Joy Smith
November 1994

Caldwell
Box 1
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Hospital No 2 Nashville Jan 14/63

Dear Mother

I am still improving I no longer have any great amount of pain and my wound is healing nicely. Perhaps you may think that I am homesick, I answer, not at all, Still I would like to be with the dear ones at home, and I think it quite likely that at no ~~great~~ very distant day I shall have the pleasure of clasping you all by the hand once more. I believe there is being something being done towards

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

Direct, Hospital No 2
Nashville Tenn

Give my love to all

Robert

sending the wounded to
their homes. Would not I
more than enjoy myself
at home this winter, pulled
and I could go sleigh riding
almost every day and the
dancing atmosphere together
with the invigorating spood
would soon bring me around
once more but if I am
doomed to lie in the hospital
I will bear it like a true
soldier should, but then
I cant help thinking that
they might send us home
for a short time at least
I am getting somewhat
anxious to receive a letter from
home as I wish to know
how you are progressing
in that latitude.
I have not heard a word
from home since our army
moved on Murfreesboro and
that was Dec 26th
I spend my New years rather
lonely I can assure you
as I was lying in a field
hospital at the time
but now I am (as I said before)
doing well. I can go round
the room without assistance
and will soon be able to
go round town. Day before
yesterday quite a number of
wounded men were sent
by Steamboat to Louisville.
I came very near going
myself but the Surgeon thought
I had better wait a few days

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

Capt. Vanter [illegible] his respects

The last letter I have had from home was [illegible] Mother dated Nov 30th. R. C.

Camp near Nashville
Tenn Dec 12/62

Dear Father

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

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

We left Nashville yesterday at 10 o'clock and marched out six miles on the Franklin pike, where we are now encamped. The Whole

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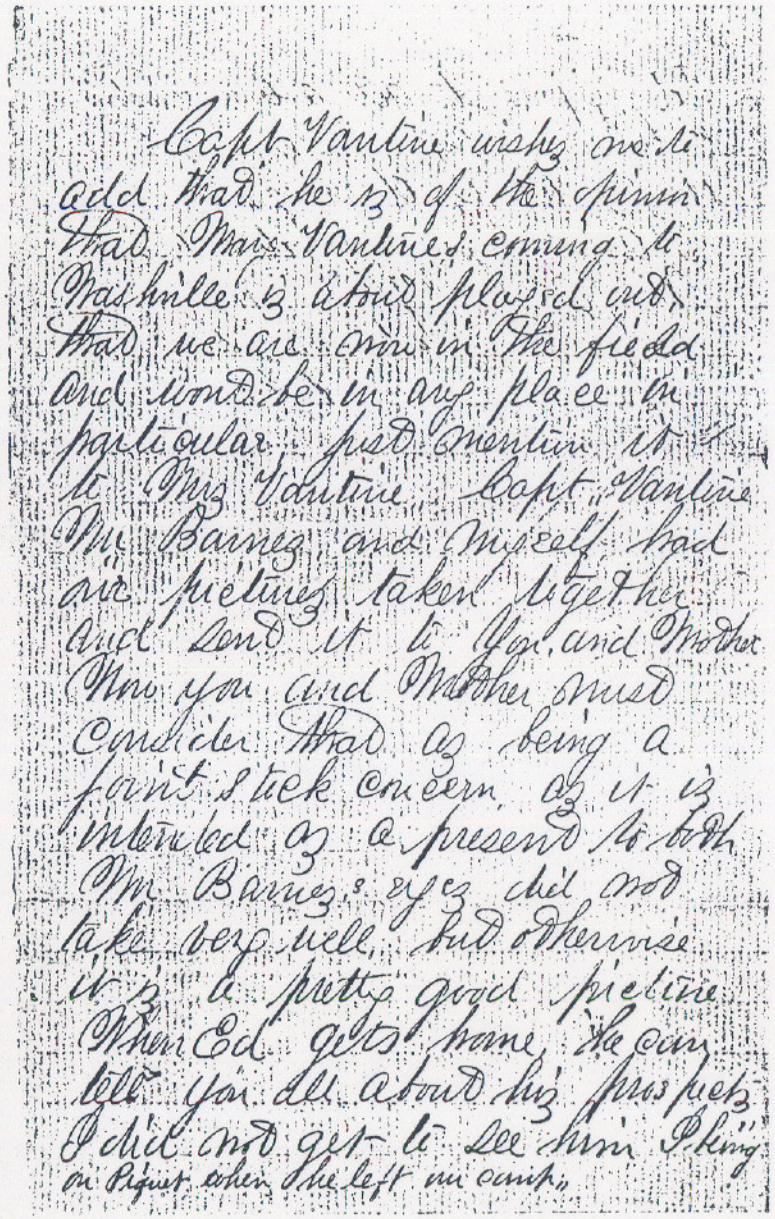
of our Division is encamped in this vicinity. Our Brigade occupies the extreme left of the Div and our Regt the left of the Brigade, so you see we occupy an important position in the Div but I am of the opinion should occasion require it that the 21st will be able to stand against at least an equal number of the Grey jackets.

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

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

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

Our Piquets are constantly skirmishing with those of the enemy, and a few days ago



Capt Vanlue wishes me to
add that he is of the opinion
that Mrs Vanlue is coming to
Washville is about played out
that we are now in the field
and would be in any place in
particular just mention it
to Mrs Vanlue Capt Vanlue
Mr Barnes and myself had
our pictures taken together
and send it to Yr and Mother
Now you and Mother must
consider that as being a
joint stock concern as it is
intended as a present to both
Mr Barnes eyes did not
take very well but otherwise
it is a pretty good picture
When Ed gets home he can
tell you all about his prospects
I did not get to see him Peking
on Picket when she left our camp.

Ed expect to get a commission
I believe. I hope he may get
it as he is deserving.
I am enjoying good health.
No more just now
Your affectionate son
Robert

Prince to
William a good
while ago
R. B.

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

hurrah for Rosy

Love to all, and never fret about

Robert

direct

Hospital No 2

Washville Tenn

I forgot to say that our company wagon was burned and as all of our knapsacks were on the wagon I lost all of my things, but worst of all I lost all of my pictures, wasnt that too bad Robt

Hospital No 2 Washville Tenn

Jan 9th /63

My dear Sister

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

believe they were.

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

Well, how did you spend Christmas and New year. You can easily imagine how mine was spent. I thought my Christmas was dull enough but when it came to my New year, no dullness then, but a sharp pain instead, not much of an improvement on the Christmas you would say, well as the Southerners say. I reckon you're right that I suppose you would like to know when I am coming home, well my answer must be somewhat indefinite as it is hard telling anything about it. I have heard it said that some of the Surgeons said that as fast as the wounded were able to bear the trip. They were to be sent home, but I don't place much confidence in the report. Perhaps you would like to know how I am getting along at present, I am gaining every day, and am getting so that I can almost enjoy myself, if such a thing were possible in a hospital. I will be so that I can go round town in a few days. and then I shall be the same lively fellow as before, for you know that it takes a good blow to shut my whistle, and I am bound to be merry, come what may

Oh! how I did sympathise with them. You know

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

Robert

P.S.

I know you write regularly, but perhaps direct wrong.

R.C

Nashville Tenn Dec 4/62

Dear Mother

I hardly know what to think about the Mail, there must be something wrong, as I have not yet had a letter since I left Camp Dennison, why it is I cannot say.

Most of the boys get letters regularly, perhaps you dont direct them right, when you write, direct, to Nashville Tenn

F Co. P. 21st Regt. O.V.

7th Brigade. Negleys Div

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[redacted]

[redacted]

James K. Polk was buried in this city, and I visited the Residence of his Wife, in the door yard of which he was buried. His Monument stands about thirty feet from the front door of the house.

His Wife is still living, but I did not see her. She is a Necessinist of the most violent kind. Well Nashville is full of the same kind of vermin. There is hardly a Union man to be found among the citizens of Nashville, confound their pictures. Well I must close.

Tell Miss. Lucky I was highly pleased to receive that short note from her. please present my respects to her. Your affectionate Brother Robert

Nashville Tenn Dec 7/62

Dear Sister

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

You stated that you had got a beau in the person of Mary Lucky. I do envy you indeed. she is as you say, a splendid girl, and indeed I am of the opinion that the North can brag over the South in point of the beauty if its fair ones I have looked in vain to see the first beautiful woman in Nashville.

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