

BM # 1

Jamestown Sept 3 62

Wife I dont think that I can come home before the last of the week I have been put through the mill and am all right and I wish ~~you~~ that you would see some one and have that wheet down to Judds bound up and sot up ten in a bunch raked up clean and done nice except the Canada thistles skip them tell who does it that I will pay them the money for doing it when I come home I want it done as son as it can be pleas attend to it and try to have it done. Alva is well

B Merrill

BM # 2 (On stationery with printed poem by Philander W. Hubbard,  
"The Friends I Left Behind Me!")

Camp James M Brown

Sept 24, 62

Ruba I thought that I would write a few lines to you this  
this morning I think the prospect is that we shall leave this  
place within a few days I find that the prospect is that we dont  
get forty dollars of the goverment bounty that was promised in  
advance Alva will get his now I think so you see that you wont  
have as much money to use as you expected and some of them will  
have to wate a spell for a part you will have keep a little by  
your self if you think best you can come out to morrow but they  
are closing up and the soldiers dont have as much privileg as  
they did if you come you had better drive the team where we staid  
and then you can come in to camp I think I had ment to have let  
you had some money to have got home but I forgot it we cant get  
any papers to day and so I run the chance of sending this down to  
town I would like to see you again before I go but do as you think  
best about coming out I think that I can manage about sending the  
money to you I will try and write again before I leave if you  
dont come out give my love to Nancy and Irvin and all enquiring  
friends This from your loving husband B Merrill

them verses speak my sentiments B Merrill

Camp James, Brown had better drive the Revere  
Ruba I thought that I would where we staid and then  
write a few lines to you this you can come in to camp  
this morning I think the prospect I think I ment to have let  
is that we shall leave this place you had some money to have  
within a few days I find that got home but I forgot it  
the prospect is that we dont we cant get any lises to  
get forty dollars of the gover day unt so I run the chance  
I went bounty that was promes of sending this down to town  
in advance of how you will get I would like to see you again  
see now I think so you see n before I go but do as you  
that you wont have us I think best about coming out  
much money to use as you I think that I can manage  
expected and some of them about sending the money  
will have to wait a spell to you I will try and write  
for a post you will have again before I leave if you  
keep a little by yourself dont come out give my love  
if you think best you to Nancy and Frown and  
can come out to now all onging friends This from  
but they are doing up you loving Husband B Merrill  
and the soldiers dont have them versus speak my  
as much privacy as they sentiment  
did if you come you

B Merrill

BM # 3  
ACM

Baltimore

Oct 1 1862

Ruba I thought that I would write a few lines to let you know where we are Baltimore is a nice City and the streets are thronging with souldiers we landed here about noon to day all safe and no bad luck I dont know yet what we will do when I find out and get settled I will write and give you directions where to direct

B Merrill

Dear mother I thought when I was at Jamestown there was lots of folks but come to get to Baltimore it seems as though there was not any body there I am well and Horace is to there is 5 regiments here in the streets besides ours and they say that the soldiers are so thick that we cant get within 8 miles of Washington we had a very pleasant ride and we passed through some large cities no more this time

Yours

Alva C Merrill

Camp Suard  
Oct 5th 1862

Ruba I have got one side to spend a little time in writing to you. we left Jamestown monday night after you came away and arrived to Almira tuesday morning there we unloaded was marched out into a pasture not far of and there each of us received a Catridge box and belt with a bayonet sheath attached to it and then we were marched along before the depot and there each of us received a good Musket with a bayonet on them shiny and bright then we were marched to the cars and seated and left there and came through Pennsylv and Tuesday night we all took supper to Williamsport PA then we passed on and rode all night passed(?) Richmond and some other places and Wednesday morning we came to york PA there we made a little stop and passed on and beforelong we were in the State of Mariland now for Mariland as we passed along in Mariland we were hailed with Joy Women and Children swung their handkerchiefs and we found the Railrode guarded by our soldiers all along as we passed they also gave us a salute as we passed and about noon Wed we were landed in Baltimore there we were also received with joy there we all took dinner to a house called the union House and spent the afternoon and Wednesday evening we were loded on the Cars again for Washington and there we had breckfast and spent the day Thursday until towards night then our napsacks were loaded in wagons and we started for camp which is 7 or 8 miles from Washington on the other side of the Potomac this river is about one and a half miles wide and a nice river we crossed on a bridge the bridge had a place fixed in it with a swing for vessels to pass now about our camp we are camped on what is called Arlington hights a place that has formerly been held by the Rebels on General lees land they say and I have seen a nice white house they say is his house and I would like to draw you a picture of how it looks here but I cant but I will sum it up by saying Dessolation and ruin there seems to be plenty of men guns cannon musick Horses wagons and Mules and Tents in sight which is about all that can be seen the land here is of a redish loom and there has been no rain for a long time it is verry dry and windy and a perfect gale of dust such is a short sketch of theplace where I now live ant is it pleasant but I feel well and enjoy good health Alva is a little down but he is around and has been well until last night nothing serious about him the rest of us are all well I think that Horace Howlett is verry steady and prudent I had ought to have said a little more about Washington it is a large place but not as nice as Newyork our camp is in sight of the Capital it is a large nice building I have not yet seen Uncle Abe I think as near as I can judge from what I can see the Cesesh is sick and wont live many months I think there is men enough to berry the creature out right and have his funeral preached perhaps I can post you more on this score in another week Men are constantly coming there was a regiment come into camp last night from Wyoming and Alleg-hany they are a set of stron men when they camein they were all swet and dust but they seemed to have freedom (?) in their countenances Nancy and Irvin I must tell you what kind of house I live and how I came by it it is a house that uncle Sam gave us it is about 6 by 12 feet it looks verry much like snow houses that you

BM # 4

BM # 4

have seen the School Children make it stands in a long city of such I have Mr. Vinson Calvin Johnson and Shelm\_dine live with me and I would like to tell you a little about our bedsteads and rurniture but I will leave that until I get home I think that I will come before many months

B Merrill

I shall want you to answer this before I write again and then I will write I think that it will take you about 5 days to get this and 5 days to get an answer so you see that it will be 10 days before I can hear from ~~you~~ home I dont hardly know how to wate if you think best you may let some of the neighbors see this letter

OCT 11th 62  
Camp Suard

to my Wife Ruba I thought that I would write a few lines to you this morning I have written twice before I dont look for anything from you yet I shall look next week for a letter from you We have had orders this morning to cook two days rations and I expect that we shall leave to day or to morrow I believe the orders is to Fairfax Alva and I are well but there is some sick in Regiment I beleave that Disentery is the mane complaint we are now on (?) farm or what was once a farm the fences are gone and the countr around here is all stumped over and trod down and any amount of tents there seems to be plenty of Men here we have had a verry dry time here but we had a fine rain last night and that has laid the dust and the weather is a little cooler to day I want to hear from you and the children as soon as I can. I think that they had a battle south of us last night by the looks of things it looked light and seemed to flash occasionally what awaits me in the future I dont know but I leave all in the hands of ~~God~~ God and I expect to go forth and try and do my duty at all times and in all places pleas remember me in your secret devotions. I have not had a bed to sleep in since I slept with you to Jamestown I would like call to our hous a while and have one drink of water out of our well they dont have such water down here by no means the land dont look as I expected it is rough here and the Virginia folks are some time behind so far as the customs are ~~consernd~~ consernd they appear some like the Dutch to Dayton there is only a few families of the settlers(?) left about here be bring water about half a mile where a family have not left the well is 115 feet deep on the whole the Cattaraugus folks dont appreciate the priviledgs that they enjoy if you should want me to write particuler about any thing mention in your next I hant seen any platations yet nor where any thing grew the past summer I have not heard from Wilbur yet no I dont know where the ~~44th~~ 44th is I have seen our Chaplin but have not heard him preach he appears like a fine man we have enough to eat when we can get it but there is so many to serve that we dont get it verry regular there is a great deal wasted evry day tell Mr Howle that Horace is verry steady and seems to enjoy himself well Lieut Hubbard says if you see Jane tell her that he has been well until last night he was some unwell but he is able to be around he says that he will write as soon as he can get time Direct B Merrill

Washington D C  
154 Rgt  
Company K N.Y.S.V.  
Care of Captin Hugabone

Fairfax Oct 14 1862

To the M E Church at West Dayton

I thought that it may be that you would like to hear from me I am about twenty miles south of Washington to Fairfax in camp my health is good and I am trying to live in the enjoyment of religion the society is not of the most favorable kind although there are a good many ~~decent~~ good praying men in Camp and a good many that are profane men I think that I would enjoy a meeting to the old meeting House to Dayton once more. I hope that the good Lord will hasten the time when this war will be brought to a close and we return safely home again. I came here because I thought that it was my duty to come and I expect to stand up like a man and do my duty like a man whatever that may be and leave the event with God

I think that you that stay at home dont appreciate the privileges as much as you should I know that I did not while I write this I sit on the ~~ground~~ ground in my tent and my gun Bayonet for a candle stick and my writing on my knee and other conveniences about in the same way

I thought of writin to you last Sunday but ~~did not~~ Saturday we had orders to march the next day and Sunday morning we started from Camp Suard and came to this place and so went the Sabbath day I have not had much opportunity of meeting yet but have been in a few Praier meetings I have seen our Chaplin he appears like a fine man I have been in one prair meeting that he managed and he is first rate for that I have not heard him preach yet I think that the army is a great field for a missionary to labour I have some Tracts handed me since I have been in the army that are put out by our society and a Testament and I think if I ever get home I will give a little more libera(†) to such institutions although I dont feel to conde(?) myself much on that score for I have been in the habit of giving to the Lord

Desolation and ruin mark the place from Washington this way as far as I have come and we passed one place where the trees were well marked up with balls well on the whole it looks a good deal like war around where I am here plenty of tents in sight and plenty of Men government Horses Mules and Wagons and all in a bustle you cant hardly go for a mis(?) of Souldiers I believe that it is a general time of health although there is some sick here I have seen no rebels yet only a few prisoners I would like to have the church appoint someone to write to me when they receive this and let me know how they get along Finely Brethren pray for us

B Merrill



BM # 5

Oct 14

Since the other was ritten we have moved to Fairfax a 10 or 15 miles we are now about 20 miles south of Washington there is a rumer in camp now that we leave this day for Center vill but we have not yet had orders to do so there is but verry few familie left between here and C Suard desolation and ruin is spred overthe place I have not yet seen any Rebels only a few prisoners that were going to Washington when we came here my health still remains good and so is Alvahs I dont get much time to write I thought that I would writ considerable sunday but sunday morning we started for this place and arrived here monday noon and so you see it goes I dont get much spare time I have some house work to do such as Cooking washing dishes and the like some days I feel a little lonesome and think of home and the folks to Dayton but I pass it off as soon as possible and enjoy myself as best I can my lodging is not first rate you now that I like a good bed and a good bed fellow of the rite stripe but I cant have either of these I herd one of our folks Howlett I beleave say that he would give 25 cts to see one good looking woman such are scarce here I tell you I think of things that I cant write

Picture  
of Lincoln here  
ABM LINCOLN.

Fairfax Oct 14 1862

To the M E Church at West Dayton

I thought that it may be that you would like to hear from me. I am about twenty miles south of Washington to Fairfax in camp. My health is good and I am trying to live in the enjoyment of religion the society is not of the most favorable kind although there are a good many good praying men in camp and a good many that are profane men I think that I would enjoy a meeting to the old meeting house to Dayton once more. I hope that the good Lord will have the time when this war will be brought to a close and we return safely home again. I came here because I thought that it was my duty to come and I expect to stand up like a man and do my duty like a man whatever that may be and leave the event with God's (He didn't put in the period!)

I think that you that stay at home don't appreciate the privileges as much as you should I know that I did not while I write this I sit on the ground in my tent and my gun Bayonet for a candle stick and my writing on my knee and other conveniences about in the same way.

I thought of writing to you last Sunday but Saturday we had orders to march the next day and Sunday morning we started from Camp Guard

and came to this place and so went the Sabbath  
day I have not had much opportunity of meeting  
yet but have been in a few of Prayers meetings  
I have seen our Chaplin he appears like a fine man  
I have been in one prayer meeting that he managed  
and he is first rate for that I have not heard  
him preach yet I think that in the army is a great  
field for a missionary to labour

I have some Tracts handed me since I have  
been in the army that are put out by our society  
and a Testament and I think if ever I get home  
I will give a little more liberally to such  
institutions although I don't feel to conde(?)  
myself much on that score for I have been  
in the habit of giving to the Lord

Desolation and ruin mark the place from Washington  
this way as far as I have come and we passed  
one place where the trees were well marked up  
with balls well on the whole it looks a good  
deal like war around where I am here plenty of  
tents in sight and plenty of Men government Horses  
Mules and Wagons and all in a bustle you can't  
hardly go a mis (?) of ~~lot~~ Soldiers I believe  
that it is a general tone of health although there  
is some sick here I have seen no rebels yet only  
a few prisoners I would like to have the church  
appoint someone to write to me when they receive  
this and let me know how they get along finely  
Brethren pray for us

B Merrill

Fairfax Oct 18, 62

Ruba I received your letter this morning and was verry glad to hear from home I assure you and I conclude that you have got to be a man of business by what you say that you have done I guess you have the blues a little I feel some like laughing a you a little and I feel some like writing a kind of ~~rough~~ roguish letter but I dont know as it would do but there is a few telegraphic marks toward the bottom of your letter that I hardly understand and I guess that you had better make it a little plainer in your next or explain a little so far as I am concerned or rather so far as my health is concerned I feel keen as a brier and Alvas health is good you spoke of your nice potatoes I am glad that you have them and I guess that you had better ~~make~~ bake one and put on some butter and eat it for me I have not tasted of a potatoe since I left Jamestown nor had any buter I live on meet and bred with coffee or tea and sugar with a little rice occasionally we have fresh beef occasionally my appetite is good I sleep in a small cloth tent with the ground for our bed stead and our tent is well ventilated with air fresh air you now is healthy and that makes me tough I ant as fleshy as when you see me last the water is poor here and there is quite a number in camp that is troubled with a back door trot and it runs some of them quite hard we still lay in camp in Fairfax when or where we go I cant tell the land here is poor and it dont look like fighting a great deal about the soil looks of a reddish Cast and looks worn out the inhabitants are mostly gone and most of the buildings tore to peaces some of the stores up to town and back buildings lad wasted even up to town the other day it is about a half a mile from our camp it is nearly (?) when I rod your letter I thought if you had my writing table it might be that you would have written a little better I will tell you what it is I set flat on my bottom on the ground in the shade of a tree with my Knapsack on my lap which serves for a table sometimes I write in the evening in my tent in the same way and my gun bayonet stuck in the ground which serves for a candle stick and so the thing goes I had a letter from Wilbur since I came from our last camp here he says he is well and on all fores answered his letter and asked him to come and see me he is down the river the Potomac Antietam Iron Works probably 40 or 50 miles from me there is now abou 10 or 15 regiments in camp not far from ours which makes a quite a number of men drums are beating a most all of the time and we are in a complete bustle things look quite like war around here and when the men comes out on dress parade their shiny bayonets looks savage I would think from what I have seen that there is men aplenty in the field to go where they pleas with the right management but I cant tell how this will be I will sent you 2 or 3 stamps that ant worth any thing here may be you can use them there you will direct as usual until otherwise instructed We have a post office right in camp male and get right here I washed a shirt an sox and drawers the other day and that was a little new to me you did not write whether you had got any thing done with the corn over to Mr. Edger-tons or whether the thrashing is done nor what you did with that little likeness of mine that we got to Jamestown I have got yours in my pocket yet I look at it occasionally ● I think the thrashing had better be done as soon as it can be what about the apples are they gathered and how many have you good apples will bring 2 to

BM # 6

3 cents a peace here in Camp so you see I am without apples and butter is worth from 30 to 40 cts and Chees from 15 to 20 ¢ and small pies from 15 to 20 ¢ a peace and milk from 15 to 20 ¢ a quart and so on and there is another thing troubles me Tobacco is worth \$1.00 per pound and I have other troubles to get along with I wont mention I would like to have you let me know whether things look smooth or rough ~~about~~ about home and whether it is wet or dry weather the weather is dry here and cool nights for one that sleeps as I do and we had a little frost last night for the first time this fall here I think on the whole that I would like to call home and eat supper with you and I would not be in a hurry to leave before morning to come back to V (?) I hardly know how to get along without tobacco ¢ etc but I dont see any other way and so I shall have to stand up to the rack hay or no hay.....

19th Sunday

...our chaplin preached to us this morning I dont remember his name Text Proverbs 22 and first verse and Psalms 119, 9 joined together and he preached good he has his sermon wrote down they say he is a Congregational preacher I have just thought of his name it is Lowell and I must tell about the meeting House we formed a square in two ranks or in other words two men thick with one side left out on a spot of clean grass on a side hill and he stood in the open space and preached to us that is the way that we do business all in the open air Cook eat and I like to have said sleep and worship in the open air I have hardly seen the inside of a house since I left Jamestown nor have I sot down in a chair nor laid down in a bed nor have I seen but verry few women I have not seen a cow in the fields nor a sheep nor hardly a horse or mule but what had U.N.S. stamp with a hot iron on them and so with wagons my equipage that I use is stamp U.S. I have not seen ~~an~~ an ox team since I crossed the potomac I have rifle pits and embankments and so forth and I have seen trees that have been well marked up with balls and so on In fact we are encamped on the same ground that the rebels occupied a few weeks ago our pickets are now beyond Center vill 7 or 8 miles south of here our regiment has done no picket duty yet nor our guns have not been touched yet according to report the rebels are falling back we drill a little about evry day and go through with the motions of sham fights etc I always liked realities better than motions but in this case I presume that themotions would be the most pleasant to the eye I understand that there is no Rebels verry near us if there was I think they would fare slim our team about here is pretty strong.....

Fairfax 20 Oct 62

Well Ruba I have got cooped up this evening in tent and I thought that I would talk to you a little with pencil I suppose that you and the Children are to work at the apples this evening and I would like to call and help you if I could you wanted I should tell you about that Baltimore Union House well it was a large brick building probably 3 or 4 storys high I did not notice what it was covered with some of our Companies eat right over each other by going up stares we had a soldiers meal bred and mest and coffee there was one man died in our regiment to day from the town of Ashford I dont know what aled him I understand they are going to send him home well this morning we had orders to go out on review and there was seven or 8 regiments and one regiment of artilery present to review and General Siegle and staff or body gard was present his body gard was 40 or 50 on horsback with ~~some~~ words and he rode a hed of them with a Cloke something like your black short Cloke on a black horse and drest rather plane rather then fused and not large and he apears like a gentleman and he is a Dutchman when he rod up to regiment he oncovered his hed and he done it nice we had review about 2 weeks ago and then General Casy was present he is quite an old man quite gray he rode a nice gray horse and appeared well I understand that our regiment is attached to Sigels division and this ant all we had a kind of sham fight today our regiment occupied the place of a reserve and I think that this is the place that we are to occupy for time to come we were ~~we~~ placed down over a rise of land and stood there a spell and then we were ordered to move we moved a few rods towards the front we heard a shout go up then we were halted and marched of the ground and so ended the fight and then we came back to camp and supper was all ready we had fresh beef and soup and bred for supper and it was good I shall be glad to get some of your butter to eat and some driedfruit and some Chees but I dont hardly know how or where we will keep them we hant no butry nor seller in our house but I guess that we can do something with them report is this morning that the rebels have evacuated wchester we have verry nice days here but cool nights and some frosts well what effect did that wedding have on        has there been much cold weather up there yet I would like some milk you know that I hant been weaned I left one thing that I want maybe you can send it I told Rug this morning I was sick and wanted him to administer he looked at me a minit and said that he would boil a peace of fat pork and have me take it to bed with me and have it warm I suppose he meant to have me put it to my feet

Privet to Ruba

Our Company drewed a nice hind quarterx of fresh beef last night this morning our two tents drewed ours raw and cooked it ourselves Alva done the cooking he pounded it and It was good he salted it when he first put it a cooking some one told him the he had better let it cook some first he said mamur salted it when she put it a cooking and he had eat good meat to home there is considerable work being laid out on our camping ground and the appearance is that we shall stay some time this morning we had orders to bring brick about a  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mild where there had been a nice brick house torn down to for a place to cook in I have been bringing brick and we have got a verry good place to cook I would be glad to have you keep a little money by you may be that I shall want some sent I will write if I do I bought a rubber blanket 2.50 and that is a good thing I have money yet this morning I feel as kee as ever my beard is growing and I dont shave I am troubled a little with a few complats some of the time but they dont last long I now <sup>but</sup> what would be good for me to have but it cont grow it Virginia It only grows in Dayton and that is an imediate relief evry time and it has a good flav-our I think of ~~home~~ home and our sleeping room bed and bed fellow and that is some consolation I would like to try my old nest and old bed fellow one night I tell you and lay my hand over your waste but I must wate a spell I want you to be careful of your health and keep your feet dry and warm if I write anything that dont want to read you can scip it but I write the truth and they say the truth will stand any how twon cost much to drop it in the stove when you have seen it I think of old times have you got your weeving done and how does your loom seat go I must close some time I will write so that you may let the neighbors read it and some times it wont do read first your self and see

BM



Oct 25 Fairfax 1862

Rupa I received a letter and a paper from you yesterday and was glad to hear from home my health remains good and so is Aivas strickland is getting better and I believe the rest from our place are in usual health I have not much news to write to day we are not doing much this after noon and I thought that I would pass away a little time in writing to you I have receive three letters and one paper from home I have ritten once since I heard from you I dont know but you think that I write oftener than you can afford for you will have to foot the bil I rote to have you send me some stamps I am getting al most out of stamps and I cant get them here I think that you had better try and keep up and I guess that you will if you have seen my last letter if that dont have the desired affect I will try again I am here to ~~try~~ try and do my duty as a souldier for my country and the old ~~flag~~ flag whe I am through I shall be glad to come home and not til then and I want you to cheer up and enjoy yourself as best you can until I can come home I expect to come sometime if providence permits I would be glad to draw you a landscape of the scene around here but I cant I will try and describe to you a little how it looks around here the country is not level nor (?) but hilly and there is considerable woods in sight and the place all around here is dotted with white tents and our camp lays betwean two rodes and there seems to be a great deal of teaming going on mostly with baggage wagons heavy wagons two span on a wagon sometimes three and some times four span on one wagon and the wagon covered with white canva our teams comes evry night put their teams ou in the broad stable of all out doors and there they stand until morning our camp is about half a mile from fairfax Corthous that we have red so much about and about 6 or 7 miles from Center-vill I dont know the exact distance alexnder though not many miles and we are about fourteen miles from the celebrated Bull runn and about forty or fifty miles from Richmond and Harpers ferry is about the distance down the Potomac River and we are now on the same ground nearly that was occupied by the rebels a few weeks ago I have not had my gun loaded yet and I dont know of any amount of rebels verry near and I dont know any thing how long we shal stay we drill some though not verry much we are camped on a clean nice pice of ground and the water is a little better than it was in our other camp Irvin wanted to know what I htought (?) frame(?) was worth I dont think that it is worth much just the frame if you can get a little some thing for it and have it taken away clean perhaps you had better let it go I would not let any bourds go I was glad to have Irvin write and Nancy must write some times to tell them to write plane plainer than I do fo I have no where to

BM # 8

lay my paper so I cant write verry well I am glad you have sent some stuff and I hope we ~~we~~ will get it safe I would be verry glad to have some butter from home I got four letters yesterday and one paper one from you one from leonards folks and one from ~~the~~ milo and one from Mr Edgertons folks when we came from camp suard here we passed the stone bridge that we have red about there has been a battle there and one ths side of there in a peace of woods that we passed there the trees was well marked up and another at baleys cross rodes those three places we have passed we are in seigles brigade I understand we have plenty to eat now and not a great deal to do and I guess that the sick are getting better there is 8 or ten ~~Regiments~~ Regiments camped near us now I dont think of any thing more that would be best for me to write this time unles I should do it with telegraph marks and I think I will wate and see if you can reade them that I did make finely the whole of this is a kind of telegraph mark I will do it up and not try to read it my self I can make more marks or dots a most any time pleas write often I think that I can read dots and marks when plased in the right place yours

B.M

BM # 9

Fairfax Tuesday 28th

Wife I am so comfortable to night that I wanted to tell you about it we have just got a nice little place fixed to keep fire in our tent and we are as comfortable as a biscuit I am alone this evening and you see I think of wife two of our family are out on picket vinnson and shelmadine and Calvin has gone out into camp on a visit Alva has been in a while but he has gone home now I have been cleaning and greasing my boots and shoes and I now sit before a pleasant fire infact I dont lack but one thing of having quite a pleasant house and that is a woman to wash dishes &c. I am tough and harty as a pig so is Alva this picket busines ant dangerous yet for there is three sit between us and the enemy we have had new neighbors come in to day a Regiment from ohio to day they have pitched a few rods from us and they have brought along a brass band and there is plenty of musick here to night there is a good many souldiers campt about here now I rather think that there will be an advace of the army soon but still I dont now how that will be I dont know I would like to hear from you often I have had but three letters yet

we sent down to Washington to day to see about that box but we shant know until tomorrow I wrote a few days ago to have you send me some stamps I am about out there ant no chance to get any here pleas send some if you hant I rather expected to hear from you to day but I did not I think that we will draw some pay soon

B Merrill

Fairfax Friday 31 Oct 62

Mrs Merrill Alva received a letter from you this morning enclosed I found one for me and 8 stamps for which I was thankful I think that you had better get a quantity of them and send me some about once in a week or two I cant take care of many at a time I have some leisure time and I want to write considerable many letters and it is quite a bother to get them here we drill some and are idle a part of the time since I rote last we haved moved our camp nearly one mile fõrm where we was near some woods and on a piece of new cleared land it is a nice place and we have not fairly got rigged up yet the weather here is fine as summer I was surprised to hear that you had so much snow to Dayton about that time we had a hard rane here but the most of the time since we crossed the river the weather has been fine the days clear and the latter part of the nights chilly and a little frost a few mornings well I have got above living in old snowy Cattaraugus now my home is the sunny south but it looks some here as though we had pitched our tents towards Sodam we hant had worship in our tents after I get laid down nights I have a chance for reflection and I try in weakness to call on the name of the Lord and Mr. Fuller(?) and I (?) out together my health is good but I am thin in flesh you said you was afraid that I would have the rhumatism I dont know how that may be I feel nothing of it yet my appetite is good and I want to eat more then is for my good I have fresh beef salt pork beans rice bred hard tacks or Sheet Iron crackers and coffee and sugar and some times molasses this is about my living if we could have butter Phes and potatoes added our living would be first rate with occasional a peace of pie and a few green apples I have not had a potato nor a bit of butter nor a peace of pie since I saw you last I hant had a bit of milk but once I bought on Canteen of milk to camp Seward we hant got that box yet I think that some body will go and see about the fore part of the week we have got to have the receipt that was given when it was shipt Hubbard says he has rote for it and he expects it evry day Strickland is getting better so that he is about Hubbard has been unwell he is about now Howlett is tough and I guess that the helth of the regiment is better than it was and the water is a little better here than it was to Camp Seward we had a general review here about ~~some~~ Siegels head quarters this forenoon and there was about 16 regiments present besides a good many artillery and Cavalry quite a number of the men that we read about was present and among the rest was Secretary Chase and among the big men that rode on horses was a lady that rode on a horse she looked nice and managed her horse well she wore a ~~black~~ black hat some thing like Nancys only it was fixed verry nice and she had on a long black riding dress I don know who she was she looked a little out of her place I have not yet seen Uncle Abe but I have seen his house his house and mine hut I live in dont look a bit alike I have an occasional thought come over me about my little home to Dayton and I folks there but I dry up and expect to reside a spell longer in <sup>old</sup> Virginia

I have not seen a green field since I crossed the river about  evry thing lays to wast even where the fields once were it is all stompt over and a great deal of the ground used for tenting and drilling ground I have seen Fairfax Court hous it is a brick building and badly damaged the windows stove in and  (?) the woods about here is white oak and Chestnut there has been Chestnuts here they are gone now I dont hear much about the war though I understand that McClelland and Burnside are when our Division will move is more than I can tell the sun is getting low and I must hasen you dont write as often as I would like to have you I believe that I have received three or four letters from you I think that I have written two or three more than I have received but I suppose that you dont have as many leisure moments as I do I received a letter from Mr. Edgertons folks and I will answe both as soon as I can get time I will try and write often I would be glad to have fathers folks write and Resign(?) I calculate to write to all of you as often as I can I shall look for two letters an done up in the other in a few days and I want you to write particular how you get along, you know I would like to see you and the children and all the rest of the folks but there seems to be some thing to be done here yet if we ever get about it but the thing moves slow my love to all B. Merrill pleas write

Friday evening I have got down by candle light to write a little more tell Nancy and irvin that I would like to see them tell irvin to take good care of the colts he had better sell his calves and you had better Kill that heifer you can find some one that will want part of the meat I think by looking around you want to get your chores as light as possible this winter and you might look out in time about wood for winter and be as comfortable as you can be shure and fix the house so that the sellar wont frees get some one to help This evening our neighbors acrost the street gave me an invitation to come over and take supper with them and so I went they had some sweet potatoes and I had a good supper the neighbors was Butler Horace Robison John Newcombs wifs brother the other you dont know potatoes are four cents a pound here they had good chees to so you see that I have some friends here I have not a hard word with anyone here I have been well used so far as I know ● please excuse me this time BM.

Letter No. 11 from B. Merrill

Virginia Nov. 4, 1862

Since I wrote to you last week we moved about 20 miles nearly west from Fairfax we made the move Sunday and Monday. I have not yet learned the place where we are and how long we shall stay. When we started we came direct to Centerville and from there to Bull run this stream is nearly as long as the Conewago I should think rather deep I did not see much there only a lot of forssac<sup>(?)</sup> wooden rebel barracks we did not cross where the most hard fighting was done after we crossed we plenty of marks of the last fight that took place there such as stone up Cannons dead horses Cannon balls shels tops of trees torn off small balls lying in the road and graves and I saw some men that were not all covered up in short it looked rather hard Centerville looks like a poor deserted place houses about all empty things lok as usua all to ruin when arrived here last night we or rather our regiment in company with others killed about ten head of rebel cattle and they made good beef the ground that we are now on was covered by rebel pickets yesterday morning but they slept out and we have had no trouble yet the ~~throughfare~~ gap is about three miles a head I believe that we are to pass that when we move again but we are stronghanded, I understand the gap is already open and secured I understand the bottom I think from appearance that

that I have come nearly to my field of labour & can't tell what will take place ahead but I think the rebels will have to scedaddle or fight pretty soon. we occupy the place of a reserve regiment I think that the whole army of the potomac are on the advance now. I will try and keep you posted as much as I can. I want you to write often. I shall write again before many days. I feel tired setting to my desk. writing and I guess I will close.

B M

Tuesday evening we have news by the way of the Baltimore Clipper which states that the war is moving every favourable. some of our Cavalry came to night they say that they rode 6 miles beyond the gap. today the army as far as I can learn are in good shape to move and that McClellands design is to drive the rebels through this gap. if this is so they will be likely to get bagged.

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Tuesday evening we have news by the way of the Baltimore Clipper which states that the war is moving verry favourable some of our Cavalry came to night they say that they rode 6 miles beyond the gap today the army as far as I can learn are in good shape to move and that McClellands design is to drive the rebels through this gap if this is so they will be likely to get bagged.



Virginia Nov. 7th 1862

Ruba I thought that I would write you a few lines this morning and I have come to the conclusion that I have got about through unless you are a little more prompt about writing to me I hant had a line from you since that that come in with Alvas Alva has received one since he says that he had 3 \$ and  $\frac{1}{2}$  besides Alva ho\_ and all the rest are well and seems to enjoy them selves verry well I am tough and hearty I dont sleep as well the latter part of the nights as I could wish by some means since I last ~~rote~~ rote we have moved about 7 miles today we are laying in camp we are now past thourough fare gap that has been held by the rebels but we hant seen any of them yet we hear all the time that they are just a hed but they keep out of our way as yet we are now moving strong handed(?) we are now probably about 50 miles south west from Washington for the last 15 or 20 miles that we have passed has been mostly held by the rebels and there seems to(?) more stuff left such as fence sheep cattle hogs and the like and more of the sellers the land is better and the water there has been more raised here the past summer and now I will tell you how our army manage they take just what they want if they want fire they take rails if they want mutton they kill sheep if they want fresh pork they kill hogs and so it goes now days I went out yesterday in the after noon I took a canteen and haversack and took some potatoes milked a cow and gathered some apples and this morning we had stewed apples roasted potatoes and milk in coffee and we had a good breckfast you did not think that I would go to taking things in this way did you but I have and this is the cut here now we are now not verry far from ~~warington~~ warington that is a ~~cesesh~~ cesesh hole I suppose that we shall pass that place before long some think that we ~~will~~ will have a brush there but I dont think that we will some thought that we would have a brush to the gap but we did not had no trouble as yet no where

now about the weather here we had little snow here yesterday so that the ground was white it is all of today but the air is chilly today but the sun shines Yesterday was the first snow here as yet and the ground is quite dry verry dry now so that the fires run over the ground a good dele before the snow the land here lays rather rough but it verry good land oak and hickory timber I begin to come slaves they live in rather poor houses not far from massers house they are rather good some of brick and some of wood some are empty and some are inhabited and some are wrne to peaces and some are not injured and so it goes I dont know how ~~soon~~ soon we shall move again but probably soon I have tried to inform you about matters here as much as I could since I left and I shall continue to do so as much as I can provided you write to me often and puncticular a good many of

the houses here that are built rather nice the chimneys are built outside the customs here and the people resemble pensylvania the cattle are mostly with out horns or if you please mully(?) a great many mules and you cant imagine much about the expense of the war until you see what I have seen I am afrade that we shant get that box we are getting so far off we still may I am sorry that there was any thning sent until we are more settled and ~~that~~ told Hubbard so in the beginning but he thought that there would be no trouble about it I would like to have you let me know about how many letters you have had from me I think that the wheat done verry well I believe that if I am not mistaken I have just 4 or 5 letters from you about every day when the mail comes in to camp names are called of a most all but Merrill my name is only occasionally called I want to hear from you at least once a week and I would be glad to hear from home twice in a week what do you say will you write often

One of our company has just come in to camp with a mule and two bags of apples he said he got the mule for our first Lieut- enant he rode up to him and says what do you think of your property Bil meaning the Lieutenant it made quite a laugh I dont know if I could think of much more that would interest you at this time I believe that I have been able to answer to my name evry time yet I would like to have you just call in to camp at meal time and see the men cook some with a crotched stick sharpened and broiling meat and some making coffee and so on and then see them wash the dishes some wipe them with leaves without washing on the whole they appear rather awkward I have had two washings to do and I did not like to do that verry well cooking and washing will amke the men think of the women if nothing else Well I tell you the men here speak of their wives at home they say that they would like to see them and I suppose they would some of them say that they would like to call home and take supper with wife I had a letter from Wil- bur a few days age he says he is well the letter was maled at Harpers ferry it rather cold to write to day and I think that I wont write much more this time although it is rather against my will to send clean paper when we make another move it will probably bring about something that will be interesting to you then I will try and write again I want to hear from you and the children oftener than I have yet and I want to hear from some of the neighbors give my respects to Ebenesar and wife and Mr Edgertons folks and Miss Howlett tell her that Horace is tough as a pig and real steady I would like to hear particular from Fathers folks give all inquiring friends my respects tell them that I am here to help defend the rights that they enjoy try and take care of your health and sleep warm from your husband

Barzilla Merrill

Th\_rougfare Gap Nov 11. 62.

Wife this morning I received one letter and one paper making two papers and I believe five letters I hesitated some whether to write now or wate and let you catch up I finely concluded that this was not the first time that I got a hed of you and so I concluded to write you a few lines I write so often that I dont get much news when I rote last we was past this gap two or there miles from warington we were ordered there or rather near there as a reserve our troops were to take the place and we stand as reserve and in a day or two the news came that the place was ours and the rebels had left while we lay there we could hear the Canon plane the Job was short when they got about it then we were ordered back to the gap how long we shall stay I cant tell I would like to describe this place to you better than I can write but I will simply say that it is a pass through the mountains a natural one where the rode and rail rode pass and just this side of the pas lots of fragments of burnt Cars and signs of where the track has been torn up we hold the rode now the rode is repaired and and the cars run some past the gap I understand this rode is used expresly for govornment you said you thought that I would verry soon be in a battle it may be so I dont think or see any signs of it yet I have not had my gun lofed but once as yet and that was for picket duty I had no occasion to use it then I think the thing works favourable for us yet we are used as a reserve there lots of baggage wagons passing here evry day so you see that some body is a hed of us I would rather think by the appearance of things that we may stay here a few days at least the water is good here and we are camped in the edge of a clump of timber rather a good spot it is we are turned out in the fields and woods and I dont know but we shall get wild after a while but I guess if I should ever stray back to Dayton you could came me by a little coaxing I could not help but feel pleased when you told me the acconimy that you wer using about our affairs and I am sorry that Nancy has such a time with her sprant fut and I am verry much pleased to learn that Irvin is a good boy I am sorry that his calve are not steers I blame my self about that I dont know what you had better do with them it may be that it would do to have steers of yet you had better have Mr Howletts advise about ~~it~~ it I would be glad to have them turne and make your chores lighter and may be your hay wont hold out to winter them the Colts will eat a good deal of hay with out grane I think that Nancy done verry well with the turkeys I hope you will look out in time for wood to last through the winter I shall be verry glad to have the time come when I can go home but I done what I thought was my duty coming here and now my business is here and I expect to stand up like a man and do my duty and if necessary fight for the old flag I think that if our folks are careful now in a short time things will look quite favourable so far as this war is concerned our army are in good shape now I think from what information I can get gordensvill is about the next place to make a visit to I think that is about twenty miles from here. my health still remains good so is alvas I asked alva if he wanted to write some in this he said he rote yesterday

the reason as we dont tent together is he and horace wanted to go to gether they two are alone now they are clost buy us they come and eat with us some times they seem to enjoy them selves well and have no trouble they are together in the ranks our meet and beens are cooked together for our company and some times our coffee made together some times each make their own coffee in our tin cups each draws his own bred and sugar and we have the ground for our table and our meals relish living a little like Camp meeting so far as eating is concerned I think that you would like it I am about of the same mind now as I am or was of camp meeting I can go this days but nights I would like to go home that is I dont like to sleep on the ground nights I think that interest is due to Johnsons the first day of December you had better inquire the first opportunity I dont draw any pay here yet the talk is that we will get it soon I have got two dollars of my money yet and Alva hant used that three dollars that you sent so we will get along a while we cant get along with out using some occasionay some times we get a little to eat of the sutter such as ~~some~~ government does not provide and I buy a dayly paper some times and all this littles(?) count I mean to be as prudent as I can and be comfortable I would like to have you send that paper but I guess ~~that~~ you had better wate a little until we get a little settled I want you to write often and I want that little folded letter folded(?) letter of course and give me particulars and what the prospect is about your health a head I have been particular on all points when I have written to you may be you hant got all that I have rote If I write to much or to often pleas inform me or I can do the other thing write more and more particular about that pin I bought a package of paper and envelops and that pin was in it and I thought that I would send it to Nancy I thought that she would clame it of course the whole cost two shillings I due not think of sending it til I got through writing so I did not write about it I dont know as I can write much more this time it is getting to be a most night if the time comes when I lay in camp over sunday I will try and write you a long letter we have had to march evry sunday but one yet I would be glad to go to meeting once more to Dayton and see all the folks and you among the rest give my love to all and pleas attend to that likeness you know I look at yours some times and that is some satisfaction from your husband B. M. I write in a hurry and hant red it over I think that you will find mistakes pleas excuse how do the Golts do and have you had any trouble with them pleas be careful and not let them run away how does the hog get along and how does the cows do ~~and~~ &c. I would like to take a look about your premises and see how slick you keep your things I feel rather keen of the two and that is rather strange for me you know I like the Climate here and the weather is fine it froze so as to frees water some last night the nights are coll but the days are fine and the rodes are as good as summer I guess this will do for now wont it what did them two capita letters stan for

Thurougfare Gap Nov 15

Ruba Alva received your kind letter last night we ware glad to hear from home and we allways glad to hear from you Alva haves to go on picket duty at eleven o clock and I dont know whether he will rite first or not I am not busy and I thought that I would let you know that we are not taken prisoners yet as it happens I guess that the rebs would not like to undertake to get half of the Cattaraugus regiment by the by there is a good many men goes in our gang I dont know what news you have seen in thepaper about our being nearly surrounded I dont know how they would go to work to surround us unless they take in Washington with us there is a great many me between here and Washington and the last twenty or thirty miles that we have passe was left by the rebs a short time before we came along and there is none verry near now they have a disposition to give the ground I think if they do make a stand It will be down near Richmond and that is one or two hundred miles from here and there is an other division of the army that is nearer there than we are there is now probably twenty regiments in camp near this gap and they are all the way along you cant hardly go ames(?) of them, there is a report in camp that yorktown is ours again how this is I dont know yet I guess that it is so I dont know whether you get all that I have written if you do you dont answer verry definit I think that I have written twice or three times you have rote to Alva we have got that money and stamps wise if you have a mind you may send a little tea in your letters I had a letter from mother a day or two ago and she sent me a little tea and I was glad of it you must send stamps occasionay and a few at a time we cant get them here and I am afrade that we shall be bothered about paper and envelops I dont know but you could send one or two envelops extra when you write I dont know of a store or a post office in running order this side of Washington I could not make a letter if it was out side of the army we have a man detailed for that purpose we are now about fifty miles southwest from Washington camp in a nise grove of timber near good water The climet here is nice and the weather is fine the ~~rodes~~ rodes are first rate and the fires run over the ground considerable evry day we hant had but one storm to amount to any thing since I came this side of the river that was when you had that deep snow then we had a cold rane with considerable wind it made our tents flap pretty smart we had a verry little snow a few days ago but that was soon over and no rain it has froze a verry little a few nights the days are plesent as summer the country here is rough and near the mount-ains the land is midling good but strong there has not been much raised here this season the fences are mostly gone there is some corn and some hay and some wheat but our folks take it for their (?) and make fires of the fences and they occasionay take sheep and Cattle and hives of bees I have some honey a few times but it had considerable cone in it I like straned honey the best I have had fresh mutton and a little cesesh new milk I know for I milked my self the government furnish plenty of fresh beef now and that is good you know I am tough and my appetite is first rate I will send you one hard tack if you would like to see one

BM # 14

and eat it it can be sent in a letter it will take two stamps to carry one they are about thre by four inches in size and about one forth of an inch thick they are about one grade poorer than comon Crackers but they go verry well with coffee and we have good bred part of the time butthe further this way we get the les bred we have our meet cooked for us and we make our own coffee and draw our own sugar some times we have rise that is cooked there is men detailed to cook in evry company I cant tell how long we shall be here but I dont think that we shall winter verry far from there has been some talk that we would right here I dont know how that will be yet there is one dutch regiment in camp that are fixing up their tents nice and Seigle is a dutchman and it may be that they know about it we dont get news a hed when we have moved we only knew it an hour or so a head that is the way it goes I buy once in a while a dayly paper with that acception I dont get much news about the war you rote to know whether you should send me that paper I rote that may be you had not better now until we was more settled I would like once in a while a tribune and have it as soon as may be after it is printed I like fresh news now days I want you should write often and write all the news I would like to hear from home at least two or three times a week we have got a floor in our tent now made of confiscated bords we have got some straw or rather wheat in the bundle and some boughs laid down and a blanket under and two over us and it makes a verry good bed I use mine for an upper sheat and it goes well I have been verry careful of it I think a great deal of it it is warm and light to carry I am gaining in flesh now I dont have hardly enough to do to keep from getting lasy I would like to come and help ypu do some chores necessary to have done for winter out it is a most to far to have it pay

B M

## Thoroughfare Gap Sunday 16th

Ruba seeing that today is Sunday I thought that I would write and give you a short review of what I have passed since I came I have endeavored to inform you as I have passed along out I think that you have not got all my letters I cant do this verry correct for I have kept no minutes In the first place after we got to Washington we had orders to go to Camp Suard this camp is about six miles from Washington acrost the river A little about Washington this place is rather a nice place not as nice as Newyork the buildings are mostly of brick the largest part of the place stands on low ground but a part lays up on higher ground and the Capital stands up there out of the mane part of the City the capital is a large building with two wings and a high cupelo on the top I should think that it cost a good deal of money to build it the streets are narrow and the (?) and things look old fashioned to return I said welcome to camp Suard this is an old camp and when we were there it was verry dry and dusty and verry warm we were there ten or twelve days in the dust and verry short for water and what we did get was poor this camp is on General lees land on rather high land and in sight of Washington there was quite a number of ded horses laying around and they smelt bad the ground was of a light sandy soil the potomac river is a nice stream and one and a half mile wide where we crossed we crossed on a bridge that had a swing in it to open for the vessels to pass now we leave camp Suard this was on Sunday morning on short notice this march was about twenty miles in length about southwest the road was considerable of the way through woods Conklin run I believe they call it there they had been a battle some day the trees were marked up with bullets we were two days making this march we camped over night on or near a stream that had a stone bridge over it and there they had a battle some day also the second day we came to Fairfax this ant much of a place and has been nearly ruined besides the celebrated fairfax Cort house is about one half mile out from town and here we lay about ten or twelve days while here we had a severe rain storm and nothing of importance took place while here all the way along the fences are gone and most of the folks to then we had orders to move about half a mile a little back by a piece of woods and wehad just got set up and our ground cleaned off stayed two nights and then we had orders to move again and leave our Napsacks and Dres Coats they are put away in a large tent and a guard place they say and they will be sen some time may be that we dont get them this move was on Sunday to this time our move was 15 or 20 miles camped out one night passed Bull run Centervill and Way Market these are small places Bull run is rather a large stream and quite steep hills on both sides and a lonesome place nothing there but a lot of deserted rebel barracks the first battle there was to the left of where we crossed and the last battle was along the rode that we came on and both sides of it looked bad for some miles ded horses broken pieces of cannon and where ded men were buried marked the spot shells cannon balls small balls made it look more destruct-

BM # 15

ive but to pass on we went into camp a few miles beyond Centerville and there we lay a few days and then we had orders to move for Warrington about ten or twelve miles distance we moved 6 or 8 miles leaving this gap to the right of us and then we camped and lay as a reserve for there was to be an attack on Warrington when the attack was made we could hear the report of the cannons but it did not last long news came that Warrington was ours then we had orders to come to this gap a little back and a little to the south and now we are here but we have had orders to move in the morning I believe the destined place is Fredricksburg some 30 miles we may go and we may not I suppose if we make this move that we will come in contact with rebels and what the result will be I cant tell.....



BM # 16

Fairfax Friday 21, 62

Beloved Wife I spend a few minutes to write a few lines to you this morning since I wrote to last our division of the army has been moved back within two or three miles of Fairfax what this move was made for is more than I can tell but I suppos time will determine our forces were strong and the talk(?) was one while in camp that we were going from thouroughfare gap to Fredricksburg but by some means we took our back track and we now about 30 nearer home than we was camped in a peace of woods how long we saty here or where we go I cant tell but I dont think that we go far at present I cant get much news here I would like to have you send me some tribunes and maybe that I can find out from them what our retreat was made for and I would like to know a little about the movement of the army I dont know if I have much to write today more than to let you know where we are now we are getting a verry rainy time here not it is not verry cold but wet and muddy you might send a little tea when it is convenient and I want you to write often. I think that you had better get as much as five cords of wood of Mr Bond and get it home as son as you can you had better have a supply on hand early on the winter about your stove trade I dont know anything about but I guess that it is a good idea if Irvin dont sell his ~~calves~~ calves I guess that he had better have ~~steers~~ steers made of them when you get this if you should have one or two dollars that you can spare you might send it though it is some thing that can be done without I have a little yet I think the prospect is now that we shall get that box and I shall have to pay my share for drawing the box from Washington and that will take some money evry such thing is high here I mean evry such ~~job~~ job of teaming we are now about 25 miles from Washington I guess that I will let this answer for now for it is a damp bad day to write from your husband B M

I could not count your letters for I have had to destroy them and I am sorry but I could not carry them I should think that I have got all you have rote my love to the children

Camp near Fairfax Nov 23 62

Irvin my Son I received your good letter this evening and was glad to hear from you I really think that you wrote a good letter about that off colt I guess ~~you~~ you had better give her two ears of corn twice a day it wont cost a great deal and may be that her lumpers are down to much you had better take her down to Mr nears ask him to burn her lumpers if they need it and ask him to take out her wolf teeth and you must salt them often it will make you to much work to cut feed for them I am glad you have got steers mad of your calves I guess you had better get the Indian to shew the colts Well Bub I would be verry ~~glad~~ glad to see you and and may be I shall by spring I think that the war is getting along some I am sorry you have got a lame arm I guess that you and ma had better study at home this winter and Nancy to It will be to much for you to go to school and do the chores you must write again tell me in your next whether nancy has any bows tell nancy to write to me I like to hear from home often I hant seen any seseshs yet only occasionay a few prisoners It is a little chilly to our house this evening so you see that I cant write verry well I rire with my rubber blaket folded and layed on my knee and paper on it and I am flat on my settdown so pleas excuse poor writing my health is quite good only I have had a little back door trot for a day or two I am thirty miles nearer home now than I was a week ago and I guess that I shall move some nearer in a few days tell ma that I think that we shall get that box in a day or two we have heard that it is to Washington I guess that I wont write much more now

from B Merrill to his Son Irvin

Camp near Fairfax Nov 24. 62

Miss Barzilla Merrill I received your letter last night dated 17 I was glad to hear from you and I beleave that I have ritten two since you rote you rote that you wanted me to count my letters from you I have had to destroy them because I could not carry them I cant tell just how many I have had I think I have got about the number you say you have rote I received one with 4 stamps you had better put in three or four a week not send more than that to a time we have moved about ~~the~~ thirty miles towards home we are now near Fairfax in camp I think you have got a letter about this last move before this time I dont get much news about the war probably not as much as you do I think that things are moving sidling well we are held as a reserve and I think by appearance we have got to shift places of camp pretty often and I guess that this will be about all I cant tell where we shall be called next I think though we dont go far at present I guess that we go some nearer to Washington do you hear any thing about a settlement of the war I would like to have you send some tribunes occasionay I would like to have matters shape that I could come home between now and spring and I rather look for such a move dont you the thing ant right as it now is the men here and the women there and you know that dont work verry well either way the nights are quite cold here it froze quite hard last night it is pleasant to day our bed room is not verry warm and ~~our~~ our Citchen is all out doors but they say that we are going to have better tents for winter our work ant verry hard only when we march and then we have so much to carry it makes it hard but we dont go far in a day Alva has been washing our close this fore knoon I expect that tonight or tomorrow we have sent for it and we have heard before that it was there it will cost considerable to get it brought I guess you had better send me a dollar or two if you can we have been having our pay all the time for some time past out we dont get it yet and I cant tell when we shall we have that three dollars you sent and that is all the men that I tent with choos to have a little butter and a few potatoes and I share with them and you see that I have to use some money yesterday we bought about two thirds of a barrel of buiscuit and they cost three dollars but they are good we get tired of hard tacks and the goverment hant furnished such other bred lately

I try to get along as cheap as I can but I have to be one among the rest and Alva uses some money though he is not verry bad or in other words verry extravagant he is a good boy and keeps quite steady but I think that if he was now to home he would not be so anxious to enlist again though he dont complane his health is good our tents are clost together Horace and Alva tent alone now they thought that Jason and Theodore got xa rather to nasty and they disolved our company get along first rate Calvin wants to fuss round and cook or make coffee or tea and we are willing he should and it goes first rate I think a good dele of Mr Vinson he is a nice man and free harted he would like to see his wife I think she writes often

after dinner we had for dinner fresh beef and beef soup and we crumed in some of our buiscuit and we had a good dinner I think that you had better get five cords<sup>ms</sup> of wood and get it home now I think that it wont be long before I can send you some money I guess that you had better give the off colt two ears of corn twice a day and see if she wont gane a little or take a little brand and put on hot water and let her have that the brand would be the best you had not try to cut feed that will be to much work they will want salt often if she has got wolf teeth they must be taken out and may be her lampers(?) are down if they arethey will be burnt have Mr Near look at her tell him to look at her Campers(?) I guess that the Indian had better shoe for you may be you can pay him some thing his family will want I dont know as I will want to advise you much I think that you are getting along first rate I had a letter from Mother the other day and I have answered it she sent me some tea and a little wollen yarn you said some thing about my being to the expense both ways I though that I had played out on that score but if I have not I want you to write as often as twice a week and I want all the news and I feel anxious to know about E Roberts mumps we have the mumps some here in the army and some have the dumps I try and enjoy myself as well as I can and keep as contented as possible some days I get the blues a little and get to thinking about home and about wife but there is one thing in my favour my health is good it is a bad place to be sick here I feel a little lasey and I dont feel as strong as I did when I came here and the reason is some of the time my exercise ant enough for my health I sint you a letter a while ago giving you a scetch of what had happened as near as I could remember ~~was~~ since we got to Washington you hant said any thing about that may be you hant got it it was rather an interesting letter allowing me to be Judge and I rote one since that you dont mention probable you will get on the whole I think that I have wrote considerable and I thought that it was to your expense but if it is to my expense I dont know but I had better hold on but probably you will hear from me occasionally my beard is getting long but I keep it comed out pretty slick I wash up ~~was~~ thorough evry day come my hare and beard I shall have to have my hare cut before long I would like to have you come my hed and cut my hare and fix me up a little I guess that nancy nor Irvin had better go to school this winter you had better have school to home I guess I would like to have you catch up about writing and keep up and then I can tell how to write better

B. M. to Mifs Barzilla Merrill

Nov 30th 62  
Fairfast or Camp near Fairfast

I find from what you wrote a few days ago that it places me in rather a critical position to write to you and I hardly know how to commence however I think that I will take off my hat first and then commence by saying Misses Barzilia Merrill if you please dear Madam

I have received two letters from you since I have written to you I received one about four days since with 2 stamps and this morning I received one with a spare envelop and some tea(?), we have been 30 or 40 miles farther into the state of Virginia than we now are then it was difficult for us to get little notions such as ink envelops &c now situated not more than 20 miles from Washington we have no trouble to get such things only our money is getting a little short I wrote the other day that you had better send a dollar or two we dont get any pay yet and I dont know when we will.

I have not received any yet if you have not sent any I would like to have you send two dollars I have a little yet but I am getting short I have written two or three that I think you have not had time to answer that I expect will be answered in due time. I have kept no account of the letters that I have wrote or received I think if a letter gets lost it dont help the matter to keep count however it is well enough to count I have had no convenient way to keep your letters I have kept them along awhile and tooked them over and then destroyed them I hated to do so.

We have been shifting considerable since we have been this side of the river and I have been obliged to have as little to look after as possible and I suppose that we will have to keep shifting we occupy the place of a reserve where we go next I cant tell I rather expected that we would have to go some where to day we generally have to move Sundays I have heard no such orders as yet may be that we shall stay in camp to day

My love to the children I sent (?) a letter if he dont get it I will write to him again

We dont have a great deal to do drill a little drilling some picket duty and our own work about our tents the most of the time. my health has been good I have had a hard cold the first week and so has Alva we are both better now the most of the time for a week past has been raw and chilly weather and not much storm and to day while I set writing my feet are cold there is no snow nor much mud rather dry for the time of year I am rather sorry that you have been so uneasy about our being taken prisoners you say that you think we are in danger now I will tell you what I think I think that there is hardly rebs enough this side of the blue ridge to make a Corporals Guard I think that Burnside and Jackson may have a battle down about Richmond before long but this is only my opinion I dont know one thing I do know I would like to see an end of the war I hope that the good lord will take this work in hand and bring ~~about~~ about an honorable and speedy close this seems to be the desire of the men as far as I hear a speedy close may be that Congress will do some thing in this direction when they come together I think that probable you will need to be a little clear headed to understand all my writing because I cant get all my ideas together

verry strate I think that maybe it will be a spell after this before I am home on a furlow I keep the same tobacco box that I brought from home it is good but I am sorry that I had not taken any other for my tobacco dries up to much in the one that I have my clothes are good yet and I have drawed another pair of pants and a pair of mittens my sox have wore through a little on the heels but Alva darned one pare of them the greate difficulty that I have to get along with is a poor place to sleep we have some little springy polls laid under and nine boughs on the top and a blanket top of them and that does better than no way we fare as well as our neighbors so we dont complain.

Alva has drawed a pair of shirts he says if Norman could bring his shirts he would like them and he would like to have Benton make him a good pare of C\_\_ boots number nines or the same size his others were and have Norman bring them that he would be glad if you would find out by Norman whether he could bring them if he can you had better get them reddy so that he can fetch them it may be that he cant bring them boots are verry dear here if he could bring them it would be a favor to Alva and I would try and fix it so that he would be made good and you had better see him right away. so far as I am concerned I dont know as I kneed any thing that Norman can bring I kneed a few things from home but I dont think that he could bring them. I think that he would do well to bring a few barreles of apples and a few barreles of potatoes apples sells ~~for~~ three for five cents and potatoes sell for four cents a pound butter is worth 40 cents and chees 20 cents if he could bother with such things I think that he might make money seeing he is coming down you can speak to him about these things then he can do as he pleases The way that we spent Thanksgiving in camp we had one sermon and no drilling text O Lord I thank the for touching our hands to war and our fingers to fight or to this import 144 Psalm first verse you can turn to it at your leisure

it bothers me some to write to you because you are two or three letters behind what I have written I want you to remember that it four or six days to get a letter after it is ritten but I am a little used to your being behind or in other words a little slow so I get along I expect that box will be in camp soon a team left here with the intention of loding with boxes for this regiment it will cost three dollars per 100 to get it brought I guess that I will send you a little sasafra in this letter there is plenty of it clost by I guess I will tell you what I had for Thanksgiving supper and it was good I had hasty pudding butter and sugar and it was a nice treat milk is about out of date I would like to come acrost our new milks heifer some night before milking I think that I would have some milk once more there ant much left here any where we have been but the face of the earth I would be glad to step into our celler and see the apples and potatoes and all the good fixings I suppose you have got them all saved nice and I hope that the house is banked so that your sauce went frees save a plenty of butter and you had better get a heart of beef cf some one and you had better get five cords more of wood of Bond I will try and go nearer the bottom this time to (?) there is a great deal wasted about our camp such as ● fried meet grees ~~some~~

BM # 18

meet hard tacks and the like we have plenty to eat but we  
dont get change enough I have learned since I came this side  
of the river that I had left you pregnant if there is any  
thing of kind I would like to know it you said in your little  
letter that you had not been unwell since July I got news  
about Aunt P\_\_\_ and aunt Town from you what about that note  
that Aunt P\_\_\_ had

BM

BM # 19

Camp near Fairfax Dec. 4th 62

..... ~~the news came yesterday that Fredricksburg was burnt by our folks~~ I think that Burnside is about to make a try on Richmond soon the talk is that there is a good deal of talk now in Washington about peace I dont know how this is I do think that the war is moving favorable for us we had orders ~~to tuesday night about 12 o clock to pack our napsacks and be ready to march at a moments call but we hant none yet I dont know when or where we shall go I know where I would like to go I would like to go home if all was right here I hope the thing may be hasend dont think that I am home sick I feel to write patiently hoping that the Lord will interpose in our behalf we get plenty to eat now some of the time we have been short though not long at a time the trouble is we dont get verry comfortable lodging but we make this do our labor is not verry hard I think that when I come home I will have a comfortable place to sleep and a comfortable bed fellow dont you~~

BM

Privat

They call P Hubbard old bright



Camp near Fairfax Dec 7, 62

Mrs Merrill Alva and I each received a letter from home this morning two stamps and two dollars we were glad to hear from home we are still in camp here I dont think that will be able to write mu this time the wind is heavy here today and the smoke settles down and our Camp is filled with smoke and it affects my eyes verry much and I have some cold besides both together affect me considerable we got that box Inman and Newcomb clame one Chees and Hubbard the other and Hubbard thinks that his folks must have sent fifteen or twenty pounds of butter so you see that the rest dont stand much of a chance Hubbard has now probably 20 or 30 pounds of butter in his possession I have understood that Mrs Edgerton put in some butter if she wants Hubbard to have it it is all write if she dont I she would tell you who she wants to have it and how much she sent I rote to you in another letter about Consequently I shant write as particular now I want you to let me know how much frate you paid and who paid the rest I have had about a pound of the Chees it did not look as though all was as it should be your letter was ingured so that we could not read it all there was a small letter rote with a pencil that hubbard got hold and first th\_ I knew it was out of sight and I did not have a chance to read it do you know ank any thing about that if you do pleas let me know what I want to get all the information about it that I can and as soon as possible the butter and chees will soon all be gone you might speak to maria about the butter ask her if she wanted me to have any of that butter she sent us she says yes ask her how much

last night after the rest of our family had gone to bed I changed my cloths and washed the ones that I took of and then I washed my self all over I wished you to wash my shoulders and back but I got along we have got a place fixed to keep fire in our tent now so has Alva and Horace and we are quite comfortable so far as cold is consernd I sent my rubber blanket dres Coat and shoes and that budget that you sent ~~me~~ I could not carry them verry well they are sent to Charles blare you will have to see him and there will be some frate for you to pay I guess you will have to send stamps a little faster I am about out Alva uses some I guess that he writes occasionally to R Settlement I see he gets some letters occasionay that is maled Verrales he and Horace seem to enjoy each others company verry well there is some sick in our rgt I dont know as any have died I dont know as any are sick that you know but Seker Manhart and imory they are away to some Hosptal is all that I know about them there is talk that we go into winter quarters about here some where and have good tents (?) and (?) BM

Well Irvin how do you do this evening I am going to take time to answer your letter now, If I dont make out much you must not blame me for i ant in tune to day and that ant ~~me~~ all I have to get flat on my set down and lay my Napsack on my lap and it makes my back ake to set in this position suppose you try this position next time you write to me sit down flat on the floor and lay Alvas Napsack filled on your lap and write and see how you like it about your steers

BM # 20

they ant old enough to handle much and I am afrade that you and the School boys will hurt them if Mr Bonce wants them I guess you had better sell them to him it wont ~~be~~ take much to lame them or hurt them then you will feel bad and I guess you had better sell them there wont be pasture for them next summer and another thing you may be short for hay this winter I want you to take good care of the Cows and Colts this winter they will eat a good deal of hay by next may dont let the colts run away I guess that Nob wont need much grane the other might have a verry little towards spring they will want a little more Ma did not say how much the hay made I would like to know you must write again and I want Nancy to write to I would like to see you and Nancy and Ma verry well I hope you will be good Children and mind your Ma if Norman could bring a couple pare of sox they might come good before spring B. M.

Ruba I put in a little sassafras and I found that it ~~was~~ would not wrk verry well so I took it out so you must take the will for the deed you must continue to send me stamps paper and envelops I can get now probably better than you can send when we were down to the gap I could not get such things I spoke once about your sending envelops you need not send any more envelops nor tea as long as we are so near Washington when I want any such thing I will write give me full clean letters with a few stamps often if you should put in a two dollar bil in one that might do if you hant or if it ant convenient I can get along a while I am about out I guess that you had better try and send a little I rather hate to ask this I rather expected pay before now and I may not get pay in a month you see I cant tell George Reel came and stuk his head into our tent this evening as I set writing he says ~~we~~ tell them I am well george is fleshy and tough he and I walk out together we are trying to live in the enjoyment of religion but I tell you that it is an awful wicked place here Alva and Horace are getting along well they seem to take comfort together and they are well Horace Chester Inman Calvin Vinson Shelmadine and Hubbard are all well some have had colds Giles is well Emory is sick he is away in a hospital I dont know where he is or how he does our tent stands open to one end and Alva and Horace tent is a little from ours and the end facing ours is open and we have a fire between Indian fashion the talk is that we will have larger tents and a small stove but it may be talk only there is one thing that I beleave our regiment as far as I know are agreed in that is to see the war close so that they can go home but we have got on the harnes and we are going to keep it on until we see the thing through and no whining Alva got a letter today and I asked him who it was from he said that it was from Mr Tailors folks I hant red it yet and I dont much expect that I ~~will~~ shall give my love to Uncle Chester and Johns folks and tell them that Horace gets along well and I think that his health is better than when he left home and I see that his beard is getting out considerable Horace and Alva takes out Coffee when they go out on picket and trade it for meal and they have some puddings

I want you to write about Ebeneser and mariah give them my respects ask them how they spent thanksgiving I thought of the folks up home that day Give my respects to Mary ann Kinder sty you know tell her that I think of som old visits that have passed between you and I and E and Mr Roberts and soon tell them may be I shall be round again and then I expect to visit some and have a thanks giving supper some where I think of old friends to home and the comforts of home life more than I ever did before and if I should live to get home again I think that I shall be thankful give my love to Uncle anson and wife may be I have forgot some but it is now bed time and the male goes at 8 in the morning so I will stop and bunk down some of the boys say I will go to my tent and lie down in despare on the whole I feel a little keen S.M. to Miss Barzilla Merrill

Camp near Fredricksburg Dec 19, 62

My dear Wife I have a few things to write to you this time when we came back to Fairfax the second time we lay in camp about two weeks then we had orders to march Siegel's whole corps consequently we started one week ago yesterday morning taking a southerly course marching every day and last night we got into camp here averaging about 8 miles per day some of the way the roads were very bad mud ankle deep and some of the way the roads were good part of the time there was short rations the teams are in this morning and we have plenty to eat again we had to march about half of one (?) night the same day or the day after we started the battle commenced to Fredricksburgh it was the design of Siegel's corp to flank the enemy as near as I can learn but we did not get through in time or I think that we would had to have walked in as near as I can learn about the battle it was a whole sale slaughter on our side and not very heavy losses on the side of the enemy our men succeeded in taking the place and the enemy fell back to their pits and batteries and they just mowed us and we could not make our big guns work very much and the next day night we evacuated the city while our folks were there they destroyed large stores of their provision that was stored there we are now about four miles from the city and in sight of the enemies camp fires their pickets and ours some of them are not more than 100 rods apart there is no firing of pickets now on either side how this thing will come out I cant tell I think they wont fight any more just yet the news is in camp that Banks took Richmond while the battle was in progress but I dont know how this is and the news is to that fort Mifflin is ours providing this is the case I think the heart of our trouble is got along with you probably you will hear about these things correctly soon as I will Alva and I are well and hearty and are blessed with a good thing appetite can eat raw pork or most any ~~thing~~ with regard to our march down here nothing very special the most of the way through woods the places are marked with destruction we came through a place called Dunfree that was a cesesa place about 2 or 3 hours before we found there was a lot of cesesha left we are now in clost contact with the enemy probably things will shape different some way soon how it will turn I cant tell I know of no other way only to wait and trust providence. I have a Gust(?) he is well he saw Wilbur a day or two before I saw him he says that Wilbur is well and fleshy they were both in this last battle we get pleasant days here the nights are quite cold we have had a little snow two different times there is no snow on the ground now I have had no letters from you since the two that you sent and the two dollars it is on the account of our move no doubt your male will probably come soon you must send stamps for I am about out I dont know as there is much to write until things comes a round more war news you will get that sooner than I can get it to you and I dont get much

Dec 20 62

Ruba I received a letter from you yesterday and was verry glad to hear from you it is the first male that we have send in ten days I am sorry that you are sick I would like to be with you I have rote two or three letters that you had not got when you wrote yours I got your fifty cents and one stamp I have the two dollars that you sent yet I am about out of stamps I want you to send some stamps if you hant I think that I will hear from you when we get another male the reason that we ~~hant~~ hant had male is because we have been on the move we are now in camp how long we shall be hear I cant tell we are near the 64 and 44 I expect Wilbur here to day hurt is in our camp now and so is gust Darbee gusts health is good I guess that I wont have the potash kettle sold now tell Mr Rich if I ant like to get home by next spring it may be I shall think best to have the kettle sold and he shall have the first chance if you can get three dollars for theold harness it would be better to sell than to keep it you had better let the calves go ifyou can I cant write much it is cold but no snow The weather is pleasant but rather cold there is a great many men camped about in this section give my love to the children tell Mrs. Hull that Jason is well he says that he has ● rote and will write again B M

I got both them tribunes you sent wasglad of them Alva appears about the same as when you saw him we have to go out on general inspection soon and I cant write much more I hope you will be careful of your health in future we have a good deal of camp smoke and it affects my eyes considerable my health is good I was weighed yeaterday and my weight was 136 I am fleshyer then I was a month or two ago I have got tuffened(?) to camp life considerable I ant as much unfavour of it as I might be I think of Dayton on occasionay and the folks there I saw you in a dream the other night you looked pleasant

B M.

Dec 23, 62

Camp near Fredricksburgh

I thought that I would spend a few moments in writing to my wife this morning

Ruba I received two letters from you yesterday and was very glad to hear from home I hant got male verry regular no have had a chance to send verry regular for the last two weeks we have laid in camp here ika a few days past and the male goes and comes more regular now. We are now in camp near Fredricksburgh probably one mile from the Rapahannac and the rebel army about the same distance on the other side and Fredricksburgh between there was a hard battle here a few days ago our folks succeded in taking the city and the rebels fell back on the hills beyond where their batteries and pits were there they held the ground our men were marched up right in front of their batteries and were mowed down tremendously finely our men were ordered to fall back with a heavy loss and so ended the fight our men destroyed large stores of provision that was stored in Fredricksburgh by the rebs and what will be the next move I cant tell I dont think that things will lay as they now do verry long some think the rebs are falling back now some say that seigle is moving to try and cut of their retreat I dont know any thing about it one thing we are not far from the enemy and there is a large number of men camped within a few miles of here the 64th and 44th are not far of Alva has been over to the 44th and has seen Wilbur hejis well he said that he would be over to our regiment soon I have been to the 64th that lays nearer the country about here is rough hilly on both sides of the river and things bare the same marks of war things destroyed the same as farther back from Fairfax down here the most of the way was through woods and the roads were muddy distance about sixty miles Since we crossed the river and came into virginia we probably have done about two hundred miles marching

I have had some peculiar feelings about this war some times my faith has been strong that the Lord would take this work in hand and stop this man slaughter business then again I think that we as a nation are so wicked that we will go by the borde still I hope and my prayer is that the lord will be merciful and bring about a speedy close I find things are managed all together different from what I expected to find them before I came here had I understood the perfect workings of the war I should have staid at home but I came in good faith and I shall trust the consequences I hope to have patience and grace suffissant for my day you must not make any dependence on money from me at ~~any~~ any particular time I dont know when I shall get any thing when I get it I will send it that is all I can do I dont know how you will get along about taxes do the best you can About the wether here it is about as warm to day as summer and the robins are singing we have had a little cold weather and a little snow two or three times the sky looks warm to day and the ground is quite dry the climate is nice here was things as far advance here as in youk state it would be a nice place to live as it is give me old Cataraugus I would be glad to step on slaberty flats once more I have hardly slept the inside of a house since I saw you and I have not set down in a chare since or any such thing we are turned into the lots or woods as the case may be like dum bruits we prefer woods for then we can set

to use and strike our tents with there is no chance for Alva and I to send our likeness for there is no chance to have it taken here we look about as we did when you saw us only some smoked up with camp fires our healths are good I am some fleshyer than I was one while the camp smoke affects me some that is my eyes and hed and I find that I begin to get a little clumsy my nee Joynts are a little stiff and I feel that I am growing old some but I guess that I stand it about as well as the generality of the men I have not faled answering<sup>to</sup> my name yet nor have I been excused from duty once yet I have been troubled some with cold I have some cold now not verry bad our folks have been sending up balloons yesterday and to day some there was one just up a few minutes ago it has gone down now yesterday Alfred Dye was here from the 64th he is well he gave me two plugs of nice tobacco that was taken to Fredricksburgh our living now is principally hard tacks and coffee the farther south we get the harder it is to get some thing to eat our rations are rather short though not bad I have a great many anxieties both here and at home I was sorry to hear that you was sick I am glad you are getting better and I think you had not better get any body to read your letters after this may be you will find some thing you won want others to see wate tell you ~~ka~~ get able to read after this I begin to think that I have been away from home a long time I begin to think the prospect slim for getting home in the spring I think our hed men like money to well for that but I cant tell how this will be I dreamed of seeing you the other night I thought your cheeks were verry red and you looked fresh I would be verry glad to see you and see home once more I think of the priviledgs that I have enjoyed in the home circle I hope the time will soon come when I can enjoy the same again dont you I have had two letters from mother the last letter was a verry good one the first one I could hardly read I find by noticing that the troops here are getting verry uneasy some say that they wont stay longer than spring any way if this kind of feeling gets to going extensively I dont know what affect it will ahve one thing sure the men are getting sick and tired of this kind of management still I try and keep as quiet as possible some days I get the blues a little to see the thing run as it does you spoke about my missing or rather calling you miss I will tell you about that you will remember giving me directions about directing your letters by using your whole name and put it nearer the bottom so I thought that I would try and suit you as I generally do that is all there was to it I was glad to have that nice little letter that was done up so nice in another this time what have you done with that small likeness that I got to Jamestown you know what I would like to have done with it you rote the hog weighed 161 pounds was ther a mistake or was she as light as that I thought that she had ought to have weighed three hundred or two hundred ~~and~~ and fifty ~~and~~ my space is full may be you cant read this but try from your husband B M

BM # 23

Dec 24

Wife I guess that I must answer your small letter I rather had the blues yesterday but I have slept it of and I feel rather keen this morning I believe that to night is the night to hang up stockings I am sure of one thing if I was at home and you should hang up your stocking I should be verry likely to put in something after your sickness or confinement I wish you would let me know what you have got and what doctor you called you was confined rather sooner than I expected

I feel rather uncomfortable occasionay but it works off and I am all wright again

I would be glad to sleep in my own nest and have my old bed fellow a gain I think that I would lay clost how do the colts get along do they cough any now how does the hay last some of the time when it is cold you must get some of that over the stable and let the cows pick out the best andthen use it for bedding you had not better sell any wheat or potatoes now they will be higher by and by and may be Alva and I could be home then the potatoes will suffer you may eat an apple for me I not undertake to read this over (?) tell I and N\_\_\_ that I would be glad to see them give my love to the friends and some in particular

B M



Camp near Fredricksburgh Jan 1 63

Wife seeing that to day is Newyears I thought that I would write a little to you we ant doing any thing in camp I think of home I ant situated so that I can hold newyears as plesent as on former occasions but I am thankful that it is as well with me as it is I am able to wright to you and this is a privilege to me During thetime I have been here when I have rote as a general thing I have rote in a hurry and hant even red over what I have rote I dont know hardly how you have got along with what I have rote doutless you have found lots of mistakes but I have designed to write petty strate and I did not think or calculate that you would be oblige to call on some one else to read for you I guess you had better not ask any one to read for you again for some curious(?) notions comes into my head when I write Ruba I have thought for some time that I would wright to you a little about how ~~the~~ the war is moving may be you will call me a cesesh but this ant so I love my country and its government and I feel like weeping over the deplorable condition that we as a nation are in this plesent newyears morning what shall I say I lack words to describe one thing I will say and I think that I will be safe in the statement and that is this this unless God by his almighty power interposes we are lost lost as a nation I neve was more disappointed in my life than I was ~~when~~ when I came down here and see how this thing run so far as the souldiers are conserved they have come with the intention to help crush the rebellion and save the union well where shall I place the blame right where it belongs on our leading men they dont seem to think of the government or the good of the souldiers they think of the large pay and and they seem to be jealous of each other they all seem to ~~want~~ want to be the largest toad inthe puddle consequly when one makes a move another will try and take off his head this is generally done and generally to the expense of the lives of a great many men I think that I am correct in this statement now what is the result the result is the souldiers are becoming discouraged and dishartend I have heard men that have been in all through the service say that they were sick and discouraged and they did not never want to go in another battle all seem to be of the opinion they have been disappointed now what is to be done I think that I have spoke the mind of nearly all what is to be done I know of no better way to answer the question than to take the statement that I made a while ago for an answer and I leave it there Judging from appearances I am rather inclined to think that we fall back until spring then have this ground to go over again butthis I dont know it is only my opinion men are sickening and they are dying and they are badly exposed to the weather our tents are poor and that makes a poor place to sleep and I think before there is much more done our will considerably diminished by sickness and death ther could never have been better weather for this business than it has been since I have been here and what has been done nothing no this statement ant wright there has been lots of our men killed now it is so late that it ant safe to advance on account of our artilery and ~~the~~ baggage wagons and another thing the govorment teams are poor and jaded out so I

dont see as we can do much more this winter only to fall back and prolong the thing all this is only my notion of the thing it wont cost much I dont know as it would be best for you to show this to any one I might write more on this subject but let this suffice while I write to day I set in Horace and Alvas tent they have gone over to the 44th to see Wilbur so you see that I am alone and here I want to write a little about Horace and Alva they are a couple of first rate boys they both mind their own business they appear pretty they seem to think as much of each other as two brothers they look fresh and their healths are good they seem contented so far as I am concernd I try and take the thing cooll some times I feel a little uneasy and think of home and the friends there the most of the time my health has been good and a good appetite for ~~the~~ week past I have had a hard cold and quite a hard cough and my lungs have been sore but for a day or two past my cold begins to loosen and I am getting better the Camp smoke has been quite troublesome to me that has hurt my lungs some you know that I always called a smoky chimney two bad things now I am going to tell you what kind of a day we are getting here to day it is verry plesent the sun shines verry plesent and we hant any storm of any kind in a long time to amount to any thing the air to day is a little chilly and when men are standing around overcoats are not burdensome I never saw a fall and winter so far in Cattaraugus with as little storm it is nice weather here now to plow make fence or any such thing the weather seems to be more steady than to home I think that the climate here is first rate but the country about here and all where I have been is marked with the destruction of war it would cost a great deal to put amont(?) any farm that I have seen back in order again the fences are nearly all burnt up and a great share of the buildings ruined or nearly so our folks made a slaughter so far as property is concernd in Fredricksburgh the other day this looks rather hard to see our folks come down here and slaughter property in this kind of a way whether it is right or not I dont know the wod lots that have been left on farms are being cut down for wood men that own the farms are gone some where there is but verry few settlers left any where that I have been and allowing me to <sup>be</sup>judge things are getting in a verry bad shape I think that we would not verry well like to have our home and property served in this kind of way I admit that the south began this but the right ones are not being punished the leading ones should suffer I presume that a large majority of these farmers are loyal men but they are suffering tremendously so the innocent suffer with the guilty so the thing goes I have been of the opinion that I should come home next spring but I have about give this up still I cant tell what may turn up there is a quite a number that their time is out next spring whole regiments I wish that the thing might be settled I think that it would be better materialy better for both sides to have the thing stopped and stop killing folks and let them go to their homes and families but we as a nation are guilty and we kneed chastening I am about out of timber I dont know whether I will be able to fill this page so that it will be interesting to you or not I think that I will tell you a little about my own undivided(?) feelings I still feel that the Lord blesses me and I have no other intention only to try and live so that I can feel

that approving smiles of my heavenly father some things I feel that I get a double portion then at other times I feel less  satisfied one thing when I lay down nights I try to ask the lord to bless me and I dont forget to ask the same blessing for my wife and children some times I think that I get theevidence that the Lord hears me some times I enjoy my mind first rate and I feel clear at other times not as well one thing sure I have no disposition to join in the wick- edness that is going on around me I have not had a word of trouble with any one since I have been here and I dont think that Alva or Horace has there is card playing swaring and in fact all kinds of obsene talk going on evry day I have watched the boys some and tried to advise them some and I think they have a mind to be men there is a good many men campt about here hardly a day passes with out some one or more being buried while I write I hear muffled drums for a funeral procession in some regiment some where I feel anxious that the Lord will spare my life to come home again and live and die with my family I try to feel reconsiled and say the will of the Lord be done I feel rather solemn to day I want you to pray for me and I know that you do I hope the time will soon come round when we shall meet from your husband B Merrill  
write often and I would like to have more stamps I am about out now

Camp near F B Jan 7 63

Beloved Wife I received a letter from you last night and was glad to hear from you dated Dec 21 No 18 I see you count cobs pretty close I have written two that you had not got when you wrote this probably you will get them we are laying in the same camp now that we have been for the last three weeks probably the reason of your not getting letters is they did not take letters here for a number of days after we came here we could send once in a while over to the 64th and get letters mailed now we mail and receive every day I don't know as I have much news to write to day you said you thought probably we had got new houses a gain by this time I will tell you when we first came here we just struck tents quick and did not know as we should stay but a short time so we did not fix much the most of the time it was warm so we did not fix much we received marching orders occasionally but we did not go and last Saturday our Col gave orders to have the ground cleared of a larger spot and Sabbath morning we had orders to take down our tents and set them up more scattering and the way the most of us set up we made a bottom about two or three feet with pine poles and then drew our canvas over and the most of us have got a place to keep fire in side and our beds raised a little from the ground and it makes rather a comfortable place to stay I would just like to have you pass through camp and see the yankey wit fixing and nothing to do with we don't get the new tents I told you in another letter I thought that we would fall back but it don't look much like it just now will take place any a head so I can't tell you where we will be tomorrow I can only say that we shall be a few days and may be a few weeks we haven't drilled much since we have been here our business has been picket duty guard duty a little drilling and the like we picket one side of the Rap and the rebs the other I have had one 48 hour tour of picketing I saw plenty of Rebs I think if it weren't for the big toads we and the rebs would I mean reb soldiers would not quarrel or fight much I have not spoke with any of them but some of our men have they say if we will lay down our arms they will and both go home we are in speaking distance when on picket in some places I have had a bad cold but am getting better I have received another letter No 21 there seems by your numbers that there is two letters from you that I have not yet received Alva has not yet had the letter that you speak of I have not got the letter from mother that you spoke about I have been short for stamps for a while back I would like to have you send more stamps and you may send a little ground black pepper if you please N M Allen has not arrived here yet may be he isn't coming I don't know our captain is back and I was glad to hear so direct from home I asked him if things looked as though you would make a live through the winter he said it did he said things looked (?) and tidy he said you did not look as fleshy as when he saw you last

Jan 9th I thought that I would try and finish this letter this morning Col Hicocks has come into camp this morning from goward he hant seen Norman I guess I must tell you how we have got our bed fixed we take six feet of the back end for a bed we cut little polls about as large as been polls layed them the same way that we lay on some pools at each end and nothing under the middle then we laid on a lot of pine boughs fine ones the pools lay clost together and then on the top of the boughs we got some dry wild grass some thing like that would be on the creek supposing it had stood out until now cutit off with jack knives and laid it on top of the boughs and a top of that we spred one blanket which serves for an under sheat the rest of our blankets a top and we sleep as they say in the army bully my tent are the same with one acception Mr Vinson has been promoted to the office of Corporal and there was a ~~vacancy~~ vacancy in our orderlys tent and he gave him an invitation to come there and he accepted and went and we have a man from versales in his place by the name of T Vanderburgh Vinson says that he is sorry that he left us and shall try and get out again he dont like his new company they sware drink and play cards our family are very quiet and Horace and Alva are clost by and we borrow and lend and live quite neighbourly I notice for a few days back ther is a great many stables fixed for horses about here and tents are being fixed quite warm and things look as though the intention was to stay a while you spoke about the 17 being cold where you was I remember that night my self when we first arrived here we stopped nearer Frb than we now are came the 16th and the 17 a little after dark we had orders to move consequently we started and treed the mud until about 12 o clock at night but made but little progress then we had orders to halt then we were marched up on a side hill a little out of the mud there we stayed until about three oclock the next day then we move a short distance and camped where we now are so you see that I can remember the 17th that night here was cold and chilly it did not storm our covering that night was the heavens and the ground for a bed I did not lay down I dst not for fear of taking cold allthough a great many did lay down I kept up and occasionay moved round some to keep warm probably I should not have mentioned had you not referd to that date you spoke about our being out of ~~Seigles~~ seigles corps the talk has been that we were placed in Sumners Corps for ten days and then we were to be in the same place that we was now this is I dont exactly know one thing I do know Stinewers head quarters are near by the same as they have been and he is under Seigle if Norman dont come you may send one pare of sox for me by male my sox are faling and I see that some get sox in this way Alva says his sox are quite good yet I would like to hear from the Colts and whether Irvin keeps his calvs and how thehay holds out and whether the seller is like to frees and how the cows get along and how many weddings there was newyears my love to you and the children pleas excuse mistakes pleas write often give me a small letter inside occasionaly

B Merrill

BM # 27

Sunday Jan 11 63 place of residence  
the same as usual near F

Wife seeing that it is sunday my inclination is to write you a few lines I got a tribune from you this morning according to your numbers there is two letters that I have not I have no news to write this time as I know of being so lonely it may be that you will get well to your opperation going through the world hors (?) alone all (?) dont get discourag~~d~~ (?) yet I would like to comfort you if I could yesterday it rained here all day it has cleared of and is plesent and warm to day I had a thorough wash yesterday in warm water and put on clean cloths when I got my cloths changed I told Shelmadine that I was clean enough to sleep with my wife let me see how long is it since your Confinement and how do you get along I begin to have rather a heavy set of whiskers on my face may be you would like to see them I keep the beard of from my upper lip and keep a stif upper lip we have a comfortable tent and a nice fire place and it dont smoke you know I would like to have you peep in to our house we hant put down our ~~carpet~~ Carpet yet nor put up our valances around our bed M M Allen has not got here yet frade he wont come I guess ~~unles~~ unles something new turns up we shall stay in the camp a while I would like our team a day to draw wood we have to back our wood about a half a mile but we dont have to use but a little to be comfortable I begin to be afraid that I shall forget how the inside of a house looks and how a york state lady like you looks because I dont see such thing now days the scenry for me is souldiers horses Mules wagons guns Cannons & it takes three span of horses to draw one Cannon uncle ~~Sam~~ Sam has got a great deal of such property now I am gaining in flesh now some and I am about over my Cold and some ways one side of my Cole well I would like to write a little encourageing to my lonely wife well what shall I say pam ham(?) try and run your one horse institution as best you can until I come then we will double teams and then may be it will go better in some respects at least can you send some more stuff to make ink well I feel a little roguish to day &c give my love to Nancy and Irvin I would be glad to see all of you

B M send stamps faster I have  
borrowed

Jan 13 63

Virginia Camp near Fredricksburgh

Beloved wife I thought seeing that I had a good chance to (?) that I would write a few lines to send to you Norman got here Sunday evening after I rote to you Alva got his boots and they fit well and look like a good pare I am glad he has got them my boots are good yet my sox are faling Captain says you sent a pare of gloves for Alva by him he dont say any thing about sox he opened his trunk when he was at newyork for Wash- ington and he hant heard from the (?) hant brought any sox so if there ant any started(?) you had better by one pase(?) by male and you had better send stamps a little faster and you may send some stuff to make ink of I would be glad to go home with Norman but I hardly think that it would be best my health is good now and I have rather a comfortable place to stay I an when Norman was here I designed to send this by him but I did not have time to finishe it our Regiment together with three others got into camp last nigh being two days and a half out our mission up the R River about 8 miles to fix a place for an Army to cross report says that sumner is going over with his Corps as near as I can learn our division was lent to sumner for ~~three~~ fifteen days and now we occupy the same position as before I found a letter here last night from you I think that I have written three since you rote that I would judge from the present appearance that our army here are about to try and do something soon you wanted my own opinion about the Pres message when I got that paper my eyes was sore caused by camp smoke and I have not red it with care I have looked it over consequently I ant prepared to give an opinion one thing I will say it wont do for the ~~president~~ president to make a move that goes a great deal a head of publick opinion it is aw- ful times now and it would not take a great deal to get up a rebel- ion in our own army the probability is you dont know the minds of our own army as well as I do a but when the nigger as they call him mentond they say that they will throw down their arms and there is a ~~large~~ large class of this stripe in the army so you it is a difficult point to take action upon but I hant time nor room to write on this point the calculation this morning is to draw five days rations this is a new thing so I think that there is a move of som kind to be made but I cant tell what my health is good now and last night when we got in I slept as sweet as a man could I was glad to see Norman and ~~hear~~ hear so direct from home I saw gust about three weeks ago he said that he was going to try and get a furlow I told him if he got a furlow that I would try and get one to this is all you need not look for me at present at any rate I think that the intention is to move the army of the Potomac towards Richmand as fast as they can so you see that there wont be much chance for going home yet Probably there is more hard fight- ing to do yet unles something special takes place you probably have seen more or less about Falmouth in the papers I will tell you about that it is a little nasty huddle about a half a mile from our Camp probably F B is two or three miles from our Camp

BM # 28

and was rather a nice place once I can see two or three spires in that place from here the ground where the battle was fought is in sight and our batteries were planted a short distance below our Camp. Ruba there is two things that I have learned since I have been in the army one is a man can endure a great deal more fatigue than I thought he could and the other is he can get along with a great deal less of the comforts of life than I thought he could do now a cup of coffee with a little sugar and 4 or 5 hard tacks makes a meal and a pint cup and spoon makes out our dishes to eat it and our bed is cheap a coat for a pillow answers and we get along without sheets or pillow bears(?) all cheap I don't mention this to complain there is one thing I am thankful for my health is good it is a hard place here to be sick I have received some inconvenience from camp smoke but now they have mostly got chimneys and the smoke is not as bad among other things that are inconvenient to get along with we have to wash our own shirts and do without our Hives potatoes and apples but some of us will live through it and go home and some will fall and sleep in Virginia without doubt I am in hopes to be favoured with the privilege of a gain returning home but I want to see this trouble cleared up and removed first if I can you spoke about Norman getting things for me here there is no chance to get much here there is a commissary store ~~there~~ calculated for the officers to buy their living and I can manage to get a little from Washington the harder to get things you might put in an extra envelop when you send and send more stamps it may be so that I can't write again in a number of days and may be not I can't tell I shall try and write as often as I can and I want to hear from you often I feel in hope that things will take a favourable turn soon but I can't tell I am sorry that Nancy keeps so lame give my love to the children Alva is well and seems to enjoy himself

B Merrill



Virginia Jan 25th 63

Beloved Wife I have a little leisure time to day so I take it to write a few lines to you I have not heard a word from you since your letter dated the 7 the time seems long I believe that I have written three times since that I have had no answer from soon after I received your last letter we had orders to march and we moved 8 or 10 miles up the Rappahanac there we halted and camped our business here was to make rodes we staid two days and worked and then we went back to our old camp then I got your last letter we ~~we~~ staid there two nights and then we had orders to take our tents and march back to where we was before then we pitched our tents and staid a few days longer and made rodes we supposed with the intention to have Pontoon bridges to have an army cross the river ther this was throwed up and a place a little above was selected and the bridges started for that place and the whole army about here was put under march ourselves with the rest expecting to go over and have a battle and the night before we were to go over we had a heavy rain so that our artillery and baggage tranes could not move then the whole army had orders to fall back so there went another great union victory we are now in camp about one mile above our old camp the Lord only knows where our next move will be I beleave that we have been in twenty different camps since wecrossed the Potomac our tents are now only sot up temporary there is some talk that we go farther towards Washington the rodes are so bad now that the army probably wont do ~~any~~ anything for a month or two to come I see while they are moving our artillery back they have four span to draw one cannon I expected one while that I should have to step into battle but still I am out and my health is good and my appetite good Alva is all wright only he has a boil on his heel cord not verry bad we were towards the first that fell back and I would haveliked to have had you seen the amount of men that have passed our camp they have been almost without number had the two armys have come togethater probably there would have been a great slaughter of men I will tell you a little about the Pontoon bridges they are scow boats the width of a wagon and about forty feet long and put togethater as they are put in and fastened to each bank then they are coverd over the top with plank from one end to the other this makes a pontoon bridge I have written to you before about Norman being down here and about Alvas boots they fit well I want you to send more stamps and you may send one pare of sox by male do them up snug as you can and you had better have delong male them and you might see what it would cost to send a half pound paper of fine cut tobacco if it would answer you may send a half ~~one~~ pound ~~one~~ paper of best kind of fine cut tobacco dont send any poor tobacco we can get that here I might write more about this last army move but I will wate til I get home then we will talk the whole matter over I cant tell what the reason has been that it has been so long since I have heard from you but I conclude you have written and I have faled to get them I would have written before now to you but we have been on the tramp so that it hant been convenient I want you to write so that I can one or two letters evry week and make some calculation that it may be that

BM # 29

I wont get evry letter there is talk that we will get some money soon but I hant got much faith about it one thing I know the 29 Newyork got pay a day or two ago and they are in our division they camp near us and it may be that we will get some if we do probable we ~~will~~ will get with in a few days so you may look a little for pay I see by a little examination that the men in the army are getting uneasy and discontented and I am inclined to think that it would not take a great many more moves to cause a break in our army and a great many seem to curse Burnside sometimes I almost think that our army ant going to do any thing to the purpose if we dont it wont be on account of the men they are here and have come in good faith the hed men seem to be the ones things look rather dark now the rane storm here has passed of now and to day is warm and plesent as summer no frost in the ground nor no snow but the rodes are verry bad we hant had a flake of snow in a long time I see that a large share of the army horses and mules are badly fagged and quite a number are dying off and if the the war continues verry long I think that it will take a great deal to replace the teams I am just the same as out of money now and when you answer this I would like to have you send one or two fifty cents stamps for we cant use any thing but government money may be that I shant get pay in some time to come I cany verry well get along with out a little money by me I think if we make any more moves verry soon it will be towards Washington there has been talk that themove would be next to run troops south but I dont know about it I want you to write all the news when you write and write often I would like to see you and the Children I was looking in my sack this morning and among the rest I saw your likeness and on the whole I have thought considerable about home to day Mother sent me some dried apples berries cherries and some tea and pepper by norman I hant got any letter from mother in some time I rote Leonards folks a letter since I saw Wilbur I have not had an answer from that in fact have not had a letter from any one since I got yours dated the 7th I see when the men get letters from their wives quite a number get small ones inside I dont know what is rote in them I think that I look about as I did when you saw me last I am fleshyer than I was two months ago and my whiskers are getting heavy I keep my upper lip shaved I think some or letting that grow to I think that I am all wright and about as keen as ever you know when I am through that I want to stop now I am through and I will stop

B Merrill

Virginia January 29 63

I thought that I would spend a little time this morning in writing to my wife ██████████ Private

Ruba I shant be able to write you a verry interesting letter this morning from the fact that I have no interesting ground to work upon I will go back as far as the time that we left our old camp which was the 21 I beleave and I will take from that date up to now and glean what I can remember as near as may be to get at my story I shall embrace a little ground before the 21 and go back as far as the 17 the 17 about 2 o clock in the morning we had orders to march and leave our tents and Knapsacks and we tok our blankets and three days rations and of course we had to obey and we started in the dark and on muddy rodes our course was up the river by the by we had to take our guns Catridge box and belts and when we had marched about four miles we had an order to halt lode our guns and put on our bayonets and as I said before we had to obey and we did this all in the dark then the order was to march this was obeyed and we moved through mud until break of day which fetched us about 9 miles from our old camp up the river then we made a short stop and then we moved about  $\frac{1}{2}$  a mile or so then we were halted right in the woods and not far from the bank of the river got some breakfast and rested a while and about the nex thing that we saw one or two wagon lodes of axes spades picks and shovels then we had orders to go to fixing rode and we worked at this, kind of that day and the nex and the next day we went back to camp again had no trouble with the Rebs then then 21 we had orders to pack up and take tents and we went back where we were before done more work on the rode and two or three nights then the order was to march and we move still up the river a few miles and camped expecting that the river would be bridged there and that we should cross and what this work was done for where we was I am not able to say the night that we camped still up the river from where we made rode and the day and night before it rained quite steady consequently the rodes was getting almost impassible (?) the whole army about here were moving and the thing of crossing theriver was given up and the troops commenced to fall back and such a time I never saw our artilery and baggage wagons cut the rodes all to peaces and such deep mud I never saw but our regimen were among the first that came back and we came within about a mile of our old camp and camped and we are here yet so you see that providence kept the two armies apart this time had our army crossed and the two armies have came togheter there probably would have been an awful slaughter on both sides had this plan been mad the first time the attack was made I think that it would have been succsful and it probably would have been now provided it had, have been carried out the move on our side was a large thing the next day after we got into this camp there seemed to be a constant string of men passing regiment after regimen all day and there is another rod running the same way not far of and it was the same on that rode to after about two days the rain stopt and it cleared of and the mud where it want deep began dry up a little the weather continued good until day before yesterday it commenced to rain it rained quite steady that day and it snowed some night before last and snowed all day yesterday and last night and melted nearly as fast as it come until last night it ganed this morning the snow was 4 or 5 inches deep but it is going fast now to day it is plesent and quite warm and I think that there mud a plenty and plenty of mud soon

I wish that I could have drawn a picture of our camp and things connected with it this morning to you but I cant do it but I will describe a few things as near as I can there is four regiments of us here to gather and there is probably 40 or 50 government wagons with us heavy wagons covered like imigrant wagons and these are drawn mostly by mules 4 or 6 to one wagon a few horses are used these were mostly in last night when they come in they have to on harness and hitch the mules to the wagons or a stump as the case may be no stables this morning these mules stood with their hind feet verry near there forward feet all wet and cold figure up and you will see quite a number of mules around camp now about the men our tents ant fixed only for the present not yet so you see that we were pinched to and had we have had four legs our feet would have been quite clost to gather to but our tent and Alvas was near each other and our beds wer of from the ground and last night we put on good fires of large wood and at bed time we bunked in and this morning we came out right all but camp smoke this troubles me and it is with trouble that I write to you this morning my eyes are quite bad as soon as it melts of and dries up a little we are going to fix up and make another chimney which will be the 4 or 5 that we have made and we have been in about twenty different camps in all but I guess that we dont move much more at present on account of the rodes our rations come within about two miles of us by ~~the~~ public conveyance and the teams get them from there so much for the present picture and when I attempt to look a hed it looks dark it may be that light will dawn some where but I dont know I dont get no news of what they are doing in congress in fact I dont get much news any way I did not hear a word from home in a long time the last letter that I got from you was dated Jan 7 until night before last I got two letters from you one had some black pepper and the other some stuff to make ink so you see that this morning I can make marks that wont rub out I see that you complaned some of pensil marks in your last my pensil was to hard for writing on paper but I did the best that I could with out or ink and poor or no paper what paper I had was rough and poor since I receive your two letters I had one from leonards folks and one from Heman your numbers 19 and 20 I have not got and I guss that there has been one or two more along some where in there that I did not get I rote you a short letter the day before I got your two last but this was done with a pensil and it may be you cant read it I rote you one letter about the first of Jan with a pensil and directed it with a pensil did you get that I think that I could write with a pensil so that you could make out what it means if your eyesight was or did not fale I rote in my last that you had better send one or two fifty cts stamps if it is convenient you may do so but dont take any trouble about it I think that we will get some pay beforelong but I dont know certain when I understand that the pay master is at work in the regiments that are with us and it may be our turn by and by I was glad to hear that you had got so as to ride out after your confinement I want you to be careful and not be to smart to soon you know that such things dont work verry well all ways have you named your babe yet what makes you think that little heifer will come in in the spring I did not think that the old heifer would come in the spring <sup>but</sup> I did not think that she would be farrow this winter of cours from what you have written before

I would be verry glad to come home and see how things are moving and see what is farrow and what has come in and what is coming in if this could be the case I know of one thing that would be likely to come in how do you think dave and Fany get along has Fany got over jerking do you think or do you think she have such spells occasionay yet I am afrade that you Cat folks are getting so unruly that you kneed me there to keep you steady seeing that I am one of the steady kind pleas ask E Roberts to keep things about as they should be until I get home you say that his mumps are well now I think that I would like to see one hansome good looking Cat woman about like your self I hant but a verry few nice looking women like your self since I crossed the Potomac river I tell you that hansome women are scarce down here some of the men say that they would give a quarter just to look at one but I guess when this was done that they would be hardly  satisfied I judge from my own feelings I think that I would like to do one thing more I would just like to kiss one to and this would do me but I bare my infiraties as best I can I hant even had a grist ground by hand as yet so you see that I am all wright and I might go of half touched I made up my mind when I left home that I would come home pure and Clean as I was when I left I am of the same opinion yet and among the rest I keep my person clean to hare and whiskers comed and my shirts and drawers clan to but all the men dont keep their close nor hands and fases clean Jate Hull looks worse than an  indian and he ant the only one in this fix some are getting lousy and Jate among the rest I hant had any trouble  with a man yet and I  have been able to answer to my name evry time and hant been excused a time yet and a number call me uncle merrill our new tent mat has ben sick and has been to the hospita but he is with us now he is rather a good sort of a man and free hated Horace and Alva get along first rate Alvas bile has got so that he can ware his boot now how does Nancy get along does she improve in her mind and ways Irvin I suppose is stabbing about as usual I am glad you are like to have hay enough and that the Colts are doing well does dol seem to be steady or does she cut a little as though she would like to run away some times be careful and not let the colts get scart and run and try to keep them so that they will grow some well I guess that I have written about trash enough for this time give my love Maria Roberts tell her if I could see her the first thing that I would do would be to kiss her I expect to be home some time and I shall feel like a bird let out of a cage then I think that I will be my own man now I an under the big bugs(?) and men ant verry polar here unless they can sware by rule and by the by there is plenty of it here it is the fashion give my love to all that inquire after me I must close for we are going to work at our tent to rig up a gain if there was any thing in your letters 19 and 20 that you wish me to see you you will have to write it again pleas write often B Merrill

I have rote the last of this in a hurry and dont read it over so excuse mistakes it may be that it would do to read the first leaf of this to some of the neighbors

Virginia Feb 2 63

Ruba We have got ~~such~~ such a comfortable tent and such a nice fire place to set by that I thought that I would write a few lines to you this evening I receive a letter from you a day or so ago No 25 I believe I have written twice to you within a short time I dont know that I have much news to write this time our snow storm has passed of and snow gone and the weather is nice again but the mud ant all gone yet there dont seem to be any thing new going on our regiment are fixing up their tents the best now that they have either time before the most of them are comfortable for cold weather ourselves among the rest are in good condition now for cold stormy weather no want your ~~glad~~ glad fodder your own cattle and take care of your horses I dont do such work this winter I live in the south it may be that I will get a farm here yet I have got a house but I have only squatted yet I have made no clame. I and Alva have drawed our pay up to the first day of November making 18 dollars each to send home I thought that I would write a little before we send on account that a great many are sending home just now our brigad did not any of them get pay up any further than the first of November I ~~ant~~ ant know when we will get any more pay some say in one month there is now three months pay back you may look for our allotments in a few days I would just like to have you drop in to our house and stay one night and try our new bed our bed is better than what they were to Jamestown we take small poles and lay them 6 or 8 inches from the ground clost together acrost the back end of our tent then we lay on pine or cedar boughs then spread on our ruber blankets some of them then one wollen blanket for an under sheet and some ruber blankets last and this makes our bed the foot of the bed our chares the front end of the tent for a door one side and the chimney the other the sides of our house is about 4 feet high made of pine poles split through the middle and the split sides layed inside of the tent and the outside mudded ~~tight~~ tight and through the middle a man can stand up comfortable the rough is made of our canvas drawn over a poll through the middle the poll lays in some crotches one at each end and they are higher ~~then~~ then the sides and this gives the slant on the rough this is a short description of our house how do you like it we hant no place to keep much provision but Uncle Sam furnishes us our provision evry day so we dont kneed much room for this purpose and we have a plenty to eat now and plenty of coffee and sugar though not a great variety of provision my health is good and ~~my~~ my appetite is good and I feel quite keen. Ruba I have got to correct a thing or two. Alva wants to read your letters and always read them first and sometimes I find little sections I think he had better not read so I tell him that there ant much of any news and dont let him read such letters I like to have some such news my self and I want ~~to~~ to tell you how this can be got along with just write your letter and leave out the choice news and put that in a slip by itself inside and then Alva can read all of your letters dont you see I saw in your last that you thought that your self and (?) could do without ours and in another something about my old farrow heifer so you see that I would rather have the extras by themselves on Alvas account dont understand that I dont want no such news only give it to me in a

BM # 31

slip separate I will do the same by you if you desire it if it would suit you any better tell me when you get this I drawed two months and two days pay and Alva got a little more so I have 8 dollars and some change to keep you spoke about stamps and about my writing no other mens wives I own that I have rote to other mens wives and other mens wives have rote to me I want you to forgive me and it may be that I shall do the same thing again. I guess that I will send you a nice new 50 cent stamp in this letter and probably 25 cents will cover the expense for stamps that I have sent to other mens wives and the other 25 cents you may pay me when I come home you know mother sent me a letter the other day and she sent me 12 stamps she did not stop with one nor two she put in 12 so you can see her generosity if you can and you may put in an extra envelop if you pleas you sent to me give my love to the children and save a large share for yourself

B M

Camp near Accuwa Feb 10 63

Ruba I received two letters in one envelop from you last night 26 and 27 Nos. I was glad to hear from you I have not got all of your letters since I rote to you we have had to move we have moved about 8 miles nearer Was then we was near a station on the rail rode I suppose that the (?) of the move was to get our supplies handier on account of bad lodes we had just got a good tent where we was and then had to move we come here last Friday night our regiment was marched into the woods a little before sundown tired and hungry we made a fire and got some supper and then got up our tents and rested what we could for the night then all we had to do was to rig again Saturday morning we ~~we~~ went to work and if men ever worked they have worked here since that time no time lost Sunday the most of them have got nearly )?( up again we have got a good tent and good fireplace the arrangement is now for us remain here a while they say until the ground settles in the spring the Cat Regiment is the greatest regiment to nock things together that you ever saw I dont know wether there will be any furlows or not there is some talk that way but uncertain yet Alva and I sent home some pay the other day I suppose you have got it before this time I think that I will have Harvy Hurd make a good heavy pare of Calf Skin boots such as is wanted in the army and have them reddy as ~~soon~~ soon as he can and I think that there will be some way for me to get them I will send the measure in this letter and you had better go over and see him and get them home as soon as you can so as to have them reddy to send the first chance my boots leak some now and I dont know how to go With wet feet and it will take some time to get them around and I shall want some sox to as soon as there is a chance may be that I will conclude to have you send me a box by and by if there is no other way to get things my health remains good and Alvas health is good I did not know as Alva felt hard towards P H I have not asked him about it this morning if you have heard any thing about it I wish that you would let me know what it is all that there was about tobacco at Dumphres was he got a little of the leaf partly dried and (?) up to a house not far of some of it I used see it was not worth much and some was given away and he did not get but a little any way when I rote to have you send me a little I had only a few shillings left and I did not know how soon we would draw I had heard about it so long but as it happened I might have got along with out sending but I got what you sent so it is just as well you wanted me to write about Alva I think that he appears about as he did when you saw him I think that he is a good boy he and Horace both they have got then a good tent about done here now the weather is fine here now and has been since returning but we had a stormy bad time to get here it snowed the morning we started and then it rained and we camped out one night and that was a rainy bad night but we are getting all right for stormy weather again now this writing looks as though you could not read it the ink is dirty and clogs the end of thepen is what is the matter and that makes it bad you know About the Colt I think you had better get someone to bleed her in the mouth and then



BM # 32

you had better give her two or three quarts of brand (?) a day scalded and put in a little rum(?) and coperas pulverized together and let her eat it warm put in about one part coperas and put in about a tea spoon ful of bo the pulverized in the scalded brand and bleed her a little and she will gane

Do you think that any bone in Nancys foot where she lamed it is out of place that makes her lame so long I am afraid there is I dont get much news here now days I guess that I had better take a yankey way to answer your question you asked me which do you think is the best to have rather a poor husband around or none atal mother sent me a letter the other day and 12 stamps I did not get any letter from her with any money in it the male goes soon and I must close and will try and do better next time.

B M

BM # 33

Virginia Camp near Accuwa Feb 15 63

Good evening Irvin I guess that I will chat a little with my Chub at home I mean with my pen cause I cant talk loud enough so that you will hear me well I fancy that I can see you stepping around mornings and nights looking after and doing your chores how do you get along with the chores this winter well I guess that you are doing verry well I know that you will try to do the best that you can well I guess that you would be glad to see pa and I know ~~that~~ that I would be glad to see ~~my~~ my Chubby do you have any trouble with the colts does dol act steady or is she a little scitish did you get a good pare of holters last fall how do your calves do and how do the Cows get along and how does the hay come out is it bright or musty and are you like to have enough give nob some scalded wheat brand evry day I guess that youand ma had better go and buy some brand and may be mix in a little meal or canel to make it a little hartier it may be that I will send home ~~some~~ a little more money before long and it will pay to stop the new milks heifer evry day be careful and not let the colts run away try and be a good boy and I gues I shall see you again some time I guess that I will send you a present of a twenty five cent stamp in this letter pleas write to me  
B Merrill you and Nancy can send in one envelop

Virginia Camp near Aquie Station Feb 12 63

Beloved Wife although far distant from you I taake a little time this evening it is now nine oclock to write a few lines to you it has now got still and quiet in Camp and it is a good time to write and what shall I write I would be glad to write something that would interest you in the first place I will describe to you how our new home looks inside this evening I set on the foot of the bed with a gun bayonet ~~was~~ stuck into the ground just before me point down and the other end serves for a candle stick with my ink to my right on the foot of the bed and my writing on my knee Calvin a little to my left loped over backwards one the bed and one foot up on the pile of night wod fast asleep Charles fashion Shelmadine is washing his cloths before the fire this makes our family our other tent mate is nursing to the hospitel his health is not verry good we have got a good fire place comfortable tent and comfortable bed I said our new home because we have just moved into the woods and put up a cabin or house and it is all done but painting we had just got fixed all comfortable to our last camp and thought that we were to stay a while and about the time you rote to Alva he got a letter last night we had orders just at day break to be ready to march at half past eight which was rather a short time to pack up and get ready to move but we were on the move in time before this time it had been quite cold for two or three days and that morning it commenced snowing and it snowed all the fore knoon and rane all the afterknoon we marched about half our distance that day and were halted a little by (?) night and turned into a large flat meadow to tarry for the night it still raned and raned all night and it raned the next morning but we had orders to move at nine oclock consequently we were ready and there was a stream of water just a hed and that had rose so high it could not be crosed without pontoon bridge and they were back about two miles still raning and we wating all packed up so we were ordered up on the side hill into some woods there we made fires and dried some and made Coffee and about noon the bridge was in and we started and landed a little before dark into the woods and no shelter but we struck tents and eat a little and rested as best we could and now the woods are gone and we have comfortable quarters log bottoms and the canvass over bottoms mudded and fire places all done since a last Saturday morning such is a short scetch of souldiering how do you like it now while we lay in Camp we have it rather easy we are still in Seigles Corps we have done considerable tramping but probable we have been in camp half of the time and may be more since we crosed the potomac I think that I stand it verry well and I am now quite fleshy I rote a few lines to you a short time ago since we came but we was not quite fixed and I did not write much I have written a number of times with in two or three of the past weeks probable you have got them before now among the rest I sent one eighteen dollar draft I hope you have got that I forget to write in my last letter about the price of that dres coat that coat cost six dollars and seventy one cents probable you had better take of one dollar I think it would be about right I am sorry that

BM # 33

I dont get all of your letters I would be glad to hear from home at least twice in a week our male comes now evry night and leaves evry morning I sent in my last letter a measure for a pare of boots I want a good pare and tapt and well nated(?) and hed plates on I want them made of heavy Calf skin and I want Hurd to make them and you may pay him I want a pare that is worth six dollars and I think you had better get them ready as soon as you can and I think there will be some chance for me to get them if you dont get the measure I think that large sevens or small eights would be the thing one of my boots leak some now and I dont know how to go with wet feet the weather here now is pleasant but rather cool no snow nor frost in the ground we have had considerable rane of late I think from the present appearance that a part of the potomac army will be moved south and a part left and no more fighting in virginia whether we go or stay I cant tell I would like to stay but I cant have my choice in this matter I rather think that we stay for a while at any rate I think that it will all come right in the end I think that I shall come home again some time in march I shall get two months more pay I think the design of the government is to keep two months behind in pay at least does our sellar frees any this winter and how does the potatoes and apples keep I was glad that Alva got his last letter from you for he was getting out of patience he said that he would not write any more until you rote to him I done my washing all up nice yesterday and changed my cloths I have got so that I can wash or cook quite well I am glad you have sent some things I hope that I shall get them when you send me another letter you may send me a little wollen yarn to darn sox and a few good pins when I sent back that little bag I ought to have taken out the yarn but I sent in a hurry and did not have time to think what I wanted I only thought that I wanted to get my lode as light as I could I will close by signing B M pleas write often and write all the news

Private Ruba you can see by this writing that my pens are worn out my pens that I ~~was~~ brought from home have all faled but one and that is to corse to write fine hand it is a corse hand pen and in good order for that use so I dont mind it and I gess you had better send me some fine hand pens how do you like sleeping alone this winter I suppose you like it for you dont have any one to disturb you or keep you awake or do you feel a little some times as though you would like to be woke up and crowded a little tightly I feel as though I would like just to do that thing for you I am as keen as ~~you are~~ a brier and as good as new and clean enough to get between sheats with you I would like to see home and see the children and see the inside of that old meeting house you that are <sup>at</sup> home dont prise the privileges that you enjoy as you ought I hant seen the inside of a meeting house since I have been in V or hardly the insid of dwelling house I sojourne in a strange land a land of all men and no women I think that the thing wont work to keep them apart long but I see that some of our big officers have their women along I was called down the other night to guard the brigade head quarters and I heard a strange nois in the ~~house~~ night insid thinks I that is the advantage the big men have so the world goes well all towards twenty one well I gues when I get home I think I will make up loss time try and keep your health good and be all nice I feel some how quers now you know Harvy inman is quite unwell I dont know what ales him I beleave that the regiment are generay in tolerable health there is a man here from rutlege he come into camp last night he says that he dont think much about the women some of the men told him if he had been down here five months and eat hard tacks he would the men here say that calico would look good to them now if they could see it but I suppose that they mean something else I can think of other things I would rather see than calico some times I think that I just must go home and then I think that it would not be best so I bare my infirmities well I guess that I will ~~live~~ live through it and see my wife again some day or night some times I think well what a fool I was for coming of down here and at other time I take a little different view of the thing some times I think that it is my duty to be here and at other times I see things that I am disgusted with then I wish I was out and home so I have my trials about it when I look back the time seems short when I look a head the time seems long I hope that providence will so arrange it that I can go home soon I would like to see old C and its inhabitants again I think of our little home the front bed room and the warm Citchen and wife and children daily but I keep up good courage and hope for thebest Virginia would be a pleasant place provided it did not bare the marks of war the climate is good first rate but the rod is such that when it is wet it is verry muddy but it soon dries off well I guess that I have scribbled about enough for this time may be when you read this you will want to blow out the light before you read if you want or would like to give me any thing that has a barin in this direction pleas enclosed on a scrap by itself I would like to have a little of this stripe yours B Merrill I will try and send you a dayly paper prnted at Baltimore you can see the difference

BM # 35

Virginia Feb 21 63

Ruba I received your letter last night and was glad to hear that you got allotments safe you sent a nice snug little envelop and stamp on it all fixed up I suppose your envelop a specimen of all you have around evry thing small snug and nice

the prospect here is now that George Reel will be home on a short furlough next week I want you to have my boots ready and I guess he will bring them to me and I guess that horace and Alva intends to send for a box and try to have the box start a couple of days before he does and may be he can (?) to it (?) so you can be getting his things ready and I guess that I will have a pare of sox and my hat and some paper and envelops and ink I hant time to write now the male be getting such things ready as you think we may be when he comes short and sweet B M

Private to R. C. M. Virginia Feb 24 63

Beloved Wife

We are doing any thing now days and the weather is nice and for me to lay idle it makes the time seem rather long so I seat myself to write a litte to you I think that it may be that George Reel will be home on a ten day furlough now soon and if you got the masure for my boots I would like to have see that they are ready and I guess that he will bring them when he comes back Horace and Alva think of sending for a box and I thought that I would send for a few things to but I rather not risk the boots to some in a box I want him to bring them right along and I will pay him for his trouble that they make him

I would like to have you put in their box for me my hat if it is good as when I left if not get me a new one and I guess one pare of sox some dried fruit mostly dried apples and some butter not a great deal and a peace of chees one quire of paper and one or two packages of good envelops and a bottle of good ink and send by him fifty cents worth of stamps and I want a coffee pot tin cup and a small knife and fork I have wrote to John about these I guess you may pay John for them and he will pay to go-wanda I would like a little wollen yarn and I hardly know what to say about tea and tobacco I hant got what you sent yet there is a lot of boxes coming soon may be I will get it with them and I would like to have you send a little maple sugar and a small bag of flour I think you ned not send any tea nor tobacco now may be you will think of some other little fixings that you will think that I will want that you can send there is one thing more that I would like but I think that it would not be convenient to send it and I will have to do without it

I think if James rich wants to buy the \_attle and is willing to pay what it is worth you may sell it to him I think the prospect slim for me to use it to make sugar this spring I think that the Kettle is worth thirty or thirty five dollars I dont exactly know how much myself I think that it worth more than the new ones they buy now and it hant been used in the arch enough to ingure it a tel if you could find out what they were worth in Buffalo you could tell something about it yourself I guess that it would be best to have it sold if it can be sold for what it is worth so you may speak to him about the Kettle I think however that ought not to be sold for less than thirty dollars and it rather strikes me that u ought to bring a little more About fodder I dont you to sell any fodder I dont know who will get fodder together for use next winter and dont let any more go of any kind throw in considerable corse fodder when it is cold and let the cattle pick it over and then use it for bedding then throw it out for manure you will want a considerable fodder you will find yet you better have to much than not quite enough I dont know as this rule will work in evry case but it will work well in this case dont let any more fodder go and dont sell any more wheat nor potatoes you dont know how much of anything such thing you will want and yet I dont want you should be short for anything that you can have it bad enough I find to do with out things that we cant have about that lode of

straw we used to call straw worth a dollar a lode probably it would have been worth more to throw under the cattle for bedding and throw out for manure than he will think he ought to pay be as careful as you can and not have any difficulty with Leonard and the best way for you is not to have much deal with him and I dont care about having his horses eat to much hay there is reason in all things you ned not let any one see this letter I dont know how much or what I shall put in to it yet when I saw that envelop you sent thinks I that is a snug nice little envelop and probable she dont want much news so I rote short and sent it back and said a nice little envelop and a nice little thing to put into it if you send me envelops I want one or two sizes larger and good sticking on them probably that I never weighed as much as I do now so you see that I cant use as small envelops as I could once I wish you could see me now I think you would see some thing worth looking at my cheeks are plumping out and my arms and legs &c are getting round and plump I have had my hair cut and whiskers trimmed and on the whole I look  about as good as new I think that I would like to see you now and masure legs I guess that mine are the largest. I rote two letters one to each of the children and put them both into one envelop and directed them to you and put in a twenty five cent stamp in each of them as a present have you got them I rote you one before I rote that and put in a fifty cent stamp have you got that you complaned a little about my sending letters to other mens wives with stamps that you sent so I thought I would send you pay for them I thought that twenty five cents would pay for all the stamps that I have used in that direction and the other twenty five cents you might pay me when I  come home I understand you made E Roberts a visit the otherevening did you have a good visit with him if you cant give me nicer little letters then you did in your last I would not give much for them I see three small strips thinks I have got some news of from the  fine end this time but it seemed pretty much a fudge after all I like a little fine news by  its self occasionally I spoke with the Captain a day or two ago about my having a furlough to go home and the present arrangement is for one out of each company to have a furlough of ten days one at a time and there is one in our company that is sick from (?) that wants to go home now probably he will go and there is one or two more that have spoke before me is nothing new should turn up I guess that I could get a ten day furlough some time towards the last of March Wife what do you think do you think that it  would pay it will cost me twenty five or thirty dollars to go and get back and about three day each way if I caould have good luck I could stay three or four days and nights at home what do you think I would be verry glad to see you but I dont see how I can figure up so as to make it pay if I could get a furlough for twenty or thirty days it might pay and I see nothing to hinder quite a number out of each company now from having furloughs at a time and go home and see their families we ant doing much here now and probably wont move from here until the rode get good in the spring it may be that there will be different arrangements about furloughs soon I dont know you had better not look at all for me and then if I dont come you wont be disappointed I think that they dont lik to let many go for fear they cant get them back again they know about how the men feel there is a possibility that george wont



his papers are not yet in his hands but that is the present arrangement for him to have them and some Calvin Shelmadine and I talk of sending for our women to come down and see us and we find one ~~some~~ difficulty to get along with and that is we want sleeping rooms enough in our house to lodge three couple I hardly know whether we will send on that account can you ~~we~~ contrive any way how that thing can be managed if you can let me know in your next

Sunday 22 it comensed to snow here last night about ten o'clock and it has snowed ever since to day it snows and blows not very cold but rather blustering when you write please inform me what the weather is sunday the 22 is and for a few days before was we have but a verry little cold weather here yet but considerable rain of late and plenty of mud our tent is verry comfortable and a good fire place and the chimney dont smoke and I dont hear wife scold we have to bring our water about eighty rods and we have to bring our wod about the same distance and you see that I am all wright only I want a woman to was my shirts that is all you know ham will to proud some how I rather would like to see and have a chat with you. when I lok back it dont seem asthough it had been five months since I saw you I often think of the last time we spent together the time loks short to look back but to look a hed it looks long and the weks pass swiftly by Ruba sometimes I get to thinking about home and it seems as thoug I must come and see my family it may be that providance will so order it that I can come but until the ~~we~~ way opens tolerable fare probably I shall wate a while I try and keep as quiet as possible but I see things here at the hed of manegement that I call perplexing and that dont make me feel any more (?) probable the nice weather in the fall so far as our regiment was consernd was a blank our men are some of them sickening and some dyeing off and probably our regiment is full one third smaller now then when we left home I beleave that fifty 6 or 7 men is all that our company draws rations for now and when we came down it was eighty or over but I have been wonderfully favoured on all or nearly all sides since I came here for which I feel thankful I have not had hardly a bad time to go out on picket or guard duty since I have been down here I dont know as I have been healthier or tougher or weighed more since you have been acquainted with me than now I can lug round and carry luggage like a horse I did not think that I could begin to stand what I have some times I get tired but I can lay down and rest and it dont make much difference what the bed is if it is out of the water I have had quite a number of different beds to sleep on since I saw you some times in a tent and some time with the heavens for a covering I guess I will mention a few of the different materials that I have made my bed of since I saw you oak liavs pine boughs Cedar boughs Corn stalks, hay, straw, and when I could not do any better I have spred my blankets right on the ground and my nap sack always for a pillow but I stand it like a horse our bed now is small Cedar boughs layed on small polls up a little from the ground and they make quite a good bed it has seemed to me that the Lord has been with and blessed me

BM # 36

and given me strength a great many times for which I feel thankful I assure you but I have trust to take<sup>care</sup> care of my health and I hope and try to pray that the lord will hasen the time when I can again return to my home and family and there I let the thing rest

I have ritten the most of this sheet in a hurry probably the whole thing has been done in about two hours may be you cant read all of it my pens are poor and ink about gone and probably some mistakes pass all such by and pleas write often to me I have had not letter that brought any news about your visit and miss shannons I am sorry that I dont get all of your letters but I know of no way to help it only for you to make calculation on having some lost and send a little oftener about stamps I cant get them here paper and envelops I can get some times if I write you will have to manage to furnish stamps in some way and it is quite a both to get ink I would like to send you a kiss in this letter but all that I can do is to send you my love and bid you good by for the present

BM # 36

Ruba sometimes when I write I try and feel as keen as possible and sometime I do at other times before I close my letter I almost feel as though it would be a kind of ~~relief~~ relief for me to drop a tear over my writing I have made up my mind since I have been down here that probably I think as much of my family and home as any man ought to and I feel anxious to see home as soon as convenient I often feel that I wish that I had been a better man and a better Christian and had taken things more patient on a review of my past life I see many things that I could wish were not so but the past is gone and gone forever it cant be recalled I intend to try with divine help to live a cristian man for time to come and and it seems to me to day that I can look beyond the musty trash of earth and behold a mansion prepared for me ~~yes~~ yes and the time is coming when I shall step in Ruba my mind is as clear as a bell to day and I wish that I could enjoy the privileg of attending a classmeeting on this holy sabbath day in the old church at home but these are privilegs that I dont enjoy the orders were last night in camp that to day at half past nine this morning there would be a general inspection butthe storm came on and no inspection and ~~this is~~ this is about the first sabbath but what there has been something wanted and I am (?) ~~glad~~ glad that there is a God in heaven that over rules and some times it seems as though it would be just in him to sink us as a nation when I see the wickedness that is practised in the world it is an awful wicked place here and some times I feel hart sick I dont know but your patience will be wearied in studying out my scribbling but some how I fee as little like writing and I have only to pen what comes into my mind and I can say to day with the poll on Jordans stormy banks &c Ruba if I could see you to day and talk with you it would be a great privileg and to undertake to get my thoughts on a bit of paper I cant do this and will say prays God from whom all blessings prays the lord o my soul

if george dont come home and John should think best to send a box to horace you may put some things for me but you had not better (?) it to send the boots it still snows and blows and it comes the nearst to being a cattaraugus storm that I have seen yet remember to keep me to stamps in some way I hant got morethan two or three by me now I will close my short epistle to you for now and write again beforelong do you think that I had better try any to come home I want to see quite a number of old friends that reside in Cat give my respects to all that inquire after me from your husband Barzilla Merrill I dont want you should say any thing to any one about my coming home for it is verry doubtful about coming a little ~~privet~~ privet letter to Wife

Well Leonard has given me had quite a chat  
I read letters to him till I was tired enough,  
a darning, lowering, day sleighing all gone here  
Leonard offered me \$25 dollar all cash for  
our best cow I think she is worth \$30.00  
I dont sell to him, quite windy but warm  
Sun 27<sup>th</sup> cold raw wind she most of the  
day not cold enough to freeze any  
has recovered what I could in some  
shirts for a lva, cant do much got  
Mrs. Flawlett to help me  
Sat 28<sup>th</sup> so beautiful a morning  
as ever snow froze a little last night  
a white frost this morning, I feel  
quite well better than I have before  
in a week & a clock 24 years today  
since I became a wife & some cloudy  
towards night Mrs. B. Merrill

6  
Tues 17<sup>th</sup> Dumb wind. Same fast Keed  
company Mrs Nathan Roberts, Mrs Dorey,  
Heman & Charlotte Merrill called they  
came part way with a wagon then got a sleigh  
are going to Leonard's to stay to night.

Wed 18<sup>th</sup> Cloudy damp <sup>to sit up all day</sup> wetter quite unwell, notable

Thurs 19<sup>th</sup> rainy, more unwell than yesterday

Fri 20<sup>th</sup> froze some last night pleasant the morn-  
ting continues, bad roads, Nancy & Irwin read

a letter from Pa for which they are thankful

Sat 21 The pain in my limbs some better, not  
able to get about much, mild and pleasant.

Sun 22 5<sup>th</sup> clock P.M. has arrived, fast, all  
day, set up in bed and wrote some to Flushed

Nancy went to church but few in attendance was  
thought best to close the protracted effort she rather

latterly to be so bad so little interest manifested

Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> a remarkable clear, and pleasant  
day the sun shines with almost the splendor  
of a June day, want to go to the Barn but cant.

Tues 24<sup>th</sup> cloudy but air mild rather cold good  
sleighting I guess the sun is resting after shining  
after shining, so bright yesterday, Sarah Ann

Keale called to see me my limbs are better

Wed 25<sup>th</sup> Keed 2 letters by George Keale he has  
come direct from the army called in company

with his wife was extremely glad to see him  
he got home at 6 clock this morning, left the

army at 10 clock Monday John Darbel & wife  
called Mrs Susanna Gardner came on a visit

Mrs Medbery called am very tired rains.

Thurs 26<sup>th</sup> Keed a quite a number of calls  
yesterday got very tired dont feel quite as well

Mrs Ira Brownne called <sup>Friday</sup> Leonard Merrill has  
come

clouds passed away the sun shined  
 in all its splendor through the day  
 Sun 8<sup>th</sup> Nat. very small wrote to E.P.  
 W.P.D.C. commenced to write to husband  
 Mon 9. P.M. with a feverish  
 some nice Mr. went to E. Roberts  
 Tues 10. Recd 6, 50 of Sarah Ann Peale  
 went to Colburns and bought a suit  
 Wed 11. paid C. Barber 3, 50 difference betw  
 een stores and, so that husband owed  
 Henry Barber went to see doctor  
 sick child took care of it part of night  
 Thurs 12<sup>th</sup> help fire Meeting. House  
 Fri 13<sup>th</sup> Made a wine preparation for \$10,  
 and 36 dollars have husband's son  
 quarterly Meeting. Saw a call Capt Smith  
 and wife heard from friends in Lond  
 Sat 14<sup>th</sup> please and went to quarterly Meeting

Bro Stanford, wife, and daughter  
 Hull. W<sup>th</sup> Hunt, & Eliza Merrill staid  
 with me. did not go to church in eve  
 Sun 15<sup>th</sup> unable to attend church about  
 sick a fine <sup>father Merrill called</sup> day and good sleighing  
 Mon 16. Feel better had seen the  
 in the morning went to W<sup>th</sup> Dunces  
 carried a ham to smoke and from  
 here to Mr Seovills paid him by letter  
 my bill leave one allotment \$18, 50  
 beside took up a note went from  
 there to G. W. Johnsons let him  
 have the other allotment \$18. paid him  
 in interest and recd \$8 of him \$5 one  
 Silver creek Bank & in Marine B  
 No 6158 June 30 1862 Barne in Albany  
 Exchange Bank No 2469 May 1 1862

called at the store of J. S. Alden  
 2 1/2 yards Cotton cloth 4 63  
 1 lb of Tea 19 -- 1,25  
 1/2 Do -- Tob. 80 -- 40  
 sent to Mr. Edgemoor & Co of  
 Chesoc went to Mr. Howlett help five or six  
 things to send to the army sent a small  
 bundle worth \$25<sup>or 3</sup> paid Mr. Howlett  
 50 freight when I paid Mr. Rice took  
 30 worth of stamps so the money goes  
 wrote a letter to Abba so cold I did  
 not like to go to bed alone so I sat up  
 till after midnight then had to go  
 to bed well I am glad I have got a  
 bed that is comfortable wish my  
 Husband & son had as good.  
 Thurs 3<sup>rd</sup> very cold the wind blows a

perfect gale than is full of snow all  
 the time wind commenced to blow at  
 midnight continued with little abatement  
 till 3 o'clock PM about 4 came to snow  
 even is quite mild & not so low some  
 Fri 6<sup>th</sup> Irvin taken sick about 3 o'clock  
 in the morning doctored him some after  
 daylight went out shoveled and swept a  
 road to the barn & hen house, the snow  
 about 1 foot last night Mr. Breece brought  
 his children to school & Mr. Nelson Breece  
 & Mr. Smith here for a visit they staid  
 till after school at night we are alone  
 Irvin no better has quite a fever and  
 diarrhoea I dont know as I have spelt di-  
 arrhoea yes cobble says that is right  
 Sat 7<sup>th</sup> Irvin is better she's more easy

DIARY OF ROSA COLLE MERRILL, WALTON, NEW YORK - FEB 1-28, 1865  
HUSBAND BARZILLA AND SON ALVA - BOTH KIA AT CHANCELLORSVILLE, VA.  
CO. K, 154<sup>B</sup> N.Y.V.I.

Feb 1<sup>st</sup> Collage 20<sup>th</sup> Callar an gus 20<sup>th</sup> 1865  
Went to church heard a sermon by Bro  
Lyon occasioned by the death of Wm Hale had  
a soldier of the 154<sup>th</sup> Regt of 90<sup>th</sup> finished  
a letter read some got Irwin some supper  
he likes to leave Ma for supper sun  
a mild day grows cold towards night  
Wed 2<sup>nd</sup> cold and snows ~~knits~~ knits  
Went to the Post office with a letter sent  
50<sup>ct</sup> bill and two 25<sup>ct</sup> to B.M. helped wash  
Tues 3<sup>rd</sup> grows cold, snow, knits some and  
sewed some and sained some wood &  
finished cleaning pantry that I comme  
nced yesterday got pretty tired.  
Wed 4<sup>th</sup> stinging cold to cold to snow help  
do chores took my knitting and set by the fire  
Ira Brown called and paid Ma \$5  
for dress coat paid 50<sup>ct</sup> I had Borewind



Virginia Feb 25 63

Ruba I received I received a letter from you and one for Alva night beforelast both in one envelop I was glad to hear from home it may be that you have seen George before this time I hope you have you will have such a good chance to hear from Alva and I and I gave George two dollars and ~~he~~ told him if you wanted it to use that he might let you have it if not he might bring it me again I was informed yesterday quite credible that we would have two months morepay some time in march and I have five dollars and some change by me now Alva says that he has four dollars and I want you to keep the two dollars any way and I think that we can get along without it verry well use it ~~as~~ as you think best I dont know but you will think that I am extravagant put on a stamp to a letter sent you by private conveyance I thought that I would have to send by male after I rote I thought that George would not get away as soon by a day or two as he intended on account of his furlough and I wanted you to have the letter as soon as you could but he went as he intended so I sent by him be sure and send me some stamps when he comes back you ned not send envelops unless you can send larger ones I want envelops but I dont want such small ones I am a quite a hand for large things you know paper and envelops I can get but not verry handy but stamps I cant get here unless they are sent Alva uses rather more money here than I think he ought to he had nearly two dollars more when we sent home our money than I had and now he has a dollar les and I have sent thre dollars since a fifty cent stamp to you you know I ave directions what to have you do with it and I sent each of the children 25 cts have you got them and two dollars by George I thought that I should have sent you more money before this time but uncle sam hant paid up as I expected so you see that I have done the best that I could in that direction I did not know but ~~you~~ you would begin to think that I was calling quite often on you well I was and am still but I dont call on you for all that I want you to furnish me by no means and I dont expect ~~you~~ to have you supply all my wants while I stay here I would like to say a little about the war but when I undertake this I hardly know how to begin or where to stop I just would like to draw you a true picture of what is around where I am stopping now In the first place I will say that we are apart of seigles corps and Seigles corps is the 9 army corps of the potomac and I beleave that his whole Corps lay around here as near as may be accept his sick and they will be here within a day or two the hospital tents are nearly ready now and we are in Sinewers brigade which is four regiments in all and the whole Corps makes rather a large thing and this is but a small peace of the hidra headed monster and I wish that I could ~~manage~~ manage to help you to form some kind of an idea about what it costs to run this peace of the Devils invention

BM # 37

but I cant Enormus I dont know as I have much news to write to day I have been on guard for the last twenty four hours two hours on and four of and to day I have nothing to do so I thought that I would write to you a little

do you think that I had better write to Alden and ~~Howlett~~ Howlett about what money you had ought to have in that direction pleas tell me when you write I have not said much to Alva about paying out his money here perhaps you had better write a little to him about that ~~Howlett~~ dont say any thing as I have ritten to you about it it is a fine place here to use money and evry thing is verry ~~high~~ high our rations now are a plenty all there is it is the same kind to much not quite enough of a variety if you think that I had better talk with him aboutit tell me in your next have you got any new shoes on that light sleigh this winter I guess you had better sell the Roberts Cow this spring if the little heifer is coming in and may be the Calvs probable you will have to hire them pastured if you keep them may be you can get 25 or thirty pounds of sugar for them troths and spiles and may be a little more if you can you had better let them go try and manage so asnot be short for fodder this would be bad for you did the Children get their letter from me B M pleas write often

Virginia March 2 at 2 o'clock

Mrs B Merrill

I conclud to spend a little time this afterknoon to write to you I have just came in from a twenty four hour picket duty no sleep last night so you see that I am in good trim to write my hed is clear and thoughts quck and diserning I have been along near the lines since we came from Fairfax and conse quently this kind of work haves to be done and the way the thing runs the cavalry picket betwean us and the Enemy and this morning before we were ~~releaved~~ releaved there was a string of Cavalry two abrest passed us that took nearly an hour for them to ride ~~past~~ past and soon after they passed there probably were three or four hundred men on foot came to releave wit their bayonets shining in the sun do you have an Idea how such things look this is the kind of business that we follow for a living in these parts how would you like it I might say that it comes so that I have this picketing to do once in about two weeks

Alva received a letter from you Saturday night and I found one from Irvin I was glad to have him write why did not Nancy write to I dont notice as you or Irvin speak about any thing that was in their letters I put in a twenty five cent stamp in each lette if they got them it seems as though that they were worth mention ing Irvin you wanted me to tell you what I though about your having the Colts to go to spelling schools I dont think that it would be best But I Expect you to do as your ma thinks bes about it and all other matters of course and I think you will wont you I know you will be a good boy Irvin

About Dr Rug I have heard nothing of the kind that you rote to me I understand that things are moving favourable about Vixburgh now I suppose you have heard direct from me by G Reel and prob ably I will hear from you in the same way soon my weight is now 140 pounds and Alva 141 P

he has a (?) down to Ferrisburg that he haves it (?) \_\_\_\_\_ stamps so you will pleas make some allowance for me on that score about using so many stamps that box that was sent to Strickland came into our camp all right this afterknoon since I commensed writing this letter and the tobacco is first rate guess that I will get you to pick or select for me after this and the things are all nice and I thank you for them seems as though the ~~cheese~~ Chees tastes like Mifs Edgertons and of course that is good our supper tasted a little like home when I opened the sack some how I thought of home and my wife the things were all fixed and pack ed nice I am sorry that your health is so poor thought that you would be healthy and flesh up seeing you sleep alone

Cur Regiment was mustered in for two months more pay last Sat ursday which makes four months pay our due now and may well I think that we will get some pay soon how does P W Hubbard get along and all the rest of the folks how do the (?) prosper and a how did Georg enjoy the priveleg of being at home to meeting and how do you think he enjoyed the priveleg of being with his family

I dont know as I have much news to write to you this time some day when I hant been on picket duty I will try and write a longer letter Alvshad a letter from peters folks to day he says they are all well I have not seen the letter have you got them logs to swans sawed yet do you hear any thing about that Aunt Peas hat I guess you had better take some wheat brand and burdock and other things that are good for the ~~blood~~ blood and boil them up and make

BM # 38

a biar(?) and drink it for some time and I think that it would be good for you will you do it and may be that there is another thing that would be good for you that you probably cant get before spring and may be you cant find it then try the bier or surrip first

I have been thinking about the furlough matter and have been trying to figure up so as to make it pay in order to do this I would have to say five dollars a night for lodging which would fifteen or twenty dollars for lodging this would bring lodging rather high but then and another thing you say that you are verry sore and this would be a difficulty and there would have to be ten or fifteen dollars now to account for in some other way so I dont think that I could hardly make it pay unless that I would get a furlough for twenty or thirty days then I would like to come wouldnt you like to have me nothing new in camp we are here yet and rations aplenty I guess that I will send you a little dried vegetables that we have for soup and you may put it in a cup or basin and put in some water and a verry little pork or beef and a little rice if you have it let it boil considerable and see how you like it I cant send you but a little and if I was there to cook it for you I think you would like it I make soup out of it please excuse me or rather my writing<sup>for</sup> this time

B Merrill

to Ruba

Virginia March 7 63 Private

Wife I have a desire to write to you a little to day seeing that I am situated in such a fix that this is all that I can do for you I am a little short for tember or in other words short for news all is quiet on the Potomac

George got into camp thursday in the four knoon I think that it made him look just fresh to go home and sleep with his wife he brought my boots they are a good pare and fit well

Ruba I feel rather keen to day and I gues I will have to give a little of from this kind of a peace I think that you would hardly know me if you should see me now my face is plumping up my joints are getting limber my hands are getting smooth and while inside inside I think if I had a little of your hare die to give my hare and whiskers a little brush that I would answer as as good a turn for any kind of business as I would twenty four years ago and I think that I could do some things better there seems to be quite a stir or considerable conversation with regard to men that came into the army on the last call and there is talk that they will be considered nine months men do you get any such news I dont know whether you ~~what~~ what we hear about this matter in camp rumor or whether there is some thing to it time determines nine months matters you know it seems as though it was not rite for me to spend so much time doing nothing nothing and you have so much to do and ~~look~~ look after and I have wished that I was near enough so that I could come and do your chores a part of the time it might make it easier for you but I am so far of you you will have to do the best you can and when you cant get along any longer call (?) Roberts you wanted I should write our position in the army well we are in the eleventh army Corps second Divisio first brigade of the potomac army 154 RGT. Ny. S.V this I believe is correct you wanted to know why alva and I did not live together I know of no reason further ~~tha~~ tha boys like to be together and old steady men I had Shelmadine arrested yesterday for making what I beleaved was a false statement and thetrial went of closed about dark last night but I faled to get my point on account that my complaint was not dated and he was released by the court with a charge to be verry careful what he said after this I think that I will give you the false statement that he made in a slip it is a general time of health in our Regiment and wehave a verry good camp ground probably about half way between Washington and Richmond what will be our next move is more tha I can tell my health is good I asked george how looked around slabcity(?) if it looked natural he said it did I asked him if you looked fleshy he said he thought about as when I saw you I thought perhaps you had fleshed up considerable by this time he says the cattle and colts looks well my ink is poor and paper dirty it is paper that I have had some time but it is about gone I notised in your little book paid Henry Darbee fifty cents that husbad owed him I payed Chester that det a part when I settled my note that he had and the balance was made some way in work it was talked over and settled between Chester and myself did he ask you for the money you may do as you think best about speaking to him about it it is but a small matter I understand that neighbour John Rice has move away how do you get along with out him I wish that I had some news to send but the male goes soon and I will close

B Merrill

Virginia March 8 63 sunday

Ruba I will try and write a few lines but short for news I am ~~getting~~ getting quite tired of not having much to do some days I have the blues a little and I know that this wont do and I get out of this trane of feeling and some days I feel lively and buoyant and some tim my mind is clear an sound and some times I think what a fool I was for coming down here some times I feel tried and perplexed so you can see that I have ups and downs and I think that I am in theright positio to pass through these senes but along with all ~~this~~ this I find some sunny spots and have done ever since I have been this side of the Potomac I have seen some as happy seasons since I have been here as I ever experienced and probably some as sore trials as ever I passed through with in my life some times it has seemed as though God has forgotan to hear prayor and turned a deaf ear to our calls when I let my eye glance around and see what has been done I some times wonder why it is that God suffers things to go on in this way and when I look on the other side of the leaf and see the wickedness that is practised in high places I make up my mind that we as a nation ned punishment but there is one thing that I can hardly solve and that is why is it that so many noble men are suffered to fall and others away from home in camp and wethering the storms of such a life all for the wickedness of others I dont wish you to understand me that I am embracine sceptical views with regard to duty I was only saying that I was not able to solve this question may be you can help me on this point, i want to be understood that I still hold on to the prom- ises of God and another thing I want to say to you I think that I am learning lessons here that will be of use to me after I get home and I try and glean when and where I can get knowledge it is a good place to study human nature I see some men that are men in mind and body and a great many that are ~~men~~ only men in body and a well developt mind looks better to me than it ever did before and some that are plased over us their minds are verry small but their bodies are verry large ~~espicially~~ espitially in their own conseibt all such passing events I observe and try and gather useful knowledge from the same and the principal of selfishness is verry fully developt here and this is one of the meanest trates of all for a man to be gladed over with selfishness I like to see a man that is a man in mind and a man in acts probable I might say the same with regard to the other sex I feel as though I would like to say a word with regard to horace Howlett I have probably seen him evry day since we have been down here and he has proved to be a man throughout he is a man that I respect and love he is a whole harted man and his ~~reputation~~ reputation is good here and I think that I can say the same of George Newcomb but to return to what I was speaking about a little while ago I still feel that this trouble that we as a nation are involved in will be overruled for our good and the ~~dark~~ clouds will disperse and god will show a smiling face I hope that we as a nation will be cleansed and be left to stand on the broad bases of the government unimpaired as it was only rid of wickedness Ruba I want to give you a text and I would like to have you explane it to me and if you can do it get Brothe Leon to help you. the text is. why is it that the inosent suffer with the guilty in this war the getters up of this (?) are the leading men and get big pay and a great many of the souldiers have come with a good motive but have been deceived to a great extent I expect that this will come all wright but why was this suffered to be I cant write all that I could talk if I could see you I have endeav- erd to give you all the information that I could but things come and

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my [REDACTED] observation that would be too lengthy to write about when I get home we will talk I don't want you to let any one know that I send mothers and (?) letter tell miss howlett what I wrote about Horace B M. please write

Virginia March 14 63

Ruba I have not received a letter from you since George came and I thought that it would be no more than right for me to write you a little this morning we still stay in the same camp we dont do much but picket and guard duty and we have plenty to eat and a comfortable bed and a comfortable tent and a good fire place and it dont smoke and there is a few things that I dont have that would be verry agreeable to have Alva had a letter from you a couple of days ago there was a couple of sentaces in that I thought you must have used some head work about in order to give your opinion about or in other words advise one was to caution Alva about using money this was done midling nice the other was your advising me not to come home this was done extremely nice there must have been a large share of caution used about this in order to get the thing out and leave a verry smooth face to it why did not you just come right up to the rack and say Alva I dont Pa to come home I dont know as I can come any way but if I should happen to come I might call and see the rest of my friends and return I dont happen to want quite so much courting I am ready now to say that I would like to see you and the children and some of the rest around there my health still remains good Alvas health is good but he has had another bile on his knee lately but it is about well now I shall send you a two dollar bill in this letter for you to use as you may think best I have a good Dress coat that I had given me when we were at Dumfries so you see that I am provided for a coat and have been about ever since I sent that home I ware the ones I have evry day we are getting rather cold weather here now but no snow I shall look for a letter from you when our male comes in to night I would like to have you let me know particular how your health is and particular how you are getting along we have to keep our guns in good order ready for use any moment that rule works well all ways take care of your health and be ready for use at any moment dont infer from what I have rote that I am coming sure I shall be just as likely notto come as I shall to come so dont make up youre any other way only not to be disappointed at any rate I have been in the army long enough to learn to take things as they come along and not be disappointed and not make a calculation one bit a hed B Merrill pleas write often the male will go soon we dont get that box yet I am sorry that I did not have you send me more tobacco that you sent is good the best that I have had since I have been down here and the tea is good I think that that last box will come safe my boots fit well and they are a good pare I feel a little dull and thick heded this morning and time is short and pleas accept a short letter plas look the underside of the bill and find a kiss sent from your husband so I will say good by for now

B Merrill to his wife R C M



privet to wife

Virginia March 17 63

Mrs Merrill I set down to write you a few lines I am about out of timber but I will try and glean a little I received a letter from you Sunday evening and I am always glad to hear from home sometimes I think perhaps you might write a little oftener but I know that you are generally behind a little so I make some allowance my health still remains good I am as tough as a pig and am getting quite fleshy I used to think perhaps if you did not have a man to bother you perhaps your health would be better but I dont see as that makes much differents with you it seems as though you might flesh up this winter you have nothing to do nights only to go to bed and go to sleep no one to bother you or keep you awake but be some means your health is poor I have hardly seen the inside of a house since I have been down here sometimes I have had a tent and sometimes only the heavens for a covering I hant seen a sick day yet and I can endure like a horse hard tacks and coffee are healthy for me I find that I yet have a constitution like a horse what do you think now about my having to much meet when I was to home well I feel thankful that my health is good Alva is getting to be a great stout fellow and he weighs more than I do I rather guess that I could not handle him now I think that there is considerable Cole about by some means I hardly know how it happend can you tell anything about it his hare is a little curly and he is getting heavy boned he is troubled some with biles he had one a short time ago on his knee but it is well now I would like to see my nice little delicate wife about now verry well but I must wate and I hope your health will be good when I come you know that I shall expect you to be quite willing and able to do about all the work for a while because my hands are getting quite tender the callouses are about all gone on the inside and they dont look as though I do much work about coming home I am afrade that I cant get a chance to come but it will depend on the movements of the army if we should stay about here I think that I shall come some time in April but if we should leave probable that I cant come there is two or three that will go before I can come supposing the thing runs as it now does I cant tell any a hed what I can do we are not our own men now so dont be disappointed any way we may lay here some time yet and we may leave soon we are just as likely to go as stay and stay as go so dont worey nor fret take all quiet and I think all will come rite in the end Ruba that Chees box found its way to our camp yesterday all safe it came a little sooner than I expected we are glad to get the things nothing ingured at all Shelmadine had quite a share in a large box come a few days ago and now we ~~live~~ live on the top shelf he had a can of nice straned huneey and we get some soft or light wheat bred now so you see we have a fat living now our rations now are more than we can use we have now plenty of rations to last a week on hand we hant but one thing to hinder us from having things about as we want it just now what do you think that is gues and let me know in your next well on the whole I feel a little keen plenty of hare on my face well I am all right and clean as a penny no lice no sores a great many

are thinking now that the 154th are nine months men do you think or hear any such news we have a great many reports and I cant tell much by what we hear but one thing I think that things are moving more favourable than they were two months ago our folks are having pretty good succes about Vixburg now one of our brigade their time is out in about two months and there is quite a good many in the same fix it seems as though the army must be strenghtend when they leave if the thing continues to be carried on I have quite a good many anxieties about the matter but I try and keep as cool as possible but I heat up some times about it and wish the whole matter was back to the father of it I long to see this nation rid of this trouble and the men go home to their families but if my health will admit of it I expect to stay and help pick the bone if it is to be done and if not I would like to go home I think that I could not do justice to my own feelings to grunt around a while and leave my regiment here and go home with a discharge nor I could not do justice to the town to which I belong I expect to do as I agree and I shall expect the town to do by me as they agreed but I hope that there will a way open that will releas me and all the rest of us I came with the regiment and I want to go with the regiment I love my country now just as well as ever and I was just thinking what a warm attachment some seemed to have for their country and how soon they manage to get out and back and leave the rest here to hang to my spunk is good yet it makes me disgusted to see men sing another tune so quick I was thinking about hearing a certain man say farewell sunday school scholars fairwell Brothers fairwell sisters fairwell all pleas keep Shady and privet about this letter I think that I am making some advance- men in the study of human nature as we call it kuba I feel that I hant done a thing that I am ashand of since I have been down here and I intend to conduct my self s that when I get home that I can hold up my hed and I expect to come some time I dont make any other calculation it seems as though the lord has been with me but I have my sotal feelings as usual and I would like to see the folks to dayton and probable I might feel like having a pretty lively visit I suppose you dont wonder at that I dont remember as I have seen a ~~day~~ day since I have been here that I have had the blues shit on right hard some days I have been a little inclined that way but I break up the fit with a large dost of partisipating the enjoyment of home again some day and so I keep along and the harder the fit the larger the dose and it works verry well well I try and keep the best foot forward and above all I keep on a cheerly countinace a little more about that box I should not have written to have a box sent if I had not thought the prospect ~~was~~ fare to get it I noticed that some of the regiment were receiving boxes a most evry day after we lay in camp a short time but when we were on a march or like to march soon the boxes were kept back I only feard that we might have to leave before we would have time to get it it is here and it has come quick

Tuesday evening after roll call

Ruba I have a nice time to write a little to you this evening I am keeping house for Alva and Horace Horace is out on Picket and Alva is on guard so you see that I am a lone I sit on the fore side of their bed by their coosy little fire with a little strip of hard tack bord on my knee and my writing on that so I am all a lone and I will write you a little letter to go with the other and I suppose you will read it a lone and I have tried a kind of widower life for five months and over so you see that I can do it but I begin to think considerable about wife and I would not grudge a V if you could spend the night with me to night the bed is just large enough for two to sleep on or rather lay but I am able to govern myself yet I feel as though I would like just to put my arm around you and give you a good hug and a sweet kis I remember the first kis that I ever put on your cheek and I think back and can think of many pleasant seasons that we ~~have~~ have had together and I see some things that I wish had not happened but I let this all pass my affection for you is probably as strong as it ought to be for I have had a trial of this during the past five or six months I can see just how you look and when you write pleas inform me if you have any different feelings to night from usual some how a great many scenes that have transpired with us in former years ~~come~~ come up before me this evening I can think ~~back~~ back twenty six years to the time when you and I stood out by the end of the rane troth to the back dore to your fathers house and had a talk and so along down and I can think of anost any circumstance that has happend that is of any account up even to your setting by the front window and I can think how you used to look when your name was Cole and you used to have your hare cut off and a black ribbon hedband around your hed and that white cape about your neck and I can remember how other things ~~look~~ look that you have got and on the whole all is wright well the officer of the day has come along and says that candle must be blowed out so I write some by fire light probable I could drop a number of thoughts here but I dont know as it would interest you to read it Prvate Harvy Inman is knowwn here now about as well as he was to home and his repitation about the same he hashad two fights and got handled both times Calvin ~~the~~ the man that I used to think he was he is verry selfish and over baring Shelmadine is a good whole harted fellow so is Vanderburg. Calvin dont have any thing sent from home but he likes to eat what others get and another thing his fingers are a little ~~big~~ t\_y he is inclined to snoos round say nothing about this I am getting tired and sleepy and I must close sometimes I dont hear from you as often as I could wish I shall look for that little letter from you get it up nice my love to the children

Merrill

Virginia March 20

Ruba to day is a snowey day nothing going on and I hardly know how to be idle an I thought that I would write a few lines to you but I am most ashamed to write any more until I hear from you there is a quite a number a hed of this that I have had no answer from I suppose to morrow at eleven oclock I will have to go out on a three day picket tower and I may not have a chance to write a gain until I come in this is a new move for us three days at a time the rebels made an effort to cross the Rappihannac the other day and quite a scurmish insued but they were driven back the canons rattled pretty lively for a while it was not many miles from us but our brigade was not called on the report is that quite a number of prisoners wer taken the health of our regimen is good now and there seems to be a better ~~we~~ feeling in the army than there was right after the Fredburgh battle some how that was a great damper on the army but for a while back there seems to be a different feeling and not so much falt finding among the souldiers but how the thing will work when we commence to move is more than I can tell or what will be the policy to work upon is more than I can tell judging from appearance it looks as though our troops were intending to take the defensive about here and work south and southwest from the fact that there has been a great many men sent from this direction south this winter and our Corps are gathered together here as near as may be and they have been scattered some and the Corps that Wilbur belongs to lays next to us towards Fredricksburgh but it ant much use for me to try to plan or calculate a hed all the guide I have is to watch the moves but I do think in a few weeks we will know more about what the move will be the reports here are that the rebels are seeing verry short times for something to eat now we are laying not far from the lines and there may be such a thing as an attack I guess they are getting considerably cornerd up about now the Rebel Cavalry made a rade on fairfax a short time ago and captured a number of our horses and away a ~~gain~~ gain this is the report here there has been a number of times since I have been here that the Canons have rattled pretty briskly but our brigade have escaped so far the rest of our brigade are some old regiments that have been out ever since about the commencement of the war and they are small now and ours was never full and probably about five hundred is all that we could muster now amost all the Captains that came out first are resigning and going home and some lutenants you know I think that the potococ army is not near as strong now as it was last fall and qute a number of regiments time arebut this spring there is a report that we are nine months men but I guess that it will take us three years to get out of our scrape I have heard of women getting out of scrapes in nine months but the men are not so smart I guess it will take the men about three years may be not cant tell yet we are growing large well I guess that I will write a little about old Virginia the improvements here looks verry much like the reservation improvement and some such timber oak pine hickory some cedar and such like the fences are about all burnt up and a great share of the buildings are gone once in a while one left and occasionally a family such ~~such~~ familys are seeing tough times for something to eat some have their slaves around them but I have hardly seen one that is full blooded some are nearly white I was out on picket a while ago and the picket line up near by where a family lived and he had some slaves and a house not far from his where they lived and the men on that post near

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his house had leaf to go into that house where the slaves stayed to make their coffee and I was among them so I went in and made coffee with the rest and see how things looked inside they had a large old fashioned fire place something like the one in the perry house and about as good a building as that it looked quite clean there was two youngish mulattoes men there and two mulattoe women and about a half a dozen little fellows one of the women was nearly white more so than the other and her ~~hair~~ hair comed strate and if she was up to dayton and dressed up nice and no one knew where she came from she would pass quite well for white and she was good looking I concluded that them little fellows belonged to them two women when we are on picket we can see a few of this stripe or class of folks generally their masters live in a house near by some have quite good houses and some not so good sometimes there is a stoop goes from one into the other but there ant but a few left and what are left their houses are guarded and I find that it is for the purpose not to get news into the rebel army as far as I have seen one man stationed to a house and he is called a safe-guard our picket lines are thrown out about two miles around camp some of the way through clearing and some way through woods there is considerable of the woods that have been old plantations and have grown up to small pines large enough for a fence pole and some hickory and some oak second groth stuff and the groun is smooth Uncle Sam has got a bakery started a short distance from our camp and the way they make light bred there is a caution we get soft bred now part of the time they mix in large vats and a man goes in up to his elbows the doe is weighed and made in pound loves and our bred ration is one lofe a day evening now and the boys are singing about camp this evening and it sounds like camp meeting singing they seem to enjoy themselves well I wish you could look round here and see how things look up on the ~~knol~~ knol above our camp is a batterry of fifteen cannons planted and it takes three span of horses to draw one ~~canon~~ canon they look savage things about here look verry much like was if you could leave home and had the means I would be a mind to have you visit our camp some men have their wives come so see them occasionaly I see a nice ~~yankee~~ yankee woman in camp and that does me some good what do you think about coming you dont think best for me to come home I have tried a widowers life for the past six months and I begin to feel some what uneasy now what is to be done I feel as though something should be done some way for me soon pleas advise me what to do I am detailed for a three day picket tower this morning Dont infer from what I have ~~rote~~ rote that I cant stand it any longer

B Merrill pleas write

Virginia March 24th 63

Ruba I wrote in my last letter that I had got to go out on a three day picket job well I have just got back into camp while I was out Bagero returned to camp he brought me a letter from you I was glad to hear so direct from home and was glad to hear that your health was good now I dont know as I can write much to day for I have had but verry little sleep for three nights back I feel rather thick headed this afterknoon we have more picketing to do now then usual stuards Cavalry have been rading around some (?) back so we have to strengthen our pickets I had to picket long side of the rebs on the Rap R a while but I dont know how near they are now we each have to be on post two hours and six of and that makes quite a number in to a time and we have houres made of pine o cedar boughs a few small pine boughs throwed on the ground our rubber blankets spred a top of them and our wollen blankets over us makes our beds and when we are off from post half have to stay up three hours at a time so you see the chance is small for sleep about three oclock this morning whang went a gun on the picket line and we were all called imediately to our arms supposing that our lines were attack but it proved to be a man saw or thought he saw a reb ordered him to halt buthe did not andhe fired no man could be found some said they had seen a large black dog a number of times about there ~~probable~~ probable this was his reb this makes the third or fourth time that I have been called imediately to my gun and no bones broke yet I am all rite and tough as a pig I expect to sleep sound to night what is to hinder a good brush bed and no one to keep me awake I gave georg one dollar for bringing my boots he left it for me to say he said he had to hire a team in Washington to move his baggage I felt as though I had ought to make him good he said he would pay me some back I felt afrade to have them come in a box such a pare would cost twelve dollars here I think if you could get ten or fifteen cords of wood for 6 s(?) per cord and have it so as to have it season and get good wood perhaps you had better get it I guess it is as well as you can do are you like to have plenty of hay is the red heifer coming in this spring I dont know but you can keep Irvins steers now the cow is sold but I guess if they can be sold so as to have it do you had better sell them some time this spring I think if I can get a furlough I shall be home before it is time to do springs work but this will be uncertain I can tell better as soon as I learn what kind of a move the army makes you had better have the colts have a verry little grane from now out and may be that Irvin can earn a little dragging in the spring with them I dont want you to let them out to work perhaps Resign will sell his drag so that it would do I see no prospect now of my being hone to do spring work I think there is a better aspect (is this a proper word) in the army now than there was two month ago there is more of the men that appear moreloyal and they show less sympathy for the south we have southern sympathisers here some dont feel afrade to advocate the doctrine here I suppose the reason that W B got a furlough was he wanted to see to his bees and another thing he is a officer but it seems to be hard work to get much of a promise of a furlough things may work a little more favourable in this direction and it may not work at all cant tell yet I dont get much news here about the war report says that thepeople are nearly starving in Fred burgh now and that ant verry far from us report also says they are seeing tough times in Richmond all eatables are verry high there I dont hear from Vixburg lately the las news was favourable from there

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Some how you dont seem to keep near up writing I have written 3 or four times since you got the Dried vegetables I have I ~~some~~ dont get much news now days for there dont much of any thing new happen we are here yet when or where we will go I cant tell there is talk that we move soon but I dont know how that is I shal continue to write often as long as I can send if we should have to march there wont be much chance to write until we get settled again I think that the roles wont admit of a move not yet I think that we will get some pay before we leave this camp I understand the paymaster is in this corps now if you should get some thing from the town I would like to have you get yourself a good black silk dress and use all that you get from that sours for your convenience I have had a talk with the Col this after noon about a furlough he tells me that there is talk about arranging the matter so as to grant ~~some~~ thirty days furloughs but it is unsettled yet I shall wate a spell and see how the matter shapes I want to come home if the thing should work so that I could think that it would be best I did calculate to write some more in my last letter but I had not the time I dont get as much time now as I had a while ago I have to do my own washing and do my duty in the regiment and guard duty about camp and my gun to keep in order and all take up time I took my old blous and fared(?) then pants before and behind that I drawed to Jamestown and they are quite good now I done it good but I had a job to fit the sit down pieces I made two pieces for that place was that the rite way I have a new pare of blue pants now that I put on occasionally you told me that I might look for a small letter next time I got it and it was small enough I want one leaf filled filled occasionally with matters that we would not talk about in company I dont know but you think that I write improper or impolite but I write about as I hapen to feel when I am writing what do you think about what D P read in class do you think that the church was glad to hear from me or not did the writing sound proper did D P seem to act as though he would treat the letter rather cool, or did it seem to pleas him to hear from me and all the I felt a little delicate about writing I did not know how it would salt(?) we are getting a verry rainy evening here we have just been to supper we had for supper lite wheat bred and butter sale molasses and coffee I am verry glad that I am in from picket before this rane came on it would be a verry bad night to be out to night it seems as though the men would suffir the rane is cold and falls fast I am sorry to have to call on you for so many things but I have been as prudent as I could but I cant get along here and keep comfortable without using some money and I shall try and take good care of my health I am thankful that my health is so good I am some fleshyer than when you saw me but I dont flesh up like some Calvin is so fat that his eyes ant verry (?) have you got the two dollars I sent you in a letter and I sent two sin cent stamps in an other after my love to the Children how old is Dane pleas let me know from B H Merrill  
to R C Merrill

a little about the weather here  
it is as dry as summer and the  
days are pleasant and the nights  
are cool the roads are quite dusty  
Sunday last was very warm it  
is so dry that the fires run over the  
ground every day I shall be glad when  
things shape so that I can come home  
but I calculate to try will be contented  
until this takes place I think that  
things will alter considerable within  
thirty days by the looks of things now  
I shall write again be fore many  
days I feel tired sitting to my desk  
writing and I guess I will close  
B M

Thursday evening we have news by the  
way of the Baltimore Clipper which  
states that the war is moving very  
favourable some of our Cavalry come  
came to night they say that they  
rode 6 miles beyond the gap to day  
we have never had that gap before  
the army as far as I can learn  
are in good shape to move and  
they are about it I understand  
that Mr Callands design is to drive  
the rebels through this gap if this is so  
they will be likely to get bagged  
my bluntest answers a good turn  
on the whole I dont lach but a few  
things of being very comfortable and  
I feel well we hunt got that box  
yet I spoke to D. H. H. says that we  
will get it I look for that  
small letter in a  
way on

No 11

Virginia Nov 4 1862

Since I wrote to you last wife we  
moved about 20 miles nearly west from  
Fairfax we made the move Sunday and  
Monday I have not yet learned the place  
where we are and how long we shall stay  
I cant stay when we started we came  
direct to Centerville and from there to Bull  
run this stream is nearly as large as the  
Conowago I should think rather deep I did  
not see much there only a lot of forsaken  
wooden rebel barracks we did not  
cross where the most hard fighting  
was done after we crossed we plenty  
of marks of the last fight that took  
place there such as stove up Cannons dead  
horses Cannon balls Shells tops of trees  
Torn off small balls lying on the road  
and graves and I saw some men  
that were not all covered up in short  
it looked rather hard Centerville looks like  
a poor deserted place houses about all  
empty things look as new as to ruin



when arrived here last night we or rather our regiment in company with others killed about ten head of rebel cattle and they made good beef the ground that we are now on was covered or held by rebel pickets yesterday morning but they slept out and we have had no trouble yet the thoroughfare gap is about three miles a head I believe that we are to pass that when we move a gain but we are strong handed I understand the gap is all ready open and secured by our batteries I think from appearance that I have come nearly to my field of labour I cant tell what will take place ahead but I think the rebels will have to scedaddle or fight pretty soon we occupy the place of a reserve regiment I think that the whole army of the potomac are on the advance now I will try and keep you posted as much as I can I want you to write often I cant get and ~~send~~ letters now as quick

as I could when I was to Fairfax so you will have to make allowance for that I have written a number of letters more than I have received all ready but I thought that I would write you a few lines a gain I think that you will write but you know that you dont get along quite as quick as I do as a general thing so I write a little there quite a number of things that I might mention or things that I have seen but I cant mention them all I try to observe and learn what I can and I will write to you as much as I can the health of our regiment is better than it was my health remains good and my appetite is first rate I think that abou grows all the time he is tough now I think that he would like them boots now if he had them to day is Letcher day to day ton I would like to know how it goes

I want you to get some thing of an  
Idea of what I am doing but my space  
and time is small but I have endeavored  
to give you a few outlines generally when  
I get down to write I am liable to be  
called on for something any moment and  
I have no conveniences for writing and  
all the time right in the noise talk laugh  
we drums beating all such noise all the  
time some times I get tired of it and  
but as though I would like a few  
days of quiet life some days I feel  
a little confused when I attempt  
to write but on the whole I get  
along very well Alva has had  
a hard cold for a few days he did  
not go out on review to day he is running  
the camp his cold is working loose  
some I think he will get along in  
a day or two it has been a bad time  
here to take cold, chilly weather  
and some snow yesterday and to  
day the weather has been fine there is  
a great many exposures to bad weather  
connected with soldiering I find  
but I stand it like a horse I have  
turned up a good deal for a month  
back I guess that I look darker now  
than you ever see me I can account  
for it I have been turned out for  
the past six months I have hardly  
seen the inside of a house since I  
have been down here nor the ice with  
a woman I have not yet got down in  
a chair and I have got so that I can't  
lay on a soft bed B Merrill

April 10<sup>th</sup> 63  
Ruba

I would just like to send you a  
picture of what I have seen to day  
but this I can't do but can write a little  
about it  
The eleventh and twelfth army  
corps were reviewed to day by the  
President about one mile from our  
camp and of course your husband made  
one among the many of that number  
you probably will see an account of this  
review in the papers it was a grand thing  
maybe if you can get one of Frank  
Berly's papers the title number you could  
see an engraving or picture of the scene  
I could see a man to work on the other  
hill in front of us but he was so far  
that I could not see what his business  
was if you should see a picture of the  
scene the man that rode a head of the  
gang of horsemen passing amongst the  
troops will represent the President he had  
his hat in his right hand about as high  
as his breast he rode a dark bay horse  
and a very good one

there was four or five women rode  
in this gang dressed in long black  
riding dresses and black hats some  
like Nancys do you think that you  
could manage a horse in such a spot  
they done it nice if you could get a  
picture of the thing you would get a  
nice picture A few words about the  
Pendant his portrait dont do him  
justice he is a marler looking man  
than that represents he has a very good  
shaped forehead and an intellectual look  
ing man but he looks care worn and  
faded his hair is a dark gray he is tall  
and slim built the next to him is general  
hooker he is a man about the same age  
and smart looking next is General Howard  
his right arm is off about to the elbow  
he lost his arm in some of the battles he  
looks like a smart man he commands  
our Corps now in place of Sigle and  
there were lots of other big men present  
our Corps was reviewed by Howard on  
the same ground yesterday when you see  
this in print probably you will get a better  
idea than I can give you this may help some

a little about the soldiers  
I dont know how many was pres-  
ent but I would think that they occup-  
ied a piece of ground as large as  
Blodgetts clearing on the south side  
of the road supposing fences and  
buildings were all out of the way  
and I guess this is to small a pattern  
the soldiers were well clothed and  
in good condition and they made a  
fine appearance and when they marched  
in review the scene was sublime and  
in order and it takes men that are drill  
ed to do this they marched in double  
columns at half distance when they passed  
the pendant and the rest of the big men  
probably you dont understand what the  
command double column at half distance  
means I dont room to explain  
there was very nice music to march  
by and the men marched nice our Regiment  
knows more now than when they left Jamieson  
but the old Regiments that have been out over  
since the war broke out puts us into the  
shades yet there old regiments can flank  
right or left and do it as nice as a pin  
well dont no use for me to undertake  
to write much about these scenes but  
I would like to give you a few out lines  
and save the rest until I get home  
then we will talk about it  
you probably you will see this in the  
papers I have tried to give you what informa-  
tion I could from time to time are you pleased  
with a little of this kind on a small scale

privat to miss

I have reserved the last page for a little just  
 there was a strange phenomenon seen here this  
 morning something that hasn't been seen in a  
 long time before and what do you think it  
 was I guess that I will tell you  
 well a gentleman and lady rode by our camp  
 on horse back and the ladys white skirts  
 showed considerable and it waked up the  
 boys considerable I assure you clean nice looking  
 ladys look good down here now it is what we  
 dont often see but such things dont affect me  
 me much you know but I want to see my nice  
 little handsome delicate wife quite bad I assure you  
 you are so handsome and that ant all I want  
 but among the rest I have to learn the art  
 of self denial which by the by is a very good  
 lesson to learn but I guess that I will stand  
 it a while longer

I will tell you who we have for our second  
 lieutenant now his name is breedsley he  
 married Martha Towns husbands sister  
 for his wife he is a very good man he says  
 he will figure for me a burrough when the  
 thing comes round again we have no captain  
 yet Chapman the first lieutenant manages  
 I think we will have one be before long I guess  
 that it wont be Chapman I think a man from  
 another company well I guess that I have wite  
 about as much as you will care to read may be  
 you cant read it I shant try and I will  
 just say that I would just like to take  
 lodging under the left wing of my hen  
 rite and left wing is a common fringe used  
 here I may get hard up by and by unless I shoud  
 ld just see my brow this last page you  
 may consider a kind of masonic letter please  
 give my love to the children and save a very  
 large share for your self I want a leaf of  
 the same style from you I would like to  
 read a little of the lively occasionally  
 so good by for the present

I think a little about letters miss next  
 from B Merrill to his wife Dr C Merrill

Virginia March 29<sup>th</sup> 63 Sunday  
 Wife

I will use a little time to day in penning  
 a very few lines to you please excuse my post  
 negligence in writing I have received a letter from  
 you last night and I had a very few lines in his  
 letter all the best news was he said I was disappointed  
 about my farrow heifer I am sorry she come in so early  
 I want you to calculate 20 as its have one new milk  
 cow not wonder if that cant all ready been attended to  
 it should have been done before now perhaps you have  
 attended to that matter I dont see any chance for one  
 to come horse burroughs are not granted now and probab  
 le it is best for me not to come it might be that I would  
 have a box of hard tacks if I was to come  
 The talk has been that we were to march but we have had no  
 marching orders yet I rather think that there was some  
 trouble anticipated along the Massachusetts but I think there  
 is not much danger just now from that source I think that  
 the rebels are not very numerous there now and when or  
 where we go I cant tell I would be glad to come home on  
 a burrough but I dont think that it would be my duty to  
 come for good until my regiment comes if my health remains  
 as good as it now is according to the best information that  
 I can get the hard fighting is about done in Virginia I saw in the  
 girlsburg paper the Tribune that there was talk that the rebels  
 were thinking about evacuating Richmond it is a curious  
 report that they are in a very indistate condition for both  
 their now and the prospect as their supplies are like to be  
 cut off below I think that it wont be very long before we will  
 know where our part is to be assigned some think that our  
 brigade will fall back and some that we back like the  
 front we have been along the lines ever since left Sharps  
 the last time but how this will be I cant tell I dont know as  
 I have much choice about the matter further than I would  
 like to be where I can do the most good I came with expectation  
 to hit and not for promotion nor profit so far as dollars  
 was concerned I came with the expectation to take a gun and  
 bayonet I have them and by the by I have learned to  
 handle them and they are a very good kind of weapon  
 and I have one other weapon with both together I expect to  
 stand by and help kick this bone of contention I have no fears  
 further than our leaders they may be not of the old  
 stripe but I leave that to the disposal of events  
 there was a shell after the battle at Sharps that things looked  
 dark here I assure you but matters looks more favourable  
 here now for a while the army seemed discouraged but this  
 has disappeared greatly and the army seem in better spirits  
 now and I hope as soon as the reds settle things will  
 move our rumors are sufficient here and we get nice little  
 wheat bread nearly half of the time and the army are  
 generally in good health Howard Howlet had the kick  
 out his foot back the other day he got stuck a hole over  
 his head and glanced and struck his foot on the log a little  
 below the instep and made a bad gash I think he wont  
 be able to do duty in the army very soon  
 Hoff is getting some better but he is at the Hospital yet  
 he is so that he is round some there has been no funeral  
 in our company here yet and I believe that none are  
 much sick now some a little however my health still  
 remains good I am about fleshy enough for my own  
 good not as fleshy as Tom but I look as well as  
 you could expect with out oats

you do your writing so that I commonly hear from  
you Saturday nights this is all good so far but I would  
be glad to have a letter Tuesday or Wednesday evening  
is as a general thing sometimes I get to feeling a little  
down in the mouth and then it does me good to hear  
from home I think that it wont be very extravagant  
to from home twice in a week I may be rejoiced so  
that I cant have this privilege I cant tell though I dont  
feel to complain much I have risen two or three times  
you had not got when you wrote I stated that we had  
got the box we got it in two weeks after it was  
started all safe the things come good I am sorry that  
I did not have you send me some more tobacco I did  
not think of it when we wrote for the box the government  
dont furnish tobacco yet I guess that you had better  
write to Mr. Barber and tell him that you will want  
to let have that money when we send home pay again  
which probably will be before long then he can look and  
find a place to use it I think this would be as well unless  
there is some thing that I dont think of Mr. Alvis and  
mine together and keep account of his and yours you  
may not as you please may be get you a good black silk  
dress with regard to Firms perhaps Roberts would like  
it and give a note on interest but I cant tell as well  
about these things as though I was there do as you think  
best I ask nothing for my advice in the matter  
I see no other way as yet only to calculate on a summer  
campaign but dont know what may happen I hope  
the time not far distant when this war will be brought  
to an honorable close I have no particular anxiety to stay  
in Virginia very long after this thing is brought about  
I shall try hard to get a furlough to come home before  
it is time to do things worth and help calculate  
what to have done it will be necessary to raise something  
for you to eat but if I find out that I cant I will  
help you what I can by writing about matters so we  
will write a little and hope for the best  
try and have the term so that they will be able to  
work some but not feel heavy it may be that fortune  
will so favour it that I can be home on furlough so  
as to do some work in the spring there is some  
talk about thirty days furloughs but I cant tell  
yet we have had a little quite warm weather  
here within a few days but the most of the time  
it is chilly and considerable rain I have heard the  
frogs reap a few times the first time I heard them  
was the other night when I was on guard have  
I got this kind of write to do the most of the time  
for a year they this as a sign the are to day seems  
as though there might be snow north cold and  
chilly but the sun shines and no snow here  
we have not had as good weather here this month  
as I thought we would get.

I guess that I will tell you what the engrenings  
are that are hung up on the walls of our house they  
are four guns four cylinders boxes four bayonets four  
haversacks and four canteens which ornament the  
walls our bed for we have but one) is made of clear  
bush and none of the rust of a bedstead put up  
cross fashion and four knapsacks for pillows  
our blankets for sheets and our red bedding this is  
about the way that we do up things down here and  
we draw our rations duly duly rations are good  
for soul and body and we want them fresh every day  
dont we well on the whole I might be a great deal worse  
of them I am the most of the time I feel a good degree  
of composure of mind some times I feel a little uneasy  
but I dispense with this kind of feeling as soon as  
may be this stimulant comforting and fastidious I desire  
I dont mean any of this for you I mean to be understood  
that I have run a great deal of this life here in the  
army more than I have run of late a contented  
mind is a contented heart I think should I get home  
again that I could mend on these points considerably  
I will I glean a little knowledge as circumstances permit  
The most of the time my head is as clear as a bell sometimes  
a little muddled but my eyesight is falling considerably  
I can see very well by daylight but candle light or  
light I am lothred to see my constipation is good I feel  
a little shortness for breath some times but I say this to  
not having proper exercise sometimes I exercise hard work  
at other times not much to do very uneven but I  
dont see as this can be avoided and I think that it is  
bad for me to be out rides on foot guard or patrol  
this has to be done my face is fuller than when you  
see me my arms and legs are some larger and rotund now  
than then and I am about as large as ever my face is pretty  
well covered with hair I am sure a good heavy set of  
whiskers and I look rather clean and tidy allowing me  
to be gudy I dont know as I can give a better description  
of my self unless I should send my picture this would  
cost a dollar that a plate here I have sent you two papers  
have you got them I sent you a Baltimore daily to let  
you see the difference between that and the New York  
daily I sent one a short time ago I buy occasionally a  
daily paper the daily Tribune comes here now  
tell the children that I will try and write to them  
again as soon as I can I write considerable but I  
have not rote to all that I agreed to there is talk  
here that revolutionaries can send letters free I wish  
you would find out about that and let me know  
I would be very glad to see the folks to Dayton  
and make a few visits may be that I would be a  
very little more well I have been rather swooped  
up the past six months

March the 29.

This date you will perceive  
as my birth day I suppose if I was  
out now I would be clear from  
a draft the same as you are  
but I am laded for a longer  
I scrape than you ever have been  
accept one and we are even about  
that that runs for the length of  
life I might drop a few thoughts  
on this case for life but I  
have written until I feel tired  
I mean the matrimonial vow  
Some day I think that I will  
give you a few thoughts on this  
point and drop a few thoughts  
on the past twenty six or eight  
years that have past I think that  
I can glean some sunny spots yes  
a good many sunny and occasionally  
a thunder storm but you know  
they soon pass and the sky  
sums more clear than before  
would you like to have me see  
what I can get out of this or  
shall I let it pass I dont know  
as it does any harm to review the  
past although the past cant be recalled  
sometimes have an occasional serious thought  
but probable you would hardly think  
so judging from the way that I write but  
the wild oats arent all sowed yet no  
probably wont be for some  
time I like a little fun

deliver me from gloom and a long  
fall sometimes I have a thought  
that it is possible that I shall  
never see home again but I leave  
this all with the disposer of events  
I am here on the lines and have been  
since I left barfost the last time but I  
expect to come I dont know as it is very  
to give room for a thought of this kind  
I dont worry about this I expect to come  
come home and spend my declining  
years with my wife give me your  
pleas that this may be my lot proba-  
ble I think as much of home as any  
man ought to but my duty calls me  
here yet and I expect to do my duty &  
like a man and I am glad that my heart  
is good I am as likely to fall here as others  
have been but I think that I am acquain-  
ted with the human custom enough to  
not abuse my health unnecessarily  
it is my intention now to come home  
some time this spring but I may slip  
up on it I cant come yet and I shall  
rather come later in the spring that is  
I think it would be best to wait a little  
dont look for me at all so if I should  
succeed to come you would be disappointed  
the old way

I want you to send me a half pound  
of good pinecut tobacco by mule Mr  
Mason had a pound bought to night  
by mule and the postage was fifteen cts  
the government dont burnish tobacco  
and I cant get good tobacco here any way  
and I think that I had not better stop using  
it here try a half pound of good tobacco by  
mule and do it in a snug and tight press it  
to gather tight and get it in a small bunch  
and direct it alone and send it as soon as  
you get this if it works I shall get my of o  
from home after this that was good you  
sent before but there is a kind that is better  
but that kind will do be careful and get  
good for it is a good way to send  
pleas take this for an answer to that leaf in H's

B M private to R c N Va April 2 63

Ruba I received your letter of the 26 last night was glad to hear from home I dont think of much news this morning yesterday morning we had orders to pack up and be redy to fall in at a moments call but we are here yet and probably shall be until the rodes and weather is better we are rather cold wether now and occasionally a little snow when we do move I think that our move will be south whether we cross the R here to F or not I cant tell but I think that the move will be similar to the last one in the winter was conserved unles ~~providentially~~ ~~hindred~~ but I dont know I only judg from appearances I think that our field of labour this spring will be betwean here and Richm some think that our brigade will move toward Was but I think that we have more to do first I have my douts whether I can come home this spring but cant tell yet it looks as thoug they would hardly consent to let or give furloughs for a spell at any rate the health of the army is good now and they seem in good spirits and I think if we have good leaders we will succed I think that light begins to dawn and I for one would like to have matters close up as fast as possible

Ruba I have not laid up any thing that has happend and I hope you wont I am sorry that we have ever had an unkind word and there has been no nead of any such thing but the past is gone and cant be recalled it may be so ordered that we shall never meet again on earth but I expect to meet you on the other shore I expect should providance favour to come home I dont feel any depression of spirits and I think that all will come rite I look for this and expect it and I feel as thoug it was my duty to help I hope you will keep up good courage I noticed one statement in your last letter that I think was not correct and I will take this opportunity to correct it you stated you thoug if I was at home the night you rote we would have a good sleep I dont that we would have slept at all we would want to visit &c

Ruba I have sent my over coat and dres coat in a trunk directed to Rice to the sumit and you will want to see about them and pay your share of the frate if they come I dont want them here any longer I put in one hard tack they are in that bag you sent me marked with red chalk I would have been glad to have sent a few other close that I shant want this summer but I could not get them in the box I left one nice little article when I came that I want but I dont see how I can have it unles you should come and bring it to me but I suppose that ant convenient for you to leave hole so I will have to do with out it I spose well self denial is quite a lesson to learn I think when we pull up here Shelmadine and I will tent alone I think that it wont be healthy for to many to tent together in warm weather Mr Howlett rote to me that Sinica would pay so he could the rest that is going to him I have no objections to that move provided he will attend to it and see that we have no trouble from Rice with regard to that peace disputed Land I shall want him to give you his word to that affect then you may have the thing closed up if this is done you will need to get some one to figure up both conserns and have all rite may be James Rich we want the privileg of enjoying the land peaceably and then we are willing to pay just as we agreed ~~or~~ or in other words all we agreed to pay I think this is reasonable



BM # 46

my doctrin is to do by others just as I agree and then I want others to do by me as they agree and this is rite and this rule will rong no one I ~~was~~ agreed to come down south and help put down the rebellion on certain conditions and consequently I have come and if my health and life is ~~not~~ spared I calculate to do just as I agreed and not play sick I intend to help pick the bone and I want the friends at home to do by just as they agreed and then all will be rite this is all a word to the wise is suffissient you may read this last sentence to W. H. when it is handy for you to do so I would like to hear or have you rite a little more about the neighbours and some of them in particular you know I cant write to all that I would like to hear from or at least you said I better not and I have taken your advise so you must rite a little more particular if you pleas and I would have no objections to having some drop in a letter occasionally in your envelop would you this might be done and do no harm I think provided the thing was kept a little shady do as you think best about it this is confidential writing I have been down here some time and it is a satisfaction to me to have my friends write to me but you see that this is a ~~difficult~~ difficult matter some times or in some cases any thing that you send me I can read and then burn if I think best so after this you can ~~write~~ rite any thing you pleas only make two letters in one and then I can manage it and Alva can read your letters to which he likes to do I can take care of theinside one he knows all the let - ters that come our company is together when the male is distributed I open mine and he his so rite as you would like or any thing you pleas only put it up rite I like some delicate news in evry letter I want all thenews on all subjects and a variety when we lay in camp week after week as we have there dont seem to be much news to write about so I rite just as I happen to feel and I dont expect that anyone will read my letters but your self when any thing appens to give a foundation for a letter I will w rite on such occasions in such a maner that you may well read them to other folks if you like I suppose that a man and wife have a rite to write or talk a little on nice points if they choose dont you you see that I have had a widowers life for the past six months and it would be a matter of course that I would begin to think a little about the finer sect but I have got along better than I expected on this point but I have an occasiona thought in that direction I dont hardly know how it happens about papers I beleave that I have had two advocates from you and some in boxes you have sent is all lately I have sent you two in the last was bradys speach my boots appear to be good ones they fit and sit easy on my feet I like a good fit you know I think that we never enjoyed the privileges that we enjoyed as we should when I was about home and the children to school I could come in and get some watter and a little lunch and have a nice time with you now I am pleasd where I think about these things but I suppose you are to old to have fine feelings or do you have an occasional flit in that direction may be so may be I could help you a little in that direction mother says that I ant weaned yet well I am about the same old coon pleas excuse the abuse received by me that night you went and set by the window I am verry sorry you did so pleas forgive

Virginia April 2, 63

Nancy Pa thought he would rite a few lines to you I received a letter ffrom you a whill a go and it should have been answed before this time pleas pardon me and I will try and do better next tim I thought your letter was a verry good composition and vary correctly spelt try and learn to right as fast as you can and learn to spel correct and you may hav the privalage of critasising thisere lines just so much as you like and correkt me in your next letter to me I have bin riting to ma and fell some tiord and it may be I shal spel bad look clost I dont know as I have much news to write you to day only that my helth is pretty considerable good jest now and I hop that you will try and be a good girl mabby I put it in a little to thiek for you up to the top but pull away at it and pick ~~it~~ it out I ges that you may scuse me thi time from B Merrill to N H M pleas write

Well I ges that I will write a little to my little chub wal Irvin how do you do I dont know but you had better take your oxon and come down and drow a few wood now Irvin ye see that I have rit to mamma and Nansey and you see that of corse I must be verry tired so you must squee mistakes and accept of a short letter how does your calves get along and how do the colts do do they grow have got a most tired of doing choars is there hay enough well irvin I would like to see you and help you do the chores a few times do you take good care of the harness and have you got some good halters to use and is your health good excuse bad spelling and write to me from B M to I

Camp "John Manley", 154th Reg't N. Y. Vol.,  
1st Brigade, 2nd Division, 11th Corps, Army Potomac  
near Stafford C. H., Va., April 9(?) 1863.

Beloved Companion I take a little time to write to you this ~~morning~~ morning my health is good how is your health and how do you get along with your matters you have to have the mind taxed with matters in the house and out doors and I am afrade that it will be to hard for you I hope that you will try and be careful of your health and take matters as quiet as you can and keep up good courage and I am in hopes that the time will soon come when I can again come home to my family I think of my wife and children daily and I am not without my anxieties about them it has been now a little more than ~~●~~ six months since I came down here and on the whole the past 6 months have been six months of ~~●~~ toil and anxiety with me but amongst the rest I have enjoyed some happy seasons I have had a friend that has taken me all the way ~~along~~ along thus far safely and I have been shielded from harm and I still feel like exclaiming prays the lord for his wonderful goodness to me on taking a review I can see that the Lord has ha a watchful eye over me ever since I left home I have not had an accident of any kind no I have not seen a sick day and my appetite has been good all the time and I have rested good nights when I have had a chance so you see that I have been wonderfully favoured and I feel like trusting providance for time to come and I think that I shall be taken safely through and I shall again enjoy the priveleges of our quiet home I think much of home and loved ones that I have left but duty call for me to be here yet as soon as I can see that it is duty for me to go home I shall feel thankful I have no news to send you about the war we are still in the same camp and I see no signs of a move just yet general Howard reviewed this Corps to day Review went of nice probable you northern folks would like to behold such a scene I think about thirty regiment present and a great deal of nice musick we dont think much about such scenes here it is the corn that w deal in yesterday General Hooker reviewed four corps of men near Falmouth about seven miles from here this corps was not there Falmouth is near Fredricksburgh and so it goes figure a little on the number of men near here we laid one of our boys in the grave to day a young man that you did not know name Adelbert Rolph disease inflamation on the brane want sick but a few days had a desent burial put in as desent a coffin as the circumstances would permit of Alva received a letter from you last night and a memorandum for march I looked the letter and mem over was glad to hear from you when I came down here I thought that we would get through and go back this spring but I think now that we will have to stay longer so you must make calculations to run your one horse team a while yet I suppose you like it I suppose that you are making your calculation about your spring work what I left for you to live on will be used up after a while you know that a word to the wise is suffissient you will want bred potatoes &c and I suppose that you will want your garden ploughed

BM # 48

so as to rase a lot of things the news comes almost daily here that they are seeing verry short times for eatables now last night we had news that there had been quite a riot in Richmon with the women on account of scarrity of food shops broke open and the like and according to report it is an importan crisis about now to Charlston I hope that things will work favourable there I hope for the best I think that this matter is moving rather favourable of late but slow Perhaps you wil like to know how I came by this sheat I will tell you our new Captain made each of the boys a present of two sheats I notised that you complaned about your ink and about different shades all out of the same ink stand how does this happen it may be so a little about your dres I think that you would look verry well in such a dres there is quite a similarity in the color do you color your hare a little occasionally presume you need to my hare is all rite comed nice and but verry few gray hares I spose you would not exactly like the looks of my face now and around my mouth but as long as you dont see me it is all rite well I cant write no more this time pleas give a variety of news when you rite and keep all rite you know that I have been down here six months and I want all the news of course and a little about all my love to the children B M to Mrs R C M I am a most out of stamps

B. M. No. 49

April 10<sup>th</sup> 63

I would like to send you a Kuba  
picture of what I have seen today but this I can't  
do but can write a little about it

The eleventh and twelfth army corps were  
reviewed today by the President about one mile  
from our camp and of course your husband made  
one among the many of that number you probably  
will see an account of this review in the papers  
it was a grand thing may be if you can get one of  
Frank Leslys papers the rate number you could see  
an engraving or picture of the same. I could see  
a man to work on the other hill in front of us but  
he was so far that I could not see what his business  
was if you should see a picture of the same the  
man that rode a head of the gang of horsemen  
passing amongst the troops will represent the  
President he had his hat in his rite hand about as  
high as his breast he rode a dark bay horse and a  
very good one

there was four or five women rode in this gang  
all dressed in long black riding dresses and  
black hats some like Rancys do you think you  
could manage a horse in such a spot they done  
it nice if you could get a picture of the thing  
you would get a nice picture A few words about  
the President his portrate dont do him justice  
he is a smarter looking man than that represents  
he has a very good shaped forehead and an

intellectual looking man but he looks care worn and pallid his hair is dark gray he is tall and slim built the next to him is general hooker he is a man about the same age and smart looking next is general Howard his right arm is off about to the elbow he lost his arm in some of the battles he looks like a smart man he commands our corps now in place of Seigle and there were lots of other big men present our Corps was reviewed by Howard on the same ground yesterday when you see this in print you will get a better idea than I can give you this may help some.

A little about the soldiers

I don't know how many was present ~~a piece of ground~~ but I would think that they occupied a piece of ground as large as Blodgett's clearing on the south side of the road supposing fences and buildings were all out of the way and I guess this is too small a pattern the soldiers were well clothed and in good condition and they made a fine appearance and when they marched in review the scene was sublime and in order and it takes men that are drilled to do this they marched in double columns at half

(2) distance when they passed the president and the rest of the big men probably you don't understand what the command double column at half distance means I haven't room to explain

there was very nice music to march by and the men marched nice our Regiment knows more now than when they left James town but the old Regiments that have been out ever since the war broke out puts us into the shades yet there old regiments can flank right or left and do it as nice as a pin well it isn't no use for me to undertake to write much about these scenes but I would like to give you a few out lines and save the rest until I get home then we will talk about it

probably you will see this in the paper I have tried to give you what information I could from time to time are you pleased with a letter of this kind on a small scale I want you to get something of an Idea of what I am doing but my space and time is small but I have endeavoured to give you a few outlines generally when I set down to write I am liable to be called on for something any moment and I have no conveniences for writing and all the time right in the noise talk laugh are drums beating all such noise

all the time some times I get tired of it  
and feel as though I would like a few days  
of quiet life some days I feel a little confused  
when I attempt to write but on the whole I get  
along very well Alva has had a hard cold  
for a few days he did not go out on review  
to day he is round the camp his cold is  
working loose some, I think he will get along  
in a day or two it has been a bad time  
here to take colds chilly weather and some  
snow yesterday and today the weather has  
been fine there is a great many exposures  
to bad weather connected with soldiering I  
find but I stand it like a horse I have stood  
up a good deal for a month back. Guess I  
look darker now than you ever saw me.  
I can account for it I have been turned out for  
the past six months I have hardly seen  
the inside of a house since I have been  
down here not spoke with a woman I  
have not set down in a chair and I have  
got so that I cant lay on a soft bed

B. Merrill.



April 10th 63

Ruba I would like to send you a picture of what I have seen to day but this I cant do but can write a little about it

The eleventh and twelfth army corps were reviewed tody by the President about one mile from our camp and of course your husban made one among  the many of that number you probably will see an account of this review in the papers it was a grand thing may be if you can get one of Frank Leslys papers the rite number you could see an engraving or picture of the same I could see a man to work on the other hill in front of us but he was so far that I could not see what his business was if you should see a picture  of the same the man that rode a hed of the gang of  horsemen passing amongst the troops will represent the Presiden he had his hat in his rite hand about as high as his brest he rode a dark bay horse and a verry good one

there was four or five women rode in this gang all dressed in long black riding dresses and black hats some like Nancys do you think you could manage a horse in such a spot they done it nice if you could get a picture of the thing you would get a nice picture A few words about the President his portrate dont do him justice he is a smarter looking man than that represents he has a verry good shaped forehed and an intellectual looking man but he looks care worn and palid his hair is dark gray he is tall and slim built the next to him is general hooker he is a man about the same age and smart looking next is general howard his right arm is off about to the elbow he lost his arm in some of the battles he looks like a smart man he commands our corps now in place of Seigle and there were lots of other big men present our Corps was reviewed by Howard on the same ground yesterday when you see this in print you will get a better idea than I can give you this may help some

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probably you will see this in the paper I have tried to give you what information I could from time to time are you pleased with a letter of this kind on a small scale I want you to get some thing of an idea of what I am doing but my space and time is small but I have endeavoured to give you a few outlines generally when I set down to write I am liable to be called on for something any moment and I have no conveniences for writing and all the time right in the noise talk laugh are drums beating all such noise all the time some times I get tired of it and feel as though I would like a few days of quiet life some days I feel a little confused when I attempt to write but on the whole I get along verry well Alva has had a hard cold for a few days he did not go out on review to day he is round the camp his cold is working loose some, I think he will get along in a day or two it has been a bad time here to take colds chilly weather and some snow yesterday and to day the weather has been fine there is a great many exposurs to bad weather connected with souldiering I find but I stand it like a horse I have taned up a good deal for a month back guess I look darker now than you ever saw me I can account for it I have been turned out for the past six months I have hardly seen the inside of a house since I have been down here nor spoke with a woman I have not set down in a chair and I have got so that I cant lay on a soft bed

B. Merrill

## Camp Manley stationery

April 11th

Ruba I receive a letter I call it because it come in one envelop and the job(?) last night I generally rite one line between so you see that I get in more than you do probably nonsense ~~me~~ I rote to Father a little about my affairs I have not heard from him since about the manure I think the most of it better be put out on the grass ground beyond where we had wheat last year and not drive acrost the new seded I guess that the orchard had better be sowed to wheat and seled down after this is done it would be best to throw a thin coat of manure on top around on the bank and over a little on the side of the bank and you will want some of the best put in the garden and some put on the poor spots on the grass ground I rote to see if Resign would take the team and get in the wheat and let Irvin take the team and drag for him to pay him I thought that ours could be done before their land would do to work if they cant do it you had better try and hire someone or let Irvin change with someone else may be some of the neighbours will change I rote to father about the colts they might be worked some for some body and when the grass grows have them pastured for pay I dont want them worked hard do light days works I think that it would be best to look out and find someone that could pasture them and in a proper time have them go to hone(?) then they will be apt to lay quiet they might rase colts and do all that you will have for them to do I think I rote to Father about this and I think he will see to it I guess that it was a good plan to have the cow sold if the colts can be pastured away I guess that Irvins steers might run with the cows or you can trade them if you think best if the cows cant come upto the barn this summer perhaps you will think best to have the two answer you will have to calculate to get along as best you can Irvin ant old enough to do much work yet and you ought not to be out much for you ant tough enough to stand it I would like to have you rase a little stuff to eat and may be it would be best to milk three cows and have them drove and got the rode I dont think that you can get the fence put ~~in~~ in up the creek this spring if you should milk thre cows it would help you some the two you have wont be much better than one during the summer do about this as you think best I think you had better have that patch back of the ● schoolhouse broke up for a spot to rase a little corn and potatoes and you had better not have any fowls about more than three or four hens and they will want to be shet up some I have thought about these matters and I have thought perhaps I might be home but I cant come in time to see about these matters and I cant tell as well what ought to be done as though I was there but I will do what I can by writing make your calculation to do as little as you can get along with and have a little stuff rased to eat I think that perhaps you would miss it to undertake to make sugar so far off it would not be prudent for you to go and help Irvin for you ant able but manage this as you think best I dont think that Irvin is able to jam round verry much Providing that Furloughs run as they now do when our orderly gets back George Newcomb will go nex I think after he goes I will stand something of a chance I think but this will bring it along into May by that time it may be that we will be where we cant get furloughs at all so you see that evry thing about coming is uncertain yet I have made

up my mind to come home this spring if I can get a furlough I think we will draw four months pay before long I intend to manage so as to bring our pay next time if I can make the thing work Alva is getting over his cold he is around and has been all the time but he felt quite unwell a few days Morace has gone to be vaccinated our regiment are generally in good health H Robison is well Butler has been nursing in the hospital the most of the time no office it takes a rough ~~man~~ wicked man to get office here as a general rule I believe that there is but three captains here now that came out with the regiment and the regiment numbers only about half as many as they did when they first came out I can hardly tell where they all have gone to about your papers I have got two advocates is all and a few advocates and that is all I hardly think you had better try to send many papers at present I think that I shall know more what we are going to do before long I think that there will have to be a good ~~many~~ many men stationed along this rail road this summer whether this will be our post or whether we take the field I cant tell yet we have been along the lines since we left Fairfax the last time it may be that others will take the front this spring our new commander has but one arm and I think that looks a little as though we were designed for the rear I would be glad to inform you more about what we are to do but I cant our co. dont know when an order comes then we have to obey and they are at a moments notice very true we get orders and they are countermanded some times we are liable to have orders to march any day and we are just as likely to stay a month as any way I dont know whether our brigade still hold the place of a reserve or not but I rather think that they do I notice that our brigade are called on to repair roads and do such chores as usual when the army begin to move then I can tell something about what we are to do or give something of a guess all these matters combined make a great many ~~anxiety~~ anxieties I dont think however that we will move very far from here our artillery is here our baggage wagons are here and all the teams unless there should be an awful shift we dont go very far I have rather been of the opinion that there would be another effort made to cross the Rappahannock this spring and whether we do it or attempt to do it or whether those in the rear or whether the thing is undertaken at all I ~~see~~ see no particular ~~need~~ need of advancing these lines until we see more how things shape south and southwest I think our army is sufficient to cross the RR with good general ship with out doubt you may allow what you can afford to for these last remarks I have only undertaken to suppose or speculate a little these are matters that I know nothing about about our chaplain I dont fancy him very much and I dont think that he is doing much for the reg I guess that he is a good man but he is too distant for that place that is he ant familiare enough I have not got acquainted ~~with~~ with him yet we have made a good sweep on captain I like our capt very much our Col is a rough wooden kind of a man no refinement I notice that some of our leading men up to Cat figure more for good births and help others in that direction then they do to have the war close up sorry to have occasion to say it but I expect that all will come rite I have ritten to you considerable since I have been here it may be that these matters will shape so that I

BM # 49

cant write as often by and by be that as it may I want to hear from you often when I can and I suppose you want to hear from me often and I have taken a peace of all kinds and I want you to do the same I rote a little about some of the neighbours perhaps you wont exactly like but I ment nothing only I would like to hear about them in some way that is all you will perceive that I have rote one line betwean and you mus do the same or take two and count one I had a good game of ball the other day and could play a bout as well as ever the rodes are drying of considerable now we have had three or four days of nice weather here and warm but cool nights the rodes are some dusty now in places I guess that I will give you a seperate leaf this time there is a remark or two that you make that I want to notice

B M

BM # 49

Ruba I think that I have been acquainted with a few in my life that seem to have a great many unnecessary troubles and anxieties to get along with did you ever see any such folks I guess that I might go a little farther they dont seem satisfied with that they dont want any body else to take any comfort around them I think that this is a pity for any one to get in this kind of a way of living but such is the fact I think it verry neccessary for us to watch the immotions of the heart and have the rite kind of shoots springing up and the noxious plants rooted out what a lesson to learn for a person to be acquainted with him or her self acquainted with our own hearts there are a great many comforts that can be enjoyed in this life and we can glean up a great many merries(?) to pass through some times we have to work to come in possession of these merries but it can be done (?) have a full cup of either ant (?) we can take our choice I find that some choose verry foolish some times an some make a wise choice I hope that you and I may choos wisdoms ways Alva is quite smart to day his cold is getting along xx pleas accept this short epistle and number all as one letter I will write as often as I can pleas do the same from your ~~little~~ little man

BM

Sunday afternoon

Ruba I guess that I will drop a thought or two on the word ~~grac~~ grac this is a word that is quite commonally used the word grace it is a short word but it is big with meaning in the first place I find that we ned grace in sunshine to keep ourselves humble grace in a thunderstorm to remove the dark cloud that looms up grace in health in order to teach us to prise the privileg that we enjoy and we need grace in sickness to teach us patience and to teach us how to prise health we ned grace for evry duty and in doing evry duty we need grace to carry a joyous cup with a steady hand grace to drink the bitter cup with an unmusmusing(?) spirit grace to have prosperity and adversity sanctified and grace suffissient to say at all times the will o God be done I sometimes try to examine my self and see if I have these graces suffissient for all these emergencys some times I think I have at other times I fear that I lack but I will tell what I would like ~~me~~ I would like to struggle or come in possession of this kind of living to have an evidance daily that I have enough of the grace of God to prepare me for any and evry emergency that I may be called to pass through (?) I can feel the fire burn I never was plased in a position where I needed a larger share of the grace of God than I do here and thus far I have found the grace of God suffissient yes suffissient I want to place myself and all I have family and cares into the kind care of a just god hoping that all will be ordered rite and also hoping that things will be so arranged that we as a family may have the privileg of reuniting under the paterna roof I look for this time to come and I expect it and further some times I feel that I have an evidance of it one thing I can say thy will o God be done

Barzilla Merrill to Wife