

SAMUEL DEFOREST WOODFORD PAPERS, 1861-1865

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by Mark H. Dunkelman

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Mr. Noyes W. Alger

Whites Eddy Apr. 19/61

Dear Mary

We landed in good season and I guess I will write a few lines to let you know that we are all well. We have had a very bad time it has snowed three days in succession, and the wind has blown very hard so that we have had to work very hard. we are all as well as usual. Hellen was not very well yesterday but is smart today. It is lively times down here there are flags on every house that is large enough (Hellen says she is baking bread and is almost done) There are ninety men agoing to start for the South tomorrow I do not know what to think of this war business but it will not make much business adds with us. Mary I want you to see that the things are all attended to and as soon as it is dry enough have James fix the garden all good and if James is sick have _____ go to work. If you will write a letter as soon as you get this write to me and direct your letter to Columbus Hamilton Co. Ohio. write me a long letter and let me know how you all are, and hug and kiss the children for me. Pittsburg, Apr. 20. We are at Pittsburgh all right I wish you could have been with us when we came through the _ears there wer a company of soldiers a going over the Bridge you beter believe they looked grand. they are all excitement here a man must not say any thing in favor of the South if he intends to get off with a whole hide. We will start tomorrow if it is pleasant. it is a very pleasant day to day

[Samuel Deforest Woodford]

Portland December the 15 1861

Remembered Brother and Sister

I set down this Sabath morning to write you a few lines after waiting long a time, please excuse me for being so negligent about writing to you. I know that I feel very anctious to hear from you often, and judging from my own feelings my distant friend would like a letter occasionally from me but enough excuses for this time

We as a family are all well with the exceptions of bad colds the children all go to School we have an excelent school, and the older ones are striving for the prize they are very much interested in there spelling class if enny one of them miss a word there is nothing sayd un-till they get through with their lesson and then the ones that remember the missd words they spell them and go to the head Willey came in the other night after school he says I want to tell you all, I left off the head, and I don't expect to again, this winter Katie comes home feeling well, she having good luck on getting to the head, and may-be the next time she comes in she is feeling bad, she has had bad luck has got down three or four, and she says I know that I shant leave of again this winter, and so it goes there is three or four goos spellers and they are hard to get down the teacher has a vacation of a week to spend the holidays with his friends at Geneseo, next Friday the schollars have a sort of an exhibition the children are preparing their Essays and learning there Declimations every evening we have a sort of an exhabition but it is more noise

and laughing than enny thing else Mary you have been with them when they wer practicing, so you know some thing about how it goes

We have been having pretty cold wether for two or three weeks, a little snow; yesterday was the first that sleighs past, but it is not good sleighing, waggon runs the best, but we talk of going to church to the hill with a sleigh, the Methodist appointment is every two weeks at half past two. I wish that you was here to go with us, for we have excelent Preaching, if we would only try and do as well as we are taught how well would be for us, but I for one feel that I come far short but I am striving through grace to live every day in that way that I can be ready, when the good Lord sees fit to call me home, for surely this is not our biding home we tarry here but a little while, and then we shall be called away, if prepared, to our hevenly home to the home of my dear little ones that have just gone before and are waiting for me to come. Oh happy day when I shall meet them my blessed babe my darling _____ Oh how I hope how I pray that we may be one unbroaken family in the kingdom of heaven

I have not much news to write at preasant the friends about hear are all well as far as I know. Mary did you remember last Friday I was forty four I am getting to be quite an old lady at least I feel so William I think is renewing his age he got his Life Insured last Monday for one thousand rather small amount Alfred talks to having his insured and William thought that he could not spare the means to ensure enny higher at preasant. we think that it is a good way of investing money, especily for young people Mary I send you our Pictures you probily have looked them over before reading this you will excuse Williams boots he went to Geniseo with a load of corn and I went down with him to trade, and we thought that we would go and se if we could have them taken I tell him it looks just like him, and I dont care about the cloths. will you please give one to Mira I shall send some to ma when I write to them again Mary where are you a-going to hold Christmas New years I expect you will all go to Pas I wish that I and mine could be of that number it is getting to be meeting time and I must stop for this time Addie says tell Aunt Mary that she has had a hard time with the ear ache she thinks it is dratfull bad kiss all of the children for me especily little Emma write sone dont wait Good by love to all A Booth

if I had wings how quick I would be down there to see you all Oh how I want to see Ma
and Pa and all of you down there

Monday afternoon

I thought that William would write some to you this time for he said that he was a going to write five letters yesterday one to Deforest and one to Mary and to Pa one Howard but he did not write one word, it seams to be a task for him to write but he thinks that I can just as well write all the letters

to day he has gone with a load of corn to market he is drawing his grain off to get money to make his payment on his place which comes due next february corn is worth seventy cts pr bushell and William thinks it will sone be a dollar. Wheat is one dollar and sixty cts pr bushell.

School is just out and I must get some supper for the children generly comes home in a hurry for

some thing to eat Mary I have got my washing and mopping and baking done so you see that it wont take long to get some supper - -

Alfred wants me to write you for him to send him those verses that the chorus comences, take me home to the south he knows one verse, besides the chorus Alfred is a large good boy he is taller and heaveyer than Howard he is a good schollar I wish that he would content himself and stay with us and go to school un till he can finish his education he thinks that he can do better to go for him self and get in to the trading buissness, but how can I have him

I guess you wont complain of having a short letter this time Howard and Florance is well as coman Good by

Camp James M. Brown [Jamestown, New York]

Dear Wife

I wrote you a few lines this morning but did not have time to write much if you get it this after noon you will find I am all right as far as health is conserved. Mary you do not know how I want to see you and the little ones. When I see such little ones trotting around it makes me think of home. But keep up good courage for if our army continues to defeat the rebels we will be home again by next spring. I shall get a furlough as the colonel gets back we are not yet organized & do not know what will be done with us. our captain [Edward S. Mills] is at home sick. If I do not get home as soon as Monday night I want you and Howard to come out and see us and bring Mary with you you do not know how I want to see her. There are people comeing here every day to see their friends and it seems as if all of our folks might come out and see me if you and Howard comes you had better go and get you a pare of glasses so you can see what is going onn. You cannot get in untill one o clock P.M. there are teams comeing to camp all the time. you will have to ride up for it is to long a walk for you. I will try to get a place to stay at a private house. We do not know how soon we will leave here but I do not think we will very soon. I shall try and get home to stay for a long time as eight days. but do not know as I will succeed give my love to all the folks and receive the greater share for your selfe from your ever faithful

DeForest

Arlington Heights Oct. 3/62

Dear Mary I should have written to you before but have not had an opportunity untill the present I am writing at a great disadvantage there is several of us seeted on the ground under a shade made by stacking our guns in three stacks and spreading our blankets over them. the boys are all well. I am as harty as a buck. we had to march from 5 till ten yesterday P.M and some of the boys wer very tired when they got here but I stood it first rate. you will not get much news from me

this time but as soon as we get our tents and get settled I will write you a long letter there is a rumor that we are going to Newport News tomorrow I hope we shall for there are too many men here to have it as good for us as it might be there is more than forty thousand men encamped around us and you better believe they make quite a show. there is no chance for a man to get lonesome here there is so much going on there is a rebel spie to be shot here this afternoon I do not know whether I shall go and see him or not. When we were marching we came over a bridge over a mile in length a man can see a great deal in a short time here. 4 of us went to see washingtons monument in the city of Baltimore it is 180 feet high we went to the top of it and you better believe my legs ached before we got to the top I found a pin at the top and will send it in this letter. Tell all of the folks their friends are all well and feeling good. Tell Howard & mary to write to me as often as they can and kiss the children for me tell Mary to be a good girl and I will send her something as soon as I can tell marcealous he must be a good boy and mind Howard & Mary as much as he would me Kiss rilly for acle and tell her he will be back by and by give my love to all the neighbors except harvey & I presume he is dead withe rheumatism before this time but I must stop writing for I am getting tired give my love to Father and mother and receive your own share Yours Truly

DeForest

P.S. If you write before you get another letter from me you can direct your letter to Washington D.C. 154 Reg. N.Y.S.V Care of Capt E. S. Mills.

S.D.W.

Camp Whipple [Camp Seward, Arlington Heights] Oct. 11/62

Dear Mary, It has been four days since I wrote to you & I now set myself by the side of a dry goods box for the purpose of writing a few lines to you. We are all well as usual. Some are troubled with the summer com but I am getting fat my vest is getting so tight I can hardly get it together. I have seen a good many boys from our parts. Henry & Solomon & Henry Woodworth & several others have been to see us yesterday I saw the man that was taken prisenor when Cass [Cassius M. Ellis, 64th New York] was they got back to washington about 12 days ago. Cass is somewhere there now in some of the hospitals I am going to try and find him tomorrow. they say he looks pretty poor & if the fellow tells the truth there is no wonder he says they had one small slice of bread & meat & a little Bean coffe for breakfast a piece of bread and some watter, and no dinner at all Poor Cass. I will guarantee he has wished many a time he was at home again. I do not know as I can find him but I shall try hard and if I do you shall hear from me soon I promised a good many of the folks I would write to them tell them I will redeem my promise as soon as I can but tell them not to wate for me but write very often for it will seem good to hear from them I saw Father Fuller at Salamanca, & when I got him by the hand it seemed kinder good. I looked for Howard & John there but did not find them. I saw several from our creek there. I guess Frank [probably Sgt. Francis Strickland of Co. I, also of Salamanca] will go with me to the city tomorrow to try and find Cass we would have went today but he is on guard duty the officers are

as strict here as they wer at Camp Brown. it is all useless the old regiments do not have any guards onely around their commissary stores. it pleases the old soldiers to see our officers perform. Well Mary I will tell you a little of the effects of this war. We are scituated on an eminence which overlooks the city and the Potomac. In time of pease it must have been a very pleasant place but it presents altogether a different appearrence now. there are several very prety mansions in view but they are used as the head quarters of some of the officers. there is not a particle of fence to be seen as far as the eye can reach, but turn your eyes in any direction and you will the white tents rearing their heads. one of the mansions in sight is the residence of the famous rebel general [Robert E.] Lee. he owned a large Flouring mill just over the hill but there is nothing left of it now, our troops have not left one stone on another. There was a chapel also but that like the mill has disappeared. But there are many other very bad features. The other day we marched about one & one half miles from camp for the purpose of being inspected by Gen. [Silas] Casey, and there on the banks of the river wer some 200 horses that had been spoiled in the army and they wer shooting them as fast as they could load and fire so you see man is not the onely one that suffers by this war. Tell howard to write to me as often as he can get time for I want to hear from you all. write and let me know how you all get along If you ever want to write to me and do not know where to direct just direct to S. D. Woodford Co. I 154th Regt N.Y.S.V. Washington D.C. care of Capt. E. S. Mills, and it will find me let me be where I will wrote soon for you do not know how I want to hear from you

From your ever Faithful Husband

S. D. Woodford

Fairfax Oct. 16, 1862

Brother Howard having written three letters I thought it would be no more than fare to write you the next one. We are all well as usual. I got a letter from Mary last night & was glad to hear you wer all well I wished I had a bushel of the apples you got of W^m. There are none here that are good for any thing & you have to pay two cents apiece for them there is nothing here raised by the farmers. there are thousands of acres of land laying to commans not a fence or any thing that looks like one the houses are all most all deserted and partly torn down there are no cattle, Hogs sheep nor even chickens. I have to write when I get a chance I have had to stop to go and drill & will now try to finish. We have just got the news that we had been in battle and all cut to pieces I am sorrow they have got such a report for there is no truth in it we have not had any fighting to do & I presume we will not have for some time to come we will have to drill more yet before we will be of any service come to get here and see old troops drill we are a lot of fools. we are drilling every day all the time we can and get our meals. I will not write very long for there are so many that will expect a letter from me it will take some time to get around. Howard you must write to me as often as ou can & tell all of our folks to do the same. write how you get along with your work and how times are. Give my love to all our folks and remember yours truly

S. D. Woodford

Fairfax Va. Oct. 27/62

Dear Mary,

Although I am looking for a letter from you for the last two weeks, it has been with hope deferred. I got one from John & Dannie, & that is all I have rec'd excepting one from you since I left home I do not know whether the fault is in the mail or in my friends at home do try and remedy it as soon as you get this by sitting down & writing me a good long letter no matter what you may be doing if you are right in the middle of a washing. You may like to know what we are about this stormy weather well last Friday us boys A. Bliss [Pvt. Asher Bliss Jr., Co. I] Cone [Pvt. William Cone, Co. I], Thomas [Pvt. Abner Thomas, Co. I] James [Pvt. James D. Frink, Co. I], _____ & myself went into the woods cut timber & backed it to camp & made us a house 12 by 7 feet we have got a little fireplace made of brick taken from the chimney of an old Sesash and here we are all of us happy as kings every little while some one will come and stick his head in and say, Well you look as if you wer at home where did you get your timber. Asher, James & myself went out on Picket Saturday & got back yesterday about 5 oclock. We had good times untill about ten a.m. yesterday when it began to rain most lustily, & when we got to camp we wer all as wet as rats You better our little hut came very good. It rained all night as hard as it could pour down & wind blew a regular gale a good many tents blew down & some the water ran through like little brooks. It has rained all day but it has cleared off tonight. We had great times on picket the boys wer pretty still untill about 9 P.M. when bang went a gun then another. Snap goes a cap, and so it went all night long It is the business of the officers to go along the beet and see if the men all right. There was one Lieut. & Surgeon & two corporals out of our regiment, but from cause there was not one of them but I that went the rounds from three P.M. untill seven A.M. Some say they have layed themselves liable to court martial for not doing their duty. When we went on, it was arranged that I was to tend to the men two hours and the other two. he done very well till dark but after that he never left his quarters. I want the rounds every two hours all night. Some of the boys wer so afraid that they must have left more on their pants than was necessary & more than was pleasant to the seet of their breeches. The boys are all well but [Pvt. George W.] Robinson [of Co. I] & I guess he will get his discharge. I am getting to be quite corpulent _____ as fat as a bear I have not written before in some time because I thought I would wate till I got a letter from home. I was glad to get a letter from D. & J. for it let me know they had not all forgotten there ever was any one of such a name in town. I hope some of you will be kind enough to write to me again. give my love to Fathers and Mothers, & all the rest of the good folks. write a good long letter tell how all the babies are and how you get along with the work on the farm. As soon as we get into winter quarters we will try send home & get some butter & cheese & dried apples, but we cannot tell where or where that will be. I will try and write Dannie a few lines tomorrow and send with this but I might stop for the boys are all going to bed & it is time I was doing the same. Write if you have heard any more from Cass [Cassius M. Ellis, 64th New York] I have not seen any time to write to him yet & he may not be there by this time This much from your own

DeForest.

[November] 5th 1862

I intended to have finished my letter to you yesterday but did not get time The boys came back with turnips chickens onions & lots of other stuff. The team has gone again this morning to find some potatoes There is a call for ten men and two corporals called for out of our Com & I may be one of them but had not ought to be. The rebs tryed to come through the gap about four miles from here but our artilery drove them back & took five cannon from them & the rumor in camp this morning is that they are putting for Richmond on the other side of the mountains but cannot tell how true it is. There is not much danger of our getting a chance to give them a brush as there are forty thousand of our men in advance of us. Seigle [Gen. Franz Sigel] says he will winter in Richmond or be taken there a prisoner he is a loud one for a small man. There is work being done some where for the cannon have been [firing] for the last four days last night they kept it up untill nearly [several words illegible] must close for my back aches sitting here so long you [must] write soon direct as before & kiss all the babies for me I am yours untill death.

S. D. Woodford

Two miles from Fairfax Nov. 29th [1862]

Dear Mary

I have just recd yours of the 23d inst containing material for answering the same. I guess I have got all the letters you have written. They came verry slow so you will see the reason why I did not get them when I wrote to Carr. I have not written to you as often as I could wish for we have a great deal to do & I have quite a number to write to. I have tried to write so you would hear from me as often as once per week. If we ever get into winter quarters I will try to write oftener. ~~We are mit Seigle [Ge. Granz Sigel] & on the reserve, & will not be verry likely to have~~ any fighting to do. you wanted to know how I Liked the man. Well to tell the truth I have not seen enough of him to know how I do like him but I tell you what I do know There is to much sourcrount around him to suit me. The boys are all well except Asher [Bliss Jr.] and Frank [Strickland] Asher has been quite sick but is better now. I think Frank is a going to have the jaundice I tell you Mary there is a different feeling in the arney to what there was three months ago there is not as much patriotism in the whole arney of the Potomac as would fill the eye of a cambric needle they can see the vast amount of rascality that is carried on. It is nothing but one vast field for speculation & you may depend it is well cultivated. There is one thing certain this war will not be closed till the people take the matter into their own hands I do not know but if the head managers of this thing know how I feel and write about it They would be tempted to start me for the Rip Raps or some other secure place. but they may rest assured that I onely utter the sentiments of ninety nine one hundredths of the whole arney. You may ask any soldier you meet how he likes the way the war is managed & they will tell you it is nothing but a humbug from beginning to end. They are all perfectly tired of it and the only wonder to me is knowing the

feelings of the men they can keep them here. If they should raise, they would all follow. I hope they will not but if this should last another year they will in spite of all that can be done they will not be fooled any longer Father wants to have me write how the men in [Gen. George B. McClellan] McLelons army felt about his removal. I do not know how they do feel onely by hearsay There was two men from his division visited our camp they said the soldiers were greatly dissatisfied with it & some said they would never fight under any other leader I look upon it as another great party speculation. They seem to aim at nothing onely to prolong the thing as long as they can. To show you how far they will carry their vilainy I will tell you how they are trying to rob poor George Robinson they have been talking about dischargeing him they sent for his discriptive list & James [Frink] went down today to carry them to him. while he was there they came & talked with George about his scituation and finally told him if he would pay them his town bounty they could get his discharge but could not on any other condition. Now cursed be the man that would offer such a thing. I would shoot him as soon as I would a dog and I am verry certain of one thing this government will be cursed as long as they keep such men in their employ. I love my country as much as I ever did, but there is one thing certain if I had my liberty again I would, knowing as much as I do know, I would see ten thousand such governments in h__l or some other better place before I would deprive my selfe comforts of home & the society of my wife & children. But there is no use of a mans complaining here. the onely way is to grin and bare it. I am growing in wisdom every day. I think it will be of some benefit to me. But I must stop writing this strain for the longer I write the more out of humor I get. you wanted me to write how we like our captain [Edward S. Mills]. he is best liked by his men of any man of the regt. We are not disappointed in him in the least. We fare well enough. I would not ask to live any better. We have been here a little over a week & have written one letter to cass [Cassius M. Ellis, 64th New York] one to howard & a line to Stephen & almira & this make four so you see I write a considerable for the time I get. I ment to have written on a different subject but I got engaged. Give my love & receive the undying love of your own

DeForest

[circa early December 1862]

Dear Mary it is now evening & I again take my pen to finish my letter to you. you spoke in your letter of thanksgiving we had what they called here thanksgiving but it was not such to me I wrote to you or howard a description of it so I will not repeat it. Oh Mary if our people at home knew how this war is managed there would be some hopes of it being brought to a close. but I will not write any more about it for some of our northern people may think I have written to much already. When I have written to you before I have had so much to write about that I forgot to acknowledge the receipt of those things you sent to me by Wiles. I tell you they made me think of home I gave the most of the berries to the sick in our hospital it seems hard to see the poor fellows lay with no friendly hand to cool their aching brow & nothing but comon soldiers fare & no money to buy anything better it makes my heart ache for them. This evening the whole of us boys are togather Asher [Bliss Jr.] has [there is a break in the sequence] but when they did begin to come I would get two or three at a time they wer a great while a comeing but wer

very exceptable when they did come. You will not be as apt to hear from me while you are away from home as you would if you wer there, for I have to write to the rest of the folks part of the time I try to write to some as often as once per week Mary I want you to spend the time as agreeably as possible but you must remember where your house is & that it is interesting to me to know how things move Remember that there is all that you & the children have to depend upon If I should never return Howard you know is no hand to write & you have been there so little that I do not know any more about my home than if I had gone I heard by the way of your last letter that howard was going to work for the barrel co. you did not mention whether he boarded at home or not you have not had any thing to say in your letters about Marcealous I want you to let me know howard gets along with him & if he minds good. tell howard I want him to make him mind him if he do it without to use the rod

Fredericksburg Dec. 19/62

Dear Mary

I have just recd a letter from you and one from Howard & was glad to learn you wer all well. It has been some time since I have had a chance to write to you for we have been on the march all the time for the last nine days. We are now lying on the hill opposite Fredericksburg. every thing is all quiet here now, but it must have been a hard time for our poor boys last Saturday. The enemy are situated on the hight of land on the other side of the river right in plain sight. Our camp is in shelling distance of one of their forts. There has been quite a number of boys from the 64 [New York Volunteer Infantry] to see us they all look healthy that are left there is but few of them onely about two hundred of them left in all they lost seventy in killed & wounded eight killed & 62 wounded. Poor Frank was among the wounded been at a farm house all the time untill this morning. Uncle [George] Robinson came here from Fairfax today & we are all in one tent I will mention all those that are not able for duty Asher [Bliss Jr.], Frank [Strickland], [George] Robinson, [William] Cone, [Sylvester V.] Dunbar so you see the rest of us have some to attend to besides doing our own military duty. Some of them I think are not very dangerous. Though I suppose we should not judge lest we be judged & that makes me think to tell you we had a proper meeting here last Sabath evening for the first time since we left Camp Brown but we had a verry good one there wer more professers in the regt. than I supposed there wer. But I will stop for it begins to make my back ache writing on my knees. you must write to me as often as you can for you get more time to write than I can. Give my love to all the people & tell them to write. Kiss the children for me & except of the never dying regard of your own

DeForest

[First page missing. Circa December 20, 1862.]

Francis [Strickland] James [Frink] & Abner [Thomas] went to see him or wer going to see him

but they moved [several words obscured] got time. he was wounded in the bowels the ball entered near the naval & lodged some where near the back bone but did not cut any of his innards they think he will get well he says he will he will he was much pleased to see the boys. But I must stop now for duty I again seat myself to write a few more lines to you while I have time. There is quite a stir in camp this afternoon Some think that our batteries are intending to open on the enemy before long but there may not be any thing in it. the boys are all well but asher [Bliss Jr.] & he may be by this time he had the billious fever before we left Fairfax & was not able to go with us when we left there, but was gaining there was not fear but he would get along in a few days I had the jaundice pretty bad for two weeks, but am well again I cured it taking cherry bark & other such stuff [George] Robinson I presume is at home now or on his way by this time. It must be a _____ sight to visit the hospitals after a battle where the boys went there wer arms & legs laying at the door of the tents that had been taken off and thrown out doors. I am in hopes there will not be much more fighting before this war will be closed Deen told me he was on picket the next night after the battle he being on one side of the river and the rebs on the other they commenced talking to each other & agreed not to shoot each other so the rebel came over and had a good visit. the reb said he was getting _____ of the war & if our men would bring Lincoln they would Davis & let them fight the thing out themselves

Dec 21 You will see by my last date that I did not finish my letter the same day I began it. It has been so that we could not send our letters untill the twentieth. Perhaps you would like to know what kind of weather we are in the Sunny South it is sunny and bright but the trouble is the sun does not do us any good there is no snow on the ground but it is as cold as it is in old Cattaraugus when the snow is _____ feet deep it is impossible for a man to keep warm over any fire he can make I believe I never saw as cold [words obscured] it is impossible to get clothes enough or to keep it from burning through. It is about such weather here as it was at home last year when howard & I wer loging in December onely the air is a great deal colder Every thing is quiet here yet We do not know whether they will have another fight here or not if they do it will be a hard one but our [line obscured by fold] to do for we are to support our batteries stationod on this side of the river. There has been a report in camp for the last few days that [Gen. Nathaniel P.] Banks had taken Richmond but the most of the men do not think it is so. There have been some few papers from the north in camp since we wer here & they state that our loss in the battle was less than two hundred that is the way they try to draw the wool over our eyes as near as I can find our loss was at least two times that amount. The soldiers all curs Burnside for leading them into such a place They say that McLelan [Gen. George B. McClellan] never would have done it he would have first shelled them from their entrenchments I have understand that the troops say if he ever tries to lead them into another such a place they will lay down their arms Seigle [Gen. Franz Sigel] says his men shall never go into such a place. I am glad he will not for I feel as though every life that is lost in this war is just thrown away my patriotism has all _____ of my fingers _____ or some where else You wanted to know how Giles likes it he seems to be in pretty good spirits a great deal better than I could under the circumstances. O Mary it seems as if I should die of grief if I had done as he has. He seemed to feel pretty bad for the first few days, but it soon wore off I am pretty sure he is of a different nature from me. He tryed to get a furlough to go home but could not. If I had been him they would have had to chain me to have kept me You must be satisfied with a short letter this time mary for my fingers are numb with the cold. You can see that by the writing. Give my love to Fathers & Mothers & all the rest of the folks. Tell

Howard the first time he sees Whitely to have him make me a pair of hipp boots double souled & the botoms & heels filled with nails & made of the best material a comon pair of boots will not last here more than two months. I bought me a pair in washington & they did not last more than six weeks _____ you cannot get boots taped here. As soon as we get into winter quarters I will let you know & you can send them to me. Warren Kingsley [corporal, Co. G] is well but Theodore [Kingsley, private, Co. G] was left at Fairfax in the Hospital. There is a great many sick & it is no wonder. If they wer obliged to live so at home they would all die The soldiers that have been here for a year or two have got used to it so they stand it pretty well Squire has been to see us three or four times. he is the same old sixpence He has got a good place driving an ammunition wagon. Deen looks hearty. but I will stop writing for this time not that I am tired of communicating with you for God knows that it is my greatest delight but from necessity the master of all poor soldiers Kiss and hug all the children for me & except of your own portion of the love of your own absent

DeForest

Fredericksburg Jan. 8, 1863

Dear Wife,

I [words obscured] for the purpose of writing you a few lines to let you know how we prosper in old Virginia we are all well & thriving in body but are not _____ verry fast in regard to our _____ We think just as little of the cause that we are fighting for as we did the last time I wrote, or that they pretend to be fighting for, but as far as fighting is concerned they do as little of it as they have to for it not the object of our leaders to endanger their own precious lives more than they can help. It would be too great a loss to the united States to have any of them killed. therefore when they happen to get into a place where there is no way to get rid of fighting they will place themselves in some elevated position and one that is out of the reach of danger. they will fight till the last for their own loved country, especially if there happens to be a large brick house to hide them from the enemy _____ wine & champayne _____ last that There they will stand looking through their glases surveying the battlefield _____ they are to gain laurels that shall last as long eternal ages roll. But at what a cost to our poor country are their laurels gained. By the loss of thousands of precious lives that are of more real worth to the government and full as dear to their _____ children as those that are hiding themselves behind brick walls & surveying this inhuman _____ through drunken eyes. But I have _____ this was the case at our inglorious _____ was some four miles _____ see of action looking out from behind _____ of a brick house & viewing the action _____ looked too frequently through _____ in its true light. But _____ last. How long till _____ is draped in mourning _____ the loss of _____ gallant sons already sacrificed _____ to no purpose & suffer this disgraceful conduct to be persued. How long shall the blood of our poor slain husbands & fathers cry for every _____ How long shall our widows & orphans tears be shed before the sword of justise shall be unsheathed & wreak vengeance on those that have been the cause of all this sorrow & loss of life _____ deceived in the signes of the times before it will not be many months before the voice of justise will make ittselfe heard before the people

of the north begins to see that we are spending our money & men & gaining nothing in return. But a _____ to this subject for I have already _____ it to much time & space. Perhaps you would like to know what kind of house we live in. Well we live in a house the walls & cabinet ware of which are of our own manufacture. The walls are made of staves split out of oak timber & drove into the ground & banked up with dirt. It is about thirteen by eight feet & covered with our tent cloth for a roof We have got a fireplace in one corner & two bunks in one end made of poles about the size of hoopoles. The bunks are placed one above the other, regular steamboat fashion & make us verry comfortable bed. We think taking everything into consideration that we have got verry comfortable quarters _____ it is the best tent in the company except the captains [Edward S. Mills] We have some verry pleasant times together all of us come from the same place if asher [Bliss Jr.] was onely here with us it would be a full team. I have not heard from him since I wrote to _____ will be here before _____. All the boys your are acquainted with in the sixty fourth are all well. Warren Kingsley is well. Theadore [Theodore Kingsley] was sent to washington to the hospital & from there to New York _____ he will get his discharge he was troubled with a pain in his side. Giles & [William] Cone are both well Squire is over here nearly _____ wer here night before _____ peck of corn I went to work yesterday & hulled some of it. it was not hulled as well as some I have ate at home but it tasted verry good after all I am getting to be a verry good cook I expect _____ & James will have a fuss when we get home again for he says he will have one for his wife

In the evening. We are again seated around our warm fireside and Squire is with us the mail has not come inn today. I am looking for a letter from you & hope I will not be disappointed. It is time I got another by this time. But our mail is verry irregular. Some will come in three days & some are three weeks _____ further within the course of another week. I am short of stamps or I would write oftener than I do now. We rather expect to get our box in the course of next week _____ I will write to you next. Jan. 10th. I will now try to finish my letter to you I have been pretty busy or I would have done it before this I was some what disappointed at not getting a letter from you to night it has been almost two weeks since I have got a letter from you & it has been so long since any of the rest have written I have forgotten when it was. ~~It does seem strange that they do not write more. I know if they was in my place & I in theirs I would write to them oftener than they do to me I thought when I left home I left friends enough so that if~~ [rest of letter missing]

Sunday [January] 11 [1863] All well as usual & have just got your letter of the 4th was glad to hear you are all well. Tell Alfred I will write to them as soon as I can but not to wate for me but write as often as they can. It is almost impossible for any one here to write to all of their friends at home. It is quite an undertaking to write a letter. we are destitute of all kinds of conveniences for any such thing & it is hard for us to get stamps to send our letters with when we do write one. I had to borrow a stamp to send my last one to you. Squire is here with us today, & if you could onely look in upon us you would think you were at home in some of our shingle shanties. Tell his wife he is well. Jim [Frink] got a letter from Frank this morning he is gaining fast. there is no danger of his dying from the effects of his wounds. It is strange where Cass [Cassius M. Ellis,

64th New York] is. It is plain he has left the hospital. I think he is trying to find his regiment & I think he will be around if anything _____ come home but I hope he has turned his face northwest instead of in this direction we have got men enough here already to suffer & die for no earthly good. If _____ [line obscured by fold] lay out your money in _____ if there is fodder enough to keep them I shall send you the rest of my pay as soon as we get it. That Howard must do with it as he wants & as he needs, for it is common stock. I will try to find if there is any chance for getting a box if it was sent to us. by the time I write to you next you may give those gloves to Howard for it is not cold enough to use them here. I found one sealskin glove once while on picket it goes first rate. Give my love to Howard & Mary & tell them to write soon. No more for this time I guess you will say so before you get through reading it. Yours

DeForest

January 12th [1863] Dear Wife having an opportunity of sending you a line by _____, I thought I would improve the opportunity & at the same time let you know what you might send me & where to direct it. I sent you a letter by mail day before yesterday but presume you will get this before you will the other. you may [line obscured by fold] dried apples, berries & if you can you may send one of your quart bottles full of Black berry preserves. you can seal it up & pack other things around it so that it will not brake. I want a couple of pares of socks as my others are lost & these government socks are not good for any thing. I wrote some time ago for you to have Mr _____ make me a pare of boots but do not [line obscured by fold] know as you have got it yet [_____ line obscured _____] them made have him send me a pare of his best _____ that he has already made No. 7 & have him _____ the heels & _____ full of nails. Tell Howard to get me two lbs. of fine cut tobacco Tell him to direct it to washington D.C. in care of John Manley. I suppose the propper direction [should be] To Samuel D. Woodford Co. I 154 N.Y. Voll. Washington D.C. In care of John Manley. Howard I have sent you a ring of my own manufacture. it is made of the root of the high laurel. I sent it by Topliss it is not verry valuable nor verry handsome but it will remind you of me though the token is neither of silver nor gold. Please except as a token from me; Abner Thomas & James Frink wants their folks to send some stuff to them in the same box if it can be done without too much bother you had not better send any cakes or such stuff for it may all spoil before I should get it & damage the rest of the stuff. If you send it you had better send it as soon as you can for we may not stay here more than three or four weeks more Howard if I get my pay in short time if you have got fodder enough & cows can be got for 15 dollars you had better buy one or two if you can spare the money but you know best. My Love to all. From your Husband and brother & Friend.

DeForest

Near Falmouth Va. Jan. 16/63

Dear Wife,

I will now write you another letter to you for the purpose of letting you know that I am well & that Cass [Cassius M. Ellis, 64th New York] is here with us. he came in this morning as we were eating our breakfast & you better believe we wer glad to see each other he is looking rugged & hearty, but he says his flesh is not good. he came to his Regt. last evening & came over as soon as he got his breakfast. I think we will spend a pleasant visit this day. he is going to write some to you too, he tells some verry hard stories in regard to the way they fared while a prisnor in Richmond. He must have suffered a great deal. I was glad to see him but would have been _____ satisfied if I had heared that he was at home in old red house, where he would not have to suffer any more for this great cause. this war that was waged to preserve the constitution but has turned into one for the purpose of freeing the poor oppresed colored man. We have been out two days on a pioneer expedition & got back to camp last evening, pretty well tired out We have been building roads for our troops to cross the river at a ford some eight miles from here called the United States ford. It is supposed we will have another fight here before many days are passed. General Burnsid's was here yesterday looking over the river at the enemy works. We have been ordered to draw four days rations and keep them ready at a moments warning. They think it will not be over three days at the most before we will have the pleasure of seeing the Rebbs face to face I have no doubt _____ whether we do long before you get this Cass says Henry Fuller [Lt. Henry Van Aernam Fuller, 64th New York] is going to _____ . He did not get his _____ when he was at washington & has not got it yet. There is some eleven months pay due him besides three months rations There is over one hundred & fifty dollars his due I have been trying to get him to not do any _____ till he got his pay If he should stand out they could not oblige him to. He says with this he will give _____ a written order to draw his pay if he should be called into action for _____ does not intend to let Uncle Sam have a _____ of his pay. he asked all about his _____ good trade & had rather have the old _____ of one than the _____ Cass is more steady than he was when he went from home ie. he is more sober. I have just returned from going part way with Cass to his Regt. we have had a good visit. I have about persuaded him to not go into action if we have to have a fight. we are in the same _____ that his is. He is going to have H. Fuller make him writing that will enable Howard to draw his pay if he should be taken away, but God forbid that any such thing should happen, but grant that we may be preserved to again be returned to our own dear families & homes. I got a letter from Asher [Bliss Jr.] this week. he was in new york & fairly well. He seems to be anxious to get back to his Regt. but he is verry foolish for he is a great deal better off where he is & is getting 15 cts per day extra as nurse in one of them [line obscured] _____ of the folks the next time I wrote, but Cass & me thought we would write a letter. he commenced to write to you all & I thought I would write to to write to you. he has left one half a sheet that I guess I will fill it up in writing to Alfreds folks I guess I will write a few lines to Howard. So good night & may God bless you & the little ones for many long years of happiness. DeForest

Well Howard I will now write you a few lines [line obscured by fold] our pay before this time but it seems that uncle Sam is in no hurry to live up to his part of his contract. He has but little thought of the poor families left at home dependent on the earnings of their husband that are wasting their lives in the service of their (well I do not know what) some say their country but I do not see it in that light but for the _____ this is _____ was [line obscured by fold] you had better turn the money off paying your father or buying stock

for my faith in the greenback is not very great & would not care about keeping _____ but you must do as you think best _____ it. Kiss the little ones & give my love to all.

DeForest

[undated fragment]

they would each of them write me a letter as often as once a month I might hear from home two or three times per week, but I find I did not recon right, as soon as I am gone I am forgotten but I am thankful it is not the case with all I have left, that there are some that cherish in their hearts memories of the absent one. If it wer not for you & Dannie I should be left entirely to my own meditations & my comrads in arms. The last one I wrote to you I directed to Sal- for I thought you would be home by that time. It had been so long since I had heard from you that I was beginning to think some of you wer sick but [Pvt. Sylvester V.] Dunbar got a letter last evening which stated you wer at home & wer all well. If there is any thing that will make one worry it is to expect to get a letter from his family & not get it under a week after he expects it. I have not heard any thing from Cass [Cassius M. Ellis, 64th New York] for nearly two months. the men in his regiment think he has deserted _____ any thing about it here. I hope he has gone home for he has suffered enough already. It has always been looked upon as a disgraceful thing for a man to desert & in an honerable war I should look upon it as such myselfe but in this I think it is the reverse, although I should never desert myselfe. My head has made a fool of me & I shall stay till I am discharged just to punish it if nothing else. I have been reading [New York State Governor Horatio Seymour] Seymores message this forenoon & am greatly pleased with the most of it & am sorry I was not there to have given him my vote. When they first began to talk of running him for Governor we wer laying at Arlington Heights. Frank [Strickland] & me got into a little argument on politics & in the course of it we got to speaking of him, & frank wanted to know if I wer at home if I would vote for him & I told him yes. he said I was altogether a different man from what he supposed I was. But today he says Seymor is the right kind of a talking man for him. So you see he has changed his mind some. The boys are all getting sick of the _____. There are those here that when they came here wer strongly for the abolition _____ are altogether of a different opinion now. They are better acquainted with the curly headed animal. You wanted to know in your last if I had got to be sergant yet. I have not as far as I know or care for there is no honor to be an officer in the arney. The less responsibility a man takes upon him the better it is in the long run I presume you will find a great many mistakes in this letter for am writing it by the light of the fire & the boys are all cracking their jokes. It has been raining all day it is the first rain we have had for over four weeks. We have had most beautiful weather all winter _____ I must again stop writing for my paper is nearly filled. Give my love to all the people on the crick & other portions of the country & tell them to write. Take all the little ones in your arms & kiss them for me. Write often & receive the lasting regard of your far distant

DeForest

Feb 2d 1863

In camp two miles From Falmouth

Dear Wife,

After a delay of two days I seat myself for the purpose of answering yours of the twenty seventh ult. I should have answered it before but we wer drawing our pay on that day & the next day we wer obliged to go out on a general inspection although it was Sabath day. It seems to be the object of our government to make the soldier do as much work as they can. They manage it so as to do the prinsipal part of the marching on that day & we have to go through an inspection of arms every Sunday morning. There are but few Sabath days here. neither do we derive much knowledge nor hear many sermons from our chaplain [Henry D. Lowing]. We might about as well not have any at all. He has preached five sermons since he has been with us & that is some four months. He is not much liked by the boys. They think he is after the pay more than for looking after the spiritual wellfare of the soldier. But we must blame him to much for he has only caught the prevailing disease, that of doing as little as they can & getting as much as they can in payment for their laziness. I was glad to learn you wer all as well as you wer for I was fearful there would be more sorrowful news in it than there was in your former one. It seems hard to be obliged to stay here a prisenor in ones own country deprived of all the priviledges that are calculated to make man happy & knowing that the only crime he has commited was risking his life in defense of the constitution & the laws, giving up the pleasures of home, & the enjoyments of his own happy fireside, for a bed on the cold damp ground in verginia with nothing to shield him from the inclemensy of the weather but a small piece of cotton cloth except such as he is able to provide by his own industry obliged to associate with every thing that is is low & vulgar, to the last degree. How can a man with the least degree of selfe respect remaining dare these things without expecting some respect being shown to him. But this is far from being the case here. If a man wants to attract the attention of his (I will not call them superior) officers, he must be able to gamble, swear & drink whisky. He must be able to join them in all their drunken carousals & make him selfe a hale fellow well met. I would ask all the respectable people of the north if there is much to encourage the soldier to be any thing. If there is any thing. Strange that we are not successful on the field of battle. That our men are discontented & demoralized (for that our arney is demoralized no man of common sense, that has had an opportunity of judging correctly, can deny) when our commissioned officers are of such a class of men, & even encourage such a cours in the rank & file, (ie) in a great many of them. But woe unto the poor fellow that happened to be so unfortunate to offend one of them at any time. The first opportunity that presents itself for giving them an excuse for punishing them is hailed with joy, & that crime may be one that they are guilty of every day (drunkenness) I have known one man to be kept a prisenor for over a week at a time, for this very offence just because he happened to get the ill will of one of his Lieut. Some might think it easier to be a prisenor & be kept in the guard house than to be on duty, but this is not the case for the guard houses are different from those we had at Jamestown. The walls are made of nothing & the ruff of the same material. But I will not write any more on this subject, for I presume it is not very interesting to you. but when I get to thinking

on it I get carried away. The boys are all well as usual Jimmy [Frink] has got a touch of the jaundice. We have drawn two months pay. I will send you a check of (18) eighteen dollars. you will have to sign it before Howard will be able to use it. He must do with the money which I send home just as though I was there it belongs to him as well as me. Tell him to be careful & not work too hard. man has got but one life to live, & it is needless to make slaves of ones selfe. If he has not got any other use for the money I would advise him to buy a young cow or some other young stock, if he has got the fodder. It is better to buy stock than to sell the fodder, for the one will improve the strength of the soil & the other will diminish it. I have not heard any thing from Asher [Bliss Jr.] lately. If you do, write in your next & let me know.

In several of your letters you have been anxious to know if I enjoyed religion. Leaving the church & the ministers of some of them to judge, they might say no, but leaving my selfe to judge what the word religion implies & the feelings in regard to my fellow man, which I bare towards them, & the promises given to us by our savior while upon earth I will answer yes, yet I would not blame a great portion of those that would answer in the negative for they judge from experience, & there are but few men that are capable of judging onely by experience. Let me sight you a few persons & then tell me in your next if I am not right. I will first mention Harvey. Last week one evening as we wer all alone enjoying the comfort of a cheerful fire blazing in our little tent chimney we began to talk of religious matters & our opinions about what we christion like & what was not we had been talking for some time when cone [William Cone] said to me, Why you talk different from what I expected to hear you. I was told before I left home you wer an unbeliever, & did not even believe in the existence of a God

when he said it was Harvey. Let us follow him & see if it was not what we would call a righteous judgment look at his every day walk & conversation & see if he does not show to the world that he is a wolfe in sheeps clothing. Look at Laura see how she acted with regard to Jonny, & then remember how often you have heard her talk to me & tell me I was on the road to distruction Taking that & other things which I have noticed of her & things which I have heard from other sources which I have no reason to doubt, she had verry good reasons to say as she did. Then, for another witness let us take Mary Foss. remember how she use to talk to me, & see if she did not have a right to talk as she did. But we will not stop here, but go into the teachers of the flock.

Take for instance that Smith, & see how he turned out. Then there is old Mr. Johnston, he has told us all many times we wer all going into everlasting punishment. Some will say you must not take these for an example, for some of them have backslid & others have never posed any religion. This is the verry reason why I take them onely I contend they never knew what religion was. some of them I believe thought at times they did posses the Pearl of great prise, & others wer _____ imposters judge which are of the two kinds. But for fear you may think strang that I should mention Mr. J. I will tell you how he has used Frank [Strickland]. Last fall he took franks oxen to pasture untill they wer fit to kill. He kept them about six weeks & charged him twenty five dollars & one half of the tallow. There are others that I might mention but I will refrain, for fear I might injure the cause of religion, but taking the few I have already mentioned, & there are some truths to be learned which it is the duty of us all to bare in mind. One is that religion does not consist in making long prayers or making a great noise. I am convinced that those that make the most noise posses the least religion another fact which it demonstrates is that religion consists in doing good & not in talking good. About two years ago I mad an open

proffession of relidgion, & I strove to live up to my proffession. at times I enjoyed myselfe verry well, at others I was verry miserable, & was unable to account for it for as far as I knew I had not transgressed the laws of God or man at length. I became convinsed that I had made a mistake that I did posees that which was professing & I made up my mind it wer better to not make any profession at all than it was to pretend to enjoy that which I did not I might perhaps deceived the world but I could not my god. Yet with my profession I did not give up my desire to do good to my fellow man, & you can bare witness that I have always striven to assist those that wer in want even at the expense of a good deal of inconvenience to myselfe. After ceasing to make a proffession through the month I did not cease to try to show to those with whom I associated that there was more ways than one for a man to live relidgion, & to let his light shine forth Neither did I give up trying to get at the true meaning of the word(Relidgion). It has been the thing upermost in my mind ever since, & I have come to the conclusion that (True relidgion consists in doing good & being good) Some may call this selfe righteousness, but there is one great consolation which I have that my judge is not of earthly origin, & one that (looketh into the heart & not upon the face) and as long as I feel that I have the approval of Him I need not fear death either in the field of battle or at home enjoying the comforts of ones own family.

But I will not say any thing more on this subject this time, but will touch upon another topic mentioned in your letter. You said you feel as though you had not always done as much as you might to make me happy. Now mary you must not think any such thing. Look back for the last five years & rejoice that we have been one of the few of the great number that have been united in the holy bonds of wedlock, & have not entailed upon ourselves a life of misery but one of joy & happiness Remember with joy the many times you have even anticipated my verry wants. The many happy hours we have spent conversing with each other long after all the rest wer wraped in slumber, & then look forward with joy to the time, where we shall be again united, to pass a long life of joy & happiness. Do not allow yourselfe to repine at my absence, but occupy your leisure moments in communicating the incidents to me that are passing at home from day to day. But I must write on some other subject. Asher [Bliss Jr.] is again with us he arrived last evening. he looks healthy. I expected Cass [Cassius M. Ellis, 64th New York] here today, but has not come yet. I shall not send you check in this letter but will send it by Dr. Vanarnam [Surgeon Henry Van Aernam]. ~~He is comeing home on a furlow. They are talking of giving ten out of each company a furlow but it may be all talk if it is true I will try and get one~~

You wrote that you had not got any word from me about sending me a box. I wrote a letter & sent to you by Topliss stating what I wanted & who to direct it too, that was over a month ago. I want some dried berries, dried apples, Butter, & any other such stuff as you may see fit to send. If you can you may send me one of those quart bottles full of Preserves but you will have to pack inn pretty solled. do not send any cake or any such kind of stuff that will spoil by laying by. Direct the box to John Manley, Esq. Washington D.C. Or Rather to S. D. Woodford Co. I 154. Regt. N.Y.S.V. in care of John Manley Esq. James Frink abner T. [Abner Thomas] & the rest of the boys want to put inn some stuff. If there is room, & let them pay their share Send my Boots if nothing else, & send as soon as you can after you get this. Tell Mrs. P. Esq. is well & is here with us. write how Fathers folks are getting along & what he will try to do with the mil. Give my love to all the folks & tell them to write often Howard & Mary must write oftener, for it will not injure them in the least. Continue to write often & oblige your still Loving & Faithful

DeForest

I send two rings one for Mary & Kittie of my own make. I presume the smaller one will fit mary best Send me a couple quire of paper, & some envelopes two lb. fine cutt Tobacco.

S. D. Woodford

[Damaged letter, circa early February 1863. Portions of edge of page torn away, resulting in missing words.]

I got a letter from Mary last evening & was glad to _____ you wer all well. There has been so much sickness of late that I have been fearful there would be some of the children dead. I got a line in the same from John stating that Katy was sick with the Dpy. Mary did not say any thing about it in hers & I am in hopes it is not so. Frank [Strickland] got a letter from his wife containing the acct of the death of his brother Josephs oldest child. Fird Vinton [Principal Musician William F. Vinton] also got one informing him of the death of Viola W. It is hard for one to loose one of their little ones when they are at home & can see them sink gradually away from their parents _____ join the heavenly hosts above, & it must doubly _____ be called to mourn the loss of our children _____ are many miles from them withe the know _____ we will never see their little faces again nor _____ their little prattl as they sport around us in _____ infantile glee. Oh, they are blessed little treasures _____ hope I shall soon have the privilege of having _____ again with me. I will send you the check for 19.00 dollars in this I expected to have sent it before but have not been able. We wer intending to send it by Dr. Vernornam [Surgeon Henry Van Aernam] but he went before we expected. So we missed this opportunity. So I will have to improve the next that presents itself, & that is by mail. I wrote to you in my last how you will have to do with it before it will be good for any thing. Howard had better use it as soon as he can or get it exchanged for money. The boys are all well. Asher [Bliss Jr.] has not been here long enough to get entirely cured of his abolition prinsipals but if we should have a few more ~~such marches as we had the other day it will make him sing another song.~~ They are a going to let every one that wants _____ furlough of ten days & onely one out of a company _____ time. John Henry is the first one of our company _____ not get his yet but expects it along every day. I _____ he will be next. It is but a short time to _____ it will take half of the time to go & come _____ when my time comes I shall except of it. I can _____ days at least to stay with you, & I will write _____ I start so that the rest can come & see me _____ But I will stop writing for this time. You must write as often as you can & tell the rest to do the same. Kiss all the children for me My love to all & the undying love of your absent

DeForest

I went & made Cass [Cassius M. Ellis, 64th New York] a visit the day before we marched & staid with him all day. we had a first rate time togather. I was verry lucky for we did not know at the time that we wer going to march so soon. I took dinner with Esquire, he was well. But perhaps you would like to know the reason why we christen our present camp as we do. I will tell you.

Our rations wer due us again in the evening we arrived but the roads wer so bad our teams wer unable to get up with us untill nearly noon the next day, & as a natural consequence we wer minus our supper. this we could not stand verry well for we wer use to such little axidents but _____ came to take our breakfast from us & make us _____ out untill noon the next day it began to _____ I am verry sensitive & to make the thing _____ onely delt us half rations. The boys being _____ as a natural consequence they ate every thing _____ at one meal so they had nothing left for supper but who can describe the inconvenience & the unpleasant feelings of ones stomachs when we found we could not draw any thing untill the next day noon. Our squad fared better than the most of the boys for we went & bought ten lbs. of flour, _____ made some griddle cakes. do you blame us for naming it as we did. But we are living well again. But Mary I must begin to write on some different subject or you may begin to think that is all that I think about. but that is not the case. but as there is no other news that would be interesting that perhaps you would like to follow us through our different marches & also to enable you to understand more fully the grand stratagic movements of the arney of the potomac. If I had the time it would give me the greatest pleasure to write you a letter as often as every other day, & that would not enable me to tell you the _____ esteem which your devotion to me for the _____ five years has entitled you to from me. There _____ of a husband & wife that have lived in pease & _____ together for years. to undertake to tell _____ which they bare towards each other. They actually _____ the same flesh & blood. When a couple have _____ in this way & are then separated it is gratifying to look back over the past & find nothing to regret but all is pease & tranquility. this Mary is the case with me & I know it is with you, & I live in hopes of shortly returning to you again to pass many happy years together in the same way.

Feb. 14th [1863]

One mile from Stafford [Court House, Virginia]

Dear Mary

~~I am again seated for the purpose of holding a conversation with you, & thereby inform~~ you that I am yet in the land of the fr- no I will not write it. I will not cause a thing which is of itselife incapable of doing any thing wrong, but which is so constructed that used by man can be made one of the most beneficial or one of the disastrous implements ever contrived by the injenuity of man. I will not allow myselve to become the propelling power that should enable it to publish such an abominable lie. For it cannot but be evident to every & any one that has the power of reasoning left that there are none of the blessings left us for which our fathers fought & died for but in name. Where now are our boasted freedom of speech, our noble liberties of the press. Gone. Gone, one after the other like the dewes of the morning, slowly, & drop by drop, untill the last particle has disappeared. Romans conquered Rome & Americans have conquered America. But I have again struck the same string that I have played upon so much & perhaps you may think too much already. but you will have to bare with me, for it looks to me as though it was the duty of every man to write home to their friends just as near the truth as he can but it is impossible for any man of onely ordinary abilities to do the thing justice. When I undertake to write to you & try to set the thing before you in such a manner that you might see the thing just as

it truly exists I find I am greatly deficient. How often when writing to you & the rest of my people of the north that do not have an opportunity of knowing how this thing is carried on onely from hearsay, how I wished that I had the brain of a webster or the oritry of a Demosthanes, that I might be able to justice to the subject. But having neither there is nothing left for me but do the best I can & let it go at that. I got a letter from you & howard last evening & was very glad to learn you wer all well. you wrote you had not heard from em in some time. I presume you felt worried, but you must try accustom yourselfe to such little disappointments from me for there are times that it is impossible for me to write for some days at a time

Sunday Morning Feb. 15th.

I have again seated myselfe for the purpose of finishing my letter to you. Yesterday was a verry pleasant day. the sun shown bright & warm & the birds wer singing sweetly. It resembled a pleasant may day at home. Today presents altogether a different appearance. It is raining & all looks gloomy. But I am still in good health. All the boys from our creek are all well. We have not got our box yet, but expect to get them in a day or two. An officer was sent to the landing yesterday to have the boxes belonging to the regiment forwarded. I intend to write to you & father today if I can get time. It is so stormy they will not be verry apt to have inspection, so that I will have more time to write than we generally do on this day. I shall not write you as lengthy a letter as common so as to be able to write more lengthy to your father, but I do not feel as much like writing today as I wished I did, when writing to him. you may remember how it use to be with me. When I felt just right words would come to my aid faster than I could write them & it is just so now.

Howard wrote in his letter they wer paying one dollar for hard wood & seventy five cents for hemlock & if I was at home we would take a job for getting a thousand cords or so. If he can get 75 cts. for hemlock he had better take a job of from 100 to 1000 cords, & give some man the job of cutting & cording it this next summer & thereby get rid of logging up those heavy trees which we did not logg last year. It will be the cheapest way he can do it. it will make business for him at home next winter & if I ever get home at all I shall be there by that time. His best way would be to hire some man that own a wood mill to cut it. if he can get it done at any reasonable price, it would be good business if he had to give half the price for it but be sure and make the bargain so they will have to take the measurement of the contractor. I will have to write to dannie before long. I wrote to him about two weeks ago but presume he had not got it when he was at home last. You must excuse me from writing more this time. I desire you to do by the children as usual. Give my respects to all tell them to be careful to not write for fear it may not hurt them & receive the love & respect of your own

DeForest

In camp one mile from Stafford
Feb. 26th, 1863

Well Mary

I have again taken my pen in hand for the purpose of having another visit. What a consolation it is that our lots were cast where we were able to acquire an education sufficient to enable us to communicate our joys & sorrows to each other although we are separated from each other by many long, long miles. How much more dreary would the hours pass were we unable to do so. We are all well & enjoying ourselves as well as the circumstances & the weather will admit to I have written so many letters within the last week that there is not much news to write. I have been trying for the last week to make up for lost time. I don't think the folks at home can complain of my not writing to them. I have spent every leisure moment in writing to them I hope they will be as kind & each one of them spend a few of their leisure moments in writing to me.

There are two ways in which I once in a while spend a few pleasant hours one is in the way I am now occupied & another is the silent hours of the night when all my physical powers are slumbering & gaining strength for the morrow my mind is busily engaged in traversing the space that intervenes between us. Passes over hill & dale, rugged rock & mountain, over comes every obstacle and we are again united to part again with the rising of the sun. But these happy dreams are as oil to the lamp by which is enabled to burn on. Last night while asleep I was at home with you. Every thing was as natural as life itself. little Mary came to me & I took her in my arms, hugged & kissed her, & then commenced walking the floor with her. I thought you came up to me & said (you are so tired you had not better carry her sit down & rest) I thought I told you I was tired but not too tired to carry my little Mary. You better believe there is pleasures even from these nightly wanderings of the mind. My prayer is that I shall one day be with you in reality, & that my stay will be until we are called to try the realities of another world But God only knows what is left in store for us. Let us hope for the best, & remember he doeth all things for the best. It may be we have both had our earthly idols, & he has seen fit to separate us for a time, as a punishment of our own unfaithfulness towards him Therefore let us not mourn or repine at the separation but hope on, hope ever. You wrote in your last but one that you had sent a portion of one of my letters to your uncle John I did not suppose when I wrote them they would go any farther than our own firesides, & do not think I am capable of writing any thing worthy of a second perusal, but God knows I wish I was. I will stop writing until tomorrow for I am looking for a letter from you this evening

Feb. 27th. Good morning all. I have come to give you a morning call. you may think that I am getting to be a little fashionable by living in this country it is only from necessity & not from choice. I have had to take another sheet to finish my letter & my paper is so poor. I was doomed to be disappointed in getting a letter from you last evening, but never mind I think it will get along by tonight. Our box has not got along yet. I have written to Mr Manely to forward it as soon as he can. In your last you were going to try & get Henry F. to bring it along with him I do not know how it will work for we are some ten miles from where they are laying I presume it will come around all right yet. Old Mr. _____ was in here this morning & said there had been a stabbing case in town but had not learned the particulars. please write them in your next please mention whether you have got the check yet or not. I have written off some verses for the children you & Mary both know the tune please to learn it to them. They will be very pretty to sing in Sabath School next summer. I do not hear any thing from Cass [Cassius M. Ellis, 64th New

York] since leaving our former county when the roads get a little better I will try to get over where he is. How has Marcealous got along with his studies this winter. Tell him to improve every spare moment in studying & in striving to get a good education. I like to forgot Libbie how is she is she with you yet. If she is tell her to not be afraid of her friends, but write once in a while. I will have to stop writing for this time for I intend writing to Dannie to day so as to be able to send it by tomorrows mail. I have written one every day this week, so you will know pretty well how I have got along. Please answer this as soon as you can. Give my respects to all the neighbors. Tell Laura I would like to hear from her if it would not be asking to much go the rounds with the children as usual & remember I am yours through life & in death

DeForest

Has Irving done any ting with those shingles the Lots Did Howard work out the tax on them & is he going to cover the barn with those or some of our own shingles

S. D.

March 7th, 1863

Dear Mary

I again sit myselfe about to write you another letter & let you know that I was well as usual. but there is no use of my writing this news to you for this letter will come to you in a different shape from any other that I have sent you. You may be disappointed to think it is not me to come instead of the one that does come I might have drawn instead of him if I had put my name down, but I have reasons why I did not which I will explain some future time. If I do not succeed in my expectations I will still stand my chance with the rest in coming home that the rest have. There is a going to be quite an altercation in our Regt. with regard to officers. I do not know whether the change will be for the better or worse. J. Henry [Sgt. John M. Henry, Co. I] just returned from home last evening. It was partly by his advice that I did not try for a furlough. He & I are on pretty good terms. I think he has got a commission & is he has I shall have one more influential friend in the Regt. We are going to loose our captain [Edward S. Mills] & our Second Lieuten. [John R. Burdick]

There has two captains already resigned & gone home. If they continue on so much longer they will not be any of the original officers left. They show plainly what they enlisted for. just as soon as there is any prospect of having any fighting to do they leave like a thief caught stealing. Nearly all that are intending to resign & those that have already gone are strong republicans, or negro worshipers. They are of that class that keep this war in operation. All such men ought to be rid on a rial & Tarred & feathered to boot. Your letter you wrote while at Randolph has come to hand I was glad to learn you wer all well. I also learn by it that our town has again elected Harve Justice of the Pease. It seems strange that there are no better men in town for office. I am ashamed of my own town. If they could not find any one better qualified they ought to have taken old Jake John.

Sunday [March] 8th. all well as usual. rather rainy. It is quite warm & resembles the April weather at home. Cass [Cassius M. Ellis, 64th New York] was here yesterday & day before he is well, but has not got his pay yet. He has got back to his Regt. but has not sent me any paper yet. I told Cass to get it & take part of it & send the rest to me. While reading over my writing in the first of this I find I have written about Abner [Thomas] coming home in such a way that you may think I could have come instead of him. I do not mean it in that light they drew lots, & I stood an equal chance with the rest. It costs pretty well for a man to go Those that have been say it costs about thirty dollars I am in hopes when I come that it will be for a longer time. Abner will not have money enough to get home and back. I have lent him ten dollars. If he wants any more if you have got any left please to let him have enough to get back with & I will get it back when he gets his pay. Our Second Lieutenant [John R. Burdick] is appointed first Lieu. in Co. C [actually, Co. G]. I guess John H. [John M. Henry] will take his place so far so good. I was afraid Lon C. [Sgt. Alonzo A. Casler, Co. A] would take his place but hope he will not for the boys do not like him Giles [First Lieutenant benjamin Giles Casler, Co. A] will be pretty apt to be Capt. of his Co. The boys say they had as leaves have their old one [Capt. Baker Leonard Saxton, Co. A]. It seems strange that men do not know there are more than one way to govern men but the most of them forget that they are onely men themselves. Giles & Lon are both verry kind to me, & would do all they can to help me.

I think my prospects for the future are better than they have been heretofore. I have not got my box yet but presume it is at the landing some four miles from here. It might as well be a thousand for I cannot get it untill the quartermaster [Edward Porter] is ready to go and get it for me. Frank S. [Strickland] got a letter from home a few days since which stated that his children wer all sick with the measles. He is afraid there will be bad news in his next. You stated in your last that uncle nelson had met with quite a loss by fire but did not state the amount please state it in your next. I have been writing letters all the time for the last two weeks but dont get any answers from them yet. If it was not for you I should not get any news from home once in two months. I am verry thankful for your goodness to me in that line. please to continue to do so still & I will write as often as I can in return. Tell the people to write when they can get time give my love to all. Tell Howard to practice writing a little more & see if it will not do him good. Kiss the little ones
~~for me. Except these few lines from your Absent & ever faithful~~

DeForest

In camp near Stafford C.H.
 March 16th, 63

Dear Mary,

It is some time since I have written to you. I should have written before this but I knew that you would learn more from Ab. [Abner Thomas] than you would from my writing a dosen letters.

The boys are all well. Jimmy [Frink] is on guard the rest of us are all at home & nearly all

busy at something. Frank [Strickland], John H. [John M. Henry] & myselfe are writing If you should look in someday & see us all at work writing home you would think it something besides a tent occupied by common soldiers, it looks more like some clerks office. I am now receiving some of the benefits of such labour in the shape of little packages of paper sealed signed & directed to your humble servant, containing cheering proof that I am not entirely forgotten. That there are those at home that still reserve a corner in their hearts dedicated to their absent sojor boy begging to arrive I recd. two of them last evening. One from Howard the other from Helen. They also contained lines from Sister Mary & Emeline Robinson. & one from you the night before containing the welcome news that you & the little ones wer well I was almost afraid that some of them might contain bad news there are so many dying off among my acquaintances at home. Lee [Private Benjamin Lee, Co. I] & [William] Cone had heard of the deaths in their families before yours arrived It is hard for Husbands & parents to be called upon to mourn the loss of those whom they hold as dear as life, at any time, but doubly so when they are separated from them & not be able to pay the last solemn duties which the living can pay to the dead. Howard wrote that his little girl was getting better & that mother was also nearly well. I was verry glad to learn that they wer for I feared from the way John P. wrote they wer verry bad cases. I should have worried verry much if I had not been able to recognise the hand writing of the one that directed the letter. John was verry anxious that I should answer his letter, & I dont know but I ought to but the fact of the business is I have so many to write to that it is almost impossible for me to write to them all. They must remember that I have to write several letters to their one unless their corrispondance was more extensive than mine was while at home. I have not seen Cass [Cassius M. Ellis, 64th New York] for some time past. When he was here I told him to see T. T. & find whether he brought me any paper if he did to take out some & send the rest to me the first opportunity I get a letter from him the next day stating that H. did not bring any. please inform me in your next whether Howard sent any by him. John Henry's cousin was over here yesterday. He is a brother of aunt Sarahs & belongs to the 64th [New York Volunteer Infantry]. I sent some Tobacco to C. by him. This reminds me that I have not yet informed you that our box has arrived safe & sound. It came night before last. There was onely one pare of socks labilled to me & if I remember you wrote that you sent me two pares. There was a pare in Jimmies [Frink's] boots of the same as mine but there was no paper on it to tell whether they wer mine or his. He did not ~~send for any nor did his folks write whether they sent him any or not, but it is of little~~ consequence. The rest is all right. You better believe we have had some jolly old meals since it came. I am sorry to learn that Marcealous is troubled so much with those spells. I do not know what to think of it, nor do I know what to do about keeping him. I would be glad to keep him as long as he was willing to stay & was a good boy & do by him as well as I would by my own son. but it is more of a tax than we are able to bare if he is not going to be able to do any thing in return. You & howard will have to exersise your own judgment about it, & do as you think best. I am glad to learn he took such an interest in his studies & hope he will continue to do so whether he stays with you or not. There a great many rumors in camp with regard to our future destination. One that has been in vogue from some time & seems to gain strength daily is that we are nine months men, & will be discharged at the expiration of that time. I myselfe hardly know what to think of it It is perfectly evident to every one that we wer enlisted on the last call of the President for three hundred thousand drafted men. The way I view it it is optional with our friends at home whether we remain for three years or onely for nine months. I am confident that there are many at home that would be glad to have us remain for the full term & thereby avail

themselves of the advantage of the overpluss of men which our state will have over other states & thereby escape the Draft. Another rumor is that Seigle [Gen. Franz Sigel] refuses to fight under Hooker [Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker] & they have concluded to send this corps to Texas, & we are to report at Washington within ten days. I have not much faith in either one of yarns but am perfectly resigned to my fate. I should feel greatly disappointed if it should turn out we were nine months men for I supposed that I had found steady employ for the next three years. If Uncle Sam should discharge me then I do not know but I should be tempted to sue the old fellow for damage. But if he should not see fit to dispense with my services then but should send us South I shall be better satisfied than I should to remain here. One reason is I have got sick & tired of marching backwards & forwards over Virginia soil. Another reason is I do not think there will be as much fighting there this summer as there will be here. Howard wrote that he was troubled a great deal with a lame back. I am afraid that he works too hard. He must be more careful about lifting & trying to do too much in a day. We have both of us worked too hard for our own good since we have been on the creek. I am in hopes we will get our pay before long. I shall be able to send him about forty dollars. Howard has not written any thing about whether Mr. Irvin has got possession of those lots nor whether he got shingles of him or whether he is going to cover the barn with sawed shingles. I would like to know how many shingles was made out of the logs we drew up to Franks mill. He wrote that ___ ___ were out & were going to try & get that kettle. Howard need not give it up until he gets an order from Applebee & pays him three dollars the claim I have against it. He cannot do any thing with it until I come home at any rate. Well Mary I will have to bring my letter to a close for we have got to go out on drill. You may like to know what kind of weather we are having Yesterday Morning it was very pleasant but it soon clouded up & we had a stormy day of it It thundered & lightened all day & was snowing at the same time. Rather queer weather you may think There is some snow on the ground today but is disappearing pretty fast. It is quite warm but cloudy. I must stop by bidding you goodbye for this time. Write soon. Give my love to all Kiss all the little ones for me & remember your ever faithful

DeForest

Camp John Manly April 4th 63

Dear Mary

Nearly all of the boys have just gone out on picket & having a little time to spare I will improve it as I generally do my few leisure moments in writing to my friends at home. I have been looking for several days for a letter from home, but have looked in vain. It has been almost three weeks since I have had one from you. I did not intend to write again until after receiving one from you but could not bare to let you go so long without hearing from me for I very well know how you would feel When I get a letter from once per week I feel very well satisfied but if it goes over that time I am all the time thinking there is something wrong. I am well aware it is a little foolish but I cannot help it I wish my friends would do one half as well in writing to me as I do to them. If they did I should hear from home a great deal more often than I do. I have written to not less than eight different individuals in the last week Perhaps you think my correspondence

is more extensive than is necessary & if it were not as large you might hear from me more often. I will admit the latter but cannot diminish the former without my friends thinking that they are slighted. I have not written to all that have written to me & do not know as I shall be able to do so I sometimes think that I do not write to Howard and Mary as often as I ought but they must not think it is because I do not think of them. When you get a letter they must consider that it is written to them as well as to you. I got a letter night before last stating you were well. John is very good to write to me & I would be glad to write to him in return but he must be content to hear from me through the letters which I write to you, for the present at least. I received a letter from Libbie W. last week. I should judge by the way she writes that she does not like it as well at S. as she does on the creek. I should know who wrote the letter is there had been no name signed. It was Libbie all over I got one from her father also at the same time, & have answered them both. There is nothing new to write We are all as well as usual. Asher [Bliss Jr.] was weighed the other day & weighed 159 lbs. & I do not think there is much difference in our weight. The boys think I will have to send out before many days. What think you about it. Speaking of this makes me think of a story that is going the rounds. There was in one of the regiments here a young corporal who was always very punctual in performing the duties of his office who while on picket a few days since was taken very violently sick. They carried him to a house a short distance from his post & sent for the surgeon. He came & in a short time presented his corporalship a fine heir. So you see such things do happen to corporals. I cannot vouch for the truth of the above but there was a little incident took place in one of the regiments in our brigade & within a stone's throw of our camp which is true. Some six weeks ago some roguish soldier in the regiment wrote home of the captain's wife that he the capt. was very sick & wished her to come & see him. She came but found her love hale & hearty, but as misfortune would have it, she was not in very good traveling trim. She was taken sick shortly after her arrival, & presented her husband with a fine pair of twins & the last I heard she was doing well & the little ones also. But a truce to all such nonsense as this. There is some prospect of a move before long. There is being instituted a thorough inspection of all the arms & equipment of the men. Each man is to be provided with clothes sufficient to last him for three months. Every man must have two pairs of shoes or one pair of boots & one of shoes. I tell you I dread warm weather we shall have very large loads to carry & I am so fleshy that I am afraid I will chafe very badly. I was out on battalion drill yesterday afternoon & when I got back I was chafed so bad that I could hardly walk. John wrote that Howard had begun to tap the bush I hope he will have good luck making sugar. When you are eating warm sugar some evening just eat some for me. I will not write any more this evening for I expect a letter tonight for certain. There is only three of us left in the tent today Ab [Abner Thomas] John H. [John M. Henry] & myself. We have just been to dinner maybe you would like to know what we had. Fried liver dried apples & berries stewed, coffee sweetened with maple sugar, some homemade butter, & hardtack don't you wish you could have some.

In camp near Kellys ford Apr. 19 [1863]

Dear Wife

I am some distance from where I have wrote to you. I did not expect we would move at

soon then as we did. We started on Monday & marched for five days from morning untill night with verry short rest there was nothing of importance transpired on the march. We wer intending to have been gone from camp onely four days when we left & did not take our knapsacks with us. but it commenced to rain the night we came into our camp which has made the roads so bad we will hardly get back this week. It is not known by the soldiers for what purpose we came here but it is supposed if it had not rained that the cavalry and flying artilery which came with us would have crossed the river & made a dash upon the enemy. There wer a few shots exchanged by a battery of ours & one of the enemy before we got here but there was no one hurt

We may have to return to our old camp again when we leave here but it is doubtful we will probably have to be on the march the rest of the summer. I was in hopes the war would be brought to a close this spring but it does not look much like it now I will not have time to write you much that will be of any interest for I am writing in haste. there is not any regular mail line here & I will have to send this by one of our captains that has resigned & is going home in the morning. You must not worry any if you do not hear from me as often as you _____ for I shall write as often as possible to you unless we get into camp. So you must tell my friends they must not think hard of me. You would laugh to see me writing to you now my paper is resting on a table formed of a rubber cap or what we call a haverlock & are made to ware on over our caps

2 page

The rain raised the river so it was impossible for our troops to cross. There wer several regts of cavalry with us & four batteries of artilery & two batteries of rifled canon. We wer to have been left in reserve to support one of the latter.

3 page

Well Mary you will find it difficult to find how this letter belongs. I had to stop for a while & did not commence where I left off the above belongs on the end of page first. Asher [Bliss Jr.] Ab [Abner Thomas] & myselfe are all writing by one light setting flat down with our paper on our knees I am not writing this intending it for a letter but onely to let you know we wer well as usual except pretty bad colds I stood my march first rate I am a great deal more healthy than when I first came here & moreso than the most of the boys. I guess it will agree with me here first rate But I will not try to write much more for

asher has got his letter done & Ab nearly so. you will have all you will want to do to read what I have already written. Tell all the folks to continue to write as often as they can & I will answer as soon as I can get the time. Give my love to our Fathers & mothers, Sisters & Brothers likewise my respects to all our neighbors. Tell Marcealous & Eddie to be good boys, & they will not be sorry when they get to be men Do by the rest of the little folks as I would if I wer there. remember me in your prayers at the throne of grace & trust in the good pleasure of him who doeth all things for the best to bring your own DeForest safe home to you again May God bless you all Good night

S. D. Woodford

In camp near Ellitts [Kelly's] Ford, April 22d 63

Dear Wife,

Although I have got one letter written & ready to send, but cannot for some time to come yet I will I will write another so you will know how we are getting along from time to time. In my last I believe I mentioned about our teams returning to our old camp for the purpose of bringing our knapsacks to us. We all supposed we would not go back to our old camp again. A person cannot tell here what the next day will bring forth. Our teams returned this morning without bringing any thing & we have got order to return to our old camp & the next you get from me will probably be written from there. The boys think it is rather hard not having the priviledge of sending letters to their familyes but we are soldiers & have to be content with soldiers fare I got a letter from you yesterday morning & was glad to hear you wer all well. I know how to prise this blessing as well as is necessary, for when I first came here I was quite unwell most of the time but since I have commenced fleshing up I have been verry rugged. Ab. [Abner Thomas] was not verry well after we got here but is all right now. Frank [Strickland] is not verry well today but I guess is nothing serious. He thinks some of trying to get a furlough to go home the next time one goes from the company. It would be verry pleasant to get back home once more but it would not pay the pain of parting with our friends agan. Then I think I would not be as contented as I am now. If I can ever get a furlough for a longer time I will try & come home. I was looking for Giles [Benjamin Giles Casler] to come inn when the teams came but was disappointed, for he staid at the old camp I expect to hear from some of you when I see him. you may judge a little about the amount of interest we soldiers have for seeing any one that has been home by the desire you people at home have to see & question any one that is from here. There has nothing of interest transpired since we have been here. Every thing is quiet. Some of the boys wer out with the teams foraging & wer fired upon by the pickets of the enemy, stationed on the other side of the river. no one hurt. We do not know when we will start back for our old camp. we may start to morrow & we may not untill the day after. It seems as if they to keep the troops travailing around as much as they can whether it amounts to any thing or not. we might as well staid where we wer as to come here & then go back again. If we had staid in camp where we wer we would have got our pay before this time. I presume we will as soon as we get back there. I hope we will for there must be a great many of the mens families that are suffering for the want of it. It seems as if this government was setting a rather bad example to her people. She passes laws to enable individuals to get their dues from one another, but she forgets it is the duty of any government to give force to its laws by setting good examples It has not onely been verry hard for the familyes but als for the men in the field. They have not had any money to buy their tobacco & if they wer sick nothing to buy any thing to eat & have to live on such as government furnishes & that is anything but palatable to a sick person. There are a great many that will learn a lesson & will be more saving of their money. I do not like a stingy man & neither do I like to see a man spend his money foolishly when he may need it far more before he gets any more.

Thursday [April] 23 [1863] It is a verry rainy day. It commenced just after dark last evening rained all night & bids fare to continue on. We wer called out this morning just before daybreak & got into line of battle, expecting an attack by the enemys cavalry. We remained in line about an

hour & an half. but the enemy not making its appearance we broke ranks. this rain will probably hinder our marching for a few days.

Friday [April] 24th [1863]. Still rainy. Everything is quiet. The rain has raised the river so the enemy could not cross if they wished. It is verry dull laying in our tents to keep as dry as possible. A person can stand it verry well for an hour or two but when we have to be cooped up for two days at a time it becomes verry tiresome. If one had reading a plenty it would not be as hard but that is what cannot be procured here. you mentioned in one of your letters about having sent me a paper. I have never recd. any excepting the one Father sent me by Abner [Thomas]. No more this day.

S. DeF. W.

Camp John Manley Near S.C. May [?, 1863]

Well Mary

I have just finished a few lines to you & mailed it that you might know as soon as possible that I came safe through the fight. I was not in verry good trim for writing & am not much better now. My nerves are quite unsteady & my thinking cap considerably disturbed. When i went to mail my last I found that one of my letters I wrote to you while at Kellys Ford had not been sent off yet. It made me feel quite bad for I can tell how you must feel in not hearing from me for so long a time. But you must feel some better when you get those I have already sent. I hardly know how or where to commence my account of our last few days experience, but as you will know by my last letters about all that took place up to the time of us leaving our camp at Kellys Ford I will commence where that took place.

Well here goes. Tuesday April 29th. Our Commissary was ordered to draw eight days rations from the brigade commissary. About five P.M. we wer ordered to take one days rations in our haversacks & be ready to march at a moments warning. About Six P.M. the order came to fall inn. This was done & we marched down to the river some three quarters of a mile distant. When we got there we found the Ponton Boats wer already there & ready to be launched. we lay there untill dark, when the order came to prepare to cross the river. Our Regiment & the 73rd Pa. wer to cross first in the boats. We wer divided into squads of Sixteen or Eighteen men each. Just before we got into the boats one of the reb pickets fired at us. We hastened into the boats & commenced crossing. I was a little amused at a remark our Lieutenant Colonel [Henry C. Loomis] made while we wer making our crossing. There happened to more men than common got into a boat so that it was pretty well loaded the men that had charge of the boats wer afraid it would not carry all & commenced jumping out. The Colonel spoke up & said Get out d-m you if you want to my men are all raftsmen. We wer verry successfull & landed all on the other side without the loss of a man. As soon as we got across we deployed as skirmishers & commenced skirmishing. Our movement was so sudden the enemy what few there wer was taken completely by surprise & left excepting about eighty that wer taken by surprise in a house belonging to a

map by the name of Kelly the same the ford takes its name from. We continued to advance cautiously untill about eighty rods from the river. We lay there untill the Engineers got the bridge laid & troops crossed & formed a line of battle. this took untill about three o'clock in the morning. Then we wer ordered back to our camp. As soon as we got back we lay down & rested untill five in the morning. Then we had eight days rations dealt out to us of coffee & four of bread & meat. About seven A.M. we got the order to fall inn. You better believe we wer pretty well loaded, taking our clothes & rations together. We marched down & across the river & lay there all that day & next night. Nothing of importance happened here of any account excepting that the boys striped old Kelly of all he had in the line of eatables & that was no small amount. He had about three hogsheads of sugar & Hams & Bacon in proportion. He was as rich as an old jew. He owned 4,500 acres of land all in a body & splendid land at that. He kept some fifty women slaves around his house. Us boys did not get any of the sugar ourselves but some of our company got more than they could carry, & gave us some ten or fifteen lbs. Thursday morn at three o'clock we wer up & ready to march. We wer not in verry good plight for travailing for it had been raining nearly all the time since dark the night before & we had no chance for putting up our tents. Our bed consisted of some blankets that had been thrown away by troops as they passed, laid on the ground to keep our own from getting muddy, then our own laid on those & part of them over us, & those covered with our rubbers. They answered verry well to keep the rain off, but did not keep us entirely dry. We started on the march & continued to march untill about ten a.m. when we stoped to rest for an hour & wer mustered for pay. After the hour was up we started & marched untill we crossed the Rapadan. Here we lay about four hours & rested & made some coffee. We started on the march about five P.M. for Orange Court House, some twelve miles distant. We arrived there about two o'clock A.M. a tired set of boys you may depend. Here on this fatal ground we spread our blankets to lay down & rest our weary bodies little dreaming that here we wer destined to have nearly half of our brave boys to share together a soldiers grave. We wer allowed to lay untill seven o'clock considerably refreshed by our few hours sleep. Went to work & got our breakfast & cleaned our guns for inspection. After inspection we went to work & put up our tents & wer informed we would probably remain there for a day or two. We had just got our tents finished & wer anticipating a good days rest when the order came to strike tents. This was sorry news for us but we wer soldiers & must obey. We lay here in the sun untill about one P.M. when the order came to fall in. We obeyed & marched about eighty rods when the order was countermanded & we marched back to the same spot again. About sunset we wer moved into a hollow on the opposite side of the road out of sight where we wer expecting the enemy to approach. Just dark the rebs opened a battery on us some two miles distant but did not do any damage further than to wound one man. In the mean time our Pioneer Corps wer at work constructing rifle pitts. We wer not disturbed any further that night we spread our blankets & had a good nights rest. But while I have been relating what happened to us you must not suppose we wer all the troops that wer on the field. I have onely been relating so far what happened to our Brigade. Off to the south of us about a mile distant there had been some pretty heavy firing nearly all day. here I learned our troops wer successful. Saturday morning as soon as we got our coffee we wer ordered into the rifle pitts which had been constructed during the night. We lay there without being disturbed untill about six P.M. when the enemy attacked us on our extreme right in a place we wer not looking for them to make an attack. The troops that wer first attacked belonged to our corps, but not to our brigade. They must have been taken partially by surprise for they all broke & ran with the exception of one Regiment which fopught

like tigers & must have suffered as badly as ours. In fact they fought under nearly the same disadvantages which we did. This portion of our lines giving way, it brought the enemy in upon us where our breast works did not do us any good & to make the thing still worse one Brigade that wer with us guarding the pits wer sent off on a wild goose chase about an hour before the action commenced which if it had not been done might have put a different _____ on the action. As it was a great portion of the rifle pits that wer in a shape to be of service to us wer left unguarded. There are three Regiments in our Brigade besides our own. The 29th N.Y. 27th Penn. & the 73rd [Pennsylvania] all old Regiments & more likely to stand the fire than new troops. They wer ordered in front of the pits & drawn up in line of battle. Two companies of our Regiment wer taken out of the pits & drawn up as a reserve for those in front. We had not got in line before the infernal cowards in front of us broke & ran, most of them without firing a single volley. One would suppose that our boys seeing these old soldiers run would have followed suit but that was not the case. they stood as firm as a rock & tryed their best to rally the men again but it was no use for they wer perfectly panic struck. As soon as our Colonel [Patrick Henry Jones] saw how the thing was going he ordered us back into the pits again. This was done & here we lay for about fifteen minutes & held them in check thereby giving our batteries a chance to draw off. We lay there untill the enemy wer on three sides of us & wer pouring destruction & death into our brave boys. The Colonel gave the order to fall back twice before our boys left. About twenty rods to our rear was a piece of wood & this was our onely refuge. This we reached as soon as our legs could carry us, & I guess we all made as good time as we ever made. But Mary there is no use of my trying to describe the scenes of a battlefield. There is no tongue elloquent enough nor pen capable of doing it justice. The best I can do is to say that it was fearfully grand. I have no time & space to write all the details & so I will give the leading features. After we got through the woods some half mile we got as many of the men together as we could find & formed in line behind a fence to give them another try. What our Regt. done there I cannot say for our captain [Edward Porter] sent me with one of our wounded men to try to get him into an ambulance. In doing this I lost all track of the regiment & did not find it again untill late in the evening. I followed in the direction which I supposed they had taken untill it was quite dark & not finding any trace of them I went into some pits deployed by troops of the twelfth army corps for I thought I would be safer there than wandering through the woods. After being there about an half hour the enemy came up & fired a volley at us, but found us so well guarded they _____ after getting a couple of rounds from us. Shortly after this a portion of our own corps came along & I fell in with them knowing that it was the most shure way to find my regiment. In this I was not disappointed. We went to Gener. Hookers head quarters where I found about thirty of our Regiment wandering about like a flock of shy sheep. I went to work & got them together in a company by themselves. We had been there perhaps an hour when our Brig. General [probably brigade commander Colonel Adolphus Buschbeck, possibly division commander Brigadier General Adolph von Steinwehr] came along looking up his stray men. by that time there had about five hundred of our brigade got together. The General directed us where to go to find our regts. Ariving where they wer we all had a time of shaking hands & congratulaing each other on their escape. But my heart sank within me when I found there was onely throe of us left, Frank [Strickland] Jimmy [Frink] & myselfe all. none of the rest of the boys had been seen or heard from since we left the field. In a short time Asher [Bliss Jr.] & Abner [Thomas] came up which gave hopes that there wer more that would be along soon. but in this we wer disappointed for the rest of our squad have not been heard from. While we wer laying here the enemy attacked our

lines but a few rods to our left, when an engagement ensued that beggars all description. There wer twelve pieces of heavy artillery at work on our side & the havoc they made in the ranks of the enemy must have been terrible. Nearly all wer loaded with grape & canister & double shoted _____ that I never in all my life saw any thing to compare with it. I have seen it lighten when it was almost one continuous blase & heard it thunder when it seemed the earth was being torn asunder but it was nothing compared to this terrible canonade. The enemy wer driven back & did not disturb us any more that night so we lay down & slept the best we could untill day light. Sunday morn wer ordered to fall inn. This was done & we ie. (our corps) was marched about two miles & placed in rifle pitts. We had hardly got stationed when the fight of Sunday the third commenced. It was on our right & the nearest of it about a mile distant. I cannot tell anything about it. it was so distant onely from the amount of firing. All old soldiers say it was continued longer & was the most severe they ever witnessed. We wer not molested, & so spent a pretty comfortable day. Monday 4th All quiet remained in the pitts. Tuesday 5th. Still all quiet. Wer relieved about six P.M. John H. [John M. Henry] & myselfe went & made the boys in the Sixty fourth [64th New York] a visit. Found all I know all safe, visit short but pleasant. Spent a hard night every thing wet _____ chilly. Tuesday Wednesday 6th Three o'clock a.m. ordered to fall inn & fell back across the river. Travailed about twelve miles & stoped for the night. Thurs. 7th Started at daylight. got to our old camp at nine a.m. a pretty tired set of boys.

Well Mary as I have already written quite lengthy & have not got a great deal more time to write before the mail starts you must not complain of the shortness of this portion of my letter. I got two more letters from you last evening & one from Helen & Alfred. I was as usual glad to hear you wer all well. I have written all before I was aware of doing so. I am sorry to learn by your letters that you are so much troubled with disiness. If you do not get any better after weaning _____ you had better see a doctor & try & get some thing to help you. You must be verry careful & not over do yourselfe. I fear you are getting into your old habit of doing to much & doing that in to short a time. I was much pleased to get a letter from Alfreds folks & was glad they wer well. When you see Helen give her my respects & tell her I will answer as I can, but that she must not be disappointed of it is not for some time to come. Kiss Katie for me & tell her to be a good girl. Helen wrote that Libbie had come to commence her school. Tell her it would not offend me in the least to have her write a few lines to her poor old cousin. You had better send Mary to school this summer. She is getting old enough to commence now. I should judge from what you write that things wer more forward at home than they are here. it is verry backward here. You wanted to know who was our captain now. Lieut. [Edward] Porter our former first Lieut. is acting capt. & will probably be our future captain. My standing in the company is a great deal better than it was while [Edward] Mills was capt. Lots of our officers seem to be my friends. I am well convinced that J. H. [John M. Henry] is & as far as I can judge from appearance Porter is also. Last Monday while we were in the pitts Porter & myselfe happened to both be on duty, he as officer of the day & myselfe as sergant of the patroll. He came up to me & says, Are you on duty again tonight Woodford. I told him that was the case. Says he, It is bad to be a good man for this business.. Then says I, Because you have to be on duty so much. But Mary I will now bring this letter to a close, for my body requires a little rest. I could sit here & write for two days with my mind in its present condition & still think of more that I would like to write. Give my love to all on the creek & all enquiring friends in general. Kiss all the little ones & save one or two for yourselfe. Write as often as you can, & tell the rest to do so like wise. From your ever faithful

Husband

S. D. F. Woodford

I have been promoted twice lately I am now third surgeon. Frank [Strickland] is orderly surgeon.

Camp John Manley May 15/63

Dear Wife

I have again seated myself for the purpose of writing a few lines to you in answer to one I recd. from yourselfe & Emeline dated the fifth & sixth I was on picket when they came, or I should have answered it before now. I was thankful to learn you wer well & hope this may find you still in the enjoyment of the same blessing. I see by your letter you are verry anxious about my welfare. I am glad that long before you get this you will have learned that I am safe & sound. I was well aware you wer verry anxious about me & therefore improved the first opportunity presented to write to you, & you have probably received it before now. I commenced writing this letter this morning intending to send it out by the evening mail but hearing that [words obscured by inkblot] of our men that had arrived wer yet [words obscured by inkblot] glad I concluded to do so There were some arrived that I never expected to see in this world again. Wm. Cone is one of them He is severely wounded yet there is no doubt but he will recover with proper treatment. Frank [Strickland] went down to see the boys today & I shall go in the morning. Oh! how I wish it was so I could be with them & minister to their wants. I presume they have got verry good nurses but they are strangers & would not be likely to feel the same interest for them which a friend & neighbor would. I shall try and stay all day with them. We do not hear any thing from [Benjamin] Lee & [Sylvester V.] Dunbar. They wer probably taken priseners & sent to Richmond. Our men all agree in stating they wer treated kindly by the rebels. There wer so many of their own wounded they wer unable to care for them as they probably would had it been other wise. You alone Mary, who knows my nature best, can tell how it makes me feel to look upon this human slaughter of husbands & children. To think of the agony of our Fathers & Mothers & our dear wives & fatherless children. Methinks I can see them now as they sit around the family circle with their saddened countenance & thoughtful brow. I can see the tear of sorrow as it rolls down the careworn cheek of that fond mother or loving wife as she sits & thinks of that dear one that has left them never more to return. I can see the heaving of that fond fathers chest as he tries to keep down the sigh for fear he may show that his last hope of his declining years are goone forever & fears to add more sorrow to those around him. O Mary it is horrid. It is Rachel (again) weeping for her children. How long will she be called to mourn Men may talk of the honors & glory gained on the battlefield, but for me give me the honor gained in a more praiseworthy persuit. God forbid that I should ever become so dead to the better feelings of humanity as to purchase a name at the cost of the lives of my fellow beings. War, of all other persuits upon the face of the earth, is the most injurious to the better feelings of mankind None but those of firm principals & strong minds can withstand the many temptations which surround him & but few, verry few, but what are more or less affected by its influence

Saturday [May] 16th [1863] I have just returned from my visit to the hospital & will now try & finish my letter You must not think (Mary) from the way I wrote last evening that I fail of doing what is required of me in the hour of the battle. I never yet shrank from any task which has been assigned to me, but to the contrary have always done my duty as a soldier to the full satisfaction of my commanding officers. At the time we crossed the river at Kellyes ford, I was chosen out of the five serents [sergeants] to take a squad of eighteen men & cross the river in an open boat, to skirmish on the rebel side of the river, & I do not think there was any fault found by those that placed their confidence in me, & on the day of the attack upon us by the enemy I think I acquitted myself in a manner that my friends at home will never have occasion to blush on my account. I do not write this for the purpose of boasting, but that you may the better understand me. But I will drop this subject & speak of those that have been more unfortunate than I. The boys wer all looking much better than I had expected to find them. There wer some that arrived through the course of the night that looked as though they had seen pretty tough times haing lain for a fortnight without any care but what they wer able to render each other. The rebs had so many of their own to see to that they wer unable to do by our men as they would had it been otherwise. They wer verry destitute of provisions & therefore could not give them much to eat but they all agree that they wer treated as well as their own wounded. Wm. Cone is looking a great deal better than I expected to find him Asher [Bliss Jr.] is getting along finely & will probably go to washington in a few days. [Sylvester V.] Dunbar & [Benjamin] Lee have not been heard from yet. They are no doubt in Richmond. There are several others of our company that wer supposed to be dead that have arrived & in a fair way to recover. Our loss in killed will not be as large as we at first supposed. There was a young man from the neighborhood where Libbie lives brought inn yesterday who is pretty severely wounded a ball passed through the knee & he will have to loose his legs They wer preparing to take it off when I came away today. His name is Eugene Myers [private, Co. A]. Speaking of Libbie reminds me that she was going to write to me. I have been looking for her letter for the last three days but it seems to have been delayed. but never mind Libbie it will be excepted with gratitude & as a partial payment for the favour if you will onely tell me the name of that favoured young man & waht company he belongs to I will speak a good word for you if necessary, which I doubt. I got a letter from _____ H. F. & was glad to find there wer some yet at home that had not entirely forgotten me If we reamin here much longer I ~~will try and answer some of the letters that I have received lately but have not been able to~~ heretofore by lack of time yet if it should so happen that I could not they muct not stop writing to me. They are just as exceptable more so if possible for it shows they do not write for the sake of getting an answer from me. But Mary I will stop writing to you personally for this time & address a few lines to the rest of the household so good by From your own

DeForest

Dear Brother & Sister

I have been writing a few lines to Mary as you see & it having been some time since I have received any letter from you or written any to you I thought it would be no more than right to drop a few lines to you also I have written all the news that is going on what I have already written to mary. So you need not expect any thing of interest in this yet there is one thing which I omitted to mention. One of our corporals & a man that can be relied upon who was wounded &

taken prisenor says that a great many of the Southern soldiers came _____ where they wer & stoped & talked & then the _____ are sick & tired of the war & would be glad to get out of the servise if it was possible They wanted to know if our government would force them to fight in our ranks if they should come over to our lines. The troops wer mostly from the Carolines & Georgia. They _____ to our men that Jacksons arney was almost entirely destroyed. one of our surgeons that has been over the field says he could have walked on the bodies of dead rebels for miles They are verry destitute of provisions & clothing All they had to eat was flower which they mixed up with cold water & baked or made into a sort of minute pudding without salt or any thing to eat on it. They gave one of our wounded men ten dollars in greenbacks for a pair of boots half worn out. how such men can fight is more than I can tell. I must stop for it is about time for the mail to go out except this for what it is worth & answer as soon as possible Give my love to our fathers & Mothers & tell them their absent sojer boy would be glad to hear from them. Tell Eddie & Marcealous to be good boys & improve all their leisure moments in trying to acquire a good education Kiss all the little folks for me & may God bless them & theirs. From your absent But affectionate Brother

DeForest

(Written in haste excuse all mistakes)

Monday [May] 16 [1863]. All well this morning I partly finished a letter to your father yesterday & will try to complete it so as to send it tomorrow. Mrs Thomas made a mistake about our captains [Edward S. Mills] being drunk at the time of our pontoon expedition. It was the captain of the pontoon corps. We have got an excelent Captain. All the fault I find with him is he think a little too much of the negroes, but I presume he will get cured of that before he leaves here for good Does Barrett preach up niggerism as much as ever. If he does & persists in this war being carried on untill they are all freed at the cost of thousands of husbands & fathers, many of them Mary as essential to the happiness of those left at home as your own Did you ever think when you have heard people talk about carrying on this war untill they have subdued the South & set the negro at liberty that they might just as well wish your own husband & all others that have ~~sacrifised all the comforts of home to fight for their dead. I repeat it if he does he is no christian~~ nor does he teach the doctrine which he says he is called to teach Take my advice & spurn all such as you would a viper, for they are ~~contamination~~ to all decent society. I must stop, for it is nearly time to put my letter in the mail. Tell Stephens & Alfreds folks to write as often Give my love to Father & Mother & all the rest, & reserve your own portion to yourselfe & ours

S. D. W.

Camp John Manley May 24/63

Dear Mary

Although you are about the last one that I wrote to, I will write to you again because you

are the onely one left that think enough of me to spend a few leisure moments in writing to me. One is unable to judge in this world who are his friends or how far their friendship extends. I supposed when I was at home that I was one of the favored ones in this unfriendly world, for I had formed the foolish opinion that I was the possessor of many sincere & loving friends. but I have found the words of the poet true

When misfortune oertakes us
 Each false one forsakes us
 A leaves us to sink or struggle alone.

Some may have as an excuse that they write to me as often as I do to them This may be literally true but if that is as far as their friendship goes it is of but little consequence for they have hours which they could spend in writing where I have minutes. They can sit down to a table or stand while I have to get a piece of hardtack box & get my back against a stump & wade in. If any of my kind friends think it is an easy position let them try it some day & after they have done so let them drop a line to me expressing their opinion of it. Some may pretend they have not the time. I use to in days gone by live in Cattaraugus I never saw the time yet when if I had been so disposed I might have written as much as one letter in the course of the week. Although as a general thing my friends have been verry negligent in writing, yet there are those that think enough of me to write now & then Such I have written down, not in my memorandum book, where there might something happen that it might get lost but in the book of memory where their names will never grow dim. Do not think I mean this scolding for you Mary for I do not. you have done better than I could expect if the rest of the folks had done one half as well as you have I would not complain I write this in my letter to you that you may read it to the rest of the people as they happen along. They may be a little offended at my stile of writing, but I cannot help it. I should not blame them if they would do the same wer they in the same situation. Just look at it. Here I have been for nearly three weeks & onely recd. three letters & all of these from you except one My last was dated the 12th & 13th & it is now the twenty fourth. I have kept writing with hopes of hearing from some of the folks after a while. I shall not write another letter to any one but you untill I get a letter from them first (except also those few that I mentioned above) if I stay in verginia for ten years. I will not write any more in this line now & hope I never will have occasion to do the like again. I remained quiet as long as there was any hope of getting any letters by doing so.

I have not been able to get down where Asher [Bliss Jr.] is for over a week. They are obliged to get a pass before they can get there. I have been trying for the last four days to get down nut have either been on guard or review or some other foolish operation. The Capt [Edward Porter had replaced Mills, who had resigned] & myselfe are going down this after noon & I can then let you know how they are getting along. [Sylvester V.] Dunbar & [Benjamin] Lee are both alive & well. They are at Anapolise. You spoke in your letter about Mrs. D. thinking she heard D. walk on the door steps & heared something fall, & that she thought he must have been killed at that time Now Mary here is a lesson to be learned & I hope there are many on our creek that will profit by it. What a pitty supersition is permitted to creep into the minds of unwell educated people as well as those that are not I have no doubt if Dunbar had been killed there are many that a great many would have thought his spirit visiting them immediately after leaving the body nonsense

Monday May 25th 1863

Well Mary

I have been over to the Hospital to see the boys. I was just in time for there wer quite a number being sent to washington [William] Cone & Asher [Bliss Jr.] have both gone. I did not have much time for visiting with them but they wer feeling very well. Asher is in hopes of getting leave of absence & come home. I hope he will & will never have to return to the army again. Cones wound is not near as bad as I first supposed They are flesh wounds & not verry bad at that

Well Mary you will see by that portion of my letter which was written yesterday that I was considerably out of patience with my friends at home for not writing to me more I guess I will have to take part of it back for there was five came in last night. I tell you I was happily surprised. I shall answer them as fast as I can, but dont know when that will be. I am glad to learn my check came safe I should have sent more but did not know but I might want to use it in comeing home on a furlough some time this summer. The Captain [Edward Porter] & myselfe went down to the hospital togather this morning & had quite a little chatt. He did not say in plain words what his intentions wer but said when there was another promotion there would be some jumping. He said he would have given twenty five dollars out of his own pocket if he could have had the sergants placed as he would like them. But this mary is not to be made public. I think I have got two good friends in Porter & J. H. [John M. Henry]. Frank [Strickland] is capable of holding any position in the company if he would onely tithe some day but the trouble is he cannot forget his old habits, & you all know what they wer. I do not know as I ought to have written as I have but this sheet is for the folks at home. I got a line from cass [Cassius M. Ellis, 64th New York] night before last he is well. I shall try to get over where he is before long. Solomon is well. Abner [Thomas] has been quite sick but is a great deal better today. Tell his folks he will write as soon as his nerves get stedied down. I got a letter from Mrs. [Sylvester V.] Dunbar. I am sorry she has been called to suffer so much on his account, but am glad he is yet safe. I spoke in the first part of my letter about peoples being superstieious. I could not help but think what a handling will be made by the brethern church of the case of [William] Cone she believing for so long a time that God would not suffer him to be killed because he was fighting for the negro. It has so happened that he was saved & none can doubt but God saw fit for some good purpose to lengthen out his days, but I do not think it was on account of his love for the negro, for he has been death against them for the last six months. He has been opposed to the Presidents proclimation & using them as soldiers. I have even heard him say he would desert if they should try to make him fight in the same field with them I hope there are none of my friends are week enough to let any such foolish ideas enter their minds. But Mary must begin to bring my letter to a close for I have already written pretty lengthy I have yet to finish my letter. Libbie I shall write agan in a day or so to some of you so you will hear from me J. H. [John M. Henry] & myselfe have just returned from making the boys of the ninth cavalry [9th New York Cavalry]. perhaps you may think I travail around when I might be writing I admit I have been making a quite a number of calls today but it is not a comon occurrence. I say Lydia D's man he is well. Sol is well also. I do not want H. or M. to think I ment all my scolding for them for they are so scituated

that when I get a letter from you I hear from them yet they might oftener than they do. But I must stop. Give my love to all tell them to write often. Kiss the little ones for me. Write as often as your health will admit. Receive the kind wishes of your ever faithful Husband

DeForest

Camp Noise [Samuel C. Noyes Jr.] May 31st 1863

Dear Mary

You will see by the heading of this letter that we are not in our old camp. There had been so much filth accumulated about our old camp that the medical department thought best to moove to some more healthy climate. We have mooved about 1 ½ miles from our former place of encampment into a verry pleasant & shady grove. The boys have taken a considerable of panes in fixing things up nice, so we are quite at home. I intended to have written to some of the rest before writing to you again but have been to busy to do so. I was unwilling to let more than a week pass without writing a few lines to you knowing you would be looking for a line. I have not been in good trim for writing for the last few days. I took a little cold the night we came here. I commenced a letter to your father & mother the day before we came here but have not been able to finish it. I shall try again before longe. I have just been out listning to a sort of a funeral sermon delivered by our chaplain [Henry D. Lowing] in honor of those that fell at the late battle of Chanselorville. It was verry good & verry appropriate yet when he was enlarging upon the honors which they had gained by their gallant conduct upon the battlefield & how future generations would have great cause to bless them, in yielding up their lives to secure them a home & a country, I could not help thinking of the many bereved widows & helpless children that have been deprived of their husbands & fathers. Will the people no how they have left home & family to go to the tented field there to suffer all the privations & hardships insident to a soldiers life show by their kindness to those that have been robed of their onely soarse of support that they appreciate their kindness & see that they suffer not for the necessities of this world. I fear they will not. mankind are too forgetful, especially where it has any thing to do with their purse. I recd. a letter from Asher [Bliss Jr.] a few days ago he was at Alaxandria he was feeling bad about not getting his pay. I have been trying to get it arranged so he will get it soon. Frank [Strickland] & Abb [Abner Thomas] are both here yet. Abb has been quite sick but is gaining fast now. he has been writing for the last two days to his folks. I guess if he should stay here six months more he would have to hire a clerk to help him write. but let the man write all he wants too, for I presume he loves her. but I wish sometimes he would cutt them a little short for there are others to use the desk besides him. but this reminds me of something worth writing (i.e.) we have got a stand or desk whichever you may call it. It is made of a stake drove in to the ground, & a hardtack box nailed on the top, & this covered with an overcoat cape. It is quite home like. There is a scarsity of news of interest just now Some say the arney is about to make another moove but do not know how true it is. Our corps will be apt to stop here if they do we will be left to guard the railroad. I saw George Smith yesterday he is going home next week. he feels prety good But I will not try to write much this time but will write again soon. Give my respects to all

the folks & tell them to write as soon as possible Kiss the little ones for me & write as often as you can yourself. Excuse all blunders & shortness of letter & Remember your

DeForest

Camp Noyse June 4th 1863

Dear Wife

Having again a little leisure time I thought I could not improve it to any better advantage than by writing you a few lines. I recd. a letter from you last evening dated the twenty ninth I was glad to learn you wer all enjoying good health. I am also pleased to hear that the little ones are going to school. I was also glad to learn that those I had written to had recd. them & also a little disappointed to think that the answers are not forthcoming. When I wrote my last I did not feel very well on acct. of a cold but am all right again. I was excused from duty for five days the first time for over four months. I am afraid you will worry about me when you hear what Ab. [Abner Thomas] wrote. It was the first day that I was sick, & he had just got so he could write. I did not think of his mentioning it untill he spoke about it. I knew what a baby he was to write so. I sat down & wrote so as to send by the same mail. I like to see a person write often to his folks but there is no use of ones writing every little foolish thing. I also love to see a man have a proper regard or love for his wife & family but I do dislike these lovesick letters they may answer very well for a lover to write to some half witted doll, but not to a woman of comon sense. It would be a task for me to write if I had a wife at home that it was necessary to write such to remind her that she had a husband in the armey & that he thought more of her than other women. But to business. There was some little excitement in camp today We wer awakened this morning about three o'clock by the beating of the drums. We dug out as the soldiers say when he is waked in a hurry and received orders to have every thing packed early for a march at sunrise. The report was that the rebbs had crossed the river and had arrived in front of our pickets. We packed up & marched about ½ mile & drawn up in line ready to receive the enemy. Staid about an hour & then marched back to camp where we are. It turned out to be a false alarm to see how long it would take us to be ready for action if it wer necessary. We are going to have another time of officer resigning. Our Lieut. Coll. [Henry C. Loomis] left us day before yesterday, & there are several of the Captains that have thrown in their resignation. I fear we shall loose our Capt. [Edward Porter] but I do not blame him if he does. they do not do the fair thing by him. I feel sorry to think we may for he is one of my friends & one cannot afford to loose a friend here every day, but I still hope for the best. We are looking with a great deal of interest to the involvements of Gen. [Ulysses S.] Grant & Rosencrances [William S. Rosecrans] armeys. I pitty their poor soldiers for I can guess something about what they have to suffer. I have not heard anything from the boys that are at Alaxandria since I wrote last [William] Cone has not written since he left the hospital here I hope they will get a leave of absence & come home before long. I do not think there is any danger of Cones dying from his wounds. they are not as I first supposed. We had a little furor here the other day Capt. Porter Giles [Capt. Benjamin Giles Casler, Co. A] & J. [John M.] Henry wer setting under a large oak tree in our Co. street when something dropped down from the tree

they sprang to their feet & looked up when behold two large black snakes wer stretched out on a limb about thirty feet above their heads. one of the boys took his gun & shot one, but the other cralled into a hollow limb & we wer obliged to cut the tree to kill him. one measured six feet & 1 inch & the other about five feet. They are quite plenty. there wer four killed the same day by our Regt. But I will bring my letter to a close. but one thing I must mention. In your letter you spoke of a dream you had & by the way you wrote I saw you wer a little worried. Now mary of all things do away with all whims of that kind for they onely tend to perplex & harass the mind & amount to nothing in the end. I was not aware that Louisa was married. Give my respects to all. Write as often as possible. Kiss all the little ones, & remember your

DeForest

Centerville [Virginia] June 17th [16] 1863

Dear Wife

It is now nearly a week since I have had an opportunity of writing to you or have received any news from home The last from you was sorrowful but I trust the next will be good tidings & this will find you again enjoying good health. My health continues good. You may be a little surprised to learn where we are for it is some _____ from our former _____ battlefield. We arrived here yesterday noon pretty well drilled out. It is getting pretty warm here & verry dry. there has not been any rain for _____. we wer greatly troubled on the march for the want of water. When we got here there was hardly a man but what had blistered his feet. I came verry near giving out the first days march. You will remember in my last I was going on picket the next morning. I was _____ 36 hours without any sleep & then came into camp packed up & started on the march. We wer four days on the march & I was better the last than the first.

~~It is quite lonely here now for there is one Frank [Strickland] and myself. Abner [Thomas] was unable to march _____ he was _____ will not be verry welcome. I cannot enlighten you any as to our further destination. we are under marching orders & we start tomorrow. The rumor in camp this afternoon is that Gen. [Robert H.] Milroy has had a fight with Lee & has been defeated. The rumor is that Lee is in the Shandoa vally making his way into Merry land. If so there will be warm times in that portion of country before many days I shall not be able to write much this time for I want to do some washing. As soon as we get settled again I will try to be more lengthy _____ to write as often _____ direct as heretofore. Give my love to all enquiring friends Tell Libbie I would like to have her continue to write as often as she can if she does not get another in return she must not think I dont think enough of them to answer them. Howard & mary must try and write often. Give Fathers & Mothers my love & tell them not to forget to write & so adieu for the present From your own~~

DeForest

In Camp near Goose Runn June 21st [1863]

Dear Mary

I have written six letters to you since I started on this march but have not been able to send it yet, but I will write you a few lines while I have time _____ when I can. Frank [Strickland] & I are well but we both pretty well used up when we arrived. I tryed to send you a letter while we lay at Centerville but could not & tryed again yesterday but it was sent back to the Regt. We got a mail at Centerville & are expecting one again tonight. we left there last Thursday & marched twenty three miles & encamped where we now are. We have been under marching orders ever since we have been here. I presume we will not remain any longer than tomorrow yet we may. I shall write as often as the circumstances will admit but you must not be worried if you do not get a line from me in two or three weeks. There has been some verry heavy firing of artilery about twenty miles from us today & the report has just been recd. that our men have driven the Rebs about four miles. I hope it is so.

Mary if there was pease once more in our land I would like to pick me out a farm in some places we have passed through in the last week. It is the most beautiful country naturally I ever saw but it lacks northern industry & enterprise to make it a regular Paradiice. There are plantations with five or six hundred acres improvements that are perfect praries in appearance for they are destitute of stumps or fences even & onely now & then a shade tree. These are surrounded with forrests of oak sufficient for all building purposes & for making rails for fence. Fruit grows spontanious along all the roads, & along the edge of the woods cherries grow. not our common black cherry but as nice as our tame ones. Some of the trees are 2 ½ feet in diameter. The boys have some gay old times gathering them for the Rebbs. I must not forget to tell you one thing, i.e., Goose Runn is a great place for catching Eels & catfish, & that we have had a good mess three days in succession, (i.e.) the Captain [Edward Porter] Lieut. H. [John M. Henry] Frank [Strickland] & myselfe. perhaps you may think I did not enjoy them some. Mary if you wer onely here by my side & such a thing as war was forgotten by both portions of our poor country, how I could enjoy the view that is spread out before me. we are encamped on a hill that enables one to see the country for miles around. We are some four miles from the Potomac but is plain to be seen for miles in either direction, but I will not try to describe its beauties now for the table I am using is a board about four inches in width & my seat is a knapsack. you will have all you can do to read what I have already written. Give my respects to all the folks tell them to write often as they can & oblige the Sojer boy. write as often as possible yourselfe & I will answer when I can. My love to Fathers & Mothers, sisters & brothers A kiss for each of the little ones & one for yourselfe

From your own

DeForest

Emmettsville [Emmitsburg, Maryland] June 30th 1863

Dear Mary

After nearly a week today I again improve the little time that presents itself for again writing a few lines. At the time I wrote the last we wer laying at a little place called Jefferson. I had not time to finish it & put it in the office when the orders came to march. We marched about twelve miles to a place called Middletown _____ remained two nights _____ all to _____ to make it pleasant for us _____ & from what it is _____ while we lay at Middletown & a good time we had of it. _____ I saw a _____ verry much to be able to send to you. It is called the _____ We started _____ about four P.M. _____ stoped at a city called Frederick the _____ city in _____ in the state. we did not have any oppornity of _____ the city for we wer on the march again at five o'clock _____ hard day for the poor soldiers for we had to travail about twenty three miles _____ weather has been rainy for the last week _____ knapsacks & equipage. We arrived here, Emmettsville, about six P.M. footsore & _____ other places we have visited in the state The inhabitants manifest great joy at our presence & each one tries to do as much or a little more than his neighbor for our comfort. There is an institution here called the Sisters of Charity that have already given us _____ thousand _____ I have not yet been able to _____ the eatables _____ but shall try to if we stay here any length of time. The boys that have been there say they have a verry extensive establishment & are cooking & _____ fast as they come That _____ They show their faith by their works. I learn there are about two hundred of them in all but there are onely about forty here now the rest are absent taking care of our sick & wounded soldiers _____ yesterday when the first division was passing they gave them nearly all bread & butter as they passed. Such deeds of charity cannot go without its reward in the world to come if not in this. How much more of the spirit of Christ is shown here than is shown by many of our Christian denominations that contend that these are not Christians. But I must drop this & finish by informing you I am still enjoying good health. Frank [Strickland] is also well. I got a letter from Asher [Bliss Jr.] last Sunday. He is at Chestnut Hill Hospt. Pa. his wounds are doing well. There is nothing of importance all not worth writing. Give my love to all & tell them not to forget to write. Write as often as you can yourselfe. Kiss the little ones for me, & remember

I am now & forever your own

DeForest

If I had time & a comfortable place I should like to give you a discription of the country we have passed through for the last week

Gettysburg July 2d 1863

Dear Wife

I have seeted myselfe to write you a few lines under rather peculiar circumstances. I am a prisentr, but unharmed otherwise. We wer again put into action yesterday about as we wer at Chancelorville. I do not know what they will do with us yet. Some think we will be sent to Richmond. Frank [Strickland] was wounded in the arm & I fear fatally. I tryed to have them let me stay with him but they would not. I cannot write much this time nor do I know for certain whether I can send _____ You must not worry about me for I will come around all right yet. Our Regiment is nearly all taken prisensors not many killed. Give my love to all my friends & keep up good courage & all will be well. May God bless you & all the rest. From your own

DeForest

July 2d. Have been laying around all day within sight of where the two armies are contending for victory. They have thought some of parolling us & sending us to our own lines but Gen. Hallack [Henry W. Halleck] has issued an order that he will not except any parolls on the field of battle.

July 3 A.M. Have just been drawn up in line & taken a vote whether we would except of such a paroll & we have agreed unanimously not to except it so we will soon start on the road to Richmond. Do not worry about me for we are well used by our conquerors. They do every thing they can to make us comfortable. We will most likely paroll us as soon as they get us there. Adieu for the present. I hope to be able to write to you again. Give my love to all.

DeForest

July 16th/63

as the Mail has Come and We found Some Mail for Mr Woodford and he is Numberd With the missing I Will take the Privilage to inform you of his absence I Could not tell you Wether he was Killed or not But I guess he Was not Killed for the most of the Boys Was taken Prisoners you Will hear from him in a few Days I think

William E Witherell
Co I 154 Regt

Libby Prison 100 29 1863

Dear Uncle

I have Just heard from Deforest he is on Bell Isle & is well he has had a suit of close

Ishued to him & one blanket his Captain [Edward Porter] & 2d Lieut [John M. Henry] is here in this Prison with me they are well I have know chance to write to Deforest I heard from him by the Col that Ishued the clothing they took the names of all the men on the Isle I think if you would send him a box that he would get it if you do send one I would send Sugar butter coffee Tea Tobacco crackers Ham writing Paper Envelopes & Ink those are the things that are the most needed & Tin Plate & cup knife & fork & spoon if you do send him a box you must pay the express charges to Fortress Monroe I write this to let you know what is needed not knowing whether he has a chance to write to you I wish you would write & let me know how _____ is we are not allowed to write long letters tell Sarah to write my love to all the _____

Direct Capt B G [Benjamin Giles] Casler
Prisoner of War
Richmond Va.

Direct to Deforest
Sergt S. D. Woodford
Prisoner of War
Belle Isle Co I 154 N Y V
Richmond Va

St. Johns Hos. Dec. 29 [1863]

Dear Wife

After a delay of over six months I am again able to write to you again In the mean time I have written you two short lines but do not know as you wer forutnate enough to get them. Since I last wrote to you, I have seen a great many hardships but thank God I am yet alive I shall not try to write much this time for my nerves are not steady enough I have got the rheumatism in my arms so they dont navigate good I wish you would send me a box of eatables. Butter cheese sugar Tobacco & tell Howard to send me ten dollars if he can. I do not know when I shall get any pay. you must not worry about me for I am well except the rheumatism direct your letters to Sergt.

Samuel D. Woodford
St. Johns College Hospital
Ward No. 2
Anapolis, Md.

Send the box as soon as you can & oblige your ever faithful

DeForest

Write imediately for I want to hear from you

D.

St. Johns College Host. Dec. 30 [1863]

Dear Mary

I wrote you a line yesterday but was so worn out from want of sleep that it was almost impossible for me to write I cannot do much better today but will try to do a little better. You may feel worried to hear that I am in an hospital but you must not for I am not so but that I am around. The trouble is I have lain on the damp ground for the last six months & have got the rheumatism tuckered to me pretty strong. They do not bother me much through the day but at night I am unable to sleep. But I am again in the land of the free, where I can get some thing done for me. If I felt well enough I would give you an outline of some of the sufferings on (Belle Isle) But I do not so you will have to wate untill some other time. My health has been verry good untill about four weeks ago, & you may believe that is one of the greatest blessings which God could grant a man that is a prisenor on that most acursed of all Islands on the face of the earth. There is no use of any mortal mans trying to discribe the misery & suffering that our poor soldiers have endured on that piece of ground. I am in hopes to be able to get home in the course of the winter & then I can tell what my pen is not able to write. I wrote in yesterdays letter for some money & a Box. I do not like to be sending home for money but it may be some time before I get any here. but we will be mustered for pay tomorrow. There is over two hundred dollars due me that must come some time. I shall write to you as often as twice a week while I stay here. It is so long since I have heard from home that I sometimes fear there may some thing dreadful have happened but hope for the best. O, you do not know how I would like to see you all but we must be patient the time will come yet. When you get this you must lay aside every thing else & write me a good long letter & let me know about all the folks how they are & what they are doing. tell them all to write as soon as they can, that I may hear from them in person Direct your Box the same as you do your letters

Sergt. S. D. Woodford
 St. Johns College Hospt.
 Ward No. 2

I had Giles [Benjamin Giles Casler] send for one but did not get any. Write to me how it was directed if it was sent & I may be able to get it yet. But I must stop for this time.

Give my love to all. Kiss all the little ones for me & remember I am still your own

DeForest

Anapolis Jan. 6th, 1864

Dear Wife

It is now eight days since I arrived here & am _____ to feel quite at home. I think I am getting some _____ rheumatism, for I rest better nights. I did not want to write home again untill after hearing from you but must do something to busy myself about. I am looking for a letter from you every day but have just heard you were having _____ severe storm that was likely to interfere with the mail. It is hard work for me to write any thing like a letter & will be untill after I hear from you. You do not know how anxious I am to hear from you. it seems as though it had been an age since I heard from you. But I thank God I am again where we can write to each other. There is no one can tell what freedom is untill he has been a prisenor on Belle Isle for six months then he will know how to appreciate that noble gift. Although I have had to suffer beyond discription yet I think I am a great deal wiser than when I was taken prisenor. I have learned more of human anture than I could in a lifetime in any other place. I never knew before any thing about the depravity of the human heart. I find by experience that in this world it is every one for themselves & the d—I take the hindmost. Perhaps you would like to know how I am scituated here. Well as far as comfort is conserved I could wish for nothing better. There are four beds in the room I am in, & they are just what a man from Belle Isle knows how to appreciate. They are iron bedsteads with two good mattresses on each one. They are the most like home of any thing I have enjoyed for the last year & a half. Our fare is as good as I could ask for. Our breakfast consists of a sort of a beef stew, bread & butter, & a cup of coffee. For dinner we have a change every day of the week. our suppers are always the same bread & butter & tea. Some might think the quantity rather small but is enough to satisfy me very well. I have always had a sort of dread of an hospital but I find things far different from what I expected. If any thing they are too careful of the sick. We have got a verry fine Steward & wardmaster. they do all in their power to make one comfortable. The Steward has taken a fancy to me & says as soon as I am able he is going to put me in charge of a ward. I think it is a business I shall like for you know I always was at home in a sick room. Evening. It is getting pretty well along in the evening & no letter from home yet but I will write a few more lines to pass away the time you any rest assured of hearing from me pretty often while I am here for I shall have plenty of time to write & every convenience for writing. As soon as you can get time I want you to write & let me know where Asher [Bliss Jr.] Frank [Strickland] & all the rest of the boys are, for I am anxious to hear from them all. I hope they are all alive & well. Perhaps you should like to know how we fared on the Island. Well I will tell you what we got in the shape of grub. In the morning we got about a quarter of a pound of bread & a piece of meat that any hungry man could put into his mouth at two bites. This was all we got untill four P.M. when we got another piece of bread (the same size) and a dish they called soup, but it was more like dishwater than soup. Of this each man got nearly a pint cup full. It was sometimes made of damaged rice & sometimes of a kind of _____ which they use for feeding their cattle & hogs & is called _____ Peas. it was horrid stuff for a human being to eat but hunger will make a man do almost any thing. You will hardly cre__ it, but still it is never the less true. There has men been _____ sick & vomited up their victuals shortly after eating them _____ other men came & picked out pieces of meat they had thrown up & ate them. but I thank God I never got hungry enough for that. I fared pretty well the most of the time. I was s _____ of a squad. my business was to draw & divide out the rations for a hundred men for which I got double rations, & _____ that one could eat such as it was. but still there has been times that I would have been glad to have got to my swill _____ & could have made a hearty meal & relished it. But those times are past but will never be forgotten. I will not try to tell the sufferings that I have seen others endure from sickness & starvation, for it is beyond my

power to do it justice.

Jan. 7th. Well Mary I have wated untill the first mail came hoping to hear from you, but to no purpose. I did not intend to finish this untill I got an answer from the first I wrote you but will have to if I send it by todays mail. I want you to tell my Fathers & Mothers, Sisters & Brothers, to write to me for I want to hear from them personally, & likewise S___ little Nephews. In your answer let me know how all the neighbors get along, who was drafted & all about things in general. I guess it is time to close for this time give my love to all the folks, & tell them I am yet alive but not verry well. I want Howard & Mary to write as often as they can get time you all know how well I like to hear from my friends at home, & I hope I shall not have to give them such a scolding as I did last winter in order to get them to write for it is verry disagreeable business for me as well to them But enough kiss the babies for me & tell them to be good untill I come.

From yours untill death

DeForest

Anapolis Wednesday, Jan. 13, 1864

Dear Brother Howard

I have written three letters to Mary & I will now write to some of the rest of you. She may feel a little jealous but never mind I am a good way from home so she will not be able to give me a scolding for some time to come at least. But to business. About three P.M. yesterday Adamses express wagon drove into the yard & delivered to me a box containing sundry articles in the eating line which looked somewhat temting to a Belle Island convict. I had it conveyed to my room & the contense examined. The examination proved a satisfactory one for every thing was in ample order. You may rest assured I did not taste of any of it. O no, not I. Such things might be hurtfull to meddle with. I will inquire of the docter when he comes around in the morning if victuals are good for ones health. my own opinion is they are, but men differ in opinion you know. Some think old Abe [Lincoln] is the man for the next president but I think little Mack [George B. McClellan] is the one to sit in the big chair, don't _____ to joking. The box you had the goodness to send came to hand with every thing in good shape. I tell you what _____ could get such a box on Belle Isle, he would be _____. There was every thing which he needed, but all would come handy. A person that never had been there might think that such little things as thread & needles, soap & the like would be of little account, but it is not the case I have know thread to sell there at the rate of two needles full for five cents & soap & other things in proportion. Soap was at times almost unknown untill just before we left, when we drew our clothes they gave each man a small piece of soap. before that we used to take sand to scour the dirt off of our hands. I presume there are a great many in the north that have hard work to get along on account of high prices but if they want to see true misery let them visit the capital of Jeff. Davises dominions. There is where provisions cost something i.e. if they call their green

backs any thing, which I some times think they do not. Butter is eight dollars per lb. cheese four, sugar four, Hams two fifty to three dollars, Beef one fifty to one seventy five, Wrye coffee two dollars, a loaf of Bread which would cost five cents in our lines costs one dollar. Turkeys, stuffed & baked, from thirty five to forty dollars, common apple pies fifty cents, Potatoes one dollar per quart, common molasses eight dollars per gall. But you must remember these prices are in their money. you could buy as much with one dollar of our money as you could for ten of theirs. So you can see how much they think of their currency. but this does not help their poor for they have to take their money for their labour & have to pay the market prices for the necessities of life. If I was a _____ working for eleven dollars per month and my wife & little ones had to depend upon my earnings for a living I should fear they would suffer for the want of some thing to eat & I think they would have hard work to keep me in the ranks. yet there is one thing connected with their money that I cannot see through you cannot see a boy or woman in the streets but have their hands full & pockets full. The boys used to say old Jeff. issued it twice per week the same as they do rations. I have been looking for a letter from home for the last three days. I have already written four & this makes the fifth & have onely received one in return. yet I will try & not be to impatient it takes some little time to get the machine to going regualrly, but after that it is our own fault if it gets out of repair. I hope we will all _____ ourselves good _____ during the remainder of my of my absence & this reminds me of what I have nearly forgotten to tell you, i.e. that I am trying to get a furlough to come home & spend a few days with you. I wrote to John Manley yesterday to see if he could not assist me in getting it I shall look for an answer in a day or two. he wrote to one of our boys that he was trying to get furloughs for all of the men of the 64th [New York] & our own Regiment that had been priseners on the Island I hope he will succeed. I think they deserve one if any body does. If get any I think it will be for thirty days. I was fearful one spell that I should not be able to come home for some time but my rheumatism is getting so it does not trouble me but verry little compared to what it did. I think the blistering is what done the work. The water which gathered under the skinn was so thick it would not run out when they opened it they had to pull it out. it resembled the white of an egg more than any thing lese. Howard when you get _____ find leisure I want you to sit down & write me a good long _____ how you are getting along how the stock looks what _____ you had _____ you are out for fodder &c. &c. also _____ thrives & if you think it will be profitable to raise _____ things have gone for the last eight months as though I had not been there.

Hoping to receive answer to this soon, I still remain your affectionate brother

DeForest

To Mary H.

Well Mary I have already written Howard a long letter as you can plainly see yet there is a little spare room left & having learned how to economise during my visit with old Jeff. I will not waste that little. I have nothing of interest to write yet I know you will except of it such as it is. I hope it will not be long before I shall be able to be where it will not be necessary for me to use the pen to let you know how I get along but can tell you in person. yet I shall not place my hopes upon it to strong for fear I may get disappointed. If I should I shall make myselfe as contented as possible for I have every thing as comfortable around me as any soldier could wish, good beds, warm & pleasant rooms, & nothing to do but write to my friends & eat my grub, & sence I got

my box I find the latter one of the most pleasant jobs which I have to do. Last evening I invited the Steward to eat supper with me my stock of eatables wer light bread Tea stued berries crackers dried beef & cheese. you better believe we made a full meal. I think I shall begin to flesh up some now. But I must stop writing for it getting nearly supper time & I have been writing pretty busy for a long time & _____ begin to get tired, although this is a poor excuse for a letter I hope you will be kind to answer it as soon as you can get time, & so adieu for this time. Kiss the little ones for me. My love to all both young & old.

S. D. Woodford

Evans Erie Co. [New York] Jan. 14th/64

Sergt. S. D. Woodford

Dear Friend

This afternoon we (my wife & I) received a letter from your other half saying that she had learned (by the reception of a letter from you) that you were now in Annapolis and she wished me to write to you immediately. When I saw you last I had no expectations that I should ever see you again and the reception of that letter revived the hope that I may now ere long look at you again. While I sympathize with you in the trials you have had to undergo since your capture at Gettysburg, & the fatiguing marches on your way to that noted place called Richmond, & also your lengthy sojourn in that earthly hell called Belle Isle, I also rejoice with you that your health has been spared and you have been enabled to endure the privations incident to prisoners in the hands of such a class, until you could obtain relief through the proper "modus operandi." Doubtless you have more you have news from Red House than I can write so I will not attempt further than to say that I have seen Jimmy [Frink] & Abner [Thomas] since I came home and they looked about as fleshy as when they were in the field. When you were peremptorily ordered to the rear as you were just preparing to take care of me there at the brick kiln my feeling were such as I cannot describe, perhaps you can imagine. Shortly after you left, some Rebs came in, spread some blankets, laid down 2 wounded rebs and put me between them, where I lay still bleeding till about dark when Dr. [Assistant Surgeon Corydon C.] Rugg found me, dressed my arm and entirely stopped its bleeding. Soon as you left, Wilkes [J.] Miller of Co. A from our town came there and brought water to us, & to those on the field — then he too was ordered to the rear with a bayonet close behind him. Before he left, as I did not expect to live, or ever to see any of our Reg. again, I gave him the family likeness which I had with me, asking him to mail it to my family; he said he would but they have not got it. do you know where he is, or anything about him? About midnight Dr. Rugg came with a one horse wagon and carried me to a church in town where I lay till July 3d when my arm was amputated and on the 4th I kept Independence by riding 4 miles in an ambulance to the Corps Hospital where I found Thaddeus L. Reynolds of our company badly wounded by a shell — three fingers were taken off his left hand & all the flesh from his left hip. John Paugh was there wounded through the right thigh, both died in a few days. John Bush & James F. Chase Co. D were there, Chase died the latter part of July & Bush is doing

well — has been home on furlough. Lewis Bishop color sergt. Co. C had both his legs amputated, afterwards died. The color corp. Co. E [David Ash] was shot through the arm but is still alive, his _____. The color corpl. [Albert Mericle] Co. H was shot through the stomach and died in a few days. Of the rest of our Co. or Regmt. I know but little. I know of none that were killed, if you do please let me know when you write. The 24th of July I left that hospital for Harrisburg, where I staid until the 6th of Oct. when I got my discharge and came home. My children readily recognized me with the exception of the babe, & she will scarcely admit that I have a right to touch her even now. I have been twice to Salamanca since my return home, and the last time saw your wife & children, (the first time they were not at home) had a good visit with them. if you had been there we should have had a “tip top” time. I do not wish to flatter you, but must say that your boy Irving is a noble little fellow. Mary Maria looks still as she does in your picture. I am sorry to learn from your wifes letter that your exposure on Belle Island has brought upon you that distressing disease — Rheumatism, but I trust you are now where you can receive that attention & medical care which will restore you to your former health, and if that cannot be done in the army I hope you may be sent home where you can have the care requisite to bring it about. Give my kind regards to any & all of our Co. who may be with you, especially to Capt. [Edward] Porter & Lieut. [John M.] Henry if they are paroled. If you can see them please ask the Capt. or Lieut. for a Certificate stating when, how, & where, I was wounded as it is necessary for me to present such a certificate in order to obtain a Pension. I borrowed \$1.00 of you just before our last battle & in Nov. I paid it to Howard with a request that he would send it to you if he ever heard from you so that he could. I know that previous to that time I had borrowed more money of some one but cannot tell who, was it you? If so, tell me how much & I will try to pay it. If you should come home on furlough please notify me so that I can see you before you go back. Please write & give me all the information you can respecting our Co. & Reg. also of your own welfare. With best wishes for your prosperity I remain your old friend well wisher tent mate & partner in clock tinkering

F. Strickland

Evans Erie Co. New York

Please accept the best wishes for your future prosperity and happiness, your restoration to health, and to your family and home, of your old neighbor and friend, C. L. Strickland

Camp Paroll April 10/64

Dear Mary

It is Sunday & I will try and write you a few lines. I wrote you the day I arrived to let you know I was here & well. I find it rather lonely here after being at home so long, & the rest of the regt. being gone makes it more so. They have all gone to Camp Chase. I shall look for Capt. P. [Porter] & the rest of our officers here in the course of the next week. There was two boats left Fortress Monroe for City Pt. last Thursday. there are onely about one thousand of our men now in

Richmond. I expected to find the rest of my Regiment here that wer left on the Island when I came away but did not they wer sent to Gorgia I hope my Capt. will come for I think it will be more pleasant for me if he does ____ I hope they will send me where the rest of the boys are for I believe the have got a better place than we have here. It is about four miles from Columbus & they do not have any guards around the camp, so they can go and come when they please, but here they have to get a pass if they want to go ten rods out of camp. It comes rather hard for me after having my liberty for fifty days. I have been sorry a good many times that I did not make it more there is hardly a man comes back on time & there is nothing done with them there was a sergt. came back when I did that was ten days behind time, & all they said to him was you are rather slow. Fargo & J. Wadkins have not got back yet.

It looks a little like old times here to look around you & see tents in every direction. [General Ambrose E.] Burnside is going on another secret expedition. I understand he will have over a hundred M. men & twenty thousand of them are Negroes. It is rather amusing to see the black bugers put on airs. Perhpas Mary you would like to know how I feel in my mind after leaving home. I wish I could analise them but cannot they are different from any thing I ever felt before. I did not reallise for some time that I was leaving home & friends to be separated from them for another years & a half, but the truth of the matter began to force itself upon my mind it soemed as if it could not be possible. If it would have done any good I could have had a good crying spell. I tell you mary it was a hard battle to fight, the hardest one I think I shall be called to pass through during my term of service.

I do not think I will have any fighting to do this summer for we are not yet exchanged & there are but little prospects of an exchange for some time to come. The Provost Martial was in our Barracks & told us that we would probably have a summers job of it. I am sure I can stand it if they can afford to stay here as long as they can afford to keep me. Mary you must excuse me from writing a verry lengthy letter this time for there is not news enough afloat to make one interesting & I am a little nervous with all. I shall try & write to some of you as often as twice a week. You must all write as often as you can. Give my love to all our friends Kiss all the little ones. God bless them & the rest of you is the prayer of your absent

DeForest

Camp Paroll, Apr. 19th [1864]

Dear Mary

I wrote you a letter this morning informing you that I had not heard from you this afternoons mail did not bring anny. I presume there will be some here tomorrow, but I will not be here to receive them for I start for Camp Chase tomorrow at 6 A.M. you must write as soon as you get this & direct your letters to (Camp Chase Near Columbus Ohio) I was in hopes to hear from you before going but I will try & be patient. I am glad they are going to send me to Cp. C. for it will be more pleasant I think & may be more apt to get home if anny of you wer sick. My

health is better than it was Give my love to all. Kiss the little ones for me. good night write as soon as you get this from your own

DeForest

Camp Chase May 5th, 64.

Dear Mary

I have again arranged my paper for the purpose of writing you another letter. I do not know but the rest will begin to think they are not going to get anny more letters from me but they must keep up good courage their turn will come one of these days. It takes some time to get the thing in good working order. I began to think there was some thing out of order not getting anny from home for so long of a time but it is all right now. I have recd. four from you two came last night one dated Apr. 23d the other the first of may. It is strange when has kept some of our letters so long on the road. they will be all the more exceptable when they do come.

Well Mary I must humble myself a little and beg your pardon for writing as I have but you do not know how I felt about not hearing from you in so long a time I began to fear you was sick & would not write for fear I would worry too much about it. If you should ever anny of you be sick you must not try to keep me from knowing the worst at once. but this is a little to much like the girl thinking about getting married & her first born getting drowned in the well.

I was in hopes of getting my pay before this we have been mustered & signed the payroll I am glad to hear Howard did so well on his job if he goes down the river again before I am exchanged I would like to have him stop & see me. If he should he must enquire for the Paroll Barreck, Co. D. It is quite hard for a stranger to find anny one the camp occupyes five hundred acres of land it is rented by (Gov) It is getting pretty well filled up with the mailita & they are arriving very fast. I will send you some verses composed expressly for them.

[The rest of the letter is missing.]

Camp Chase May 9th 64

Dear Brother Howard

I have written all my letters, so far, to mary but will now try & write you a few lines. I was in hopes before this to have been able to send you some money. Some of the troops here have already got their pay. the rest will probably be paid in a day or so. There is a report in todays paper that we are exchanged but I hardly think there is any truth in it. it is not official but let it come. the more men we get in the field the sooner those that live to get home at all, will be able

to return. It seems as though there would be something done this time. If there is not we might as well give up first as last. & then there are other reasons why I feel so indifferent about an exchange. Of all other places in the world, this is the worst as far as society goes. Howard you would be surprised at the depravity of the human beings of this world, could you but remain here one week & hear & see for your selfe. Depraved & unprincipaled women have collected here from every part of the country. It is estimated there are over 1,500 of these creatures in the city of Columbus, & the lord onely knows how many there are scattered through the country. The woods are full of them. You may think it would be a great temptation. To some it may be but to me it is the reverse. It is disgusting to anny one that has a mind of their own. If I wer going to commit suicide, I should prefer some more speedy way. O, Howard you do not know how I long for a different society to mingle with from that which I am thrown amongst here. Joyful indeed will be the day when I will again be permitted to choose for myselfe. Well How - a few lines to business. I am a little worried about Cass'es [Cassius M. Ellis, 64th New York] trade, yet there may be no occasion for it, but these times are such that it is necessary to be a little careful how one gets in debt. If Cass was onely at home, & got sufficient time, the place is cheep enough, but if he should happen to get wounded he would never be able to pay for it & would loose all his hard earned money. Now Howard if the writings are not already drawn, have it done in a way that we or some one else can have the priviledge of paying the balance. Cass ought to give you a Power of attourney in writing & drawn in a way that it will stand law. When you ans. this (& I hope it will be soon) give me the full details of the matter, & how you are getting along with your own affairs. Mary wrote in her last that C. Topliff talked of setting up his mill on the creek, & would give \$75. for Hemlock. Now if he will you can afford to give him the use of the ground for mill & yard for nothing as long as he wants it for a mill you would do well to make a bargain for all the logs we will have to spare for lumber will not always be as high as it is now but you must do as you think best.

But I will bring this to a close for you will have all you can do to make out what I have already written. Tell all the folks to write often & oblige the Sojer boy. When you see Libbie Giles tell her I would be glad to hear from her again. My love to all.

Adieu,

DeForest

Camp Chase May 14th [1864]

Dear Mary

I have just expressed \$100 dollars to Howard & will now sit down & write you a few lines to inform you of it & to let you know how I am. My health is pretty good, better than I expected it would be when I was at home. Yet it is not as good as I wish it was. I feel the effects of Bellisle, when I worry around to much; I expect we will have to go to the front as soon as next week, but do not know for certain. There are a great many different rumors but do not know as

there is anny truth in anny of them. time will tell for its selfe. I will send a rect. to Howard & a two dollars bill. They say it is not good but I do not believe it. I got it at Almira, when I was going to Annapolis. Well Mary you must not be surprised if there are blunders in this letter for there are about a dosen drunken men in the Barracks singing and talking just as a lot of drunken men always will. man is a curious creature. many of them are beneath the brute creation in many respects. There are hundreds here that spend their money for whisky & other ways still worse if possible, forgetting (apparently) that they have loving wives & helpless children at home who are suffering for the verry means they are worse than throwing away O Mary I thank God he has given me a mind of my own & a will capable of governing my actions, & will enable me at the end of this war to look back to this part of my life with pleasure & not with pain. I have been looking for a letter for the last three days. It is nearly a week since I got one from you. I think tonight will bring it You must continue to write for the letters will follow us if we should be sent to the front. Ever Marys

DeForest

Howard

I have written nearly all to mary & have directed it to you, but it makes no difference its all in the family. you know I have sent you some money & hope it will be of help to you. I was in hopes to have got my ration money, but have not been able to yet, but it will come good when I do. Write as soon as you get this & let me know if the money came through all right. I am quite anxious to hear from Cass [Cassius M. Ellis, 64th New York] I fear for the poor boy. there has been some awful fighting done. God grant he may not be one of the many slain. O, this cruel war. But I will close for this time. My love to you all. From your Brother

DeForest

Camp Chase May 17/64

Dear Mary

I will write you a few more lines, the last you will be apt to get from me while I remain here, for we leave today at 12 a.m. for the front. It will be some time before we get to the Regt. for we go to Cincinatti & have an examination. I got a letter from you last night, the first for eight days. It is strange what becomes of all the letters written by us for I have written as often as every three days. It will probably be some time before we hear from each other but I will try & write a few lines while on the way. I got a paper of yesterday that gave an acct. of an engagement our Regt. was in. Col. [Patrick Henry] Jones & a number more officers wer wounded. It did not mention the names of anny of the privates.

_____ Some of the boys cut those _____ ould not _____
 send some _____ will start _____ will write _____

DeForest

Well Mary, I am again going where dangers are on every hand but you must not worry too much for the God that has preserved my life thus far is still ready & willing to continue his goodness to me. Let us trust in his goodness to permit us to meet again when this cruel war is over, never again to separate until called to try the realities of another world. I do not think there will be much fighting to do by the time we get there. I think this war is soon ended. I will not try to write much for I have got to be stirring. Give my love to all, & tell them to write as soon as they find where to direct to me. Kiss all the little blessings for me, & remember your own

DeForest

Camp Chase May 18/64

Dear Mary

Yours of the 15th ult. is before me. I am not onely pleased but surprised for I did not expect to get another from you while here. We did expect to leave here yesterday but did not as you see but the talk is now we are going tomorrow at 8 a.m. but dont know for certain. I have written so often of late that there is not much to write but I feel as though I must write a few more lines before leaving, for it may be many long days before we reach our journeys end. We will go from here to Cincinnati There we will be examined, they say, and those that are not fitted for the field will be put into the Invalid Corps. I do not care about being examined until we get to the front for I am sure it will be better for to go there. I will never be able to go with the Regt. I begin to feel the rheumatism more & more every day. I am quite lame now but will not complain for they will think I am playing off, to get rid of going to the front. There are some that are being examined here.

~~You say in your letter you can see I do not like my present home. You may rest assured I do not,~~ for there are two things that abound here that I despise above all others, drunkenness & ----- well never mind you can guess. They are destroying our young men by the hundreds. It would have been far better for them to have died on the battle field fighting for their country. Their friends would have the consolation of knowing they died an honorable death, & they when the hour came to leave, could say, my life has not been in vain. I have given it a sacrifice for my country, & for generations yet unborn.

I am glad Libbie is going to live with you this summer for it would be to hard for Mary to do the work & it will be more pleasant for you all. We (Libbie & I) had some talk about it the day I came away. you need not say anny thing to her about it but you know how much I think she is worth. I have just been & drawn a Knapsack & canteen & bought me a sachel yesterday for we did not expect to get anny & if I have time I will put my over coat & a few pare of pants & may be some other traps in it & send it home by express.

I will now close & write a few lines to Mary & Billie. Continue to write but be sure to the Regt. & company on the end as I directed Hoping these few lines will find you all enjoying good health & contented mind I remain yours untill death

DeForest

May 19th. Cannot get my sachel expressed. Leave at 9 a.m. Good by

DeForest

Chattanooga May 30th 64

Dear Mary

I arrived here some two days ago but have not written before hoping to be able to find out when & where we wer going to from here. When I wrote to you before we did not know but we would come here a foot & bring a drove of cattle, but did not make it out as you see. We wer two days comeing here by rail 150 miles. Pretty fast traveling you may think, but it was fast enough for the road we run off the track twice but did not hurt anny one verry badly Onely a few sprained ancles & knees. A great manny jumped off & by that means got hurt if they had have stuck to the cars they would have been all right. I staid on & so came out all right, but it was disagreeable riding for one could not help feeling a little skeert. We found quite a number of officers & men of our Regt. here. Coll. [Patrick Henry] Jones amongst the rest. From all accts. they have seen pretty rough times & I am not sorrow I was not there Jimmie [Frink] came off all right. Ben Lee was hurt falling off the rocks. This is a hard place for our arney. I never saw a place better calculated for resisting an invading foe than it is all through here. Lookout Mt. & Mission ridge are both in sight of here & are sausy looking places.

~~Well Mary there is nothing new to write we do not know what is going on as well as you do at home. We have not heard anny thing from [General William T.] Sherman for several days. yet it is rumored he has taken Atlanta. We do not know when we will leave here the 4th & 20th Corps have gone on a raid & taken 20 days rations with them & intend making it last 40, & we will not leave here untill they stop Coll. Jones left for the Regt. yesterday but did not know whether he could get to it or not. I do not care how long they keep us from the field I have no particular desire to do anny more fighting.~~

Mary I do not know what to say to you about writing. I do not know how long we will stay here, & the letters that go to Camp Chase will not stop here but go on to the regt. I presume it will be a long time before I hear from you again but I shall try & keep you posted as to my whereabouts. you must do as you think best about writing. I should be glad to hear from you every day but cannot. Give my love to all & especially the little ones. Hoping this will find you all well I will close. From your own

DeForest

Chattanooga, June 3d 1864

Dear Wife

I have wated three days more without writing, for I was in hopes to be able to let you know by this time what they intended to do with us, but I guess they do not know what disposition to make of us themselves. One story is that we are not legally exchanged & Gen. [George H.] Thomas will not except of us, but it is probably onely a rumor. There si one thing I do know They tryed to send the men of the 14th Corps but the Quarter Master Gen. would not furnish arms to them & sent them back to the Barracks, but there may be other reasons than the above why he would not. I am sure I do not care how long they keep us from the front. I have no particular desire to go there. Our Regt. is nearly destroyed there is hardly an officer in it now. Our Co. is commanded by a corporal. There is onely seven men left in it. J. [James W.] Baxter the orderly arrived here yesterday. The Regt. has had three days more hard fighting Jimmy [Frink] was all right when he left. I should like to see the boy. I am in hopes our Regt. will be detailed to guard some post they are getting so reduced they are not fit to remain in the field. Coll. [Patrick Henry] Jones is going as one of Gen. Thomases staff he says he will try to do some thing for the boys. I think he intends trying to get us in as boddy guard. if he could it would be a good position. but these are all conjectures I shall try & keep you informed of our whereabouts. That will be the most I can do for as for war news you have the advantage of us already for what we get here is all taken from eastern papers & is more than a week old when it gets here When I wrote to you before I did not give you anny directions for I did not know as we would be here anny length of time but I am sorrow now I did not for there is no knowing how long we may remain. do not write anny thing but you had as leaf others should see for they may not reach me You must excuse poor writing for my paper is verry poor & my pen more so It is verry warm here, but we have had a fine shower of rain which has cooled the air verry much. I cannot form ~~any opinion about farming here for there is not a field of corn or grain of anny kind in sight &~~ the view is a pretty extended one Here one has a fare chance to see the effects of war. dead men, dead mules, & dead industry. yet it is better in some respects here than it was at Columbus I did not see a minister while I was there, but here they come every morning & distribute papers & tracts, & have an half hours preaching. It looks rather odd to see them gambling in one part of the house & the ministers of God preaching in the other. But I must stop for it is rainy again & my paper is getting wet. Write as soon as you get this. Yours Forever

DeForest

Direct

Co I 154th Regt. N.Y. Voll.
 2d Brigade, 2d Divis. 20th Corps
 Arney of the Cumberland
 Chattanooga Tenn.

Chattanooga June 6th 64

Dear Mary

As I have nothing else to do to pass away the time & intend leaving tomorrow for the Regt. I will spend a little time visiting with you & the rest of the folks. but it is a hard task to do so with the utensils that I have. I have written every third day since we arrived but have not heard anny thing from you but am not at all disappointed. I presume there are letters awaiting me at the Regt. I am about the same as usual as far as health goes. The rheumatis bothers me yet. One of my knees is quite lame. I presume I shall not be able to do much marching & prehaps will not have to for our Corps is relieved & is the reserve & our Regt. is so reduced that it is quite likely they will be taken to guard some place along the Rail road. I have not heard anny thing from the boys since I last wrote. There has not been anny news from the front for several days. I do not think our men intend to attack them in front but compell them to leave their fortifycations by flanking them. They (the Rebs) occupy the last range of hills this side of Atlanta & if they can be routed from there they will have the worst of the work of taking Atlanta done. Prisenors taken lately say [Gen. Joseph E.] Johnston intends giving us a desperate fight & if he is defeated, surrender & not suffer his army to be taken by piecemeal. I hope this will be the case, for then I think the rebellion would soon be done with.

It will seem rather odd to get back to the co. again. Geo. Mosier [Sergeant George Mosher, Co. I] will be first in command, & I second. he says I have got to take charge of it, & he will go back to the ranks if I will not without but I had rather he would take the lead for he is a first rate fellow & would do as well by the boys as he possibly could.

Well friends I begin to feel quite anxious to hear from you again, but will have to wate patiently untill the time arrives. Days seem like weeks sinc I left home but still they are passing away & every one makes the time of y absence so much shorter. There was quite a number left here today whose time of servis had expired. I presume I did not envy them anny. O, no not I, but all men must bide their time, I with the rest. We have been having quite a rainy time to day is the first pleasant one for over a week but it is so much cooler since the rain that I almost wish it would rain all the time. I am so fleshy that I presume it will be hard business for me this summer

I will bring this excuse of a letter to a close for you have probably got enough of this kind. Write often. give my best regards to all. Tell the little ones I still remember them & except of one or more of them what you sent to me in one of yours

DeForest

[Fragment of letter, week of July 10, 1864.]

before he can be cared for, if a person is wounded here, his wound is dressed, then he is put on the cars and sent to Chattanooga before it is again dressed. It takes about two days to make the trip. Dr. Vernorman [Surgeon Henry Van Aernam] came from home last week and says he heard Capt. [Edward] Porter was dead I fear it is true but hope he is not.

Well mary I received yours of the 3d & was glad to learn the sick wer doing so well for I was fearful of hearing some of them wer not of this world but God is mersiful. Let us be thankful to him for his goodness. My health is about the same my back & legs trouble me some. Jimmy [Frink] is well & in good spirits Give my love to all, & excuse poor writing. I guess you will have to put on your glasses to read this for my ink is a little consumptive Kiss the little ones & remember me as usual.

Yours Ever

DeForest

[Undated fragment, circa July 1864]

I am sorry to hear of Fathers having such bad luck but tell him to keep up good courage I shall be home again in little over one short year. then we will see what can be done. Tell Howard & him to stick to the plow & suffer no loss. Fate will not always be against them nor the frost neither I hope Give my Respects to all & tell them I would be glad to write to them if I onely had the time. Tell Libbie I thank her for writing & will answer it as soon as possible. Praying,

When this cruel war is over
We may all meet again, I will close

Yours for Ever

DeForest

Jimmy [Frink] sends his best respects & says tell my folks I am well.

In Camp. The same as before. July 11th 1864

Well Mary

As I have not had an opportunity of writing you anny verry lengthy letter since I arrived at the Regt. I will now try & make up the deficiency as there has not been anny orders to march yet. we have lain in our present camp longer than anny other since my return. It is verry pleasantly scituated on a ridge two miles from the river but it is a wilderness all the way there & another

ridge about the same hight of this so we cannot see it. we have been pretty busy since I have been with the boys. I got back the 26th of June & on the 27th our Division advanced their lines nearly a mile. The Johnnys peppered us some, but we wer not long in getting up breastworks to protect us from the stray bullets. It would astonish you to see how quick the boys will get up breastworks after they get their position. One man will hold the guns for several others & at it they go. Every thing that will help stop a bullet is taken, Old logs, fence rails, & every thing moovable is piled up in a line in front of us. Then if the bullets are not flying too thick the Pioneers are sent for to cut logs to lay up regular breast works. but if they do they wate till night befor they go at it, & in the morning will appear works that the boys would laugh to have the Johnyes attack. When this much is done our batteries get into position & commence the work of annoying the enemy There has been firing on the skirmish line continually for the last six weeks. I am getting so used to the sounds of musketry that I do not notice it unless they fire by volleys. We have driven the enemy from three verry strong positions the last two weeks. They left their last works on this side of the river night before last. They have lost verry heavily in prisoners & deserters, while we have onely lost a few in wounded along the skirmish line. It has not been the fear of an attack in front which has caused them to leave their works (There is nothing would please them more than for us to do so) but while a portion of our arney is annoying them in front another portion is working around to their rear. They cant stand these flank movements. The rumor is we have two corps across the river already & they have taken some of the first lines of works around Atlanta but I hardly credit it. but I presume you know more about it at home than we do here. I presume the works around Atlanta are stronger than those at Vixburg for deserters say they have about 5,000 negroes at work on them. yet I do not think we will have anny difficulty in taking it for our forse is large enough to surround them, if they will onely stop long enough in one place for us to do it. But enough of this. I recd. your letter dated June 27th yesterday. was glad to learn you & the rest of the family wer as well as they wer, but grieved to hear of Father Fullers getting hurt, but I am in hopes to hear in your next that he is not so badly hurt as your last one stated. I shall look with anxiety for your next. It is a curious position to be in, to wish to hear from home & at the same time dread too for fear of hearing bad news. Yet we must submit to the will of God. His ways are not the ways of man. Let us trust in him & hope for the best. I am glad to hear Cass [Cassius M. Ellis, 64th New York] is safe yet & hope he will escape unharmed. Mary I will have to close my ~~visit with you for this time for the mail goes in ten minutes more Give my love to all, & tell them~~ I would be glad to write to them if I could get the time. I do not have as much time as I might if I did not have to do all the writing in the Co. Tell Jimmies [Frink's] folks he is well. he sends his respects to all. Kiss the little ones for me, & save some for yourselfe

Write soon & often From your own,

For Ever,

DeForest

In camp two miles from Chattahoochee river July [14, 1864]

Dear Mary

As there is a chance of sending a letter this afternoon & seeing that we cannot get the chance every day, I will improve this opportunity of writing I cannot write more than enough to let you know I am well for I am bussy making out the payrolls it is a long job & a verry particular one. I got a letter from you night before last dated June 22d & was glad to learn you wer all well. We have been on the moove so much lately that the chances for writing are few & far between The Johnnies have fell back about eight miles & caused us to make some different arrangements. They have made another stand now on the last range this side of the river but I do not think they can stay in their present position long for if they wer in danger of being flanked before their present position is still mor exposed. We can see Atlanta from where we lay by climbing the trees. The Rebs lost verry heavily in their last retreat our corps took over one thousand principally deserters, & I presume the other corps done full as well. It must be verry discouraging to the general commanding their arney to loose so manny men & not have the satisfaction of even injureing his opponant. I think if he is not careful he may loose a great manny more before he gets over the river. We are in a verry pleasant camp now but do now know what minute we may moove. I will not try to write anny more now for I am tired & must rest so as to go at the Rolls again this afternoon. I have all the writing to do in the co. & it keeps me quite bussy. I will try & write again soon Jimmy [Frink] is well & sends his respects. My love to all Write soon

Yours for Ever

DeForest

[New York October 28, 1864]

_____ & tollerably _____ amongst the dead. I was taken prisoner on the 19th day of July & was taken to Andersonville Geor. I staid there for six weeks. I found Cass [Cassius M. Ellis, 64th New York] & _____ brother _____ amongst the prisoners. On the 13th of _____ they undertook to moove us to S.Carolina but Cass & a little fellow by the name of Sammy Preston [Sergeant Samuel E. Preston, 64th New York] & myselfe concluded not to stay with them any longer & jumped from the cars. we wer thirty days getting into our lines. I will not try to write anny of the particulars this time but will give you the full details from time to time we arrived on board of our gunboat Potomsky off Georgetown S. Carolina, & have been tilted around from one place to another first to Charlestown, then to Hilton head & from there to this city. we arrived here last Monday but have not been able to get anny material for writing untill this morning. I expect to have to go to Washington from here I will write again from there. Casses brother died while we wer at Andersonville. Give my respects to all. you had not better try to get a letter to me untill you hear from me again. I will send you (Mary) some flowers picked in the in the swamps of S.C. They now are faded & dry for they tell their own story

Kiss the little ones for me

DeForest

_____ you will hear _____

Camp Distribution Alexandria Virginia Nov. 8/64

Well Mary

I wrote you a letter while at N. Y. to let you know I was alive & promised to write to you again as soon as I got to Washington I presume you think by this time I am dead or have forgotten my promise but it is neither one or the other. The trouble is we did not go to Washington at all. we wer sent from the city to Governors Island & from there to City Point, & from there here. Cass [Cassius M. Ellis, 64th New York] left _____ there & went to the Regt. I presume you will hear from him before this reaches you for he said he would write as soon as he got there & let you know how & where he was. My health is verry good considering what I have been through. I suppose they will send me from here to Columbus &c. I hardly know whether to have you write to me here or not. I may stay here for a month & we may not over three days The first day we came here I was standing in line wating for my name to be called when my attention was called to a true spocimin of a yankee that stood about six feet two. I was pretty certain I had seen him before but could not tell for certain where. but my yankee curiocity was arroused & I was determined to find out who & what he was. So I went up to him & looking up into his face asked him where he was from. He looked at me for a moment as though he wer looking at one arisen from the dead, but he soon found his speech & we had a good visit. I was glad to learn you wer all well, but was grieved to learn that so many of you had been suffering from sickness. I do not know but it was better for me to be a prisoner for if I had been with the Regt. I should have been worrying all the time I am sorry to hear father has had such bad luck having so much sickness loosing his _____ but tell him to keep up good courage. I will be with you again in about ten months. But perhaps you would like to know who my friend was. Well it was no other than David Bliss. he is doing duty in a fort about a mile from here. I am looking for him or Monson here this afternoon, & if they have got it to spare will try & borrow five dollars from them & let Howard send it to them you might write as soon as you get this & direct it to them then if I was gone before it came they could get it. You can hardly know how I want to hear from you all. but be of good cheer. it will not be long befor I will not onely hear from you, but also see you. Ten months more & then good by Old Abe [Lincoln]. There is so much noise I will not try to write anny more this time give my love to all little & big & do not forget yourselfe. Yours as usual

DeForest

I will send you part of a pod of cotton I picked while tramping through S.C.

Nashville Dec. 12th 1864

Dear Wife

I have been neglecting to write to you thinking perhaps we would get to some place where we would remain long enough to get an answer from you. The last time I wrote to you I was at Chattanooga & was in hopes of remaining there long enough to hear from you. but man proposes but God disposes. In a day or two after writing we wer sent here & remained here ever since. We wer expecting to have a fight with the Jonnyes but they seem to be a little shy of attacking us We got here just in time if we had been one day later we could not have got through. the rebs tore up the track & captured one train of cars, but most of the men made their escape. There is some skirmishing and some canonading every day. We have had such severe cold weather for several days that both arneys wer willing to remain quiet. They may talk of their Sunny South, but I never want to see any colder than we are having here now. Mary perhaps you think I am getting negligent about writing, & I admit I have not written as often as I might but it was on your acct. When we first came here we wer expecting a fight every day and I concluded not to write untill it was ove for you would be worrying all the time, till you heard from me again. but now the danger is all over I can write knowing you will not worry anny till you hear from em again, which will be soon We have been pretty busy since we arrived, fortifying & putting up comfortable quarters & have got things arranged so that we will have more leisure Some think we will remain here all winter & if we do I will try & make up lost time. My health is good & am heavier than ever before in my life Father will have to look out or I will get to be fleshier than he is. I was rather hard up when I first got into our lines but have got about over the effects of my trip. I promised to give you the details but cannot yet for I have got no good place to write You do not know how I want to hear from you & the rest of the folks yet I hardly know whether you had better try to answer this or not, if you should direct to Nashville, Tennessee, in care of the Sanitary Commission. But I will close for I am getting tired of writing in this position Give my love to all, & tell them to write as soon as there is any prospect of my getting their letters. Yours now & for ever

S. D. Woodford

In Camp near Nashville
Dec. 17th 1864

Dear Sister

I wrote a letter to Mary on the 14th & recd. one from you the same day written the sixth the first that I have recd from home since making my escape & informing me of Marys sickness. O! how I wish it was so I could get home. but there is no use wishing I try not to worry about Mary for I see by your letter that she is better than she was when you wrote before. I judge by the

way you write Mary has been sick also. I was intending to answer your letter the next morning but did not have time & the next morning after we mooved at 4 a.m. we have been laying in the works out side of the citty since & in plain sight of the battle that has been raging for the last two days. What an awful sight scituated as we are with nothing but to look and think. it awakens some strange thoughts. Some that are not verry complimentary to mankind But I will not stop to philosophise, for we may be called upon to moove befor my letter is finished. You must not worry about me for we will not be called upon if there should be any more fighting, unless the rebels should drive our men & attack the works around the city They would have to be more successful than they have been so far for we have driven them over five miles. There has been no firing yet this morning & I should not be surprised if the Johnnyes had left for some more hospitable region. Their loss must have been verry great The first day we took eighteen pieces of artillery & twelve hundred prisoners. Yesterday we took over three thousand. Our loss the first day was small about three hundred killed and wounded I have not learned what our loss was in yesterdays fight. I presume it was large for there was heavy musketry firing all day, but I presume you will have got all the particulars before you get this. I have just been out to see a drove of about three hundred Rebels that have just been brought in. they say their arney is badly demoralised & verry destitute of provisions, & have been living on raw corn for the last five days. rather hard fare, I know by experience. I have just learned that our men have advanced over twelve miles. Well Mary as it is so I cannot get home to take care of M. in person, I will resign in your stead. May God bless you all for your kindness. You spoke in your letter of having boarders what is up. Are there some mills being built I presume if I had received your other letter it would have explained the whole thing. I told you to direct in care of the Christian Commis. But you may direct to

2d Battallion Convalescents 20th Corps Nashville, Tenn.

My love to all. Kiss the little ones From your brother

DeForest

Chattanooga Jan. 12/65

Dear Wife

I arrived here this morning & found a letter awaiting me from Mary written the 2d of last month. It was the second letter I have received since my escape. You may be assured I was glad to hear from you again for the one before informed me of your sickness. It stated you wer better but I feared you wer worse than they wer winning to let me know. I find also that Cass [Cassius M. Ellis, 64th New York] has been home & made you a visit. I was in hopes one time to be able to get home before going back to the Regt. but have given up doing so now. There is some talk of our starting for New York the 15th of this month, preparatory to going to our commands, & I hope it will prove true for I had rather be there than in this forsaken place. We have had nearly two months of the hardest soldiering since I have been in the servise there has not been much fighting

but verry heavy marching, & all the time on three quarter rations. We have had a chance to see a grate deal of the country, & a more beautiful one I never saw. If every thing was as it should be, Allabamma would be my future home. yet it may be better as it is. we have a little home of our own & if God is willing we will live to enjoy it together. Keep up good courage Mary. there is but eight short months more for me in this disagreeable business & then adieu to war and all connected with it Mary write that Father has sold his place I was verry sorry to hear it for I was making calculations on his having a good home in his old age. but I fear now that what little he has will soon go. but prehaps it is all for the best. I am glad to hear that Marcealous is not living with you, for I was satisfyed in my own mind when I was at home last spring that he was going to of more trouble than help, but there is no one to blame but himselfe. It must be pretty lively times on the creek now if they are putting up a barrel factory. how I wish it was so I could be there with you. but it is always so. my dish is wrong side up when it rains. the longest day has got an end & so has my term of servise. Mary writes you are keeping boarders you must not work to hard if you can make a little extra by doing so you have got but one life to live & enjoy that as well as you can.. Give my respects to Emeline & tell her to write. also to the rest of the folks I will write again as soon as possible & try to fulfill my promise. write as often as you can get time, & let me know how you get along. Kiss the little ones for me especially the younger.

From your absent

DeForest

Tunnel Hill [Georgia] Jan. 14th 1865

Dear Wife

It has been several days since I wrote to you last but you must get more letters from me than I do from you, for I have not got onely two from home since last June & they wer from Sister Mary. ~~You must not think I am blaming you anny for I do not. yet it is a little strange that I~~ do not get anny more. The last one I got was written the 2d of Dec. I begin to think there is some mistake in your directions. when you write again direct to

Sergt. S. D. Woodford
Co. C, 2d Battallion
20th A.C. Detachment
Chattanooga, Tenn.

It seems a long time to be in our own lines & not hear from anny of you. I hope when you get this you will make no delay but sit down & write an answer immediately. If you direct as I have written I think there will not be anny diffculty in my getting them. I wish in your next you would send me some stamps for I cannot write but two letters more untill I get some. Also give me the address of Asher [Bliss Jr.] & Cass [Cassius M. Ellis, 64th New York], for I do not know where to write to either. Tell some of my former friends that a few lines from them would not come

amiss. There must be some changes being made in the neighborhood & you must feel a little lonely not to hear Paulina scolding her children. I fear I should miss her verry much. I wonder if she took her spoons with her. do you hear anny thing from Harvey, &c. But I must stop asking such foolish questions. I wrote to you several days before we left Chattanooga that we wer expecting to go to Dalton. We did go there first & wer sent from there here. We are in good quarters & are enjoying ourselves as well as could be expected. If our rations wer a little larger we would be all right. These do verry well excepting the meat. Prehaps you would like to know how they select the beaves which they wish to kill for the day. Well, I will explain. There are quite a number of cattle, some three or four hundred, that wer driven from Louisville to Atlanta, & when Sherman left, they wer driven back here & are some what lacking in flesh. They are driven out side the pickets every day to grase & to select those to kill they lay a log across the road & drive them over. all that are able to get over the log without falling down are safe for that day, but those that fall are taken for beef. You may think this a pretty hard story but it is no worse than it really is. I was out this morning & counted eighty five head of cattle that starved to death in the last six weeks so you can guess our beef is poor enough. but I will bring this thing to a close I have been two days writing what I have already written, & tomorrow I will not have anny time for I will be on duty. Tell Howard to write, & Stephens folks too. a letter will be just as exceptable now as it ever was, & it will not take anny more time for them to write it. Let me hear from you as soon as possible. Give my respects to all. Kiss all the little ones as usual &c. Good night for this time

Yours as ever

DeForest

Raleigh [North Carolina] April 15th 1865

Dear Mary

I promised you a month ago to write to you again the first opportunity. Although you may think it is a long time to wate. yet I have just seated myselfe to redeem my pledge. I arrived at the Regt. last Sunday & we left the next morning, & did not get here untill yesterday afternoon. I am in hopes we will neither of us have to write manny more letters untill after I have been home to see you all. Every thing looks prosperous now The news this morning is cheering especially to us soldiers the report just came inn that [Gen. Joseph E.] Johnston has surrendered to Killpatrick [Gen. Hugh Judson Kilpatrick]. It may not be true but it must come before long at the farthest. our force is sufficient to anihilate him as soon as he makes a stand or is cornered

I found but few of the old soldiers with the Regt. there wer onely five of [them] in the Co. My health is good & I stand the marching better than I expected. you must be satisfied with a short letter & I will try & write more the next I onely write this to let you know I am alive & well. Give my love to all.

Yours as ever

DeForest

(PS). I found one of Emelines old letters awaiting me here dated Jan.

Direct to
154 N. Y. V. I. 2d Brigd. 2d Division 20 A. C. via Fortress Monroe

In Camp near Washington May 27th, 1865

Well Mary

After another long delay I again improve the opportunity that presents itself of writing you a few lines & perhaps the last you will receive from me while I am a soldier. Perhaps you may think by the time this reaches you that I have forgotten you entirely, & if it is as long on the way as the other you will have good reason to think so I do not see how it is there is such work about our letters. I see yours was written the 5th ult. but it did not reach me until the night of the 20th. Jimmy [Frink] got one from his folks which you directed for them (after you got mine) over a week ago but never mind they will not have a chance to bother us much more. I was intending to write when we first arrived at Alexandria, but after James got his I concluded to wait until after I heard from you for I knew if you knew where to direct to Jimmy you did to me as well. Cass [Cassius M. Ellis, 64th New York] has been over to see me once since we came inn. he is looking well & hearty. I think he will be home as soon as July, if not sooner. I presume you are a little anxious to know when we are expecting to get home. Well to tell the truth I am about as anxious on that subject as you are. There are a great many rumors afloat but none are to be relied upon. If we get around by the first of July I think we will do well. We might have been away sooner if the Regimental books were here. They were sent to Chattanooga when they left Atlanta. It will take some time to fix them up after they get here. I was sorrow to hear that there had been so much sickness with you but am glad it was no worse. Tell Howard to keep up good courage for I will be at home to help him in a few days by the time haying commences at any rate. Tell Mary Pa will be at home with his little girl in a little while. Kiss all the little ones for me. Tell Em. to write whether I stay away long enough or not. Excuse the shortness of this letter for Jimmy is holding the light while I sit on my beams end writing on a table about six inches square & my knees for table legs. Write often whether you hear from me or not Direct as before, only Washington instead of Ft. Monroe.

Yours as Ever

S. D. Woodford

[On United States Sanitary Commission stationery]

In Camp as before May 29/65

Dear Wife

When I wrote you before it was in a hurry & with the ideah that it would be about the last you would receive from me while in the army. but I have alterd my mind & will write one more at least. I am not onely writing to let you know how I am but also to kill time for I look upon it as a pretty profitable way to spend ones leisure moments & I think I am safe in saying that the most of my spare time has been improved in this way. I do not take my pen this evening for the purpose of writing the details of some great battle won by our armies or to chronicle some great historical events, but I am uneasy laying around camp with nothing to take up my time but eating & sleeping & long for something more substantial. Something that will give me more exercise to the mind. Mary I see by your last letter you had been feeling pretty bad on acct. of not hearing from me in so long a time. I am sorrow you wer so uneasy for it is no verry agreeable foeling for I know all about it by experience. It is strange how my letter went to New York before being mailed for it was put in the post office with the rest of the Regt'l mail. I did not have any chance of writing again untill we got to Alaxandria. Abner "T" [Thomas] came by boat from Richmond & I told him to write as soon as he got through & let you know where to direct for I knew you would be anxious to hear from me & it would enable you to write to me sooner, for I do love to hear from home. He has got an answer from the one he wrote but more has not got along yet. I look for it every day. The old saying is, Hope deferred maketh the heart sick. If this is true we have both had a chance of being troubled with heart sickness. but never mind there is an antidote for us yet. I should be glad to be able to write you a more interesting letter but there is nothing of interest afloat. The most of interest to us just now would be something in referense to our getting home. I presume we will know something about it in a day or so for our books got here last evening. There is nothing to do but to settle our accts. & start for York State. How long this will take is more than I can tell. There will be something to varry the monottony of camp life tomorrow for Gov. [Reuben E.] Fenton presents our Regt. with a flag. I suppose it is a pretty grand thing. If I have time I will give you a few of the particulars after it is through with. I have been helping make out our pay rolls today. We supposed we wer going to get paid up to the first of may, but they seem to think now we will not get anny untill we are discharged. I am trying for my ration money. think I shall get it. I have not see Cass [Cassius M. Ellis, 64th New York] but once since I arrived here. I look for him over every day. but I will bring this to close for it is getting late & the boys want to go to bed give my respects to all, & tell them I will be with them again before manny days I am looking for a good time ahead Continue to write as usual.

Yours as ever

S. D. Woodford

In Camp near Washington

June 4/65

Well, Mary

I have again seated myself to write you, & to beg your pardon. Methinks I hear you say what for, what have you been doing that you should need my forgiveness. Well I will tell you & perhaps you can guess from the tenor of my last, written soon after arriving in this camp. When Ab. [Abner Thomas] left at Richmond I charged him to be sure & write to his folks to tell you where to direct, so I could get a letter as soon or shortly after getting here. He recd. an answer to his nearly two weeks ago but there was none came for me. I have managed to keep pretty busy & so passed the time very well until today, in helping fix up the books. but today I did not feel very [well] & remained in my tent with nothing to kill time, but my own thoughts, (my complaint is not a very serious one . . . a sore mouth) & they of course, left to their own course, turned towards home, & its attractions. I thought of the many happy hours passed & gone & looked forward to the future with hopes of again soon being with you & the little ones, there to remain the rest of my days. but then the thoughts came, Why dont Mary write? It seems strange I dont get a letter by this time; There has been time for one to get here long ago. There is Ab. has had three since I have had any. I guess they have all forgotten me. Will I can stand it if they can. I wont write again until they do &c. &c. Such has been the general drift of my thoughts through the day. no very agreeable state of mind you will admit. The mail arrived at abt. three o'clock but none for me as usual I told Jimmy [Frink] I had a notion to write one more letter. he thought it would be well enough, but I must not blame any one for not writing. I presume this was good advice for I felt a little vexed & might have written what I ought not as the sequel will show I had just got ready to write when another lott of letters came in & one of them for me written by you the eleventh of April You may be assured it was gladly recd. & its contents eagerly devoured. I was happy to learn you wer all well, & hope you may remain so. You too speak of your anxiety of mind at not hearing from me in so long a time, & have guessed my thoughts at reading, viz. now you know how I feel, at not getting letters from home. but never mind it is nearly through with. A little longer here you know. But enough of this. I promised in my last to give you some of the particulars of the presentation of the flags to our Regt. & the 119th [New York Volunteer Infantry]. But there is nothing of interest in it to write. Gov. F. [Reuben E. fenton] spoke but very little & what he did say was impossible for us to hear. There is nothing of any importance to write the officers are working at our books getting arranged for our final discharge It will take some time yet. If we get home by the first of July we will be doing full as well as I expect. I have not see Cass [Cassius M. Ellis, 64th New York] since we crossed the river. I presume he is busy with his books. I think he will be at home nearly as soon as me. He is 1st Lieut. now. Good for Cass. Well Mary I will stop for this time for what I have already written is dry & of little interest. but you must excuse this for my head is in no trim for writing & my nerves are in about the same condition. My love to all as usual. be of good cheer. I may soon be there. My usual compliments to the children. So good night. I stop.

S. D. Woodford

[Woodford's account of his escape from the Confederates after his capture at the Battle of Peachtree Creek, Georgia, on July 20, 1864. His fellow escapees were Cassius M. Ellis and Samuel E. Preston of the 64th New York. Pages appear to be missing from this account.]

Oct. 12 [1864] Not withstanding it was chilly we slept well & the sun was up before we awoke. Our prospects for the day wer rather gloomy. All around us was a dismal swamp with hardly dry land enough for us to lay down upon. We had been sparing of our provisions the night before so we had a small sweet potato apiece & a small piece of hoecake, & this we must make our last us untill we wer out of the rebel lines, & how much longer no one knew. we saved it until about ten a.m. when we got so hungry it was impossible to resist the temptation anny longer. So we divided up our stock & each man took his share & ate it. After eating we wandered around a little to see if there was not a chance of getting some grapes but there wer none to be found. So we came back & laid down on our pile of brush to awate the comeing of another night. Time draged heavily but the longest day must close at last, & it was so with this.

Oct. 12 [1864] We did not wate long after it was farely dark but started full as soon as it was prudent Our old negro friend said there would be no difficulty in our getting through the rebel lines before daylight the next morning & we wer not going to be in the fault if we did not. When we started out every thing looked promising The tide was running out the moon shown bright, & there was no wind to impede our progress. If we had onely a good stock of provisions we would have been pretty well satisfyed. The river was pretty wide & we kept as near the middle as possible to prevent being discovered by anny one on shore. As we wer rowing along about ten o'clock we discovered another boat below us coming up the stream. We did not care about making anny new acquaintances so we ran our boat ashore amongst some rushes untill the other boat should pass. As it came nearer it proved to contain but one person & he we knew was a negro by his voice for he was singing.

Oct. 13th [1864] The boys could not resist the temptation to speak to him & see if he had not got something with him that was eatable. So we rowed out to meet him but it was no use. he had nothing. So we kept on. About midnight the wind commenced to blow, & it was not long before the river was quite rough. The tide had changed so we had pretty tough times all the latter part of the night. About three in the morning we began to look for the village of Georgetown. We knew we ought to pass the town about that time in order to get to the Island before it was light enough to be discovered. But time flew & the town did not appear. At length just as the roosters commenced to crow for day light we passed the town. Here was a bad state of things, daylight comeing on, Georgetown with its reb garrison just passed, below us about four miles a battery of eleven guns & no woods to hide in through the day. we kept on untill we wer about half way from town to the battery when it got so light it was dangerous to go anny farther.

I saw a large sycamore laying just in the edge of the water & told the boys this was our onely chance so we pulled over & got our boat in behind the log.

Oct. 13 [1864] Today we wer obliged to keep pretty close. We are laying behind a big sycamore log that the tide had floated up. The rushes are pretty tall but not so high but we can see the village of Georgetown two miles above us & the battery the same distance below but the country

is so level that it does not seem half that distance. It was high tide when we landed but it is ebbing & we are high & dry on land. Our fare today is rather slim. it consists of faith & the hopes of soon getting where provision is plenty. Sammy & Cass ventured into a little ways to see if there was anny chance of getting anny corn or anny thing else that was eatable but returned without anny. Then we tryed another experiment. When the tide went out it left us on dry land & we noticed that the ground was full of little holes & when the sun came out hot there was a little crab cralled out _____ & would lay & sun themselves.

Oct. 13 [1864] We would wate untill they got out & then catch them & brake them to pieces to see if there was not some part of them that was eatable but it was no use for there was nothing about them that looked like meat. So we concluded to try another plan. The old saying is, "necessity is the mother of invention" & I think it a true one. Cass & Sammy went to digging for worms & I tryed my hand at making fish hooks. I had my line left & several pins. I took the pins & bent them into hooks & tied four of them on the line together, the points in different directions. When I had got it completed I was quite sure of getting some fish if they would onely bite. The boys found some worms & I bated my hook & commenced fishing in a sluice a few steps from where the boat lay. These are ditches dug to drain the rice fields when the tide is up the water sets back & when the tide falls it _____ the water is running one way or the other all the time. I got plenty of bites but _____ every time so I was obliged to give it up.

[There appears to be a page or pages missing.]

Oct. 15th [1864] contd. and started for the lighthouse. Our compass was the stars, the same as on other nights and one that had served us well. The water was pretty smooth when we first started, but before we got far it was rough enough to answer all purposes. Our boat diped frequently but would come up again all right. My knowledge of handling a canoe served me well here, for a raw hand at the wheel would have been fatal to us. I handled the steering oar myselfe this trip altogether. When we got about half way, we could begin to see the Island. This gave us new courage & the boys worked with a will. I cannot but wonder how our strength held out so well, when we wer so near starvation. Although we worked hard it seemed as if we would never reach the Island. As we neared it the water became rougher, & for a time it was a little doubtful whether we ever reach it. But we we victorious at last. the Island was reached & we wer out of the rebel lines.

When we reached the Island we concluded to land & reconoiter. We did not land on the Island where the lighthouse was. There are two one called North & the other South Island we wer ca. South I. Where we landed it was low & marshy & had been used as a rice plantation. We traveled around some but could see nothing to denote that there wer anny inhabitants on the Island. I climbed a tree to enable me to get a better view of the country. We wer not able to see the lighthouse, but as soon as I got to the top of the tree it was plain to be seen. Otherwise there was nothing to _____ so we made up our minds to take to our boat & _____ to the lighthouse. For we knew we would have a better chance to see _____ if anny of them should happen to be passing. When we got into the boat _____ of being so fortunate as to get _____ of one of our vessels that night but _____ a joyful surprise.

Oct. 15th [1864] We wer in no great hurry so we paddled along leisurely thinking of what we had passed through & wondering how it would terminate & did not pay much attention to what was around us untill we wer within a quarter of a mile of the lighthouse when one of the boys thought he could see the rigging of a ship between us & it. We all looked with all the eyes we had & sure enough not more than forty rods from us was a vessel. She lay in the shadow of the lighthouse or we should have been able to see her before. There is no use trying to discribe my feelings at this moment. I had not allowed myselfe to be carried away in the ideah that we wer a going to get through all safe but had made up my mind to do the best I could, & leave the rest to providence. But here we wer within a stoness throw of liberty & friends too we wer certain it was one of our own vessels for we had been told there wer no rebel boats in the bay. This gave us new life & we wer soon in Hailing distance & it was not long before we _____ . Boat ahoy. who goes there.

Friends, was our reply, but they did not seem to be satisfyed for they hailed again, & we answered, Union soldiers escaped from the rebels. Bring your boat along side, was the next command, with which we readily complied. The gun boats are all supplied with a coarse netting which is attached to halyards which are lowared when the vessel is at anchor so they are surrounded by breastwork that prevents anny thing from coming in contact with the vessel. This they hoisted & we came along side. the ladder or gangway was lowered & in less time than it takes to write it we were on the vessels decks free men once more. We wer not aware when we approached the vessel that there was _____ but such was the case. The captain _____ they wer not in the habit of haling _____ in the way we did but _____ They had been _____ they did it from