

Hdqrs. 3<sup>rd</sup> Div. U.S.G. Hospital Alex'a Va.  
December 30<sup>th</sup> 1864 Evening

Dear Sister Mary;

Having a little leisure I improve it in writing to you. We are all well and have been since we arrived in "Dixie." Malvina has been in her old place since my return. We have things quite comfortable considering all things. M. has been quite busy most of the time she has not had a chance to run around any yet. Today I helped her awhile & then went out & took a long walk. We went to the colored soldiers hospital and a Dr. went with us, then we went past the slave-pen & on our way back we were hailed by one of the Drs of the mess to go with a small party of them to see the president's car. It is in the depot here they have a house just large enough to house it. It is a splendid affair in the center there is a kind of state room. 2 berths I believe, a wash basin of marble & the stand the same and a large mirror. this room can be shut up from the other part of the car in each end are rooms both have a sofa & chairs in one end is an elegant center table marble top & then there are other fixtures equally nice. It must have cost a big pile of money there were damask & white lace curtains to the windows. I believe it has been used once. The Potomac has been frozen over so the boats did not run for nearly a week. It was quite wintery. Our first snow has melted & gone and last night it snowed about 4 inches or would have been if it had not thawed. today it has snowed most all day & tonight it freezes. Christmas passed off quite pleasantly all the hospitals had good dinners. we had turkey & other fixings. here at the mess they had two turkeys mince and pumpkin pie dressing turnips potatoes, cranberry sauce &c. Malvina and I went to the Catholic Church Christmas evening. They have a splendid church for such a city. the seats however was quite ordinary, behind the platform it was raised & up about 3 feet there was a kind [of] Ark or tabernacle about 3 feet square with door in front back of this & over it were candles also on each side back of all were sticks diamond shaped fixed like rays of light from the sun forming a half circle. these were gilt & on the points were gas burners lit. the points were half of them about a foot farther out from the center than the rest. there were 4 beautiful bouquets, large ones. Malvina suggests to say that the Tabernacle was marble & it rested on a kind of altar place also of marble. on the right side was a small statuary representative of the virgin Mary it was about 4 ft. high. on the other side was another I do not know who it represented above this Ark was an image of Christ on the cross it was small say about 10 inches long the walls were decorated with pictures of Christ. just as you enter the church is a painting of Christ on the cross it is quite large. It has stained windows on each side of the house as you enter is a marble dish containing holy water where the faithful stop, dip in the finger & cross themselves. Service began with music it was very good, they have a fine organ they chanted latin and the priests came out attended by 12 boys who had on red turbans and the priests (3 of them) had on dark colored ones. after they had sung awhile the priest \_\_\_ over something in latin I suppose. It was not very edifying. they burned incense I suppose but it smelled like resin. the priest made some very good remarks during the service. Well I suppose all this will not be of much interest to you if you have not heard from Emory. I hope however ere this you have heard. You must have been very lonely during the long weeks you have not heard from him. I know it seemed a long time to me once to wait 11 days without a letter from home when I was sick and alone as it were. We remember him (E.) as he is so far from home & in an enemys country and pray God to bless and protect him in the hour of danger. O it will be a happy time if we both live to return to our home again and find our family still spared to us. Give our regards to your father's folks & Mina and all others who inquire. Kiss Alice for us. Write soon.

Yours affectionate Brother [John] Wesley [Sweetland]

Sept. 1<sup>st</sup> 1863

Dear Husband

Again I seat myself to write a few lines to you. We are all in usual health for which I feel thankful Geo. and \_\_\_ went to the valley this morning I rather expected a letter but did not get one. We rode home with Geo. and staid till after dinner and Uncle R\_\_ Aunt P. and Malvina came here & we came home \_\_\_\_\_ the Valley. Ruth and \_\_\_ youngest children came here Malvina thinks she shall go to see Wesley about the first of Oct. She has got her a new hat, white straw trimmed with black velvet ribon There is a young Lioness over to Amasas Henry Mosher told father that when Jeff Green went before the Surg. to be examined he was like Mr Salsbury that is most every thing ailed him Wesley was not very well the last M. heard. he had been to parole camp and seen about 100 of the 154<sup>th</sup> the Wellmans among them, had seen Ed Hildreth. Ed told him it had [been] two or three weeks since he had had a letter from Eliza. She has not heard from him in about three weeks. I think that you think more of me than he does of his wife.

I am spinning a little for mother Sweetland its so dark I cannot see the lines So Good night dearest

[Mary Sweetland]