

Elbert J. Squire Letters Michigan 4th Cavalry

Undated Letter

[missing text] the river the water [illegible] over the tops of my boots, but there was no complaining for as we were allowed fires today to dry our clothes and sleep by. The time from the morning we left our camp this side of N. until the present has been miserable days fighting the enemy and continuously in the rain and mud with nothing to protect us from the weather but an overcoat and only very small rations – add to this the seeing of men and comrades shot down by your side, hearing the groans of the wounded and dying while above you, around you, everywhere were singing the leaden messengers of death while on your right, on your left, in front to be heard constant volleys of musketry or the roar of cannon now near us our forces fell back, now at a distant as we drove the enemy. I think there could hardly have been a minute but what we could hear the sound of fire arms either heavy when a large force were engaged or between the skirmishers, from the morning of the 31st until we crossed the river Sunday morning.

This has been a terrible battle and it seems to me that nothing but the special providence of God protected me and spared me when so many fell. I hope I may ever be grateful. The loss of our Regiment is 23 killed including the Colonel and Lieut [sic] Colonel and 120 wounded besides quite a number taken prisoners. There is also quite a number missing who undoubtedly have skedaddled back to Nashville. None of the Monroeville boys were hurt except [illegible] Picken who was wounded and taken prisoner. There was no one killed out of Co. D.

We left our camp Tuesday night and crossed the river marching to this place. My health is now good. Doctor Cook is with us. Charlie Marsh has his discharge and will probably be home before long. Capt. Sheldon is recovering.

Accept my love and remember me to all friends. Tell John I will write to him before long. Let me hear from some of you immediately. We have rec'd 2 mails - in the camp, but no letters for me. I rec'd the Home Journal of Dec. 28th. I hope you had a merry Christmas and Happy New Year day. I could not help contrasting the situation of the soldiers with those at home, we [illegible] off our raw pork and Hard Bread and those at home partaking of the 'Goodies.' There was no envy in my heart. I was thankful that my life or limbs had been spared. Again I say, Love to all, and write to me soon.

Your affectionate Son,
Elbert J. Squire

Undated Letter

[missing text] wood. Our Major and Adjundant [sic] were the only officers present. Gen'l [sic] McCook was with [illegible] I stopped to listen to the practicing of a brass band. One of the pieces played had a strain or two that sounded like Lorena. It went to my heart at once, reminding me of the many times I have heard Martha and Mary singing the piece. Little did I then think that I would be a soldier, and would hear the same strains of music on the soil of Tennessee. How little we know of the future!

I suppose ere this, Mary's school has closed. She must need rest after so long a term. Tell Father that I think of him often and his labors at the store. How I would like to set my foot inside the Old Store door! It seems as if I could be content spend the rest of my days behind the old counter if this terrible rebellion was wiped out.

Lt. Livermore has not reach the 3rd OVC yet. I took dinner there last Monday, with Capt. [illegible], Capt. Luckey, Alfred and Wellay ate dinner with me Wednesday, they are both well. I am so glad to learn that your health is as good as when I left home.

Remember me to all and write to me, Mother whenever you feel able.

With much affection, I am
Your loving Son
Elbert

Undated Letter

Don't let the unfriendliness of the mails discourage you in writing, for the letters will come along sometime, and when [missing text] the foot of the hill when we got to the cornfield. They lost some - we reached the hill without any left. A few skirmishers were sent to the top of the hill, which was covered with trees, from both Regt. when we found the rebels had left. Our boys took a prisoner and the 38th captain the battle flag of the 2nd Arkansas. That night the regiments sat at the foot of the hill while Co. D, T, I, and part of C was sent on to the hill as pickets. Going up the hill I counted 9 dead rebels and 1 wounded while guns, knapsack, and haversacks, etc [sic] laid around in profusion. In the morning we saw the rebels on a hill to our front about 1200 yards from our lines. We also saw 5 Reg'ts [sic] file off to our right and take position on other hills.

We skirmished all day, we then loosing [sic] one man wounded (Co. C). The 38th skirmished on our left and a line of skirmishers were ordered to charge up the hill in the front but they were driven back with considerable loss. We were relieved at eleven o'clock at night...had been there all day without dinner or supper, on picket the night before and clothes quite wet, but not a murmur was heard. I had a good supper of

chicken and broth. Our drummer boy went to a house right by the line that was vacated, got some dishes and a couple of chickens, brought them down to a shanty inside the lines and got us supper of chicken, coffee etc. About this time Lt. Col. Messer sent me down to the right to order our men to cease firing, the enemy being too far off to render our fire effectual and I delivered orders and got supper.

The next morning we moved to the front again and formed in skirmish line and marched through the [illegible] wheat field on to the hill the Rebs occupied. I expected they would open fire on us, but we found them gone. We found two of them hid who gave themselves up as deserters. All this happened in what is called Liberty Gap. We then marched back and went into Hoover Gap taking the Manchester road and marching toward [illegible] And oh! what roads! They were worse than any I have ever traveled over before. We halted Saturday night in very good season, near a little brook I washed my [illegible], socks, and shoes and slept in my wet clothing soundly. It rained all the night.

Sunday we reached Manchester, where we remained until Wednesday. It rained nearly all the time. Had several nice baths in Duck river. Wednesday we left for [illegible] expecting to have to fight for the place. Our wing of the Army (right) was ordered to use the bayonet and musketry only at short range. The Artillery was to be held in reserve.

Just before we reached [illegible] we heard that the Rebels had evacuated. We passed through their line of fortifications and the town by moonlight. They left five very large seige [sic] guns, all their tents and a large amount of corn meal. Thursday morning we left Tullaboring [sic], marched 10 miles and encamped on the bank of the Elk River. Friday we forded the river which was waist deep and the current quite swift, and also several other parallel streams, and reached this place at noon.

This town is the county seat of Franklin, had 1800 inhabitants before the war, also two female and one male colleges and is a very pretty place. The people are nearly all Secesh. There is a report that our Division is to remain here some time, yet we may move in 10 minutes.

Please write to me. My health is good. Love to all.

Yours in haste,
Elbert

Send me some postage stamps.

Undated Letter

[missing text] rough a large level cornfield. Willich's Brigade [illegible] for glory or pay. With such a commander an army can accomplish all it is possible for human hands to do.

This is a most pleasant day, cool and comfortable with a clear sky. How afflicted the people of Northern Ohio must be by the losses in the numerous fights that have taken place within the last year: at Antietam, the two battles of Fredericksburg, at Stone [sic] River, Vicksburg, Winchester and Gettysburg Ohio troops have suffered terribly. I notice that a "Hamiltons [sic] Battery" 3rd U.S. Artillery is at Charleston, S.C.; is it Frank its command? Write to me soon and if it is too hard for you to write have some of the rest write to me.

With much love, I am
Your affectionate Son
Elbert

Camp 101st OVI
Winchester, Tenn.
Aug. 8th, 1863

Dear Mother,

It is hardly a week since I wrote home, but having nothing else to do, I thought I would write while I have the opportunity.

We are under marching orders, that is, are ordered to be ready to march at a moment's notice and it is my impression that we will leave Winchester ere many days. Still I think we will not go before Monday, and may not leave here for months. I cannot imagine where we should go. There is no large body of armed Rebels in Rosecran's [sic] department. Bragg is no nearer than Atlanta Georgia and we are farther advanced from the base of operations than any other Army in the field. Our destination is probably Alabama and Georgia.

Mitchell's and Turchin's Divisions of Cavalry are not at this place. They have penetrated as far south as Huntsville, Ala. Gen. Turchin has been relieved of his command and Col. Crooks commands the Division. The 3rd OVC are in that div. and are here. Alfred and Lewellyn have both been to see me. They are looking hearty and well. I had the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Gen. Rosecrans Thursday: she passed the picket post at which

I was stationed, accompanied by the General and his Staff. She looks like a good sensible woman.

It is one year tomorrow since I enlisted; how much I have been through, and how mercifully has God preserved me. I then thought that one year would close the war, yet it seems as though it required another year of hard fighting to bring the southerners to their senses. The Government is organizing Negro Regiments here and has asked for officers from the volunteer Regiments. Quite a number from our Regt. sent in their names and if they can pass examination will be given commissions in the Colored Regiments.

There will be three Commissioned and six non-commissioned officers sent from this regiment to Camp Chase to take charge of the conscripts for this Regiment. I have no expectations of going nor do I wish to go to Camp Chase unless I could visit home. If my health keeps good (and I hope it may) I shall not expect to see home for a long while: six months or a year at least. I have never heard whether Father ever got the watch chain I sent home by a Mr. Trembly of North Fairfield last winter. Willie wrote me that you were going after it and that was all I have heard of it.

My health is still good; weather continues very warm. Have you received the Photographs of Rosecrans and McCook that I sent last week? How do you like the looks of Rosecrans? He is, in my estimate the most benevolent looking man I have ever seen. The last letter from home was Mary's dated the 24th. Love to all.

Affectionately Yours,
Elbert

Camp 101st OVI
Stevenson, Ala.
Aug. 28th, 1863

Dear Mother,

We are still here where we were when I wrote to brother Charlie one week ago. I know not how soon we will move from here, but presume it will be before long as the Pontooniers [sic] are laying a pontoon Bridge across the Tennessee River at Bridgeport which is about 10 miles from here. There has been some fighting at Chattanooga, and I am told that part of our forces are across the river. Chattanooga is 38 miles from Stevenson.

Stevenson is less than half the size of Clyde, O. and is of importance by being at the junction of the Nashville and Chattanooga and the Memphis and Charlestown railroads. The place is located in a little valley at the foot of a mountain. This valley which I suppose is the valley of the Tenn. River is quite fertile. The town is surrounded by mountains on every side. For the past three days the weather has had very much the appearance of fall: days quite warm and the night uncomfortably cool, that is for our scanty supply of bedding.

I hardly know what to think of Bragg's movements, whether he will fight at Chattanooga or no. Each day deserters come in to our lines from his Army, and from their account I judge his army to be very much discouraged. In fact I have not found a single man or woman whether a rebel soldier or Citizen of late who claims any hope of success for the Confederate government. Our men forage considerable through this country, their plunder is generally limited to Peaches, Apples, Green Corn, Poultry, and Pigs. I was out one day this week with part of our company. We got peaches, corn and a small hog. I really feel sorry for some of the people here, that is it seems hard that women and children should have to suffer. When the boys shot the hog we had quite a scene... There was but eight of the men with me and as we had no waggon [sic] we did not go out more than 3 miles from Camp, and as we had all day before us we thought we would enjoy our freedom. So after eating what peaches we wished and hunting around for a hog that we didn't find we built a fire under a shady bush, gathered some roasting ears, and made our dinner of roasted corn, after which we regaled ourselves by shooting at a mark. When we were ready to start back to camp, I went to the field to help one of the boys, our cook, to fill a sack with roasting ears, and while absent the men (who had no meat in camp) shot a small hog and started off with it that I might not be made answerable for the pig. I could not blame the men for shooting the animal, but I was afterward sorry that they had done it for as I emerged from the field with the sack of corn I met the woman of the house nearby, who owned the pig. She told me that one of my men had shot her best pig, that she was a Union woman (the way most of them now talk), that her husband was carried over the river by the Rebels as our troops came here, and she did not know what she should do, that her family would have to starve and (weeping) that the Union people were used worse than the Rebels, and guess it would be better for her children should die than live and suffer. I told the lady that although the government was determined to protect the Loyal, soldiers could not always discriminate, that the destruction of property and devastation of the country was always the effects of war and that although our troops frequently committed apparent wrong, the real source to which it should be charged was Secession, the cause of the war, etc [sic], but I finally ended the argument by paying her a dollar for the slaughtered Pig in view of her Unionism, at the same time requiring a minute description of the man who

shot her stock, leading the old lady to suppose he would be severely [sic] punished, which of course was all a 'make believe'. I afterwards ascertained that this same woman has a son in the Rebel Army. I am to [sic] tender or chicken hearted to make a good forager, giving people the benefit of the doubt of their disloyalty, but when I am thoroughly convinced that the owners are Secessionists I don't care how hard the heel of retributive justice presses down.

Education must be sadly neglected in this state. I have not seen a single schoolhouse in Alabama, nor do I see how it is possible for the people to have them in the country for the nearest neighbor is frequently three miles distant. To illustrate the ignorance of a portion of the whites, I will relate a little experience. We stopped at a house (a good farm house) to rest in the Porch a while. We found a lad aged apparently 16 or 18 years. We opened conversation and plied him with numerous questions about the generals and Johnson Island and Lake Erie. He had not heard of Johnson island and when one of the boys asked him if he knew of Lake Erie, the lad said he 'did not know him,' ignorantly supposing he alluded to some person. I inquired of him if he had ever studied geography; he said no. His parents were apparently wealthy and his ignorance is undoubtedly chargeable to the 'Peculiar southern institution' in which the Confederates hoped to establish their government. The more I see of Slavery, the more do I despise the system. I judge it to be fully as debasing and injurious to the whites as to the Blacks. The Negroes in our camp are very desirous to learn to read, and though of them are very [illegible] scholars, still they pour over their spelling book for hours at the time, if they can only get some one to instruct them. Their perseverance is very praise worthy.

Capt. Latimer started for his home this morning. He has leave of absence granted him for twenty days. He will probably call on you. I sent by him a package of old letters for Louise. She takes care of my letters for me. If the Capt [sic] recovers so as to come back when his leave expires, I would like to have you send me by him the Boots I ordered, also 2 undershirts and two pairs Drawers. You can get them at the store and I will send some money to take their place, when I am next paid, as I do not wish to draw anything from the business for my support while I am in the Army.

My health continues good. Geo. Hubbell is well. Our Chaplin the Rev. Mr. Kennedy of Bucyrus has rejoined us; he has been on duty in the hospitals ever since last October.

We have also rec'd our regimental Library which consists of \$120 dollars worth of well selected Books.

I saw Watson yesterday. He is well.

Love to all.

Affectionately,
Elbert

P. S. I suppose Hattie Drake has visited you and Mary has started for [illegible].

Monroeville, Dec. 14, 1862

My dear, dear son Elbert,

It is now 11 ock [sic] sabbath morn. It has been a warm, dark, gloomy morning, and it is now raining quite fast. Our family has, with the esception [sic] of Mary, Willie and myself, gone to the funeral of Charles Gowdey, whose corpse arrived here Friday [sic] eve. He died Monday [sic] morn in the hospital at Bardstown. His father was with him when he died. I am so glad that you have thus far been saved from the suffering incid[illegible] upon sickness in the Hospital. I do not worry about you my son, but want you to have your friends immediatly inform if you should fall sick.

Monday, 1/2 past 3 P.M.

The rain is still falling and looks as if it might for the coming 24 hours. It makes us think of the suffering, suffering soldiers.

Tuesday 16th, 2 1/2 ock [sic] P.M.

You will begin to think I am writing a diary instead of a letter. But it has ceased raining and the sun is now shining brightly, although this morning the earth is clad in a mantle of white. We heard from you yesterday by the way of C. Center who said that he had seen and conversed with you, that you were looking well and in fine spirits, which is glad news to your loving mother. O may you be sustained amidst all trials and hardships it may be your lot to suffer. Be hopeful my dear son, and remember you have our sympathys [sic], and that your name each day is tenderly spoken by every member of the household. I hope Elbert you will be rewarded if in no other way, by a consciousness of having acted well on your part in endeavouring [sic] to restore peace and blot out rebellion. We learn by the papers that the army of the potomac [sic] is in motion; they have attacked the rebel army at Fredricksburg [sic]. Fight still progressing. Bank landed a large force in North Carolina, they will have a hard battle, I hope a successful and

decisive one. I learn today that the 10th OVC at Camp Cleveland have received marching orders.

Evening 1/2 70C

John and Louisa have just gone from here. They received a letter from you last night. While they were waiting, Willie came in with a letter from you to Mary and Martha, over the contents of which we've mingled many tears, not all of sorrow, for there is no pleasure so anxiously looked for, or so joyfully received, as letters from our absent loved one. But we feel sorrowful when we think of the hardship and suffering that you are constantly enduring, and that possibly ere this reaches you, you may have gone forth to meet the enemy in the bloody strife. O may you be enabled to put your trust in the mercy of him who ruleth [sic] all things, and who is ready and willing to bless those who ask of him. May his protecting care be around, and about you, and bring you to participate in a joyous meeting with your many friends, is the ever anxious wish of your devoted Mother.

J.F. Squire, Dec 17, 1862

One week from today is Christmas. Wish I could fill your stocking. I shall if permitted [sic] meet together around the family board and try to be merry in memory of the past. Our hearts will go out toward our cherished one.

"We miss thee at home" dear brother. Mattie.

Did you receive the white wrapper [sic] we sent by Rickey. Love from all.

Monroeville

Sept. 23d, 1863

Wednesday 4 P.M.

My dear son,

We have heard of the terrible battle now waging between Braggs and Rosecrans armies and of some of its disastrous results. But hoping [sic] that you are among the living and have escaped being captured I have ventured to write a few words. Your Father saw Doc't [sic] Baker (Monroeville) last evening; he told him that he should start this evening for the scene of action in order to render medical aid to those who need. I shall send this by him. If anything disastrous has occurred [sic] to you or any of our friends let us know as soon as possible so that we can send some one to your assistance.

We have full confidence in Rosecrans and his noble army, but we have reason to suppose Bragg has arrayed against him vastly superior numbers; that he has been heavily reinforced. We hope and trust that the union or federal army have been strengthened ere this. We shall wait with hope knowing that the same father of mercies still watches over our beloved that protected him heretofore. O may he strengthen and prepare you for every event is the fervent desire of your anxious loveing [sic] Mother.

J. F. Squire

Elbert J. Squire

P. S. Write when possible.

Chattanooga Tenn

Sept 28th, 1863

Beloved Parents,

Again has our heavenly Father preserved my life through a terrible Battle. How can I be sufficiently grateful. You may have learned ere this that I was wounded in the fight of Saturday; such was the case, but quiet your fear. My wound is very slight and I have so far recovered as to be able to use my hand in writing, though not with entire ease. While striving to rally a portion of the men during the fight that began to give way, I was struck by a Bullet on the underside of my arm about 4 inches above the wrist; at the same time my Sword was struck on the end of the hilt, or rather in the hole of the guard for the sword knot, and knocked from my hand to the ground. I attempted to pick it up with my wounded (right) arm, but could not and then I seized it with my left hand. I thought my arm was broken and so went to the rear; by this time our Regiment was obliged to fall back, a large number having been killed or wounded. Our men fell back a short distance and then rallied and twice charged the enemy. They also fought severely on Sunday. I went to the rear, had my arm dressed, then found my Regiment, (then) the Major com'd'g [sic] the Regiment advised me to remain at the hospital as I could not use my arm. Sunday the wounded were sent to this place a distance of 13 miles. I walked that distance, and remained at the hospital until Saturday the 26th, just one week from the time I was hurt, when I reported to my Col. for duty. The Ball took off the skin and a little of the flesh and bruised my arm badly.

Saturday the 19th we lost the following: of Our Co., "D" John Blair killed, [illegible] B. Jones killed. White, wounded and a prisoner. Hubbell slightly wounded. Richey slightly wounded. Gunthrie slightly wounded. Cap't [sic] Kilmore and Lieut [sic] Hale of Co. "F"

killed. Lt. Col. Messer wounded. Lieut [sic] Rule mortally wounded, besides many others.

Sunday Lieut [sic] Read was wounded (has since gone home), Maj. McDonald probably killed. Lieut [sic] McGraw mortally wounded, Wilson Hamilton badly wounded and Crawford and Hawkes also of our Company are missing. Our Regiment went into the fight with 232 men carrying muskets and had 86 wounded, 12 killed, over fifty that are missing, probably prisoners. Our Company went into the fight with 15 including Reed and myself; of those only 4 escaped unharmed. The Col. and Lieut [sic] Col. of this 21st Ill are probably killed and the Col. of the 38th Ill was mortally wounded and the major also badly wounded. I cannot write much more at present but if I am spared will write soon again.

Our men had to fight Longstreet and Ewell's Corps. Davis' [sic] Division has probably suffered more than any other Div. in the Army. Our Army has fallen back to Chattanooga, and are strongly entrenched. We have skirmished almost each day and night.

Love to all, and may God Protect you,

Elbert

P. S. Colonel King reached us Tuesday morning, I saw Watson yesterday. He's well. E.

All well Sept 29th. Capt. Latimer is here.

DIARY ENTRY: BATTLE OF CHICKAMAUGA

Monday, Sept 28th 1863

This is a very pleasant morning. It is now more than a week since I have written in this diary owing to condition of my arm being unable to write. I now proceed to note down the events that have transpired since last writing. Friday p.m. we heard a little artillery firing towards our left. We moved towards the left, and halted late in the evening in a corn field near a creek. Staid [sic] all night. Saturday morning we marched to the left, reaching Crawfish Springs at about 11 a.m., marching slowly. We halted a few minutes, and then pushed on nearly two miles, then 'double quicked [sic] it' for a mile and formed in line of battle by 'on the left into line' and were in front. We were in a cornfield and laid down in front of a Battery while they threw shell among the enemy. Lay there for all of

thirty minutes, then rose up and moved forward wheeling to the left, passed from the cornfield into a wood. A regiment in front of us broke and ran passing through our line and throwing us into some confusion. We rallied part of that Regiment, who stopped long enough to fire their guns and then kept on to the rear. Our men formed and fired, when it became too hot for us and had to go to the rear.

Hubbell was wounded almost the first thing. Lt. Hale was killed and I was wounded. I went to the rear, had my arm done up and then tried to find my regiment. Did not find it until sundown.

The major sent me to the rear. Our Regiment was behind a breastwork of rail on a side of the cornfield, from which they charged across the field twice. Blair was killed while fighting bravely. Jones was killed. Rickey and Gutline wounded. White wounded and taken prisoner.

Our Regt and brigade took up a position Sunday on a slight rise of ground behind a low breastworks of logs, and threw out skirmishers, who soon came back closely followed by the enemy in three or four lines deep. Our men from their position mowed them down and repulsed them twice, when the right flank being turned, they had to leave or be captured and they left. Lieut [sic] Reed was wounded in leg, Lieut [sic] McGraw mortally wounded, and Major McDonald supposed to be killed or wounded and a prisoner. Wilson Hamilton badly wounded and Hawkes and Crawford are both missing.

I went to the hospital and staid [sic] all night (the hospital at Crawfish Springs), helped Lt. Rule there, and found Lt. Col. Messer there (who was also wounded). Capt [sic] Kilmore was killed.

Sunday the 20th they moved all that could be moved from the hospital to Chattanooga. I walked in with others. Reached the hospital at about midnight. Slept on the ground by the hospital waggon [sic]. Newton was with me.

Monday I remained at the hospital on the south side of the town. Staid [sic] all night. Saw Reed. Tuesday our division moved in near this hospital and worked all day and night building breastworks. The inmates of the hospital (our Division) were moved down town in Sanitary Rooms. Staid [sic] there all night. Col. Kirby came this morning, Wednesday 23rd we moved across the river about two miles to general field hospital. I staid [sic] here until Saturday a.m. the 26th when I went to the regiment.

Sunday the 27th attended religious exercises in the morning and heard sermon during evening. Visited Watson during p.m., found him well and in good spirits. Last night

between ten and eleven were aroused by the firing of the pickets. It soon quieted down and we retired to rest. Lieut [sic] Reed and Col. Messer have gone to Ohio. Maynard came up this morning. Capt. Latimer came up to day. He has been home in Ohio.

Camp 101st OVI
Bridgeport, Ala
Friday Evening, Dec 4/63

Dear Mother,

Fifteen months this morning since I last saw you and my pleasant Ohio home: wonder how many more weary months are to pass away ere I see you again. I hope not many, yet if I can only have the assurance that you and the rest I love so dearly are well and happy I shall rest contented.

You wish to have me come home, and I would like to be there but it is impossible. The next best thing is to keep up good courage and be hopeful. Our Army has been so successful at Chattanooga, that I think it will have a great bearing on the end of the war, that I think the end is not many years (I had almost said months) off.

There has about 5000 prisoners passed over the bridge by our camp, so we know that there has been that number captured. There has a large number of Rebel Officers been brought up on the Boats, and perhaps other prisoners, but as they land on the other side of the river, we don't know how many has really been sent to the rear.

Lieut. Boggs of the 10th OVC just returning from home took dinner with me today. He is on his way to Chattanooga to report to his Regiment. Lieut [sic] Reed arrived here yesterday. The Buck Gloves he brought me are just the things. Father could not have pleased me better, for I needed them, the nights being quite cool.

The detail from our Regiment to go north to recruit has been made and the list has returned to the Regiment from H'dq'r's [sic] approved. The list is as follows: Lieut [sic] [illegible] B, Reed Company "D", Lieut [sic] Taggart Co. "I", Lieut [sic] [illegible] Co. "C", Lieut [sic] Petticord Co. "K", Lieut [sic] G. E. Seurey Quarter Master, Capt [sic] Beckwith Co. "B", Sergt. Homer Co. "E", Sergt Webster Co. "G" and Corp. White Co. "F". Reed and Petticord have both been home ever since the Chickamauga Fight. Reed returned yesterday and Petticord returned last Monday. I hardly think it fair that Reed should go home so soon after being home so long a time, but I am glad Petticord goes, for he buried his only child the day before he started for the regiment, and his wife who has been sick a long time is not expected to live. Lieut [sic] Beer and Capt. Beckwith are

both at home on sick leave. The care of Quarter Master Surray is a harder Pill to swallow. He voted for Valandigham [sic] and am told has said he was not in favor of the war. I think none but Loyal men deserve favors of the government. He has always been very Gentlemanly and pleasant to me, but I don't like his political principles. I imagine the Colonel didn't want to lose his men that were fit for duty, therefore he detailed [illegible] those who were already home. Reed and Petticord had returned before the Papers were approved.

Dr. Reed applied sometime [sic] ago for a recruiting commission for his son. Reed brought us quite a quantity of Butter and some other articles of Provisions, so that we gain something good to eat by his having been home. We get the "crumbs" that accrue from his happy priveleges [sic].

I am ordered to take command of Co. "F"; shall do so tommorrow [sic]. Capt. Barnes and [illegible] have returned, also Jefferson, who brought me a pair of Socks, some Paper Envelopes, Sterrups [sic], Cigars and more than all a Letter from you.

We are having pleasant days and cold nights.

Yesterday, as the Rebel prisoners were crossing the Pontoon Bridge over the west or north channel, the bridge broke, precipitating a number of the rebels into the river. A number were downed [sic] from 7 to 17, also one or two of the guards. The railroad bridge over the west channel (the river runs south west here) is completed to the island, and a Locomotive ran over it today. The bridge over the other channel will be completed tomorrow, when the cars will run to Whitesides, which is within 15 miles of Chattanooga. Chattanooga is 28 miles from Bridgeport by Rail Road, but much farther by the route we came.

Doctor Cooks [sic] father from Mansfield is here visiting the Doctor. Lieut [sic] Reed has gone to Chattanooga to report to get orders regarding recruiting. He will probably start for Ohio tomorrow night. I shall endeavor to send by him a package of old Letters for Louisa, also a Pipe I have had one of the men make for Father out of Laurel Root, for a Christmas present to Father.

My health is now quite good. I had a little touch of the ague and a bad cold a few days ago, but am quite well at present.

Do you get all my letters. I write quite often. No more to night. Take good care of yourself and pray God that Peace will come and that we all once more be united around the hearthstone.

Expecting to hear from you soon. Remembrance to all, with much love I close

Your Son,
Elbert

Camp 101st OVI
Bridgeport Ala.
Sunday December 20, 1863

Dear Mother,

It is only one week since I wrote to John, and I have no news and can not write anything of interest; still I think you will be glad to hear from me and to learn that I am quite well.

This has been a very pleasant day, the atmosphere cool and bracing and the Sun shining clear and bright. We have no Chaplain, (Rev. Kennedy having resigned and gone home), therefore we have had no services the past three or four Sabbaths, but I am at no loss for means of passing the day in a proper and profitable manner. On our table lies the beautiful Bible I received from home when we were at Murfreesboro, a volume of Longfellows [sic] Poems containing "Evangeline" "Courtship of Miles Standish" and other good pieces, "Armies of Europe" by McClellan [sic], "Casey's Tactics," "Lessons of the Cross" and biography of the Rev. Geo. Whitefield.

It is now Sundown, and I have passed the day in reading from the bible and the life of Whitefield, writing to Ellen Brooks, and a stroll all alone by myself on the island and I shall finish the day by writing to you, my dear Mother, and in reading. In [illegible] our Regimental Library is an excellent thing. It contains over one hundred volumes, among which are many good works. It is opened for the issuing of books every other Saturday. Does your health admit of your reading? If not, you must let one of the little boys read to you. I know they would like to: I always did. [illegible] I would like to be home this pleasant sabbath eve. I can imagine just what you are all doing. You are all in the Sitting room: You and Father and Willie sitting before the Grate, Louisa, John, and Martha around the Piano singing, and Charlie and Berkie teasing the life out of Clemment seeing which of them shall monopolize his attention, Mary and Jane away. Oh: how I hope that we may be united at the homestead once more.

I have just eaten my supper. We had soft bread, Butter, Apple Sauce and Tea, a right good meal. Our mess consists of Captain Latimer, Serg't [sic] Henry Newton and Thad Hackett. Hackett is our Bugler and Cooks for us. Newton [illegible] for the Adjutant. Our

black boy "Sudy" left us in November to go to Murfreesboro to enlist in a Colored Regiment. We had got him well clothed and paid him some money, and he went off feeling well. The negroes have a hard time of it. I don't think they (are stocked) with an over amount of Courage, but their situation, which they understand better than many would suppose, and their remarkable powers of imitation, will make them good Soldiers and, as for courage they have shown in several instances that they possess that requisite of a good Soldier. In battle most of the Negro servants keep a good distance to the rear and are hard to find when needed, but our "boy" generally stuck close to us, at least where we could find him when the danger was over. He stayed with me when I was at the hospital nursing my arm and appeared to like me, as I did not scold him as much as Reed did. He use [sic] to provoke me frequently by his carelessness, but he was one of those whom it did but little good to scold.

I sent Willie and Geo Drake a Printed Roll of the Regiment. Before you hear from me again Christmas will probably have passed and the Turkey have been eaten. Eat a slice for me. I can only be with you in spirit, and that does not partake of bodily comforts. "Merry Christmas" to you all and remember me [illegible]

Your loving Son
Elbert

Geo Hubbell and John Rickey are both well and with us. E.

Captain has a "Jubilee" and we sometimes have a sing. The music lacks a Sisters [sic] voice and is not so sweet as of old.
E.

Elbert

Mrs. J. F. Squire

