in five or six days. We hear nothing definite from Hood's operations, but it is rumored that he is playing mischief generally, One of our men left Memphis four days ago, he says that a part of Hoods forces were within 25 miles of there at that time & that all the Cavalry at that place were out skirmishing with his advance. There was great excitement. Our Cavalry can hold him in check until reinforcements reach there & the force we have out at Nashville & other points will come up in his rear. Boat loads of Soldiers were hurrying up the river to Memphis. He may run a reckless & mad career for a while, but will most certainly meet the same defeat that Price did in Mo. The Rebels are growing more desperate, it will only hurry on their final overthrow. A few nights since the Gurrillas who infest this miserable Country chained a yoke of oxen on a bridge leading across a Cypress swamp five miles this side of Little Rock, the chains (Log chains) were put around the rails, so when the engine came rushing on the poor helpless oxen, the driving wheels Jumped over the Logchains & off the track. The Engine fell through the bridge, the tender & carrs pitched off the track which was on an embankment of 8 - 10 feet some went on one side & some on the other, I was a general smash up two or the soldiers wer killed, several wounded, one poor woman had both he legs broken. I suppose the wretches who did it were near

enough to see or hear the mischief they had done & were satisfied that they had accomplished something, will they did kill a few men who were worth more probably than a Regt of such cowardly sneaks. Such buisness will not prosper, it only harms a few & does no one any good. The Road has since been repaired & trains are runing as usual. To morrow our Regt baggage will go down to the Bluffs, the Regt will march at 1 - & camp about 8 miles from here, & march in on the next day - then likely we will load the goods on boats the night following or the next day - & about Sunday we will reach Memphis, I can't guess any further, but will write to you as soon as I can after we stop. It is uncertain what the future may be but hope is ever in the ascendant with me & I certainly look to get into a better country - but we may have to fight for it. Well don't the picture on the Rebel side look dark? With their main army shut up within the defences of Richmond - Sherman with one of the very best if not the best armies ever on the march, moving right through the very heart of their country almost without opposition. He is marching where he can destroy Lees communications & supplies. He may release our prisiners at Andersonville & other places. He will without doubt capture Charleston or Savanna - posibly both - We may be mistaken as to his movements, but if he is moving as reported we may reasonably look for great results. In view of all these things, the Rebellion looks to me verry much as though it was about played out.

I had intended to have written a note to Austin, but will wait now until I receive a letter from him, as I am looking for one every day. Tell him the sale of polly is verry satisfactory to me & only wish he could sell all the property we have as well. If Bert is something extra & is going to be one that can go to DesMoines & back as quick as any other horse, a real boanerges of a fellow & he can't sell him to good advantage, he might keep him. I like a horse that's got the bottom, but Kit & the rest I would sell, while everything is up to such wild figures. It will not always be so, remember '56 & the crash following - It's bound to ocur again, I would not be blinded by the present fabulous prices, but profit by taking advantage of the times, Greenbacks will be in demand in less than a year look out for breakers - Well my dear I must close. Tell Em & Liby that I would have written to them, but that I suspect that my wife will read portions of my letters to her sisters so that they will know just how their Soger - brother is getting along, give them my love, & the same to Father & Mother & all the rest, & may Our Father keep & protect thee my own dear wife is the prayer of your husband L A Garrett

No 54)

Camp of 23rd Iowa Inft Duvalls Bluffs, Ark

Monday P.M. Dec 5th 1864

My Dearest: I have Just received yours of Nov 23d (No 50) No 49 has failed to come to time, but as all the rest have come in due time (or after they were due,) I shall look for it. I was indeed happy to learn that you were all in usual health & that you are so verry healthy. I am sorry that I cannot report so favorably for myself, but "honesty is the best policy" & I am compelled to admit that I don't feel well to say the least. But I think by the next time I write that I'll feel better, I think its only cold, my throat is much better, but such a cough as I have! last night & night before I had the privalege of remaining in my bunk most of the night, I most generally have to get up & make a fire & sit by it two or three hours & cough, & I cough so hard too, but it was always so with me, a cough with me has always been caused by irritation in the throat, Just now I am coughing - lustily. Well this essay on cough & colds will suffice for the present, I think I will be better in a few days. Let me thank you for the stamps, they came in good time, I only have 2 or 3 left. I never think to say any thing about sending home any money. We have been moving about so much this summer & fall that we have missed all paymasters. I wrote you last from Brownsville, Just as we were packing up to leave as we thought for Memphis. I have never seen our Regt so taken back as when we were ordered into Camp at this place, I wrote you that by Sunday we would be in Memphis. That was quite a mistake But I must close for the present for Dress Parade. We still keep that up

It is now time that I retire, but as to morrow will be a buisy day I will write a while as I prefer writing to my loved one to sleeping. We have now to go through the following exercises daily (except sundays, when we only have regular inspection & dress parade.) At 8 A.M. Company drill. 1 1/2 hours, at 11 hear the Non Com Officers recite a long lesson in the tactics, At 1 1/2 P.M. form on the Parade ground, & march near a mile to the prairie, & have Brigade drill from 2 to 3 1/2 Dress parade at 4 1/2. Officers recitation at 5 1/2, about 120 pages. What do you think of that for a days work? To morrow Capt will be Brig Officer of the day, so that I will have a pretty buisy time of it, (for an invalid). Well my dear girl, I know that the way I have written to you about the state of my health will lead you to think that I am about used up, & I am admonished that I can never endure the hardship I once could, but I have great faith in my naturally robust & strong constitution, to recuperate when I shall have the opprtunity, A few months at home under your care will bring me out all right, & I have the pleasant satisfaction that even if my constitution is wrecked, that it has been done by honest efforts to serve my country properly, & that my health has not given way under the influence of disipation or licentiousness as some have. Do not understand me to say this boastingly, I have never done more than my duty. I have tried faithfully to do that, I am feeling better to night than I have for weeks, & hope that my cold & cough will disappear. I not I will either offer my resignation or aply for a leave of absence. I feel as if I would like to remain with the Regt until our time is out. Then I have some hope that the war may end even before that time, but I suppose I am too sanguine, but few officers think it will.

You speak of "the man who bought Stewarts place" has he sold out? did he sell all the land he had? & how much did he get for it? & what is Father about getting for his? does Austin talk of selling. Has he received my communication & proposition? What does he think of it? & what do you think of it? that's the question - There is one thing while I think of it - In my last I wrote to you to get a lot of grape-vines & set out in the garden at Fathers. Well I have repented of that already. That wouldn't pay unless Father was sure to keep the place & you could hire the work done cheaper than it is likely to be done, I am aware that my anxiety to have a home & have it improved, may lead me into wild ideas, but I think the plans I proposed to Austin were good ones & would prove highly profitable. I shall look with some anxiety for Austins reply. He may not deem it of much importance, I have pictured out a farm & improvements out on some prairie, that I hope we may realize. If God in his kindness should give us health & His blessing on our efforts, we may yet have a good home with pleasant surroundings, & plenty, If He in His wisdom should withhold these things we must be submissive & know that His ways are best, It grieves me to think of the way Father has to work. It is too bad, I'd rather hear of him selling off his land in lots & paying it out to hands to do his work than for him to be wearing out his old days at such hard work, 'tis too much for him. But it is needless in my to say any thing, I am not in a position to help him & if I were I might not do it, though it seems to me I would, I'd like to be tried, & if I should get home this winter & felt able to work I should certainly put in a good portion of the time helping him instead of visiting

I have not told you yet about how nicely we are situated here, We are living in houses! Yes, veritable log cabins. We have a window to ours - Two sheets of oiled paper, a fire place (That suits me, I have a good many foggy notions yet) bunks to sleep in, & prairie hay to spread our blankets on. I tell you we are luxuriously situated, Our camp on quite a hill (That suits me, an other foggy idea) provisions plenty & dear - tobacco \$2 or \$3 per lb poor quality at that, other luxuries (?) in proportion, Our sutlers have no conscience. It is quite uncertain how long we remain here. There is some talk this evening that we are to move soon, but I have lost faith in talk, & when the order come around to strike tents we will vacate our cabbins as naturally, as chickens leave their roost at break of day.

We have news today that Hoods army is moving on towards Nashville & that our forces are evacuating, forts on his rout & falling back towards Nashville. I think our commanders are letting him as far north as they wish & that at the proper time they will close in on him & annihilate him as they did Price in Mo., I have no word yet from Cyrus. I think his Regt is or was on Hoods rout & it is likely that the Cavalry will have warm work of it, I feel some uneasiness about him. If you should hear anything from him, or his Regt at any time, please write to me.

Well my dear girl it is now quite late & I must bid you good night.

Tuesday eve 5 - Well my dear I have filled the programme up to this time, but I assure you that I am verry much fatiegued. Our recitation to the Col will be at 6. I counceled to day with the Col about resigning, He thinks that unless I feel materially better in 8 - ten days I had better resign. He says that he considers that it is not demanded of me at the present stage of the rebellion to expose my health, I don't know what to do. I wish I did. I don't think that it is at all likely that I can stand a campaign, either this winter or in the spring. You may keep this strictly to yourself for the present. If I should undertake it I will make it sure, for the Surgeon & Col are each my personal friends & are men of influence & don't often fail. I may get to feel better & may not make an effort. Will let you know when I write again. You say in your last that you will send the shirts by either Barton or Wilcox, so you received my request for them. they will come at the right time - thank you.

I will close so as to send this out this eve, give my love to Father & Mother & all our friends & may you continue to enjoy good health & lively spirits. God our Protector keep us to meet & realize our fondest hopes Lyle

(No 55)

Duvalls Bluffs Dec. 14th 1864

My Dear Wife: Yesterday while on picket I received yours of the 2nd inst. ("No 2 "new series"). I suppose that No 1 is the one you sent by Barton, he has not made his appearance yet. I thank you for starting the shirts, they will be very acceptable to moneyless soldier at the present. You need not send me any more stamps for a while. We may possibly be paid this month, & it may be months yet, I do not depend on it at any certain time. I will tell you how I am getting along. - what we are doing &c, and then turn to matters contained in your letter. As for myself every thing is going well my throat is nearly well, perhaps as nearly so as ever it will be. My health in other respects is better than it has been since last spring. I had an other conversation a few days since with the Col about my resignation. I told him that I should be governed entirely by him in the matter. He was very cordial & frank, he said that while he would give me up reluctantly, yet under the circumstances, rather than have me struggle under poor health, he would relinquish his claim willingly and that if in a week I did not feel better, to apply for a Surgeon's certificate, on which to base grounds for resignation. Since that time I have steadily improved in every respect, I have but little hope of its permanency, as the slightest cold affects my throat, the glands of my throat from one ear to the other are tender & slightly sore at all times, for the past two weeks the weather has been very fine and dry - I have kept in doors principally & have kept my feet dry & warm. If it should turn warm & wet I may expect to suffer for it.

I have understood this evening that we have been transferred to the the Miss. Reserves. We will then be called the 2d Brigade - 4th Division, Mississippi Reserves & will be stationed on the river & when we move it will be by steamboats, it will be easier.

I regret the necessity for detailing my ailments to you. I have always been so rugged & stout. I must be frank with you in all things & I am afraid that from exposure in bad weather that perhaps I have contracted a throat disease of some kind, Bronchitis or something of its kind that may be verry anoying at times through life - However when I get home so that I can take proper care of myself when atacked it may never injure me much. I will say to conclude this long harangue that in the future I should be troubled as I have been for three or four months. I will make an effort to resign & if I make the effort I will be likely to succeed. I don't make many failures, but it would probably take me a month or two to get papers through & returned to me. We are having gay times on Brigade drill under Col Black of the 37th Ill vets. He is as sharp as a briar & makes the Regt under his command "git" as the boys call it. We drill on the prairie every day & recite lessons from Caseys 2nd Vol Inft Tactics every evening to Col Glassgow. I flatter myself that we are improving - like a set of diligent school boys - There is an event to come on Fr 16th that will be horrid & the whole command at this post have to be mustered to witness it, Private George B. Prince 22nd Ohio is to be shot for desertion at 2 P.M. 16th on the verry ground we parade on every day near a mile from camp. Col Glassgow is to be field Officer of the day for the ocasion. A Sergeant & 12 men are to execute the poor wretch, I think he deserted & went to the enemy - & was subsequently captured, his is a hard fate, but no doubt a Just one, may God have mercy on him.

Now my dear quit thinking about what you have read & I will talk awhile about matters at home & I will try to think of & answer every inquiry in your last & ask some questions. Has Austin received a long letter I wrote him about the 15th or 20th of Oct, relative to my going into the stock buisness with to the extent of our means for say, five years? I have not heard a word from it since - you speak of Father & Stewart digging a a well & failing. Tell them to dig & cement a large cistern right where they want it by the barn & have spouts to lead the water from each eave to it, this is the best council I have ever had the privilege to give either of them. The cistern if large & properly put up will be worth more than all the wells they can find room for, & as for finding streams of water under ground by means of hazle switches its no go. The day of witchcraft passed with the dark ages. I have have seen enough in the south to convince me that a cistern is the institution. You ask me, if I think that property should come down, why not wait & buy then? Well my clear headed wife I must confess that your question is a verry rational & you are almost - entirely right. I will try to give you my idea as clearly as posible, & I know that you will see the "pint" whether I am correct or not. I think that land has reached about its highest figure unless the R.R. should have an influence on it, but inflated as property of all kinds is at present, that it is safe to presume that our farm may bring as much now as it will for years & especially if there should come a wet season, this is what I am afraid of, & my idea for buying is that where we will want our farm land will not come down in price

I had thought that in localities that I have frequently mentioned in my letters that prairie land could now be bought for from \$5 to \$8 per acre, & that say \$8. 160 acres would only cost \$1200.00 & that it could not be a bad investment & we would be sure of a place to begin on, the balance I would put at interest. Now what do you think of it? And after all I believe your idea is the safest & I certainly thank you for any suggestion for if you are "only a woman" I'm glad of it. You can "mak things fly" as it is. I had thought that perhaps Austin would stir up & make some trade of the lot in town & the piece down on Agency for a 40 or 80 of prairie on the bluff north of HARRISES, that's what would suit me, but that extreme caution, characteristic with all my people, (very good in its place) will always keep us from improving on past times. There are none of you aware of the exorbitant prices of every thing at present, who ever heard of such prices lasting any time, - little runts of horses - worth (?) \$150, Hogs gross \$8, corn \$1 & every thing in proportion, There must be a general coming down. Wool even in Iowa is growing in fleeces by the million, Cotton is coming in large quantities from the rich plain of India. Yes King Cotton has abdicated the throne in the C.S.A. & can now be found riding on his triumphal car even in Africa. Merchandise must come down, & every thing else - the time to sell is Just before this takes place, - the time to buy - after. I heartily second your move to write out an advertisement & urge Austin to try immediately. It would pay to give the editor \$10 - \$15 to blow it good. Just so he don't blow the Springs dry - & as to price I can not say, certain not less however than \$30 per acre. Sell the 80 west of the house with 20 immediately east (or less if it will bring as much, more if necesisary), the 40 south of Runyon can as well be sold separatly, but if you can get as good a price let all go together, Agency & all, (particularly Agency estate). One other thing you speak of - renting the farm to diferent men. I think that it would be better to have as few tenants as posible, but there is one thing I want done - certain Austin is a good hand to make contracts, have him to have them written sure - good & strong. If I get home in the fall I'll see that they live up to it - I have written it before, but again if he can I want one half - & all corn in the field, mind that will you? & if posible to have the south side of the field cleared up & put in corn & the same in the 40 S. of Runyon (I must finish on a scrap

There are a few little items I will mention while I think of them. I think Austin had better rent to Mr. Miles, & if possible I would prefer 1/2 corn in the field & all the ground put in corn that can be. Wheat & oats, Hungarian grass &c don't pay, an other item, I would like to have all the ground on the 2nd 40 (west of the old field) cleared up & put in corn, I would rather aply a portion of my wages to that than to paying debts, anxious as I am to cancel them, I know it will pay. The farm must be put in condition to sell, There is some wood on it that at the present high prices will help pay for putting it in a state of cultivation, The farm looks too ragged in its present condition to bring what it is really worth. There is a large walnut tree in the bottom that might be cut & taken to the sawmill & cut into boards & either sold or put up to dry, before I get home & can cut it, Pine lumber can be had, probably cheaper than it will be at present prices, I speak of these things now because I might forget them at the proper time, speak to Austin about them

Now for some more smaller items, about fruit trees & vines, I have a plan for you. Now pet don't laugh at me. I don't propose to have you go into the vineyard buisness, but sugest a plan. I have thought of, it is this, that next spring you get about 200 grapevines - yes 200. - from Mr Smith, good ones and get Father or Stewart or Austin, to prepare you a corner or strip in the garden, by deep plowing &c & you oversee the planting, in about the following maner; put them in rows about four feet apart one way so that they can be plowed one way, & about two feet the other, & then you can water them if, need be, & by the next spring they will have taken root so that we can have a vineyard (by taking them up & transplanting them where we want them). What do you think of such an idea? is it one of my whims; or is it a good idea? Tell me just what you think of it & if you don't think it will pay, say nothing about it, I would give you too much trouble I fear, but would be quite an item to have one years growth. I must say good night - pleasant dreams.

Lyle

Camp of 23rd Iowa Kennerville, La Jan 21 /65

My Dear Wife: You will see from the heading of this that we are yet at Kennerville, but you cannot see the seas of mud through which we have to wade, I always felt sorry for my hogs when they had to be in such mud when it was out of my power to help them. So now I am sorry for my men, but this is at best poor comfort to them. You would be surprised to see men in such a plight to see them get up in the morning out of their "Little Dog" tents" damp & muddy - wading about in thin mud, cook ther morsal of bacon, boil coffee & at their "Hard tack & appear cheerful. If you could have seen our camp yesterday & seen the men go into their little Kennels at night, you would have looked in the morning for many sick men, yet I believe that all my men were able this morning to be up to Roll Call at daybreak, yesterday morning I found one man numb & stiffened in his tent, so that two men had to carry him to the Hospital - I give you these little items, not by way of complaint, but that you may know something of the kind of life the soldier has to endure. It is fortunately not often that we have it so muddy, but we are of necessity often exposed to very inclement weather. I believe I have remarked before that those who have never been in the Army can not realize or apreciate the hardship that the soldiers has to endure. But our Regt will only have to undergo these hardships & privations Eight months & from present indication we may be out sooner. There appears to be quite a commotion in Jeffs dominions at present and I see that the Sen Blair & Frank Jun have gone to Washington on some kind of a mission. There have also some three or four gone from the South. Vice Pres Stephens; Orr of S.C., Leach of N.C., &c. I think it is about time that negotiations of some kind were commenced. I would rather see the Government past operations

This manner of folding you must take as one of me (illegible)

in the field and let the Rebs make the first overtures, as it is certainly their place to do so. From the best information I can get from all sources, the Rebel army is reduced to so low state of discipline & so much discouraged & so depleted in numbers that our armies can now march over their territory in any direction & in small force, so that we are enabled to divide our armies into detachments. In this case we can in a few months literally lay the country east of the M Riv waste. The last four months has been more disastrous to Rebel interests than the same length of time during the war & the Spring Campaign will most certainly give us their entire army and country.

There are some rumors afloat, with regard to French & English recognition, but those countries will be slow to recognize a cause so hopeless. These are my own views of the case and may be very incorrect. So much for matters in general connected with the prospects of the probable duration or end of the war - As to my own case, my health is good, since coming down here my throat feels entirely well. I assure you I am glad to get out of Ark. Capt Jennings is at the Hospital yet & may remain there for months. Mart Ramsey is waiter at the same Hospital which will suit the Captain. I suppose as he appears to have quite a fancy for any thing, from "Rising Sun" With me it otherwise. I am getting along first rate & only wish I knew whether Jennings would come back at all. If every thing was squared up to the present I think I could run "the machine" through without any difficulty, & possibly with some honor to my Self & better half, You will no doubt see by the tone of my letter that I have not the most exalted idea of the capacity of my Captain, since I have taken Command there have papers come to him from the War Department referring him to certain paragraphs in the Regulations with reference to stoppage of pay on account of certain Ordnance Returns not having been made at the

proper time, viz: for the 2nd & 3rd Qrs of /63 Where a Comanding officer of a Co. fails to comply with orders in making proper returns, his pay & the pay of his Lieuts may be stoped, so that even after having waited so long it is posible that a part at least of my pay may be stoped. I hope not however as I am in great need of it. Now my Dear one you will please keep all these matters I am so freely confiding to you. It is not best to commit such things to paper, but if it reaches you I know it is safe. & I have no one else in whom I can place such implicit confidence, O, when I look at the situation of the Rebel cause & our sucess & the probability of an early peace & at farthest to the end of our term of enlistment, only Eight months, even less & look forward to that time when I can again take you to my arms. (you are already in my heart) & freely confide all my plans - my hopes, Joys & sorrows and know too that in that heaving bosom will arise a heartfelt response to all my hopes & efferts. I asure you my dearest these are happy thoughts to me, & I know too that your mind is not entirely idle & that you too are looking forward to the 19th of Sept with anxiety, don't you? Well I have now written until it is too late to send this out, so that it will not go until morning, I have not said anything about our buisness affairs - as it seems hardly necesisary. I have received no letter from you since yours of Dec 18 & 25 (No 4) none from Austin since dates prior to that, I don't know whether the "Gentleman from Clark" bought the 40 South of Runnion or not, or whether the "Dixyland is sold or not - wish I did: I will be glad to know that all our land is well sold, I had hoped to be able to save considerable from my wages, but it seems like it will take nearly all I get to keep me & I am very equinomical more so than most of the Officers as much so as is politic. If I should get paid up in full to the 1st of Jan I could spare \$300 or \$400. The next eight months I think I can spare one half of. Well it is dinner time - I will close to night or in the morning - for the present - good bye Lyle

Sunday morning 22nd Dear Wife good morning. This is a very wet & disagreeable morning, having rained most of the night. To give you a better idea of the situation, I will give you a description of the location of our camp by drawing with a tract of country you have seen. Take the country on lower Agency, say from Blue Barlows down to Dawsons, in a wet time, in the spring of the year. Four mile bank full, the DesMoine Rive about three feet higher than the level of the bottom, restrained from over flow by levee, weather cloudy, raining half the time, then mud about shoe mouth deep, no place to drain surples water better than "Haners swamp", men in shelter tents, (A shelter tent is a piece of cotton Drilling about 6 feet square one piece to the man, two men put up to gether, sometimes more, the tent is so low that they have to be entered by getting down crawling into them. They are somewhat inconvenient to dress in). Some of the Regiments are camped on fields that were in corn last season, verry muddy. Our camp is on a lot that has not been cultivated for a year or two & when we came here there was quite a nice sod. Now the sod has disapeared beneath the mud. Well I don't know whether you will realize the situation, but it is decidedly muddy & disagreeable, I have a wall tent, the Orderly stays with me. I have no idea how long we will remain here, or where we will go to from here. We have not been paid yet. I think we maybe this week. Yesterday there was quite a mail came to the Regt but none for me. Marion received a letter from May Jane she said you was writing to me (Jan 8th) I have none from you since yours of Dec 18th. There are many things I'd like to speak of, but as my paper is about full I will close. J. Swift received a letter yesterday from Mitchel stating that Father had sold his place at \$50 per acre. I am happy to hear from home from any source, but would be be better pleased to have news direct, Sometimes I get vexed at my people about their negligence about writing & almost come to the conclusion that I will write only to you. They seem to think that I have no interest in any thing. "That's done beneath the circuit of the sun" except the dull & monotonous camp life I am leading. They mistake, my mind is at home. Write often my Dearest and may the choicest blessing of Heaven fall to your lot & your brightest hopes be realized, in the future, is the prayer of your husband Lyle A Garrett

"No 75"

Blakely Ala, May 5th 1865

My Dear Wife: It has been but a few days since I wrote to you - but the times are so full of thrilling events that I feel inclined to write to you every day - But when I reflect that any news that I may write except from this Department will have become Stale long before it reaches you. I received yours of the 16th Ult. Nos 20-21 day before yesterday - I can appreciate your feelings on receipt of the news that the President & his Sec were assassinated. I do not care again to look back upon the sad hours I experienced after the receipt of the terrible news. The hours have passed away - but memory must be for ever indelibly stamped with the horrid deed!

Yesterday an Extra from Mobile contained Official Despatches that Booth had been killed, giving some of the details how he had been pursued into the woods in Maryland - & took refuge in a barn - & after the barn had been fired he ran & was shot in the back part of the head. Nearly in the same place that his victim was shot. One of our Colr sergeants was at the landing when the steamer landed & got an extra & started up to camp. The scene was worthy the painters brush - as he passed along reading to the crowd following - when he came to that part - stating that Booth had been shot, it was enough, Such Cheerful - Rapturous looking countenances I had not seen for days or weeks. The boys would clap their hands - with Very Joy

& run to meet their Comrades - with the glad news that "Booth is killed" Booth was shot in Maryland by a soldier in the back of the head" & all kind of expressions of satisfaction some regretted that he had been killed so suddenly - that he should have been kept & tortured - But we should not allow passion to rule us in such matters - It is our duty to act as instruments of Justice. Vengeance is not ours. I give you these items to show the feeling among the brave boys who have for years bared their bosoms to danger for the sake of the principles of our Government.

The feeling in the army is terribly intense against the perpetrators of the horrid crime & their sympathisers every where - I do not believe that the people in the South or the Rebel soldiers are more guilty than the K G C's & other organizations in the North - Be this all as it may Our Government Still lives - to bless its enemies with its friends - We have great faith in President Johnson - notwithstanding - he is said to have been drunk at his inauguration. Grant was said to have been drunk at Ft Donaldson & Sherman to have been crazy long ago. They have each done very well ever since - Except Shermans last act of clemency to Johnson - We cannot yet understand it & hope that there may be something behind the scenes that may exculpate him from censure - A few days since Gen Dick Taylor sent in word to Gen Canby that he would surrender his Army on the same terms

that Johnson had to Sherman, Gen Canby "couldn't see it" but in the meantime had received orders from the War Department to push forward - so Gen Dick concluded that "discretion was the better part of valor" & day before yesterday he sent in word that he would surrender on the same terms that Gen Grant gave Lee. That was a bird of an entirely different feather, Something that Gen Canby could "see" so yesterday morning he is said to have met Gen Dick, what they did is not known. You have no doubt seen by the N papers that Gen Kirby Smith is to meet proper authorities at the mouth of Red River to arrange terms of surrender of his Army in Texas so that in a few days all the Rebel armies will have surrendered - & our work is done. Now my mind turns toward home & its loved ones. My heart is thrilled with the prospect - But where will we make our home? that is the question. In my last I thought of fixing up on the old place - but I cannot think of living in sight of the wretch who could abuse my dear old father & besides this nearly all our neighbors black-hearted Copperheads - Enemies to the principles for which I have staked my life - & sacrificed for three years all that I love. No I would rather go some where else - but we must have a home some place & I see no other way but to go into the old cabin or build a small house - such a one as we

will be able to build, & wait until such time as we can sell - I am afraid that the time to sell at high figures has passed - & I would be glad to hear of its being sold even at less than \$40 per acre - But if it will not sell - as I have often said before - we can make a comfortable living on it - & our associations can be other than those in sight - How would you like the idea of going in partnership with Stewart in Nevada? I don't know whether I have capacity to do a mercantile buisness but think I have & we might live more easily. We were paid off on last Monday for Ten months. I Received \$1020. I have now on hand \$686 - I will send you \$500 as soon as I get an oppertunity to express it. It will cost me about \$110 to get what clothing I want. I will have \$76 left to support me. It will get my provisions for three months; we do not expect now that we will be paid off again until we are mustered out - & we may not be paid then. (That is the officers) I Collected in the Co \$670. I have Capt Cross' Receipt for it as Regt Treasurer. I have not yet received Austin's letter of the 16th. I have no word yet from Cyrus - I feel uneasy about him. There is no doubt but that he has been in active Campaign since he wrote me - may God in his mercy return us home in safety. I must close for the present. I have been sitting on Court Martial for a week - men will violate Military law as well as Civil - & must suffer the penalty. Give my love to all our friends & may Our Father keep & protect thee my own dear wife is the prayer of your loving husband till death.

L A Garrett

You have doubtless read an account
of the terrible disaster on board the
steamer Sultana - below Memphis
The most horrid - spectacle ever
witnessed on any river in the
world. Over 1400 killed!

5 A.M. 5th Order to move at an early hour to morrow morning. The men have drawn ten days rations. I have no idea at present where we are going - possibly to N. O. & up the River or to march I think we will go over to Mobile - I forgot to tell you about the dinner we had at our house a day or two since - It would have done you good to have been with us & have a good wholesome army dinner. We members of the Court Martial was made up from the Officers of the 19th Iowa - 20th Wiscons, 94th Ill & 23d Iowa - The 19th & 94th Camps are over at Spanish Ft 6 or 7 miles from here - So one day I told the boys (I have the Orderly Sergt & one of the men to cook for me & mess with me to have dinner for two extra men - So I brought a Capt & Lieut with

good plain Iowa fellows - & here let me digress a little so as to give you a description of our house - Kitchen &c - the main building is 7 + 9 feet & rears its stately walls- 4 1/2 feet from the ground the sides being pine boards held up by stakes, & is covered by two "dog tents". The Kitck is not so massive in its proportions, but humbly squats in rear of the mansion, is about 6 + 7 feet & its roof is of boards & does not pierce the skies, like its front neighbor - but about the dinner, we had, buiscuit - real plain buiscuit, mashed potatoes, Dried Beef- & pork, pickeled Cabbage, Coffee, sugar, Canned Peaches &c I don't remember what else - perhaps that was all - but the real sociableness - (is that acording to "Webster") of the ocasion is what please me - I like to sit with friends at my own table - I am living now very well - But I think, O so much of home and my dear wife - God bless her - O that my rash - impulsive nature, may never again give her one pang - O I am hopeful as to the future - good bye Dearest

"No 76"

Camp of 23d Iowa Vol Inft

Near Mobile Ala May 11th 1865

My Dear Wife: I am writing today under the shadow of some ancient Cedars - about four miles south of Mobile on the west Side of the Bay - in plain view of Spanish Fort. We are encamped in a beautiful place, the Country is Slightly rolling - very heavily timbered - & about 20 - or 30 feet above the tide. Yesterday I walked down the Shell Road (this is a road from the City down the Bay South- & graded the same as a turnpike & covered with Oyster shells two or three inches, it is the finest road I have ever seen - smooth as a floor) a mile or two under the shade of great magnolia trees. It would be difficult to describe the beauty of the scenery - the forests of large pine - Magnolia, Beech, Live Oak &c. The flower gardens on the wayside - groves of Fig trees, Peach, Apple, Plum, Orange, Mulberry - & more than I can enumerate. Then the beautiful Bay quietly sleeping beneath - with numerous steam & sail ships some running under steam - others - under widespread sails. Villages - & dense forests across the sparkling water all combine to make it one of the most lovely scenes it has been my good fortune to witness - & I couldn't help thinking as I passed one beautifully rose-embowered location after another - how well I should have liked to have had you with me - I could have enjoyed my walk very much - as it was, I was alone & could only look at the beautiful Scenery & admire in Silence - The old fields and roadside are infested with running briars - dewberries, full of fine ripe berries - I picked & ate all I wanted - There are Mulberries too of the finest quality - The soil is generally poor - but the climate very fine & take it all together, is a splendid country no doubt to live in

You will no doubt think from the fact that all the Rebel armies east of the Miss River have surrendered - & from Orders from the War Department - with reference to mustering out soldiers - stoping enlistment, discharging from Hospitals &c that the war is really over & that we will all be at home in a very short time - I had thought So myself until today - & it may be so yet, but it apears that Kirby Smith & his Army in Texas are not inclined to give up as we had fondly anticipated. Last night & today orders are coming in to Co Commanders to furnish the Qu. Master lists of Clothing, Camp & Garrison Equipage immediately for all that is required to "fit out acording to existing Orders" the same as at the commencement of the Campaign against Mobile. I am not aware of the meaning of all this - Gen Canby keeps his own Council & is successful in Consequence - Rumer has it that we are to go direct to Texas. Another rumer is that we march across the country to Baten Rough - which is near two hundred miles - from here. I the later more likely for this reason - That there is a large pontoon train here - & large quantities of Captured stock & other trains. These pontoons are very bulksome (Small boats on six mule wagons) - I have not seen the trains, but there are in all over 100 wagons, perhaps 200- & perhaps 2,000 head of mules & horses- this is a moderate estimate & to transport it around by the gulf to the Miss R. would be atended with delay & much expense - So I think there will be a Brigade sent over the country with it - It will take us about Ten days to make the trip (If we make it at all)- I feel a down in spirits today over the news of Kirby Smiths stubbornness - he can

have no hope of ultimate success - & to hold out now is simply fool-hardiness- that may cost many lives & the Gov much treasure. If we are compelled to go into Texas, I want to go in booted & spurred & without gloves - & show rebels but little mercy - The Citizens & returned Rebel soldiers in Southern Ala appear to be well satisfied with the state of affairs - They generally give up - "Immortal Nigger" without a whimper - & will succumb to the Constituted Authority & make good Citizens - Our Yanky Soldiers take well with the Southern ladies - Their own men are so many of them killed that there are many more women than men - & I am of the opinion that Southern women, do not set the same estimate- on their husbands that women of the north do or perhaps do not appreciate them in the same light that you of the north do, & consequently forget them sooner - They must have a man - of some description - & the soldiery are not the men to stand on "propriety". But I do not propose to write an essay on Southern female character, more than that they are generally handsome- & in the north would be considered - "fast".

I have no answers yet to any of my letters written after the siege at Spanish Fort commenced - I your last you speak of having received mine of March 24th three days before the first days battle - since that time I have written with this eight letters - In my last I wrote you I believe that we had been paid 10 months & that I would send \$500. I have not sent it yet - I had hoped to go over to N. O. & possibly take it home - I ought to be definite about it but hardly know what to do - I may go up to the City to morrow & send it by express - I will have about \$175 left

I am enjoying the very best of health, really robust - I feel as if I were at home on a farm that I could make business go lively - But I don't know what a summer campaign may do for me - I cannot but dread it on account of the heat - but "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" I have endured the hardships now for nearly three years very well And have learned much. In deed this has been a great school. those who live through will have nothing to regret - When the history of this tremendous struggle shall have been written & the intelligent Soldier gazes over its bloody pages - he will understand what he is reading for many of them have written - pages of it with their own blood. A word in reference to the terrible tradgedies in Washington I have no doubt but that you of the North think the Southern people guilty & that they rejoice over the death of Pres Lincon - I do not think they do - I have no doubt but that the Civil Officers of the C.S.A. and the class in the North known as Copperheads are equally guilty - although the Southern people are rebels - they as a class have as much horror of the crime of assasination as other Americans But I have no sympathy with them as Rebels Now, my dear wife I wish I could speak somewhat definitely about the time I expect to get home - but the way matters look just now I cannot & I am sorry for it - I don't like uncertainty or suspens But a soldier should make no plans - he is not his own Time must develope these things - Write to me as soon as you receive the money I send you - I may send. "Coupons" drawing interest I dont know as there would be any advantage in it or not. Give my love to all. Ever your husband till death. L A Garrett

(No 77)

Camp of 23rd Iowa Vol Inft

Near Mobile Ala May 18th 1865

My Dear Wife: We are yet in Camp awaiting Orders. It is said that our mail has been detained at N. O & if so it looks as if we may soon go over; It is difficult to know what we will, as there is nothing definite yet with regard to what portion of the army will be mustered out, or Just when any portion of it will be so fortunate. We must be patient & wait our time, But I am getting very impatient. I feel as if I had done all I could & now want to be at home: Jester is out to our Camp this morning - he is looking for Mrs. Hedge every day - he has rented a house & bought furniture, a cow, chickens &c, they are going to housekeeping in the City. He is doing (apparently) a good business - & I think they have a good many of their aristocratic ideas worked out of them & they may do very well - We'll let them wait we?

Yesterday our camp was thrown into wild excitement - I need not say "wild" excitement, for we have got over such things, the excitement of a veteran Soldier is deep & silent. - I can't describe it, but as I was about to remark - the news of the Capture of Jeff Davis & a part of his fleeing band by Gen Wilsons Cavalry - was hailed with Joy - some of the boys threw up their hats & Jumped around like fun - Well isn't it a good Joke on "Jeff" "We'll hang Jeff Davis on a sour apple tree" &c

I have no word from Cyrus but expect he is with Gen Wilson & may have participated in one of the most glorious feats of the war - the capture of Jeff. Davis & crew. I think we will go over to Orleans in a week or two - a part of the 13th A.C. will go to Texas. I think it will be the veterans & recruits - the "Cruits" are uneasy - Yours eve Lyle

It is needless for me to give you any news - for I know that you read the papers & will have read any thing long before this would reach you - There is nothing going on here except parolling prisiners & transporting them to their homes - They generally appear to be well satisfied with the turn things have taken, There are thousands of them who have served 2 - 3 & 4 years in the army against their will & conscience. I am pleased with the course that prominent men in the South are taking the stand for the Union they are. It will all be right .

Friday A.M. - I have been nearly all day yesterday & to day pouring over my Returns for the months of March & April - until my head is dizzy - I will cypher it out but it is very tiresome & I will be glad to get through - It is a relief to me to quit a while & write to you - We have had no mail for more than a week - The last I recd from you was April 22nd very nearly a month - If it should take this long to reach you & the return be as slow - I will hardly get an answer - for we will hardly remain south all summer. Col Glassgow has been in command of our Brigade for a week or two, this morning he returned & took command of the 23rd & his first act was to send a Circular to Commander of Cos to get their books & papers footed up as soon as possible, preparatory to muster out - This looks like buisness & it is to be hoped that the war is really over & that we can all return home to our friends

It makes me almost nervous to think of the prospect before me - The thought that I may soon be permitted to to clasp to my heart one so dear as my wife sends a thrill of happiness - all through my being - I am enjoying very good health - & the idea of getting home, yes home make me cheerful - generally - I shouldn't perhaps say the word "home" so often but - "From the abundance of the heart the pen speaketh" & I had Just as well let my pen go on as I feel - but I must curb it a little or you would be sure to think me "home" sick. Well be it so I cant help it - I never was much of a "ham" to enjoy life away from home. Why you will think it strange perhaps - that during our late victorious battles - while the missiles of destruction wer hurled around me - the awful roar of huge canon & amid all the confusion & horror of the field of strif - I could even then find time to think of home & its loved ones - & thank the Wise dispenser of all things that our own dear homes are not assailed by the ravages of war - Well - how are you getting along, at "home" that's the question - I find that I will say "home" & if I should write it a score of times you mustn't laugh at me - for there is no man living who loves home & its pleasant associations more than I do - & I am half the time laying plans for the future - at "home" I can imagine that I could even enjoy life on our old hills, but would prefer that they were sold

not but that we could make as comfortable a home on the hill as we could perhaps any where else - but will we be contented there? Will we not be wishing to be in some more public place - where we can see more - I don't know ow it will be - I know that the most happy days of my life have been spent on those same old hills - & you would be surprised to read my thoughts & I pass in immagination over the heights around "Bald point" & on the hills about the orchard - I can see the trees as they stood before me 3 yrs ago & I find myself for hours planing how we will arrange our house & door yard - garden, barn & pasture lots, &c. Sometimes I think I will - rent out the farm as well as I can & plant all the fruit trees vines &c on the hill that I can work, & Just have good stock enough to eat up the rent & live a quiet & independent life. The R R will cut up the place badly but may be they will have a switch or place to water or some way so that we could get on the carrs, right at home & branch out in the world - when we get tired of home & wish recreation. Then again I think I'd like to have a large farm out on the prairie with a large herd of stock - to feed in winter & see grazing in the summer - But O' those winters - Whew - it makes me chilly to think of it - But I'll not trouble about that for a while. "sufficient unto the day &c". I hope Mr. Miles will do well on the farm this summer & I think with what - I will get when U.S. is done with me we can pay our debts - I sent you \$500 on the 12th Inst., the expressage will be \$7.50 which you will have to pay at DesMoines - out of the \$500. I would be happy to know how much we will be owing - when you pay what you can spare of that - It makes me almost heart sick to think that I have to pay out money so hardly earned to pay debts contracted foolishly years ago - but it is all right - all debts should be paid - I have made up my mind that "I'll not can" go in debt any more. Capt Henry was here to day he is looking very well, is enjoying life with his family in N. O. He goes home to morrow. Well I must go to work & finish up my passes & be ready for - whateve turns up. It wont hurt my feelings to be mustered out so as to be at "home" by the 4th of July & it may be a vain hope - but we may be there by that time - give my love to Austin & Harriet & little ones. Have you Ida yet? good bye dearest - I remain ever your husband until death. L A Garrett

(No 78) Camp of the 23rd Iowa Inft May 26th 1865

My Dear Wife; We are yet in our beautiful encampment on the banks of the Bay of Mobile & 4 miles below the City enjoying the deep dark shades of the Magnolia now in the freshness of its bloom & dark green foliage= But the sparkling waters of ever so fine a day - or the shadow of trees with feathered songsters trilling their songs of love & praise - or walks over green fields - or fruitful vales - well no difference what all - I am not happy not real happy - only in the consciousness of having done my best for my Country & in the prospect of future happiness. I cannot enjoy my self here on suspense after our work is done And then since writing to you I have been having ague. Yes regular ague & fever - I have had four chills & very high fever following - but this is the third day I have missed it & feel quite well & I hope that the ugly customer will let me alone. He has shook me down considerably - I have missed "nary" a term of duty, I went on guard yesterday morning & came off this morn all right. We have nothing definite yet as to the time when we will be mustered out of service, but it is the current opinion that we will go over to N.O. in a few days & pass Grand Review & either be mustered out there or sent to Iowa & there be mustered We are making out the "Muster out Rolls" so as to be ready when the proper officers come. I have received two letters from you I believe since I wrote to you - Yours of May 3rd & 6th No (24) is the last. I had made up my mind that it would be better for you to remain at Austins & make ready for housekeeping, but after all it is perhaps better for you to teach - the time will pass off more lively & I know you can do the rising Young Americans good if they will try.

You will doubtless before this reaches you see in the public papers an account of one of the most terrible calamities of the age - One of those terrible gun powder explosions - You may not see the papers & I will give you a brief account of it as far as I have learned Yesterday about 4 P.M. a large warehouse in the citty Mobile filled with ammunition such as shells &c to the amount it is said of two hundred tons & about thirty tons of powder in kegs - barrels &c exploded - How? will never be known Soldiers & Gov employees were at work - loading a steamboat from the warehouse or rather "Ordnance Store" for Texas It is said one of the men had a lighted pipe & another story that a percussion shell fell on the floor & exploded, but all these things are guessed at for of course every one in or about the buildings were instantly killed. I have not been up to the citty since the sad occurrence but from what those who have witnessed the scene say of it - it is truly terrible That part of the citty is principally built up with large brick warehouses Cotton Presses &c. Fourteen Blocks are in ruins - Eight of them not a brick left in the walls - Just imagine - a commercial Citty with shipping at the wharves - loading & unloading & in an instant - an explosion that literally crash down by mere concussion massive walls of masonry - the walls fell outward the roofing & floors downward - steamboats were blown to pieces by the shock & by fragments of buildings & others which did not fare so badly were broken & took fire & burned up - some men were found dead without a bruise - having been killed by the shock - all this was done in an instant, at one crash - hardly a window left in the Citty - doors - wrenched from their fastenings & strewn in the streets Ceilings & partitions torn down - horses killed & buggies harness wagons &c

thrown about the streets - But the saddest of all is the contemplation of human sacrifice - the morning papers give the loss of life at from two - to three hundred - There were a great many wounded the news papers give - the soldiers & sailors great credit for their daring & bravery in rescuing the victims from the ruins. There was a strong wind at the time from S. W. the explosion was in the N. E. part of the Citty otherwise the whole Citty would likely have been burned, as the debris from the blown up buildings, hay - cotton &c rapidly took fire & burned all evening & night & to make it still worse - huge shells kept up a noise like a canonade throwing their fragments all over the citty - It must have been almost like being in battle. - Well my dear I must rest a while.

5 P. M. I have been talking with Barton, who has been up to the Citty to day again, (he was there yesterday & in fact nearly every day, "mucho savy" Barton) he more than confirms the statement of the papers, he says they have found 300 dead already, & are still taking out the dead. - he says he has no doubt but that there has been at least 1,000 killed. May be so, don't speak of it as my opinion, but "Bartons" - he says there are fourteen squares laid flat, & I don't know what all - I don't know how it is - I was lying on my cot at the time. & I wish I could describe the noise my first impression was that it was a tremendous clap of thunder but instantly another, & yet there was but one - it was as if - one well I cant describe it - please excuse me - louder than - pent up lightnings - all bursting at once - I looked out & there being a clear place between us & the Citty - the volume of smoke that rolled up was one of the most awfully grand spectacles I have ever witnessed. The day was clear & the sun shining full on the solid volume gave it the appearance of a heavy cloud - bursting & unfolding

& rolling upward & outward - until the east was one vast volume of unfolding fleecy mass -It was really magnificent - I will dismiss this subject & if I can get a paper to morrow I will send you one. I have been talking with some of the officers who think it likely that we may be south yet quite a while - It is 'said' that the 1st Division 13th Corps is going to Shrevesport Texas & that our Div (2nd) will remain here as Gen Andrews is assigned to the Command of Mobile. I don't of course like the idea of remaining south though the hot summer, but if we are needed all right we will stay " 'till the last armed foe is crushed" Well my plump little school Miss how are you getting along with your family - I expect you are having a good time, all things considered. We cannot expect to enjoy our selves as we hope to do when the armies shall have been disbanded & we all get "home" O home sweet home, I can form no definite plans for the future, every thing will be very fluctuating - lands & stock will come down & in fact every thing as I said months ago, except G Backs I regret now that our land is not all sold, or that if at any time it would have brought \$35, that it did not go & yet if it will bring that - let it go, and if land appears to be coming down in other parts let it go still cheaper I know that we can make it a very comfortable & good home but not a Convenient one - or one on which we can branch out on - or make much of a show But if we can be contented to live easy & rent out the land in the bottom & work on the hill & fence up pastures for we can have no use of - outside pasture, & keep a few cows & a few horses, & raise much fruit - I think we could be quite happy - but I would like to have a chance at those larger free pastures & herd stock - I'd prefer it & I think you would I have no word yet from Cy. I write to him again this week or next. Give my love to J & Sarah J. Finch & family & to your own household - may peace of mind be your companion ever your husband L. A. Garrett

No "81"

Camp of 23d Iowa, Near Mobile June 13th 1865

My Dear Wife: You will see by the Caption of this that we are yet in our old Camp on the Bay. We have had quite exciting times for a few days. There have been vague orders with reference to mustering out troops & I suppose that there has been a large number mustered in the East but these orders don't seem to apply to us, but in our anxiety to enjoy the sweets of Citizenship we have been pressing matters. The Muster Out Officers have been in Mobile for over a week & appeared to understand his business to be to muster out all whose time expires before the first of Oct. "immediately" but had not the Rolls to do it on. Maj Houston & other persevering Officers procured paper & employed a foreman, & a printing press & went to work to assist Our Venerable U. S. - we got the Rolls ready & worked on them last night until far past midnight & to day when the Maj took them to the Mustering Officer he was coolly informed that "Our time was not out" & that we might see Galveston in a few days - we are ordered to have four days cooked rations on hand & be ready to embark at an hours notice. Suspense & Vexation; I worked on Rolls last night until my hand is almost lame & my eyes became so weary that I could hardly see whether the pen was making marks or not & all to no purpose. Why I almost seen myself taking a steamer for the north - too bad isn't it?

Continue to direct your letters as before & write often - the health of the men is better than one year ago. My own health is very good. Marion is enjoying good health & spirits. Milt Dean I suppose has gone home. Harvey will be pluck to the last & be mustered out with the remnant of the Regiment.

You will be as much disappointed as I, for I know by the tone of your letters that you are expecting me soon, & it may be that I have encouraged you in this for I remember to have written soon after the fall of Richmond, that we might be at home by the 4th of July - & in fact I have felt ever since that we might yet, until yesterday, the order came to be ready for a march - We suspended work on the Rolls. Then after we had gone to bed & I had just gone to sleep, Orders came for us to prepare our Rolls as soon as possible. I assure you I rose cheerfully & worked faithfully most of the night. But there is an order from Gen Granger to the Mustering Officer not to muster out any more troops until further orders. The nonveterans of the 37th Ill (Col Blacks) were being mustered out yesterday & I am informed that a part of them were mustered out before the work was arrested, every thing is in such suspense that it is imposible to form any correct idea as to the time - of our release. I do hope that the Gov may find it convenient to allow the thousands now in the field to return to their loved ones at home, It may be that the attitude of Maxamillion has something to do with present movements, but I think it more likely that our Division are to go to Galveston as there are no land forces there yet. Our Naval Arm taking care of the place during the day & returning to their ships at night - this looks as if the Galvestans were not very hostile - I must rest a while & write in the morning - Good morning my dear one - I wish I could speak these words - looking into those bright eyes, this morning reminds of some very pleasant morning in Iowa, Just cool enough to

be comfortable in shirt sleeves, I got up early & went down to the Bay & enjoyed a fine bath before breakfast - & I feel first rate. Only I don't like the idea of going to Texas, it will keep us in the South an indefinite period. I had began to calculate the No of days it would be likely to require to take us home & I could almost see myself at DesMoine by the 15th of July. Now my Dearest I am sorry to have to write so, but cannot avoid it, I know you will be in suspense, & I can say nothing at present knowingly to relieve that suspense, but I do think that we will be at home in August, I think we will only remain at Galveston until some Veteran force shall have time to relieve us. Well how are you getting along with your school? I hope you may enjoy yourself finely, & I am adapting myself to circumstances as philosophically as I can, & we have the small consolation that if Uncle Sam does keep us away from our homes, he pays pretty liberally for it, but what is, even good wages to the sacrifice of the endearments of the family circle. I think you will be safe in keeping your school until the time is out. Well we will try & enjoy the few weeks to come as well as we can & make up for the time in a trip over the prairies this fall - I am anxious to enjoy with you the splendors of the scenery among the lakes & groves dotting the vast expanse of prairies to the north, & then on our Circuit, we will see many new scenes & form new acquaintance, & see how the people of the S West

are progressing. I received yours of the 29th after you had returned from Nevada. I was glad to learn that mother was getting better. I hope now that I may enjoy a pleasant visit with - father & mother - I see by the papers that all the dismounted Cavalry are to be mustered out immediately - I shall be happy to learn that Cy is discharged & at home - I hardly know what to say - things are in such a state of uncertainty. some will have it that we are going to N. O. & there be mustered out. others think we are going to Vicksburg - but the most probable move - to my mind will be to Galveston.

This is such a lovely morning. One of those cool, zephyr breezes from the Southern seas that we often read of - but must realize to appreciate. Southern birds are perched in the boughs of the Cedar, the China & Magnolia trees singing their sweetest songs. fleecy clouds are passing over us, & all nature is smiling over the disappointments of the weary almost homesick. & war-worn soldier. Let us join nature & laugh at disappointments. There is much happening in store for us. I am looking forward with pleasure to the time when we will be located on some fine prairie on our own farm, & not bound by "Orders" but if we choose we can go & come without hindrance - I should be so happy to know that every acre we own was well sold - I was surprised to learn that it would cost \$100.00 to get the old buggy repaired, why it would hardly be worth that when done better let the old vehickel rest - we will get a nice wagon & at leisure trade the old buggy towards a new one. You will be surprised to learn that out of one thousand & upwards who came out with the 23, that not more than three hundred are here to be mustered out - Yes that large Regiment of athletic men you used to see on dress parade at DesMoine have faded away, before the withering blasts of war until less than one third of their number remains to tell the suffering & toil & peril through which they & their comrades have passed, many have fallen in battle others have died in hospitals, others have been discharged - what remain are a hardy set of men & it is to be hoped that they may enjoy the fruits of their labors - amid the smiles approving friends - Give my best wishes to all - ever your affectionate husband Lyle

No- Camp of 23rd Iowa Inft

Galveston Texas June 23rd 1865

My Dear wife: You will see from the caption of this that instead of being on our way home, as we had hoped to be that we have other fields before us. We broke Camp at Mobile Monday morning. I had gone up to Mobile Sunday morning to Sabbath school & church, attended the Baptist Church of course, after meeting was over I went up to Hedges & took dinner & in the afternoon there came on one of the heaviest rain & wind storms I have seen in the South, so I remained with Hedges all night & after breakfast started for camp - leisurely & just outside the city met some of the 23-boys, they told me that the Regt had moved & was in the City, had come in on another road. I went to the landing & found them about ready to embark. This is only the third time I have visited Hedges in the South & have been left by the Regt twice. We went on board a transport & passed out over the bar about nine miles below the City & were transferred to an Ocean Steamer (the Gen Sedgwick) & passed out into the Gulf between Ft Morgan & Gains about sun set the same day - we had a very fine trip &

landed here yesterday morning & unload the ship & went into camp in the suburbs of the city in the afternoon, night before last we lay at anchor outside of the bar & in sight of the city - I was seasick the first night we were out of course - but got tolerably well over it the next day & enjoyed the trip very well.

This has the appearance of being a new place, about the size of all Des Moines. Streets wide & laid off square. There are some large brick buildings in the business part of the city, gardens look well, the soil is good, not so sandy as on Matagorda Island. There is said to be a fine freeze here except in the early part of the day. I am writing on my knee under the shade of my "dog tent" quite comfortable. There are many of the citizens about in the interior which give the place a quiet & dull appearance. It is certainly a pity for so fine a city to be abandoned by its occupants, but this terrible rebellion has desolated many homes in various ways - but who lives to see Galveston in a few years will see one of the most thriving cities in the Union. The camp is in considerable confusion. We start for Houston in less than an hour. The bells of the R R cars are ringing. I am not certain whether we go on the Cars or by Steamboat, & it is uncertain whether this reaches you if it does whether you can read it.

I will write again as soon as I can. I see by your last (June 7th) that you are looking for me at home. I am sorry to disappoint you but circumstances beyond my control keep me from the society I love so well far beyond the time I could desire, but it is now less than three months to the time when we can reasonably hope beyond for adventure, when we will be at home I sincerely regret that we were not mustered out at Mobile as I think we should have been, but since we have come to Texas I want to see all of it I can. We may not go further than Houston, but there is a report that we are to go to Austin, the Capitol. If we should we will have to march a part of the way, which I dread as it will be very warm. I intend to hope on that we will yet be mustered out before the 19th of Sept. I believe I wrote you in my last that Cyrus had been taken prisoner, he & five others of his Co were cut off from the rest of the Command during an engagement. I have some hope that he will be mustered out as all prisoners were to be, but there is no knowing, he may have been killed, & our hearts be wrung with the same anguish known by thousands of other parents. But let us hope that God in His mercy may spare us such a sorrow. It would truly be terrible.

I must close as we will be on the move in a short time - My health is very good & if we were to remain here on the coast I should not dread the heat, I have a fancy for living on the sea shore, but cannot now say any thing about a home on "Rusian River". I was happy to learn that Mother was getting well again. I hope to see her in her new home, contented & happy. Send my love to her & father & all.

As for our home affairs - they will have to remain in status quo for a while at least, but O - am I not anxious to get home again to "run the machine". Have Austin to take good care of the young horses, have Prince & Bert in good order. The 23d is now cut down to about 375 - there are about 80 recruits, so that there will only be about 300 of the old soldiers to muster out. I have only to say further that it will be better for you to be making any arrangement you can towards housekeeping - as we will want to go home as soon as we can - I am so tired of runing about. Good bye dearest. May God bless you is the constant prayer of your husband. Lyle A Garrett

Marion & Harvey Dean are each well

No "83"

June 26th 65

Camp of 23rd Iowa, Columbus Texas

My Dear Wife: Since writing at Galveston on the 22d we have moved far into the interior of Texas, & much as I regret my continued absence from home I am satisfied that we have made this last move, especially from Galveston. This is decidedly the finest country I have seen in the south. From the time we crossed Galveston Bay until we arrived here the country has presented one scene of native grandeur, extensive prairies with thousands of cattle grazing & many small herds of horses, mules & Jacks & many deer. From what I have seen there is about the same proportion of timber to prairie as there is in Iowa. We passed some fine improvements. The prairies are quite level, & in fact the whole country is verry level (the part of it I have seen) about as level as Agency from "Hanners" north west. We left Galveston Friday on board of the Steamer "Island Citty" & steamed across the gulf & up Buffalo Bayou, passed the old battlefield where the Texans under Gen Sam Houston defeated the Mexicans under Santa Ana in 1834. We landed at Harrisburg - four miles from Houston, took the carrs at 9 A.M. Saturday & arrived at Alleyton about 4 P.M. & marched 4 miles to this place ferried over the Colorado River by dark, & went into camp, which was a pretty big days work. Yesterday Morning we moved camp a few rods under the shade of a grove of Live Oak.

The Scenes of yesterday have made an impression on my mind that will not soon be efaced. The Negroes came into camp by hundreds & the happiest people I ever saw, they were well dressed, especially the women, most of them in white

It was a sight worth going miles to see. Although the day was Sunday I must confess that I enjoyed the Jubilee. The colored people had come in for miles around, some 30 miles. Maj Houston is in Command of the Post & partially ordered that the camp be cleared of negroes. Capt Houston was officer of the day. I was Officer of the Guards, & in Council with other officers we thought best to let them remain. Many of them were quite intelligent & sung a number of hymns & songs, they were good singers. Among them were two almost white girls about 16 they had each been field hands, had hoed & picked cotton ever since they were large enough. One of them said that she picked 300 lbs in one day - they with many others were dressed very well, silk capes over white dresses feathers in their hats. (Now don't laugh because your careless husband noticed how these people were dressed, it was a day of study with me). They were about the complexion of white girls sunburned, blue eyes. There was a little slave boy, as white I presume as I was at 10 years straight light hair, blue eyes, who attracted a good deal of notice, he has a little sister just older than him who is very fair. I tell you I seen more than one soldier grit his teeth & swear over the enslavement of white blood. But I must let yesterdays Jubilee pass. All the slaves coming in to day are sent back either to their old masters or any where else where they can get employment - To day many of their old masters are in town getting what information

they can as to the policy of the Government with regard to the future status of the negro. I have seen a crowd of blacks who were called up by their masters last saturday & told that now they were free & at liberty to go where they pleased, some of their masters made long speeches & I have no doubt but good & proper one to the blacks the poor creatures were so overcome that they could not (some of them) remember what was said by their masters after he told them that they were free. Is it any wonder then that they should get up early sunday morning & put on their best & walk miles to see what they think is their deliverers, or that they should indulge in wild demonstrations of Joy, or that we as soldiers should allow them to enjoy the shades of our camp. But no doubt hundreds of them feel gloomy to day they had formed such extravagant notions of liberty & to be arested to day by guards & sent out to the plantations, is more than they expected - There are thousands who have been brought here from other states so that there is a surplus of labor here & about all that their old masters can reasonably promise them this season is to clothe & feed them & their families as they had been acustomed to before. I heard one man tell a great stout black fellow who six years ago was worth \$1800 that if he thought he could do better & wished to he could go where he pleased

the poor fellow hardly knew what to do but concluded to take the wide world for it -

I am thankful that I have been permitted to live to help work out the great problem that has vexed the brain of our wisest statesmen for the last half Century. The present is second only in importance to the era that ushered in the advent of the Redeemer of Mankind. The future destiny of states & empires & millions now living & million yet unborn hangs on the success of the present experiment of the United States. Let us hope that the expectation of Philanthropists may not be disappointed - But I must close the mail is about leaving - We brought ten days rations with us & are to return at the end of that time or live on the country by paying for it. I think we will leave here for Galveston in ten or twelve days & probably to from there to N. O. & home. This is what I think but intend to be Just as well contented as posible if we have to remain longer. You will of course adapt yourself to circumstances & enjoy your self as well as posible - It is very hot here. Yesterday Mercury stood at 100 [degrees] & I think is as hot to day - Give my love to all & believe me eve you affectionate husband L A Garrett

No. "84" Columbus Texas July 2nd 1865

My Dear Wife: We are yet in Columbus and likely to remain here for some time to come. I have no idea when we will be relieved from duty here, probably not until we are to be mustered out. I had hoped until shortly before we left Mobile that I might enjoy the coming "Fourth" with you in Des Moines but I am doomed to disappointment - and instead of enjoying society to me so congenial I will have to spend the day as best I can with my comrades, with a people hostile to the free institutions, to the Glorious old banner under which for almost three years we have fought and endured privations and hardships a people scarcely more than semi Civilized, rude and vicious - But we will "hope on, hope ever". We will better appreciate the blessings of peace and a home when they are ours. Sometimes I wish I could enter into amusements as other men to it would help pass away time, but when I see the evils consequent upon such a course I am content to keep aloof and as it were - pine away - longing for better days, knowing that they will most surely come. Since writing to you on the 26th we have buried one of our comrades. Limen Jordan Co "I" & on Tuesday eve I attended church heard a very good discourse from a stranger passing through from the west - a refugee I think returning to his home, and to day I attended Sabbath School, and at 10 1/2 preaching by a local preacher of this place. He preached a very good discourse - to a full house, about one half Soldiers (Union) the other half Citizens & Confederates. I think he is a good man, but acknowledged his embarrassment. He said he had preached to large congregations in his time - but never before under so peculiar circumstances. He was followed by a large

Sandy, rough looking man in an exhalation & prayer. He too felt embarrassed, but his former opinions were no secret, they were known & he did not seek to conceal them. He was not a believer in fate, but in Providence. He had hoped & prayed that Providence would build up a great Southern Confederacy, but He had not done it, & it now becomes us to submit as well as we can to the "Powers that be &c". One young lady of the vimish, aristocratic stamp Jumped up & sailed out, one or two gents of the same stamp followed. He "didn't wish to give offence", lined out a hymn which was sung by the "peculiar congregation" & prayed, for the president of the U. S. & his Councilors, & for all in authority & for those languishing in prisins (I think he meant poor Jeff Davis) that their afflictions might be light & that mercy & forbearance might govern those appointed to rule over us &c. He prayed fervently for our afflicted & distracted Country, East, West, North & South. Let us yet hope for the Republic, a nation of sinners are in tears and prayer. It is now 3 P.M., the church bell has Just rung, to collect the Colored people together, the same gentleman who preached to us to day anounced that he would preach to them as usual at this hour. It was also anounced that "the Chaplain" (meaning Barton) of the Regt would preach at early Candlelight at the church (Baptist) There are a great many Baptists all over the South, I think they are only outnumbered by the Methodists & perhaps by the Presbyterians. It is a sad thought that brethren of the same religious faith and often the same church who have mingled their prayer before the same Throne, and Sat at the same Table and eat and drank from the same Cup in memory of Him Who died, that we through him might live, I say it is sad

and terrible thought that the next meeting as doubtless has been the case should be on the battle field in deadly strife. But I will not dwell on so painful a subject. Let us rather hope that the great affliction through which our bleeding country is passing will not only purify the fountains of society, and purify our religion, but that it may cement the affections of a great people and that this may be the last internal war that history shall have cause to record concerning the United States - One item more & I'll quit the subject. The people of Texas as you are aware are or were made up originally of a hard set of men from all parts of the U. S. - of course there were exceptions. What I was going to speak of is the way some of the planters here are treating their helpless negroes. They are in some cases driving them off, without the means of support or to get out of the country & it is said that they are shooting them down like beasts in other places - What is to come of the poor defenceless creatures is more than we can foresee at present - Yesterday I made a contract on my own responsibility that you will be interested in. I found a little boy - James Henry Hands packing his knapsack, to leave the Regt he did not know where, he has been with one of the Captains of the 23rd since we were at Kennerville La last spring - as waiter, cook &c. he was with us during the Campaign against Mobile & took an active part in the siege against Spanish Fort, a Soldiers part, was in the whole fight with his gun & did more service than many of the Soldiers who are paid & clothed at the expense of Gov't who if maimed will be pensioned, he (Jimmy as we all call him) risked his life & braved all danger without any such inducements - he has been a faithful boy as all the Regt could testify - but the Captain yesterday morning coolly told him that he didn't want him

any longer. Jimmy is a sensitive little fellow & took it quietly but pretty hard & cried over it. I did not hear of it until after dinner. I reflected over it a short time, & acted on the impulse of a heart that I trust may never be callous to the tear of an Orphan & went right to him & found him as I said packing his scanty supply of clothing in his knapsack. (one old shirt & a blanket) the clothes he had on are ragged - he was in tears. - I hardly knew what to say to assume the responsibility of offering him a home was something not to be lightly thought of - but I did so in as kind a way as my hitherto rough manner of life would permit. - of course he accepted. He is an Orphan his father died when he was eight years old & his mother in two weeks after, he has one brother - 21 years old in the 25th Kentucky Vols. he is 17 but very small of his age - looks to be about 12 - 13 - he is a stout little fellow - appears to be well satisfied with his prospect - & also appears to have confidence in me - which is more than could be expected after the treatment he received at the hands of my brother (?) Officer. I have not inquired particularly into his past life, he is from Zanesville, Ohio - was put on a farm at eight years of age - he & his brother left Dayton O. for the army - a year or less ago, may be because of ill treatment, or it may be from a longing as too many boys have for the army - Did I do right to take him? And by the way, did you get the little girl you wrote me about? I hope you have. Let us do our duty by the unfortunate, trusting that God will so guide & assist us that we may be their benefactors. But what of our own dear boy - my heart bleeds for him. I have only learned that he was captured during an engagement & taken as a prisoner of war - will he receive treatment due a prisoner of war? He should have been released long ago & according to Orders from the War Department at the time should be mustered out - sometimes I hope that this may be the case, & then the darker shades of the picture appear & I dread to contemplate the result - O' that God would deliver him from the thralldom of captivity & restore him to the delights of home & friends. And now my dear wife trusting we may each enjoy the intervening weeks that separate us - I bid you good bye. Ever your affectionate husband, "Mary" L A Garrett

"Mary"

I have written to Cyrus. but not lately as I don't know how to reach him, while at Mobile I wrote to his Co Commander & inclosed a letter to Cyrus requesting him to forward but have not heard. I wish you would write to his Capt or 1st Sergeant & try if posible to hear from him - I am in great suspense to kno his fate. I will write to you again in a few days when perhaps I can have a better idea when we will leave this place. We had expected to have left here now in a few days - but the Q M has sent to Galveston for rations, & there is still "Cotton" in the country - always a curse to the army

We are cut off for the first time from supplies. The R.R. Bridge across the Brazos River was washed away by floods a few days ago. We have had the hardest rains a few days ago I have seen for many years - The Colorado was up but is going down - Rivers here are quite rapid - & the country as fine as I have ever seen - but the people - rude & savage. You have seen young ladies at R Sunn the young ladies are more uncivil in church than they even the time that old man Crea preachd there some years ago - don't like see them, flirt & giggle. [illegible] Lyle

No "85"

Camp of 23rd Iowa, Harrisburg Texas July 13th 1865

My Dear Wife: I have been waiting in patience until our mail agent should return from Houston with the mail. He came in on the 9 A.M. train without any. There is said to be none at Galveston. I suppose that our mails are at N. O. or Mobile. We have had no mail since we left Mobile on the 19th of June. The last I received from you was written June 7th. Since our arrival in Texas I have written to you from Galveston on the 23rd & from Columbus on the 26th, & 2nd of July & to Austin on the 9th - I will continue to write until we are on the way home, & even then when I think the mail will beat us home. Last Monday evening about 9, Gen Glasgow arrived at Columbus & gave Orders for the Regt to move at 5 A. M. next morning. We marched over to Alleyton 3 miles & took the cars for this place, where we are now in camp about five miles South of Houston waiting for Orders. Gen G, Col Clark have gone to Galveston to learn what is to be done. When we came down Tuesday eve there was a steamboat at the landing as if by appointment. We loaded every thing on it & were about ready to start for Galveston, when Col Clark received a dispatch for us to go into camp here & remain until further orders. So of course we as old soldiers obeyed

I am getting very tired roaming about - & of so many disappointments. It is the understanding that we remain here until we are mustered out - which will be but a few days if there is an officer here to muster us, & I suppose of course there will be - I think we will be on the way for home in one week from today - O' it makes the blood leap in my veins to think of an event "so devoutly to be wished" & even that week seems as if it would be long. But time is passing rapidly away & with it I trust a happy meeting for us my dear wife. My heart swells with pride when I reflect with what fortitude you have borne the privations & duties necessarily entailed by my absence. You have borne all with a heroism worthy of emulation, & O, how I long to clasp that warm heart to my own, God in His mercy grant that our brightest hopes for the future may be realized - There is only one thing now to trouble me. My fears may be groundless, but I cannot but feel uneasy about Cyrus. The last I have heard of him he was a prisoner of war, & what he may have suffered, if even living, who can tell. I have a dread that he was on board the Sultana & perished with that mass of struggling victims in the Mississippi River. O, the thought overcomes me & I hope it may not be so

Friday morning 14th I have Just received & read twice yours of June 11th - I was happy to receive this letter, but I know that there are others of a later date due.

Gen Glassgow (better know as Col Glassgow, but he has worked hard for the Star & I think earned it he is Commissioned as Gen but not mustered as such) Came down last night from Houston - Lt Col Clark went yesterday to Galveston on business conected with the mustering out of the Regt. We expect him back on this mornings train when we will know what to be at. I hope we will be mustered out in a few days but it will be as well to be prepared for disappointment. Texas is a hard place - I mean that the people are a hard set - I thought Columbus had enough - but the people there made no atempt on our flag - or there would have been rough times - The reb Cittizens tore down the Stars and Stripes at a place about eighty miles N.W. of Houston - I forget what what Regt was there, an Ohio I think - They caught the ring leader or one who tore down the flag & have him in Houston, the Soldiers & many of the Cittizens wanted him shot, which should have been done on the spot

The people of Texas have felt but little the shock of war which has rent the very foundations of Society, Social political, & Civil in all the other Southern States. The parolled Confederate soldiers say they regret that we did not march into & all over the state with a large & victorious army. It would have been far better. They are saucy & insolent now, they need a good sound thrashing - & hundreds of them will have to have it - But we will be out of it & let the Veterans at them - Id like to see about 100,000 Corps De Afrique administer Justice to a portion of this people. - I am pleased that you are getting along so well with your school - I think that the successful School teacher has much to be proud over - & you will have a Score or more young friends - to cherish your memory where ever they may be in years to come. If you have not already determined to do so - I would reccommend that you make presents to the worthy at the end of the term - It is needless for me to say what I shall do as to buisness - I have so many notions. But tell Austin to hold the helm at wild-cat with a firm hand - until I come, which I think will be within three weeks. Ever Your affectionate Husband. L A Garrett

5 Saturday Morning - We move Camp this morning - about one mile Col Clark has not returned from Galveston, we will not do much before Monday morning. the sun is very hot, very hot & the nights warm enough to lie out of doors without any covering. This hot weather is taking the muscle off me. I only weigh 146 lbs 22 lbs less than when in texas in 1864 & yet I

am enjoying the best of health The Soldiers are getting almost desperate - they imagine that they are being trifled with, in being here at all & these delays are borne with an ill grace I am trying to bear the disappointment as philosophically as possible But I assure you I am anxious to be at home with those I love so well. time is passing rapidly & in a few weeks - all will be right Ever yours Lyle

Office Assist Com Muster 13" A. C Harrisburg Texas July 26 1865

I hereby certify on honor that I have carefully examined the accounts of 1st Lieut Lyle A Garrett Co "C" 23rd Regt Iowa Inft Vols, and find that he has made all returns to the proper Bureaus as required by the Revised Army Regulations and existing Orders for all property for which he has ever been responsible and further that he has made affidavit on file in my office that he is not in any way indebted to the U S Government

Frank N. Luce 1st Lieut 23rd Wiscon Inft A C.M. 13th A.C.

PROPERTY RETURNS DIVISION
(EXAMINATION SECTION-FORM I)

Ordnance Office,

WAR DEPARTMENT,

Washington, D.C., Nov 15, 1865.

Sir:

Your return of Ordnance and Ordnance Stores pertaining to Company C 23 Iowa Infantry, for pt 2 quarter of 1865, has been examined in this Office, and referred to the Second Auditor for settlement.

Respectfully,

Your obedient servant

By order of the Chief of Ordnance: Jno. R. McMcGinness

& Brvt. Captain Liet. A.

Lieut. of Ordnance and Assistant. Lt.

L. A. Garrett

Co. C. 23 Iowa Inf

Mobile Ala.

This letter is the evidence that the property return referred to above has passed the administrative scrutiny of the Ordnance Bureau, and has there been found correct. IT SHOULD BE CAREFULLY PRESERVED BY THE RECEIVER.

(9.2.65.50.)

ESW

No. 25 Des Moines, Iowa

Saturday Eve, Feb 21st /63

Dear Husband,

I have just come home, Mrs R, & I have been down town spending the day. It is just five months today, & the question rises will you be gone another five months? I try to hope for the best, we have no news today; I have been in town since Tuesday last, I received three letters from you that day, one of them was written before the one I recd last so that I have got all of your letters but one, the ones I got last were numbered 14, 16 & 17. Mr. R. is scolding us to bed, so I must say good night. Monday Morning Feb 23rd good morning Dear Husband, O how I long to know where you are, your last letter Feb 1st is the latest news that I have with regard to the whereabouts of the regiment, and as you said you are going away so far, that communication will be difficult or entirely off, O how many anxious

he will give you his opinion of the war. Good bye my Dear Husband.

days & night I will spend; I think that I never have felt as lonely as I did last night, I got your letters out and looked over them before I went to church in the evening. I felt very sad all the time during the sermon & after I came home I felt so badly that I could not conceal my feelings, so I went to my own little room and indulged in a hearty cry & feel better this morning. Yesterday evening during the sermon I could not keep my thoughts from wandering back to our own home, and happy we might have been, & instead of going day after day alone to church, you might have been with me had it not been for this wicked rebellion, I must confess that I have lost a good deal of my patriotism or something. I don't know that I can say that I love my country less, but I am disgusted with the do nothing policy of our government, it is said that "coming events cast their shadows before," but the end is effectually shrouded from our short vision, but why do we despond? Our Father knows what the destiny of this nation is; can we not trust Him? Instead of adding to your despondency, I ought to encourage you, but you see that I write just as I happen to feel & that is the way I want you to do, don't conceal anything

from your wife, for I am able to bear it, I can endure any thing, better than suspense, I thank you for writing as freely as you do; I feel quite anxious about your health, you were not well when you wrote last. O how I wish I could cook a good meal now & then. It is too bad that you don't get your rations, I think there is a way to get redress, & if were a soldiers, I would clamor loudly for it, the government rations are liberal, and the clothing warm and abundant, if the officials would do their duty, our soldiers need not suffer; Mrs. Reicheneker Mrs. White & I are talking of getting up a box to send to 23rd. Last Friday evening the ladies of the Baptist church gave a festival for the benefit of the Sabbath School, the whole R family went myself included, the net profits were 81 dol. they intend to buy a library with it, there is a talk of making a festival or concert for the benefit of the soldiers in the hospitals, I feel like patronizing anything of that kind; I look over the list of the sick in our hospitals every week. O! I do hope that I will never see your name on the list.

After all that has been said, we have given up our plan of going into business, Mrs Rs. Brother advised her not to go into business, this spring, as our affair

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with regard to currency is so unsettled that he thought it unsafe to go into any business now, I am afraid that you will think I lack energy or perserverence; I have decided to teach this summer, if I can get a certificate, I think of trying to get the school in Smiths district, if I can make 15 dol a month besides expenses, don't you, I intend to go over as soon as I can to see about it. Fathers folks were all opposed to me borrowing money to go into business & I did not feel all together satisfied about the matter if I can get the school I will begin right away. I will feel better contented to have my mind occupied. Mrs. R wants me to stay here and take the school in her room, but my expenses are so much more in town than in the country, and I enjoy myself in the country better, if I can get to church, & if I get that school I will be near town, Emma is going up to Nevada this summer to teach, that is if - mother will let her. Stuarts are talking of fixing the old cabin to live in as soon a Browns go out I suppose that Austin has written you all about our affairs on the farm, Cy goes to school on Agency, they have a good teacher, & he seems very much intrested in his studies, Mills offers a prize of a large Pictorial Unabridged Dictionary to the best speller in the county, the trial is to come off the 7th of March at the court house. I want Cy to compete for it, I would be so proud if he could get it, wouldn't you? You would hardly know Cy he has grown so, he is taller than stuart, and is as strong and hearty as ever since he has had the measles, I have not heard from Father since I came in. I suppose he is better or they would have let me know, I must hurry and close in time for this to go out, I am sorry to send you so short a letter, I will write soon again, take good care of your health my dear & write as often as you can & don't forget to pray, Bro Nash said Thursday that he would write you soon

Tuesday Eve, Feb 24th /63

Des Moines, Iowa

Dear Husband,

I have just received your precious letter no 18, Feb 4, 5 & 6th. O! I was so glad to hear from you. I had been washing very hard all day, & Will forgot to go to the P.O. at noon, so I had to wait 'til night, as it was too wet for the children to go down town, it was nearly dark and I was lying on the sofa thinking of you & how long it had been since your last letter was written & you were not well then, when Will came in with a letter on whose back I soon recognized the Mrs. Mary A. H. you may be sure I was not long in getting at the contents, I thank you my dear Lyle for such long, tender letters, and they are more particularly dear to me when I remember that you have so little time to devote to your friends, if the letters you receive do you as much good as yours do me, we all ought to write often. I wrote so little the last letter that I sent, that I feel like writing you again.

You spoke of sending money, did you get your full pay or only part. I hear that Capt Houston is in town. I shall try to see him. I believe he brought Charlie Hepburns body. I wish I could come & see you; yes I should like to live in "Dixy" any place with you my dear Your Mary

especially after receiving such a letter, but it is getting late and I am very tired, so good night.

Thursday Evening 26th I fear you will think I am neglecting you, as I write a little now and then, but when I am not writing, you are in my thought almost constantly; I am quite well this evening, I wonder how you are? Mr. R. told me today that there was a dispatch saying that Gen Davidson's command is at Pilot Knob, O! if I had the money I feel like I could fly to you, it may be the last chance I will ever have of seeing you, if I know it, I would go to you at all hazards; I received a letter from Aunt Liss this evening, I was very glad to hear from her she would like to have me come to visit her, as Mary is married she feels very lonely, she & Genny Ellisons were married the same day, Aunt says that Molly Hedges folks are all bitter secessionists; I forgot to write you anything about the weather in my last; last Thursday the 19th we had the heaviest fall of snow we have had this winter, the wind blew very hard and it drifted so that it is hard to tell the exact depth, Mr. R said he thought about 4 or 5 inches, the next day it turned very warm, and froze

that night and remained rather cold and cloudy
'til Wednesday morning when it began to snow, and
about the middle of the day turned to sleet and rain.
I think it was the stormiest day I have seen for
more than a year. Today has been a bright warm
day. The snow has melted a great deal. The roads
will be almost impassible. I thought of you all
that day that it stormed so. It is getting late so good
night my dear.

Saturday Morning 28th, My Dearest, I
have just received yours of the 24th written since
I began this. O you don't know how I feel that
you are so much nearer home. I feel that I
can't stay away from you any longer. This is the
second letter that I have received this week.
I am so glad that you have recovered, but it
makes my heart ache to read how many hard
ships you have to endure, & have to go almost
half starved. O 'tis too bad. I should think
you could do something with your quartermaster.
The evidence of the whole regiment would go to
prove that you have not received your rations.
Why don't your Col. attend to it? It makes my

blood boil to think that the men that have to endure the severest of the hardships & receive so little pay, must be cheated out of what is necessary to sustain life, while those who endure but little & whose loyalty is doubtful are making their fortunes; there is so much corruption among us that I hardly to hope for success. You say that you may go to Vicksburg, O! I can't bear the thought of it, the whole army there is sick, over a hundred die daily, but I ought to have learned before this that I have no choice in the matter, you are no longer under your own contoll or my wishes, as Mrs Bird said yesterday, all that we can do, is to commit into the hands of God what a comfort it is to feel that we have a Father that cares for us, whose arm is strong to save, Put your whole trust in him my husband, no matter how much deceit & wickedness you see in men, even those that you may have believed to be good and true, don't allow it to shake your confidence in the reality of religion, or the truth of God, I have no doubt that you often derive comfort from sources unknow to the unregenerate heart, my prayer to God continually is, that you may be kept from yielding to temptation & that you mind & morals may not be contaminated by contact with ungodly wicked men; we hear that the Suttlers, Hull & Lyon are keeping whiskey to sell to the poor soldiers, O what an outrage, how many young men that would never think of drinking at home, who now away from the restraints of society and friends, will be ruined body and soul; use your influence for good, let your light shine; and try to cultivate a love & taste for all that is good & pure and "lovely; hold your self aloof from the low, & degraded as much as possible. My health is pretty good, I don't think I feel quite as well as I done, but I think it is owing to so much damp, disagreeable weather, the snow is mostly gone, & it is very muddy, & is warm & cloudy, we will doubtless have rain or snow before 24 hours; I have not heard a word from Fathers folks since I came home. I suppose father is better or they would have let me know. My paper is almost fill & it will soon be mail time & as this won't go out until Monday, if it don't today, I will close & write soon again.

Des Moines March 4 1863

Dear Friend

I take my pen in
hand to let you know that
we are all well at present
My aunt and cousin are here
I have not got time to write
much at present as mother
has no girl now. I would
like to see you very much
indeed. I can not write
any more just now
from your affectionate
friend

Mary L Reicheneker

money I should have gone with them I also heard this morning that the regiment was going to remain there till their teams recruited, if they do I hope you will get a chance to come home, ever since you came so near coming home, I feel nervous every blue coat that I see. I am quite well again, I am in the dagurrean room. Shurman has gone East and Will is taking pictures, Mrs. White is having her photograph taken if I could get a good one I would send you another, I do wish I could have yours in a large frame in your full uniform I saw one in a large frame this morning from the 2nd Iowa, if you should go to St Louis get a photograph wont you & send it in a large envelop & I can get it framed. I expected a letter from you this morning but was dr's appointed; I saw Dr Whitman this morning he was out to Fathers last Sunday, Father is better but is some what discouraged. I expect to go out in the country next week, I will write you soon again, till then good bye my dearest husband, remember me in your prayers, ever your true & loving Mary

No 28

Des Moines Iowa

Wednesday March 4th /63

Dear Husband,

I received the draft this morning for 43.00. I hope you kept enough to buy such things as are necessary for your comfort, I will use it as economically as possible, we owe Brother Nash 5.50 of our last years subscription that I will pay, as I expect they need it, how much ought we to give next or I would say this year; O: I try to hope you will be home to hear his sermons, before the year is out, I wish that I could feel as hopeful as Bro Nash does, he said Sunday that he would write you & send it by Capt Houston I did not see as expected, & he did not start to the regiment until this morning, Mr Reicheneker saw him last evening & asked him if he knew you, he said he did & saw you every, Mr R told him that there was a woman up at his house that would like to

see any one that had seen her husband lately he replied that he would call, but was going to leave in the morning, I should like to have seen him, I'll "bet" I would have asked him many a question, I don't know where your Regt is now, I have not seen the morning paper O! I do hope you will not have to go to Vicksburg you seemed to be somewhat elated over the idea of going there. I cant censure you either for wanting to do something for your country; I don't believe, as I have said before, that I dread a battle as much as a long stay in an unhealthy country for more die by disease than by the sword. I do wonder if you will ever get a furlow. I think that they might let you come, if any one does, as you were so badly disappointed.

I have been round to Mrs. Birds this morning, they have not heard from Empson for sometime, she told me that Mrs. Hull & Eliza started for St Louis this morning, O, how I wish I could have gone with them, if I had plenty of

Des Moines, Iowa

Sabbath March 8th 1863

Dear Husband,

Again I find myself writing to my husband, which to me is the most delightful imployment, this is a bright day, wind from the northwest, last night there was a very light fall of snow. There was no preaching at our church today, so I went to the Methodist, are you surprised? the pastor of that church is a very excellent man & as I had never heard him, I thought this would be a good opportunity as I never like to leave our own preaching, but instead of hearing Mr. May be I listened to a very good sermon from our secretary of state Dr Wright, I think he is a good & likely a very useful man, but I should think a man of very limited education, but a pretty shrewd man & a deep & correct thinker, his views with

Sometimes I feel like I cant stand it any longer, but I should not murmur as long as your life & health are spared, when so many have had to bid their husbands a last farewell. No I wont despair, but try to hope for the better. You say that you did not write in your journal for two months now I have a mind to give you a real good

scolding , that's just what I want to know about your privation & all you marches & everything & I think if you live to get home & peace is restored it would be gratifying to see what you suffered establish such a good government.

now then I want you to go right to work to keeping you Journal & don't neglect it again under penalty of my displeasure. good bye my dear dear Lyle I will write soon again May our Father keep you

regard to the war as expressed in the pulpit suit me exactly. Mr. Guile of Rising Sun will preach in our church this evening. I had much rather spend the evening with you than listen to Spurgeon or Henry Ward Beecher, I wonder where you have spent this day & I wonder too if you are thinking of me now 8 P.M. I feel real lonesome & homesick today, I long to see some face I love, Mrs. Reicheneker went Winterset Friday & will probably be gone a week. Mrs. White and I are keeping house, Bro Nash went to Winterset Friday too & will not be home till Monday. I have not seen any of Fathers folks yet. Will saw Cy in town yesterday at the spelling match, but he did not come up to see me, he did not compete for the prize. I do wish he had for I think he would have won it, it is growing dark & I must stop, good night my dear.

Monday morning 9th Good morning dearest Lyle, this is a bright beautiful day, the air is so pure & bracing, how we would enjoy such a morning at our own home, I am getting real homesick

I think I will go out next week, I have not got a school yet, I believe I told you that I wrote to Jas. Smith about the school in his district he said that they were to have an election for director the next week & if Ben Fuller was elected no one need apply as his son & daughter both wanted the school, but would let me know again, but have not heard from him yet, I am sorry that I did not teach in the country last winter, I could have got 22 dol a month, & my board would not have been more than half as much as it was here, and another thing it don't take half as much to dress in the country as it does in town. Till Edar is teaching in Ankany's district 22.00 & her board don't cost her anything, I want to get a school & begin teaching by the 1st of April but I will keep you posted. O! I am so glad that I decided to teach. Now for a little gossip & news, you remember Mat Nicholson, he went to England last fall a short time after you went away & was married a few weeks ago, he intended to come

to America, but his wife is not willing to come as she has considerable money & don't think it safe in the unsettled state of the country to bring it here; I believe that Till Edar loved "Mat" she don't seem like the same girl since he went away; I have not seen Ross for a long time. I don't know whether he thinks of her yet or not. Last Saturday we two military personages to dinner, Col Sawyer & Lieut Ruston from Sioux City. We made them a real good dinner, O! I did wish so often that day while we were eating that you were here & another thing if you have to be in the army I should prefer to have you up there in a cavalry regiment, they fare so much better than the southern soldiers do, & I think that the cav service is not so hard as infn. there was a report in the paper the other day that the 6th Cav would be sent up north, you know that is the regiment that Ellison is in, the sickly season is coming on & you would be apt to be healthy up there. I was in to see Mrs Bird Saturday she told me that Empson was sick again in the Hospital at Pilot Knob, poor woman she does feel so badly about him she wants you to try to get a discharge for him, I do think that he ought to come home, don't you? I was thinking the other day that Empy might not be able to come home alone if he was discharged & they sometimes allow another soldier to go to take care of the sick one & perhaps you might get to come with him, was it foolish in me to think of such a thing? O! I do want you to come home so bad that I am trying to devise ways for you to get home all the time, I don't know how should act if you were to come home, I was mistaken about Mrs Hull going to St Louis, she intended to go but was taken sick the morning before she was to start & could not go, but I expect if I should go to see you I would feel just as lonely as ever when I got home, but I feel less reconciled to your absence every day.

No 30

Des Moines, Iowa

Tuesday Evening March 10th

Dear Husband

I received your 21 of the 3d & 4th today, the letters come so much quicker than they used to that it don't seem like you are so far away, I thank you for writing so often, & I am so glad that you are feeling so well & seem to be in so much better spirits, I read a letter in the daily Register today that would do you good to read, it is from your Col, I presume it will be in the weekly & I will send it to you.

I attended the funeral of Charlie Hepburn this afternoon at 2 O'clock at his Father's house, how I pity his poor mother, I am glad that he is buried, his friends have been expecting his remains so long that it kept his death fresh in their minds, & it must be a great comfort

too, to his mother to know that he is decently buried, they opened the coffin yesterday, they said he did not look very bad for one who had been dead so long, his Father looked at him. I think that they would not let his Mother see him, poor woman! I fear she will never get over his death. Mr. Bird conducted the services, he read a chapter and prayed & there were two pieces sung by Moody, Mrs. Scribner, Mrs. Stacy Johns & a gentleman that I did know every one seemed to be deeply affected.

I called at Mrs. Birds as I came home this evening, she is very uneasy about Empson I do wish that he was at home, I don't think that he can do his country much good in the army; O I do hope you will be sent north it will be likely to be more healthy, & as the warm sickly season is coming I am afraid that you will not be as well as you have been, but you will call this meeting trouble half way. It is nearly nine O'clock, there the clock is striking just now, & Mrs. White & I have done a very large washing today & done baking besides & consequently I feel pretty tired, so good night dearest

Saturday Evening March 14th Good evening Dear husband, I do feel so happy this evening, today Mrs. White & I had worked very hard & got dinner just at twelve & had all our dinner work done & had gone into my room to dress & had got my dress off when Mrs. White said O come here quick Mrs. Garrett here is a blue coat coming up the hill, she is always teasing me about the blue coats, & she said I do believe he is coming here, you cant imagine how I felt for a few minits, Mrs. W says that I looked like I was going to faint but I think she exagerated just a little, & then she went on to say & he is climbing the fence. I do believe its Mr. Garrett; I threw my dress around my shoulders & ran to the window & was soon convinced that it was not you, so I ran back to my room to dress me & I heard him inquire for me, I assure you that I was glad to see him, I though he was an entire stranger, you may be sure that I asked him questions just about as fast as he could answer them, I

am perfectly delighted with your likeness, I think it a real good one, the best one perhaps you ever had, I see you have grown fleshy, your face is as rosy as ever, I wish I could send you a real good one, but I hope you will be soon home to see the original, which I know will please you much better. I am feeling quite well now & am quite fleshy; I was very much pleased with Mr. Christy, he appears to be a fine man he said that you were coming home in six weeks. O! I fairly danced for joy, I did jump up & down when he went away, he told me that he thought Jennings would resign & that Hull would probably be promoted; if that proves true you will stand chance for something, & I think if merit is the prerequisite of promotion you will be Capt - O I do hope you may, for I know you would be good to your men, and I suppose you are on the march again. O! I am so uneasy for fear you will be sent to Vicksburg; Mr. Christy seemed to feel very hopeful, sometimes I feel so & then again I am discouraged, but I want to ask you now before I forget, is what assurance you have of coming home, if you have any or did you want to keep it a secret? if you are coming do let me know for I don't know what might happen if you were to come home unexpectedly, but - I beg of you don't stand on formality if you get a chance to come before you have an opportunity of writing, you know that you will be welcome, I have your likeness lying on the table beside me while I write, it looks so much like you I love to look at it & your letter did me so much good, O! I did enjoy it "hugely", but I must be careful or I shall be criticized for using "slang", that was right I stand corrected but you had better be careful how you pick up words while you are away or I shall be correcting you all the while. I declare I feel so excited that I can hardly write, to think you are coming home but - I must not be too much elated for fear I may be disappointed, but you will write me soon

and tell me all about it wont you? (5 page) I had intended to go over to Smith's this afternoon, but Mr. Christy came & staid about an hour & Mr. West called & as soon as they were gone one of our neighbors came in & so I gave it up entirely, I think now of going Monday and as this letter will go out before I can give you the result, I will write you in my next how I succeeded, I had thought of begining the first of April but if you are coming home I will wait till you do come. Mr. Fredric was in day before yesterday, he was talking of our folks and theirs making up a box to send to Co C of good things, I do think they ought to & hope they will.

Sunday afternoon 15th I had written so far & it was about 11 O'clock when we saw the lamps of the stage coming up the hill, we had been expecting Mrs. Reicheneker all day but had given her up; the road are quite bad, & consequently they were longer coming up, it has been very warm for the last few days & the ground is thawing out very fast, indeed it is not frozen very much; yesterday & today are two of the most lovely days I ever saw, it is so

bright & warm, if it were this warm I wish you were here now, but as you say I suppose you will have to wait your turn & I do hope it will come soon; I hardly know what to do about engaging a school, if I knew to a certainty when you were coming, I don't want to be in school when you come & if you don't come before the first of May I might teach a month I will see tomorrow what I can do, I don't know whether I can get a certificate or not, do you think I can? I guess I will study some & brighten up a little. Mr. Bird preached Charlie Hepburn funeral sermon today, the house was crowded every one seemed to be very much affected, poor Mrs. Hepburn, how sad & heart broken she looks, I could not help thinking & wondering if I should ever have to attend the funeral sermon of my soldier husband, O! I don't think I could live through it, I pray God every day that your life & health may be precious in His sight, & yet sometimes I feel so unworthy when I utter that prayer, & often doubt my acceptance. O my dear remember me in your prayers

I feel that my religious feeling are growing cold, & one thing I will say to you in confidence this is a very pleasant family to live in & I enjoy myself very much, but it is not a very good place to grow in grace, there is a great deal of talk on & about worldly matters on the Sabbath day & there is very little love between Mr. & Mrs. R & there are a great many arguments & jars in the family to be agreeable to me; Mrs. R has been very kind to me & I like her very much & I believe she is a good Christian woman, but Mr. R. is just next to nothing, but he has been very kind to me & likes me a great deal better than I do him; but I blame Mrs. R too for scolding & ruling him so much, but she has had to manage so much & look ahead & provide, that I don't know that she is much to blame after all; Mrs. White, Mrs R's sister is a real lively intelligent woman but is not a Christian, & if we look at things right, the main object in life should be to prepare for that after higher life for which all other things were made, & yet - how much we are taken up

with the things of time & of the world; I am rejoiced that you do put your trust in God, & especially that you enjoy the consolations of religion now & that His promises are precious to you, let that word by your constant companion, it will exert a holy & refining influence over your life. O that we would study it more, that it might be "the man of our council & the guide of all our ways". You say in your last that you "wrote without reflection & had perhaps written more than would be interesting". I wish you would always write so, for then you will write just as you feel, & you need never fear that your letteres will not intrest me, I only wish they were as long again, but my dear Husband I know you have been very perseverant and have written me good long letters, & have never yet felt like or had ocasion to sencure for neglecting me, I feel thankful that I have such a husband & feel honored to possess the affections of so true & good a man, I try to be worthy of much love & devotion. Mr. Robinson was here today & he wanted me to go home with him & insisted very hard on me going, but I knew that you would rather I would not go & I told him that I would wait 'til you come home, wasn't that right? I like Mr. Robinson very much, but I know how you feel about the matter & I respect your views. I don't know that I said anything to you about the school out at Robinsons, if I don't get a school near here I can get the school in that destrict, he is director and would give me all they could afford & he wants to come very much, he said that he wished that I had been out there this winter & they would have had a school that was a school; of course I took just as much of that flattery as pleased, but I guess he was in earnest; they had a very poor teacher there that began the copies with small letters it was deficient in other things in proportion. I think if the Co Superintendent gave her a certificate I can get one. Well the sun is almost down & I have nearly filled my paper, & I will close for this time. We talk some of going to the Catholic church tonight the Priest will lecture on celibacy & the Latin language, the Catholics are preparing to build a fine church in the spring, a great many or at least a number of our citizens have subscribed large sums to build it, and many of them are members of protestant churches, consitency; good bye ever your Mary

Monday Morning 16th It is cloudy & foggy & looks like rain, last night we had a wedding in church last night, it was quite a surprise to some of us, Sister Sparks, I don't know that you remember her, she is a sister of Mrs. Eldridge & was baptized last winter. Bro Nash united her & Mr. Curtis (old Mrs. Gordon's son) with the shortest little ceremony you ever heard, she did not look a bit frightened, Bro Nash preached one of the best

that I have heard for a long time, he has been to Winterset a great deal this winter where his labors have been blessed in a great revival, they think a great deal of him down there & would like to have him for their Pastor, Mrs. Reicheneker thinks that a delightful county, I think from what I hear of it, it would be a delightful place to live if it were not for the "secesh" proclivities of the inhabitants. I suppose that you have seen by the papers of the copper head demonstrations down there; was not that an awful affair at Detroit, Mich; O' dear I don't know what our country is coming to & what will be the end of this wicked rebellion, well my paper is full again, so good bye, every your Mary

At Fathers Thursday Even

March 19th 1863

Dear Husband

Again I begin the work that gives me great pleasure, if I could afford the time I would write you a sheet every day; it is thundering & lightening very hard, & has been raining almost constantly since dark last evening, but the most of the time raining very slowly; I suppose that we are having our equinoctial storm. I came out here yesterday evening, I had expected them to come after on Tuesday; Yesterday morning I concluded as I could not get a horse any where to take it afoot to Smiths, to see about that school, I had heard that John Smith was Director, so I started early in the morning & got there about 9 O'clock, you may be sure that I was very tired when I got there, but not as I used to feel. The Old gentleman seemed very glad to see me, he did not know me when I first went in, he said I had grown so much fleshier & looked so much healthier than I did last summer, I had a very pleasant time chatting with Mrs. & Mr. Smith & talking on my fingers to a Mr. Vanwinkle that is a mute. I think that I heard you speak of him once, he was very much delighted to find some one that could converse with him in his way; he is a great union man, & Smith says, that his father is a strong abolitionist. There had been several application for the position of teacher in that district, but I could not know anything definite about the matter 'til their school board met, as the director had no authority to hire one 'til after that

must close for tonight, now let me caution you again to take good care of your health, you have more need to now. Mother said as she went to bed "give my love to Lyle." father is not well yet he looks very pale & thin, but he is getting better, is able to be up all day; remember me in your prayers, you are never forgotten in mine good night my dear Lyle
Your own Mary.

time, I think that Mr. Smith will use his influence for me. I told him that I would teach for 15.00 a month & board, there is but one person that has made application that I think will stand in my way and that is Miss Clara Tuttle, she asks 20, & board herself, if you will excuse me for saying it, I think that I made a favorable impression. The old gentleman told me that he would give me fifty apple trees free of cost, he is generous isn't he? That will be as many as you will want, will it not? Smith says that unless your grape-vines were dug or covered last fall, will all be dead this spring. I told him that I thought you left orders to have them covered; O my how it is raining & hailing, I pity the soldiers that are out in this storm, I suppose that you are at St. Genevieve by this time, & possibly on your way to Vicksburg; I noticed in yesterdays daily that Dr. A. G. Hull had received dispatch to that effect, Stuart saw him yesterday in town & he said that he wanted to see me & that he would be passing by fathers to day & would call & see me, but it has been storming so that I did not expect him. I knew several days ago that he was in town, but I did not care about going to see a man of his stamp of character; & I did not suppose that you would send any special message by him.

Yesterday was the anniversary of your fortieth birth day. I wonder if you remembered it, I thought of it several days before & Mother said that she well remembered what feelings thrilled her bosom 40 years ago yesterday morning, sometimes I fear I shall never know by experience what those feelings are, but we will hope & pray for the object of our desire, & if it is not granted we must not murmur. Cyrus received your letter written at Thomasville, I read it today to him & the family, it brought the tears to all our eyes, even father & Stuart; O you don't know

how much good it does me to have you write that you enjoy the comforts of religion, O! I think Cy will answer this one, I try my best to have him, I don't think it is because he don't love you that he don't write, but that he dislikes letter writing generally; it is about bed time, & my eyes don't feel very strong, so pleasant dreams my dear.

Friday evening the 20th It is evening again O! how I should love to know where my loved one is tonight; I can't reconcile my mind to the thought that you are going to Vicksburg, you don't know how anxiously I am looking & waiting for a letter from you, I shall feel more anxious if possible than I have before, as you are now going into a climate whose air is poisoned by the miasma rising from bogs & decayed & decaying vegetation; O! I do hope the report of the evacuation of the place is true; I see by the Tribune of last Saturday that the health of the army at Vicksburg is improving; my feelings are constantly vacillating between hope & fear; sometimes I am elated with the thought that the war will end by fall at the farthest, & again I am away down in the valley of despair; but you have learned 'ere this that my feelings are constantly fluctuating, I am either all hope, or all despondency; I am trying to school my feelings to a more even tenor, & try to give myself & all that I have into the hands of God, O! that I could do it with implicit confidence, & then I need not be troubled with any of these fears; but we are human & the ties of earth are strong, & I know if I did not love you so much, I could not feel so much solicitude for your welfare; & now while I think of it, could you not get a transfer in to a cavalry regiment, I think as a general thing they are heal-

thier than infantry. I should like so much to have you in the 6th, they are ordered now to Sioux City, they will have a healthy atmosphere, & if they are stationed at Ft Randle they will have a delightful location, but I don't suppose there is any use of speculating on that, for you will not likly feel like leaving your regiment, you all seem to be elated at the prospect of soon getting to fight, I suppose that is what the most of you enlisted for, but poor fellows; many of you will have to give your lives as seals to your patriotism, how many, very many go into battle as the unthinking horse, where do you think the thousands of souls that perish in frenzied strife will go? it has been a subject of deep thought to me. O! this terrible, terrible, civil war when will it end. We might answer when God has accomplished his doubtless wise purpose, & not assuredly 'til then, why should we poor shortsighted mortals wonder, doubt & fear when an omnipotent God lives & rules the universe; & will make the "wrath of men to praise him". It is growing late & I must hasten; Austin was down today & gave me a very pressing invitation to come up & stay a week with them; I think of going up tomorrow; Mr. Lamb was over today after a girl & to take May Jane over, they have a young son over there nothing strange for them is it? He seemed as much pleased as if it was the first. Mr. & Mrs. Hawthorn are here visiting, they start home in the morning, he is a real old copperhead of the Mahony kind, I don't see how he & Stuart get along as well as they do. Mrs. Hawthorn is quite a fine woman, she is Jennie's stepmother, O! that name jars on my ears so, I don't hardly know why, but I do dislike so much to hear it. Frank Fredric was down today to get the things that Corwin sent, they all came safely, but the expressage was enormously high, 3.75. You would have been amused if you could have looked in when we unpacked the goods, we were real foolish we put the caps on our heads and the mittins on our hands, & May Jane said she was going to sleep under Marions blanket that night. I looked over the letters & found the picture, I wont say likines. I dont wonder that you did not know it, I wish I could send you as true an one as yours is, I have filed all your letters & mine, we will have a rich time looking over them sometime I hope. It is growing late & I

No 32

At Fathers, Monday Eve March 23d 1863

Dear Husband,

Your precious letter of the 12th was received this afternoon, Mary Jane also got one from Marion mailed the 19th at Cairo, & yours was mailed the 13th at St. Genevive, so we know that you were going down the river, so we sent the letter immediately over to Lambs to Mary Jane & so we know by that, that you are at New Madrid, whenever you move I get the map & trace your course, I see that you are about fifty miles below Cairo; I was very glad to hear that you were in such good health, but it makes me feel sad that you are going farther away from me & into that sickly climate. I hope as you are so well that you may escape. O! do take good care of your health my dear husband for my sake as well as your own. My health is quite good but I don't think that I am quite as fleshy. I will go up day after tomorrow & get my picture taken for you & if Mr. Christie has not gone will send it by him, you did not say anything in your last about coming home, but I suppose you don't know anything about when you can come, but must patiently wait your time. O! I do hope it may come soon, I do want to see you so bad, that I feel like I could not wait any longer, but if you are trying still those feelings that you may be a true soldier, I too must be brave & strong hearted, that I may be worthy of my soldier husband. We have done a very large washing

today & am very tired, & will have to bid you good night much as I would like to fill this, may you sleep sweetly & have pleasant dreams of home again good night.

Wednesday afternoon, again I resume the pen, I wonder where you are today, I fear down about Vicksburg. Ross has just come & is telling us that one of the Ellis boys that went in the same company with Cary is dead, they have but a little over a hundred effective men, it looks hard to see how fast the soldiers are dying off, many of them who have never seen a battle field, I am constantly anxious about you, more than anyone thinks of. I have had such singular feeling lately, when I read of the death of a soldier my thoughts turn instantly to you, I don't know whether it is ominous or not; this is real March day, this morning was a bright beautiful one, but it soon clouded up & has been spitting snow & is quite cold & disagreeable. Ezra Plummer returned a few days ago & I suppose that he & Venise will be married soon, they do not intend to make a wedding. Father is not well yet, he looks very pale, but he has good appetite & we think he will get along now if he does not expose himself. I feel anxious to go to the office for I think there is certainly be a letter for me, you say in your last that you fear that you often write more than will interesting, never fear, although your letters are good long one, I always wish they were longer; you must try to get along as pleasantly as you can in your discussions. I know just how it is, but you that we must look over what some people say & ascribe it to their ignorance. O! how I wish that I could have been with you that evening that you were strolling around among the farms & vineyards, I don't wonder that it made you homesick, it made me feel so to read it, I will try to have our orchard improved as much as possible, Austin says that he don't like to go to digging up trees, & thought perhaps he had better wait 'til you came home. I suppose you want the peach trees that are dying dug up; he is going

down in a short time to see how many vacancies there are. I believe that I wrote you about Smith saying that he would give me fifty trees. I intend to let him select them. O I do hope that I will get the school over there, I don't suppose that I will know before the middle of April but that won't be long now, the winter has been so mild that it don't seem possible that Spring is here, it will very soon be time for farmers to begin their work, they feel quite discourgaged here just now, Stuart & Cy have neither one been able to do anything but feed & chop a little wood for a week, & their Charley (horse) has a stiff disease and is so bad that he can scarcely walk, & they fear that he will never get well. I believe they hardly ever do when affected in that way. Cy is unwell a good deal of the time & complains a good deal & they don't know what to do for the best this summer, he is old enough to make a pretty good hand, but they are afraid he can't, he is not well now. I know he look a very bad color, but you know that he is not very anxious to work at any time, & consequently they don't feel that sympathy for him when he complains as they would if it was otherwise, but perhaps I ought not to have written this it will only hurrass your mind all to no purpose, but when I get to writing I feel like telling you every thing just as I used to do when you were at home. It is almost dark & is quite cloudy & cold, wind from the north, I think that is doubtful about us going to Desmoines tomorrow, if I go I will finish tomorrow at town. I am in Desmoines now & have no chance to write any more, I received yours of the 17th today, I got my picture taken today & will send it the first opportunity, it is not a very good one but you know that I don't take very well, all pretty well, but I have not had my dinner & have a very severe headache, Eunice is with me, we had to wait so long for our pictures that

we are tired to death, I am feeling very badly about you going to Vicksburg, well I must stop much as I dislike to send white paper, I don't know that you can read this, I will write soon again ever your Mary

No 34

At Austins, April 10th /63 Friday afternoon

Dear Husband

It is a week ago today since I wrote you from Desmoines, I have been so busy all the time that I could not even begin a letter to you, but let whatever may happen I will write to you one a week if I am well; I believe that I mentioned in my last that Father had sent me word that there was letters out home for me, they were both from you Nos 25 & 26 written one at Memphis & the other a few days afterwards at Helena about 16 days ago, I feel very anxious to hear from you again, I expect I will not get my letters as soon, or as regularly as I have done. This is a very warm day & the windiest I have seen for a long time, it is blowing furiously from the south & there is quite a heavy cloud rising in that direction, we are wishing very much for rain, it is over three weeks since it has rained any at all & a great deal of that time has been windy & the ground is very dry & the farmers fear if we don't have rain soon that their wheat crop will be a failure; the up-lands are much dryer than our farms in the bottom, where the wheat has been sown in many places up on the prairie the soil was so loose & dry that it is blowing away & leaving the wheat bare & the birds are taking it. Stuart finished putting his in, at noon today; just in time if it should rain tonight & I think it surely will, but we have thought that a great many times this spring, the wind goes round the right way for fair weather.

O' how I wish you were at home farming, or rather I wish there was no cause to call you away, but I do hope this miserable war will end this spring & summer, if it should close that soon & my husband be returned to me, the past will be to me as a dream

The spring to me is generally the happiest & most cheerfull time in the year, but this spring has a sadness for me that it never had before; there is a void that the opening flower & the songs of birds, can not fill; I presume that you do not feel my absence as much as I do yours, you are constantly changing from one scene of excitement & bustle of military life to another so that the time does not pass so slowly as it does with me, but I would not have you think for anything that I go round constantly with tearful eyes & a woe begone countenance, the most of the time I am cheerful & happy, & I think that I will enjoy myself better teaching than I would at fathers, I have accepted the school in Robinsons district; I begin teaching in about three weeks, I got a certificate for six months, if I can get the school I will take it for that length of time, & I do hope by that time you will be at home my dear husband

Saturday Morning 11th Good morning dearest Lyle, how I wish that I could say those words instead of write them where you will not see them perhaps for two or three weeks. Cy brought up your No 27 of the 29th & 30 late yesterday evening. O you may believe that I was glad to get it, it was such a good long one too, my dear husband I know that your thoughts are with the loved ones at home, you are so punctual about writing & write so easy & as if your heart were in it, & you are away down near Vicksburg that stronghold of the enemy that has proved up to this time impregnable but I hope before this reaches you will be our, not that I wish to hear of a battle there, but that the matter may be decided, you say there is little probability of a battle there, O! I do hope there will not be, with how much anxiety I will wait & watch for this news from the south, it is strange how selfish we are now when we get papers, I always look for the department of the South & feel but little interest as to how the war is progressing in other places. I have examined the maps in connection with the reading of the Tribune & know pretty well where

all plans for canals are laid & where the levees are cut & (every thing) up you say. We are so busy all the time at Father's that I can hardly get time to read the war news, so that I expect that I am not much better posted than you are when you get papers at all; I have had the Register mailed to you direct from the office, so that if you don't get it you will know that it is not because it is not sent. I am so thankful that you are in such good health, do be very careful to not expose yourself unnecessarily, & be particular to keep your body clean & be careful what you eat that is if you have any choice of food at all. Austin & I remarked last night at the supper table how Lyle would enjoy this meal, we were eating two of your favorite dishes cornbread & buttermilk. I hardly ever eat that I do not think of you my precious husband; poor Billy! I am so sorry that he is afflicted so, you spoke as if you thought him dangerously sick, poor Margery! how anxious she must feel; it is a pity that he did not get a discharge before he left Mo, it will be very difficult to get him home now that he is so far away: you speak of taking a walk with Mr Warnock so that I suppose he did get to come home; I am very sorry that you cannot get home, I felt for a while that I might see you any time, that is I was looking for you all the time after Mr Christie, he seemed to think when he went away that you would get to come home, but I had given up the idea some weeks ago, after you were ordered so far south; how beautiful everything must look where you are, roses in full bloom, when there is not even a green leaf to be seen up here, the elms are in bloom & the gooseberries are leafed out is our nearest approach to Spring. I have not been down to our home this Spring, I should like to see how the strawberries & gooseberries & the mountain raspberries & the grapevines are doing, but I feel your essence so keenly when I go there that I can't venture there & you know too the lady(?) of the house is not most agreeable companion, Austin

says that your grapevines have rooted finally & he will attend to setting them out soon; his own did not take root at all, he got 48 apple trees for me & set them out, but I won't write you any more on that subject as he says that he will write you in a few days, I tried to get them to write so last night to send in my letter, but he told me to tell you that he had been branding stocks & his eyes were so full of dust that he could not hold them open to write, but that he would write in two or three days: The other day just as I was starting to town Father called me into the bedroom with a mysterious look & quietly to a sheet of paper out of his trunk on which Cy had been trying his best to write you a letter, he had made a very good beginning but had written but two or three lines before he stalled & could go no farther, he said he wanted me to see it before I wrote to you again so that I could tell you that it was not because he did not want to write but because he thought he could not write. Father feels badly about Cys not writing to you & wanted to make all excuses for him that he can he is doing first rate now, Austin said the other day that Cy worked like a man; I am so glad & I know that you will. We had a stranger come to our house last Monday the 6th, a rival for the 2nd Lieutenantcy, a fine big boy, a ten pounder, Ellison came home just two days after it did is very much pleased to have a son; the 6th Cav passed through Des Moines last Thursday, we had all intended to go up to Mrs Epons to see them as they passed, but David E. said that they intended to stop at the barracks a day or two & we thought it would be more interesting to go & see them on dress parade, but they did not stop at Des Moines but went on 4 miles the other side & camped on Walnut, Ellison went up to the regiment yesterday to learn when they would go on, he came home late yesterday evening & had to leave very early this morning, he started this morning before any one was up, they are going to Sioux City & from this away up into the Indian country, Ellison don't seem to like the idea of turning his back on the rebels he makes a fine looking officer he had a sword presented him by his company which he says is the finest in the regiment. I am delighted at the prospect of your promotion. I do think that you deserve it & I shall look with intrest for news from you, I shall not say any thing about it to any one, & anything that you wish to write confidentially, will be safe with me, & I don't you need fear that it will fall into other hands, I receive all your letters, Strains folks say that they don't get half of Davids letters he is some where near Vicksburg, I presume it is because the are not directed plainly; I will send you a Tribune perhaps you will get it sometime it has a speech by Gerrett Smith & some editorial that I should like you to read; I suppose before this reaches you, you will have received my picture write me whether you think it a good one my health is quite good, I don't think that I am quite so hearty as I was in the winter, I have to work rather hard for my health, I came up here to rest a little while & saw a some, I am going up to Des Moines next week, and stay all the week and perhaps longer, since Libbie has been sick we believe had more work than ever, they named their boy Edward Garrett, Ellen Strain is waiting to take this to the office so I must close, I will write soon again good bye dear husband, all well at Fathers, again good by may God shield you in the day of battle is the prayer of your Mary

At Mrs Bansmans, Desmoines, April 16th /63 Dear Husband You see that I am in Desmoines again, & will perhaps be surprised that I date at J.B. Bansmans, I don't think that you are personally acquainted & I know have a great antipathy for the editor of the Desmoines Times, so I will explain befor I turn my attention to things of more importance for fear you will think that I countenance treasonable institutions or have a disregard for you choice of friends; I met Mrs B. last fall at Mrs Reichenekers soon after I went there, she came to help Mrs R. with her sewing & spent the day & Mr B came up to dinner; you may be sure that I was prepared to dislike them both, more particularly, the editor from the fact that he was the proprietor & editor of "The Times". Mrs Reicheneker spoke so highly of Mrs B. & said that although he (Mr B) did edit such a sheet was a very fine man, but abolition sentiments & high patriotic feelings only made me the more determined to dislike them, but in spite of my prejudice & dislike for them they very unaccountably to me, seemed to be very much taken with me, & invited me frequently to their house, but I allways declined with the best grace I could without giving my reasons; Mrs Reich did a great deal of sewing on her machine in the & Mrs B. is just as handy & neat as she can be & Mrs R would send for her frequently to come up & help her when she was hurried with her work & J.B. generally came up to dinner & sometimes to supper, so that I was thrown into their society a good deal & the more I saw of them the better I liked them, & you will remember that I wrote

you several times last winter of being down to Mrs. Bansmans, I could fill this sheet in giving you my opinion of the family, but I will simply say that I don't think that J. B. Bansman is not a traitor at heart as many people believe, I think I have shown you by this long winded apology for being a guest of the editor of the times, if such you should choose to call it, to show you that I do regard your opinion of those that I choose for my friends & that I desire to consult your wishes in all I do if I do sometimes ask your advice & then do as I please; O! dear it does take so long to tell a thing when you have to write it don't it, if I could only see you, couldn't I make my tongue fly for a whole week? You know you used to laugh at me for asking you three or four questions at a time & then not give you a chance to answer them, well you would not care now if to have the privilege of me asking you fifty if you did not get to say one word, would you? I am sure I would be willing to endure the punishment of bridling my tongue for a whole hour & just feast my eyes on your dear face. Yesterday morning I told Mr. B to enquire for me when he went for his mail, & then I thought that I would not get the letter 'til noon, for I was almost confident that I would get one, you know when I speak of getting a letter I mean one from you as I don't care for others. It would not do for my friends to hear me say that, but I feel so much more anxiety about hearing from you, that letters from my dearest friends are very incipient & only secondary to yours; well you know that my impatient disposition would not let me wait from 9 A.M. til 12M so I told Mr. B that was afraid he might forget and leave it at his office & at any rate I could not wait 'til noon, he laughed & said that I wouldn't get one for a week, I watched the clock & when I was sure that the mail was in, I went on a double quick

as you would say to the P. O. & sure enough there I found the unmistakeable M.A. H.G & I don't know what military term to use to describe the time or the gait I came back in but I expect you might call it quadruple quick, for it seems that Mr. Reich was into Lairds as I went by Mrs. R. asked me yesterday evening at prayer meeting if I got a letter; that she heard that I had been seen running up town; you must not think from this that I make myself ridiculous by running in the street for a letter when it had only been five days since I had received one from the same person; but I won't say that I would not act a little impudent if I should not get one for two or three weeks, but you know that persons will exaggerate just a little about these things & I don't really think that act quite as crazy as they try to make out but seriously, your letters are the greatest earthly comfort and real happiness that I have, as soon as I receive one I begin to count the days from the time it was written & think that there is another one written & perhaps two, for it takes them from 11 to 13 days to come & O! how often I wish I could get them the day that they are written or in three or four at least, but they are always good when they do come, & always find a warm welcome I do assure you; your last that has been received was dated the 3d & 4th & was recd the 15th but I should not complain when I get a letter every week & sometimes two if they are a long time coming, when you were three or four without any word from home, how anxious you must have felt but I thank you for saying all the time that you knew that it was not my fault, you don't know how happy it makes me to know that I have a husband that has implicit confidence in me, & one too that I know is true as steel & that I can love & think as a man in its truest broadest sense; you say in your last

that you know that I am or will conduct myself while you are away, so that you will be proud of me when you return, I will strive to live so that at least you will not have to blush for anything you may hear of my deportment if I should not succeed in raising your feelings of pride; & I will just say here not because I ever think for one moment that you feel any anxiety that I will willfully do anything that you would disapprove but it just came into my mind & you know I write you what ever comes into my thoughts without reserve, that when I am selecting a dress or bonnet or any thing I do it with the thought that you are far away, that evil eyes are always watching missteps & innocent follies to magnify them into crime, so I will try to be just as discreet as you could wish, & I do hope & pray that I may never be allowed to to far forget my duty & my love to you, to betray your confidence in me; you see from my date that this is the anniversary of my birth day, I am 23 today, & I have been thinking over my past life, over a score of years & how much better is the world for my having lived in it, how many broken disconsolate heart have I cheered, how many have I pointed to the Friend that "sticketh closer than a brother" & have I myself always set that example before nonprofessors that was consistant with my professions of Christianity; I fear that if I should be called today to that great reckoning that all these questions would be answered in the negative. I don't know that I ever thought more deeply on the eve of my birth day that I did on this & went to a very appropriate place too, to draw my thoughts from the world & turn them inward, & O' how much of sin & depravity I find there how very very sinful our lives must appear to a God who can not look upon sin with the least degree of allowance, I hope you will pray that the resolutions that I found to be the rule of my future may be carried out, not in my own strength for that is weakness, but that I may have humility, & may prayer be always "what will Thou, have me to do", O that I would not be such a sloth, that I might have the desire & ability to work to do good. You wrote a piece of you last letter on the "first Sabbath" of the month, & you right divined my feelings that while sitting there alone, my thoughts did wander away to that soldier of his country & I believe a soldier of the kings of kings, & I always do think of when I enter the little brick church where more than a year ago I was made so happy in your union with the church & a profession of love for him who died for you, keep steadfast in the faith, steward of God is a safe companion for you at all times & the consolation of the gospel will be with you under all circumstances. I know that I do not feel so anxious about you as if you were not a Christian; I am in the best of health & tolerable good spirit - I will write you in a day or two again. Mr. B is waiting to take this to the office & the mail will soon leave & I must close, for you will want to get this as soon as possible so good bye dearest. Every your Mary

Des Moines, Iowa April 20 1863

Dear Husband,

When I finished your letter last week I intended to write you again that week & send by Dr. Campbell & Lieut Houston of your regiment, but they started sooner than I had understood they would; my health is very good indeed, I was weighed last week & was a half pound heavier than I was in the winter with all my winter clothes on. I don't look as fleshy as I did then, but I suppose my flesh is more solid; You see from my date that I am still in Desmoines, we (Mrs. Bansman) & I were up to Mrs. Reichenekers all day last Saturday & in the evening we all went to bible class at Mr. Nash's, I do enjoy the study of the bible so much, I am sorry that I am not more familiar with its contents than I am. Bro Nash is a very interesting teacher; I believe that I did not write you about the quarterly meeting at Rising Sun a week ago last Sabbath, all of Fathers folk went, their Elder, Rev Mr. Coles was there, I presume you have heard of him, he preached a splendid sermon, I do wish you could have heard it, little too much "politics" mixed up with it to suit some people, particularly "Copperheads". I could see some shake their heads & look daggers at him, but they had to take it or retreat; in the evening Ezra Rathburn preached a very good sermon & if we had been wise we would have come home when the sermon was over, but we did not so we were compelled to witness a scene that was very disgusting to me & presume that you have witnessed the

got Pennyson from the Trustees of the Court House & that some one that had keys to fit the door locks had been getting in & the county clerk (J. M. Laird) who has the care of the house had it barred on that account, that is the straight of it as near as I can get it

Well my paper is almost full & I must stop for this time. I am very busy sewing & getting ready to go to teaching, I don't just when my school will begin but I suppose about the first of May, Mr. Robinson was up to Mr. Reicheneker last week before I came in town & was talking about the school, he said they had more public money than usual. Mrs R told him that she hoped that he would not let me

same yourself; such shouting & hallowing I never heard before & I think I try to avoid ever hearing again; do you remember Crawford a Methodist preacher that used to live up near Nevada? he was there, we went early in the morning they had lovefeast & a social meeting, relating their experience &c he got up & talked quite a while, & for all I had heard so much to prejudice me against him, I was quite interested in what he said, one reason I suppose was that he had been in the army for a year & a half & had a good deal to say about that, I must admit that "blue coat" anywhere attracts my attention, but I always remember what you once said in one of your letters that not every one that wore a blue coat was worthy of the respect that was due a true soldier; in the morning after the first sermon just as we were about to start home, I saw Billy Buttler I went to him & shook hands with him & his wife, I tell what my feelings were when I first spoke to him, I was so glad to see him, although you know I had but a very slight acquaintance with, & it was with difficulty that I kept back the tears, I could hardly keep from envying his wife the society of her husband when mine was far away in the South, every hour exposed to the aim of the rebel, or to death by sickness; & then at evening meeting I saw them again, he with his army overcoat on, with their babe in his arms & tears would come; was it right to feel so? will you love me less for indulging such feelings O! I miss you everywhere, in all my joys & sorrows; may the day soon come, not only on our account but for thousands of other hearts that are left desolate, when there will be no cause for husbands, fathers & sons to leave their homes & peaceful pursuits to meet their brothers in deadly strife, but I sometimes

fear that "wicked, designing men & scheming politicians may hold the day a far off", but we know that wicked men cannot defeat the purposes of God & the permanent evil will befall those that walk uprightly & put their trust in Him, if I did not believe that there was a God that choose & appoints the destiny of nations, I should despair, for I must admit that the future looks very dark to me, but you must remember that it is the Christians privilege to look above & beyond the designs & even the successes of wicked men; I believe that our Father had a wise purpose in establishing this government & that that end is not fully attained & if unjust men do wield the armies of this nation for a time that we shall yet rejoice in a happy peaceful country, firmly established on principals of justice & equity; you will doubtless hear before this reaches you of our defeat at Charleston; we have had no news from Vicksburg for a week, I hope that the plan of attack will be better laid & executed if you do attack them than there it was at Charleston, I don't believe that it (Charleston) can be taken by a marine force alone, they will have to be attacked on the land side; I want to see that city burned to the ground & never be rebuilt, but be a barren waste; that it may be a reproof a warning to traitors in future; my eyes & getting heavy & I will finish tomorrow, I am looking for a letter from you very anxiously; I am curious to know what HC has done for you by this time, write me all about the matter just as freely as you would tell me if you were here.

Saturday morning 9 1/2 O'clock. Dear Lyle, I had expected to get a letter this morning, but am disappointed, but if I should not get one for a month I should not blame you, for I know that you will not neglect me it is not quite a week since I got your last, but you know one every day would be acceptable, I am going down to

Mr Birds after I finish this to see if they have heard from Emphy. Louisa was here yesterday evening a little while, my last letter was a later date than theirs; Mrs Bird called one evening last week & she said that she would like if you would mention Emphy every time you write & they would tell him to do the same by you; O! I had nearly forgotten to mention our new cousin; last Wednesday I was sitting by the window & saw a wagon full of women get out at the Methodist Ministers Rev Mr Maybie's & told Mrs Bansman that I expected that they had all come in from the country to be vaccinated, as there is a case of small pox about eight miles west of here & the people are considerably alarmed, but in a few minits they all came out again & I could not imagine what they could have been doing; while Mrs Bird was sitting talking we saw a couple of ladies pass & she said isn't that Emma, I was not expecting to see her & did not know her; so Mrs Bansman sent one of the boys to tell her to come back, she did not know where I was stopping or she would have called, she said that she had come up with Lavina & Ezra to see them married & that was them that I saw drive up to the ministers; was it not too provoking that I did not recognize them? I would certainly have gone in; I went down street with Emma to see them, they all took dinner at the Blodget house. Ezra has improved in looks & manners a great deal since I last saw him & Vinie did look real sweet, she has been very sick lately & was very fair; I think they are well suited for each other & I am rather inclined to feel proud of my new cousin than otherwise; I must not forget to tell you about going to a copperhead meeting, sometimes called democratic; D. O. Fisick made them a speech, some things that he said did very well & were true & a great many were not; if you get the Register you will be apt to see an account of it, as I saw they noticed it in the daily; they had posted hand bills that they were to hold the meeting in the new court house, but half past seven & eight no lights in the court house, Mr B wanted Mrs B to go & insisted on my going & I felt some curiosity hear what they would say but as we got near the house we saw there was no lights & we went on to Keys & Crawfords Store, when Mr B left us to go & see what was the matter, some one had got into the room by some means & barred the doors in the inside; they put a boy in through the transom & unfastened it & rang the Methodist church bell & in a few minits there was I should think a hundred or two there wer about twenty five or thirty ladies; I tell you they all looked wealty, ladies not accepted, I think if they had got the consent of the authorities to occupy the room they ought to have had it in place until it was seen what they would do; if they did anything contrary to law & order then would have been time to stop them; well they went on at length to talk of the injustice of debaring them who had born an equal part of the tax in building that temple of justice now because they called themselves Democrats & the other party was in power to be deprived of the privilege of expressing their honest (?) sentiments, was an outrage that they hoped soon at the ballot box to find redress for, but when the straight of the story was told it seems that they had not

write just as often as you can, take good care of your health my own dear Lyle. Mary

work for nothing & he said that he would see that I was well paid

Des Moines, Iowa, March 21st /63 Dear Husband,

This is Sabbath morning, everything is quiet, the busy world has ceased from its labors & bustle & my thoughts turn to you more & oftener on this day of rest & I feel very anxious too to know where you are for from the looks of movements at Vicksburg they are about to do something & in your last dated 11th you were ordered farther South you addressed your letter written to Austin to me & of course I got it & opened & read it; Empty Bird has got home, they were not looking for him so soon & you may believe that I was considerably excited & disappointed too to see him, I had been thinging since Mr. Chritie was here that you would get home before very long, & when I saw Empty it brought you so vividly to my mind; I went to see him immediately after hearing that he had come & I asked him everything that I could think of about you, he told me one thing that I know made my countenance fall, for you know I have a telltale face; I asked him if when he started you did not want to come home, he said no indeed he don't want to come home & that you were displeased that Christie had given me any encouragement to think you would come. I received yours of the 9th & 10th last Wednesday & Austins the next day, in one of them you say that you do not expect to come home 'til the war is over.

At Fathers, Tuesday Evening April 28th Dearest Husband; you see from the date that I am again at Fathers, Sunday evening

after writing the above I went to church & when church was out Fathers folks drove up in a wagon to take me out home & so I did not get to finish it; I just received yours of the 15th. You will know that I was very anxious to hear from you, more so perhaps than I have ever been, Billy said that we would not be apt to get any letters very soon again as no letters or communication of any kind would pass Memphis going either north or south, but I do hope that he is mistaken, I don't know what I should do if I could not hear from you, I will continue to write & the letters will I hope reach you some time; I am glad that you think of the possibility of death in battle although it wrings my heart to read your letter; my daily, hourly - prayer shall be for your safety; it is a source of great comfort to me that although you are surrounded by every species of vice & wickedness you have the courage to own that you love the Savior & that you feel in your heart the sweets of that pure & holy religion. O! my Husband I pray you never let the jeers & scoffs of ungodly men cause you for one moment to doubt the reality of religion, or to deny the blood that bought you, I know that your life must be a very unpleasant one, surrounded continually by so much noise & profanity; you cannot get away for an hour to enjoy your own thoughts; but my dear be a true brave soldier & write a record that will reflect credit & command admiration, I am not writing this because I fear you will not be steadfast but by way of encouragement, if my feeble pen can in any way cheer you; The thought that you may never read this is a painful one to me; & that little word "alone" carries to my heart a burden of grief. O! I pray that I may never feel its meaning as hundreds of devoted wives have felt it

I do not try to drive the thought from my mind, for there is as a strong a probability that I shall be one of that number as of any one; Mother was very anxious for me to read your letter, but I could not control my feeling sufficiently to read any but the descriptive part; It is two weeks tomorrow since it was written & you may have passed the crisis, every hour will be constant suspense - till I hear you are safe, I thank you for writing your feelings so freely on the eve of this great battle, if this should be the last, it would be a source of invaluable comfort to me; all your letters are carefully preserved & almost I was going to say valued alongside with my bible & I don't know but I should have told the truth for I don't prize that Holy Book as I ought to, it should be the main of our council & the guide of all our ways, and I have no doubt that you renew your strength often by reading the words of encouragement & promise in that inspired volume; both as I am to do so I will have to stop writing, for it is a pleasure to write you, but tired nature is calling loudly for rest, I have done a very large washing today and am very tired; so good night.

Des Moines, Thursday April 30th My dear Husband, again I seat myself to address you; this sheet of paper has traveled round a good deal since it began to talk to you; I had not expected to have been here today, I saw Mr. Robinson Sunday & he said that the school board had authorized him to hire a teacher for three months for \$20.00 per month & I suppose I will have to hire my board, that will cost me about four

a month, so that I will make 16.00 a month clear of all expense and I intend to try to do my best to please, and advance the pupils; in your last letter you seem to be very averse to my boarding at Mr. Robinsons, I will try to subscribe to your wishes as much as possible, if I can get a place to board nearer the school house, that will be at all agreeable, but from what I can hear, I think it will be very doubtful, but as I said once before, I will endeavor to be as discreet as you could wish me to be; and I do believe that Dernas Robinson is a Christian, and would do right from principal and yet may possess a physical organization together with baser passions that might yield to temptation but - I know that you have too much confidence in me to think that I would make any advances towards impropriety and as for what people may say I don't think you need to have any fears; for he is very popular with the best class of persons, and my friend and yours seem to rejoice that I have got the school in that district, so near to Robinsons, but as you say "you have some whims peculiar to yourself" and I believe that you are generally right; I will begin my school next Monday if I live; I suppose that you have seen the Presidents proclamation, setting this 30th day of April apart to be observed by Christians all over the land as one of humiliation and prayer. Ezra Rathburn was to preach in R Sun and all of Fathers folks intended to go, and I had expected to go with them, but I had my trunk packed ready to send up and come myself if I had a good chance as it would be more convenient for Mr. Robinson to take out from Des Moines than from home and they are so very busy at Father that I did want to stop the team if could help it, for you charlie is dead and kit is

not fit to work now so that their work has to be done by two horses; we were just dressing for church when Stuart said there goes Altmans (the man that lives on Ben Barlows place) to Desmoines and if you would like to go up I will go and speak to them, so I thought I had better come than risk having to step the team, although I was loth to leave fathers so soon, I regret having to go so far away from home, and yet it is not so far away but is so out of the way that I will not be likely to get home more than once during my school term they are all so kind to me, and seem to regret my leaving so much especialy Mother, she has been a Mother indeed to me, and if you should not be spared to return would feel almost as deeply as your wife, our love for you is a bond of union between us. This day I believe has been generally observed, there was a union meeting at the Congregationalist church, but by a vote of the church we observed the day in our house; I think it would have done your heart good to hear the prayers and remarks this morning in that little brick church, particularly the prayer and remarks of Bro Robinson, you know that he is very ultra in his views on slavery. the church was well filled and a heartfelt solemnity seemed to prevade the whole audience; I do feel that we need to humble ourselves very low before God; Bro Nash remarked this morning that he did not pretend to say nor believe that this war was going to humble us, and that he believed that we would have to pass through a time of fearful religious persecution such as the inquisition never saw before we would truly repent and the church be purged from it corruptions, and the he felt the church, Christians, were fear

fully guilty in the crime of slavery, and that he could see the elements at work now in this nation if they through the will of wicked men should culminate, to bring about a fearful religious persecution; I must stop now for awhile.

Friday Morning; O how I wish I could greet you with good morning, but you are far far away; it is two weeks today since your last letter was written and there is no telling where you are now, we have a report that the enemy is evacuating Vicksburg. I don't wish them to have a battle but I don't want the enemy to get away, so I hope that it is not true; I was up to Austins Wednesday night he gave me a very encouraging account of our farm affairs, he thinks Wickham a fine fellow and disposed to do what is right; but Austin is writing to you now and I will not anticipate; Father is getting along nicely with their work, Cy works like a man, and is so much more agreeable, I like to be in his society, I think that he is almost as tall as you are; he wrote you last week, I am sorry that he don't write oftener, but you must excuse him for I don't think it is because he don't want to but it is such a task for him to write; I had like to have forgotten to tell you that I was up to John Hayes visiting, I did enjoy it so much, they live up towards the graveyard in a large square house, with an acre and a half of ground attached to it, it would do your heart good to see his shrubery and fruit trees and vines, his oldest apple trees have been out two years, and are going to bloom, Austin says there is considerable bloom on our peach trees, wouldn't you feel encouraged if we should have peaches this year, my paper is full and I must close for this time, I am expecting a letter from you this morning, if I have a chance I will send you some paper and envelopes, good by dear husband, may God take care of you is the prayer of your Mary

No 38

School room, Delaware Township

Wednesday Morn 8 1/2 O'clock, May 6th

Dear Husband,

You see from the heading that I have begun my summer work; this is the third day. I like it very much, and think I shall have a pleasant school, I have but thirteen pupils yet, but Mr. Robinson thinks it will average from eighteen to twenty, which will be a very good number. I came out Sunday after meeting. I received yours of the 19th and 20th Sunday. I was so glad to get it before I went into the country, and it was such a good long one too. My dear husband I want you to know that I appreciate your kindness in writing so freely and confidentially. I think that I need never fear that your morals are corrupted while the current of your thoughts run so pure; while you have so much reverence for the God of nature and acknowledge him in all his works; although it is very pleasant here and Mr. Robinson's treat me very kindly, I feel like if it was not so far I would walk to town some evening; I feel so anxious to hear the news both from Vicksburg and the Rappahannock, it was reported on good authority last week that Hooker had cross and some of his forces had succeeded in capturing about 400 rebels in one place, if you get the Register you will see all the dispatches; I read yesterday in the Tribune a vivid account of those boats you spoke of running the gauntlet at Vicksburg, he was a good wri

ter for he pictured it so vividly that with the aid of imagination I could see them floating down slowly and silently, and then when the enemy raised their beacon light how the hearts of the patriots fell, as every moment discovered to the vigilant for their position. There was one of the neighbors went to Des Moines this morning and I sent by him to the office; you said when you wrote that it would probably be ten days before there would be any active operations against the city, that time has now passed and I am so anxious to hear from you. I have always felt that you would return yet I feel very anxious about you. I read your letters over and over 'til I get another; you did not say anything in your last about your company officers, keep me posted if anything of interest occurs; you did not write me anything about the trip from Richmond to Carthage or when you got there; when I am reading your letters I think of so many things that I should like to know more about. If you have a battle and come out all safe I do want you to come home, I don't think there will be any trouble about getting a furlow to one that has always been at his post of duty; but as Mr. Robinson said it is not the worthy and deserving that are promoted and receive favors or you would have been in office long ago.

Thursday Morning; Good morning dear Husband, it is not quite school time and I will improve the few minutes in writing to you. This is a lovely morning, clear and bright; we had a light frost last night, and night before last it froze quite hard, I was afraid that it would kill the fruit, but Mr. R. thinks it is not injured, it looks good to see the peach and apple trees covered with blooms, I hope that you will be at home in time to help eat our fruit, I did not go down to our place this spring, I wanted to go very much

but I dislike Mrs. W so much that I thought I should not take much pleasure in going; Austin will keep you posted on the farm affairs. My health is very good, I have a walk of 1 1/4 miles morning and evening, but I don't mind it at all, I don't think there is any family in the district as far as I have seen that you would like to have me board with, and as long as I see nothing out of the way in my host I think I shall continue to board there. I pay a dol a week, and I shall help Mrs. R some with her sewing so that my cash expense will be very little. Mr. R preaches every month at Iowa Center and Sunday is his day to preach and Mrs R and I are going along; it is about 18 miles. Last Saturday afternoon I went fishing, Mrs. Reicheneker and Tarbells all sent in Mr. Tarbells wagon, we went up to Kuhn dam we passed the place where the 6th cavalry camped on Walnut. I remember you said that you eat your dinners there the day that you got home from Pikes Peak; we had a lively time, but didn't catch any fish. The season is very dry, we have not had any rain to amount to anything for two months, the ground is not as dry as you would suppose, the spring wheat come up pretty well, and the winter wheat looks beautifully, but every thing needs rain now, it threatens and we think it will surely rain this time, but it passes off and is as clear as ever. There was no letter for me yesterday, and I had no opportunity to send to the P. O. today, but Mr. R is going up to Desmoines tomorrow, when I expect to get a letter and I hope good news from our armies. O I do hope that our Generals will push the rebels just as fast as they can so that if possible the war may close befor it gets so warm and sickly! as you said after the waters of the Mississippi recede we may expect a good deal of sickness; you have always been so healthy that I fear if you should

get sick it would go hard with you; I was reading the other day that Gen Grant had ordered all the ambulances at his command, down for the use of the army in the coming battle. O! I feel like I can't wait to hear the news, I know you will write me often now for I am so anxious, and two or three days brings great changes these times, even the destiny of a nation may hang on a day. Now that I think of it, I believe that I did not tell you why I went to stay two weeks at Bansmans, J. B. B. has invented a ventilator for railroad cars and has secured a patent for it and has gone on to Chicago to try it more thoroughly and try to have railroad companies patronize it, and I went to be company for Mrs B; there is but one other machine in the U. S. for ventilating cars and this certainly has a great many advantages over the other, and I think it is very likely that he will succeed, if he does, it will make him independently rich; he is a real genius and a perfect gentleman in his house, they are as different from the old man Bansmans family as you could imagine. They are talking of enlarging our church, our church members when all there fill it full, but I am not in favor of running that little squaty thing back twenty or thirty feet, it would look squattier than ever; the city is improving rapidly and fine buildings and handsome churches will go up all around us and we will soon be ashamed of our church, so I think we had better wait perhaps a year and then build a new one, the difference between them wide not be very great and if we enlarge it, it will only be an old squatie church after all; I believe that I wrote you that I subscribed 10.00 for Bro Nash, and I intend to pay it myself - when I get my money, they want to give him 500.00 and pay his rent - besides which is 125.00. Now I tell you again to take good care of your health, I believe you said in your last that you were very careful about what you eat - I am so glad you do, I shall not feel so uneasy as if I know you to be reckless and careless, and above all don't forget your Bible and your God, heed not the scoofs and jeers of wicked, use your influence for good for you know however humble we think ourselves we exercise an influence either for good or evil, many prayers ascend for your safety, good bye my dear husband, I ever remain your Mary.

No 39 School room, Wednesday noon, May 13th 1863 Dear Husband Yours of the 25th Pleasant Point was received yesterday evening, it was a little longer coming than they usually are, and you know a day is a long time to me now; I am so glad and thankful that you are yet in good health, you have always been a man of regular, temperate habits, so that I have not so much cause to fear you will be sick as others have. My health is good; my left eye has been sore for several days, but I think it will be well again in a few days It troubles me about writing, so that if I write a little at a time and it should be disconnected you will excuse me; This is a beautiful, bright day, every thing is refreshed by the rain we had Monday; the weather has not been very warm yet, I expect it is getting pretty warm where you are. I was very much interested in the account you gave of those five boats running the blockade at Vicksburg; before you get this you will doubtless hear that we have Richmond; the news came in last Sunday, but we don't know whether to believe it or not, but think it very probable, O! if it is true the war will soon end sometimes I think you may be home before my school is out; the very thought makes my heart-beat quicker, but it is over two weeks since your last letter was written and I know not where you are or what your fate may be, I wonder sometimes that I can be so cheerful, but you know it is not my nature to feel happy or sad long at a time my eye is pains me so that I will have to stop for today and may not finish this for several days, as I cant write much at a time. M

2 Thursday Noon, 14th, Dear Husband, again I have leisure to write you a few lines my school is still small, but pleasant, I think I enjoy teaching better than I ever did, the time passes so fast when I am in school, if there is no prospect of your coming home. I will try to get another school as soon as this one is out the children are very good and very easily governed; I wrote you last week that we were going with Mr Robinson to Iowa Centre, we started early Saturday morning, it is about 20 miles from here and Mr R was driving a young colt so that it took the best part of the day to go, we stopped at a Mr Maxwell's about a mile this side of Iowa R. he is a very strong union man, and in the course of conversation I found that he was from Lafayette, I know the firm that he was connected with well and, his daughter Mary and I were schoolmates and sat in the same seat, she is married and lives in Iowa Center, we had a very pleasant time, he is a real whole souled man I know you would like him; when Mr Robinson told him my husband was in the army, he said "good for him, I hope he will come out to Major Gen" Mr R replied you can be assured he will do his whole duty. Mr M. Kene Mr Wordworth & Clement and all my old friends he came out here seven years ago, we staid there all night; Mr M and Mr R went over to the Center to a union league meeting in the evening; you have seen an account of those meetings in the papers; Sunday morning we started pretty early to meeting and stopped at Mrs Ingersols, Mrs Maxwell's mother she is a widow lady; she and three daughters keep house, one of the daughter's name is Cory, she lost her husband about three months ago in the army, he was in the 39th [illegible] Co, and now right here while I think of it; the different Regts are making out records, each Company seperatly, perhaps you have seen some, I do wish I had the record of Co. C. 23d I should prize it highly, Mrs Cory has one of the Co that her husband was in, framed nicely, hanging in the Parlor Mrs Ingersol lives nicer than any country people I have seen in Iowa, well I must hasten, as I see I am making a long story of some thing that may not interest you very much, but it was quite an event to me, and so I thought I would write you about it; Mr M did not ask me my name before I was married and so I did not tell him so we went to church and listened to a no 1 sermon from Bro Ross, with a good deal of antislavery and antiseccession mixed up with it; this feeling between the union and secesh or Copperhead is very bitter then and Bro R could enter into the spirit of his side of it; well after meeting was over Mr Maxwell's daughter came running up to me and almost covered me with kisses, she did not know I was in Iowa and was not expecting to see me, so you know I must look very much as I did seven or eight years ago, Mary said I had not changed a bit, that she knew me the moment she came into the door; She was always a warmhearted girl and always took my part, and she has made a noble warmhearted woman; I don't know of any one in Iowa that I feel so anxious to visit and have a good talk with as Mary Baldwin my paper is full and I must stop for today, there is preaching in my school room at five o'clock. good bye Mary

Friday Morning; 15, Good morning dear Husband, how I wish I could say those words instead of writing them; Mr Robinson was to Desmoines yesterday and heard that there was a dispatch came in saying that Gen Grant had gained a decided victory at Jackson Miss; I am always glad to hear of victory to the union armies but you cant imagine how anxious I am at this time, you wrote me in your last that you were ordered to have everything in order and ready to march at a moments warning; and it is very probable that you were there; I was so anxious last night that I could hardly sleep and when I did I dreamed of battles and of you being dead and O! I was so lonely and sad when I waked and have a dull headache; I thought this morning that I would go to town this evening if I had to walk, but one of my scholars, Lydia Justice, says that her Father is going up early in the morning, so that I guess it will be better for me to go there and stay all night and ride up in the morning; We hear that the report that Richmond is taken is all false; that it was all made in Chicago by brokers to bring gold down; nothing is so sacred in this nation to be sacrificed to money, men will sell their liberties for gold, and speculate on the price of their country. If we could come up as one man to the help of our country we might soon have peace and enjoy prosperity, I sometimes think we did value our blessings as we will after we purchase our liberties again with blood; I have no patience with the traitors at home, they have felt and enjoyed the blessings and privileges of our liberal form of government and free

institutions, in my mind they are ten fold worse traitors than Arnold, for then the experiment of self government was in its infancy; there is a family in this district that send to my school who hast to leave Missouri on account of the troubles, who are bitter seccionists, they have a daughter whose husband went into the army last winter, and they were so enraged about it that they would not let her come home nor let one of their boys go to cut wood for her in winter, so that she was thrown dependent on strangers; Yesterday during preaching there was a large coarse looking farmer in a red flannel shirt sat beside the preacher; he looked so coarse and was so dark complected, I was comparing him with others, and with my husband; but when the sermon was over, he got up and read a him and talked to us a little while, and then prayed, he did make such a good honest sincere prayer, and read so earnestly and feelingly for our nation not the soldier that it won my heart right off and I felt like I should like to have an introduction to him, and shake his rough brown hand; if we meet a man or woman now a days that for the government we are friends right off, and that's about the first thing that we find out about a stranger; well my duties call me now, I will write a little more tomorrow before I mail it if I have time. Desmoines, Mr Birds Saturday 10 1/2 o'clock, Dear Husband where are you today? I see by the papers that the 23rd has been in one or two battles, who are among the killed and wounded? I cant give you any idea of my anxiety, I thought I should have got a letter this morning but was disappointed; O! my dear husband my prayer to God night and day shall be for your safety, I have tried to imagine how I should feel to that you had been in a battle but I find that the reality is painful beyond all im-

agination; I feel that if I had no hope that you were a christian that I could not bear it, how many aching, broken hearts there are, and this suspense is terrible, but all we can do is to trust in a Father that doeth all things well, though we do not always feel that his ways are best; O! my dear Lyle while I write these I know not that you will ever see them, but I will strive to calm my fears and hope for the best, perhaps I will get a letter tomorrow, you see that hope is a very prominent feature in my character; well my husband I must close for this time so as to mail it today; I hope to hear from you soon and may our God keep you and shield your breast in the day of battle is the prayer of your Mary

No 39 Des Moines, Iowa Thursday Morn May 21st /63

Dear Husband You will be surprised to see my letter dated at Desmoines; I went to my school on Monday and taught that day, but my eyes were so sore that I was obliged to dismiss for this week; they are a little better this morning; but I have not heard from you since yours of the 25th of April, and you must know that I am very anxious, as I see from the location of several of the battles that have been fought on the lower Mississippi that your regiment must have been engaged in two or three; O! I feel like I cant stand it another week; you see by the writing that I cant see very well, and you will excuse this short note, as I cant write but a little at a time, and indeed ought not to write any, but I will try to write to you if it does injure my eyes, for I know that it must do you a great deal of good to get letters from home; my health is good, all my trouble is about you my dear husband, I fear that my eyes wont improve much till I know you are safe; I saw Father Mother and Mary Jane last Sunday, I think I shall go out to Fathers Saturday I would have been there now but I thought I could doctor my eyes better here and could wait for war news and letters; My dear husband you are not out

of my thoughts asleep or awake; O! if I could only be assured of your safety; the prayers of your wife constantly ascend your safety; I will write soon again; write me often, if only a few lines that I may know that you are safe; ever your affectionate wife Mary

No 40 Des Moines, Iowa; Saturday Morning May 23rd /63

Dear Husband, I have just received yours of the 4th, 5th & 8th, you may be sure that I was rejoiced, just to think that my husband has been in a battle; My dear Lyle I do look on it as providential that you escaped when your comrade by your side was killed, O! I so thankful that you escaped; I feel that is a direct answer to prayer that you are preserved; but I am constantly anxious for you; I see by this mornings paper that Grants army have had another battle at Jackson Miss., and were victorious, you say that your division was left as provost guard, but with the order that you were to be ready to march at a moments notice, and consequently it is very probably that you were there; my dear husband I feel that if I did not know you were a Christian that I would be almost crazy about you; you know now and feel in your heart that there is a reality in religion I did not go to the country when I expected, I felt so anxious to hear from you and my eyes were so sore and I am doctoring them with Homeopathic treatment that I thought it best to stay; I am going out this afternoon for I know that they will be very anxious to know of your safety; my eyes are much better, but I fear that they will be well enough to go to my school next week, they are so much better that they do not pain me at all, but are very weak, you see by this scribbly that I do not see very

well, but I know this affection's eye can trace the lines if they are not very plain; It is all that I can do to read the dialy Register and your letters, but I have read your good long sheet of ledger paper over twice, and I don't know how many times I shall read it before I get another; but I hope I shall not have the chance to read it over many more times till I get another; I will stop now, but I guess that I will not close this till I go to Fathers and perhaps they will write a little; Your safety and the success of our cause is the burden of all my prayers; Your affectionate wife Mary

At Home - Dear Brother Lyle, as Mary has left a blank, and wishes me to fill it up, well I do so with pleasure, although I have but little to write that would interest you. We are all enjoying good health, which is one of the greatest blessings we can ask for. Dear Brother I cannot tell you how rejoiced we were to hear from you once more, for it was quite a while since we had heard from you, and knowing that you been engaged in a battle. You may well know our anxiety, and when the list of killed and wounded came, it was with almost breathless fear, lest one might see your name, but I believe my dear brother that the strong faith and trust you have in you Savior will sustain and protect you. and the prayer of your unworthy sister is that you may be safely protected though this great struggle and when the starry folds of the old banner of liberty are seen floating all over our once peaceful shores may you return safely to your happy little family, and friends and enjoy a long and peaceful life. Father is siting near me reading a Negro sermon. Mary is siting by him listening for she can not see to read with ease. Lib is holding baby. Mother and Mary Jane getting breakfast. Cy feeding the little ones in bed ar beginning to crall out one after another for there is quite a good many when they all get together. This is a beautiful day, so calm and pleasant. I wonder where you are, our folks are going to church today to Des Moines, I cannot go conveniently. I am teaching this summer in Uncle John's district I have been teaching three weeks. Have a pleasant school and am prospering nicely. Uncle's folks are enjoying their usual health. Uncle's health is so much better than usual at this season of the year, he has a very sore leg, which the Dr. thinks is the cause of him having better health. Billy Trice is getting quite well again and wants to go back to the Regt if he gets entirely well. He walks without a cain now, Cousin Jennie is teaching in Trillings Grove this summer at twelve dollars a month, mine is subscription. I am attending singing school this summer, we have a splendid school of forty schollars and an excellent teacher, Mr [illegible] of Desmoines perhaps you know him. He teaches at Rising Inn his schollars are progressing very rapidly I know more would enjoy them very much, we use the [illegible] sacred music and silver [illegible] a glee book. We have learned some handsome glees. Well they are ready to start to church so I must close. I am sorry I haven't the time to fill this space, please excuse this bit of scribbling, my pen is so poor. Give my best wishes to Marion they all join in sending love to you both. Wont you write me soon, I have one letter you wrote me and I prize it very highly. Your affectionate Sister Emma

No 41 Des Moines, Iowa Wednesday Morn, May 27th 1863

Dear Husband, I am well this morning except my anxiety for your safety, in looking over the battles from their location and their commanders, you must have been in two or three battles, and in one report I saw that the 21st and 23rd in the taking of the Black River bridge stood the charge and sustained the principal loss; I am waiting with great anxiety for the report of the killed and wounded; sometimes I feel that my nerves are not strong enough to look over that list when it comes; I let Mr Robinson read your last letter, he seemed very much pleased with it, and said Mrs. G you have a good husband; and I don't believe he will be killed; if that letter should be the last, (and you know that every one I think perhaps it may,) what a source of comfort it would be to me, there are some passages it that are sublime; We received the glorious news Monday evening that the "Stars and Stripes were waving over Vicksburg; you may believe was heartfelt hurrahs went up that evening, there were two balloon ascensions and bonfires and speeches and singing and all kinds of demonstrations of joy; you could see the Copperheads in little groups away back in the shade of building O! I can tell them they don't show joy in their coun-

tenances if they do express it with their lips; but it is becoming very unpopular in Des Moines to be a Cop, so their number is becoming very small and I think by the time Richmond is taken, and the soldiers begin to come home they will crawl into their dens and die of starvation; for their meat and drink seems to be the defeat of the Federal arms, and now while I think of it, do you get the Register, it is mailed to you direct from the office, if you do not get it I will have it changed to go to Father, as they do not take it yet, you know Libbie took it when the first came here, and when her time was out they neglected to have it renewed. I went out to Fathers Saturday and had to walk from Four mile bridge and it was quite warm and I got overheated and made my eyes a great deal worse so that I could not go to teaching this week, and I feel so anxious to hear the news that I thought I would stay in town; they are a great deal better now but very weak, so that I cant write but little at a time; I know you will excuse short letters on that account; they are all well at home; it did me goot to go out there they received me so kindly just as they would a daughter; Stuart was gone to Nevada to bring Jennie home she has been up visiting, and Huston and Hattie was over to Lairds so that I did not get to see either of them. Mother wants you to write to Cy and the folks at home as often as you can so that they can hear from you as I will be away, and your letters do do them so much good, I know you will write me as often as there is a chance to since; I will try to keep up courage as a true soldiers wife ought and leave the result of these battles in our Fathers hands and will try to be reconciled to His will, what ever it may be; ever your loving Mary

No 42

Des Moines, Iowa,

Tuesday Evening June 2d

Dearest Husband

I received yours of the 21st this morning, I have been in great suspense ever since the battle of the 17th of May although I did not see your name in the list of "Killed and wounded I feel with you that it was altogether providential that you "escaped unharmed". Continue to put your trust God and if it is His will that you should return to your family and friends the bullets of the enemy can not harm you; I trust that you will not have to stay much longer mid such scenes of carnage and bloodshed; I have now another cause for uneasiness, I see by this mornings Register that Carr's Division have been in a very severe engagement and I fear that my dear Husband was among them you said that your regiment was acting as guard for Rebel prisoners, and it may be possible that you were not there. I went over to Mrs. Hull's as soon as I got your letter I did not know whether she had heard

anything from her folks, she had not heard until this morning she had a dispatch from the Dr that he was on his way home with Albert she was feeling very badly she feared that he was severely wounded as the Dr did not say neither did you, and she is in very poor health any way; when she got her dispatch she was so nervous and frightened that she read it wrong, that the Dr was coming with Alberts body, that overcame her so that she was feeling very miserable when I got there but she laid down and fell asleep and when I came away in the afternoon she was quite cheerful, one of her little boys met with quite a sad accident a week ago today, he was holding a horse by the halter in the yard to eat grass, when it whirled and kicked him on his left jaw and fractured it, and knocked out several teeth, poor little fellow it came very near killing him. I do think that she is a fine little woman, I am going to take "Jerry" Tiffin's buggy tomorrow and go over to nursery Smith for strawberries for Mrs. Hull, to have for Albert when he comes; how I should love to be pre-

its hardly worth mentioning but I guess I shall have to tell you, I was at Mrs Bird and there was a Mrs Cook there, she was speaking of Mrs Harry Griffith, how she grieved and how miserably she was looking that she talked in the most doleful manner of her husband; and she said I tell you Mrs. Garrett she looks very different from you, O! I tell you it made my blood flow a "little bit quicker through my veins for a minit or two, I don't want to have you think and I know you wont that I am unusually cheerful, but I don't go round with a woe begone countenance all the time and I know you would be sorry to have me do so; but you will understand it, you know how Mrs Bird is always borrowing trouble and how annoying it is to every one, particularly to her own family, but that saying of hers rather touched my feelings and I intend to tell her of it some day when I have a good chance, as for Mrs. Harry Griffith, she makes herself ridiculous to all sensible people, and I don't think any one that is intimately acquainted with her has any confidence in her professions of such great sorrow. I will give you an instance which is well know to all those who are intimately acquainted with her, she has gone to her husband three times since he has been in the army and left a very small child just weaned with strangers and the last time she went she staid I think three or four months, and never saw Harry after the third week she was there, but boarded in a "Secesh family at 15.00 dol per week; she has very aristocratic notions and that just suited her to be waited on by negro servants, she staid there so long and was so extravagant that Harry sent her money to pay her debts and bring her home and that hereafter he would address her at Des Moines; she staid there sometime after that and wrote to him but could get no answer, and letters kept coming to her here, and her friends thought she was lost or taken prisoner, but at length she concluded he was in earnest and came home, perhaps you will not relish this bit of gossip but it was in my mind and I thought I would write it. My eyes are better but were not well enough to go to my school on Monday, and I did not feel that I could go into the country till I heard from you

Cy was up to town Monday and came up to see me, he is troubled with rheumatism in his right shoulder so that he can not work, and came up to see Dr Whitman; Cy is improving in looks and actions very much; he is getting quite handsome, I think and appears so well in company, is not a bit awkward as you would expect in a boy raised in the country as he has been, I do wish that he could be going to school all the time now, for I want him to have a good education if he gets nothing else, for I you know I always thought he would make a smart man, and I think so much of him lately he is so much more agreeable than he used to be, I am going out to Fathers after Dr. Hull gets home, I intend to go to my school next week. Mr. Robinson says "for a marvel they like you our in our district" it seems that they have been very hard to please; and I don't wonder they were not pleased with some of my predecessors, for from the way the children seems to have been taught shows at least that they were not graduates (over on the other side)

I am trying to get into the public school here, and I have not much doubt that I will succeed, Mr Robinson is "Electioneering for me with the school board, it will be pleasanter for me in the winter to teach in town; and I guess I will get about 25.00 per month, I feel better contented teaching than at anything else, and my health is so much better than when I work hard, I am in very good health now (3d of June) I suppose that is the reason that Mrs Bird thinks that I don't grieve very much, I look in such good health, well my dear Lyle I must close as my eyes are very tired, may you be kept from all harm is the prayer of Mary

5 Wednesday morning June 3rd, Good morning dear Lyle, this is a bright morning but very cool for the time of the year. We feared a frost for the last three nights. I suppose it is oppressively hot down where you are. I do hope you will get home on furlow,
and you may be on your way home now;

No 44 School-room Monday 2 OC' P.M. June 15th 1863

Dear Husband, I just finished a letter to you yesterday but I can't write very much at a time, and Dr Hull has kindly offered to carry a letter for me and I want to send a good long one; so you will excuse me if I write a little every day, and if it should not be very connected. You see I have got to work again, I have but eight pupils today so that I do not have to use my eyes very much, I think with care they will get well now; I am so sorry that I had to lose so much time (four weeks) for when you come home I want to have a vacation, I don't want to make too great calculations on your coming home, but I certainly do look for you sometime this summer; I fear that you wont get here before the 4th of July, I do so much wish you could; if you get the Register you will see the programe; Capt Hull brought me out this morning, he has bought a gentle horse for his mother \$120.00/ and is about buying a buggy, don't you think he is very good to her; nothing makes me esteem a young man more highly than kindness to mother and sisters his leg is getting better fast, he does not use a crutch at all now I tell him I fear he is using it too soon; but he does not walk any except in the house and out to his buggy; he seems very anxious to get back to his company if there is any probability of your having anything to do. Tuesday noon, again I have leisure to write; this is as yesterday was a very warm bright day, the sun is very hot, and from 10 til 3 oclock

the sun pours his scorching rays into my little schoolroom but when I think of the poor soldier toiling with knapsack and gun under a burning sun, I feel that I have nothing to complain of; there was an old gentleman by the name of Cory staid all night at Mr. Robinsons last night (I think perhaps you have heard of him, he said he fell in with father at Oskaloosa when he was moving to this country.) He had a son in the 39th who died after the battle of Cross roads, from over heating; he went after his body which was buried at Corinth; the scenes he witnessed as he tells them are perfectly awful; I suppose that no one at home can realize the fearful havoc of lives and property; Poor old man; the death of his son almost broke his heart, but he is only one of the many that have been bereft; and I pray God that I may not be of that number. I feel so anxious to have you come home this summer, for my health is so good and I am looking so well, I know you will be so glad to see me improved so much; O! you can only imagine how much I want to see you by your own feelings; my eyes fell better and stronger today than yesterday; I tell I fell under obligation to the Dr for curing them and you will too I have no doubt.

Wednesday Morning 16th It is recess and I have a few minits to devote to you; it has been considerable over a week since I heard from you and I am beginning to feel quite anxious; Mr. Robinson went to Desmoines today to the Republican state convention, you will see the nominations in the Register if you get it, I expect a letter when he gets home; he teases me a good deal about my letters he says he hears nothing but letter from me from Monday morning 'til Saturday night; he thinks you write letters equal to anything he reads in the Tribune; I let him read yours written after the battle of Port Gibson, I think that was one of your best, and I also consider Mr. R a judge. I took three of your last letters down

to Uncle Johns with me and read them to the family, and the next day Aunt Sarah asked me if I would care to let her read those letters herself, that they were so good and she thought she could remember more of them to read them; they all thought them good and wanted I should have them published; now I know this expression of appreciation of your letter by your friends and your Mary wont be considered flattery. I consider these epistles an index of your character, your soul, and I cant tell you how highly I prize every one of them, I have received 37 of them, and those with those of mine you sent home are filed away nicely in my trunk, there are several of them that will become matter of history in a few years. I believe I wrote you in my last of being to Uncles but I wrote in a hurry and did not tell you as much about it as I wished to; you know Uncle has a sick spell almost every summer, instead of that sickness he is confined to his bed with a running sore on the point of one of his hips, we have some fears that it may terminate his life; what a dear, good, man he is, and how patiently he bears his affliction, I look like death would literaly be gain to one who had suffered so much and who was so fully prepared to die. Vince is married you know, Ezra has gone to the Peak again, but will be back after her in August, Jennie is teaching up beyond "Eleck" Bondurants somewhere; Billy and Margery are still living at their Fathers; his hip is nearly well and wants to go back very much, he said he wrote you and Marion sometime ago but didn't know whether you had got it or not as he had received no answer. I had a letter from Alvira last Saturday she too spoke of writing to you and didn't know whether you got it or not. I think you mentioned getting one from her in one of yours to me; I will write her this week and excuse you for I know or consider how hard it is for you to write at all

Friday morning: Good morning dearest Husband; I am happy this morning that I have received another of those good loving letters; I got yours of June 5th written youngs point last night, they did not get through with their nominations at the state convention til sometime yesterday and Mr Robinson did not get home 'til pretty near ten oclock. I was in bed asleep, they did not intend to wake me, thinking it would injure my eyes to read by lamp light but I waked just as they came up and you know I was not long dressing, it had been two weeks since I had heard from you and was getting quite anxious as I always do if I don't get a letter just when I expect it. I am so thankful that you health as well as you life is so remarkably preserved; I must give you credit for good sense and more control over your appetite than I used to give you credit for. I am glad that you can abstain from food that might please the palate, but be injurious to your health. Now that I feel somewhat relieved to hear from you, we have a report that the 23d has been in a battle at Millikens bend and suffered severely; Mr Robinson saw the list of killed and wounded and your name was not among them but I never fell at ease, 'til I know from your own pen. I know you will write the very first opportunity. O! that this war might end tomorrow if 'twas possible, and stay the tide of death and sorrow; every letter I receive and your health and life is still preserved, I feel my unworthiness more that the giver of all good is remembering me in this terrible conflict, when I am so forgetful of Him. O! how much I wish to be with you if only one hour, my waking thought and my dreams are all about you - you seem to think if you should come home and go back in the heat of summer it might indanger your health; I don't wish you to expose yourself so that you would be liable to be sick, but I assure I want to see you very much, so much that language does not express it. I wont urge you too strongly, if you think it is not running too great a risk, come, if you have money to come home, I guess I could draw some of my money to send you back, I don't imagine I will feel very anxious about that I do hope with you that you will not have to stay your three years in the army, but sometimes when I get the "blooze" I fear you will; do just as you think best and I will abide by your decision, whatever that may be. When you wrote you had just got my letter stating that my eyes were sore; they are improving all the time, so that I can attend to my duties without any trouble; I have such a nice little school, the children are so easily governed, and I think they like me; if I didnt get into the public school next winter I mean to try to get this, for I intend to teach all the time while you are away. I enjoy myself better than at Fathers, I have better health and you know Mother is grieving, or talking about her troubles so, all the time that it is not pleasant, and then as you say it will help us a long. My school is out for this week, and I am waiting to go up with Mr. Justice and his little daughter to Desmoines, there is to be a school exhibition there this evening, and the proceeds are to be given to the soldiers families. good bye for today Mary

5 page

Des Moines, Saturday Evening, June 20th, Dearest Husband

I came in yesterday evening and staid all night at Mrs Reichenkers. I looked some for a letter from you today. In the report of the killed and wounded it was said that it was only a partial report and I shall feel anxious to know from you; as I came in yesterday I stopped at Dr Hulls a few minutes to my umble and fan that I had left there; he told me that Downs was killed in the same breath he said I am going to try to get Lyle in to his place, I thought it looked a little heartless to begin to speculate on his successor before he is cold, but I suppose that is the way they do in military life; I don't know that I should rejoice to hear that you had a Capt commission, only that I know that you deserve it; for there are so many officer killed in proportion to their number than privates, but if it is Gods will to spare you I suppose you will be as safe there as in the ranks; now about coming home if you don't think it will endanger your life or seriously impare your health to come home and go back in the hot weather, I want you to come, O I do want you to come so much, but just as you think best as I said once before, I got a letter from Mary Hedge this week; among other things she said that Aunt Fannie, Mrs H-----se's brother's wife wanted to know of her where, Mary was, and that Mrs H-----n had threatened to sue Uncle for her support as long as she lived if the did not tell her where Mary was; Mrs Hedge assured me that she (Hunt) would be none the wiser of M whereabouts from her, and if I wished them to know to write to them. I answered her letter right and said that I did not wish them to know, and for them to be careful, Mrs Hedge can keep anything as long any person. Uncle William Henderson is a good man and would be my friend but he has a grasping close fisted, artful wife; who would sacrifice Mary without any compunctions of concience if she thought there was any possibility of Uncle loosing 10,00 through her; I perhaps ought not to have written this to you, but it weighs very heavily on my mind, and you know you are my only confident in the matter; I have written in a rather singular style, but I guess you will understand it; if it should fall into the hands of those that know the parties they perhaps could not could not; O! if you were only here, the partner of my hearts deepest thoughts; May God preserve you my dear dear Husband that we may live long together. Sabbath afternoon Dear Husband I received yours of the 8th written after the battle, O! how thankful I am that you are again preserved. I thank you for writing so punctually; God has for some wise purpose doubtless, kept through so many scenes of danger, I told Mr Robinson that I had heard from you this morning, and that you had come out without a scratch, he remarked that, "I do believe God will preserve that good man" I did thank for those words how fearfully severe the engagement at Milliken must have been; Every battle you are in the more anxious I am to have you come home; but I don't want to be unreasonable but I feel if I should never see you after all you have endured, it would kill me; but my dear Husband put your trust

in an Almighty arm, who will be a sure protection. I am going over to Dr. Hulls this afternoon, he intends to start tomorrow, you will see a letter in the Register from him that sounds very well, I guess he is honestly for the union but - some things that he has said might lead persons to believe otherwise. You will have heard before this reaches you of the Rebel raid into Penn; I must confess I am ashamed of that army of the Potomac, what are they doing to allow the rebels to get away up there; In every paper I see the glorious 23d eulogized, I am proud of Iowa, the fame of her sons daring will be written in history. I hope what I wrote on the other page will not cause you any anxiety; I thought once I would not write, but you know human sympathy is always acceptable; and you know and understand all about the matter, and care and will sympathize with me; O! do come home soon; it is nine months today since you went away, will another nine months separate us? I wish you could have heard the sermon this morning, it was one of Bro Nash's best; I hope soon to listen to one of those good sermon with you my dear husband by my side, but this may seem that it is a foregone conclusion that you are to come home, and not acquiesce in your decision if it should be to the contrary; but my paper is almost full and it is time that I was going, hoping that you may be kept and that I will see you ere long. I will say good bye; write soon and don't apologize for writing on secesh paper, I prize them just as highly as on letter paper, just so that you continue to write often and just your thoughts, ever your own
Mary

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No 45

At Robinson's, Sunday Morn,

June 28th /63

Dear Husband,

We are at home today, that is we have not gone to Des moines, there is preaching in my school house and we are going there; It is very warm this morning, we had a nice rain last night but the air is not much cooler, yesterday was about the warmest day of the season; It is a week ago today since I heard from you, I wonder where you are today; we have no news either from Vicksburg, that is the central point of intrest now to every one and is especially so to me; but O! I fear many of our noblest and best, will have to be sacrificed yet, before this unholy, ungodly rebellion can be put down, and that stronghold, it seems is yet stubbornly holding out; I had hoped before this nation again celebrated the anniversary of the declaration of our independence, that we would indeed and in truth be a free people; but although the day may be long deferred, I never have had the shadow of doubt that it would come; and forever woe unto them that originated this reign of terror; the finger of scorn will be pointed to them and their decendants forever, for their ifamous connection with this rebellion; The days of your absence are long to me; and I pray that the day of peace may be hastened; but my heart is sad when I remember how many homes and hearts are made desolate, treasures lost that the world can never replace; but such is life, our fondest earthly hopes are blasted; our dearest ties sundered; what a lesson we should learn; to lay up our treasures where the toils and conflicts of life will not effect us, only to drive us

more closely to the Rock, where all our strength lies. I know that this is a source of comfort to you too, that if our fondest earthly hopes should never be realized, though we should never meet again, that there is a brighter happier home, that if we strive to we shall live in and enjoy; these joys are unsullied; O! that every wife whose husband is in the army had the comforting assurance that I have, that he was not only a soldier of his country but a soldier of the cross of Christ.

I have felt ever since you sent away a nearness to every one in the army and more particularly to those in your regiment. I don't remember whether I wrote you of meeting Capt Roach at Hulls or not; His health is improving and he has received an appointment of enrolling officer for four townships, viz: Four mile, Camp Beaver and Deleware, and last Wednesday evening in pursuance of his duty as enrolling officer, he called at Mr R he did not intend stopping but Mr R told him that I was at the house, and invited him to stay all night so he came down to the house, I tell you I was almost as glad to see him as you say "as if he had been a brother." Mrs R said that she thought that Mr. Garrett had come, I made so much fuss over him, and shook hands with him so long; you know he is a great talker, and he talked all the time and told us all about army life, and then we have a great deal to say now a days about "Copperheads". I tell you they hate Roach with a perfect hatred, they have been so mean as to circulate a story of him, that when he saw a prospect for the 23d having anything to do, he feigned sickness and got a discharge. I don't believe a word of it; he was so anxious to be doing something for his country that long before he was really able to do anything, he went to Desmoines

to examining Surgeon, to see if he thought he would do to go into the service. He told him, to go then would be certain death and that with care his health would be such as to admit of his going before next winter or fall at the soonest, so he felt so anxious to be doing something that they gave him what he has. He is a great deal more of a man than I thought when I used to see him a Campbellite preacher, and I think he is more of man than he was then; this crisis is bring men out, and developing master minds; O yes, I came near forgetting to tell you that I read him your last letter, written after the battle at Milliken's bend, he and Mr Robinson almost went into extacies over it, I very modestly remarked that you could express yourself in writing better than in conversation; Well said Roach, I always thought he talked like a man of good sense, but I am certainly surprised to hear such composition as that and Mr Robinson said that it sounded like a man of a fully matured mind, and that there was such a feeling of refinement pervading the whole of your writings; so he and Robinson beset me to let them have that letter to have published in the Register, at last I consented to copy off the part that I thought would be interesting to the public, you always write something in all your letters that I would think improper to let strangers see or hear, and that I dislike very much for even our own relatives to see, I presume they think it foolish; but I am glad that we both have those feelings of I don't know what to call it, but all persons of refined feelings can understand it. Mr. Robinson and Roach both said it was too bad to keep such communications from the public, and that I was receiving a letter or two every week from which a paragraph or two could be taken

that would adorn the pages of the Register, that they never see anything to compare to it any communication; of course I was very much pleased to have them find out you worth and appreciate you, as I have done for years, but you will allow me to say that I think you improve, and you will excuse me for this praise right to your face, but its from your wife and you know it is sincere the world don't know, nor never will half the mind and genius and worth there is in the ranks of our armies. I am all anxiety to hear of your prospects, I presume I shall know something of it in your next letter, and that may be in the office now, Mr and Mrs R are going into town tonight, to get things ready to go to visit his parents. They are very old people, you know, they must as Mr R is pretty well along in years; they are going to have a family dinner on the 4th, his brother from the southern part of Ind. is going up, and one of the brothers daughters was married last week and they anticipate a good time, they live near Kalamazoo Mich., and I think from the letters they write they are fine people, and he is from a good family I have no doubt; I will just say that he has treated with all the respect I could wish since I have been here and I think Mrs R a perfect lady, and altogether it is a very pleasant place to board; there is four weeks of my school gone, I am getting along nicely, my eyes are perfectly well, but not quite as strong as they were before, and my health is very good now, and look as fleshy and rosy as you could wish; I told Dr Hull when I bid him goodbye to tell you how well I looked; we are making preparations for the 4th, O how I wish you could be here then, I shall go, and try to enjoy myself the best I can, but my thoughts will many many times be with you my own dear Lyle, I think as much about you that I talk a great deal about you, and especially after I get a letter for three or four days. I expect they don't fell so much interested as I do, one day I was talking about Mr. Garrett, when Mr R said there it is Mr Garrett again, I believe when he married you he married all of you; and that just what I think; but Mr R is just ready to start and I must stop for this time; I will write you again after the 4th; till then good bye; about coming home, if you think it best to wait till fall or the last of August, I will try to wait you know that I am quite, very anxious to see you but I suppose no more so than you are to see me; continue to take good care of your health, and put your trust in an Almighty arm who can keep you, and I hope will return you to your home and family, write me every thing, ever your affectionate wife, Mary.

No 45

Des Moines, Iowa, July 5th 1863

Sabbath afternoon,

Dear Husband

Your letter of the 21st of June was received yesterday morning, so it just came in time for me to enjoy a pleasant 4th for when I know you are well and in good spirits I am happy, and can enjoy myself at such a gathering as we had on the 4th. I came in from Robinsons yesterday morning very early, just beyond B F Allens farm, between that and where J. B. Tiffin lives, we passed a rough looking man, who when we got just opposite to him hallowed "hurrah for Copperheads", John answered by saying Copperheads in the most cutting tone, just as we had got past him, he pointed a pistol or revolver, I don't know which, at us and snapped it, John and Becca a girl that lives at Robinsons heard it and looked round, I did not hear it, I don't think it was loaded for John saw the smoke, and if it had been of course we would not have seen smoke at the explosion of the cap. If we could have found out who he was we would have had him arrested, I think from the way he acted he was drunk, but you know a pistol or revolver is a dangerous weapon in the hands of a drunken Copperhead. suffice it to say that our little adventure created quite a sensation among our friends in town. The celebration went off very pleas-

My eyes are about as strong as ever, and my general health very good. M.

antly and quietly, Capt Hull read the Declaration of Independence and did it well too; Palmer's oration pleased me very much, you will be likely to see a copy of his speech in the Register, there was a perfect throng there, every family brought its own dinner, there was about 25 eat when I did, you know Robinsons are gone; the girl and John and I keeping house, so we cooked a lot of good things as Lairds and Reichenekers and Ankenys and two or three other families ate together, so I assure you we had a nice dinner and a real sociable time, and as I remarked before getting your letter in the morning raised my spirits wonderfully. After dinner as is usual we all gathered round the stand to listen to the toasts and responses, one of them was responded to by Col J. A. Williamson, which pleased me very much, more so because I had heard his loyalty called in question, I know his wife to be an avowed secessionist, and all her relatives are too, Turk's wife of this city is a Cousin of Mrs W's, I suppose you have heard of him though the columns of the Register. I have always noticed that a wife is apt to entertain the same sentiments that her husband does, on this account I regret that Mrs W expresses the sentiments she does as it causes one to doubt slightly the honesty of the Col, which I would not willingly do, and if he expressed his honest convictions yesterday as he professed to do and which we have no just right to doubt for we have no right to call in question the motives of men if their actions are right; he is "all right" as they say, on the question of carrying on the war. I don't know whether I wrote you or not about Capt

Hull's being engaged to a Miss Gregory, a sister of Mrs Col Williamson; she has made herself so obnoxious to all loyal people in this city by expressing such bitter secession sentiments, that they have all dropped her and Dr and Mrs Hull both gave me to understand that All would too, don't say anything about it to him or any one as they told me in rather a confidential way and perhaps would not like it mentioned out of the family. Father and Stuart, Gennie, Mary Jane and Ally were up to Desmoines to the celebration, Cy and Emma with Uncle Garretts folk went to one down on Spring Creek, Mary Jane had not had a letter from Marion since the battle of Millikens Bend, and was feeling very anxious yesterday. I told her all I knew of him, but father and mother were up today and they got two for her from Marion; I had intended to have gone out with fathers last night, but missed them when they were all dispersing I saw Austin and told him to tell them to call at Lairds for me, but he did not see them 'til he got to Finches, so that both they and I were disappointed; they (father and mother came up in the buggy early this morning I read them the letter I recd from you yesterday, and there being no preaching at our church today, I went with them to Mr Birds, which seemed to please them very much, and this being their communion Sabbath (and ours too if Bro Nash had been here) they went to Mr Birds to dinner and I went along; Empson is beginning to look well again, and says he would like very much to be with you, but I don't think it would be at all prudent for him to go into the army, as he would be

likely to be a burden rather than any help to the government. There was a coach load of Officers left this morning for their commands in the south among them were Brig Gen Crocker and Col Williamson, I did not speak to Capt Hull more than to bow yesterday and don't know when he designs returning to the Regt; I sympathize with you in your expectations and will rejoice as I have said before at your success, for the reason that I feel you deserve it, but I must say I feel no very great anxiety that you should have a position, only that your hardships will not be so great, and that you could feel that you were getting some remuneration for your in my estimation at least very valuable service. I know that you are bored with M-----, but I would advise you to be careful not to say anything to him as others there that will cause him to dislike you for it is better to have his friendship than his enmity, anything you choose to confide to me, will be scrupulously kept; I am thankful that I was not deceived and bored by such a Granny. I am not surprised that you could not read my letters written about the time my eyes were sore for it was very hard for me to see to write at all; and then I have got into a careless way of writing since you went away for I often write in a hurry and write long letters. so I will try in the future to write a little plainer, I have read I think every word you have ever written with ease. There is a rumor this morning that Richmond and Vicksburg are both ours; I think it highly probable that Vicksburg has surrendered, but we hear so many false reports that I think it doubtful as to the former place; if you can after you receive this write me something definite in reference to your coming home, I do want to have some time to look forward to for I do want to see you so much; Mother says to give her love to her poor dear Lyle; I think it would please her very much for you to write her a letter, make it as interesting as you can, and direct it to Mrs. Mary D. Garrett in care of William Garrett, father and Cy will write you soon; May the God of Mercies shield your head in the day of danger, is the prayer of your own, Mary

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No 4

Cottage Home, Iowa

Monday, Nov 23d 1863

Dear Husband,

I am again at home, as you will see by the heading; Austin came up to church in his buggy and brought me out; I was really glad to get home, and they all seemed glad to see me, so you will forget all I said in No 2. The last time I wrote you I was looking anxiously for a letter from you, I recd yours of the 29th and 30th written immediately after your arrival at Camp Carrolton, on Wednesday, and yours of the 6th just as you were leaving or expecting to leave for the Regt the next day, so that I know the first was detained somewhere. I was glad to hear your health had improved so much and that you had such a pleasant trip down, but I am sorry you did not start two weeks sooner if it, your absence, will be any detriment to your intrests there; I suppose you did not know when you wrote that the Regt had been consolidated, I suppose in that event about half the Capts would be mustered out unless they resigned; We met Dr Hull as we were coming out yesterday, he seemed to regret very much that you did not get there sooner, as he said there would be a

would take it right now; Write soon and tell me all about your prospects, and your health; May Our Father protect you
is the prayer of your wife

Mary

remodeling of the Regt; I can hardly wait to know the result, I do hope for your sake it will be favorable. Stuart's moved up here the same week that Libbie went away, father is not able to cut the wood for two fires, and Stuart would use as much if not more than we do, and they thought it would better all round for them to come back. Stuart has decided not to take the old place, but intends to build next fall. Father has had a very bad cold for about a week, they were afraid that he was going to have neuralgia, but he is getting over it, although he is quite hoarse yet, and mother is so hoarse that she speaks in a whisper; the rest of the family with myself are well. We had a letter from Lib last Saturday, Ellison was in Sioux City when she got there, his company is stationed there instead of at Yankton; it was very fortunate for Lib to meet him there, as she would have had to have traveled 75 miles farther alone with her little children, she writes they have engaged a room and boarding for the winter and think it will be very pleasant there, most of the officers have their families with them as well as some of the privates. I am sure I almost envie them the pleasure of their husband's society; We recd a letter from Cyrus, a week ago today, I think it was written about the 5th or 6th, he had been sick in the hospital at New Albany

Ind; he said it was only a hard cold and cough, and when he wrote expected to go to his regiment in a few days, which had been ordered to Chattanooga; he sent his grandfather 30,00 by express; poor boy! he will earn his money hard enough; you must write to him whether you hear from him or not, Emma wrote him last week, and I will write to him in a few days. Em and I are going to Des Moines tomorrow, when I hope to hear from you again.

You will remember the morning you left fathers, Jackson stopped with his brother Ike, well Ike was married last week to a daughter of the proprietor of the Palmyra wollen factory; I suppose he has done well financially; Our folks made them a dinner, at Jackson's request; Jack was at our church yesterday with Bro Potter he thinks Potter is a No. 1 fellow. There will be services at our church on Thanksgiving day but we are all going to Rising Sun to hear Mr Bird, his church is trying to turn him off again, they have advertised in a Cincinnati paper for a new minister; if you get the Register you will see a communication from Mr Bird on the subject. I attended the Ladies State Convention, and listened to two speeches and a lengthy report from Mrs Wittenmeyer, and for the life of me I can't see that she made mat

ters any clearer with reference to her connection with the sanitary commission, she claimed that the report she made was copied from original papers in her possession. They organized what they call The Iowa State Sanitary Com which cooperates with the Western, and United States San Com. Br Shaw was there, and made a speech, to which I could not see or hear the "pint". Hon. James Harlan presided as Chairman of the Convention; Col Stone made himself very conspicuous in speechifying; you will see an elaborate account of it in the Register. Mr. Ankeny's have lost both of their children, the went to Cass county to visit her Brother while there they both were taken very sick and died in a short time. Frank Grimmel died last Saturday night; there has been several deaths in Des Moines in the last week. Old Lorenzo Taylor has just come to get Bert he looks better than when you left; Kit looks miserably poor her colt is not weaned yet, the men are so busy they don't get time to build a stable for the colt; Wickham is going on in the same old style; they have a boy baby now, so I think it is doubtful whether he gets out to work at all or not.

Wednesday, 25th, Dear Lyle, I have not finished this for the reason that we were disappointed in coming up to town. I finished writing on Monday evening and expected to come up the next morning, but when we got up on Tuesday Morning we found a young winter had made its appearance while we slept in the form of 7 inches of snow; so we women folks were completely penned in, this morning I came up with Stuart in the wagon, on a grist of wheat. It has cleared off today and we hope the snow will soon disappear; There is one thing I want to ask you about, and I wish I had your answer now; Mrs Bansman has a very nice guitar, it is said to be the best one in town, since I have been here, she has been giving me lessons and she says that I learn the fastest of any one she ever saw; she wants to sell it as they need the money very much, she will take 10.00 doll for it, which is very cheap for any instrument of that kind, especially for so good a one; I think you would be pleased to have me play well, and if I had the money I

Thursday 26th, Dear Lyle, I hurried yesterday to finish this and then forgot to put it in the office before I left town and I thought of some things I wanted to write, and have opened it for that purpose; We heard by some means that your farm was advertised for sale for taxes. I could not think it was true, but Stuart thought perhaps it would

Mother says to give her love to her boy; and they all say "mine too" M.

be well to go up and see Tiffin about it, and found it to be true; when you settled all your taxes when you went away first, you only paid for /61 as the taxes for /62 were not then due; the amount of the taxes were \$18.00, but the per ct and cost of advertisement makes \$21.00, we will try to get it paid which will have to be done before the first Monday in Dec., if you can spare the money, perhaps you had better send it soon, if you can send by some person coming up it will save considerable as the expressage will be about \$1.50. I will send you the paper containing the proceedings of the Sanitary Convention; you will see the names of two of the Garretts as members of the next Legislature. Mr Bird was here all night we are getting ready to go to meeting, Good bye dearest husband. Mary.

No 5 Forest Home, Iowa, Dec 3rd 1863 Dear Husband,

I have been waiting for three or four days to hear from you before writing; it is two weeks today since I recd yours of the 6th ult; Capt Hull has been at home more than a week, father saw him a few minits last Monday; he said you were well when he left you the 8th, and that he recommended you at his resignation; O I am so anxious to hear from you for many reasons I have not written to you quite as often of late as I could have wished, there is so much noise here that it is almost impossible to think, or at least to collect thoughts sufficiently to write so as to be interesting to any one. We are all well with the exception of colds. The weather was very severe for a few days after the snow fell, last Friday the murcury was down to 10 [degrees] below zero, but it has been moderating since Monday, and today's sun has taken the most of the snow off, it is very warm and cloudy tonight, it will probably rain or snow before twentyfour hour's. The men are all very busy repairing the fences, before the ground freezes, where the snow covered it. it was not frozen at all, where it was bare it was frozen about six inches; they had to haul away the North side of the pasture fence to build your half of the Runnion

fence; it seemed too bad to take that fence away, but Runnion would turn his stock into his field, and the fence being so poor, would not hold them; and Stuart says that they never stay in the field longer than they can cross it and get into ours and they destroy and eat more than all Stuarts stock; he turned them out a time or two, and Old Ike threatened to prosecute him if he did it again; so they concluded it would be cheaper to build legal fences; today they have all been at work at the outside fence, and if it don't storm or freeze tomorrow will have it all done up nicely. Austin has rented the farm but I can't tell you much about it as I have not seen him to talk with him much since, he will write the particulars. Wickhams have a new boy, you can guess how much work he will get done now. Well I guess I have told you all I know about the work. We have all been up to Austin's today to a quilting party, we had a real good old fashioned time, we all went but poor old Mother she staid at home with the children. Our big preacher, Potter has got the Rising Sun school; won't he make young America know his place? they have built a new school house there at last. father paid your taxes on Monday, it amounted in all to \$23.00 and some cts, if you need the money you need not be in a hurry about sending it right away, as he has a good deal on hands; and never mind the guitar I can do without it. I must bid you good night, as my head aches badly tonight. Friday Morn 4th Good morning dear husband, this is a bright, mild morning, and contrary to our fears, bids fair for good weather. We are all well this morning; my health is very good, I am a good deal fleshier than when you went away. Emma and I are going to Desmoines today; There was a man down from Crawford county last week hunting teachers, he said they would give \$30.00 per month and board, I wrote to him at Desmoines, but he had gone before the letter reached the office, I am going to write to Crawford county today, and if I can get a good situation I will go; what do you think of it? James Smith was here to dinner one day last week; he says they have a Copper-head teacher and they won't send their children to him, he wants me to come and teach his children two or three month; I don't want to go a bit for he is so hard to please, but I suppose if I don't go away I will have to go there.

They had a church meeting at Mr Birds church last Saturday, the vote stood 38 for 12 against, so the matter is settled, we are all so glad he is going to stay. We had glorious news from the army last week; they had a hard fight at Chattanooga, Bragg attempted to out-flank Grant, Old U.S. took advantage of the movement and forced his, Braggs, center and cut

the rebel army entirely in two pieces; reported that we took 25,000 prisoners and deserters coming in by the hundred; Mead was south of the Rapidan, driving Lee before him; Charleston is reported to have been burning for 65 hours; pretty near burnt up I should think. We all think from present indications the war will be over by July at the farthest. Well we must start soon; Write often my dear

husband, take good care of your health; and may the God of Heaven keep you, I know my dear you do not rely on your own strength; Mother says give my love to Lyle if you think it worth while. Good by dearest. Ever your Mary.

No 6 Cottage Home, Iowa Sunday Dec 6th 1863 Dear Husband, This is Sabbath evening, we have just got home from the funeral of Gum McCall's youngest child, little Fremont, he and Jared Irwin's little girl died yesterday morning, both with Scarlet fever or rash; you know that Gum and Lucinda think so much of their children, this is the first one they have lost, and it is a sore trial for them both; Gum has been very serious for a good while, this trouble may have an influence for good. Innocent little things! they never could have been taken in a better time. After the burial, we went back to Gum's to dinner; all of Uncle's folks were there except Ross and his John, poor little fellow has been very much afflicted this fall with rheumatism. I do think Uncle's folk are the best people I ever knew, there is so much child-like simplicity in their manner; native politeness that never can be equaled by any affected city lady or gentleman. I always thought it did me good to go there for I always come home with good resolutions to improve in the future. Well it is getting late and I will bid you good night dear husband.

Wednesday Evening 9th Dear Lyle it has been three days since I commenced this, and I have been very unwell since that time is one reason that it is not finished the whole family is almost sick with colds, the atmosphere has been very heavy and damp for a week, and every person is complaining of colds. Monday I was so unwell as to have to go to bed; but I am a great deal better now, indeed almost well. I received yours of the 15th ult (No 6) last Saturday, you were then at Algiers, and about starting for Texas, and this evening I recd No 5 written on the west side of Berwick bay; My own dear husband I thank you many, many times for such letters, so full of love and tenderness, and yet all is expressed in such a manly way that I admire so much; O you don't know how anxious I am to hear from you again! you have long ago reached your destination if it was indeed Brownsville Texas; and it is possible have been in an engagement; I feel so anxious for your safety that I wait impatiently for the next letter, and you have got so far away now that it will take them three or four weeks to come from and as long to go to the regiment, but I will try to be patient for I know you will write often, and I will trust your life and health to our Father, who doeth all things well.

How much I think of the happy weeks we spent together last fall, that visit will be a bright spot in my memory as long as recollection is given. I never felt like saying as others have said when their friends returned to the army, that they had rather they had not come home, because the parting was so bitter no my dear you if had only staid three weeks as you at first intended, I cold not regret that you came. No the joy of that meeting I cannot forget; those few happy days danced joyously on, But Time never pauses, Alas! they are gone. In both your last letters you speak of your p-----s, it does indeed look bright, I am impatient to know the dicision of the matter. You have never said any thing about the regiment being consolidated, it is probably a mistake; I hope it is at least for I don't want the 23d to loose it identity, I think it ought be filled up either with conscripts or volunteers. Austin is making calculations to be drafted the 5th Jan, there is but eight or ten men in this Township subject to the first draft, and our quota is five, so it is very probable that he will have to go, though he may possibly escape. I should be very sorry indeed to see Austin go into the army for I think he is needed more here than there. I don't believe Uncle Sam will need any of you very much longer. But Hope is ever in the ascendant; it cheers the despondent, heals the sick,

plants laurels on the brow of fame, and is indeed a panacea for earth's ills. I received a letter from Libbie this evening; she and Ellison and the children were well, she is having a nice time up there, they are boarding in a private family, and take three or four magazines, and have access to a good library owned by their host; and the town is full of Officers and their wives who are giving parties and attending Aid Societies &c, &c., I almost envy them their happiness. Stuart was reading an account of the dedication of the Cemetery at Gettysburg, last night in Tribune I know you would like to see it so I will send it to you as soon as they read the paper through. I think of taking the Ladies Repository next year, it has more information in it than any other magazine I know of. I am afraid that I will not accomplish much in the way of study this winter, as there are so many here, and so much confusion among the little folks; I have not got an answer from Crawford Co yet, if I can get a school, I think I will go. Our folks don't like to have me go away from home so far; but I don't feel contented not to be making any thing: I am so sorry that I wrote that naughty letter to you, about - No 2 I think it was, I know you would feel discouraged when you read it - be sure to destroy it, now won't you? Mother and Father are very kind to me, and I feel perfectly welcome as far as they are concerned, Mary Jane and Ally are here again; Austin would not keep them any longer, I don't think he did just right, when father has taken so many, I think it was Harriet's fault, she disliked Mary very much and did not treat her well at all, I felt real sorry for her, it would have been better for all for her to have staid up there but we get along very well. Now my dear it is getting late and I must bid you good bye again, praying that you may be spared many years and that you may be successful now in your highest aspirations, farewell my own dear husband. Ever your Mary

No 14 Des Moines, Iowa Thursday Morn, Feb 11th /64 Dear Husband: I am in Desmoines this morning, and at Mrs. Bansman's of course; I came in yesterday with cousin Jennie Garrett and did not expect to stay, but Merce would not let me off. I have not been up here to stay any time for a good while, and then another consideration, I had not had a letter from you for a week and felt anxious to hear that you had got your commission, so last evening I went to the P. O. again, there is a son of the P.M. in the P.O. who does not look half for our letters, so that they lay in the office two or three days if we don't happen to ask some other clerk for them, so on the 2nd inquiry I got yours No 13 Jan 10th. Mary Jane had received a letter written the 12th two days before in which Marion stated that you had got your Com., and that you did pretty well for the

on duty for the first time as Lt" you can take it as a compliment or not, as you please. I was so glad my dear husband to hear from your own pen that you have received what you have doubly earned, as soon as I saw the announcement of your promotion in the Register, I wrote you, congratulating you, I have been thinking perhaps you might get the letter before the comm. One thing you are certain of, that your wife rejoices with you in all your successes, and sympathizes in all your disappointments. O what would I not have given to have been there when the Col handed you the papers. At last our hopes in one particular have been fulfilled, and now that you are on the ladder of promotion, I look forward with hope that your merits will be appreciated and your faithful labors reward by a step or two more up the ladder; you have heavier responsibilities, but they wont be such a heavy tax on your physical powers, and I

feel confident that you are fully competent to discharge your new duties, with honor to yourself, and satisfaction to U. Samuel; you did not say how Capt took your promotion in preference to his favorite, and how does little Eve act? It don't do to say a word about it to the other half at home, but we must keep our council, for I have learned long ago not to show my real feelings to every one. It is needless for me to give you any advice now about your clothes, for you will likely have the before this reaches you, but if you could get some tailor in the Regt to take your measure, and send it to New Orleans, you would be likely to get a better fit, if I could not get nice I wouldn't have any, if you get good clothes take good care of them so that if you should get to come home they will be nice. I expect you will have to pay enormous prices for every thing, but I suppose you will have to have them right away

Emma got a letter from Cyrus last Monday, I tell you we were all glad to hear from him,, he is well and with his regiment about thirty miles from the Tennessee river, I intended to send you his letter in this but I did not think of staying when I came up, and did not bring it with me, Em wants you to send it back soon, as she wishes to preserve it. I will send it the next time I write. The folks are all well at home. We had a letter from Lib this week she thinks the 6th Cav. will be sent South in the Spring. The President has called for 200,000 more and it is thought Iowa will fill her quota without a draft. Gov. Stone telegraphed to Washington "Father Abraham we are coming" and without a draft too, in answer to the Pres call for the men. There have 500 Rebels at Rock Island enlisted in the U. S. A. and more are wishing to do so. Whole Regmts of the Southern army are deserting, and they have to fight among themselves to keep their army together, Poor hopes of the C.S.A. isn't it. My dear Lyle I close for the present and write you soon again. Let us write in praise and thanks to our Father for His blessings. Ever true is your Mary

No 24 Rossville, Ill. Sabbath Morn April 16th, /64 Dear Husband. This is a beautiful morning! the Robins and Lark are trilling their matin songs, every thing in nature seems to recognize their Creator. I am at Mary's, that little black-eyed girl; you remember she married John Ellison; I am spending the time here very pleasantly indeed; all I have had to trouble me particularly was the loss of my trunk, but I heard from that yesterday morning, it is at Danville now at the Express Office, it will cost me 2.75 but I am glad to get it by paying that sum; I was afraid that I had lost it entirely. Last Thursday I received two letters from you (No 20 & 21.) in the last you wrote of moving from Indianola to the Island again; the loss of those soldiers on the pontoon was very sad indeed, I read an account of in the Chicago Tribune,

they belonged to the 69th Indiana, many of them doubtless left wives to mourn their irreparable loss, I cant feel thankful enough that your life has been spared through so many dangers; I pray our Father that you may be spared to the end, to the glorious termination of this struggle for the perpetuation of our unrivaled government; and the cause of liberty. It causes the blush of shame to tinge the cheek of the true American, that this the boasted country of freedom and equality, the sample nation of the World of true Republicanism is the last to cast off the "Twin relics of Barbarism", but the people are fast coming to the right side of the issue between Slavery and Freedom. You must have lively times down there, that is those of you who attend Balls. I am thankful that I have a husband, in whom I have implicit confidence; there are a few in the army, whose souls are pure and untarnished by the vices of camp as water always finds a level, so purity always finds congenial companionship. And (now while I think of it want to ask you

a question. Mary Hedge told Uncle Jhon Bradley, that you told her when at Pilot Knob that if you had know when you enlisted, what you did then you never would have been in the Army. I told Uncle that you never told her anysuch a thing; and I don't believe you did. She tried to insinuate that you as well as the majority of the soldiers in the army are disaffected she and and Jester and all the family are the Rankest Copperheads I ever saw, they are very much opposed to the war, but are very glad to the opportunity to make money out of it. I suppose Jets and Mary will make the money fly in New Orleans this summer. I have not very much money left, but can send you stamps enough to last you quite a while; I borrowed money from Austin to bring me out here as I expected to get some from you every day, but you wrote me in your last that you had not been paid yet; I am not needing it badly now, but will want some after while to get some new clothes for summer. You need not fear that you promotion will affect my deportment in the least, although others in their treatment of me

Aunt Eliza treats me with marked politeness since I am a Lt's wife; O! how I do abhor such a principal; but money and position is the God of that family, as well as many others. I will wait to hear from you before I go to see Mother; I do want to see her so much; as I never expect to see her again. What do you think of it" So try to come home this summer wont you? I have got very hearty since I have been out here, and have such a good appetite. I have not heard from home yet, I am anxious to know how they all are; I never hear from Cy, he never writes to me, I think I will write to him again this week; has he ever answered any of your letters? Since I have been here I have been thinking of trying to again to sell that land of mine in Indiana; I have a Cousin or a Cousin of my father's in Danville, who is a good buisness man, and a man of integrity too who I presume would attend to it willingly for me, and two hundred dollars is worth something nowadays. It is now almost church time and I must close; write often and freely to your wife; Ever remember me in your prayers; Ever yours Mary

No 25. Rossville, Ill, April 27th /64 Wednesday Morn, 8 O'clock My own dear Husband;

Yours of the 23rd of March is before me; I have read it four or five times already, and shant promise how many more times I will read befor I get another; it is just a week ago today since I received it, and would have answered it before this, but we have but one regular mail a week here; and consequently can't send out letters only one day in the week (Thursday) without some one happens to be going to Danville that we can send by but they say in the summer when the roads are good there are more persons going down to D. the P.M. there, often send the mail up between mail days, by any one that he considers responsible. But I cant complain of Uncle Sam for keeping my mail very long on the way since I have been here, for I got four letters from you in three weeks, and they had to be remailed at Desmoines too; when you begin to address me here, I will get them sooner than at DesMoines, for the reason that they will come nearly here by Rail. Rossville is a little town of about 1,50 inhabitants, situated near the North Fork of Vermillion river;

twenty five miles north of Danville, the county seat of Vermillion Co. I give you this information gratis, so that you may know precisely where your little wife ran to on such short notice. If it does not meet with your displeasure a shall be very glad that I came, for I am enjoying myself so much with Aunt Liss, and my other friends, and by the way I find that I have more well wishers than I had any idea of, All that I regret particularly now is that I did not think of coming sooner, for I might have got this school, it is only three quarters to the school-house, and its such a nice little house too, all new and well furnished, I would have been nearly sure of getting as Uncle is one of the Directors; twelve weeks would have soon rolled round, and Sixty dollars would have helped wonderfully to replenish my wardrobe; but there's no use grieving for what can't be helped, I will rest and visit; and enjoy myself too, just as well as can without your company, which would greatly enhance my happiness, and who can tell, maybe you can be with me a part of the summer; I don't want to deprive my Uncle Samuel of your services, if you are actually needed in the field; but my dear husband I do want see you so badly, and look into your honest truthful eyes, and have one of those good long talks; I feel great freedom in talking to Aunt Liss about my pastlife and my hopes for the future; but you my dear

husband, are the only confident of my most secret thoughts; O! how much happier would the world be if every wife and Husband reposed as much confidence in each other as we do; would it not? Now to the subject matter of your letter; you had recd a letter from me and one from Austin and Tom Mitchell, and five coppies of the Register, and Gov. Stone's inaugural in one mail; a pretty heavy mail for one day I should think; you certainly don't spend many idle minutes; I judge from what you tell me of the labor you perform, and the way you put in your time generally. I intend to put in my time profitably this summer if I am visiting; the School District Library is kept here, and contains a very great many books of interest to me; such as History, both Ancient and Modern; and Geological works which would be more interesting if I understood geology. I am glad too that you are able and willing to perform the services your country required at your hands, and I know you will do your whole duty, to the last iota; it is a source of great comfort and no little pride to me to know that you are esteemed by the best men of your Regt, we can always find a congenial element in any society we may have to mingle with. I anticipate a "rich" feast of fat things" when I get that sermon of Bro Hills, which you promised to send me sometime; I appreciate your kindness in trying to get it to send to me, and I shall prize it highly both for its own value, and because you were so much pleased with it.

It was very fortunate for Mrs Crane to find a relative in the army, and one so kind too; the masses of the people of the South are to be pitied; there are many noble, loyal hearts that have to suffer equally with the traitorous ones; O! the depth of suffering will never be known, that this fratricidal war has caused; Woe be to those who have been the cause of the shedding of so much blood; I sent you sometime ago a Chicago Tribune giving an account of an outbreak of Northern traitors; I fear there will be trouble next summer and fall, in view of the Presidential election; not that the rebel element is likely to be too strong for us, but it is the last hope of a dying rebellion, and a very forlorn hope it is too, and it is impossible for them to give up with a good grace all their cherished hopes of power, and pelf. But we, that is the Republicans, Unionists feel confident of success, and hope to see "Honest Abe" at the helm for the next four years, when he will indeed "swing our country back on its old accustomed track" but not quite "as easy as he used to swing his maul". Since I wrote you last I have received a letter from Wm Braden of Indianapolis, who was about buying that land of mine three or four years ago; a gentleman of his acquaintance living in Spencer Co, where the land lies wishes to buy it; and got him to write to me. He proposes to give me \$75 for a quit claim deed, or \$100 for a Warrentee Deed. The land has been sold repeatedly for taxes, and there has not been any tax paid on it to my knowledge for fifteen years; I send by this mail for my deed, which I left at home; I hardly know what would be best to do about the matter and, it will take too long to get an answer from you in regard to it. There is a cousin on my fathers living in Danville, who is a lawyer and a very good, reliable man and who would be willing I am sure to assist me in any way and I thought of getting him to attend to the matter for me I think I ought to have at least \$100 for a quit Claim deed; as I understand it; a Warrentee deed, is one to free it from all incumbrance in the way of tax or costs of any kind, and a quit claim deed is to merely give up my right or title to the land as it is. If I give a deed it will have to have your signature of course; I must do what I do, soon; I will write you what I decide on; I got such a good letter from father last week; it was written the 14th of April, they were all well. Emma had just got a letter from you written the 21st of March, I must get some more paper

No 26 Rossville Vermillion Co., Ill. Wednesday Morning May 4th /64 My Dear Husband Yours of March 29th was recd last week, remailed from Des Moines, I am getting impatient to hear that you know where you wife has taken up her abode; tomorrow is mail day and think I will surely get a letter direct from the army; You had not got a letter from me for a good while when you wrote, I assure you that I can sympathize in such disappointments; and in the other matter of failing to get all your money but perhaps the latter is more of selfishness, than true sympathy. I am very much obliged to you for the 'V, ou sent me and although I have already supplied myself with a pen and holder I shall nevertheless consider it a present from my husband, but about sending for the Phenological Journal I hardly know what to do, not that I don't appreciate your kind offer, but I will not be here all summer, and the address would have to be changed, but as you so much wished to have me send for it, I guess I will and risk getting it; and I'll endeavor not to disappoint you in improving by its lessons on the various "ology"s. I am real sorry that you could not get a suit of clothes if you could get along without till you come North, which I hope will be soon, you could probably get them a good deal cheaper, and get a better fit too; but do as seems best but mind you, do you take good care of them, for when you come home I want you to look very nice My

"precious" you see I have made up my mind to have you come out here this summer, maybe you'll surprise me some of these days by making your appearance unannounced, Who knows but I believe you are not very fond of surprises yourself and consequently not much addicted to making them. I suppose you will think, well truly Mary is full of freaks, here the last letter she was "lying awake night" troubling her brain about how we were going to get out of debt, and next letter she's off to Illinois, without as much as saying "by your leave" but I can't help it, that one trait my character that's carried on though a great many difficulties, quick to decide and act but when I sell my estate in Spencer Co Dindy Dandy, I can make it all right, and perhaps have some left to help you to dress up. Now My dear Husband while I feel very grateful for your sympathy in my loneliness, I don't want you to work yourself into the belief that I am a heroine, for I think that I am very far from it, to be sure I feel keenly the loss of my own pleasant home and the society of a loved husband, but who has a better fathers house to go to than I, and so many and such good friends; while many a woman is left with five or six little ones to care for, and eke out a subsistence for herself and children, out of what her husband can spare, or save of his hard earned \$13 per month. I am so glad to hear that away there in the Army, where vice and imorality grows as it were spontaneously, there were a few left that had not bowed the knee to Baal, and who as true prophets of the living God, ceased not to pray, and their efforts have been blessed in the conversion of so many didn't the scene of their baptism carry your thoughts back to a scene on the river Des moines, where a holy man of God baptized willing subjects into the likeness of their Saviors death?

No 26 It gives much pleasure my husband that in the midst of arduous duties you find time to visit the house of prayer; I am mostly deprived of church privileges here; there is preaching occasionally at Rossville by a very old gentleman, of the O. S. Presbyterian church; he was expected to preach last Sabbath, and James Ellison took me down, but we were disappointed; the people around here visit a great deal on the Sabbath day, and there are some very intelligent persons here too; I speak out just what I think of such practices, I tell the that I will not visit on that day, nor do I wish any one to come to see me on Sunday if I offend I cant help it. It seems from what you wrote in your last, there is a possibility of your moving soon, I am sure if it would end the war as soon I would rather have you stay where you are

but I presume every available man will be in requisition this summer. I see that the Governors of Ohio, Ind, Ill, Iowa and Wis, have offered the President 100,000 troops for 100 day service, to be furnished within twenty days after the notice of the acceptance of the proposition, the proposition was accepted by Pres Lincoln April 23rd and the Secretary War directed to carry it into execution that will be a proportion of 20,000 to each state; they are to be armed and equipped and paid as other volunteer troop, but are allowed no bounty. It will be hard for young men that are farmers to leave now, as most of them have begun to put in their crops and have rented of others, so that they can't leave if they would. Lucy's brother that I spoke of James went in the three months service, and again with the three years men, 600,000 call, and was discharged both times on account of ill health, but like a true patriot he can't bear to hear the Gov't call for men without responding to it, and is trying to study some way to get some one to take his land of his hands. Pity is'nt that all the young men were not as patriotic? Well here I have my paper filled and haven't written much either; Good bye my dear. Mary

No 27 Rossville, Ill. May 11th 1864 Wednesday 1, o'clock P.M. My Dear Husband, This is a beautiful May day and looks more lovely in contrast with yesterday, which was a very cold, cloudy one, but I am sorry to say that I am neither physically or mentally able to enjoy the day for I am quite unwell today, and consequently feel a little low spirited. I didn't get a letter from you last week and that perhaps accounts in part for the "blues", but tomorrow is mail day again and hope to get a letter then, and I will regain my usual health in a few days, and "I'll forget that yesterday I was sad". I see by the Chicago Tribune that the evacuation of Texas by our forces began May 2nd, so perhaps you are in New Orleans, or farther up the Mississippi; I must not expect that you can serve your country and lie idly in camp all the while, but I had hoped that you might stay there this summer. O! I do pray you may never fall into such hands as perpetuated the Ft Pillow massacre; retaliation is justice to them surely. That fiendish act has capped the climax for the rebellion we will bring a reckoning most fearful. But the day of deliverance and peace is hastening, already Gen Grant has opened the contest on the Rappahannock; and we look forward with hope that as Abraham Lincoln's first term of office expires, the din of civil war will cease forever, that this will indeed be the "Land of noble, brave and free. But here we sadden as the imagination look into the future, for

'ere all can be accomplished, many must fall; the widdows grief and orphans cry will ever and anon be heard, reminding us that our freedom and liberty's bought at a fearful cost, can all say as did the widdow of Major Booth, (Commander of the post at Ft Pillow) "I have given to my country all that I had to give - My Husband. Yet I have freely given him for freedom and my Country." Yes, we will prove by our actions that we are worthy to be the daughters of the brave women of '76; we will bucle on the knapsack for our husbands and bid them God speed, and to the war for God and the right. I am quite contented here yet, and hear from home often; I got a letter from Austin and Hattie last week, they were all well, and every thing is going on, on the farm quite prosperously; I presume that Austin will keep you posted in home affairs, he remarked in his letter that he suposed your letters would be scarce in that county now. Aunt Messia has not come home yet, but we are looking for her every day. I think it's likely I will go to Danville next week, but direct your letters plainly to this place all the time, remember the Co. Vermillion. I hope you will excuse this short letter, and pardon me if a spirit sadness or complaing has showed itself in what I have written, for I am feeling badly, but don't my dear let it trouble you. Ever remember your wife at a throne of grace, for she feels that she needs your prayers, and let me assure you my dear husband that your name is never left out. I ever remain your affectionate wife Mary Garrett

No 30 Rosssville, Ill. June 5th 1864 My Dear Husband Yours of May 12th, written opposite the mouth of Red river was received Thursday the 2nd inst, and I assure you I devoured its contents greedily, for I was becoming very anxious about you, as it had been more than two weeks since I had heard from you; I again have reason to be thankful that your life was spared, for you were evidently in a very dangerous position. O! it makes my blood chill to think of terrible death that some of our poor poor boys met on Red river! Certainly our national pride will forbid our historians from recording the barbarities of Ft Pillow and Red River. I shudder when I think there is a possibility of my husband falling

into the hands of such savages, who have forgotten that we are united by the ties of blood, and who have lost their manhood by trampling under the iron heel of tyranny all that was sacred to a race that had become degraded by cruel oppression. it is impossible for man to have complete controll of his fellow without becoming a tyrant. This war is an ordeal that will try men "as by fire" and bring out their true character, it requires great criseses to develop great characters, the revolution gave us a Washington, and the rebellion has given us - - who, perhaps the historian will say a Grant a Butler or a Sherman. But is is sad to contemplate the moral depravity that this war is developing; even our bosom friends whom we thought were all that was pure and noble and true decive us, and we are tempted to doubt the integrity of the whole of the human family

but yet we do not doubt that there is truth and purity, and the contrast with depravity and falsity will make it appear more beautiful, and often being disappointed in those that we have set up as samples of moral rectitude or personal bravery, will have a tendency to draw us away from the world, up to the source of all truth. We must always bear in mind that man is fallible in his nature; the creature of circumstances that unless he be guided by the Eternal, he may prove false to himself and all that are dear to him. The more I see of the world the more I distrust it; and the more highly I prize those dear tried friends at our own fathers hearthstone. Since I wrote you I have been to Danville, and I am sorry to have to say it, but I must to you; I am ashamed of and perfectly disgusted with Uncle Payne's family; they are

the most rabid Butternuts I ever saw; We went down one day and came back the next, and I don't think I will trouble them again with my presence. although they gave me a milk and water invitation to come again. Uncle John and I called at Joe. English's in the evening and spent an hour or two very pleasantly; I never met him to know him till last Wednesday although he is a relative; he gave me a cordial invitation to make his house my home when I came to D. again, he has a family of seven children, two sons in the army one in the 13th A.C. who was in Missouri the same winter that you were, Joe was formerly a Democrat, but is an ardent supporter of the Government; he lives in one of the most [illegible] house in D. it would do you good to see the shrubbery in his yard, every foot almost is occupied; with both useful

No 36 Rossville Illinois. Sunday Eve. Aug 14th 1864 My Dear Husband, Still I date my letters at "Rossville" and I am sure I can't tell when I will change my address. I would go at any time now if I had the means, but will wait till I do as I do not wish to borrow. This evening finds me well, but very tired. Last Friday Uncle and Aunt and I went to Danville; Aunt got better, and Aunt Payne was very sick and we thought it would do Aunt Melissa good to take the ride; and although she is very tired, is a great deal better; we started very early Friday morning and got there about eleven o'clock, staid one night, and started home again at five P.M. yesterday, and got home about 10 1/2 last night. One day and night is as much as I wish to spend with my Copperhead relatives. We took dinner yesterday at Joe Englishes. I enjoyed the hour or two there more than the whole time at Aunt Eliza's. If they would let me rest on the subject of the war, and politics, I would not care to go there; but its nothing but "niger" all the while; well I think I have been there for the last time. Today I received another letter from you, although I was glad to get I felt somewhat disappointed to find it had been written so long, dated the 4 of July; it resembeled its author in one particular

its been wandering up and down the earth all its days. I will try after this to number my letters correctly, so that you may know when you receive all of them; yours have been coming very irregularly for a while and if it were not for the no. I would not know how many I miss. The last or latest I had from you was July 21st, that is pretty well on to a month ago. I look for one tomorrow. When I get home I will get mail more regularly. I do want to go home so badly. You keep writing to me as if I were at home, directing me what to do. I will endeavor to comply with your requests when I get home. Last week I received four letters one from you, and Libbie, Jennie, and Ettie Drummond; so that I had a nice lot of news for one day. They were all well at home, but didn't say anything at all about Cy: Poor boy I should like so much to know what he is doing, or even where he is. There is but little war news of interest now. Reported that we have taken Mobile; but it is not confirmed. Grant is sieging Petersburg; and Sheridan has whipped Early. I presume you have heard of the capture of Gen. Stoneman, together with about 1,000 of his men. Wednesday Evening 6 1/2 O'clock Three days since I began this; you won't think my dear husband that is neglect but for want of quiet: It is almost impossible here to have one moment to myself, and often when I do write I answer questions, and carry on a conversation, so I hope this will be a satisfactory apology for the brevity as well as the long time that intervenes between some of my letters. We have had company this afternoon, four ladies, they have just left and I improve the time between sundown and dark to talk to my absent one; O! how delightful 'twould be to spend this hour with you my dear. How thankful we

ought to be for memory; I am happy again when I think of the few bright years we spent together; and I hope, fondly hope we may both live to enjoy each others society many years.

And now for the news. Uncle John has been to Milford and the report is that Gen. Lee has evacuated Petersburg - and his whole army is making for Washington, and that Grant is orderd by boats to protect the City; this is merely rumor, we don't believe it. I suppose the Cop's will rejoice over anything that looks like defeat to our armies, one of the ladies here today advanced some rather sympathizing arguments, I soon gave her to understand what I thought of it. They - the Copperheads, say that if Gen McClelland can be given a command, he can have 100,000 me who will not go if he remains inactive, I replied to the lady that said that, that if he did'nt use them better than he did when he was in command, it would be little worth while to try him again. There is very little volunteering in this State there will probably be a draft here, and the 5th of Sept will soon be here. But for the timely discovery of that formidable conspiracy, there would doubtless have been considerable trouble here this fall. I will send you the paper containing a full account of that conspiracy, also a Lafayette paper in which you will find a letter from Bayard Taylor, which you will think rather more amusing than interesting.

There is an incident I've been wanting to write you this three or four weeks, but have forgotten it every time. One day when Aunt and I were visiting at a neighbors, a woman stopped to get some milk for an eight months old babe; some of the ladies asked some question in

regard to her babe, when she told us that the child was not hers, but that of a soldier who was killed at Lookout Mountain and its mother had died a month ago, and she being an acquaintance of its mother had taken till she could get a good home for it. It was a very bright looking little boy and had no near relatives. O! I did want to take the poor little orphan to my heart and be a mother to him! and I was about to ask the woman two three times where she lived and her name, but the uncertainty of having a home myself and some one to help me raise him, kept me back; I would like to take a child to raise and would if it be the orphan of a soldier. Would you not like to too? But my paper will soon be full, and I want to talk a little on financial matters. I heartily enter into the plan of trying to get out debt while Green backs will go at par on them, and I am very sorry that Father did not take 50.00 in gold for the poney, why that's too valuable an animal for me to keep. I will help you all I can when I get home. I haven't been doing that this summer. If I had staid at home it would have been about 150.00 in our pockets; but a favorite adage of yours which I adopt is "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof", and its "done spent" now and can't be helped, can it? Well I've worried along with this, by talking a little and writing a little, till at last they all left me and went to bed; Now it is 9 1/2 and I must bid you good night my own dear husband. Come home this fall if you can; Heaven bless and keep you is the prayer of your Mary

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No 37 Rossville Illinois Aug 26th 1864. My Dear Husband, Yours of the 4th and 8th of Aug. is just received; I am very sorry that you are feeling so badly, I do indeed feel quite anxious about you, you have been complaining so long that I fear at length your health will break down entirely, and then if you cant get a leave of absence, I may never see you again. When you are feeling so badly, you ought to excuse yourself from duty, and be careful what you eat, and try to procure such vegetables as will induce a healthy action of bowels. Cheer up my dear, the "blues" ar'nt good medicine at any time, particularly now, so far away your little wife; who could soon affect a cure were you at home. In the first part of your letter where you thought of trying to get home in about a month I was quite delighted and began to devise means to start home immediately, but before you finished writing you had started some place, you knew not where; and now I have no time to look to, when I will see you. But such are the uncertainties of a life in the army; your time is not your own; so we will try to bear these disappointments in a spirit of

true heroism. I am sorry that I cant go home now on many accounts; your letters since the latter part of June have gone to Desmoines, and have to be remailed so that I am a great deal longer getting them, and the additional postage is from six to twelve cents, most of your letters are just a little over weight, so that at the office of delivery they cost six cents, and when remailed six more, I want you to write long letters if you feel like it, the longer the better, so I would suggest that when you write over one large sheet to put two stamps on; It is too bad that you sent so much money home, and now have to do without what you need for the want of it. If I wait for money from the army I will probably be here till the middle or last of Sept. I may get the money here before that and go sooner. I had intended to have written to you on Wednesday, to have sent last mail day, but Aunt Melissa took a relapse and was very sick for a few days, and the work all devolved on me, so that I was kept very busy, and although Cy does not answer any of my letter I thought I would write to him again, and that was all I could find time to write before mail day. But I have but little hope of getting Cy to write

as his Aunt Lib. and Henry Lamb, wrote him a long time ago, and have not received answers, if he would only write to you, we would excuse him. I have no war news of any importance, save of the feeling in the North; there is no doubt I suppose that there has been a very formidable organization of Northern traitors; in Indianapolis a few days ago there were fifty cases of arms seized by the authorities, which were intended to arm the Hoosier Tories; The Rebels made a raid on a small scale into the Southern part Ill, a few days ago. There is but little excitement about politics, or the coming Presidential election it is a settled matter with the Copperheads, that "Honest Abe's" to be the next President. Evening 7 1/2 o'clock, Again I resume the pleasant task of writing to you. My health is very good and I am enjoying my visit now better than I did at first, I am beginning to get acquainted with all the neighbors but yet if I had the money I believe I would go back to dear old homestead. O! I do want to see them all at home so badly; Uncle John said the other day that I had better stay all winter, but I don't think of that at all. Aunt Melissa's health is so poor, that I ought to stay

as long as I can. Our folks seem anxious too to have me at home, so you see I have many friends, I am very sorry that the folks neglect you so in the matter of correspondence, but you must excuse them, it is not because they forget you, but they are no great hands to write. I suppose you know by this time that Austin got that money. O! I do hope that you are not going to the Army of the Potomac, that would seem so out of the world, although I suppose you would like to be under the command of "Old Unconditional". I don't know what that army is doing now. It is said that Lee has sent 20,000 men to reinforce Hood, if that be the case, Grant can easily manage the opposing forces at Richmond, I do hope that this fall will bring this rebellion to a close. Uncle predicts that if there is a draft, the Copperheads will fight before they will go. they may, but I think the most of them are cowards. I will look anxiously for your next letter, to know if you are indeed coming home if you are, I will surely be there to receive you although I should like to have you come this way, as the folks here would be so well pleased to have you come. It is now about bedtime and I will have to say good by for a while; take care of your health my dear husband, for your Mary's sake, and may the time soon come when we can enjoy the peace and quiet of our own home Ever your affectionate wife Mary

Rossville, Illinois. Sept. 6th 1864. My Dear Husband; I have been waiting to get a letter from you before writing again, as you were ordered away just as you were finishing your letter, and it is now two weeks since I received the last, and about six since it was written, I am getting anxious about you for six weeks is a long time; O! when will this suspense end, when I can have my husband at home, with no cruel for threatening to rob my life of its light! One more step has been gained towards the overthrow of this great rebellion; Atlanta is certainly ours, and probably Mobile. Then Richmond, and we hope to soon see a termination of hostilities when all, no not all, our weary, war worn soldiers can return to their homes, thrice dearer to them now; that will be a day of great sadness as well as joy to many, - the light of whose lives and homes have gone out on the battle field; who return not to receive the blessings of friends, but have gone on before to their great reward. I am enjoying the best of health; and as you see at Rossville; I returned last night from a visit of two day at Lucy Yorks, Mary, John, and I went over last Friday, it is fifty miles south East of this, and a long fifty it seemed to us, riding all that distance on a board in a wagon, going there in a day; it rained very hard Sunday night, and the

roads were very muddy yesterday, we started early, and travelled all day just fast as the horses could go with the load we had (John went for seed wheat,) and did not get home till nine oclock at night; we were cold and tired enough I assure you; but I don't suppose we felt half as bad as you poor soldiers do after a hard march. I did not enjoy my visit at all, Lucy seemed very glad to see us, and so did her husband, but there seems to be such a coldness between them, that is unpleasant to me to visit them, and yet I wanted to go on Lucy's account; although her husband treats me very well indeed, and I feel very welcome; I am sure I couldn't endure to live with my husband if he didn't show any more affection towards me; but that's their business not mine. I have not heard from home since I wrote you last. I think now of going home in about two weeks, Jim Ellison and Lucy have given up going to Iowa, and I can get money and return or replace it, as I wrote you once before; They have so many apples here that I want to dry some to take home, and may not go home quite so soon on that account; I believe I wrote you about the Rising Sun boys stealing our apples, we never can have the good of fruit so near to that town. Land is very high here and coming up all the time, and I suppose it is there; I do hope Austin will sell our farm this fall, although if the war continues, every thing we raise will bring a big price next year; if we could get such prices as the do here, wheat is 1.75, and 1.85, .90 at retail, corn .50 in the field. but it is after ten oclock, and this will have to go the office tomorrow, So my dear husband I will say good bye for the present. I will in a few days again, Ever yours Mary

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No 39 Rossville, Illinois, Sept 11th 1864. My Dear Husband This is Sabbath afternoon; we all went to meeting at Rossville this morning, heard Old father Kingsbury, who preached a thanksgiving, war sermon, this is a day mentioned by the President to offer thanks for the victories of our arms; And we have much indeed to rejoice over; The boasted stronghold of Georgia is ours and all the forts of importance in Mobile bay are in our possession. I don't know when I have heard as good a sermon as this morning; Mr Kingsbury has been a life long abolitionist; and three weeks ago buried a son, who had received his death wound at Atlanta in July; but he says he is willing to sacrifice more yet for this noble cause; And this is the feeling all over the North, all desire peace, but it must be an honorable one, such as posterity will not have reason to blush, or curse us for; and till such a peace can be secured the loyal people of the North are ready to sacrifice all, that they may have a country; which they now love, but which we hope to see purer and holier after it has passed this fiery ordeal. I am now enjoying my usual health, for a few day last week I was quite unwell. Yours of Aug, 14th was received last Thursday, it was two weeks since I had heard from you, and I assure you

it was opened hurriedly and read with great eagerness; It troubles me that you are so miserable; I know you necessarily mingle with those whose society is very disagreeable to you; all the way I can console you is to say bear it my dear as patiently as you can, seek the society that is congenial as much as may be; and although there are a great many things in the army and government we don't approve of, their object is in the main right; and we hope by the blessing of God the cause of war and the necessity of an army will cease; till then my husband be patient; keep your heart and life pure, and the quiet and charity of the home circle will be doubly dear to you. The society of dear, cherished friends, will indeed be a sweet reward to the weary, war worn soldier, disgusted with army life, with the sights and sounds of the profligate and dissipated. Wednesday afternoon 14th 5 1/2 o'clock. We have just returned from Mr Marstons, you remember of me writing you about them, we had a very pleasant visit, I always like to go there, it is the most intelligent family in the neighborhood; their only son is very sick, a young man of nineteen, so that we could not enjoy the visit quite as well as we did in the summer; I am now making my farewell visits, I expect to start home next Monday morning from here, I will go to Middleport, get there by noon, with reach Desmoines probably by Wednesday evening, that will be just a week from today. I received a letter from Emma last mail, which contained the news of the capture of the 8th cavaly, and as

they have heard nothing from Cy since, suppose him to be a prisoner; there is a possibility that he escaped as there were ten who eluded the enemy and succeed in getting away, but as he never writes home we cant tell anything about it. I am truly glad that Cy has at last written to you; I wrote him on his birth day, that poor boy! I don't expect he will ever get that. I know how badly you will feel to hear he is probably a pisoner in the hands of so cruel and inhuman an enemy; I fear his young frame wont stand the privation and starvation of rebel dungeons. I never felt such an antipathy, almost amounting to hatred towards Copperheads as I have lately; the feeling is probably enhansed by the irrational talk of my secesh relatives, which I can't listen to with any degree of patience, I have not made them a visit this summer, nor do I intend to see them before I go away, I'll tell you sometime what Aunt Eliza said about me to Aunt Melissa last week, she and Uncle went down, and I staid and kept house I tell you it made my Hamilton blood boil for a few minutes; but I must not say too much or I may excite your curiosity, for I don't believe that trait is entirely confined to the women; perhaps I will resent it, perhaps not, it is not exactly right to do so, but I feel like it would do me so much good to write a sheet or two of foolscap, just to let me know what I think of them, but it doubtless would not increase their love for me, and perhaps I'd better leave them severely alone

Our folks here have sold out; they had two of the best farms you ever saw, one of them you would have liked, both together contained 350 acres, sold at about 23 doll per acre, cheap at that too. They all liked so well that they would not have sold, had it not belonged to so many heirs, Uncle wanted to get his part so as to get a home of his own, and get to improving it. Land is coming up fast here, and is changing hand rapidly. I do wish our farm was well sold and our debts all paid while times are good, for I look for a grand smash after while or at least fear it. Everything a farmer can raise sells here at big prices, the market is so much better here at any time than with us, if you were here with 75 hd of hogs you sold at 2 ct last spring you could make enough to clear all your debts; but be patient and faithful to the end, though our duties be arduous, and your associates uncongenial, your countrys claims are paramount to all others; The needs and asks for the prompt and cheerful service of all her sons now. There are many hearts at home longing and looking for the loved ones away on the field; I was talking to aunt today of our home and remarked that it was a humble looking cabin but that I gladly go to it again. My paper is almost full and I must hasten, I will not write you again till I get home. Aunt Melissa and Cousin Mary send their love, and say when this "cruel war is over" you must be sure to come and make them a visit, if the war dont make a Cop of you, I guess their no dangers Good bye my dearest for a while your Mary.

No 41 Cottage Home, Iowa Sept, 26th 1864 My Dear Husband I am happy to inform you that I am again under the parental roof; and the heart felt welcome that I received did my heart good; I believe I wrote you last at El Passo, I had to wait there thirty hours longer after I wrote to you, for some unaccountable reason the Baggage Master, at Gilman did not send my trunk until the third day after I got to El Passo. The R R Company were liable for my expenses there, but gentleman told me that the managers of the road were never known to pay anything without compulsion, so I thought it best to let the \$5.00 go than to sue them for it; Indeed I was very glad to get my trunk

at that rate, so many lose their baggage entirely. The trains on the road running North and South and East and West do not make close connection, so that every time I changed cars I had to wait from twelve to twenty four hours. At El Paso I found company going to Nevada. A Mr. Childs from the 32nd Iowa, and his Sister Mrs Webb she was returning from a visit to Peoria, he was going home on a ten days leave from St. Louis, where the 32d is now; Mrs Webb is rather a coarse woman, but her brother took care of my baggage, and I felt very much obliged to him. We left El Paso Thursday night at 9 1/2 O'clock, got to Dixon the next morning at three, and then we had to wait till the next night 1 1/2 O'clock; there we took a through train to Nevada, we took breakfast at Cedar Rapids and,

dinner at Nevada; I met with S. V. White and family on the train, he came and spoke to me, and very kindly offered to get me a seat in the coach to Des Moines and attended to my baggage, and did every thing in his power to make me comfortable. He and his wife and wife's sister had been on a trip to the White Mts and to Boston and [illegible]. I got into Des Moines Saturday evening at 8 1/2 O'clock; Mrs Bansman had sent one of the boys down to the Blodgett House to watch for me, and when the stage stopped some one called out "is Mrs Garrett in there" so I went right up to see Merce her mother is a real nice old lady she has been with her all summer. Of course the first thing I thought of Sabbath morning was going to church but I was greatly disappointed in not hearing Bro Nash he was absent, in

the country some where I believe. I felt a kind of disappointment too after having been gone for six months they did not any of them act as if they were surprised at all to see, or even glad; I thought of how badly you felt over cold treatment in the church or by certain members of it, expecting after an absence of a year that every one would be glad to see you. But when I returned from church I found father and Libbie waiting for me, and felt that they were glad to see to see me, you know father is very quiet; but I knew by the light in his eye that I was welcome, and dear Libbie you know what a dear good soul she is, I cared not for all the rest, if the they welcomed me. I expected to have been at home on Wednesday, and father came up after me on Thursday, and Emma was up Saturday, but could not wait

till the stage came in, and Mother was very uneasy, fearing I was sick or some accident had befallen me. Found them all well, and the children were perfectly delighted to see "Aunt Mawy"; Austin came down Sunday evening and gave me a brothers welcome; I am so delighted to get home that I hardly know how to act, but I don't think your little wife is quite as excitable as she used to be. Tuesday Morning Sept 24th Good Morning my dear dear husband, How much I wish I could address the words to you, than through this tardy medium, and if I could even know how your health is; I feel quite refreshed and rested this morning, I was so tired when I got home, and yesterday was washing day of course, and I had a great deal to do so that I

could not possibly finish this, as I wished to do, as I know will be quite anxious to hear of me reaching home. But to begin where I left-off; When I got home Sunday I found three letters and a whole lot of Photo's from the army, O! t'was too much happiness for one day!, but I am happy to inform you that I "survived without material injury to my mind, yours No's 41 - 2 & 3, were read with great eagerness, as you may know when it had been about seven - week since the last I had from you was written. I am so glad - that your health is better, but I don't like the idea of your having to take quinine every day to stimulate you, I fear it is not the life current of health that causes you to feel stronger, but merely the

stimulus of medicine. I don't wish to urge you to come home if you don't think it expedient for it is said to make soldiers discontented to be urged by friend at home to come, but O! I would be delighted my dear one to have you with us if t'was only for two or three weeks, but I hope I am not unreasonable, if it is not best for you to come, I will try to wait patiently till you can come. I feel deeply for you on Cy's account. I suppos from all you wrote and what I can hear that the most of that regt is taken prisoners Poor boy I fear sometimes that we may never hear from him and yet I never felt the he would be killd. Mother feels so badly on his account, and we all do. Persons have written home

that Cy was such a good soldier and had grown to be so steady which will be very gratifying you as it was to us. If I knew how to get a letter to him, I would write just a few lines to let him know he was remembered, the Rebels will - allow friends to write a few lines to prisoners in their hands; you had better try to get some word to him, if you can ascertain his whereabouts; Stuarts wife is very sick this morning, and he is going up to Des Moines for medicine, and I am hurrying as you will see by the looks of the writing to send this by him to the office. I could fill two more sheets of this size, but will wait a few days, when I can give you all the news on the farm, how our interests are looked after. I am going up to Austins today, when I will find out all about everything connected with our affairs, and will report to headquarters. I must bid you good bye my own dear husband may Heaven keep you is the prayer of your wife. Mary

No 44 Cottage Home, Iowa Monday Morning, Oct 10th /64 Dear Husband It is but a few days since I wrote you, and I have not heard from you by letter since the 15th of Sept, yet whenever I have a moment of leisure I feel like giving it to you, Libbie has taken my place at the wash-tub, and I have run into the parlor to write a few lines. We are all enjoying our usual health, especially myself. Yesterday Emma and I went to Des Moines in the buggy, I to our own church, I had been in the house but a few minutes when Bro Nash came 'round and shook hands with me in his hearty, friendly way. He preached from Zach 6.4., the best sermon I have heard since I left last spring, after meeting I saw and spoke to a number of friends, but did not stop to dinner, as there was to be a lecture in the evening at Rising Sun, on the Subject of the Orphans Home, I presume you have seen accounts of the enterprise in the Register. It looks to the support and education of the orphans of Iowa Soldiers; We were all so much pleased with the lecture and lecturer, he was very young, did not appear to be older than 22; he went into the army under the first three years call, as a private, was promoted to Adjutant; His address was so interesting throughout delivered with so much ease, and such plain, good language, Subscriptions were solicited, according to the

ability and desire of the donors to contribute to such a cause, 25 dol, constitutes a life membership, \$5.00 an anual membership. I felt a desire to become a life-member, but did not feel quite able, so I signed \$5.00. Was that too much? I thought not, It ought to put to blush those who have been at home all these three years making money, to hear how liberally soldiers are giving; One company in the 3rd Iowa Cav, numbering 37 men gave over Six hundred dollars. There has been forty or fifty thousand dol. pledged already for the enterprise; some thirty or forty orphans have been received already. It is thought that there can be 150 or 250,000 dol. raised, which they propose to invest in U. S. securities, and the intrest will pay the expenses of the institution. I am proud that Iowa was the first state to start such an enterpris, now several other states are following Her example. Friday Evening, Oct 14th My dear husband, you will think this a long interval in my letter; My only apology is that I have been waiting to hear from you. It is four weeks since your last letter was written (the 15th of Sept,) why is it that I don't hear from you? I know if you are living and well, you will write, but you were not well the last I received from you, and persons in that climate sicken and die so suddenly, that sometimes I fear something has happened, and then again I think you are coming home, and for the last two days I have been quite nervous, every strange step I hear, I think it is you, the girls and mother laugh at me, but I cant help it. Last Wednesday Morning I went to Desmoines and staid till Thursday evening, Libble went up with me

as far as Sarah Jane Finches, and visited 'round among the folks. I staid all night at Reichenekers Wednesday night; and went to prayermeeting that evening; but I staid the most of the time at Mrs Bansmans, I believe I wrote you that they had moved; Did you notice the sixth anniversary of our wedding day; yesterday was the 13th, I thought of you nearly all the time, and I felt so confident that I would get a letter yesterday, but was disappointed, and I will fess to you that I did go into the parlor in the evening and sat where the moon shone into the window, and wept, long and bitter; You will excuse me for this weakness, If you consider it such; for the day brought to my mind memories of the past; O! I cant tell you the lonely sad feelings of my heart there alone; but all this I ought to keep to myself, for I do not wish to make you sad, because I have been. It is a year ago today since you left Fathers and a year ago tonight we were at T. Mitchell's, how vividly it all passes before my mind; and when I parted with you, I hoped to see you before this time. But now the eleven months that you have to stay looks short, when compared with the time you have been gone; yes - I can't give up the idea of seeing you this fall; But I can and will adapt myself to circumstances. Hattie and her children, and Jennie and Stuart were all here to dinner today, and this is my week to do the cooking, and I tell you we had a magnificent meal, which the avidity of the participants appetiets fully testified to; the gathering here today, reminded of a larger one six years ago, when you brot your young wife for the first time to your fathers house.

But I must quit writing for tonight, for I feel very tired. I carried Hatties baby up the hill, and she did the milking which with the cooking, has quite exhausted my powers for today. Libbie has been sitting by me, writing to Ellison, he has been away up on the Yellow Stone this summer, and have had either two or three engagements with the Indians; the exposition has now ended for this season, and the most of the troops are back to Ft Rice. Now my precious I will bid you good night, pleasant happy dreams. Saturday Morning 15th My dear Husband, This morning finds the quiet of our homes disturbed by the news of the Rebels being in Iowa; the report at Des Moines is that the Rebels have burned the town of Albia, down on the river, this is considered authentic; and we have - another report that Knoxville is burned, and Bloomfield and the Rebels are coming on to the capital. The news came to into Des Moines on Thursday night, but this morning was the first we heard of it. The Militia is ordered out the Company in Camp Township, just went by to Des Moines. Franklin stopped and gave us all the news I have written; It is bringing war very near our homes, but I don't feel very much alarmed, we are all somewhat excited of course. Franklin told us that the Bankers had become alarmed and were moving their vaults to a place of safety. I will write you often, and keep you posted, don't be uneasy, we feel abot to defend ourselves, the fource of Rebels is reported to be from five to eight hundred. I am hurrying to finish this so as to send to the office; Good by my dear one Ever Your Mary

No 45 Cottage Home, Iowa Thursday Eve, Oct, 18th /64 My Dear Husband The excitement of Saturday has subsided, and we are all safe; The report of the Rebels being so near, was altogether untrue and as far as we can hear only few gurrillas crossed the line next to Mo, and stole some stock. On the strength of what we heard Friday and Sat, there were six Malitia companies met at Desmoines and were organized into a Regimental form, with Jack Williamson for Col. Harry Griffiths is Capt of the light artillery. We had a dispatch on Sabbath morning saying that Price had crossed the Mo. River and was coming toward Iowa; he is presumed to have crossed at Jefferson City. We don't feel alarmed, although we

my have trouble; Some people in the country were very much frightened; There is a saw-mill above four-mile bridge, owned by a Mr Taylor, a good Union man, by the way; he has two boys hauling logs for him , one, Aaron Huffman who drives a span of very large Bays for Taylor, past here up into the timber for logs: When the Camp Township Co came long Saturday morning, the two boys with their loads of logs had just turned off on that road towards Davids old mill, when they saw the Malitia boys coming, and took them for Guerrillas, after counting twenty five, they put whip to their horses, and run up to the mill and told Taylor the Guerrillas were on them sure enough; Taylor ran out and unhitched the horses, and one of the boys jumped on one and went as hard as he could go back into those hollows up in the woods; saying "the Rebs shouldn't have his big horses any how."

It was a real good joke on them - we'nt it: Sarah Jane Finch was badly scared too, she gathered up all their best clothes, and they were preparing to go up on Skunk river; but I don't hear anything more of it now; We are all in usual health, all that is required to make me perfectly contented and comparatively happy, is a letter or two from my husband, Mother and I went up early Sabbath morning before the P.O. closed, hoping to get a letter, but again I was doomed to disappointment; now Stuart is going tomorrow and if I don't get one then, I don't know what I shall do. but I rather suppose I will do just as I have been doing for the last four weeks "wait and see". There was to be preaching in the afternoon on Agency, so Mother and I stopped at Ann Deans for dinner. She has a Sister visiting her from Ohio

who married one of Aunt Margery Wilsons boys, Stuart Wilson; she (Mrs Wilson) is a widow, her husband died about a year ago; I like her very much indeed! we were expecting she and Ann here today, they will probably come tomorrow. Mother says "its bed time girls" so good night my dear husband. Wednesday Morning 19th My dear Lyle I have a few minutes to write before - Stuart starts to town. I have but little of intrest to write as I wrote so lately and having no letter from you, but I fully expect one tonight: Father is very busy diging his potatoes, and you know what hard work that is, and for as old a man as father too, it is too bad, but he cant hire any one to do it for him; he works very hard for one of his age, and it is letting on his looks, I think he breaks very fast. Libbie is talking of going with Ellison to Sioux City or Ft Randle or wherever he is stationed this winter, I do wish you could be pleasantly situated at some post so that I could be with you. But it is just eleven months today till the 23d's time is out, and if I see you this fall the time wont seem so long, I will bid you good bye for a few days till I hear from you, keep good heart, and come home if you can, your Mary.

Cottage Home, Iowa Saturday Morn, Oct 22nd /64 My Dear Husband, Emma has written you such an interesting funny letter, that it's hardly necessary for me to add anything more. This is a beautiful morning, contrasts finely with the weather we have been having; I am milk maid this week, and I was out early this morning and heard the canon booming away at DesMoines, O! I wonder what is the news; O! don't we wish that Richmond has fallen! Emma and I talk of going up with father and Stuart John Sherman of Ohio is to Speak there today; O! wouldn't you enjoy going up with us; but you have taken upon yourself the duty of defending our beloved Country against inveterate

foes, and must not waver; and we at home will try to help you to bear your burdens till that happy end when peace shall be restored; then how proudly and joyfully we will welcome our loved ones home covered with honors, and gratitude of a happy people saved from worse than death, by the great wall of human sacrifices so freely set up between them and danger.

We are all enjoying the best of health as Emma has already told you. I have no letter from you yet but expect one today, Libbie and Austin both received one from you this week. Austins was the latest, it was written the day that Wilcox left the Regiment it was nearly a month on the way, but my paper is full and I will close hoping to hear from you soon, May Heaven keep my precious one is the prayer of -- Mary

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No 46 Cottage Home, Iowa, Oct 23rd /64 Sabbath afternoon, 3 O'clock My Own Dear Husband I could hardly wait till dinner was over, and the necessary work of the house done up to get to writing to you; Yesterday we all (that is Father, Stuart, Emma and I) went to Desmoines, as I wrote that we expected to do in my note yesterday. The long-looked for letters came at last, two from the army and one from Aunts folks, another from Ettie Drummond and one from Braden of Indianapolis in reference to my land, I expect to get \$75 for it this week, and make a quit claim deed for it, and you are to add your signature when you come home; that is not much for that much land, but with the encumbrances on it, I think we had better take it; don't you think it the best we can do under the circumstances? The letters I received from you were of the dates of Sept 25th and Oct 2nd, O! I was so glad to get them and together with the others, and hearing such a good speech from John Sherman, I was quite excited and as a natural consequence came home with a nervous headache from which I have not entirely recovered yet. It pained me to hear of the troubles in your Regt, and yet I feel more indignant than sorry; I think you were right, and do hope you will come our right, but it is rather dangerous bus-

iness to oppose those in authority over us if they are disposed to be tyrannical, for it is seldom we get justice, but if all the injured party stand firmly together they will probably get a redress for their grievances; you know which way my sympathies go, if I could see a certain Military gentleman (?) wouldn't my eyes snap fire at him, I believe he'd as soon face a canons mouth at once, hard as that is for him to do; If poor little Co' C. is so dull that he can't see the 'pint, soon enough to commit himself soon for you, don't feel hurt about it, he's of little consequence anyway. Austin also got a letter from you yesterday written the 7th of Oct, five days later than mine you did not mention in that any of the troubles of the Regt and I have been thinking that perhaps you did not wish me to say anything about the matter, but I can't help it now, I am generally cautious as you know about repeating what you write me, but this concerned you so intimately that I could'nt help telling it, but you know its safe with our family. O! your letters do my soul good! I do hope when you are writing to me, that you wont try to restrain yourself, don't fear that your letters will be too long and uninteresting, every word to me is fraught with intrest: just write on and on as you feel, either trials or joys, I will gladly share either with you, my dear dear husband, the supreme Lord of my heart, to whom I look for greatest earthly happiness; O! if you were taken to whom in this world of stangers could I look; who would be then my heart's confident, and who could fill the void? But I will draw the vail

of trust, faith over that dark picture, trust that all will yet be well, and have faith that Our Father will not send more upon us than we are able to bear; and let us continually pray for strength equal to our day; and let us rather suffer than bring reproach on the cause that should be first in our hearts; therefore my husband allow me to say, be cautious, watchfull, lest you be too hasty, and I know you will take this kindly; I will certainly feel considerable anxiety till I hear from you again; but be precise and exact in all your business, I know you will be conscintious in all matters, but do be prompt and exact to the very letter and I feel assured you are and will be. You mentioned in one of your last that you felt almost hard towards Aunt Melissa for insisting on me staying when I was intending to come home. I don't think you ought to feel so, you don't blame our folks at home for wanting me here, and there is a nearer relationship existing between Aunt Melissa and I than ordinarily between Aunt and niece; and she said all the time if I had cares or duties to call me home, she would not urge me to stay, which you know I had not; when you think of these things I hope you will feel differently, for I want you to think well of that dear Aunt for my sake. We were up to Rising Sun to meeting this morning heard a pretty good sermon from Mr. Calfee, I think a brother of the one in the Legislature, it was rather bombastic to suit me however; Ross, Sammy, Jennie and Alvira Stain, who is boarding at Aunts going to school, came

home with is to dinner; Ross is looking very badly he is a little dyspeptic, and looks sallow, and billious, he says he would like to write to you, but does so little writing the he neglects it from time to time: they have all gone up to Austins now, and I am improving the quiet by writing; but here they come back, and will start home in a few minutes and I must stop and talk to them a little; Mother is going down with them to stay three or four days. Margery is very sick, they considered her quite dangerous yesterday; they fear she is going into consumption; they have gone over to Aunt Sarahs; O yes Cousin Cary Wilson is up, he is hunting a farm, sold his own for 20 per acre; land down where he lives is much lower than here, we look for him up tomorrow, he is at Scotts. Monday Evening, Oct 24th The duties of the day are over and my thoughts are with my loved one far away, this as usual has been a busy day; but my health is so good that I can stand a hard days work as well as any of the girls; O! twould do you good to see me now. I am looking so hearty more so than you ever saw me. I have so much color, and such an appetite, I tell you I am a real Garrett in that particular, if in no other: Well Cary Wilson has not come yet. Gum McCall went up this morning to Desmoines, (he is a juror in the Supreme Court U.S.) he said Cary was going to look 'round down there for a farm; I believe he has not a very large capital to invest; there were some land buyers out here today, from Indiana, they are coming out day after tomorrow to look at the farms, those springs of ours will be a great attraction to that place now, nearly all the wells in the county have failed; Austin has two that he has always thought to be dry weather proof, but I heard him say today that he would have to have water soon. It would require a great deal of rain effect the wells now especially deep ones. If you could be here yourself a few weeks you could do more towards selling it than Austin can, he has a great deal to attend to, and does the best he can I think. He and Harriet are both very anxious for me to stay with this winter, or till you come home if I wish but I would rather stay here and Mother and Emma both insist so hard on it too. Libbie is going up to Dacotah or wherever Ellison is this, and I presume Mary Jane will stay down at McClains this winter, so there will be a small family here.

Now my paper is almost full again, and my eyes are getting heavy and I will stop for the present, do write often about matters in the Regt, I will be anxious till it is all straightened up; You never mention Capt Henry any more, and did not send his Photograph, what has become of him? do you and your Capt get along pleasantly? I send you Ettie Drummonds Photo, together with a young lady who you will recognize. Now I must say good bye although I am loth to do so; all send love, your wife thinks of you last at night and first in morning. Ever your own Mary.

and I alone will not add much to the family, as far as the trouble is concerned. I am always ready to help with the work when I am here, when those with children cant always do their part; not wishing to boast of what I do but you understand how it is; and then Emma and I can go round together more than the others but If Mary Jane comes home I think I will go to Austins, as they both insist very hard for me to come.

No 48) Cottage Home, Iowa Friday Eve, Nov. 4th 1864 My Dear Husband Yours of Oct 20th was received on Wednesday, Libbie and I were up to Desmoines again together and both got letters from our husbands; I was real glad to hear from you again, I don't know exactly where Duvalls Bluffs are, as we have no good map to refer to, yet I fully realize that you are far enough away from me, and in your last you said you did not expect to come home till the war was over or till next Sept. O! that made me feel gloomy and badly all day for I had been thinking that you would get home some time this fall or winter; I know it will only be ten months from the 19th of this month, but that will seem a long time to a lonely waiting heart; sometimes I think I can not wait patiently, I do want a home so badly; but I will wait, and try to be patient, for not many are blest with as good friends and as pleasant surroundings in every respect as I am, yet there is a void in my life, a longing for a love and sympathy that friends can not give. But I will be as brave as a soldiers wife ought to be, I know if you can come home, and think it expedient you will do so; and you doubtless are as anxious to come as I am to have you. I am so glad to hear that your health is improving, but feel some what anxious about your having sore throat so long

I fear at some future time it will run into Broncittis take just as good care of your health as you possibly can, I want you to have health to enjoy life if you get home, there is no bravery in recklessly exposing life and health as some do, which I know you will not do, but I want to caution you for my sake to take good care of your health. The health of the family is good with the exception of colds, Jennie's (Stuarts wife's) neck is no better, and is not likely to be for some time. Mother and I went down to our place last Tuesday afternoon, it was the first time since I have been at home, they are very plain folks, they seemed very glad to see us, and would have us stay to supper, things in the house and around the yard looked much better than when Wickham's lived there, I went down to the spring and over the garden, I think that most of the grape vines are living, the goose berries have grown wonderfully, strawberries did no good; those mountain raspberries are about to take the whole garden, and don't bear worth cultivating. Miles' built quite a convenient milk house, and things look about as well as they did when we lived there. They want the place very badly next year and I guess Austin will rent to them if he cant sell, which I am afraid we can not do, we might possibly get 30 dol, but I think no more, our improvements are not very attractive you know. Austin was up to Des Moines today and has about sold Polly to Cook that used to be out in the mountains, for \$150, and she is well sold at that, he is going up again tomorrow to conclude the bargain. I am going up to covenant meeting, father

is going up to their church meeting; I subscribed \$10.00 for the year to Bro Nash, I don't know whether we ought to give more or not, that don't go very far these times; He bought a small house and lot in the spring and gave \$200 down out of his \$500, and three hun, where every thing to buy, wont make a very good living. Sabbath, Nov 6th, 11 O'clock; This is a calm quiet day, and we are all at home, reading or writing. We had all intended to have gone to Desmoines to meeting today, but it was raining when we got up and looked so unfavorable that we made no preparations to go; but about 9 O'clock it cleared off beautifully, and is quite warm and sunny, so if we had only know it we could have gone as it did not rain - enough to make the roads slippy; I am very sorry indeed, as it was communion day at both churches, and it has been so long since I have been to communion; I was up yesterday to covenant meeting which I enjoyed highly, although there were very few out, which I am sorry to say is too often the case in all the life giving, essential meetings of the church; We have received two new members lately, a Mr & Mrs Davis; I hope from the cheering words they spoke yesterday that they will be a very profitable addition to the life of our church. I met Mrs. Walker for the first time since my return, she came home about three weeks befor I did; every one supposed that she had gone too stay; it is too bad to see a woman of her mind, piety, and cultivation, tied to such a low, groveling specimen of humanity; she looks so subdued and heartbroken; I do pity her; I met her besotted husband on the street yesterday it made me fairly shudder to pass him, but to live with him would be terrible in the extreme. I saw in the "Statesman" that the "Peace men" (?) were to have a "grand rally" yesterday in Des Moines, at the Court House, but rather think it was a "grand

failure", the only demonstration I saw was rather more than an average number of the "free voters" around the saloons, and low doggeries, and an unusual number of urchins, and hoopless "wimmen" around the "copperhead" dry goods stores. It is their last 'great, effort befor expiring. You need not be surprised to hear of trouble at Election time, there has not been very much excitement apparently, this summer, but there is a deep, bitter feeling on the part of the "Peace Snakes" (those two words are evident contradictions) and it is warmly returned by the Union lovers: as we were coming home yesterday evening, (father and I and James Wilcox, of the 23d who rode out with us) we were passed by I. N. Runnion, with a woman who lives with him, and a man that I took to be old Cuninghame that used to live on Billy Hughe's place, they were evidently quite drunk; Old Cuninghame hurrahed twice for Jeff Davis, O dear but it made my blood boil, to hear men who are protected every hour in their rights of property, and the right of franchise cheering for a more than a Benedict Arnold; I asked Wilcox if was'nt pretty hard for a soldier swallow, he said it was. but I suppose it is but to let them alone, for Uncle Sam's Provo's to take care of; the loyal men will effectually quiet them day after tomorrow at the ballot box; As we were driving into town we met Harry Griffiths, who spoke to us, and asked if this was Mrs Lyle Garrett saying that he had a letter from her husband; it was one day later than any news I had from you, and was thankful to hear even one day later. Harry,, will doubtless be elected, if the soldiers vote will do it, there are some Republicans here however that will vote for John, Lynde, who object to Harry on account of his drinking, which is truly lamentable, but he is otherwise fully competent I presume to fill the office, and surely ought to be preferred to a man who will stoop to be run by that notoriously corrupt party.

& They the Copperheads consider it a great catch to have a returned Capt of "untarnished morals" who has been fighting for the "constitution as it is, and Union as it was" on their ticket; Now you will think if you don't say so "that will do for this time my little wife on politics", as you don't like "strong minded" women, I must not go into "the cess pool" too deeply. I intended to have finished this Friday evening, but had been sewing very hard all day for Libbie, and my eyes refused to discern the lines any longer. We are all well, and are finely prepared for winter, which holds off remarkably; the leaves are not near all off the trees yet; this long nice fall weather seems quite a Godsend to many families, where the women and children have to gather in the winter store; everything is very high, pork 8.00 dol gross, Austin refused to take that for

his this week, Mile's hogs brought them over six hundred dollars, men that will work now need not starve; if Wickham had managed properly he might have had hogs enough to have brought double that sum; he is growing poorer every day; Mrs Gentle's husband died a prisoner. Gum McCall got a letter a few days ago from a soldier that was captured with Tom, and had been released, stating that he Tom, died in prison of consumption, Gum takes it very hard. Don't it seem providential that Cy escaped being taken prisoner; and he was always so delicate and Tom so robust and hardy, fell first a victim of disease! We hear nothing from Cy. Margery Price is slowly recovering, but Aunt Sarah is very much afflicted, she has erysipelas in its worst form. They are an afflicted family truly. Austin saw two or three Pikes Peakers yesterday who were out there when you were, but he will likely write you about it. He sold Polly for \$150, and paid it right over to Stuart on Mc note, you owe him yet about 98 or 99 doll intrest, the principal is at last liquidated, dinner is ready, good bye my precious husband. Your Mary

No 49 Cottage Home, Iowa, Thursday Eve, Nov 17th /64 Dearest Husband It is eleven days since I wrote to you, and I must begin with an apology for fear you may think your little wife is neglecting you but no, I know you wont think that, but indeed we have all been so busy here getting Libbie ready to go to Sioux City that there has been no room for anything else; Ellison came down last Saturday night, and couldn't stay longer than Tuesday morning; I fully intended to have written last Sunday but Ellison was here and there was so much talking that I could not well, and after that, all was hurry and bustle till Lib got started, and Emma and I went up with her to Desmoines; Wm Ellison took us all up, and Em and I took dinner with them at the Desmoines House; that consumed one day, and then yesterday Em and I did one of the largest washing we have had for many a day, and when night came as you would naturally suppose I was quite tired; and today I have been up to John Smocks to take that money to Lib Bradley, got home about five O'clock. The roads are very bad snow and slush and ice and mud. I fear that our winter has begun; the night before the Election it rained and sleeted all night, and

I cant send those shirts by Barton if he could take them, as this is Friday and I hear he starts on Monday, if I can get the money and James Wilcox can take them I will send by him; I am writing Friday Morning 5 1/2 O'clock; Yours
M. A. H. G.

Tuesday was a very disagreeable day, raining and icing by spells and that night it began to snow; the snow was by Wednesday Eve, in the woods about nine inches with about an inch under the snow; the last three or four days it has been thawing gradually but there is a great deal of snow on the ground yet, it has not been so very cold since the storm but cloudy all the time for twelve days so that it could not thaw, I don't think we have seen the sun for three hours at a time that length of time; if the snow goes off gradually as it has the appearance of now it will help the wells and watercourses which are needing recruit sadly, both our wells here have been so near dry that we had to carry water from the slough well for cooking. We are all in usual health, myself especially. I grow healthier, fleshier every day; Stuart's have a young daughter; it was born Monday the 7th before the election. Jennie is quite smart, sat up all day today; they both seem quite well pleased with the edition to their family. I am not surprised, are you? Austins folks and Aunt Sarah's are well, Margery is well; Ross and Jennie were here Tuesday night. Well the great day of all days to our government has passed, and victorious beyond all hopes is the result; the people themselves have said this government shall not perish by traitorous hands; and this dicission victory, peace we believe, for to the instigators of this unholy manslaughter there is certainly no hope of success; We expect to hear great

news from Grant and Sherman. Gen Pleasanton has done good service in Mo. in pursuit of Pap Price he has captured Maj. Gen. Marmaduke, and Gen. Cabell four Colonels, nearly one thousand prisoners, including a large number of field officers, several thousand stands of arms, the destruction of a large portion of the enemy's train, and routed the whole army, the last fight they have had that I have noticed was Oct 28th at Newton, Mo. enemys loss 700 ours 120; Price retreating towards Cassville. We have a report that Morganzia Bend is captured by the Rebels with one thousand prisoners; I don't know by whom I have not seen the account of it myself, it may be in this weeks Register, but I have not had time yet to read it, indeed I have read very little newspaper matter since last Spring, I manage to find out when there is any great battles, and that is about all. Yours of the 26th & 27th was received Tuesday, and one to Austin written the 28th & 29th of Oct. Austin has given me the privilege of opening your letters to him, for which I am very much obliged indeed; I was happy to hear of your health being better, but I beg you if your throat troubles you much to try to resign; you are allowed thirty days a year leave of absence without deduction of pay. I would not feel so anxious to have you come home if I were certain you would get home next fall, I would try to wait patiently, and yet I know how badly you want to get out of debt,

and twill take quite a sum to bring you home and back to your regt; so in view of these things I know if I profess to be a sensible woman ought not to insist and I do not, I leave it to your judgment, I wish you were here now for various reasons; I hope that my mentioning this subject so often wont make you dissatisfied or homesick. We were all glad to hear of Cys health and safety again, I think I will write to him again soon. I had a letter from Aunt Melissa this week, she has been very sick again they were going to move to Danville the week of the election; by the way, the election went of quietly enough here, Polk county gave 400 majority on the home vote, Harry Griffiths was elected by about 160 or 165 majority, he was very unpopular, as you see run far behind his ticket, it was unwise in the convention to put up such a man; he is noble souled lion-hearted little man of himself, but that demon alcohol has about ruined him, and he has run through a little fortune of his own, and is considered very reckless in business matters generally therefore I think it was a great error in the party to put up such a man, although I did not want to see his competitor elected. John Jack was elected by 7 majority; his opponent I have heard was a good man, and competent and reliable for the office of "Recorder; its a shame to set up drunkards for office in our party, it will do for Copperheads to take care of them.

Well my dear one I must stop soon, all the rest are in bed, and I am quite tired, having rode Old Fanny ten miles today. I was anxious to finish this tonight to send up by Austin tomorrow who takes his hogs up to the slaughter house, he sold at 8 cts gross, he has the best lot of hogs in the county, I think he said he had 20 that would average 300; everything is up with gold. We have had no offer for our farm yet, I don't know what Austin thinks of your proposal of partnership as I have not seen him since he got your letter; but I will tell

you frankly what I think of it; I don't believe in partnerships of any kind (except as you and I are partners) although your proposals have great advantages in combining your capital but you are both men of your own minds and might not agree in your views of doing business. I should like too to have them live neighbors to us, but this partnership I don't think much of, but of course don't wish to bias your action, only give you my opinion. I like the idea of going into the sheep business. don't you wish you had gone into it about five years ago; Greenback have accumulated fast on their woolly backs for the last three or four years; but I must stop right here, May Our Father keep you in all right paths, and bring you to the loved ones that wait and watch for you is the prayer of your Mary.

No 50 Cottage Home, Iowa Wednesday Eve, Nov 23rd /64 My Dear Husband, Your of Nov 3rd was received this afternoon, and yours to Stuart was also received today which was written five days later; In which gave an account of your move; I am very uneasy about your throat and that cough, I fear your health will be permanently injured if you remain in the service much longer; I do not wish to annoy you by importuning you to resign but I do think if your throat does not get better soon it is your duty to yourself and family to try to come home if you can get out; I was sorry also to hear that you cannot get home on a leave of absence, but you know best about that, and I nothing to but acquiesce. Your letter found us all in usual health, my own health was never better; I think you'd give fifty cts to see how fleshy I am, father I think is growing uneasy as my appetite increases for fear he will not be able to keep me till you come home; I do really feel very thankful that I have such good health, for I have know what the want of it is. Stuart has just been up here with his letter for me to read; we were all much pleased that you got to vote, the vote in your Regt was not a shadow of the great victory we have gained, the

largest majority I suppose any Prest, ever had 500,000, 200 Electoral votes McCellan 21. in reading over the returns from Iowa Regts, hardly any if one gave as large a vote Mc. O! I tell you we all feel happy over the result. The weather still continues cold, yesterday was exceeding so, this morning the wind was from the south and today was quite warm compared with the weather for the last three or four days, thawed a great deal in the sun. It has been quite as cold already if not colder than at any time two years ago this winter. Poor Old Father! it keeps him going from five in the morning till away after dark to get wood and haul corn and feed, his back hurts him so badly tonight that he goes half bent; I think it is time he was selling out and getting into an easier way of living; if he hires a hand all the time which he ought to do it would take off all the profits, so that he could not make a living, and he must otherwise work hard while he stays on a farm; the man that bought Stuarts place was here this evening to try to arrange terms with father, but nothing definite was done; there don't any one seem to take a fancy to our farm, I am sure I wish they would; it would be a capital time now to sell. The (illegible) will bring you between three and four hundred dollars and if it had been farmed rightly would have brought six hundred Austin says. Austin sold corn the other day to the amount of 149 dol, McCalls note is cancelled at last, I calculated the intrest last night and cut your name off the notes. Now your debts are confined

to your brothers and father, and I hope that before this time next year, we can say that we "owe no man". If your life is spared, as you say, ten months will soon slip by; but O! how many lives and hopes may be crushed before that time; I pray that mine may be preserved and realized. I am beginning to count the days now, and many castles I build of happiness a prosperity for the future. O! I do hope you are not now on the field of carnage, as you may be as you were moving; How uncertain is a life in camp, you know not when you start where you will pitch your tents but all this privation is for a noble cause, one of best that ever enlisted human sympathy; Emma has gone with "Dic" Ross down to Aunt Sarahs to a party tonight the children May and Ida are in bed, father lies streched out on chairs with

his feet to the fire, and Mother sits by the fire with her knitting, and just now said, "Poor Lyle! give him my love." She thinks if your throat dont get better you ought to try to resign. Tomorrow is National Thanksgiving, we all expect to go to Desmoines. We truly have great cause for thanks at this time. We have 6 - 7 live Rebels in our jail in Des Moines, Guerrillas they were captured in Decature Co this State, and from a Mo. Rebel Regt. It is hoped the will be treated in a "hostile manner". Well my dear it is growing late, and I have been sewing all day and my eyes feel badly, so I must close, although I feel that I have said but little. I will send those shirts either by Barton who has not gone yet or by Wilcox. May The Merciful Father keep you in health, and all truth is the prayer of your Mary.

No 4 Cottage Home, Iowa Sabbath Morning Dec 18th /64 My Dear Husband, Since writing you a week ago I have received two letters from you, 25th and 29th of Nov. In the first you wrote of being sick, and I fear you did not tell me the worst, O! how much I should like to be hear you to nurse you, and read to you when lonely in your tent, but that privilege is denied me, and I can not hear from you for three weeks after your letters are written; but I don't feel as uneasy as I should have done had I got but one letter this or last week, in yours of the 29th you say you are much better, and your throat freer from soreness than it has been for 3 or 4 months, which news is very cheering, but I think it imprudent in you to go on duty so soon after being sick when doubtless there are other men not half as ill are excused and you have always been at your post, so that your superior (?) officers will not censure you for taking care of your health when 'tis necessary. And if your throat does not get better I would try to get a resignation through by Spring, for I fear such a protracted soreness in your throat, will cause a disease of the Trachea and finally your lungs; and much as I love my Country I cant reconcile myself to the thought that my husband life and health are to be sacrificed; and if by resigning you can save your health, there are others that can fill your

place, perhaps without endangering their health. This may look like a selfish view of the matter to you; well I will confess to share with others in that weakness of humanity.

And now I have a new cause for anxiety, you are ordered to Memphis and I know not what bloody scenes you may have been engaged in before this time; but all this uncertainty and anxiety is the natural result of the great civil war now upon us and must be borne with all the fortitude becoming patriots, who have intrests at stake dearer than life itself, and now that we have put our hand to the plough must not look back. I do think the Rebellion is kept up now by its last resources, and cannot last much longer; not that the leaders are a whit less hostile to their rightful government, but their finances as acknowledged by "Jeff" himself are in a deplorable condition, their armies depleted, with no material to replenish them, except the blacks; whom they dare not arm, for the most ignorant slave in the South knows the issues of this war, as well or better than "Jeff" Davis; and they arm the blacks at their own peril. So it looks to me that they will have give up for want of means and material to carry on the war, and not because the regret it, for I believe that the leaders and property holders generally in in the South, hate the principals of our Democratic form of government as thoroughly as ever. The emisaries of Jeff Davis are all over the North, in all our principal cities plotting their destruction, and but for a providential neglect on their part, New York City would now be a pile of smoldering ruins, I will send you a paper with

full account of the plot, and also one with a letter from Vice President (?) A. H. Stevens wherein he denies a desire to give up the rebellion and sue for peace. He says "from the first I understood the issue of this war to be Subjugation or Independence" but he forgets the speech he made about the time Georgia seceded, that human slavery was their aim and That, they made their corner stone. He has always been as we thought one of the mildest of the prominent secessionists; so that we must accept their issue as given by Stephens, subjugate, or acknowledge their independence. As they have repeatedly said in official papers by Mr. Davis that they would accept peace on no other terms than recognition, and President Lincoln in his message says the war will not cease on our part, till the party that began ceases hostilities, we know in one sense what is in the future, as the policy of the Administration is clearly defined; The annual message is plain, brief and comprehensive; you will like it. Afternoon. This is a warm day for December and father and I thought of going to church this morning but twas cloudy and the air felt heavy and damp portentous of storm, and we concluded it was best to remain at home and read than to expose our health, and I was not feeling very well today. About noon it began to mist, and now 4 O'cl P.M. it is snowing very fast, almost straight down, a little from the West. Mother has recovered her usual health, and just now said "send my love and your fathers to Lyle, if you think worth while to write it."

My general health is very good as you will think when I tell you what I weighed the other day, I took off my furs and cap, and then drew 141. more than I've ever weighed in Iowa; O: wouldn't you like to see me now. My cheeks are rosy, and I feel so well. We live on such healthy food here that any one would thrive on it. Tuesday Afternoon, 20th. I have been very busy since I began this and have had no chance of sending it to the office. We are all well as usuall, and nothing of importance has occurred since my last writing; the weather is quite warm for Dec, snow only fell about 1 1/2 to 2 inches deep. Now for our own business affairs. There was a man here yesterday evening wishing to buy your land on Agency, and Marions timber, father couldn't tell him how much we would take for it; he wished father to find out immediately and drop a line in the post-office, I have written a note to him today, saying you would take 20 dol, per acre; how will that do? Marions timber will bring 40 dol, that was a bad bargain wasn't it, but timber was not so valuable then. I do hope that man will take that piece of prairie, that, 680 dol will nearly cancel our debts; I am going to write an advertisement for the rest of the farm and the town lot. I believe I did not tell you that I was to Desmoines last week. Friday. I visited Mrs. Reichenenk, and had a very pleasant time. Mr. Coplan is at home now, mustered out of the service, having served three years. Mrs. Roach is Mrs R nearest neighbor; I called on her, and heard her read two letters from Capt Roach, you know he is our State San agent at Nashville, his business I suppose is to see that Iowa Regiments get the sanitary goods intended for them, his wife gets a letter every day from him; he writes splendid letters, most as good as my husbands; The 8th Cav is at N, and I have written to Capt Roach to get acquainted with Cy; I also read a letter from one of the men of Co G, 23d, a young Deweese; it was a very good letter well written, beautiful handwriting, and he a good union man as mother says, which is better than all the rest. Well my dear I must close. O hope to hear from you soon, May our Father Keep thee. Ever your loving wife. Mary

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No 6 Cottage Home, Iowa Friday afternoon, Dec 30th /64 Dear Husband Yours of Dec 14th was received last Tuesday evening; I was glad to hear of your health being better; but I had begun to lay plans of what I was going to do in Spring when we would go to house-keeping, now that happy time is deferred, and if you could regain permanent health I would be willing for you to stay till the 23d's time was out, but I fear your health will be, if it is not already permanently injured; and now that we are all broken up here I feel more anxious than ever for your return, as I don't care about teaching very much, although I expect I will if you don't come home, for I don't want to go to Austins to live, although he very kindly and cordially invited me to come up there and make it my home as soon as he heard we had sold out; but here I am committing the double sin of encouraging desertion and discouraging a soldier, by giving him the double care of home life, and field cares and duties, too much for even your broad manly shoulders to bear, by way of apology, you always say "write freely on all subjects", you'll think I do that without much urging; you know I can't keep my thought entirely to myself.

We are feeling very hopeful for our cause since the great victory of Sherman at Savannah; he sent a telegram to the President that he would present him Savannah with 150 guns, 800 prisoners, 25000 bales of cotton, ammunition and small arms, as a Christmas present. He is very liberal in making his friends presents, isn't he? The Rebels themselves are becoming discouraged, Foote, one of the great men in this rebellion has left Congress in disgust; We are looking for something important from Richmond soon, Sherman can take every point of importance in the south while Grant holds Lee's army at or in their own Capital. We have other good news, which will be cheering to you as it was to all of us; Emma got a letter from Cyrus yesterday, he was well, at Nashville, the letter was written the 14th of Dec, the same day that the last one I received from you was written. He wrote a very good long letter, he mentioned having one from you; but that hard battle at Nashville since he wrote, and we can't hear whether the 8th was engaged or not; Cy thought he would come home this winter, you would be happy to meet him here wouldn't you, if you can't resign couldn't you get a leave of absence? Cy never mentions getting my letters, although he must get them if he does anybody's, and never has written me a word, so I don't think he wishes to hear from me; It rather hurts my feelings that I am so little esteemed but I'll bear it in silence as much as possible.

We are all in usual health, except Jennie, her neck is very much swollen, she is blistering it, and it is growing worse the more she doctors it; I don't believe in that way of making sick to make well, but as you are a heretic on the "little pill" subject so my opinion may as well be kept to myself. One of Jennie's friends Mrs. Kellogg is down spending the winter, she is a case, you can not probably understand what I mean by that, well she don't care what she says to any body, just as she thinks she speaks; I like plain folks; but she more than pleases me. Yesterday we had a great visit, or a great many to visit us; there were fifteen in all. Mrs. Reicheneker and three children, Mrs Roach and two children Mrs Coplan & three children, Mr & Mrs Bansman & two children, we did have a jolly time you may imagine, we gave the little girls the sitting room to enjoy themselves in with their dolls; the boys five of them took the barn and premises generally. I enjoyed their visit very much indeed and so did all the rest of our folks. Mother liked Mrs Roach so much. There is to be a Soldiers dinner in Des Moines tomorrow; together with a donation of everything that their families can consume, indeed the day, the last in the year, is set apart by the Gov. as a day for contributing to the comfort of our brave men's families all over the State, tomorrow is also the day of our monthly meeting,. I think

I will go up and stay over Sunday. Our Ranch is not sold yet, Austin is holding off renting as long as possible, I sent up the advertisement last Tuesday, to be advertised two months in the Weekly Register. It cost seven dollars. I put in the Agency piece and the lot in town. Well it is getting late and I wrote so lately that I will close for the present perhaps I will have time to add more before I send it out. May Our Father keep you is my constant prayer. Ever your affectionate wife Mary.

No 7 Cottage Home, Iowa Friday Afternoon Jan 6th 1865 My Own Dear Husband, As this is the first time I have written to you in this year, allow me to wish you "a happy new year"; and may we all see the close of this cruel war in the year of '65; and many homes made happy by the return of the brave fathers, and husbands, and sons, now battling for this country's honor and perpetuity. Father received a letter from Marion, and Stuart and Austin one from you today; of the 26th Dec. twelve days later than the last I have from you, there are doubtless some on the way for me; Austin has given me the privilege of reading your letters, before he gets them. You say your health is better, I long to hear from you, to know all the particulars; O! I am so anxious for you to come home in the Spring, if at all consistent in you to resign; Father & Stuart & Austin, and indeed every one who speaks about the matter thinks you ought to come home before your health is entirely gone. Lieut. Coplan told me last week that ill health was about the only thing an officer could offer, or have accepted now, every body that knows you inquires of me how you are and when I tell them your health is poor, they say he ought to resign. It won't be long I know till the regiment's time is out; but your health or life may be gone, by that time; but use discretion and act on your own good judgment, and I'll abide by the decision.

We are all in usual health, myself in particular we are all making calculations to leave the first of March except fathers, Mary Jane will go to Billy Prices; she and Albert came home last Wednesday morning, so our family is increased to eight; last Tuesday we killed one hogs and have got through with our dirty work, rendering lard &c; and we are not sorry I can tell you; I can stand hard work pretty well; as you will think by my weight you will excuse me for saying that I believe more firmly than ever that it was not hard work alone that made my health so poor two or three years ago. You did not say in your letter to Stuart whether you got your shirts or not, it was unfortunate that I did not leave them with Barton, but I hope you may get them soon; for I expect you need them; it is too bad you don't get paid, I fear some of them need it sadly. I went to the Soldiers dinner last Saturday. There was a lottery connected with the donation; there was a nice buggy worth 250 dol and a set of silver, a Wheeler and Wilsons sewing machine, a Bible worth 30 dol; were the prizes; chances in the buggy sold for 2.50, silver 1.00 sewing machine 1.00, Bible .50. Peter Meyers drew the buggy, and a silver cake basket, lucky man Peter was. The dinner was splendid, everything that palate could desire, coffee, oysters peaches and cream. I took dinner and bought a few candies for the children; the dinner was .50 cts. 25 cts admittance to the hall; Shermans hall was the scene of festivities. Merchants and every body gave liberally it is supposed they realized 1,600 dol.

The money is to be distributed to needy soldiers families. The great trouble is to discriminate between the deserving families, those generally who need most are too modest to ask; and those who are able to do without aid, are bold to ask it, so it is a delicate matter to refuse one and give to another. You know George Robinson is one of the Township Trustees. Guss has been at home since in August, and as Orderly Sgt, draws about 26 dol; it is the province of the trustees to give orders on the treasury to soldiers families. Well old George used this privelege by giving his son 'Guss, an order of 50.00, saying that he was not able to board him, and 'Guss, was disabled and not able to support himself. About that time George would not give an order of more than five dol. to a needy family in his township. Soon after 'Guss.

drew that money, Robinsons made a grand party bought canned fruits, and cakes and confectionaries in abundance, they invited everybody in the country, but the family had run themselves out so with everybody, that few attended but copperheads. The whole family is gone to Polk City to live and nobody's sorry, they have few friends in Four-mile.

There are so many new families moving in Rising Sun is almost entirely new, as to population I notice my advertisement of our farm in this weeks paper, just word for word as I wrote it. Stuart gets the first payment on his farm tomorrow, 1,000 dol. Mother says to tell you she is 64 today, and hopes you be at home before she sees another birth day, and also sends her love; My heart as you know is the same unchangable devotion to you. Good bye. Mary.

Saturday Morn, 7th. All well, Stuart is going to Desmoines this morning to receive his first payment on his farm. In one of your letters you spoke of Col. Black, of the 37th Ill. Vet, If his name is Charley Black, he used to be an old schoolmate of mine in Danville Ill; he is Col of one of the Ill regts, and I think probably its the same one I used to like Charley first rate he was a very

bright boy in school. Is young English in the Regt (37th Ill) yet? Emma and I were up to a meeting of the Orphans Home Society last night, I saw Mrs Barton she had just received a letter from her husband of the 24th Dec. Well good bye dearest. Mary

No 10 Des Moines, Iowa Sabbath afternoon, Jan 28th /65 My Dear Husband, After two weeks waiting and watching, yours of Jan. 11th was received yesterday afternoon; So you are again going "away" from your "loved ones" instead "towards" them; I had heard previous to getting your letter by one from Capt Jennings that he was in New Orleans, and that the regt was about sixteen miles above that place. Your probable future destination you did not mention, and I cannot guess, doubtless more active scenes; the last part of your turn may be more arduous and prove flat to many fond hopes, upon whose "air castles" we are about to inscribe "reality".

Mrs "Harry" Griffiths said in a conversation I had with her this morning after church, in reference to the the expiration of your time, that "the last months and weeks were the longest" to her; But Hope with her bright wings is my guardian angel; the time flies swiftly by, in anticipation of the bright future she presents; I am very thankful that your health is so good, and if it continues so, will feel quite resigned to my lot of loneliness till next Sept.; It is only about four weeks now till we will have to leave Fathers. I suppose I ought not to feel so, but I don't want to go to Austin's to live; they have a small house and really have not room for all my things; they are very kind indeed to urge me to come, and I am afraid they will feel offended if don't go, but if I can get a room

of Ann Dean I will live there, I can live much easier, and have more time read, which I can find no time for where I am. It will cost me more than it would do at Austins, not much however, I can keep my cow, and horse if I want to, but I think Austin will want "Kit" to work on the farm; are you in favor of this plan? I came up with Austin Saturday in the buggy, and expect to stay a week or more, I have my head qr at Reichenkers; I have not visited any up here since I came home; I intend to go out to Jerry Tiffins in the 'round. I paid our taxes Saturday on all our property except our lot in town; 24.13 was the amount I paid. I don't think that lot will bring more than 700 dol; Austin went to see Mr. Dennis, the gentleman

who wanted to buy it, he said he would look at the lot, and think on the price \$1000. We owe about 650 dol. if the lot will clear us we will feel pretty independent with that we have left. There has been a great deal of excitement about peace, and things do look a little favorable; another Ft Fisher or two taken by us will make the Rebels more anxious, I think. I received a letter from Capt Roach a day or two ago, in answer to the one I wrote him in reference to Cyrus, he could not hear of or his regiment after the Battle at Nashville, and supposed they were out on the Ten. river. We are in suspense as to his fate; I am surprised he don't write to you. he wrote Emma a very good letter indeed. Father got a very good long letter from Johnny McCall last week, he is with father at New Madrid; he is issuing clerk for his father, and gets 45 dol per month he writes a beautiful round hand and he composes like a little man which he is. I wrote to Jackson about Ida but have received no answer yet if he wont let me have her to keep I would rather not take her at all. She is a dear child, and I love her more than any other in the world, she is just like her mother. May is more like Jackson. Your wife in love, Mary.

No 13 Cottage Home, Iowa Sabbath Feb. 19th, 1865 Dear Husband We have spent this day quietly at home, it has been quite warm, melting the snow, which fell last Tuesday night, considerably: A few more days like this will take it all off. Yesterday evening when -- Stuart came home and said no letter, I felt sadly disappointed as I had thought and said as I often do, that I knew I should get one. But hope never dims, and I think I'll get one next time. If you were to step in today you would hardly know the place we have moved into the two front rooms; Mary Jane moved her things down to Aunt -- Sarahs yesterday, and I took mine to Ann Deans; and we sent

Libbie's things to Wm Ellisons. We begin to realize that the old home is no more ours. I expect to stay here till they move to Nevada, and then I think of going to Des Moines, to teach a select school, and board at Mrs Roaches, I may be disappointed in this, but this is my intention now. Capt Roach and family stopped here to dinner last Friday, as they were going down to Mr. Prunty's. He is certainly a devoted man to his country; He entertained us an hour or two with, interesting and affecting scenes, of which he was an eye witness; which were enough to touch the heart, of the most hardened. The history of the suffering in this terrible war, is being written in indelible characters on the hearts of its victims. I could listen to him a whole day without tiring, relate incidents of "the war" in Tenn; They design sending their boys to the country, to work on a farm this summer, and Mr R first proposed to me to come and live with "Jane" (his wife), don't you

think 'twould be a capital idea? I would pay my board, which would not be as much as at a starangers, and if I could not entirely clothe myself, it would help a little. I would at least pay my board and I would be near church and Sabbath school; you know it would be very lonely for me at Austins. I am sorry that you are so far away that I can't consult your wishes in reference to all matters before acting, but as it is I cannot. Thursday Morning Feb 23, My dear husband. I am very sorry that I could not have finished this sooner, but we have been so very busy moving that I could not find time, I know you will think it a long time between letters as I do if mine are delayed a day or two too long on the way. Yesterday evening I received No 63, finished the 13th of this month, it was only nine days reaching me, came sooner, or in a shorter time than any I have ever received from that distance; I am so happy to hear that your health is so much better. I hope with care you may get through the sickly season, and 'tis not quite seven months now I count the days as they pass, and I think somebody else does too; I have understood that there has a law passed to muster out all officers with the men regardless of the time of their promotion, so you will have no trouble about getting out in Sept; It does seem too bad that you don't get any pay, some of the men and their families must be needing it badly. I do want to see New Orleans so bad, I do wish you could be stationed there and I could go down, for I never expect to see it after the war is over and we get settled. But maybe this will vex you for me to be wishing to go south don't think of it a moment for I suppose it is impossible. Mc is stationed at New Madrid and Mary has gone down; the war is not very hard on them. But the time will soon roll round if your life is only spared, but many dangers must be met, and every day you are liable to lose your life, but I will hope as I ever have that your life will be spared to me and your friends. Do you go to New Orleans often or have you to stay with the Co. all the time, I suppose you will stop there on your way to Mobile, I think it strange that you are ordered there, we have heard

long ago that it was evacuated. We heard the glorious news last night that Sherman had taken Charleston and Ft Sumpter; we heard the canon booming last evening, and went to the door to hear it more distinctly, when Dr. Ward came from Des Moines, and told us the news which he said was official, stronghold after stronghold is falling; surely this fabric of delusion cannot stand much longer. Grant is holding Lee at Richmond, while Sherman is gradually coming up in his rear. We look soon to hear of fall of the Rebel Capital itself. We hear that the draft is postponed till the last of this month as volunteers are rushing to the rescue. O there is great excitement here about the discovery of Petroleum; companies are coming from the East to go to work developing the riches of Iowa. There has oil been discovered in Bill Depew's well; everybody nearly 'round here is leasing land to the companies; to get the fifteenth barrel; Mr Winterroads has leased 900 acres buggy after buggy loads of men from Des Moines pass here going out to see the "oil" wells (?) I certainly think there is Petroleum on our farm if any where and I don't like to sell at 40. dol, if there is any likely hood of there being such deposits on it. John Jack, Co Recorder, wrote to Austin last Saturday asking him to call, as his father wants to buy a farm, Austin is going to send him word today, to come out to see him tomorrow, as he intends to rent it tomorrow or the next day. I do wish you were here now. I don't like the idea of selling just now; for if there is Petroleum in any quantity, it is a fortune; We rather think Mr Prentiss will take the 40 south of Runyon at 40 doll; Well my paper is almost full; We have not heard from Cy yet, Capt Roach promised to write to his Co. Commander for us. I will write again in a few days. Ever I your own little wife; keep up your spirits bravely, many warm hearts wait to welcome you home. Mary.

No 14 Cottage Home, Iowa Friday March 3d /65 Dear Husband Yours of Jan 30th was received on Monday, I had got one later than that a week before this one had been taken out, and by the looks of it had been read pretty often, at least it was badly soiled; there was no apology on the back of it, If I had got it myself I should have mentioned it, I would a little rather read my letters first. We were all very glad to hear of Cyrus in that letter; if he would only write to you I would be so glad; but still he wanted you to write more frequently. I presume he likes to hear from you and home if he don't answer. I also received a record of your Co last week.

It is very neatly gotten up, I am very much obliged for it; I will get it framed the first day I go to town. Fathers sale went off a week ago today, thing generally went low. Stuart couldn't get a bid on his mules; he has since been offered 400 dol for them, and 175 for "Beck" his mare. He sold Kits colt for 36 dol, the pony would not sell for more than 25. or 30 and Austin bid it in. Stuart started to Nevada yesterday with the first load of goods, they may all move soon. Stuart is obliged to be there by the 15th of this month, to begin with Sinclair. It looks like reality now, that the old home is being deserted by its loved occupants; Mother is constantly regretting that you did not get the place; I have an idea that she and father would have been pleased with the arrangement that you proposed to me last summer; I never said anything to her about your proposition to me. For some

reasons I should like it; and for some others, I would rather have another one. I feel like I would be willing and would indeed love to go away off to a distant county and begin anew, and grow up with the country; if you were ten years younger, but with what you have undergone in the army, I can't expect you to come home at 42 with the strength of 30 years: it would in my opinion be best for us to sell here, at as high figures as the Petroleum excitement can raise it, and buy a farm under cultivation with good improvements; and although it would be pleasant to live near the Capital, it will always cost us more to live, and our taxes will always be much higher than in adjoining Co's. You spoke of thinking of Story Co as a future home; I never thought I would like there, but I think I would like any section of the country now, to get settled in my own home again

Mother was much pleased that you expressed a wish to be near them. It will be such a short time now till you come home that I don't think Austin will try very hard to sell; he don't feel like taking the responsibility of buying for you. Old Andy Strain sold his farm of fifty acres, last week to Mr. Persons for 100 dol, on the strength of Petroleum, there is a spring on the place in which the crude oil has been found. A great many make light of the existence of Coal Oil in the State but I have faith in it. Time will develope that as well as otheres recouses of wealth. As for my whereabouts from this time till you come home, I can't say, I feel very undesided what to do, fathers folks never asked me to go till I mentioned the subject and told them what you said about it and now they don't insist on it very hard but I don't blame them for it, - they have had a large family so long, that they doubtless feel like being alone. I don't want to teach and I don't want to go to Austins. So its hard to tell what I will do. Its a bad state of affairs isn't it; but don't let it trouble you for a moment, I'll have some place to stop till you come home without doubt. I am going up to Desmoines tomorrow it is the 4th of March the day of our Presidential inauguration; there is to be a great jubilee all over the North. It is also the day of our covenant meeting. I am going to pay Bro Nash ten dollars too, I have not given him anything for more than a year, it's too bad, these hard time, hard times for those who buy everything. Emma is down to Aunt Sarahs. they are all well both here and down there. My health as good as ever, every one is remarking how well I look. I do wish you would go down to New Orleans and get some good photographs, but I forgot you were ordered away; I am so sorry you did not get your shirts, I sent them though the R. Sun P. O, or meant to have them go through my paper is full, so good bye dearest. Mary.

No 15 Cottage Home, Iowa Sabbath afternoon, March 5th /65 My Dear Husband, Yours of Feb 16th was received yesterday, I was highly pleased with the length as well as the cheerfulness it exhibited, and as I followed you in imagination in your trip to the Great Southern Metropolis, and over the shell road to Lake Ponchartrain, O how I longed to be with you, to enjoy the beauty of the City and its surrounding with you by my side, to enhance the pleasure. But I can only witness it by the eye of my imagination, for I never expect see any more of the "Sunny South" than my imagination and your pen can give me. Give me a home in the free enlightened, but frigid North, with those I love and I am content. You speak of stopping with Hedges family, I suppose they must be keeping house from what you said of stoping with them; I hope if you pass through New Orleans while they are there that you will make Mrs Hedge a present worth enough to pay your lodgings at a hotel; I am too proud to al-

low myself to feel under any obligations whatever to them. I heard enough last summer of how Mrs Hedge told her mother, that she had done so much for me after I had come out here, and that after I was married, we used to come right there when we come to town, to eat, and then when I brought butter to sell, I must have the highest market price of her. Its all a falsehood from beginning to end! If they consider they did a great deal for me, they must have very small souls, is all I have to say; and if I don't forget, I never sold her butter, but I remember of giving her some chickens. So that I don't want to feel under any obligations to them; we can meet them on friendly terms. I did not form a very favorable of Charley Dewey, although he complimented me so highly; I think he lacks something of being a gentleman; I was introduced to him, and was talking to him busily about the 23d, when Louisa Bird introduced him to Miss Holland, (Major Houston sister-in-law), I had just asked him a question, which he never stopped to answer which I should not have noticed if he had asked me to excuse him; I just left him in disgust. So I don't fancy he was facinated with my appearance.

And your going to dress up, that's all right, I can afford it, but I think its too bad that I can't get to see in your blue, for when your out of the service I don't want you to wear army clothes, if you could have managed to have worn out all your clothes befor you come home, and then get a nice suit, I want you to dress better when you come home, than you used to. But we can arrange that when you come home. Thursday afternoon 9th. This is a day that rivals midwinter for severe cold; it was 16 deg. below zero this morning, and a sharp wind from the west. Stuart moved up to Nevada Monday, Austin went with him, to take one load, it got so warm Sunday that Stuart got frightened for fear Skunk would get up, and hinder him from going soon, so they bundled up Monday and started about two o'clock; I never saw it thaw faster than it did that day. Austins branch was runing over the bridge shoe mouth deep by evening. That night it froze, and was cold, wind from the North, and yesterday, it snowed with a driving wind from the northeast, very disagreeable. The boys came to Brazeltons and staid all night. I though while I was milking this morning it was about as cold as we had had, but the wind is working 'round to the south, it will be

warmer tomorrow. If it had not frozen up when it did it would have raised the waters very high, they look for Court Avenue bridge to go off when it thaws out in Spring, it leans very badly now, I feel afraid to cross it now. [Illegible] bridge went some time ago. Stuart sold his mules to Ross for 350 dol, and Ross sold a young sorrel mare of his for 200 dol. I feel pretty well settled for this summer, I met Capt Roach on the street last Saturday he intended to start for New York, Monday he said they were expecting one to go there this summer, that he thought I could get a room in the public school house. I have not seen Mrs. Roach yet as to terms, but the Capt seemed very anxious that I should come, he said that Jane would be terribly disappointed if I did not come. Father seems to think he will stay here now, till it gets warm weather. It will cost them less to live here, as they would have wood to buy. Stuart and father are speculating in town property. father and Stuart first bought a block ten lots then father bought the Bilsland property, Stuart bought a house and lot, and yesterday he bought four lots, with a log house and a little barn on it for 575 dol. Austin was offered 125 dol for his button poney; and refused it. he took him and a great big horse nearly as big as old Charley to Nevada. If that poney of mine was well broke he would sell as well as that. There is still some excitement about Petroleum. I think Prentiss believes he will find it here sometime. I wrote to Cy last Sunday I don't hope to hear from him, but thought I would write and let him know how we all were. I got that record framed Saturday, for two dollars it hangs in the parlor and looks beautiful. I prize it highly; it is amost dark, and I must go to milk so my dear husband good bye; Ever your loving wife Mary.

No 18 Cottage Home, Iowa Monday afternoon March 27th /65 My Dear Husband; This day as all other Monday's has brought its work, washing is done, and I improve the few minutes I have to spare in talking to you, which is my highest pleasure, now that you are away. In a few minutes, when father gets the horse ("Kit") ready I I am going over to Mr. Fredrigel's the school director of the Barlow district, he lives on this side the creek. I failed to get the school in Des Moines. The Barlow district is so large that they talk of having two schools. I applied for the Barlow school if it is divided, and if it is not, I will take it, if they will let me have it, at twenty five dollars per month. Wednesday Morning 29th 7 O'clock. Yesterday evening I received a rich treat in the form of two letters, "from husband" and one from Sister Libbie. I was very much rejoiced to hear of your welfare again, as it had been two weeks since I had a letter from you, and we are hearing rumors that they have had a fight down to Mobile; which of course causes me

considerable anxiety; and these letters, although very welcome, do not relieve it; for in yours of the 9th you had started out on a march for the doomed city, and 'tis now nearly three weeks since it was written, and O! what sad havoc death may have made of my hopes ere this time, the All-seeing eye only knows, I never have felt so on hearing of you starting on an expedition as I did last night; I could hardly keep the tears back) till I went to bed, Mother asked me twice if there was any bad news in your letters; but as you know, I am ever hopeful, and this morning I feel more like trusting to the guidance, of the All-wise, who has ever been merciful to us, in all his dealing's. Father, Austin and Emma and Harriet were up to DesMoines yesterday, and we got letters from both Stuart and Libbie; Stuarts are settled again, and in their own house. Libbie writes me that Ellison has been promoted to a Captaincy in Co "F", 3rd U.S. Vol., and has gone to Leavenworth, Kansas, where his regiment is stationed; He is a man of integrity and capability, and will be appreciated, by high officials who chance to possess the former quality, which by the way, I notice is at a great discount in this government at present. Libbie also wrote me that Ellison designed going down

to Kansas City, Mo. if he could get a leave of absence for a few days; to look for a location; Libbie thinks from what she has heard of that part of the state, that it would suit you, it is a good stock country, and fruit growing, climate, it is said that that hard class for which the State is so notorious is leaving and going farther South. I should dearly love to live neighbor to Ellison's. If there is good accommodations for his family at Leavenworth, Ellison will have Libbie come down there, if not she will come to Wm Ellisons for the summer Davids time will be out in December, the regiment with which he is connected was enlisted for one year, and have already served three months. I think it very strange that your part of the army is not paid, how do you get along without money? I feel real proud of your business capacities, which if you will excuse me for saying, I did not think you possessed in a very great degree. I always thought you had judgment and, and mind enough, but you are not generally prompt you know in keeping a strict account of all the details. May be you won't feel your self very much complimented after all. But I am sure I meant to praise you, if I did do it awkwardly. I am pleased that The Orphans Home, is looked on

so favorably, with the 23d; as it is generally received in the army. We organized a society in Four-Mile of which your humble servant was Vice Prest, but it is impossible to keep up an intest here, and there has been no meeting for a long time. Now for our business affairs. I believe I never wrote you that there had been another, and a permanent survey of the Keokuk and Desmoines Valley railroad, and it runs diagonally across our eighty, and cuts about ten acres off of the forty south of Runyon, so if we don't "strike Ile' its a bad bargain, but I have great hopes that if there is Petroleum in this part of the country, it can be found there, and the coal of itself which doubtless lies in those hills will be a fortune to us some time. If Austin had had a good offer for the whole or part of the farm at 40 dol, he would have taken it, there have several talked of taking it, but at last gave it up. Austin told me a day or two ago that he would try to set out a lot of grape vines for you this spring; but thought he would not go into it extensively as you desired him to do. He has rented out nearly all his ground for this year; but has given up building a barn. Father will move next week or the week after as the folk in the house seem quite anxious to have us away. I will not know definitely about my school for a week or two yet. We have heard nothing from Cyrus lately, I saw in the Register lately that the 8th was in Ala; I will write to Stuart to forward that box to me, at Desmoines. Bro Nash is about resigning, to undertake the financial work of our coledge at the Capital, don't know who we will have as pastor. Well my dear I must close for the present, father and Austin are going to town again today. May your head be covered in the day of battle, and you heart and life be kept pure is the prayere of your wife Mary.

No 19th Cottage Home, Iowa Sabbath Morning, April 9th /65 Dear Husband, Yours of the 24th written in field was received last evening, and it was one of your best, and was appreciated more on account of your being in immediate danger; two weeks since it was written too, what may have transpired in that time, how many have gone out of this life, hurried into eternity without a moments warning, leaving a void in the hearts of those who called them husband, father or brother, that can not be filled; O, the thought is terrible! You speak of writing to me on the 12th. I have not received that yet, but presume I shall, as I believe I have got all the letters you have written me. You evidently thought that fathers would be gone when I got this letter, but they are here yet, I presume this will be the last letter I will ever write you from "Cottage Home" it makes my heart ache to write it. I can't fully realize that it is so, but time is drawing near now; father was up to Desmoines yesterday, and hired teams to take him next Tuesday; he is anxious to get away before his time is quite out, for if any thing should happen

so that I may make your home happy and attractive; Let us both begin life as anew and may we never, if permitted to meet, let one discordant word mar our lives.

that they could not go it would be very unpleasant for them here, more so for father than the rest of us, it seems that the men try make it as inconvenient as possible for him throw down his feed troughs, and build fences so as to cause him to go a great deal farther to do his feeding, when it would be no inconvenience to them to have it otherwise; the old adage is a good one that, one house can not be made large enough for two families. Father did not get home till about dark, when we saw him coming, Emma ran to to light the lamp for I knew I should get a letter; as soon as I had read it myself, of course the rest wanted to hear it; Aunt Sarah is here visiting, she got close to me so as to hear every word; I wish you could see with what anxiety they all gather 'round to hear your letters, you could realize how much they love you, and their anxiety for you. O, how earnestly we all hope and pray that you may be kept from danger the few months that you have to serve. Long before this reaches you, you will have heard of the glorious victory, the surrender of Richmond. Some are so sanguine as to think that the war will end in two months at the farthest. It surrendered on Monday morning at 8:15 and they got the news at Des Moines at 10 1/2. We, father, Emma, Ross and

I, went up that day, we overtook Bro Nash on this side of the river, and he got into our wagon and rode over with us, and told us the news. Every one we met (with a few dishonorable exceptions) wore a broad grin, I never saw people so excited in my life, the greater part of the population of the town, was on the streets, all the public schools were dismissed, a procession of men women and children was formed and marched 'round the principal streets, the church bells were all rung, and bells in hardware stores were put onto wagons, and hauled through the streets, ringing, I think it would almost equal the noisy capacities of your army of 40, or 50,000. 1.75 guns were fired down at the mouth of Kuhn river, Emma and I were just nearly wild with excitement, you know I am not proof against that. We had news yesterday that Sherman had or was likely to capture the whole of Lee's army he having left Richmond with the major part of his army before its surrender. Sherman is undoubtly a great Gen, newspaper harpies never know any thing about what he is doing as where he is going, till it is done, and he has gone. I feel in hopes that this news may reach Mobile before there is a general engagement, it will surely discourage him greatly. But I am

not building up on the hope of seeing you before your time much as I would desire it; in ten days you will have but five months to serve, that don't seem very long, if your life is only spared, what a happy meeting it will be. If I don't get that school in Ann Deans district I will go to Austins. I question if it would not be better for me to go there any way, as I have a great deal to do to get ready for house keeping. I have a rag carpet to get ready for the weaver. They have given up building up their barn, so that there will be so much hard labor to perform, and they are so anxious for me to come. You will I fear think me very fickle, but they have made very different arrangements about their work, which has caused me to change my mind, as I wrote you before, I want to take care of my health, and save my strength, to expend it in my own service. Father got the letter you sent to Nevada, they were very much pleased to get it, and will answer it after they move. Emma was up to town yesterday, and went to Mr Birds to dinner. Empson told her that Capt Hoxie had got home lately and that he had seen Cyrus very lately. He told Em that he was disabled, that he could not ride, and seemed delicate about telling her about it, but said he was not dangerous. I will go up the first day I can get a chance and see the Capt myself. I hope it is nothing serious. A week ago yesterday drove Kit up to Desmoines, and she got so stiff that she could hardly get home, and the next morning could hardly get up. she has been better and worcs since at times, father thinks if she can get along till she has her colt, she may get over it. Bert they say is a very fine, showy horse, but small, this winter David never drove him from hom but he was asked if he was for sale. My poney is a very spirited little thing, is larger than the other ponies, but is as wild as a deer. I have not heard anything from Stuart in reference to that box. Austin was down this morning and said he would write to you today. Emma says you must not complain of your friends not writing to you when you don't answer their letters. I tell them all that I know you are very busy. I hope you will be paid soon, so that I can have some money to prepare for house keeping with. I presume we will have to go into that old log cabin where Miner lived, Austin has reserved that, I feel like I would be willing to live any place, to have you at home again, O, my dear husband! how I do long for your society although I am generally cheerful, I miss you O, so much! You know it's not my disposition to grieve all the time. You are nevertheless dearer to me every day, and I am trying to school my self to cheerfulness, and forbearance

No 20 Oakwood, Iowa Sabbath Morning April 16th /65 My Dear Husband, I is with feelings of the deepest sorrow that I write you this morning, caused by the assassination of our Good and Noble, Lincoln: O, tis too terrible to write; more so to believe; but yet, alas! it is true. It has ever been thus since the beginning of time, that the innocent suffer for the guilty. The dispatches we had yesterday morning read thus as near as I can remember, Washington April 15th The President was shot in the head while at Ford's Theater, and died this morning; Mr. Wilkes Booth, (an actor in the theater) has been arrested, as the probable murderer; at about the same time, a man made application for admittance to the residence of Sec, Seward, proffessing to have a message from his (Seward's) physician, but was denied admittance by Mr. Fred Seward, when the ruffian knocked him down, and made his way to Mr Sowards sick chamber, and overpowered two male attendants, and succeeded in cutting the Sec, throat, but not so badly as to cause instant death; there were two dispatches yesterday the first saying he had died yesterday morning, and the last yesterday evening, stating that he

was still living, but thought his wound to be fatal. The City of Desmoines was draped in mourning, all day yesterday after the news came in, and all business closed. Today there are to be funeral exercises at the Court House, at two O'clock, we are going up; You can only imagine the gloom that this sad event has cast over us, the whole of the Loyal people, I am sorry to say that there are those who rejoice over it, but forbearance is no longer a virtue with us, and woe is the man who boldly expresses his delight. We can not divine what is for us in the future, God help, and pity us! I must close for the present, but will give you all the particulars soon. With a heavy heart I am your loving wife till death. Mary.

No 21 Cottage Home, Iowa Sabbath evening, April 16th 1865 Dear Husband, Although I wrote you this morning, the sad events of the last few days press so heavily on my mind, that I must unburden it to you, although it may be weeks before this reaches you. The words that I have listened to, and the scenes that I have witnessed today will remain fresh in my mind as long as memory is unimpaired, years will not, can not erase the impression from it. The meeting convened at the Court House at 2 P.M. and I heard it remarked by several, that they had never seen, a more orderly, intelligent concourse of people, the multitude crowded into the Court House yard and on the steps of the North front was numbered by the thousands, I will not pretend to say how many. Most every business house in the city was draped in morning and indeed almost every dwelling house; The State House, was trimmed very heavily in black and white, with a larg Flag at half mast, trimmed also in black waving over it. O, I couldn't keep back the tears, and I am sure, I assure you I did not desire to hide

or restrain my unfeigned grief, for we mourn the loss of the Great, and Good. The exercises began by the reading of appropriate passages of scripture and prayer by Rev. J. M. Chamberlain, all of which was very affecting. then there was a very solemn chant sung by a choir of thirty, accompanied by a piano, then a few remarks as to the nature of the meeting and &c, by Gen J. H. Williamson, then Mr Palmer of the State Register, delivered a lengthy, written address on the character and acts, and virtues of Abraham Lincoln which was very able, indeed. I will endeavor to secure a copy of it to send to you; then another solemn patriotic song, then a short, but long in weight and effect from Hon J. A. Kasson, and then a hymn to the tune of old hundred, after which we had prayer by Rev Mr. Henson and benidiction by Mr. Peet. Tears stood in the eyes of many unaccustomed to weep; it was indeed a season of deep feeling. I am very much excited tonight, my brain is wild with conflicting emotions, and were it not that my body needs rest, I feel that I could write you all night; but tomorrow will be a busy day with us. Father expected to have been moved last week, but rain and bad roads prevented them from starting; if nothing happens they will start early in the morning; Mother told me the last

word before retiring, "to give her love to her dear boy". So soon I must bid the old home adieu! and twill never be home to us again, No never can we roam as a guest over the ever green fields which our father's possessed for its present owner will not be a congenial neighbor, but will be as a "thorn in the flesh" he has treated father shamefully, and even threatened to put him out of his own house, for father has a right to stay till the first of May, but this with many other things we will talk over, in the future, to which I look constantly, with hope, and anxiety. May Our Father hasten the day of the peace of this Nation, and our reunion. As I said before, we can not see what is in store for us in the future, "behind a frowning providence He often hides a smiling face; This great affliction may work out for us, as a nation a greater salvation, than His life could have done, selfsacrificing though it was. But we should rejoice as well as mourn now, that we have an all wise Ruler, Who guides as well, the destinies of Nations as men. O, that we might look to him at all times, under all trials, and adversities in life! But I fear our voices are oftener heard in murmurings and repinings, than in praise and thanksgiving. But let us my dear husband learn to trust Him more implicitly, for no lasting calamity

can befall those who walk uprightly. We will watch the signs of the times with breathless intrest. This is a critical period in our history. Time can only develop its lessons to us. I have nothing later than the 25th March from you; hope to hear tomorrow. A dispatch came in about noon today saying that Sec. Seward and son were still living. Hopes are entertained of their recovery. It is growing late, and I must close for tonight, I may add a little more tomorrow; Good night dearest one. M.

No 24 Agency Prairie, School-room Wednesday Morning, May 3d 1865 My Dear Husband, It is hardly school time yet, and my thoughts turn to the object of all my anxiety; Where are you this morning, and how situated are the questions that naturally come up to my mind continually; but after over two years and a half absence from you I have learned to "wait and See". You see by the caption of this, that I have begun my summer's work, and I am thankful I do not have to say my life work, although I think I shall have a very pleasant school but I am only enduring this confinement, in the hope of the future, I am sure I should not be worth anything, have no aim in life, were it not for the hope of the happiness I anticipate in coming years with you. I began my school yesterday with twenty-one pupils, I came over on Monday, having previously made an agreement with the Sub-director with the understanding that there was public money, but on seeing Mr John Barlow I learned that there was not more than half enough, he as well as several others were anxious for me to take it, assuring me that I could get my money as soon as there was a tax levied, but I declined taking it on those terms, and went over to Finches, pretty soon

Mr Barlow and Sims came over and agreed to stand personally responsible for the money, so of couse I took it, on those terms. I am boarding at Jim Finches this week, but as soon as Kit is able, I will board at home and ride to school, where Austin says it shall not cost me anything. Yesterday evening when I got to Finches I found, Sister Libbie there, O, but I was glad to see her dear face again. She will go out to Austin's today, but expects to make her home at William Ellisons this summer. Ellison is now with his regiment above Ft Kearney, he is in infantry now instead of cavalry. Thursday Morn, 7 1/2 O'clock, School-room. I have come down this morning so as to have a quiet place to write in; this is a beautiful spring morning, the woods are begining to look green, and every thing in nature seems to be returning to life, but I suppose that in southern Ala, it is summer time even now; it is not two week since we had a snow storm, the winters are so long here that farmers have to be energetic when the growing season does come to provide enough for the long, cold, winter. But after all I believe I like Iowa better, climate and all, than any other I have ever seen, but I have no doubt that when you get home and those severe storms begin to rage the western fever will claim you as its "victim" But I will wait and see and not prophesy that you will be discontented after so long an absence. for my own part

I feel that I can get contented anywhere, even though our farm is not located in a very desirable place, If you can be content to remain on it, I am sure I can. 12 1/2 O'clock. My dear husband. I have just now received yours of April 15th by Libbie who went to Des Moines with Wm. E. for her trunks; I am so glad to hear from you again and to know that you were well three weeks ago; this is two days later than previous news. I am so thankful that that stronghold is taken, for I feel satisfied that the 23d has now finished its record of battles. There is surely very little to be done now by the armies; I understand there is an order from the war department to muster out 50,000 troops. I heard today that the man who attempted to assassinate Sec, Seward has made confession, and has divulged the names of those interested in the plot, and among them is Jeff Davis, there is 100,000 dol. offered for his delivery at the capital. If he does not escape from the U.S. he will be caught I have no doubt, and I do hope he will be taken alive; so that he may in part expiate his crime on the gallows. O! it makes the chills run over my frame to think of the battle ground at Mobile; pools of "human gore" and peices of flesh, limbs, and fresh mounds. It will be many, many years before the vestiges of this strife are obliterated. How I should love with you to visit the battlegrounds of the south, particularly those on which you have been engaged. I endorse the plan of taking a trip

Friday Noon the 6th over western Iowa next fall; we will have a team just suited to the trip, 'Bert and 'Prince. Isaiah Miles is breaking Prince now to the Saddle and harness, both. I have been thinking of it almost constantly ever since I got your letter, O! wont it be grand to ride over those praries with just our 'lone selves: of course you wont invite any one to go along; that would spoil the trip for me, for I want to have you exclusively to myself for about two weeks that's real selfish, now isn't it? but who has a better right to ask it than I? O! I am getting along so nicely with my school. it is a pleasure to teach such a school! it promises now to be one of the best schools I ever taught, notwithstanding persons in the district have told me that it was "one of the worse schools I ever heard of", and that I would 'surely have trouble.' they all seem to love me already. Yesterday afternoon after school, I spent at Mr Brewers who lives on the old Curran place: they have a large family of young folks, have five to send to school. they had invited a party of girls to spend the day there, before Mrs Mary Wilson, Ann Deans sister went home, she starts next Monday. Mr & Mrs Brewer are very pleasant people; I think I shall like them very much. I will go home this evening after school; one week more of your absence slipped away; In thirteen days it will be but four months till your time will be out, I tell you I keep count of the days. Yesterday was a very warm day, but today is cool and cloudy wind blowing furiously from the N.W. Well I must close as it is about 1 O'clock. I received that box of goods on Monday last, all right. As ever your affectionate wife Mary.

No 25 School-room, 4 1/2 P.M. Wednesday May 10th 1865 My Dear Husband The duties of the day are over, and I tarry to write you awhile. I received yours of the 19th ult, last evening, I walked to town after school, and staid all night at Mr. Bansmans. I thank you for this long, kind letter, and I hope it will not be long, from present indications, till we can see each other "face to face" which will obviate the necessity of this tedious mode of communication, although we would not be deprived of this comfort of hearing by letters, O! no the separation would then be intolerable; you had just heard of the over-whelming victories of our armies, and doubtless the whole army is as jubilant over the fact as you are, but what a revulsion in their feelings and spirits there will be when they receive the sad news of Lincoln death; and such a death! O 'tis too sad to contemplate! But events are ripening fast, we feel that the end is near, even at hand - Capt. Roach is at home now; Sherman's army is

to be mustered out, or is even by this time. And the Capt told me, (and he I think is posted), that all the troops were to mustered out immediately except the Regulars, two Corps of Colored, and one of cavalry. I do certainly look for you home by the Fourth of July. "Tempes fugit", it is but little over four months till your time expires, even if you have to stay that long; O! my head is so filled with the idea that I can't write of anything else; sometimes when I am hearing my classes, I am planning for the future, but don't you call me naughty now, and say I neglect my duties! I never taught a pleasanter school, I enjoy the school hours very much, the are all busy preparing their compositions and speeches for next Friday; it is something new to them, as no other teacher ever required it of them. I am boarding at Mrs. Curran's this week; and now I must go as they will be waiting supper for me. Good night my dear. Thursday Morning 11th Noon. Such good news that I can hardly content myself in school pleasant as it is. It is reported that Gen Canby's army is or will soon be mustered out. I have been casting about

in my mind what I shall do with my school, should you come home in the course of two or three weeks; I will most certainly give it up, whether they are willing or not. Shermans army will be home in a few weeks; O wont that be joyful! I cant realize that the war is so near at an end. Wont Mother feel rejoiced, we had a letter from them last Sunday, Emma says that father and mother seem as contented as can be. You spoke in your last of me getting the buggy fixed; it would be best to do that or get an open light buggy wagon, but such things cost so much now; I presume the old one could be made to look pretty well. If Austin thinks best I will have it taken up immediately, that letter on the subject of fruit growing has been deferred so long, that I have a mind to wait now till you come home; indeed I don't feel that I can write anything interesting, I am so excited over the prospect of your being at home so soon. I am enjoying the best of health and am comparatively happy. But wont the time seem to pass slowly till you do come.

You will excuse me for writing such a short letter but indeed I cant collect my thoughts sufficiently to interest you.
Hoping to see you soon, I am your effect wife Mary

Nevada, Saturday 2 1/2 A.M. May 27th /65 My Dear Husband You are doubtless looking anxiously for news from home. I wrote you last Monday. We heard nothing more from Mother till Thursday about three O'clock. I got a telegraph dispatch saying that mother was very low, and for us to come immediately. I dismissed school, and started home as fast as I could walk we (Austin and I) started in an hour or two, and sent word for Mary Jane to follow in the stage, we came to Justices last night and got here about 12 M. yesterday. Found Mother still living but very low. She seemed to revive after we came, and appeared to be much better, but we fear it was only excitement, as she seems very weak, and is sinking. She suffer no pain at all, nor has she from the first, but it seems that her physical strength is all gone, we give her strong stimulents all the time to keep her from sinking away.

I am sitting in the kitchen, and have just been in to give her a little wine, she was sleeping pretty well and I did not waken her. We have very little ground for hope of her recovery. She has you as know worked very hard, and is quite old, and it seems that she has no vitality to resist the great debility. Empson Bird brought Mary Jane up last evening in a buggy. We will probably remain today, but Austin thinks he will be obliged to go home Sunday. Although Mother's physical strength seems exhausted, her mind is as bright as ever, and she talk of death very calmly. She says she know in whom she has put her trust, and for us not to fear for her, as she can look death calmly in the face. She says that God has given her a long life, and spared her to her family a long time; and that she feel a comfort in having such good children. She speaks of her dear boy in the Army and of Cyrus. And seems to have a great desire to see you. I received a letter from you on Thursday last, written the 11th. O! I do feel so disappointed that you are not likely to come home soon. Mrs. Dean had recd one from Milt written the 15th he wrote that you were coming this way, and he thought would be mustered out - and be at home in two weeks. But I think you would have better opportunity to know than he. I do hope he may be right, and his was written 4 days later than yours which might make some difference. But by what I can learn from that department it is the intention to take those troops to Texas; if they are need. Kirby Smiths Army is variously reported to number from 50 to 80,000 thousand. I feel very badly to have you go into another campaign, now that your time is so near out, but I pray the God of battles to be with you as he ever has been. I will not give up my school till I know you are coming. I will write you every day while I stay, and as often as I hear after I go home. I must go to mother now; Emma sat up the fore part of the night. All the rest are worn out and asleep now. Ever your own Mary.

10 A.M. Mother no better. M

Oakwood, Iowa Sabbath eve, June 11th /65 My Husband Yours of May 26th was received last Friday; Of course I feel quite disappointed that you are not at home by this time, as I fully expected to. But I still hope to see you soon. I will however go on with my school which half out now, there is a good teacher in Desmoines a young lady who offers to take it any time I wish to leave, so mind is at rest on that subject. I was very sorry indeed to hear of your having the ague, but hope you had it effectually broke. Feel somewhat relieved to have a letter from you since that terrible explosion, although I did not borrow any trouble about it, as I knew you were three or four miles from the City, but others talking to me, made me feel somewhat anxious; it was truly a terrible affair.

We have had very dry weather for three or four weeks; the dust was suffocating, till last Friday we had a refreshing rain, that wet the ground to a considerable depth, Four mile was up, I don't know but that it was past fording, it run its a wagon box Saturday morning, and had then fallen about 1 foot. Corn has grown surprisingly since that and weeds too. I have not been down to our farm this Spring, but think it is being cared for. I hope you may be at home soon to guide the helm. I paid all that mony out but about \$21. I had the pleasure of destroying the note Austin held against you. Stuarts is all cancelled but one hundred and Father \$110. You can probably pay them off when you come home. Let us pay them all off, and begin anew. We can live a great deal easier now. Austin does since he is out of debt. I had a letter from Emma yesterday mother is getting well rapidly, they are expecting us there any time; I think

it likely you will come home to be mustered out, but we don't know anything about but we make a great many guessess. Austin and I went to Desmoines to church today; we were expecting our new minister on today from Rochester N.Y. on trial. Brother Nash has resigned, and is going to undertake the financial work of the new colledge we, as a denomination are trying to found at Desmoines. I am very sorry to loose him, but it may be for the best. I feel very little like writing, as I expect you home so soon, you will excuse me therefore for writing so short an one this time won't you. We are all in the best of health, and I find a pleasant here Hattie and Austin are both just a kind as they can be. Hoping to see you soon I am ever your effectionate wife. Mary.

First Baptist Church, COR. EIGHTH AND MAY STREETS, KANSAS CITY. FRANK M. ELLIS, PASTOR.
Mrs. Mary A. Garrett. You are cordially invited to worship with us. The Hours of Service are 11 A. M. and 7 1/2 P. M.
Attentive Ushers will be present to wait upon you. SEATS FREE. (OVER.) YOUNG PEOPLE'S MEETING
MONDAY EVENING AT 7 1/2 O'CLK. PRAYER MEETING WEDNESDAY EVENING AT 7 1/2 O CLOCK.

First Baptist Sunday School COR. EIGHTH AND MAY STREETS W. H. POWELL, Superintendent The School meets at 9 1/2 A.M. Teachers' meeting Friday Evening, 7 1/2 o'clock. Childrens' meeting Saturday, 3 P.M. SUMMIT MISSION SUNDAY SCHOOL, COR. LYKINS & JEFFERSON STS., School meets at 3 o'clock, P.M. F. M FURGASON, Superintendent ALL ARE CORDIALEY WELCOMED. (OVER.) Allen & Ward, Prs.

Home, Polk Co. Iowa. March 20th 1865, My Dear Brother. You have been gone a long time. yet I have never written to you. I hope you will forgive me, for being appearantly so careless. I hear all you letters to the family (and sometimes portions of Marys) read with deep interest. We all talk about you every day, and think of you oftener. I am indeed glad to hear you and Marion are enjoying such good health. While you enjoy health, you can bear the hardships of a soldiers life, even though they are hard. May the prayrs and sympathies of friends at home help encourage and strengthen you to endure your hardships, and privations. We are all pretty well but Father. He is improving but rather slowly. But I presume Mary has given

all the home news. The reg. to which Ellison belongs (the Iowa 6th) is ordered to Sioux City. They will probably be at Des Moines in a day or two. I looked some for Ellison this evening, but he did not come. I am so pleased that they are going North West, it will be so much healthier than to go South. How I should like if you could be transferred to this reg. Mary and I have been talking about it and think it would be a splendid thing, she would go with you. and oh, wouldn't it be nice to enjoy the society of our dear husbands. The Reg. will probably go to Ft. Randal this summer. a nice healthy location. My little May is sitting on my knee while I am writing this. I asked her if I should tell Uncle Lyle she is is a good girl, she says yesh, she is just begining to talk a little. Well I believe I am limited to a half a sheet and I have filled it. There are many things I would like to say, but will wait til another time. I hope we will see you soon. Remember me to Marion and Billy. Your Affectionate Sister E.C. Ellison.

Four Mile July 17th 1863 Dear Lyle I seat my self to day to scratch a few lines to you I have been thinking I wold write to you evry week for a long time but I have been So busy and I never was good at writing letters by pieces I have stil delayed writing I have stil heard from you by Marys letters & suppose she has been giving you all the news but no more apologies excuse my neglect we are enjoying tolerable health at this time your mother was quite unwell the fore part of this week She took cold it settled in her jaw and throat She suffered very much for three or four days She is able to be about again Cyrus has rather poor health this summer he has not been much sick but has been troubled with pain in his Shoulders he has not been able to do much work since we planted our corn we put in about as much crop as Stuart & him both was able to tend it caused Stuart & me both to work a little harder than was agreable but we have had a very favorable season I don't know that we have been hindred one day with rain

At last accounts Morgan was in Ohio cutting didoes all along the little Miamme he was at Manchester Adams Co I hope they catch him

before he gets over the River

Since we commenced plowing in the Spring we are having a very dry Season I never Saw the Streams So low and water So Scarce in wells So early in the Season Corn looks well considering the drouth but if we do not get rain very soon we cannot have much corn it is begining to tassle & the ground is as dry as dust & you know corn must have rain in earing time wheat as general thing is light Some winter & Some early Sowed Spring wheat is very good the Chince Bug has done more damage this Season than I ever Saw any Season a majority of the wheat is now in Shock it has mostly been cut when the Stock was perfectly green we have about concluded ours is not worth cutting I cannot tel how yours is but I think it is prety badly bugged I believe your Stock as far as I know is doing well Cyrus had the dun pony up last week She looks fine we have Kit here She is doing well She has a prety good colt not large but well put up I Saw A Barton he is quite unwell I was sory to learn from him that you was Sick & in the Hospital we were all very much troubled about it we were Some what relieved last evening when Mary came home and brought a letter from you Stating that

you were doing well we were all Sorry that you after So long a Siege & So much hard fighting around Vicksburg that you wer not able to march in and enjoy the rich jubilee which it must have been to See that vipourous Reble flag hauled down & the glorious old Stars & Stripes hoisted over that hither to Strong hold of Rebledom it would Seem almost enough to make a Sick man well they had a Splendid time in Desmoin Wednesday night the news of the fall of Vicksburg Port Hudson the defeat of Price & Johnson in the West & Lee in the East all coming about the Same time it was enough to call for a big jubilee all the principle buildings in town were illuminated Cheers were given Cannons fired and all kinds of demonstrations I Should like to have been there to have taken part in it but we did not know of it til it was all over you Speak in your letter to Austin of the dissatisfaction of the Soldiers at the nomination of Col Stone for Governor I am Sorry it is So but, as it is I think the best we can do is to give him our Support the Mahoneyites which is the leaders of the Democratic party refused to have Tuttle for their Candidate after he was fairly nominated

because he was a war Democrat and Fisher who of course is a copperhead or they would not have had him we had better take Stone if he is a little backward to face the Cannon I was at the convention when Stone was nominated Stones friends were very enthusiastic after balloting Six or Seven times the others all gave up & he wa nominated by acclamation if we Suffer a Copperhead to be elected who oposes the war & all means to Sustain the war and the administration it looks like we might as well hang up the fiddle a great many Democrats Say they cant go Fisher Some will vote for Tuttle & Some will go the republican ticket your Uncle John's health has been rather poor this Summer Cary has been home on furlow he started back last Sunday D. Ellison at last account was at fort Pier he was well but not well Satisfied with his destination There was a despeate circumstance occured last Sabath up on fourmile Sweatfigur the man who hooked the coffee last fall at the Barrl had hitched to the Reaper to cut Will Harvey's wheat he steped forward on to the toung one of the horses took fright threw him of under the machine one arm was cut of in two places one leg cut of his head cut in to the brain he died in ten minutes I must close for want of room Your Mother Sends her tenderest love to you no more your affectionate father (William Garrett L. A Garrett)

Cottage Home Iowa Oct 21st 1864 My Dear Brother, Your old maid Sister received a very kind letter from you a few days Since, was very glad to hear from you. I will here thank you for your kind advice, but I think it is a joke on the way me writes. Your letter found us in the enjoyment of excellent health. I believe you never Saw us look so healthy. You ought to see Mary. oh but she is fleshy. She seems to have had a very pleasant visit, and is enjoying herself now at home.

We are having very cold cheerless weather at present. Yesterday, and today it snowed considerable, but soon disapeered after reaching the ground, it reminds us that winter is almost upon us. We have our winter provesions all stored away in the cellar. Such as, apples, potatoes, pumpkins, molases, honey &c. We had about 17.teen bushels of apples, 75. of potatoes. 80. or 90 gallens of molases, 1.25 lbs of honey. also two cabbage heads. We are milking three cows and make an abundance of butter. So you may imagin we are not going to Starve, only wish we could send you a supply of these articles which would be a change from hard tack and coffee.

The Rising Sun lodge (G. T's) gave Mr A. J. Prentiss a supper or rather, made it in honor of him, Wednesday evening last, I tell you we had a nice time, a splendid festival, every one seemed to enjoy themselves to the fullest extent. You ask how Ross gets along, among the fare ones, he seems to enjoy himself very much, is present at almost every gathering if the young but do not think he has any intentions of marying. You also ask about the 4th and the S! I guess he is all right at least he is expected home Sun, having resigned. Guss is improving slowly, can walk very little without the aid of his crutches, I think he will always be some lame.

How glad we was to hear that Cyrus is safe. What a burden it takes from our minds We have not had a letter from him yet. Lib is expecting Ellisin home in the course of two or three weeks. She expects to go out west with him, and spend the winter. Mary Jane has not returned yet. I think probably she will remain down there all winter, so our family will be quite small again. I must close, as it is growing very late. The family all send their love to you, give our kind wishes to Marion also. Please answer soon. Ever your Aff-- Sister Martha Emily Garrett. (Can you read it bubby)

#51 Waterloo Alaabama February 28th 1865 Dear father I seat myself to answer your kind letter which I received a few days ago it was written on new years day you will no doubt think it strange that I did not get it sooner I left the regiment the twelfth of December and went to the hospital perhaps you would like to know why I went there I was not Sick I have not been Sick a day since I have been in the army. last fall at franklin tennsssee when our regiment was mounted I was out in the country after forage my horse got scared and jumped off a bridge and hurt me severley the doctor Said I was ruptured

I Staid with the regiment until in December but done no duty I went to Nashville then to Jeffersonville Indiana and then to Stlouis I begun to think I was going home but instead of that they sent me the other way I have finaly got well and am again able for anything that may turn up. I am glad to hear that we are getting out of debt this is better than I expected March 6th I have just received yours letter of January 30th I am glad to hear that you are well. when I left St louis I was sent to Memphis through mistake I saw a recruit going to your company I told him to tell you that I was well I think you had better not be in a hurry to Sell your

farm I think land will raise in a year or two but do as you please. we are under marching orders and expct to leave every day there might be such a thing that we might come together this Summer I would be very glad to see you. you spoke of lieut peeler he is 2nd lieut of our company he has gone home on a leave of absence. We are Stuck away down in this absence corner of the world and I can not even get a Stamp my health is very good Jones and Stepens are well our colonel is a poor stick one company commander is the meanest man in the regiment the boys all swear veengeance on him. well I will have to come to a close
from your affectionate Son Cyrus W. Garrett

Ferndale Calif May 13. 1888 My Dear Grandpa, Every Sunday I think I will write to you but you see I have been a long time getting at it. I never have time to write through the week, for I must start to my school every morning at 7 O'clock and do not get home till 6.. I suppose you are having the pleasantest weather of the year now, or is it too early?

It is beautiful here now and how I do wish you were here to enjoy it. The trees are all in full leaf. The grain fields are young yet except a few fields of barley which are headed out. Pa has a field of rye that is very tall. We are all well at present but have had very bad colds. Pa has a cold now. Charlie went over to stay all night with Fred last night. It seems queer for Ma & Pa and I to be alone. Charlie is seldom away from home all night and not often at anytime

John's sister Rena Bishop lost her baby last Tues. a month old.

There is no kind of fruit ripe now except salmon berries and a few strawberries. If Charlie was here I think we would go walking and see if we could find a salmon berry patch.

Cousin John has been very sick and had to leave the store but he is able to be around again. He and Cal G. are going up to their hill range tomorrow. They are going to look out for a home for me. You see I am a school ma am now and ride horse back to school now. I ride Mary's buggy horse and he is fine

but Mary wants to drive him as soon as she can ford the river and that will be soon for they have stopped the ferry. Wasn't I a happy girl when \$120 in gold was put into my hands. I think that as good for a girl - two months of as pleasant work ad I ever did. But it isn't so pleasant now. There are some in the district that are dissatisfied because I don't whip enough. Friday morning I cut three large hazle and am going to satisfy them in that line - "No lickin, no l'arnin" says I." Hoping you are all well and happy. Yours lovingly Edna

Maple Farm, S Kans May 24th /88 Dear Father. I received a letter from Libbie yesterday, she spoke of you not being so well, or that you were tired out with a long walk. I think of you a great deal, and miss you ever so much; I hope you will be well all the time you are gone and have a good visit. Your little room and arm chair look quite vacant. Mrs Wheeler and so many people ask how you are. We got a letter from Edna, and we send you this written to you, which you will enjoy reading, as will the rest.

I have been sick most of the time since you left, but am feeling a good deal better yesterday and today. I must tell you "Old Kit" has a little colt, very small, and looks like her. Lyle is getting along pretty well with his farming, and we have been having good rains the past week; we hope the Chinch bug will not do much damage now. We will have your room cleaned and ready for you any time you wish to come, and we will all be glad to see you. I would love to come up to come down with you, but I don't think Irena could get along without me. We have another new cow, and we make 50 lbs of butter weekly. So I can't be

spared as long as I can be so useful. You must see all you can to tell me, when you get back. Well I must go now and put the old "hens in pens" and get milk ready for calves. We have fresh green peas from our garden now, and every thing growing nicely. we send you our love, with also good wishes for all the family. Good-bye till we see you.
Lovingly Your Daughter Mary A. Garrett.

Dear Sister - Yours of the 22d came the same day 'twas written, you must have misunderstood my card, or else I didn't what I meant to. I did not ask about butter, but merely said, "when wanted any, or what was due you to let me know." I have not heard from any Kansas City parties, but can sell all I have in Humboldt if I wish, but want to get more. Our grocer says he can't ship butter to R. City; but sent 700 lbs that he took in last Sat, to the Chanute Creamery, that's the way Creamery butter is made; I rather dread the next three hot months for butter making I think would be troubled less to take butter of Mrs. Brown just in quantities to suit you. Although if you find hers fails any time, if mine seems good and fresh I will send it to you or any one there at .20 cts.

Yours heartily Mary.

#54 Grizzly Bluff, Humboldt Co., Calafornia, April 12 1893 Dear Brother: it is raining today and I am alone Setting by the cookstove craming in spruce wood it burnes up about like Kansas corn cobs. Hattie has cone to a rag carpet Sewing party to a near neighbors it is very thickly Settled here and they can get up a party on short notice. "heap talk," Hattie and I are running the ranch alone now. Edna is at home from Friday until Monday morning. Mary is at her old home at Englewood. Charley is at his school on Bull Creek, all well. What kind of a winter have we had? well a fair average one. the fore part was fine - the latter part very wet

April 13, There were three earthquake shocks this morning-Just about 4.30 and second about 5 oclock the last one 15 of 20 minutes later the second was quite a hard one but did no damage

this spring is very backward and very wet. Just wet enough to keep us from getting in our grain and grass sowed the pastures are pretty good we don't suffer from floods here as they do in central and Southern Calafornia it rains more and oftener but not such down pours then there is not so much snow in the coast as in the Sieras Mts, then our Rivers are Mountain torrents with a very swift current until they reach the Ocean. Eel River is a monster when it has its back up. I have not got any grain or grass sown yet it has cleared away this evening and looks as if it might stay fair. I only have seven acres to seed don't that sound big, well I believe this tuppany farming will dwarf any man don't you?

3 last year I had one patch of oats that I cut for hay (three acres, had it bailed it bailed a little over four tons to the acre. I sold it at eleven dollars per ton at the barn. I had in four acres of barley cut it for hay for my own use also four acres of clover and orchard grass hay for cows I had a little less than half an acre of potatoes had about five tons will sell four tons they were worth a short time ago fifty dollars per ton in Sanfrancisco I was offered thirty here for them they are scarce and I may get a good price for them will have to sell soon

prices are pretty good for everything horses are the lowest and dulest of any thing. cows are in good demand at from twentyfive to forty dollars. Stock hogs five cts. - fat six. Barley per ton \$18 oats 25 to 30, how is it in Kansas when you write give is prices are you farming pretty Steep this spring? do you ever see or hear any thing of McReeves I have Just written to Ellison in regard to my buisness I would be very anxious to get that off my mind. do you have any prospect of selling and if you sell what is your aim See that you at least visit us well I must close and go to the postoffice Your Bro J. A. Garrett

their party to get into office - just as they have done everywhere Hattie

We have been reading "Demi Pop" literature the past winter in the Iola Register. I think the Kansas People should get their eyes open enough to see that the Democrats are using

Mrs. James A. Campbell Mrs. Mary A. Garrett

This chain was made while in camp, during the Civil War by a Soldier in 23d Iowa Vol. Inft. and was worn for 35 yrs by L. A. Garrett