

## Alexander Keady Letters

ALEXANDER KEADY TO LOUISA KEADY

Murfresboro [sic] Tenn [sic]

April 13th 1861

Sister Lou

I believe I will write to you this time, as I don't know who I owe or if I am in debt to any of you. I have kept no account of who I have written to but I know I write often and to all of you. I recon [sic] it don't make much difference whose name is on the Envelope so you hear that I am able to kick round. What is Tom doing all the rainy days that you tell about having that he don't honor me with a few of his thoughts. Almost every letter I get comes with his writing on the back and I think well here is a Letter from Tom at last but when I [crossed out] opened it proves to be from a more prompt correspondent than he has proved to be so far. Perhaps he makes a mistake and directs all his Letters to – to – well you know where that little picture came from. I Spect [sic] that's what's the matter. Then he is busy rearing Calves feeding Pigs and all such duties belonging to one of his calling. If he was a Brave Soldier, he would not have to engage in such humble employments but he could perform bold dashing deeds like his younger Brother such as Scrubing [sic], Moping, [sic] Sweeping Making Beds and many other daring deeds belonging to Soldier life.

I believe the last letter from Home was Janes [sic] of March 30th which I received about the 8th of the present month. I am glad to hear that things are so prosperous around Home, hope they may long continue so.

My Health is a great deal better this Week than it has been since I came here. I begin to feel like myself again. Will soon be able for duty if I have good luck and no backset. I sit up half the night occasionally just to give the Nurses a chance to sleep. There has been one of them sick for a whole week or so past but he is better now. All the patients in our Ward are doing well now. I could get in for nurse if I just said so but I don't fancy the Work. It is much more pleasant out with the Reg't. [sic] They are still at the same place as when I last wrote or were about a week ago I can't see what they are tearing our old Neighborhood up so far. I never heard of the like before. You won't gain much by Sam White's trade if I am permitted to judge. I hope that Jim would move away and the rest of that lovely Family would follow him but it aint [sic] so to be I recon [sic] George will get sudenly [sic] better now that the War seems to be near an end.

The news gets more encouraging every day. Today we got the news of the surrender of Johnson and Forest [sic] with their respective commands. This includes about all the Armies of any strength in the Rebel Service. I can't see why the War is not over as far as fighting is concerned. There will of course be a great deal of Labor to do after the Fighting is done but all here think that the last Battle is Fought. There is to be a grand time here tomorrow over the last captures and victories. There are to be Two Hundred Guns fired Bells Wrung [sic] Speeches made and all the excitement got up that is possible on the occasion. They have sent for two Flags one for the Court House and the other for our Hospital (No 1). The Two are to cost Two hundred and Fifty Dollars.

They raised \$80 in our Hosp't [sic] and the citizens had to fork over the rest much against the will of a great many of them. I invested 50 cents in ours They will not be here for about ten days as they had to send to Cincinnati for them I did not intend to write this letter until tomorrow but I thought there would be to [sic] much racket to write with comfort. I have not yelled once or even waived [sic] my Hat since I came here. don't you think that is Strange I always told you I was not so easy excited as you all imagined You need not say that its [sic] because I am sick for I feel about as well as I ever did only a little weak. There was a Train loaded with Sick and Wounded came up from Chattanooga going to Nashville but on account of the R. R. being damaged between here and there they were put in Hospital here There were so many of them that a great many of us had to give up our Beds for the accommodation I got permission [sic] to Sleep up at the Captains [sic] as he has two extra Beds I will stay here till further orders Will have to report every morning. I think I will be sent to my Reg't [sic] in a few days, if I get along well Some of the men that came up on the Hosp't [sic] Train say our Reg't [sic] had a fight with the Guerrillas and that a few of them were taken Prisoners but I can't vouch for the truth of the Story I believe I will leave the other page and finish tomorrow

Friday Morning 14th This is one of the most beautiful mornings I ever saw in my life Clear and Warm just the kind of a day to plant Corn or in fact to do anything but loaf round. When Tom gets about forth acres of ground Plowed and nicely marked out he may send for me to drive the Planter as I can make a great deal straiter [sic] Rows that he can.

I don't know when this letter will get away from town for there is no communication north There are two Bridges washed away between here and Nashville. There has been no Train there from that direction since two days ago and no Mail either I spect [sic] I would have had a letter from some of you if the mail had come regular That Butter of Nathan's got through just before the bridges left. I tell you it is real nice eating. We had Light cakes for supper last night. What do you think of that. I fear I will lose a good home when I have to go to the front and take it regular Soldier fashion I get almost as good living here as you do if we had old Red here or her Milk we would not ask any favors of you.

I am quite anxious to hear what course the Minister persued [sic] after that vote. Your side did better than I expected they would. I was afraid you would be cowed down and not vote stall as has been the case many times before. The Stiffness certainly would come out of his back when he heard the election returns. I can't think of anything write this morning worth reading.

I thought the small sized Paper I had would not be big enough to write home so I went and got a dozzen [sic] sheets of this Size (paid 20 cts [sic]) but I guess the other would hold all the choice gems that I had collected for this if properly condensed [sic].

(Note. The following was written across the lines of the last page, in what is now a very pale red ink)

I do not know whether the Mail will be running before tomorrow night or not but I will finish this and put it in the office Has been a great deal of noise here today over the surrender in Shannon's (?) department You must write me two letters for this one and about twice as good. Give my Respects and those of the Meanses ? to all the Keady

Family and mine to any one else who may wish them ? Without any further ceremony I remain  
ALEXANDER KEADY

THOMAS KEADY TO MRS. MARY F. KELLY, SOUTHAMPTON, PEORIA CO. ILLS.  
Jefferson City, Mo., Friday Nov. 29th. 1861.

Sister Mary,

I shall improve my leisure moments this morning, in writing you a reply to that kind letter of the 13th. Was indeed very glad to have an epistle from my old "Tow-head" home. Those were quiet happy days I spent with you, and their remembrance yet is food for genial thought. It almost makes me feel sad to know that another occupys [sic] my bed and place at the family board, yet never for a moment have I regretted this step: if I fall by the way may it be my better lot to enter the Golden Portal, if not, I hope to spend quiet hours in the enjoyment of home.

Two months have past [sic] since I came away, - strange months flitting by an alley of bright and darker hours, - Two months more, and what shall be the record?

You think I have made a fortunate escape from picking that field of straggled corn! it may be so, yet, as a change, I would be happy to try one through, with Sal and Lucy: methinks I could enjoy a private whistle in the field, as in other days.

How I should like to see those two favorite pigs. Aye and help pick their ribs. I fear twas [sic] foul play to take away the fowls' living by thrashing out that notable stack, that too, when the foul weather is coming on.

Deal not gently with "Clerk" should he come to shoot my rabbits as, if I return, their chase and soup, will afford me amusement and succor. How I should smile to Peter tickle me out of bed now, were I once in it, after thus long reposing on a couch so hard (by the way, I never slept better than since in camp).

Peter and I had some gay times, and would have again did we but have the opportunity. Is your cellar well stored with good things? "Your trees", doubtless the ingathering of fruit has been immense. That young colt, how does it thrive? so "Scharley" [sic] is gone, and in lieu is a Longshore.

Of War I can say nothing; its rumors however are not lacking. One day Price is to attack us, the next we are to attack him, and again he is in the heart of Arkansaw [sic]; all think however that our stay here is not to be prolonged.

I confess a change would be lightsome. Some have it that we have marching orders. Yet I can affirm nothing. In the camp is nothing unusual. Our boys are all pretty well, Houston being about recovered. George Robinson is getting on well gaining strength daily. Stevens is in hospital with intermittent fever, but is not very bad. Bonslough would have me say that he is all right.

Measles are having full sway in the camp. Rheumatism; also throat and lung ailments are keeping pace with the advance of Winter. Typhoid is running out; several old cases on hand, but no new.

Homesickness is a fatal malady here. Some have died with it, and fiver were furloughed yesterday to save their lives, they having pined themselves into a low state. Furloughs are not procurable by "able bodied" men.

My health is good, have yet to go on the sick list, or to get a blank mark. My strong right hand is rather stiff and sore; barked slightly then got cold in it. Am yet Hospital nurse; have not played Soldier for many a day.

Do not think by my connection with the sick that it affects me always, as it would, were I but to watch by a mans [sic] dying couch for a night only. No, a person gets used to any mode of living almost, and my feelings, naturally sensitive, are now not affected by the death like groans of the afflicted ones.

My letters now are always written while watching at night, with sick men all around, and no well person nigh; you may well suppose that it required patience to write and obey the calls of 14 men at the same time; but tis a useful exercise. I get 4 hours sleep at night for two nights, and the third sleep all night. Am not affected by loss of Sleep. Do not sleep in the sick rooms, but in a lower room where is an open fire place. As there is a surplus of hospital blankets my bed is not the worst. You ought to see me of a morning, with Sponge [sic] and water, brushing up mens [sic] faces, then too propping [sic] them up in bed with pillows blankets, overcoats, knapsacks and giving them their grub. But few have any shyness in asking for what they want, and for many things not to be had

Yesterday, I suppose, by what Mat wrote, you were all feasting on Turkey, and like good things at the home mansion; hope you all relished the viands. I too was there, in thought, while quietly eating my bread and beef at table with Strangers. Will it not be a day of thanksgiving when this war among brethren shall terminate and the fathers, husbands, Sons and brothers shall return to their quiet homes? Alas, too, how many hearth stones will be desolate, how many will be tearfully looked for, but never saw more. My best wishes to all. Tell M. J. H. I shall answer hers soon if nothing prevent. I shall enclose little notes in reply to the ones in yours but have no more time now as the morning is near. Write soon as convenient Your brother THOS. KEADY  
(interlined)

I received a couple of papers from home lately, a Banner, and Transcript. Was not aware that our boys played such a conspicuous part in that campaign, until that wondrous Transcript article revealed it to my astonished gaze.

'Tis strange that so many were slain, and they never told me. But then you know Prentiss was commander and 'twas his expedition did the work, although they may have been separated wide in various squads. Nothing like winning laurels, yet "Honor to whom honor is due".

Our Commander here, Gen. Tom Price, some make bold to declare as tainted with a warmth for the rebel cause, of this I know not.

While putting up my letter, a New York Tribune was handed me, from I know not whom. I hope to enjoy its perusal today. We have had a few cold days here. (one on which it froze throughout the day) but no snow as yet.

We are waiting anxiously for the meeting of Congress, to know what will be the result. It may be that legislation will accomplish what the sword has yet failed to do. Yet I would have our side remain plucky unto the end, or until the foeman is humbled. T.K.

(Envelope addressed) Mrs. Mary F. Kelly. Southamptom, Peoria Co. Illinois. Care of Alex Keady.

THOMAS KEADY TO MRS. MARY F. KELLY. SOUTHAMPTON, ILLINOIS.

Point Pleasant, Mo. Monday, March 10th, 1862

Sister Mary:-

As there is a slight prospect of sending letters mail-ward soon, I will pen you some lines. Am enjoying good health, and buoyant spirits. Our neighborhood boys are well.

The 47th. has yet an existance [sic]; is, with other troops, holding this point and endeavoring to blockade the river. They have planted some cannon and dug rifle pits on the shores; from these they fire on the river craft. The steamers however, hug the Tennessee shore and manage in some instances, to pass.

Then too, they have gun boats to act as escorts; these gun boats are poorly constructed, but are mounted with heavy guns; too heavy for our field pieces. They shell us every day, but without effect.

The 47th. has picked off Pilots, Engineers etc. from steamers. We hold a point lower down the Miss- than any other of our troops. Gen. Pope is at New Madrid] but cannot hold the place for lack of heavy guns to drive off the gun boats. His guns however, have disabled one gun boat, and keep the others at a respectable distance.

Probably all that will be done at New Madrid and this place will be to amuse Secesh until the arrival of heavy guns; or until our gun boat fleet gets down. If it gets past. No. 10 Island, nothing here will be an obstacle. This general detail I need not pursue as the prints will supply all, if not more.

I wrote last at Benton; we have had some roughing it, coming through the swamps. Jeff Thompsons [sic] crew tore up the bridges, and felled trees across the road, so that we made slow progress. Our cavalry pursued Jeff and holed him in New Madrid. He had some one pound cannon out in the swamp to bark at us, but these were captured, also one of his Captains, and a Lieut. Our Brigade (Palmers) was detached and sent down here several days since.

The Wagon Train came down, from New Madrid, yesterday. I came with this, having yet an ambulance in charge (Bob Bell drives the other).

We are getting used to the whistling of cannon ball and the "Shells bursting in the air". These I have yet "viewed afar off" but will be in closer proximity if there is a battle; as the ambulances follow close up to pick up the wounded.

Stevens joined our train Friday, at Madrid; is yet back with some baggage wagons. He reports starting with a package for me, which was stolen, or mislaid, in the hotel at St. Louis.

From him I learn of the marriage and departure of Mat. The event was expected, yet not knowing of the set time until long past, I was surprised; could scarcely realize that she was really gone, yet it must be true. She has doubtless weighed well the affair; and I pray that her life may be a happy one, but I confess to feeling as if one of the ties that held me to home is severed. You know she has been my life companion, the sister endeared to me as my life.

Often, when disgusted with the profane vulgarity of the camp, has the perusal of her letters awakened genial thought of better hours, and fancy painted the happy reunion in the home circle, but this may not be. Manly or not, my eye moistened on hearing that she was gone. He is a fine fellow, and my best wished go with them.

How deserted is the hearthstone where once circled a happy band. A Father long since in the Spirit land; brothers, sisters, floating as fragments on the ocean of life. How lone and sad must our Mother be, yet [letter ends here]

THOMAS KEADY TO MRS. MARY P. KELLY, SOUTHAMPTON, ILLINOIS.

Riensi, [sic] Mississippi, Sabbath, July 13th, 1862

Sister Mary:-

A letter is your due. Lacking any homelike Sabbath privilege, I will devote the evening to answering yours. Nothing new to write, since I wrote home, a daily routine rather unvaried.

I spoke of being connected with the 47th hospital; act in the former capacity. You ask of my skill as a cook. You remember Mothers [sic] story of my adroitness in amusing the baby; well similar is my handling of the pots. Somehow after getting the fire built my culinary learning seems at a low ebb, and I go to musing beside the empty pot (A sheep like fortitude sometimes impels me to try).

This may conflict somewhat with former statements, but you will feel that it lacks little of the truth. Again you ask of the food; why I am doing well enough, in that line now. Hospital fare is more varied; more is drawn from the commissary; some is drawn from the sanitary committee (contributions from the many ladies [sic] aid societies). Then we leave something of a fund in money.

We have had new potatoes, apples, beans, milk, and venerable pullets. Some of these not in great profusion. Blackberries yet, pies of the latter relish. A good cook, a fellow nurse at Jeff City, (by the way, one of our Jeff City hospital hands, Jim Askey, of Co. I, was sent off last week in chains, to serve a term in the Alton Military Prison; Crime, killing one of his company on the steamer last spring).

We have light bread. The Regt. soon will have, as ovens are being built; army biscuits will then be at a discount. We expect to tarry here for a length of time, unless ordered East, or driven back by a Butternut wave. I would not gloom the present by images of the past. If we all meet not here again, may we, in the hereafter, not be severed.

Janes and Mats of Feby 16th. and M. J. Herveys' of the 20th are the latest letters I have received. Please direct to Commerce Mo. (Our nearest Mail point). I expect to send this by a person going back and know not when I may have another opportunity. (Hope the river will soon be open to us)

I expected when enlisting to be back to help plant corn, and am not yet divested of that idea, yet as the rude blasts of Winter here have given way to the milder breath of Spring, I hope to enjoy it if longer detained.

Tell Alex to have my chosen Plugs in proper plight for inspection when I return. If he has enough of that corn plucked to pay the rent, let the balance go for the fertilizer, or to aid the poor, I care not which.

My best wishes to Uncle Moses and his family, when next you write. Hope Sam will not be called on to fight the U. S. I am in need of nothing; plenty to eat and wear. In camp, have only to care for myself and my team (mules) and on the march manage my vehicle.

Thus far I have written; more there is that I have not time to write; and more again that I care not to write.

Truly your Brother

Thos. Keady

(Envelope addressed)

Mrs. Mary F. Kelly. Southampton, Peoria Co. Illinois.

THOMAS KEADY, JULY 15TH, 1862

They are said to have some Cavalry and Artillery prowling near. We are dwelling in a fortified place, earthworks crowning the hill tops, and entrenchments greeting the eye all around. Quite a little force is scattered round the place, mostly German Regts. [sic] from Pea Ridge. The force likely is adequate, but somehow seems small, when compared with the immense army that crept into Corinth, That Richmond Army certainly is having terrible times. The Nations [sic] best blood seems of small moment now, and yet the tide is likely to flow. A foreign foe may yet be to be repelled. Truly the days are dark, but the reins are held by a Power Above. Men may plan but only by His permission can end be accomplished. Will the new call for men be promptly answered to. Somehow I fear there is not enough to fill it in time. Then too, the old Reg'ts [sic] are to be filled up. It would be risking life by disease, to come South into the Army before the Summer is over. The new Regts [sic] will likely hold captured territory, while the old will be thrown in concentrated force on the enemy.

I see not, when the South is conquered, how that bitter spirit is to be subtued [sic]; the very women we meet, almost gnash the teeth. Men who have come into our lines as distressed Union Men, were captured no later than last week, in armed maraudering [sic] bands and base spys. [sic]

My health is very good, but the summer heat begets a languor, that almost renders a person indifferent to any thing; locomotion is not performed with much agility. Our boys are all flourishing only Stevens, who is complaining some. Tell N. J. Hervy that I will answer her letter in due time.

Is my "Opponent" and Chum, John M. Yates home yet and running the old Rugg? If home, tell him of me and of my desire to get a long epistle from him. My best wishes to Peter, he could likely flax me now in the harvest field, as my hands are tender and my frame not properly knit for severe toil, but I doubt if he could tickle me out of bed in time for a harvest breakfast, or would you be likely to get a spruce neck tie, with its immaculate collar fitted on me, of a Sunday either.

My starch, prim ideas of dress, are not so elevated as formerly. Here we have no Sabbath, no church, nothing to keep green the memory of bygones. I heard the deep solemn tones of "Old Hundred" today, and somehow it produced a strange effect. No, may I never forget the teachings of home and of the Sabbath. It rocks but little what befalls [sic] us in the mortal vale, so we have part in a better world.

I have no letter from home, later than the one by Col. Bryner; expect one by next mail, whenever it may happen to come. Please answer soon and oblige your Brother

Thos. Keady

Mary F. Kelly

THOMAS KEADY TO MRS. MARY F. KELLY, SOUTHAMPTON, ILLINOIS.

Hospital 3rd. Div. – 15th. A. C.

In rear of Vicksburg, June 5th, 1863.

Sister Mary: -

I do not send you this sheet as a necessity, but as a sample of the manufacturing skill of the Chivalry. It was “confiscated” in the “Confederate House” Jackson, Miss.

I rec'd your letter a month old, with others of like maturity. Have one from Lou of May 25th. Latest from Akron, May 8th. The situation at Vicksburg remains as usual, a complete and prolonged siege. It began on May 18th and will end – sometime, I hope. The Rebs [sic] are very tenacious to hold on, and Grant equally positive in his endeavors to smoke them out.

We have a large quantity of artillery in position, pointing directly into the doomed City, and large siege guns are being added to the No. daily. The bombardment continues day and night, all along the line of the rear and from the Mortar Fleet on the River. I do not see how they live in such a storm of iron and other deadly missives.

No Infantry charges have been made since May 22nd, but rifle pits are dug close along the enemy's line of defenses and the boys in these pick off every Reb that imprudently shows his head, seldom giving their artillerists an opportunity to approach their guns.

The deep ditches and perpendicular breast-works are too much for our men to charge over, as they have well tested. Artillery, aided by want [sic] famine, will have to do the work, and these effective agents are at Grants [sic] command.

The hope of succor from Johnson or some other outsider, seems to sustain Pemberton in his forlorn effort. It remains to be seen whether they can bring up an Army large enough to raise the siege. I think not unless they abandon some of their other strong points, which would be fatal to them.

Truly the young hopes of the embryo Confederacy are withering away. May their last hope speedily vanish, leaving our beloved Country again free from stain; with nothing to mar the bright folds of the Sacred Flag.

I can give no report of the 47th only that it left here soon after the charge of the 22nd and is yet absent. Did learn that they took boat and went up Yazoo River. Large numbers of troops are out on the watch for Johnson. The army here is in the best of spirits, but rather seedy and ragged from the exposure of the expedition. Camp equipage, knapsacks etc. were left at Duck Fort La. on May 2nd.

My duties are yet in connexion [sic] with the Hospital Department – Div. Surgeons [sic] Office. The troops are too near the enemys [sic] works for to use Regimental Hospitals; each Division therefore has its Hospt [sic] at a convenient distance in the rear. We are using tents, and with the use help of large supplies from the Western Sanitary Commission, are making the sick and wounded quite comfortable. Men die here that would at home, in like circumstances, but not for want of care, as has been the case in certain places. Of course a hospital, and the care of a Mother and sister at home are widely different but men so long used to roughing it find the former a luxury.

I preserve my usual dyspeptic thinness but am as healthy as ever; do not see that I am any smarter or more awkward than when guiding the plow on “Towhead”, or in the circle with you and Peter when the evening wore away in social and lively conversation. I

have tried to stand firmly against the vices of comp. have remembered, when surrounded by spirits utterly loathsome, the teachings and gently influences of home, and yet shrink from those words and acts which are so fearfully marring the fair names of our young men.

Ah Mary, these are strange months in my life, widely in contrast with the experiences of home! Congenial spirits are only confined to a narrow circle, but this has become a usage of months standing, and I am not troubled with discontent. In fact I had heavier strokes of the "blues" in a single week at home than altogether since in the army. This doubtless arises from a fixed purpose, in view of present circumstances. If I were returned home today a civilian, the old moody question would very likely be re-established, "how and where shall my life lot be cast," Do you remember how Mother used to urge upon me marriage as the very some [sic] of life?

My real views on that subject are much as formerly. The War, however, is the one all absorbing topic of the present, the one in which all others are merged.

You keep asking for a new edition of my handsome visage. No chance to get one struck. Why not look at those fine Jefferson City ones and be satisfied, or that "Clerical looking" type of my youth. Ah, that I had won a maid in those my handsome days. The golden opportunities of youth have passed from me for ever.

Am truly glad to learn of your brightening financial prospects; hope the freshening breezes of prosperity will waft you into Summer Seas. There is no prospect of my coming home before the end of the war, or of the term of enlistment, which you will perceive is wearing away.

The 47th mail comes to Division Head quarters and I get mine out. Please write again.

Truly your Brother

Thos. Keady

THOMAS KEADY TO MRS. MARY F? KELLY, SOUTHAMPTON, ILLINOIS.

Near Black River, Miss.

Sabbath, July 26th, 1863.

Sister Mary: --

Have I been scolded for speaking so seldom during the sultry flight of this harvest month? Perchance you think me growing negligent; forgetful of home; swept into the common vortex of dissipation? O no; I trust not.

Freshly yet the memory blends the imagery of by-gones. The past seems as the golden sunset; the future glimmers as the first streakings [sic] of summers [sic] morn.

Mine was the will to write frequent and sage epistles to the tribes and half tribes of my kin. The burden of it all rolls weightily over on to the facilities. The 2nd. Jackson expedition bore me off on its advance wave without time for a parting word or even an after echo.

That is over now, we have recrossed the Big Black and are about to settle down in permanent camp – at least so it is said. I know not that there is anything left to do. The enemy is driven out of our department, and we may "rest on the oars" awhile, until new projects are hatched and until "Old Sols" rays are more oblique.

Shermans [sic] big expedition is vested in nothing romantic, or in garb of more than common texture. He drove Johnson into Jackson, flourished his bugles for a term of days around the walls of Jericho, and then dashed madly in – after the bird had flown. Johnson was drove many miles beyond the Pearl River and out of Grants [sic] Dep't. [sic] Much of the City was reduced to ashes, the R. R. more extensively destroyed and the entire region laid waste. We then returned with large caravans of negroes, stock, carriages etc.

Alex though, may have toughened some in muscle and backbone in his duck tours. Yes I know he must. Am much obliged for your overflowing offer of new milk. It would be a feast quite acceptable. I get some at long intervals.

The latest news we have, Old Lee was effecting his escape. Shouldnt [sic] wonder if that Pa. Victory is a dream game after all, - large loss and small gain.

Personally I have little to report; am in good health and in good repair. Sent letters by Col. Bryner, also some money to Mother; it will be found with Bryner.

I must cease and switch off on the Akron branch. Have no Sabbath services to render home-like the day. I had hoped to see Mr. Cairns again; we will miss him sadly – the teachings of his life.

Good Bye, T. Keady.

(Envelope addressed)

Mrs. Mary F. Kelly.

Southampton, Peoria Co

Illinois.

THOMAS KEADY, JULY 26TH, 1863.

Another raid to the proud Capitol of Miss. and it may be numbered with the fated "Cities of the plain". The people seem to be entirely broken down and hopeless; a confederation of dupes, ruined and disgraced. It does seem to me that the time draws near for a pause; surely this people is not so reckless as to court entire annihilation. May the day of peace burst suddenly and gloriously upon us, brightening the folds of the old "Flag of the Free".

I saw the 47th. again after a separation of two months. John H. and I reclined in the shade and reviewed the events of the period and went back into the receding mists of "long ago".

The 47th. is but the shadow of its former self, yet not so back as I feared. They told me how Dutton was gone to his brother and the good Old Chaplain was taken from the weary toils of earth. That river swamp is a terrible place in the Summer time.

Our Division will probably go into camp on Bear Creek, in the wooded hill country 20 miles back from Vicksburg. These hills are a secluded and healthy retreat, probably as much so as the camps of Clear Creek and Rienzi. We often long for the gushing springs of Tusculumbia Ala.

I res'd [sic] 6 letters yesterday, among them yours of June 22nd and of the 26th, also Lou's of July 7th. Latest from Akron June 28th. Thank you for the stamps. I must set apart one of them to convey sweet tidings to the gentle one far away. (I must not desecrate the Sabbath by going into a portraiture of my angelic moods; you know how they affect me).

I imagine Peter and Alex are a full complement for that new machine. Doubtless the sheaves fell thick and straight. I know they could tinker and groan and punish Rooster, but am not so certain of their efficiency in matted and verdant grain.

THOMAS KEADY TO MRS. MARY F. KELLY, SHOUTHAMPTON, ILLINOIS.

Black River, Miss., Oct.12th 1863,

Sister Mary:-

My pen is idle just now, and with your consent, I'll jot a line to your account. Whest [sic] with your domestic duties and gossiping tours you may not unravel my mysticisms soon, No difference, it will move my filial stake a week ahead and make a balance in my favor. You have got dinner over and those impudent men out of sight for another little season – what an ungainly lump of flesh is man; and yet he can do little acts of usefulness. The memorable nooks and by-ways of "Towhead" are before me. My "Mouth waters" while thinking of these purple clusters of Black Haws, – trifles of themselves, but I was a school-boy then and append a world of romantic memories by them suggested. What am I but a school-boy now, taking less ideal and sterner lessons in life? Time whisks us along through varying scenes, but ever shaping for the shores of immortality. Are we rightly impressed with the "lessons of life"? If so, how much brighter will be the path.

I think quite pleasantly of those days on the prairie – that brief visit from Dixies [sic] somber shades. It was a goodly change; is now a theme for reflection.

News items are not very reliable here just now, rumor being a large ingredient. One easily disturbed by visions of the foeman would get little sleep here. New alarms every night and men sent out to patrol the roads. Guess there is not much real cause, but vigilance is wisdom on the borders.

Indications point to an early move on our part; think it likely a 3rd. raid to Jackson is brewing. I would greatly prefer a new track if as conducive to the interests of the Country; all charm is gone from that country. – but then the "Third is the charm".

We may not go. I continue to wield the pen diligently at Head Q'rs. [sic] Have a tent nicely floored, with my desk in one corner and bunk at the side. Good board – a variety and a good cook. Few in the army have their wants better supplied. Scarce enough of exercise though to keep up a good appetite, sitting all day long and all week.

It is night and the rain is pattering on my tent; have had supper and a good cheery teasing letter from Nathans Folks. Its visit done me untold bushels of good; what a funny fellow he is with his double column of jokes.

I must meet him boldly or he will bring me to confusion. Mat talks quite matronly of her son. They are bound to assume all the decorum of their station, and with it a ripple of their more playful life.

By the way, today marks a month since I received certain clusters of grapes and sprigs of evergreen – tokens, I thought, of a maids [sic] good wishes for our Army and Cause. It seems to be a mine of witticism at my expense. Poor me, so innocent, and yet so deeply implicated. Whether the maid loves me or not, I must be arrayed in battle with the punning archers. I can parry their pen thrusts, but wo [sic] betide me if I venture home. What a peacefulness grows up in ones [sic] bosom at the thought that a sweet

lassies' heart swells and throbs for him alone. Surely traces of my destiny are cropping out on the surface. A guiding star is rising to bid the wanderer return.

Lous [sic] letter by Young is my latest from the prairie. Have Chicago papers of Oct. 2nd, and today got a Mobile paper (rebel) of the 6th.

Hope Rosecrans will yet be able to drive Bragg out, and charge the "last ditch". The 47th. is 6 miles below here, camped on the R. R. Have not visited their camp but once since getting back. Tom Harvey is camped close by here.

A. Young came up here a few days since and staid [sic] all night with me. He said that Aaron L. was quite sick and was sent off to General Hosp't. [sic] at Vicksburg. Over 500 sick were sent from the Division at the same time, this in anticipation of future events.

Tell Alex how I admired his bright eyes young maid, and might have become a dangerous rival had she honored me with her presence that Saturday eve, probably she feared Zanders [sic] frown.

My respects to Peter and Kirk. Tell Peter to send me a profile of the Blue Dog. I must to my couch and dream of luscious grapes and of [missing]

Good night and write to me

Brother Tom.

M. F. Kelly.

THOMAS KEADY TO MRS. MARY F. KELLY, SOUTHAMPTON, ILLINOIS.

Memphis, Tuesday evening,

August 2nd. 186.,

Sister Mary F. K.,

I have again the doleful tale to ring in your ears – no letters; Why is it? I do not know; there are mysteries too deep and solemn for me to fathom and awake to responsive echos [sic]. I feel mad, bad, and independently "dont [sic] carish [sic]" by turns and then flit off into other fitful moods.

These efforts however bring no letter. I am now subsided into hopeful patient waiting and am withal buoyed by a cherry glimmer of faith "feeling in my bones" that silent home messengers are sighting me out from the bosom of listless old "Father Mississippi".

The missives rec'd since coming in from Tupelo are now filed before me in a meagre row; they are Alecks of July 3rd, Janes of July 10th and Matts of July 18th, none others. "Like Angels visits, few and far Between".

Ah well, I can "grin and bear" many a hurtful grief. Manifestly they will prune up my chafing spirit and fashion it in ways of sweetness ready unto the coming days of domestic docility. The restless grimace of a figety [sic] soul you know ought to be mellowed down to a calm quietude, when we near the bowers of matrimony. Do'st [sic] think this will supply in my case?

This was to be a chuckfull [sic] news letter, void of all the flash and any nothings of fancy. Let us "simmer down" to a sober gait and discuss items as they occur.

Towhead I take it, is well flushed out in its summer green – a paradise of doves and black-haws. Remember to have those rabbits fat for this Winter. Peter should lead his "Blue dog" into ways of gentleness, not permitting him to dash savagely through the copses to the dismay of my favorite game,

What progress at gathering in the harvest? Too much corn has tassed out between my arena of labor and the Tow Head Mansion to permit me a view of the "Dinner sigh" flowing out from the South window. I suppose it to be yet there and am frequent in mental surveys of the smoking viands spread out before ye lusty harvesters. Could you crowd in an extra plate for a lank and not remarkably voracious "Blue Coat"? If there are enough ravenous maws to consume all the "chicken fixens" [sic] I can wait a little, if you will make me a neat little pot of mush or a good granny cup of tea. That new farm, seems to me, will be a cool place when grim old Winter comes blustering on; however the idea of sole proprietorship will probably modify the cutting blast.

Wonder if this stray deponent will ever creep into possession of a Manor heritage? – improbable quite. Guess I shall continue to beat up and down the world loose, keeping out of the way as much as possible.

Have you a Melon patch? Would ask 70 questions if in tongue range; T'is [sic] a job too cumbrous to eke them out at pen point and I'll give it up. You can make a long talk without my propositions.

About affairs here; We have had a few days of quiet in camp, but this is being changed. The Division is now all gone out the R.R. but these Head Q'rs [sic] and they are to go tomorrow. The 47th started this morning by train for Holly Springs, Miss.

The Miss. Central is opened down that far from Grand Junction. We will likely be at Holly Springs by evening of tomorrow. The expectation is that another expedition will strike out from there. Look over in the heart of Miss. for a town called Columbus. That is the objective point talked of now.

It will be a longer march than the last. Corn being now filled out, we can subsist longer on the country. You have no full idea of how oppressive these long marches are in Midsummer, but we should cheerfully address ourselves to any task will assist Sherman in completing his giant job.

I earnestly hope that our labors may contribute something in this grand movement, and that the Rebellion may soon fall powerless. Those Northern conspirators need watching. Union men should be thoroughly organized and prepared all over the land and no ways slack to throttle the hissing serpent the moment he shows his fangs.

The cause of the Union has cost too much and progressed too far to allow Secession to prevail through home miscreants and base traitors. I have an abiding faith that all will yet be well through the working of the Almighty Hand.

August 3rd,

The order to move has not come yet but may come at any hour. Mower is again given command of two Divisions. He had two on Red River. This doubles the number of reports and of course increases the work of the Hd. Qr. scribes.

The prospect of getting discharged in this month continues getting no better fast. There will be much dissatisfaction in the regt. after the 16th. It would be of more advantage to the government to set in good faith by its soldiers for it has need or more. However some have greater cause for complaint. We will likely stop out on the R. R. for a few days before striking out from our base, so that I may be able to send another letter.

Yours most respectfully

Tom Keady

Alexander Keady to Louise Keady

Quincy Illinois

Feb 20, 1865

Sister Lou:

We are not very busy this morning so I'll just scratch you a few lines to you so that you may know that I have not played out yet We are looking for orders to fall in for Muster every minute so you must excuse this child if this letter is not got up in a very good style. Our head quarters are still at the Broadway House at night and grub up at the Commissary. We get good Beef Coffee and Salt Bread Sometimes Beans. enough for comfort

The reason we dont [sic] sleep in the Hall is on account of the gas in the room There is some defect in the pipes thereby making it very unsafe to sleep in the room. One of our company died Saturday from the effects of it and there are any quantity in the hospital from the same cause The expense of sleeping in the Tavern is about 25 cts [sic] per night not enough to pay for risking our lives Our squad consist of Wakefield and I from Rudnor Isaac Clayton Andy Graham and John Cameron from Trivolia. They are just as good a Squad as ever went to War There are a great many men here that I knew before I came here Some very good men and some mean ones. We have all got in Andrews Co but Cameron he is in Snows They are both so good that we want to go with both I believe I had not got my Blue when I wrote last We got it Saturday afternoon, and shipped our clothes (Wakefield and I) to R Emory in Peoria the same evening it cost us 65 cts [sic] apiece for expense and 50 cents for Box.

Yesterday was rather a curious Sunday for a boy from the quiet country Military affairs went on just the same as on other days. We had no duty to do except to famm [sic] in and escort the body of our dead comrad [sic] to the Depot I went Presbyterian meeting at Eleven and Seven Yesterday heard two good sermons Will go to Methodist Church tonight Since writing the above our Reg had to fall in to be reviewed by Gen. Prentiss. he read some orders made speech and issued some orders on his own hook among which were that all should be ready to march by wednesday [sic] morning as we would all be shipped by that time our Cap says if we can get mustered and Transportation we will go sooner We go to camp Butler to Fight Grey Backs

Spent quite a while today going through two very large Hospitals in the City They are larger than any buildings in Peoria and four stories high are nicely arranged clean and quiet there are not many men in them two died in one of them today. This is one of the most grand old towns I ever saw It has a population of about 25,000 I saw some of the handsomest ladies at church last night that I ever saw in my life I only dared peep at them from the corner of my eye Have the Prospect folks made up their minds that I am going to war yet

How does Tom get along with his department has he got them posts made yet and has he got the blues as bad as usual I never enjoyed my self better in my life than I do here Have not lost or had anything stolen yet and that's something none of our Squad can say. What manner of pictures were them that I got taken if good you may give my girl one What think you

If you direct letters to Co A, 151 Reg Ill. care of Andrews, Springfield, I will get them Give my best respect to all prospects to write to

Brother  
Alex  
Addressed to  
Miss Louis E. Keady  
Southampton  
Peoria County  
Illinois

Alexander Keady to Louise Keady  
Dalton, Georgia  
Friday, May 5, 1865

Sister Lou:

I will write you a few lines tonight as I may not have a chance to write or mail a letter for some time as we are going to break up this camp early in the morning and march to Resacca [sic] and join the Regt. They have orders to march for Kingston at 7 o'clock on Sunday Morning so we will not get much rest. I am stronger and more healthy now than at any time since I Enlisted and if nothing happens I hope to go through all right.

We have had a busy time this afternoon packing and loading our Camp Equipage We will not get it near all along but we have done our best Most of the stuff left will have to come off Uncle Sam

I put my Blanket Over Coat and one Shirt in a Box with our First Sargent's [sic] Clothes and will express them in the morning I will not get them till he and I get home but I did not want the expense of shipping alone and did not want them If I find I need anything I can draw from the Quartermaster after the March or pick up anything I want on the March I have had a fine time here since Sunday. I have not had any letter from anyone since I left Murfreesboro but I look for some soon If you dont [sic] get any from me for some time you may ascribe it to the want of Transportation You may direct by way of Chattinoopea [sic] I may get them I must go to Bed and sleep ready for the March So Good Bye

Alex Keady  
Addressed to  
Miss Louise E. Keady  
Southampton  
Peoria County  
Illinois

Clerks, Office Crumb Hospital, Nashville Tenn.  
Thursday Night, Aug. 17/65

Sister Lou:

You are to be honored with one of my excellent Epistles tonight for which I hope you will be thankful in proportion to the greatness of the occasion. I do not expect to hear from you any more except through a second person now that your attention is so much taken

up in another direction. I advise you to be a little more careful of your health and eyes than to be found awake so much in the small hours of the night. I almost wish I could slip in some night and see for my self wheather [sic] indeed these things be true. You must have a gay time now when all the boys are hone. Wish I could see the 47 boys. Why is it that John Longshore has entirely quit writing to me. He went off 3 years ago before we got done stucking [sic] and has come back to finish the job now. I got Barbs [sic] letter on the 12 It is the only one I have had from home yet. Got a real good one from Nathan last week. Heard lots of news from him round by Ohio. he said he had read a letter from Joe. Why is it that I am not favoured [sic] from one from the same source. He will have to make it up in Beer and Oysters if he dont [sic] look out, for he knows we did not have any the last night I promenaded the streets of Peoria in Co with him. Guess old father Moor has not forgot that night either. Hope that new daughter may prove a rare jewell [sic] but I think there are too many girls in the U. S. now. John C. did not serve a very long term at the Court of Mars think he should have remained faithful to the end. I am going to stay till the war is over.

We have heard from the 151 several times this week. They are at Columbus Ga They are not reporting a good time and light duty. Yet I do not feel much tempted to leave my present position for the honor of carrying a musket in the hot sun. My health is very good now better than it has been for some time. Can do ample justice to good rations. Went out into the country near 3 miles the other day to seal peaches got all I could eat and all I could carry in, have a Haversack half full yet. I went down to town this afternoon for the first time since leaving last winter. I viewed the various Lions of the city. Got a new shirt and socks at the Sanitary Commission, got a nice white shirt but could not get what I went after which was a pair of Office Slippers. They gave away the last pair they had yesterday. The Aid Societies have forsook the commission so their stock is slim. I drew me a new pair of pants this morning as my old ones were beginning to get thin on the back. I got a pair at Kingston but they were to [sic] small so I let one of the other boys have them. Will be under the necessity of renewing my boots when I go on duty out of the Hospital. I dont [sic] feel as though I had wrote enough so Ill [sic] stop and finish tomorrow.

Friday Morning 18—

I must finish this letter this morning and send it on the way rejoicing. Ill [sic] bet you cant [sic] guess where I went when I quit writing last night. You must not be scared when I say I went to a dance. dont [sic] you think that is a great place for a soldier to be yet it is true they had quite a number down in one of the large dining room to which the Clerks were all invited. I went over about 9 o'clock and sat on a bench and watched till I got sleepy when I sough my couch. There were quite an array of the Fair ones of the South present. I hear rumors from various sources of a correspondence between Barb and a certain Ex Military Officer. I can hardly understand what all these things mean. Think I must hasten home to regulate things or I will have no home to go to. Guess Mom and I can win the machine through if all the rest do desert it. Does Tom still indulge in the English notions or has Sally succeeded in winning his affections away from Maggie. I see very plainly that I am going to be left to trend the old Bachelor path alone. I advise

you to stay with your Maning [sic] till I come home for I want to help move you off the old farm if it has to be done.

Alex Keady

Addressed to Miss Louise E. Keady, Southampton Peoria County, Illinois ---

Clerks [sic] Office Crumb Hospital

Nashville Tenn. Aug. 31

Sister Lou:

I received a letter from you today which I will answer tonight as my weekly report is due and must be made got one from Jane last Sunday which is unanswered but once a week is often enough for me to write and more than can be interesting for you to read Wish you would write twice every week Was rather surprised (from former experiences) to hear that Nathan had bought him a Farm so soon. I did not know that he had any notion of going West this fall till I got a letter from Nat informing me that he was going. I don't believe he will live in that part of the country long unless he has found better land than any I ever saw in that section. If his land is good he got a cheap farm. I can stop and visit them on my way home if they move this fall won't that be real handy? Perhaps there will be another little cottage there or somewhere for me to call in If there don't be I fear there will not be much Beef left for me. So Louisa, Sargt. [sic] Merwin of our CO and Sargt. [sic] Gray of Co. E. passed through here this morning on their way back from Peoria where they have been on Furlough. Merwin says he saw Nathan and Longshore on the Carrs [sic] as they came out to Ellpisso. [sic] They report gay times in Peoria since the Soldiers came home. Wish you could have saw him. he is such a clever fellow. You could have sent your letter with him and saved 3 cents. He came out to the Hosp but the guards would not let him in so early but he sent him down to our office or Bed Room rather for we was not up yet. So Hulse and I hauled on our Pants and rushed down to the Depot and found them and I tell you we had a gay time for an hour or so. He says he had 2 letters for me when he left the Regt. but some Rogue stole his carpet Sack and away went the letters and all they contained. The 148 ill [sic] is here to be mustered out. They were organized in Quincy the same time our Reg was Our Co. was assigned to that Reg. Cap Andrews left or got his Co transfered [sic] to the 151 because he could not get to be Co. A. You see I came near having to go home this fall. I think our Reg. will go out in November if there is no more trouble in the South. I saw the famous murderer Champ Ferguson this morning He is rather an ugly looking character but does not look like the terrible scoundrel he has been proved to be. Will have the pleas- [sic] of seeing him hung some of these days if it is done in public. My health still continues good am doing well and never was so fat and stout since I left, your bed and board. The worst thing I miss is some one to wash my shirts have to wash twice a week as I have only got 2 white shirts yet. will have to wash tomorrow.

Friday Sept 1

I did not write 3 cents worth last night so will put in another slip this morning. We had a fine rain last night and it is raining some yet. It is the first time the dust has been laid in

Nashville for more than six weeks Sept has come in fine and cool if it only continues. They had another dance here last night I went over and looked on for a while but did not shake my toes any

I dont [sic] know what to think about the maids getting married off so if Cynda is gone my last hope must die out I must apply for a Furlough and come home and see about it There is some talk of breaking this hospital up this month but I dont [sic] believe they will as long as there are so many soldiers in the field as there are now. It would be rather hard for me to go back and shoulder a musket after such a nice time as we have been having. I have not stood guard since we were at Enharler [sic] Mills last spring and I dont [sic] think I will be again. Recon [sic] Tom and Sam will soon scour up the plows for a vigorous fall campaign. They are getting along so nice that I dont [sic] want to come home and disturb them. Guess I had better get a position down here I must go to my days [sic] work so good morning to you.

Addressed to Miss Louise E. Keady, Southampton Peoria County, Illinois

[image: photograph of Alexander Keady in his uniform]

[image: photograph of Louisa Ellen Keady and Alexander Keady]

[image: photograph of the Keady brothers in 1914: Thomas, Alexander, Samuel]

[image: photograph of Alexander Keady with the caption: Born Sept. 1841 Died Oct. 1926]

[image: photograph of Thomas Keady Co A [illegible number] Illinois Infantry, born December 6, 1936 and died April 26, 1918]

Record of Practice Firing at Fort Brashear Form 1865

[Note: This table contains 13 columns. The headings are: Date 1865; Kind of Guns; Kind of Projectile; Charge in Bundle; Elevation Deg; Range; Length of Fuze [sic] in Seconds; Kind of Powder used; No. of Friction Primers that failed; No of Rounds fired; State of Wind; Drift; Remarks. The information from this table will be written in line form in the order of these columns, with semi-colons between the columns.]

April 1st 1865; 24 Parr; [blank]; 8; 1; 865; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; [blank].

April 1st 1865; D; Shot; 6; 1; 900; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; to [sic] left to [sic] high.

April 1st 1865; H; Shot; 6; 1 ½; 900; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; to [sic] high to the left.

April 1st 1865; D; Shot; 6; 1; 900; [blank]; [blank]; None; [blank]; [blank]; Strong; to [sic] left to [sic] high.

April 1st 1865; H; Shot; 6; 1 ½; 900; [blank]; [blank]; None; [blank]; Strong; to [sic] high to the left.

April 1st 1865; D; Shot; 6; 1; 900; [blank]; [blank]; None; [blank] Strong; to [sic] left to [sic] high.

April 1st 1865; H; Shot; 6; 1 ½; 900; [blank]; [blank]; None; 4; Strong; left [illegible].

April 1st 1865; D; Shot; 6; 1; 900; 2 ½; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; left burst right.

April 1st 1865; H; Shot; 6; 1 ½; 900; 2; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; burst to [illegible].

April 1st 1865; D; Shot; 6; 1; 900; 2 ½; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; burst right.

April 1st 1865; H; Shot; 6; 1 ½; 900; 2 ½; [blank]; [blank]; 4; [blank]; five feet; burst to rear.

April 1st 1865; H; bore; 6; 4 ½; 1600; 4; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; five feet; left of [illegible].

April 1st 1865; D; 6; 1 ½; 900; 2 ½; [blank]; [blank]; 2; [blank]; five feet; burst to [illegible].

April 1st 1865; 32 Parr; Shot; 8; 1; 865; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; left to [illegible].

April 1st 1865; 32 Parr; Shot; 8; 1 ½; 865; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; 2 [crossed out]; the right.

April 1st 1865; 32 Parr; Shot; 8; 1 ½; 865; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; to right.

April 1st 1865; 32 Parr; Shot; 8; 1 ½; 865; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; right.

April 1st 1865; 32 Parr; Shot; 8; 1 ½; 865; [blank]; [blank]; [blank]; 5; [blank]; [blank]; left.

Back side of Form with a List of Names

Parns, Onsel, Johnson, Jackson, Hedley, Ceural, Hinas, [illegible], [illegible], mare, Osborn, Ellis S, Ellis B, Elkenthier, Geralthort, Haggard Y[illegible], Gluke, Haborn, Ott, Deicks, Hotchkiss, Kinsell, Nagel