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Remarks:

May 21, 1995

Gilbert Backlund, Ranger
Stones River National Military Park
3501 Old Nashville Highway
Murfreesboro, TN 37129

Dear Gilbert,

A belated thank for your time and help during my visit to your wonderful park in April. Also, please thank Alicia for doing all the copying from the files of the 21st and 49th Ohio. Some great stuff there.

As promised, enclosed are the 37 Civil War Letters written by and about my ancestors, the Leonard men and their bro-in-laws from Hancock County, Ohio. Have enclosed a set for each file.

Absalom Klecker, Company A, 21st Ohio, is the young man who was shot "in the forehead about 9 am" on Dec 31st at Stones River. He and two brothers were related by marriage to my mother's grandfather, George F Leonard, Co E 49th Ohio. A total of eleven of them (perhaps two more) grew up in the same rural neighborhood in Ohio (see map), and according to enlistment dates, all but one could have been at Stones River.

Absalom wrote 14 of these letters to his wife Elizabeth Leonard Kleckner. Be sure to read the one letter written from home, from Elizabeth to Abb ... Letter #25, dated Jan 4, 1863 ... "am I writing to a live husband or a dead husband?" Elizabeth's brother, John C Leonard, Co A 21st Ohio, was captured Sept 20th at Chickamauga and died of scurvy at Andersonville. He wrote 20 of these letters.

I found the graves of Abb's two brothers at Chattanooga Nat'l Cemetery. John was killed Nov 25th with Co K 49th Ohio at Missionary Ridge, and Tilden was wounded Sept 20th at Chickamauga, Co A 21st Ohio. He wrote Letter #37 on Oct 26th from hospital, and died Nov 18th, one week before John was killed. Do you have information of the whereabouts of Absalom Kleckner's grave??

See also, Isaac W Leonard, another cousin, Corpl Co H 49th Ohio, wounded and captured at Stones River, "died in a Rebel prison." You see, not many of these young men came home. Does your center by any chance have info on those captured there?

Sorry ... I tend to rattle ...

Hope to visit with you again. Yours truly,

Allan

G. Allan Vaughan
11927 E. Harvard Ave #202
Aurora, Colorado 80014

303 368-4929

FOR 49th OHIO FILE

Civil War Letters. A part of Leonard Family History G. Allan Vaughan, Aurora, Colorado, April 1995.

Two Novembers ago I set aside my Civil War research and battlefield visits to do a family tree, forward from my mother's grandfather, George Foster Leonard. But George led me the other way. He led me to Silas Leonard, his grandfather, who served as a Revolutionary War soldier, and Silas' great-great-grandfather, Solomon Leonard, who landed at Plymouth in 1630. And George also led me deeper than ever into Civil War research, finding his brother Stephen B, his wife's brother Abraham Diehl, his Leonard cousins John C, Isaac W, and John, and five brothers-in-law of these young men. And they all lived on farms close to each other east of Findlay, Hancock County, Ohio (*see map*). Five of these eleven, including Stephen, joined **Company A, 21st Ohio Volunteer Infantry,** and George and the other five all joined various companies of the **49th Ohio.**

The **21st and 49th Ohio** fought in many battles in what was known as the Union Western Armies. The 49th fought under General Grant at the Battle of Shiloh April 1862. Both the **21st and 49th** fought at three major battles that claimed six of the eleven, Stones River Dec 1862, Chickamauga Sept 1863, and Missionary Ridge Nov 1863, all in Tennessee and northwest Georgia. Another was reported killed in Kentucky in 1861. Two of these seven were captured and died in Rebel prisons. **Both Regiments** fought with General Sherman in 1864 in the Atlanta campaign, incl the seige and Battle of Atlanta. The **21st** "marched to the sea" with General Sherman, and the **49th** joined in the chase of General Hood into Tennessee and fought at the Battles of Franklin and Nashville. This month I had the wonderful experience of researching and walking for four days where these men fought at Stones River, Chickamauga and Missionary Ridge.

Research in Hancock County in June 1994 not only found before unknown relatives, information and gravestones, but many of the farms where these young men lived (see map). Not far from the home of George and Stephen, the name Leonard on a mailbox led to copies of these 37 Civil War letters belonging to a descendant of John C Leonard's brother, Robert L Leonard, who was nine years old when his older brother died at Andersonville.

21ST OHIO VOLUNTEER INFANTRY

John Curry Leonard Co.A, 21st Ohio, captured at Battle of Chickamauga Sept 20, 1863, probably on Snodgrass Hill (Horseshoe Ridge), prisoner at Libby Prison in Richmond, and then Andersonville Prison, Georgia, where he died of scurvy June 11, 1864. The Andersonville Historic site provided a copy of his record and a poloroid of his grave marker. He wrote 20 of the letters, most to sister Elizabeth. Son of Samuel B & Isabell Leonard, brother of Elizabeth Frances Leonard Kleckner, brother-in-law of Absalom Kleckner.

Dorence Atwater, 2nd New York Cavalry, a prisoner trustee at Andersonville prison, kept a record of the deaths and burials of nearly thirteen thousand prisoners at that Georgia stockade prison. In July and August 1865, at the end of a mission to notify relatives, assigned by President Lincoln before his death, Clara Barton used this list to identify and mark graves of the dead. The book "Atwater's List" was later published.

Absalom E Kleckner Co.A, 21st Ohio, killed by a rifle bullet Dec 31, 1862 at the Battle of Stones River. Taken to Ohio and buried with honor. He wrote 14 of the letters to his wife Elizabeth. Son of Isaac Kleckner, husband of Elizabeth F Leonard Kleckner, brother-in-law of John C Leonard, brother of Tilden and John.

Tilden Kleckner Co.A, 21st Ohio, wounded in the leg by a rifle bullet Sept 20, 1863 at the Battle Chickamauga, and died Nov 18, 1863, from his wound, at Union field hospital two miles north of Chattanooga where he wrote Letter #37. Buried in grave #B-919 at Chattanooga National Cemetery, which was set aside by General George Thomas after the battle. Son of Isaac, brother of Absalom, brother-in-law of Elizabeth, brother of John.

Stephen B Leonard Co.A, 21st Ohio, lived to age 72. Buried at McComb Union Cemetery, McComb, Hancock County, Ohio. Promoted to Corporal 4-18-65. Mentioned in four letters. Son of Abner & Margaret Leonard, brother of George, brother-in-law of Solomon Wells.

Solomon Wells Co.A, 21st Ohio. Letter #18, August 1862, from Absalom Kleckner reports his capture, but Letter #37, Oct 1863, from Tilden Kleckner reports him "helping take care of our boys" at the field hospital where Tilden lies wounded. Prisoner exchange was common then. Promoted Corporal 4-18-1865. Brother-in-law of Stephen Leonard

49TH OHIO VOLUNTEER INFANTRY

George Foster Leonard Co.E, 49th Ohio, his was also a 3-year enlistment, but he was discharged early with severe frostbite on Jan 29, 1863. It appears that George fought at the Battle of Stones River, Dec 31, 1862 to Jan 4, 1863, and that January reportedly brought severe winter weather to Tennessee. During the next 19 months he recovered, was married, and reenlisted in **Co.G, 178th Ohio** in August 1864, making Corporal in September. The **178th** left Ohio in September, later joining Shermans Army in the Carolinas, and my grandpa Jim was born nine months later. His illness of "diaree" is mentioned in Letter #4. Buried at Merle Hay Mem. Cemetery at Glidden, IA, my hometown. Son of Abner & Margaret, brother of Stephen, bro-in-law of Abraham Diehl, cousin of John C.

Abraham Diehl Co.E, 49th Ohio, detailed to **Pioneer Corps** Dec 21, 1862, 10 days before it fought at Battle of Stones River. Mustered out 9-5-1864 at Chattanooga. Son of Abraham/Catherine Diehl, brother of George's wife Catherine

John F Kleckner Co.K, 49th Ohio, killed at Battle of Missionary Ridge Nov 25, 1863, the day that the **49th**, Gen Willichs Brigade, was one of the first regiments to reach the top of the ridge. Buried in Grave #D-11930 at Chattanooga National Cemetery, with his name spelled wrong (Clickner), and application is being made for the records and stone to be changed. Son of Isaac, brother of Absalom and Tilden.

Isaac W Leonard Corp'l Co.H, 49th Ohio, wounded and captured Dec 31, 1862 at the Battle of Stones River. The Ohio Roster shows he died in a Rebel prison, and was buried at Jackson, Miss. His body was believed to be reinterred at Vickburg National Cemetery in the 1930s. Vicksburg records do not include an Isaac W Leonard, but 13,000 of the 17,000 Union Soldiers at this large cemetery have "unknown" markers, including most of those buried by the Confederates with wooden markers, and reinterred 65 years after the war. Mentioned in Letter #3. Son of Benjamin & Eliza Leonard, brother of John.

John Leonard Corp'l Co.H, 49th Ohio, more info coming on John. Hancock County History reports him killed in Civil War, but more details needed. Mentioned in Letter #3. Son of Benjamin and Eliza Leonard, brother of Isaac W.

Enoch T Graham Co.A, 49th Ohio, reported killed Dec 1, 1861 in Kentucky. The 49th was then part of the 6th Brigade, Army of the Ohio. Brother-in-law of Emily Leonard Graham.

The young Leonard men above are descendants of Caleb Leonard of Pigeon Creek, SW Pennsylvania, a "home guard" soldier in the Revolutionary War. Four of Caleb's sons served in Capt Craven's Militia in that war. They were Caleb Jr, Abner, and Isaac (great-grandfather of Isaac W and John), and Silas (grandfather of George Foster Leonard and Stephen B Leonard, and great-grandfather of John C Leonard). These Leonards were indeed patriots.

Michael L. Leonard of Findlay, Ohio, was given the original 37 letters by his grandmother Phoebe G. Lewis Leonard, widow of Fred S Leonard, who was the son of Robert L. She had saved these letters through the years, and with the same loving care that Phoebe saved them, Michael and wife Paula researched and transcribed them, no easy task. Almost all were written to John C Leonard's sister, Elizabeth F Leonard Kleckner, by her brother John C and husband Absalom E Kleckner. Letter #25 is the only letter of the 37 written from home, by Elizabeth to Absalom, right after the Battle of Stones River. The news of the terrible battle had reached Ohio, and Elizabeth appears hopeful, but uncertain whether Abb is alive or dead. Indeed, Abb had been killed. The last letter was written to Elizabeth by Tilden Kleckner, brother of Absalom, in which he informs Elizabeth that her brother John was captured. He was in the hospital after being wounded at the Battle of Chickamauga, and he died three weeks after writing that letter, and just one week before the Union victory at nearby Missionary Ridge.

The letters were written by John, Absalom and Tilden from the Union Army campsites and hospitals, and they report regularly on their cousins, brothers and brothers-in-law from their home neighborhood. Numerous references were made to them and to many of the folks back home, with many names mentioned over and over. These name are in bold print, and the homes of almost all of them can be found on the map, taken from Township Plat Maps of 1863, 1875, 1902. *See Index of these names on page 21, and the map (last page).*

THE 37 LETTERS written by John C Leonard, his sister Elizabeth, her husband Absalom, and his brother Tilden.
Property of Michael L. Leonard, Findlay, Ohio, a descendant of Robert L Leonard, brother John and Elizabeth.

LETTER NUMBER 1. Dear Friend Lexington, Ky, Camp Dudley, Oct 17, 1861

It is with the greatest of pleasure that I take my pen in hand to let you know that we are all well and in good spirits. We left camp near Nicholasville for Cumberland Gap and got 12 miles to the town of Lexington and we camped here. It is a nice place here. The Rebels have all left Cumberland Gap and we will not go there. I think the next place we will go will be to Tennessee or home. I tell you the Rebels are leaving as fast as they can. I dont believe that we ever will get to a .... army.

Our Colonel took us to the grave yard where Henry Clay is buried and it was the greatest sight I ever saw. There is 15 or 20 acres of graves in the yard and it is all shaded with evergreen trees. The nicest trees I ever saw and nearly every grave has a monument and most of them are from 10 to 20 feet high and the nicest marble I seen. Among them is Henry Clay's and his monument is 130 feet high and his likeness is cut out of marble 11 feet high and stands on top.

The foundation is about 20 feet square with two iron windows on each side and in that stands his coffin. It is marble and as white as snow. There is a concersi cut out of marble over the coffin, looks like a sheet. He hant in the coffin yet. The monument hant done yet. They low to take him up before long and lay him in his new tomb. It has cost 75,000 dollars and hant near done yet. I believe I have told you all the news at present that is worth writing. No more at present but remain yours until death.

I want you to write as often as you can. I .... is once or 2 a week, all the rest of the boys can get letters but me. I feel as if I had no friends but I know I have one that is my friend. Write as often as you can. Direct your letter to A.E. Kleckner, Lexington, Ky, 21st Regiment, in care of Capt Stoughton. Direct them there until I write again. They will follow us where ever we go. This is a bunch of evergreen out of the grave yard where Henry Clay is buried.

A. E. Kleckner to E. F. Kleckner (*Absalom E. to Elizabeth Frances Leonard Kleckner*)

2. Friends Louisville, Ky Dec 17, 1861

I take my pencil in hand to let you know that I am well at present or nearly so. I have had the measles but was not very bad. I was so I could walk about all the time but was very weak. **Tilden** had the measles too, but is some better. I think I shall go on to the Regiment in 2 or 3 days. I send you 20 dollars which you may either keep yourself or lend it out and I want you to keep an account of what you receive. No more at present. I am in a hurry for Mr Kimble is waiting on me. John Leonard to Samuel Leonard (*father*)

3. Friends one and all I am near Bacon Creek Dec 27, 1861

I take my pen in hand to let you know that I am well at present and hope these few lines may find you the same. I received your letter and was glad to hear from you. It was the letter you sent with the Doctor you stated that you had sent me a letter by mail, but I have not got it yet. The postage stamps will come very good as they are very scarce here. You wrote that you would like to have my likeness but I guess I cannot get it here as there is not place to get it taken here. Me and **Tilden** came from the hospital the 19th. The Regiment is 75 miles from Louisville. **Absalom** is there too. He has the measles too, but **Joseph Twining** saw him yesterday. **Jo** was at Louisville and the Doctors along with him back. **Absalom** was some better and was able to go around. He was not quite able to go up to the Regiment. Isaac B Leedy has the measles. He took them since we came here. You stated that **Pap** said he would write me a note and send it to me for that money and now I want you to tell him that if he writes me a note that I do not want him to send it here. I have no place to carry it and if I could carry it with me a month or two it would be worn out. If he writes me a note he can give it to you and you can keep it safer than I can.

We are about 8 miles from Green River where there are about 35 thousand troops. The troops are repairing the bridge across the Green River which was blown up by the enemy. The **49th Regiment** is encamped at Green River. Some of our boys were down to see them. They seen **Isaac Leonard,** he is well and hearty. Maldon is well too. They said they did not see **John Leonard (Isaac's** brother), nor did **Isaac** say anything about him, but I suppose he is well too. We expect to stay here till the bridge is finished and we do not know when that will be. I would like to know whether **Robert** got the pocketbook that I sent. You did not write anything about it so I dont know if he got it or not. I sent it with Kimble.

I would like if you write whether you have heard from **Aunt Marthy** since I left or not. If you have, I want you to let me know how she is getting along. I would like to know whether **Silas Leonard's** children are getting going to school this winter. Some of the boys are sending home for some New Years cakes and pies. **Tilden** sent for some and if you want to send me anything perhaps you can send it with them. You need not go to any trouble about it, though. **Tilden**

wants you to tell his folks to send him a quart of whiskey or bitters. He has a bad cold. I want you to write to me often as you can. I suppose I have told you all the news. Tell **Silas' folks (Robert & Elizabeth Leonard)** that I am well and I send my best respects to them. No more at present. Write soon. Send your letters to Elizabethtown, Ky.

John C. Leonard to E. F. Leonard Kleckner (*sister*)

4. Dear Friends Camp near Bacon Creek Jan 2, 1862

It is with pleasure that I take my pen in hand to let you know that I am well at present and hope these few lines may find you the same. I have not got those postage stamps that you said you sent me in a letter. **Joseph Twining** was down to the **49th Regiment**. He saw **George Leonard,** but he is not as stout as he was when he enlisted. He has had the Diaree, but is getting better. **Jo** saw Maldon Mervin, he was well. The rest of the boys from **Biglick** are all well as usual. The boys are all well as usual. **Absalom** is in the hospital at Louisville. I guess that he is about well. The Doctor will know how he is.

I want you to write as often as you can and let me know how you are getting along. I will send **Robert** a kind of a present that will do for a New Years gift. It is not worth anything if it gets wet. I would like if you would send me postage stamps once in awhile, as I cannot get them here. I have 6 yet and that will do me a while but I use a good many. I have wrote since Christmas about 10 letters. No more at present. Write soon.

John C. Leonard

5. Mr Dear and Affectionated One General Hospital, Louisville, Ky Jan 3, 1862

Why should I not write to one whom I so dearly love and twines so affectionately around my heart. I received your letter of Dec 30th today the 3rd and was glad in my heart to hear from you. It found me in about the same state of health when I wrote before, only my throat hant quite so sore. I don't feel as I am gaining much but I hope when you receive these few lines they may find you all enjoying good health. I also received the 4 evergreen leaves and 5 raisins in the letter which tasted very good but they did not do me as much good as to hear from you. I received that apple which you sent with Doc Amos, but did not eat it yet but I will try it today and I also received 12 postage stamps which you sent me, and I thank you very much for them. Our Regiment gets paid off tomorrow the 4th and if I don't get any better I will apply for a furlough and come home awhile. I would have applied for one before this time but I had no money to come home.

I don't know what day I will get my money. I think I will get it some day next week. I have not got a letter from home yet. I am waiting for that big letter which you wrote to me I was agoing to get from home. I don't want you to say anything to give them **(I. Kleckner)** any reason to get mad at you. Let them say what they please. They cant hurt you. Dont say anything to them, will you. I hope I can come home and then we can settle all of this up but they cant make me mad at you. They need not try that game for it wont work.

Do your part and all is right. Dont mind them more than you can help. You know that I am your best friend on earth. That is all I believe I have to write at the present. No more at present but remain yours truly. You need not look for me home until you see me coming. Write soon.

A. E. Kleckner to E. F. Leonard Kleckner

6. Respected sister Camp Jefferson, Ky Jan 18, 1862

I take my pencil in hand to let you know that I am well at present and hope these few lines may find you the same. I received your letter the 18th and was glad to hear from you. You seemed to be very uneasy about me being sick and leaving the hospital too soon, but I guess I will get along and you need not be uneasy about me. I will get along here better than I would at the hospital at Louisville that me and **Till** was in. If you would go in the hospital that we were in you would not blame us for leaving as soon as we did. It stinks in there worse than any hog pen you ever seen, and while one is there he is exposed to every kind of disease that you can mention and the Doctor advised us to go to the Regiment as soon as we were able, and if **Abb (Absalom)** would get out of the hospital he would get well a great deal sooner. It is a mean place. You wanted to know whether I had read any in my testament. I have read Matthew, Mark and John through besides I have read in other books considerable but my eyes have been middling weak and I could not see to read much. We had not much fun on New Years. We could not go out of the guards. I went to meeting on New Years night at Err Kimbles tent. There was **Banks Moore** and 2 or 3 others from **Company F** and they had quite a prayer meeting.

I have been to two or three since they have meetings every Sunday night either in our Company or in Company F. I have not eaten all my butter yet nor my pudding nor quite all my sausage but I am going to fry it for supper. We boxed up **Abb's** things and sent them back to Louisville. I do not know whether he got them or not. **Tilden** did not get any apples in his poke. He got two chickens and lots of bread. If you get a chance send me another roll of butter. It

tastes a little better than Ky butter. It is so strong it can speak for itself. It is so strong that we had to put guards around it. I thought that **Pap** must go over to Ruckmans by what I can hear and I suppose he carries the mail over that way and then gets them to read their letters to him. I dont care how many they read to him if he would keep things to himself. It does not sit very well to come to the Regiment that he reads every letter that was sent to the girls. Not saying who the girls were. There is no letters for **Abb** here. **Jo Twining** sent a letter with Doctor Williams that came for **Abb**. I suppose that must be the one. It is a little strange that this is the first letter that I have got by mail directed to me. They were always in somebody else's letters. I sent you a long letter the other day and I think I have told you all the news. Give my best respects to all inquiring friends and oblige me.

John C. Leonard to E. F. Leonard (Kleckner)

7. Friends Camp Near Bacon Creek Jan 21, 1862

I take my pencil in hand this morning to let you know that I am well at present and hope these few lines may find you the same. I thought I would write a few lines. We are all well as usual. We had a sad accident in camp yesterday. It was done as an accident and there was one consolation and that was there is no one to blame but himself. It was a bad thing but no one could help it. **Absalom** is still at the Hospital in Louisville. I have not heard from him for several weeks.

And now is you want to accommodate me a little, I would like to have some things sent to me but I am not very particular, and I do not want you to go to any trouble, but if you would get a small box and send it by express and send me some butter and other things. If you do send it, I do not care anything much about sweet cake. If you would roast a .... or two and some sausage, some apple butter and bread or such things, it would come very good and if you would let **A. Kleckners folks** know they would be apt to send some things to **Abb** & **Till**. It would not cost very much & would be cheaper that way than we can possibly get it here. Things are very scarce here of that kind and what is here is very dear. But as I said before, you need not go to any trouble about it and if you will send the box you had better pay the express and I will send you some money as soon as we draw our pay. I do not know when we will be paid off, but we expect it before long.

I guess that I have nothing more to write this time as I wrote you one and gave it to Harsh last Thursday, expecting him to start right off that day, but he took another notion. Write soon.

John C. Leonard to Elizabeth F. Leonard Kleckner and all the rest

8. Kind Friends Camp Jefferson, Ky February 2, 1862

I once more take my pen in hand to let you know that I am well at present and hope these few lines find you the same. I received your letter and was glad to hear from you and I received the provisions that you sent me and was very thankful for them. I also got the letter that you sent in the box.

You said that you had sent a letter to me and **Abb** and paid 6 cents for it. Now I never got any such a letter and I do not know whether **Abb** got it or not. I know that he did not when I was with him. I never got the postage stamps that you sent me. I got a letter from **Absalom** today. He is some better than he was. He is not able to come to the Regiment yet. If I was him I would get a discharge and go home but he may do as he pleases. He said that some of the men had written that I was sick.

It is true that I was sick but I was not quite that bad. I was in the hospital one week since I came to camp and I have only been in the hospital 2 weeks and a half and I think that is not very much for me having had the measles. The last time I was sick I was sick at my stomach and I had the Diaree. I was very weak but I got better as soon as I got the Diaree stopped and I feel pretty well now. You said that I ought to come home if I was not able for duty. I had better come home but you dont know that we could not get one if I was ever so sick we cannot get a furlough to go down to the depot. You have to hire the teamsters to haul them boxes down to the Regiment when they go after provision for us. You wanted me to get my likeness. I will get it as soon as I can but I do not know when that will be. There is no place nearer than Elizabethtown and that is 25 miles but I will get it if I can. I suppose there is some hard tales goes home about us. We hear some of them ourselves. We heard that Ben Wise told that **Jo Twining** owed the sutler 40 dollars which is as big a lie as he could have told for he can only go in debt if he wanted to 4 dollars a month and I have been here with Jo all the time and I have seen the sutlers books and I know that he does not owe 5 dollars, let alone 40 dollars, and we heard other things that was not so, but those that want to believe them may.

John C. Leonard

9. Dear Friend Louisville, Ky Feb 12th, 1862

I now take the privilege of writing you a few lines. In answer to your letters which I received some days since they found me in tolerable good health. I am getting better, I think I will be well in a few weeks if I dont get a back set. I hope when you receive these lines they will find you enjoying good health. I was considerably surprised the other day. I was lying on my bed reading my Bible and some one catched holt of my shoulder and it was David Williams and John Boley and I talked a little bit with them and in come **Old dad.** I did not think that they thought that much of me as to come down after me. I was glad to see him come, you know that. If I had the choice who I would rather see, you or him, I know who I would have chosen. It would have been my tet. That so peggy. Well, tet, if I dont get home to see you (which I think I wont), you must keep in good heart. I will be home some time. You need not think that I will forget you or forsake you as long as I have my senses. It was your request that I should get my ugly face taken and send it to you. I have got it taken twice for you and once for mam.

I have got your pocket handkerchief. I will send you my old letters and you can take care of them until I come home. I will send you a belt which I traded for. It was an Indian chief's belt. I will send you a set of sleeve buttons that I got in a package of paper and I will send you my love and best wishes. I have many things to write but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee, but I trust I shall shortly see thee and we shall speak face to face, peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee, 2nd John 2nd Chapter 13 and 14 verses. I have read my testament through and there was a man brought me a Bible and I am reading in it. Well, Frank, I think I shall go to Camp before long. I will write you another letter before long if I take a notion to go to the Regiment and one if I do go. I believe I wrote you all the news for this time. No more, but remain your true friend.

A. E. Kleckner to E. F. Leonard *(perhaps "Frank" is a nickname, as her middle name was Frances)*

10. Dear Friends Murfreesboro, Tenn May the 3rd, 1862

I embrace the present opportunity to write to you to let you know that I am well at this time and hope that these lines will find you all enjoying the same great blessing. It has been seven weeks since I got a letter from you. I suppose there are letters at the Regiment for me and I expect to start there in a few days. The two last times I was paid off I sent money home and have not heard whether you got it nor not. I also sent my overcoat. My arm is almost well. The bone is knit together but the flesh is not healed up. My wrist and fingers are quite stiff yet. I do not know how soon I will be able for duty. I am as hearty as ever I was in my life. I weigh one hundred and sixty five pounds. It agrees with me to lay around and do nothing. I am in Murfreesboro female seminary Convalescent barrack which is a very nice place. I have been here four weeks yesterday. This is a beautiful country. The red clover is in blossom. Peaches are as large as your thumb. The slaves are plowing the corn through the second time.

This is one of the nicest farming countries around this town that I have seen since I left Louisville. The farmers are mostly pretty wealthy owning from 5 to 25 slaves. There is a great deal of cotton & tobacco raised through here. There is a great excitement here today. It is reported here today that the Rebels are 8 or 10 miles from here. All the Regiments around here are on double quick. I was at the depot when the train came in from Nashville. There were nearly 100 soldiers on the train but only a few that had any guns. As they came within 10 or 12 miles of here they found the rails tore off the track. They then went to rerun back to Nashville & only rerun 2 or 3 miles back when they saw a lot of men on the road tearing it up. They then started for here again & laid the rails down & come on through safe. There are 2 Regiments of calvary after them now. I hope that they will kill all of them.

I cannot write yet as it is my right arm that is broken. I am going to send you my likeness in this letter. The sick are nearly all getting well. Again there is not many that has died at the hospital here of late. Last Sabbath there were 4 dead, on Monday last, 3rd. They have the typhoid fever mostly. So now I must come to a close with my scribbling for I am afraid that you cannot read what I have written already. Please excuse all misspelling and forming of words. Give my love to all the inquiring friends. Yours most respectfully,

John Leonard

11. Dear Sis Murfreesboro, Tenn May the 13th, 1862

I received a letter day before yesterday and was glad to hear from you. It found me well and I hope these few lines may find you the same. It is hot here today and we have just come in from Battalion drill. Colonel Jim (Neibling) put us through on double quick and it made us sweat. I expect it will be good for our health as lying in our tents makes us a little lazy. There has been some little excitement in camp for a day or two about Richmond being taken and yesterdays paper had the same news in it.

There is very few that credits it. I suppose we will .... in a day or two. I think that it is most too good news to be true. I rather think that the Copperheads are getting rather bold in the north and if they do get up a

company, I am of the opinion that it would be like the company that was got up in West Independence by Mr Combs. After they were all ready to go the officers would back out and have some excuse for not going. There is not much danger of them ever hurting any one and the north may rest assured that there will not be any fighting done there so long as the ones that are there remain. They will do very well to stay there and talk about fighting Negroes. I dare say a company of good Negroes would whip a whole Regiment of them. I guess I have said enough about it but one thing is certain anybody that will have anything to do with a Copperhead is no relation of mine, at least I will not claim him as such. I do not know anything about Jacob Wire. Neither does anyone else in the company that I know of as I have asked nearly everyone in the company. The last we seen of him was a week or two after the fight. He came over to the Regiment to get his Descriptive Roll. He was well and looked as hearty as usual.

The general impression in the company is that he has left for good, or rather has deserted as nobody knows anything about him. He was wounded slightly in the corner of the eye and was knocked down by a piece of a shell or something else striking him in the breast. It did not go through the skin but left a mark. He said that he did not know what struck him as it knocked him senseless. I saw him lying on the ground on his back, the blood running out of his eye. As I thought by glancing my eye over him (as I had not time to examine closely) and I thought he was dead, but his eye where it was hurt was healed up when he came here after his descriptive list. You need not tell them that I said that he deserted for I dont know it to be the case, only I have that opinion. He was taken prisoner and paroled, but the Rebs did not get time to make out his parole as they had to leave for Dixie about the time they were paroling their prisoners. He is marked on the Company books as a paroled prisoner, but he has nothing to show to that effect. So we have to take his word for it.

John C. Leonard to Elizabeth F. Leonard Kleckner

12. Dear Friend Elizabeth May 17, 1862

I now sit down this evening to write you a few lines to let you know that I am well and hearty and fat as a pig. I have got a new suit of clothes, and I went to town today and got shaved, and I feel as big as wach in butchering time. Well, Elizabeth, I hope you are as well as I am. I had lowed to write you a letter tomorrow but Andy came here this evening and said he was going to start home tomorrow so I thought I would write you a few lines this evening and send it with him. I went to town today expecting to get a letter from you but I was disappointed. I did not get any but I dont think it was your fault, for I know you would write to me as soon as you knew where to direct your letters. Well, Elizabeth, I would like to hear from you. The time seems long to me. I have nothing to read (not a letter you wrote to me) nor that likeness of my dear one which I used to hug and kiss when I was in **Biglick**. When I find out whether we are agoing to stay here or not, I will write to you and get you to send your likeness to me. I cant tell you anything about what they are going to do with us. We dont know any more about it than we did one week ago. Well, Elizabeth, when you write to me tell me what you thought when you heard that I was taken prisoner. I will tell you what I thought. I thought that I never would get to see you in this world or hear from you. I did not want to hear from anybody but you when they told me that they was agoing to send me to Mobile. I felt middling streaked about that time, then I thought it was no use to fret about it. I thought if I could only hear from my Elizabeth I could stand whatever they might put upon me, but if I could not hear from you I dont think that I could a stood it two months. Well, Elizabeth, I dont want you to be uneasy about your Abb for I am doing very well. I am in no danger here, not half as much as if I was in the Regiment and I have not half as much duty to do as if I was there. The most I have to do is to keep myself clean and free from the graybacks (insects?), there are plenty here, you can see them come out on .... of their backs and run footraces. I have not got one on me yet but I dont see how I can escape. That is enough on that subject.

Well, Elizabeth, I have not got any money yet and I dont know when we will get it either. I went to see the paymaster today. He told me I would not get it until he paid the Regiment again and that will be a month yet anyhow.

I have not a cent of money now. I had everything taken from me so I had to get me some things that I had to have and it strapped me. I dont know how I will get along without a little. I guess I will have to do the best I can. Well, Elizabeth, I hope I will hear from you before long. Write as often as you can and I will write a little oftener. Excuse me, love, for this time for I had to write in a hurry. Good by, love. I hope to see you before six months.

A. E. Kleckner to E. F. Kleckner (*where is Abb? captured, then exchanged? paroled?*)

13. Dear Friends Huntsville, Ala Thursday June 6, 1862 (*north side of Tennessee River*)

I now for the first time since I got my arm broke, attempt to write a few lines hoping they will find you all well. I am now at Huntsville, Alabama. I am in the hospital here. My arm is almost well. I have occasionally a shake of the ague, but I do not mind that much. The Regiment is at Athens about 30 miles from here. They went there since I came here. I expect to go to the Regiment the first of next week if I get the ague broke on me. I have received several

letters from you but could not answer them. I got Pickett (Joseph) and Nathaniel Newcomer to write a letter for me at Murfreesboro. I was at Murfreesboro about 7 weeks. I then started for the Regiment. We went to Nashville and they would not let us go any further. We stayed there in the barracks four days and then they sent us back to the way we came. We went to Shelbyville and stayed there four days and then started through to the Regiment. We had to walk from Shelbyville and carry our knapsacks part of the way and the road was middling muddy. We however got through the fourth day about 1 oclock and that night I had a pretty hearty shake of the ague. I suppose it was lying out in the night air and not being used to being out in the dew. I have got 3 letters from you since I came to the Regiment, but I did not get any while I was at Murfreesboro. The thing you sent with **Abb**, old Morgan (Confed cavalry raider) got them. I was spited about it. I should like very much to have had the sugar cake that you sent me but I want you to save me a small lump till I get home. I think **Aunt Marthy** must have looked at the wrong card when she said I was coming home. It is true I expect to come home with the Regiment and maybe before what I know. but I must close my letter for I do not expect you can read what I have wrote. Give my best respects to all inquiring friends and oblige me.

... later that day ...

I should like to have been there with about a dozen of Company A boys with me about the time those boys were going to Arcadia (Hancock Co). It appears to me that some of them would have got tired of wearing their "butternuts" before they would get home. I am very certain that if we men had been there that they would have either whipped us or took the butternuts off. But I feel assured that there is a day a coming that they will not wear them and if they do, they had better be dead. **Tilden** says that **his folks** may kiss his tother end and that he will never send another cent of money home, nearly every letter that **Till** gets they tell him to send home enough to buy the girls new dresses. **Tilden** says that he thinks that the writing that he does to his folks will be rather small after this. Mary Stahl seems to hate the Negroes powerful and I wont suggest that if I had my choice which should sleep in my bed. I should give the Negroes privilege before that of a thieving copperhead of the north. I want you to let me know when Nancy Kleckner gets her butternut and I will try and write her a letter. I do not think that Dave Rosenberger would write such stuff home as that about Jake Wire (Wyer?) as I certainly would have heard something about it if there was anything of that kind going on. Jake told some of the boys that they should not write home where he was and did not give any reasons. There is no doubt in my mind what has become of him as he would not have went off so sly if he did not care where he was going. Pickett is well, so are the rest of the boys. Lewis Lafferty is not far from being crazy. I would like to have **Robert's** likeness but as I lost yours I suppose you will think it is not worth while. I think I will get mine taken as soon as we get paid off if we stay here. John Morgan is making quite a raid in Ohio from what I can learn from the papers. I am not very sorry as I think it will wake the north up and perhaps there are copperheads there that would like to fight for the Confederacy. If there are, this will be a good chance for them to enlist and if they will only come south we are willing to fight all that come and we think we can whip both copperheads and traitors of the south. The man that owes me 5 dollars lives out about Findlay somewhere. His name is Jim Morrison, but you need not say anything about it unless he pays you, then let me know. I have sold the note but if he pays you I will make it all right with the man that has the note as the man that owes me is not very good pay and the man would rather have it that way than any other way. Nothing more this time. I did not get quite done writing on that sheet, so I will take this. I was glad to get your likeness and I think it looks very natural. I cannot get mine taken now and if we leave here anyway soon I do not know when I will get it taken. I will get it taken as soon as we get paid off again if we do not leave before that time. I will finish this in the morning before the mail goes out.

... Sunday morning June 7th ...

It is a nice morning. I am on picket today. There was 22 privates called out of our camp. Our Division had a grand review one day last week. I tell you they all put on a good deal of style. There was several Regiments had white gloves on. Our company was all the company in our Regiment that could afford white gloves and they were not very white when we got in from review. The postage stamps you sent were all right. They were not for myself. They were for **Tilden**. He got a letter from home yesterday. His folks gave him fits about being a black snake instead of a copperhead, but they wanted him to send the girls 10 dollars a piece to get them nice clothes. **Tilden** wrote them a letter not long ago and told them he was in favor of freeing the Negroes. I guess they did not like it any the best. I will send **William Leonard** (*Wm. K*) a letter in this. I must quit writing for this time. My respects and good wishes I send to all inquiring friends. Tell **Pap** I will write him a letter as soon as I get one from him.

John C. Leonard to E. F. Kleckner

14. Dear Wife Columbus, Ohio July 8th, 1862

I now sit down to write you a few lines to let you know that I arrived here safe and sound. I am well this morning and I hope you are the same. We arrived here yesterday evening at 5 oclock. We went to see about getting examined. They are three weeks behind time; there is not any chance for me getting a discharge here. I have got transportation and am going to start for Cincinnati this afternoon at 4 oclock. I expect to go right on to the Regiment. I dont like to do it but I cant help it. I will have to do the best I can and put up with what is to come.

Well, wife, I was all over the State House yester evening. I tell you it is the biggest house and the nicest house I ever was in. You can go up 190 steps and then you wont be to the top yet. This morning I was all through the State prison. I tell you it is quite a sight to see. There is about 8 hundred men at work. It is hard to see how they have to dive in to it. I tell you I never want to get in to the State prison. I will send you a ring in this letter that I bought from one of the boys in the prison. I bought 7 rings from the boys. I would send you two or three if I thought things would not get lost on the way.

I believe that is all I have to write this time, as I will tomorrow if I get a chance. The Colonel thinks he will get us some money when we get to Louisville. If he does I will send it to you. I will express it to Findlay. I will write as often as I can. Excuse all mistakes. The Colonel told me this morning, when we got there if I could not stand it, he would see we were sent home. This ring was made in prison. From your husband. Good bye Wife, hugs, kiss.

A. E. Kleckner to E. F. Kleckner

15. Dear Wife Louisville, Ky July 10, 1862

I now have the privilege of writing you a few lines to let you know where I am and how I am getting along. I can say I enjoy good health this morning and feel in good spirits. I hope when these few lines come to your notice they will find you and all the rest of the friends well. We left Cincinnati yesterday evening about 7 oclock; we arrived here this morning between 8 and 9. The boat was to leave Cin at 12 oclock but it did not get ready. We have so much to do in the fore noon that I had not time to write in the afternoon They still told me that they would soon start and I would not have time to go to the post office; that is the reason I did not write. This afternoon we are going to see about getting our pay. If we get it I will send it to Findlay by express and you can get it. I will send it in your Pap's name and he can get it for you.

Well, Elizabeth, if we get things fixed up here today we are agoing to start for Nashville tomorrow morning. I have nothing very special to write. It is raining here today; harvest is all done here and the wheat is stacked here. I will write some more this afternoon when I find out whether I get my pay.

Dear wife, I can now say that I have just now received my pay. I got 91 dollars. I will send you 80 dollars. I will send it by express to Findlay to the Findlay express office. I will send in **your father's** name. I have not time to write any more. My best respects to you.

A. E. Kleckner to E. F. Kleckner

16. Dear Wife Athens, Ala July 25th, 1862

It is through the kind providence that I have this privilege of writing you a few lines in order to let you know that I am still on the land among the living and I can tell you my health is as good as it ever was in my life. I have been very hearty ever since I got here. I do hope when these few lines find their way to one whom I love most dear, they will find her enjoying the great blessing of good health. Well, love, I was disappointed very much yesterday when the mail came to camp. There was a very large mail. Most all the boys got letters but me. How I wished for one from my dear wife, but I was confident within my own breast that it was not your fault. I write you three or four letters every week. It dont discourage me from writing to you because I dont get any letters from you. I will write to you as often as I can get a chance. I am on picket today. I went on last Monday, I was relieved on Wednesday. This morning we went on again. **Steve, Till** and myself are on out of our mess. I like to stand on picket very well. We have good times. We set around in the shade at day time. At night we have one trick to stand and that is only about one hour and a quarter. I like it much better than camp guard. Well, love, I dont know whether you can read this or not. I am setting flat down on the ground beside the road in the woods holding this paper in my hand. It is a hard way to write. Read what you can and guess at the rest.

Well, dear one, I suppose you would like to know something about that hot weather we used to talk about when I was at home. Well, love, the weather is some warmer here, that is so. But I can tell you I have not sweat as much in one day here as I did there on the 4th of this month. I tell you I have seen much warmer weather here than I did in Ohio. I was badly disappointed about the hot weather today. It is very pleasant, the sun shines very hot here, that is so, but there is a cool breeze here all the time. **John** is here, he came out to see how we was getting along on picket.

John has good times here. He dont do very much duty. Once in awhile he stands field guard. He is well and looks well. I will have to quit writing for **John** wants to go to camp and I will send this scribbling with him for I wont get to go to camp until tomorrow morning some time. I look for a letter from you tomorrow. We dont get the mail here only every other day. I will have to close by saying excuse me for this time. No more for this time, but remain your husband.

Absalom E. Kleckner to Elizabeth F. Kleckner

17. Dear Wife Elizabeth Athens, Ala July 28th 1862

It is through the kind providence that I have this privilege today to write you a few lines in order to let you know that I am still on the land among the living and am blessed with the comforts of good health. I hope when these few lines find their way to my best friend they will find her hearty and well and also all the rest of the friends enjoying the same blessing. Well, love, we had quite an exciting time here yesterday morning. About daybreak the pickets commenced firing. In a few minutes there was one of the pickets came to the camp and reported to the Colonel that the enemy was on hand. The long roll beat and I never seen such scrambling and scratching as there was in camp about that time. In about two minutes we were all out in a line of battle. We stood around about an hour and no enemy did we see. Then we was ordered to go to camp and get our breakfast. We got our breakfast and then the fight was all over. All is quiet today. We hear nothing about an attack today. I dont feel any uneasy about the Rebels making an attack here. We have six pieces of artillery here and a lot of cavalry. I dont feel any uneasy here. Well, love, I have not heard from you since I left home. I have not any letters since I got here. O how anxious I am to hear from you. There was a large mail come yesterday morning but there was not letter come for Abb. I think I will get one tomorrow. I hope so anyhow.

I have not wrote **Aunt Martha** a letter since I have got here. I thought I would wait until I would get a letter from you. When I get a letter from you, me and **John** are going to write her one. I promised to write a good many letters that I wont get time to write. When I get time to sit down to write I am going to write to you first and if I have any time after I write to you, then I will write to somebody else. I have only written one letter besides what I have written to you since I came here and that one I wrote home. Well, love, I believe that is all the particulars that I have to write for this time. Excuse all mistakes; no more at present but ever remain your true and loving husband.

Absalom Ellsworth Kleckner to Elizabeth F. Kleckner Good bye

18. Dear Wife Camp Near Athens, Ala Aug 5th, 1862

It is through the kind providence that I have this privilege this morning to write you a few lines to let you know that I am well, hearty, fat, ragged, sassy and dirty and in good heart. I hope when these few lines come to your notice they will find you well. **John** got a letter from you yesterday dated the 22nd of July. O you dont imagine how much good it done me to hear from you. I was almost discouraged. I wrote you a letter every day for several days after I left. After I got here I wrote three letters every week. I dont know what is the reason my letters dont go through. Well, love, I was glad to hear that you got that money that I sent you. I was very uneasy about it. I was glad to hear you got those presents I sent you. I am going to send you two rings in this letter. I dont know whether they will fit you or not, but I will send them anyhow. I sent you one when I was at Columbus but you did not say whether you got it or not. I expect you will when you write to me. You said in that letter you did not know what do with that money. I am sure I dont know what to tell you to do with it. I want you to do with it what you think best and I will be satisfied. Well, dear one, I have not much time to write today. I told some of the folks there when I got here I would write home whether we knew anything about **Solomon Wells**. He has never been heard of since he was taken prisoner. There has been some of the boys heard from that was taken at the same time, but they cant hear anything of **Sol**.

Well, wife, I will send this letter with John Guntner. I will have to close my few lines and get my rings fixed and take them to him before he packs up his letters. Well, love, excuse me wont you for this time. No more but ever remain your husband.

Absalom E. Kleckner to Elizabeth F. Kleckner

19. Dear Sister Camp Strong at Athens, Ala August the 5th, 1862

It is with the greatest of pleasure that I take my pen in hand to let you know that I am well at present and hope these few lines may find you the same. I received your letter yesterday and was glad to hear from you. I am as hearty as I have been for some time and feel first rate. My arm is almost well but is weak and I have to be very careful with it. It is very easy strained. I was on picket yesterday and it went a little awkward with me. It being the first time I have been on guard for some time. **Absalom, Tilden and Stephen** Leonard was on the same post and we had all the corn we could eat, it being not far from the post to the corn field. There is not many roasteneers here as they are taken as soon as they are fit to cook. Bulls (*Buell?*) army thinned them out as they have been marching through here.

That is General Thomas' Division, the rest having passed through here some time ago. We have been on half rations for some time and we had to live a little saven or it will not last us from one drawing to another. We have not been attacked yet but we have been expecting an attack every day for some time. The 18th Ohio Regulars were attacked last Friday but they had the good luck to whip the enemy and drove them away with the loss of 7 wounded. It is not known how many the Rebels lost, but it is supposed that their loss is inferior to ours. It was only about 3 miles from our camp. I suppose that Colonel Stoughton wrote that letter but I do not believe that he was exchanged by proper authority. How it was done, no one knows, but some of the officers. There is no papers to show his exchange to be found. However, he will have to put up with it now. I do not expect to bring any bod ? home with me, but it might be after I get home that I might want one. Samuel Pickett is well and as hearty as ever I saw him. He has got to be corporal. You need not send any postage stamps now as I got some since I wrote you that letter and have enough to last me a good while if somebody does not steal them for me. Tell **Pap** to pay the expressage on that overcoat and I will try and send him some money next time if I have any way to send it.

Tell **Robert** (*young brother Robert L*) that he must hurry and learn to write and write me a letter and I will answer it. I guess I have nothing much more to write this time. Tell **Mam** I shant write her very many letters if she will not answer them. No more at present but remain your brother. Write as soon as you get this. Good bye. I shall send this letter with John Guntner as he is going to start home tomorrow.

John C. Leonard to E. F. Kleckner

20. Dear Wife Nashville, Tenn Sept 3d, 1862

It is some time since I had the privilege to sit down to write you a few lines to let you know how I am getting along. I can tell you that I am hearty and well. Also all the rest of the boys. I hope when these few lines come to your notice they will find you and all the rest of the friends well. Well, love, I have only received 3 letters since I have left home and them I got from my dear wife and the last one was dated August 3d, one month ago today. I think there must be some between here and home for me. The railroad is torn up so may places between here and there I dont know whether you get any letters from me or not. I know I dont get many from you. I am well convinced within my own mind that you write as often as you get a chance. Well, love, we have had quite a time for last week. On the 27th of August, we got marching orders. We fixed up and went to the depot to leave right away. We laid around the depot all day and no train come to take us. We laid there that night, all the next day, also the next night. That night some of the boys set the town on fire. It made a nice fire. One square burnt all into ashes. It looked hard to see so many good buildings all on fire. The next morning the train came. We all got on and started for Nashville. We went about 40 miles and we got the news the Rebels had possession of the road and had burned some bridges. We went 10 or 15 miles and sure enough we come to a bridge that was burnt. We got the news there that some of our boys and the Rebels were fighting about 7 miles on ahead. We all left our knapsacks, got out of the cars and off we went for the battle ground. When we got there the fight was all over. Our boys cleaned them out. One company of our Regiment was in the fight. They left the day before we did. There was one of our boys killed and one wounded. It was Company E that was in the fight. They killed some of the Seccesh, took some prisoners and got 5 horses. When we got there, there was no Seccesh to be found. Our boys went right to work at the bridge the next day. It was ready to run over again. We soon cleared the road, fixed the bridges and was on the road for Nashville and now we are here, camped about 1/4 of a mile from town.

How long we will stay here I dont know. I expect we will stay here some time. The report is that the Rebels are agoing to retake this place or try to anyhow. I have no idea they ever will attack us here. We are fortifying this place as fast as we can. There are about 1000 Negroes at work here. Well, love, I will close for this time. I will write again as soon as we get our things and matters all arranged and get a little rested from our fatigue. I heard yesterday that there was a cousin of mine in the hospital at Nashville and he requested me to come and see him. I have no idea who it is. I want to go and see him today. The report is that we will get some mail today. I hope we will for I know I will get a letter from my dear wife. O how anxious I am to hear from you. Well, love, excuse me for this time. Excuse all mistakes and bad writing for my stand to write on is my knee and my chair is the ground. Well, love, I will have to quit and put this letter in the office. I will again soon. No more at this time but ever remain your true and loving husband. Direct your letter to Nashville, Tenn.

Absalom E. Kleckner to Elizabeth F. Kleckner

21. Respected and never forgotten wife Nashville, Tenn Nov 16th, 1862

I am happy to say this Sabbath morning that I am blessed with the great blessing of good health and have the privilege to write you a few lines to let you know where we are. I hope when these few lines come to your notice they will find you well. Also all the rest of the friends.

Well, love, I have so much on my mind I dont know what to write. We have nothing new here. We have had a very nice fall here, we have had no rain here of any account. It is raining here today. I came off guard this morning. I will not go to church today as David Williams is going to start for home tomorrow and I thought I would write a few lines and send them with him. I wrote a letter yesterday and sent it with Robert Mungen. I will write another and send it with **Ben Leonard** (*Benjamin Leonard?, of Fostoria? age 46, visiting?*). He is going to start for home next Tuesday. I will send you a Seccesh flag that one of our boys captured at a skirmish we had at Lavergne, a little town about 17 miles from this place. I will send you some needles that we got there. I have got more than I want. You can make use of them and I cant. The report is that we are going to stay here this winter. I hope we will. We will know more about it in a few days. The mail has come in today but no letters for me, but I got two papers, one Advocate and one Courier.

I thank you, my dear, very much for them. I will satisfy you for your trouble when I come home. If I can make a raise of a little money, I will get my likeness taken and send it to you. I think I can make the riffle. I will have to bring my few lines to a close for this time for Dave is packing up his things. Excuse all mistakes, no more for this time but ever remain your true husband. Good bye.

A. E. Kleckner to E. F. Kleckner

22. Dear wife Nashville, Tenn Dec 4th 1862

I now sit down to answer your kind letter which came to hand the 2nd. It found me well and hearty and in good heart. I hope when these few lines come to your notice they will find you well and in good heart. Well, love, I want you to excuse me for not writing sooner. I know you will when I tell you the reason for not answering it sooner. I have a kind of a barbershop and the boys kept me busy cutting hair and shaving. I made $1.25 cts to days besides my wages. I have made better than 12 dollars shaving and cutting hair in the last month. I want to make enough to keep me in spending money and send you all the money I get when we get paid off. We expect to get paid off tomorrow or day after.

I have not got much of my pay for barbering. I shave and trust till payday, but pay day is not far off so I will get it as soon as the boys get it. Well, dear one, I got that slide you sent me in that letter but it dont do me any good now for I have no watch at the present. I have had three since I have been here. I bought a locket for 7 dollars that was captured at Lavergne by one of our boys and traded it for a watch and sold the watch for 12 dollars and then I took a note and then traded the note for another watch and gave two dollars to boot and then sold the watch for 18 dollars. So I am out of a watch. Well, love, you wanted to know how near we came to starving. I tell you we had middling hard times for a week or two. All we had was a half loaf of bread a day and that was hard as a brick and so sour it was not fit to eat. We would not look at it. Now about every 4 days we get one mess of fresh beef and had no salt to eat on it, but those times did not last long. We were never so hearty since we have been in service as we were that time. We have plenty now, more than we can make use of. Now about the breast pin. There are some very nice pins here but they are very dear. If I can get one to suit me I will get it for you. I would have sent you that locket but you had my likeness in a locket and you would like a pin with my likeness the best. That cousin of mine which I spoke about, his name is Adam McClurg; he is in the **49th Regiment** (or was). He is discharged now; he left for home last Sunday. He lives at Forest or near there. He is agoing to you folks when he gets home and gets able. You wanted to know whether the boys wished me much joy when I got here; they did of course. They laughed at me for several days after I got there, but **John** never said a word about it. Now, love, I have plenty of stamps, also paper and envelopes. I have about 50 sheets of paper and about 40 envelopes, 16 stamps (3 cent ones) and 7 one cent stamps; that is enough to do till we are paid off. When I get out I will let you know if you are knitting socks to sell. I want you to send me 4 pair if you get a chance for the socks we draw here hant worth anything. I had lowed to buy my socks and how I would as soon pay you as anybody. Sam Pickett is here. He is hearty and well. Lew Dibley is acting lieutenant, Brice Hurling, Isaac Foreman is our commanding officers. Dwella Stoughton is our major. I have to bring my few lines to close for this time. Excuse love, no more from your true husband.

A. E. Kleckner to E. F. Kleckner

23. Dear wife Camp Hamilton Dec 20th, 1862 (*11 days before the Battle of Stones River*)

I now sit down to write you a few lines in answer to your letter of the 10th instant which I received the 19th. It found me well and hearty. I hope when these few lines find their way to my dear one they will find you the same. I would not have written you this tonight but I am on guard tomorrow. Tomorrow is Sabbath. I had lowed to go to church in the forenoon and in the afternoon I had lowed to write you a letter. This evening I was detailed for guard and that spoiled any calendations so I will have to write tonight or wait till Monday. We have been on drill all day today or nearly so. I tell you we have quite a time here catching robins. Two of our boys went out night before last and caught 35. I tell you, I made a good pot pie last night. 3 of our boys went out and caught 65. We also had another pot pie

today. We bought 2 pounds of butter to season them with. We paid $1 for 2 pounds and it was strong as old cheese at that. Well, love, I expect we will be in a fight here before many days. They are fighting tonight about 5 miles from here. We can hear the cannons booming very plain. We have orders to be ready to march in a moments warning. The boys are all very anxious for the fight. For my part I would rather not see a fight. I have no anxiety to be in one, but if I do get in one I will try and do the best I can. Well, love, I want you to buy me a pair of cotton gloves and send them to me. You can send me a paper and put them inside. I will send you a paper. **John** is agoing to send July a pair of gloves in it. I guess I will have to quit for tonight. I will write on Monday again. Excuse me for this time. I wrote this in a hurry. We dont hardly get time to write any more for it is drill drill drill all the time. No more for this time for your true husband. Good night.

A. E. Kleckner to E. F. Kleckner

24. Dear wife Dec 25, 1862

I now sit down to write you a few lines in answer to your letter of the 10th and which I received yesterday the 24th while I was on picket. It was a welcome visitor. It found me well and hearty. I hope when these few lines find their way to my dear one they will find you the same. I was glad to hear that our receipts got home safe. I was uneasy about them for awhile but all is right about them now. You said you did not know where **John** got so much money to send home. We only got 3 months pay. I will tell you he did not send any home the last payment before this. He lent $30 to some of the boys until this payday. He sent 6 months pay this time, that is the reason he had so much.

I sent you 3 months pay which amounted to $50. John sent 6 months pay which was $60. Now who sent the most money. I dont think there was a man in our company sent as much money home as I did. I lent $5 more today. I get 8 dollars for it next payday. Now I will tell you why Till gave his money. When we got our money he said he was agoing to spend every cent of it. I told him he had better send **Pap** some money for they have had a hard time of it there this fall and he stood need of all the money he could get. I told him I was going to let him have all the money I had to spare. He then told me he would let me have 20 dollars if I wanted it. I thought I had better take it for if I did not he would spend it. I took the money and got a receipt to send home while I was writing a letter to send with the receipt. Walters came and brought him a pair of boots. I then told him he had better let me give **Pap** them 20 dollars of his. He then told me I should let him have it. Now when you draw your money, I want you to give him what **Till** gave me. You can tell him how you got the money. They cant blame you for it or me. I done all I could to get him to send it to Pap, but I could not get him to say he would send it to him. I want you to let him have what money I sent to you. If he wants it, when you draw your money you can go and see him whether he wants it or not. If he does, let him have it. You can take a note for it. If he dont want it you can do what you think best with it. You wanted to know what I sent that back for. I was afraid some one might get hold of it and read it and make a fuss about it. I thought the safest plan would be to send it back. I had no reason to disbelieve one word of it. I always believe all you write to me. I almost forgot this is Christmas. There is nothing going on here today. It is the lonesomest Christmas ever I seen. I wish I had something to send you for a Christmas gift, but I have nothing to send. I will send you some money in this letter and you can get one for yourself. I will have to quit writing for this time for it is getting so dark I can hardly see. Excuse me for this time. No more but remain your true husband. Good bye.

Abb E. Kleckner to E. F. Kleckner

This is the last letter of this collection written by Absalom, six days before the Battle of Stones River, where he was killed December 31, 1862.

25. Dearest dear Sabbath afternoon 4 oclock Jan 4th, 1863 Ohio

I now sit down to write but who is it I am writing to. Is it a live husband or is it a dead husband. God knows, but I dont know. I hope you are alive. I have a little hope on which to build while writing this letter and that is this. I have asked God for months past to protect my dear husband and to shield you from the bullets providing you were called into a battle. He has promised me the desire of my heart, this is my hope. I know he has answered my prayers in other days, why not now. I know not whether you were in the battle of Murfreesboro or not. Dispatches have come but not very satisfactory to me. Dispatches say or mention officers that were killed belonging to Rosecrans Army. O how I dread to hear the true report. I expect I would feel worse if I knew you were killed, but my dear one, I feel from the bottom of my heart today. I hope these few lines will find you still at Nashville alive and well. I am well today. I have got well of the cold I had when I wrote last. I am all right again.

Pap has had a big time with his teeth, he caught cold in his face or jaw. His face swelled all over so bad. I dont think you would have known him. The day we butchered he was not able to help. He was in bed part of the time. Silas and Joe Pickett done all but salting the meat away. Pap done that himself. We butchered the 2nd, we finished yesterday the 3rd. It rained both days and both nights. It rained all forenoon today, poured down, but has cleared off now and the sun is shining and getting cold. The mud is almost knee deep to a horse. Last Tuesday, 30th, it snowed all day as hard as it could pour down right on mud and water. The next morning the snow was near 4 inches deep again. The next day eve the snow was all gone again so you grip there is some mud here now. I went down to see your folks yesterday after supper. I tell you they are having a time there this winter. **Your mother** was getting better although not able to sit up out of bed. Day before yesterday she took worse and had a very bad spell. Yesterday forenoon she had another bad spell. She has been very costive ever since she got sick but now worse than before. She has to take physic and when it moves her bowels she told me last night it seemed to her the passage was growed nearly up; then when the bowels moved it would go to that tight place and there it would stop. Then she says she has such awful pains through her it nearly kills her. She is very low but while there is life there is hope. In the last letter I told you Narr was not well. She did not get any better but grew worse. The first of last week she was taken down bad. She is out of her head most of the time. She knew me last night. She has got so deaf that when they talk to her they talk as if they were talking to someone at the barn. The doc says her fever is the sinking typhus fever, the lowest grade of that fever. The rest of them are well. Fred's wife is still at your Paps; she helps Amy do the work. Fred is still at the hospital at Lexington. Will has not come yet, neither does he write any. Your mother thinks he certainly will come before many days but I dont know where their hope is for he never said he was coming so soon. I have not been to see Barb since you went away. News came yesterday that Sam Swihart is dead and buried. Joel, George and Eli volunteered. Joel, after he went to camp, got sick. Sam went and took care of him till he was able to come home on furlough after which Sam took the camp diaree and has since died. George is sick and in the hospital. Now 3 or 4 more of old Mats family are down with the same disease. I grieve that is all the death I know that has happened since I wrote last. Ken (Galerape) and Mary Wiseley run off the other day to Michigan (Rafs Moore's sister-in-law) to get married. Mary is 17 and Ken 18. Last Monday I washed and knit a sock. Tuesday I knit one, Wednesday I commenced the first one of a pair at 10 oclock and before 9 at night I had the last one of the pair done. If I had commenced at 5 in the morning I could have knit 3 socks. I was 11 hours knitting that pair and milked 2 cows and fed them in the 11 hours.

.... *a page appears to be missing?* ....

.... barrel and then slopped in the night. They awoke and heard something in the kitchen calling to Dudgeons ... **John Dudgeon.** He got a light and went in and behold it was his old whiskey. I had no air holes and you know how it would sound coming out of the barrel. I wish they had bored a hole in the end of the barrel with a gimlet .... then it would all run out before he would have heard it. Well, love, I believe I have told you all the news for this time. It is now going on ten. The rest have all gone to bed. I am out in the kitchen writing. I wish you was here to sleep with me tonight. 6 months ago this day I took you to marry. I hope you will be home before 6 months more. Some think the war will soon be over. I hope it will, the Lord grant it. Be a good boy and come home as soon as you can. I would send you a paper if I thought you would get it. No more but ever remain your loving and true wife. **Aunt Martha** and children are well. Thats all. Write soon. Good night, love. Sweet sleep to you.

E. F. Kleckner to my only and best friend A. E. Kleckner.

26. Dear Friend Murfreesboro, Tenn Jan 6th, 1863

I now seat myself for the purpose of letting you know how we are getting along. For my part I am well and as hearty as can be expected. We arrived here yesterday having been 11 days on the road and having had a hard march and several hard fights. However, I escaped uninjured. I was not touched with the exception of a spent ball striking me on the boot leg and dropping to the ground and an other striking my blouse collar and cutting it through but not touching my neck. They were not all as lucky as I was. There were 4 killed and 18 wounded in our company. Among the killed was Lewis Diebly, **Absalom Kleckner**, William Bradford & Daniel Swartz. The boys from Independence that were wounded were Levi Boucher, John Boley, Jacob Hazen, Jacob Twining, Jacob Wire & **Joseph Twining**. None of these are badly wounded. Richard Hawkins was double quicking and slipped and fell and broke his ankle bone somewhere about the joint. Anyhow he could not travel and was sent back. So you see our Regiment is considerably smaller than it was. There is 182 killed, wounded and missing from our Regiment. Our Company A suffered more than any other Company in the Regiment.

There was a lieutenant commanding our company by the name of Wiley who was wounded so bad that he has since died. There was 3 sergeants & 2 corporals wounded in our company. Our highest officer was a 1st Sergeant and he was only acting as a sergeant. We have a 2nd Lieutenant but he is quartermaster and is not with the company. Colonel Neibling was wounded very slightly in the shoulder but still kept on his horse. It was only a small buck shot that struck him. I suppose you would like to know something more about the Boys that were killed. The enemy came up on the right and left of our Brigade and flanked us and we had to fall back about a mile and a half leaving the dead and a few of the wounded on the field. The enemy came up and stripped those that were killed of everything that was on them but their shirts and drawers. **Tilden** got Joseph Camp to take **Absalom's** pocketbook out of his pocket. There was three dollars and five cents in it, besides a note of eight dollars due next payday. **Tilden** has his pocketbook and money and he says if you are willing he will keep the money that is in the pocket book till the note is due and then send you a receipt for all of it at once as it is hardly safe to send it any other way. The pocket book we will send as soon as we get a chance. **Absalom** was shot through the head, the ball striking him just above the eye. He was killed the last day of the year. I just now heard that our orderly sergeant was dead. He was wounded in the arm, a piece of a shell striking him, tearing the flesh of his arm and he bled to death. His name was Erastus Biggs.

I should have written sooner, but I had neither paper nor envelopes. I got a hold of this and thought I would write a little. Our knapsacks were sent to Nashville after we got very here to keep old Morgan from getting them and have not been brought up yet. If there is anything else you want to know about, please let me know and I will give you the particulars as near as I can. It is rather lonesome with us in our mess as there is only 6 of us left out of 12 that went into the fight, 1 killed and 5 wounded. Write soon and often if you please. Excuse this dirty paper.

John C. Leonard to E. F. Kleckner

27. (*Sister*) January 1863

Having a chance to send a few things belonging to **Absalom** with Mr Biggs who is here after his son. I will send you a brush that he bought from one of the boys. He got it at Athens. His pocketbook that he bought of me after he came to the Regiment, his Testament, 3 pocket handkerchiefs and 1 neck-tie which he got at Nashville. I will send them to Findlay and have them left at the post office.

There was noting else that we could send. His overcoat was lost in the fight or I guess that Old Morgan got it. And his knapsack and blankets we will turn over to the quartermaster. The knapsack has to be turned over anyhow. Mr Biggs says that he will leave them at the post office or give them to **William Leonard.** Nothing more.

John C. Leonard and Tilden Kleckner to E. F. Kleckner

28. (**Sister**) January 1863

Tilden and me have agreed to write together and we will try to satisfy you as nearly as we can. In the first place if (Andrew) Wisemen says that he **(Abb)** was shot through the breast, he is mistaken as **Tilden** says that he took particular notice to him both the day of the fight and the day he was taken up, and others that were standing by say the same. He was shot just above the left eye and Lewis Diebly was shot through the breast, however. It does not make any difference. He was shot and it cannot be helped now. I have just got in from picket and I think I will try to finish this today, it being the 3rd day since I commenced it.

I was called to go on picket the next day after we got in from foraging so you see I could not finish it. I did not hear **Abb** say anything about the fight before we went into it that morning. We were called out a little after six, up into line of battle. Some of us had not got our breakfast ate. Lewis Diebly excused **Abb** that night and he stayed by the fire and slept while we went on picket and we had not been back but a short time till we were called out into line of battle. **Abb** did not complain any that morning as I heard. **Absalom** did not speak after the ball struck him.

Some of the boys say that all that Lew said after the ball struck him was "I am shot". For my part I was not near enough to know what he did say. **Abb** had not been in any fight before that morning.

Who was standing beside him I cannot tell as we did not stand still by any means and some that were at the head in the commencement of the fight was at the foot when we was ordered to retreat. So you see, it would be hard to tell who was beside him when he was killed. I did not see him the day he was buried, but **Tilden** went and seen him buried. I could not say whether he got the letter with the candy in it or not. We got a letter that was directed to him about the 12th of January and we burnt it. His old letters was all in his knapsack and when his knapsack came up to the company, we took them out and burnt them. I thought that was the best thing we could do with them as we did not have any chance of sending them to you.

The watch slide you sent to **Abb** got broke some way and he threw it away at Camp Hamilton. We got nothing out of his pockets but his pocketbook and it was a wonder that **Tilden** thought of that and I suppose that he would not have taken time to have got it but there was a note in it of 8 dollars. I did not think of anything of the kind and if there had been a thousand dollars in his pocket, I would not have thought of it. The Rebels got everything that he had in his pockets as we had not time to wait and get the things in his pockets. We were ordered to retreat and if we had been a few minutes later we would have been all taken prisoners. We sent you all the things that were in his knapsack. The knife you spoke about I do not know anything about. I know that he had no such knife in his pocket. I suppose that he must have lost it as he had no knife but an old thing with one blade in it that he got off one of the boys in the mess. You wanted to know what the Rebels took off of him. He had on one of the striped shirts that he brought from home and two blouses, and a brand new pair of pants, a new pair of shoes and one of the pair of socks he got from home. They took one blouse, his pants, shoes and socks was all they took off of him. You wanted to know about his cap that he brought from home. He sold it to **Stephen Leonard**. He wore a hat a good while till it was wore out and then bought one and they left it where he fell. It was not worth anything as the crown was all torn out or nearly so by the ball. It was surely a hard sight and I am sorry that we could not get the rest of the things out of pockets, but we have nothing more to send you as there was nothing in his knapsack but what we sent you in that bundle.

John C. Leonard and Tilden Kleckner to E. F. Kleckner.

29. Dear brother & sister West Independence, Hancock County, Ohio Jan the 25th, 1863

Its with pleasure that I take my pen in hand to inform you that we are all well. Hoping these few lines will find you all well. The friends here are all well as far as I know. Peggy & John Jefferson died this winter. I dont know whether you heard it or not. We heard from them not long ago and they were well then. There has been a great deal of sickness about here this winter.

We have not had any sleighing here this winter yet. We have any amount of mud here this winter. It has been that muddy that we could hardly do anything all winter. This is a very nice day and middling warm, most too warm for this time of the year.

There has been some of our neighbors killed in the Battle of Murfreesboro, Tenn (Stone River). Lewis Diebly, **Abb Kleckner** and David Newhouse & a good many more that you dont know from here that you didnt know was killed.

I am getting tired of this war. I think some of the Abolitions are getting their eyes open. I think it is an awful thing the way our young men are getting killed for the sake of a few headstrong men. I dont see as we have gained anything yet by all the fighting that was done yet. But I know that we have lost a great many good men already and probably will lose a good many more yet. Well, I must close so no more for this time. Good bye, answer soon.

John Kinsel to George W Kinsel and Wife

Note: John Kinsel lived 1 mile west of Silas, Sam & Robert Leonard. Years later two of Robert & Frances Leonard's grandsons married Kinsel girls: Robert L, age 9 (s/o Samuel B), married Sarah A Kinsel in 1875, and Edgar H, age 8, (s/o William K), married Ida M Kinsel in 1879.

30. Dear Sister Murfreesboro, Tenn Jan the 31st, 1863

I embrace the present opportunity of writing a few lines to you, supposing you are well as that is all I have to go by. I have written two letters besides one that I put in **Pap's** letter and I wrote two to **Pap**. Not a scratch of a pen have I received in reply. **Pap** never wrote anything about the receipt that I sent, whether it got there or not. I expect likely he wants me to send some more that way. Perhaps you did not get the letter that I wrote you about **Abb** and I will tell you a little something about them. **Abb** was shot on the last day of the year. He was shot through the head in an early part of the engagement. He complained of being unwell the night before and did not go out on picket with us. The next morning he still complained of not being well, but went into the fight as bravely as any man. He was shot about

9 oclock. His things, we could not send hardly any of them home. Mr Biggs took a brush, his pocketbook, 3 handkerchiefs and perhaps there was other things that I cannot remember and he said he would leave them at the post office at Findlay or give them to **William Leonard**. I wrote a letter the same time and sent it to **Pap** putting in a piece for you about the things. Perhaps you got it.

I am not very well and have not been for about two weeks, although my disease is not a very bad one. I took the ague. It will be 3 weeks next Tuesday and had one shake and then got it stopped and I have been so weak part of the time. I could not scarcely stand up. I had no appetite and could not eat anything so that was the matter. But I am beginning to get considerably stouter and can eat some. No more at present. You need not write unless you want to.

John Leonard to Elizabeth F. Kleckner

31. Dear Sister March the 21st, 1863

I now seat myself for the purpose of answering your kind letter of the 15th which came to hand the 25th. It found me in good health and I was glad to hear that you were all well.

There is nothing much going on here at this time only fortifying and digging entrenchments. Some think there will be another big fight here, but if they attack us here they will find us prepared. They are building 11 or 12 fortifications near town or on the west side of town close to the river and I do not know whether they are building any south of town or not. Those on the west side of town are on a high elevation and will command several miles around. We were out on grand review yesterday. Negley's Division was nearly all out. There were five Major Generals out to see us and inspect us. General Rosecrans, General McCook, General Crittendon, General Roussaeu and General Thomas, besides others that I did not know. We are in the 3rd Brigade and 2nd Division commanded by General Negley and I believe we are in the 14th Army Corps commanded by General Thomas. There is occasionally a picket post attacked, but they do not do any great damage as they put out a good many men on each post so that they are afraid to come very close. They sit on their horses and shoot at our pickets but are so far off the ball dont reach them.

I got the letter that **Will Leonard** wrote me and answered it. I do not know how long it has been since I answered it. I suppose he has got it before this time. I would like to know who writes or tells such stuff at home that Walters was trying to get a discharge by whining around. I say it is a lie and anybody says so tells what is not so. Walters is in the same mess that I am in and I know something about as well as anybody else. Walters stands his turn of guard and other light duty. He does not go out on picket any as it is a good piece to walk. He is on guard here at camp about twice a week. Anybody says that he is a stout man has not got good sense as the looks of the man tells enough. He does not act the baby as much as some folks think he is. If he was, he would have been at home and discharged long ago. I suppose that John Boley knows more than the whole company as he is the first one in the Company that I have heard of that said **Abb** was so sick. If he was sick that morning, I did not know anything about it, neither did Till as he ate hearty enough for breakfast. So that is all he knows about such things. But I am not going to write anything more about it as I find it is no use as I could not satisfy you if I would write a month about the one thing somebody else would tell you differing. So there it would be again. But I must close for this time. I got the stamps that you sent me. Direct your letter to John Leonard, 21st Regiment, ... You need not put Co. A on them in care of anybody as a fellow by the name of Curry (*Capt James L Curry*) has got to be Capt of our Company. Give my best respects to all inquiring friends, if any there wonder this time.

John Curry Leonard to Elizabeth F. Kleckner

32. Dear Sister May 6th, 1863

I received your letter dated the 25th of April and was glad to hear from you. I am well at present and hope these few lines may find you the same. It has been tolerable cold last night and today and is drizzling rain. It hardly ever rains here unless it gets cold enough to almost freeze as it falls and hardly ever rains when it is very warm. You said that men had gone to Mr Struble a visiting. I would not mind being there too myself to pay them a visit especially if Ol was at home. There was a man came over to see us the other day from one of the Indiana Regiments, I believe. And who do you think it was. It was old Avy. I did not expect to see him down in Dixie. But he is fat and hearty and looks as much like a soldier as anybody. The health of the Regiment is very good at present. There was three died out of the Regiment lately, but was through carelessness of the Surgeon who did not get them to a hospital and they died in camp. He would not excuse one of them from duty the day he died and when the boy went to get medicine the second time, ordered him bucked and gagged. He died about 5 oclock that afternoon. He belonged to Company G. There has been considerable talk of us getting horses and being mounted infantry, but I guess it is all talk.

You wanted to know what I thought of **I. Kleckner (Abb & Till's** father). I think as the man did when the mule kicked him. I consider where it comes from. We cannot expect any more of a man that never reads anything but

Vallandigham papers and wont believe anything, only what that old Courier says. I am sorry there is such an ignorant man as him living north of the Ohio River. I believe there is Union men that are Democrats and perhaps the strongest kind, but if there are any they would not take such a lying sheet as the Courier. **Tilden Kleckner** is well. He does not say anything about sending any money home. He spends a good deal as well as myself.

There was no way of sending money only by letter and it is not a very safe way of sending money. When we were at Nashville I saw Richard Hawkins. He was there all the time that **Joseph Twining** was in the hospital. He says that **Jo's** knapsack is there yet and that his wife cant get it till she sends power of attorney. He says there is 5 dollars in it but that the man in charge of the hospital will not let anybody have it till he gets orders from her. For my part I do not know anything about it. Sometime ago you wanted to know something about a small envelope that **Till** sent you. It was one that **Abb** had for a long time. I guess I never wrote anything about it. I will quit writing for this time. Give my respects to all inquiring friends and oblige me.

John C. Leonard to Elizabeth F. Kleckner

33. Dear Sir Murfreesboro, Tenn June the 17th, 1863

I received your letter today and was glad to hear from you. I have just come in from picket where I was all night. It was very warm here yesterday and today we almost melted going out on picket. We have to carry our knapsacks out on picket with us. It is not hard enough to walk out on picket without carrying 25 or 30 pounds with us. I expect they will make us carry brick after awhile, but it is done to make us used to carrying them in warm weather. There was two boys come to the Regiment today. They were Louis Lafferty and a fellow from Findlay by the name of Godfrey Nusser. They are as hearty as they can be. Lafferty left us at Lexington, Kentucky. He was sick and was not able to go with us. So Capt James Neibling told him to go home. We raised a collection, every man giving something if he had it to give. I gave him the last quarter I had. We are looking for Jacob Hazen and **Twining.** The excitement about moving has all died off and there is not much talk of us moving now. It has been middling wet here for a couple weeks back and the corn, what is of it, looks well. I saw corn yesterday that was out in silk. It was only a small patch. The raspberries are ripe and the boys are gathering apples and stewing them. They make very good sauce, especially for a soldier. I do not think there is much danger of me being a very big drinker of anything stronger than water as it is mighty hard to get anything else. There is, however, some whiskey and .... water called wine to be had for two dollars a quart, but it cant be got only by officers or through orders from them. You need not be any ways uneasy about me drinking. I have the first time to get drunk yet, although I do not believe it will hurt anyone to drink a little when it is cold and wet and when we have to stand guard in the rain. I am listening with patience to hear of the Conscript Law being put in force and I hope they will take every young man that is able bodied and fit to carry a gun and send him to the front. We will put them through on double quick. **Tilden Kleckner** is well and he told me to ask you what his father thinks of the war and the government "proclamation". I shall have to quit for this time. I do not expect you can read this. If you cant I will try to write the next one a little better. I still remain your son. Write soon.

John C. Leonard to Samuel B. Leonard (*his father*)

34. Dear sister Decherd Station, Tenn July the 17th, 1863

I received your kind and welcomed letter yesterday and was glad to hear from you, also to hear that the folks was all well. I am well at present and hope these few lines may find you the same. We are still in camp at Decherd Station, Tenn. Nothing of importance has transpired since our arrival at this place. There are Rebel deserters come into our lines every day, there was 50 come in yesterday. There has been no fighting done since we came here, everything is quiet in front. Some of the boys are out 7 or 8 miles in front and have not been interrupted.

There is a squad goes out of the Regiment nearly every day to gather blackberries. There is 2 or 3 goes out of each company to gather for their company. There are plenty of them about 2 miles from camp. Rations have been tolerable scarce since we came to this place till the present time. We have drawn pretty plenty this morning. Our knapsacks have all been lost and everything that was in them. We have neither woolen blankets nor tents but we have got rubber blankets and we make a kind of shelter with them. It is tolerable cool here at nights and we do not sleep as well as we would in a good bed. We do not know when we will get blankets. We have heard nothing from the **49th Ohio Regiment** since we came here but we suppose they were in the fight.

I suppose that we will be paid off in a few days as the paymaster came in last night. I do not know whether I will send any money home or not as there is not a safe way of sending it and I will have to use considerable to buy thread, paper, postage stamps and other things that I lost and will have to have. It may seem as that such things will not cost much, but you cannot get them for nothing here. The pen that I spoke about **Abb** did not have it but two or three days and I did not suppose you would care anything about it for that time I wrote to you once that I had the pen when we

first got to Murfreesboro and I suppose you never got the letter. But it is lost now and if I had known that you had wanted it you should have had it, for nothing but I would not have taken less than the 5 dollars from anybody else. I spoke about sending it home once but **Till Kleckner** lowed you would not care anything about it and they are middling dear to buy them here, so I thought I would keep it. It is a fine thing if John Ruckman has got his eyes open and it seems to me if we ever get home there will be some more get there eyes opened or entirely shut one or the two. I heard that M. J. R. was a copperhead if she is pleased to let me know. You need not tell her that I asked you. I got a letter from **Aunt Martha** a few days after we left Murfreesboro. She was not very stout yet. I have not answered the letter yet.

John C. Leonard to E. F. Kleckner

35. Dear sister Decherd Station, Tenn August the 10th, 1863

It is now dark and I am writing by candle light. It has not yet been role call. But the drums will beat in a few moments. I thought I would write you a few lines as I was afraid we would leave here before I get a letter from you. I got those papers yesterday and have read all that was worth reading. I think I should be ashamed to have my name in the paper especially for such a thing as that. You will hear what **Tilden** thinks about his folks if you can get to see a letter that he wrote home. I am well and as fat, ragged and dirty as ever and hope these few lines will find you well.

Jacob Hazen is not going home now. He is going to clerk for our Sutler awhile. He gets $25 a month. I sent my likeness with the orderly sergeant of our company who is going home to get conscripts to fill up our Regiment. There was five out of the Regiment went, I believe, and three commissioned officers. He is going to leave them at the post office in Findlay. Also a likeness of **Tilden Kleckner** that is directed to you which he wanted you to take care of till he gets home. He got his likeness taken to send to you in a small case but he got it spoiled. My likeness is directed to **Pap**. There is also a small case with mine, done up in the same package, that I had lowed to get my picture taken in but I thought it would not pay. You can give the case to **Robert** or July. **Tilden** had lowed to send his likeness home but he got so mad that he would not do it. His picture is taken with a group of 6 or 8. He had directed it to Nancy but took another notion and he wants you to keep it. I got a letter from **Aunt Martha**. She is well but Elija Jane is at her Uncle Johns. She is sick but not bedfast. She has a pain in her stomach and side. **Aunty Martha** is in Petersburg, Ohio, working in the tavern. One of the Brigades of our Division left here today and I heard that the 1st Brigade had orders to leave tomorrow. I do not know whether we will go tomorrow or not. I rather think we will stay here for awhile. I guess I will quit writing tonight and finish it in the morning. We have had role call and the most of the boys are gone to bed. Good bye.

John C Leonard to Elizabeth F. Kleckner

Tuesday morning, the 11th, 1863

We are still here in camp and no sign of moving. The 1st Brigade has not left yet. I do not know whether they will go today or not. If I was at home I should like very well to go east with you but you can tell them I am all right side up with care. I want you and **Aunt Martha** to write me a letter when you get there. Please let me know in your next letter whether the Nashville Weekly Union comes to **Pap** and what you think of it. You can let some of those copperheads read it if they want to. I guess I have wrote all I can think of this time. Give my respects to all inquiring friends (East and West). You will have to excuse me for writing this letter. I was afraid that we would leave here sometime in a hurry and I would not get time to write where those things were. I have got another gold pen but it is not as good as the first one I had. I wrote **Martha Jane Leonard** a letter some time ago but I have not got an answer for it. I would like to know whether M. J. R. is mad at me (if she is, I am glad of it). How is my hoss getting along? I think he will be big enough to ride before long. If **Pap** will break him to ride, you can ride him when you want to. I wish you and grand **Mam** a safe journey east. Nothing more this time.

John C. Leonard to Elizabeth F. Kleckner

36. Dear Sister August 31st, 1863

I once more take my pen in hand to let you know that I am well at present and hope you are in good health. I received a letter the 25th and one the 31st of this month and was glad to hear from you. We are still in the same old camp ground in which we arrived the 19th instant between two large mountains. The valley that we are camped in is about a mile wide. We have not seen the sun rise nor set since we came to this camp and when we want to see out we have to look straight up. The sun gets up over the mountain about 8 oclock and goes down behind the other mountain about 5. It is not very healthy here in this valley. I think there is a small stream running through close to our camp by the name of Crow Creek.

Yesterday I commenced to write you a letter in answer to the one I got a few days before. I got about half done writing and the orderly came and detailed me for fatigue. There was 24 out of the Regiment. We had to go to Stephenson to get rations for the Divisions and we did not get back till about 7 oclock. When I got back the Regiment was in great confusion. Everything was torn down and packed in the wagons and they were ready to move. They had orders to be ready to move at 8 oclock at night. They had everything in readiness to start but when the time came the order was countermanded and we were ordered to wait till morning, but this morning we had orders to put up our tents again. There is an order just going round through the company that we would go tomorrow for certain and we may go tonight for all I know. The report is that our men are crossing the river (Tennessee) at 4 different places on the pontoon bridges.

I was not very particular about that girl that I wanted to know about. I thought perhaps you had heard something she had said about me. I think that Kate had better be careful and not tell any lies or they will toss her out of meeting. You wanted to know who all was present when that picture was taken of **Till**. Well, Chauncy Boucher & Wes Bradford were the two sergeants. Sam Pickett, Jacob Twining, David Rosenberger, Shel Henderson, **Solomon Wells**, Jacob Hazen and there were several standing around that were strangers. The one that is by the side of **Tilden** with his hand up on his face is Jacob Hazen and **Tilden** thinks it was Chauncy Boucher on the other side. I was not there at all. I could not leave camp when they went, neither was Steve along. Tilden says to tell you to get that picture put in a frame if it dont cost too much so it can be hung up by the side of the wall. Tilden says he wants you to tell **his folks** that he is going to gamble his money away after this and that if it was to do over again he would not send a cent of money home. He says you must not let them look at that picture too much for it will not be healthy for a copperhead to look at it too much. **Tilden** says that you can let **his folks** read this letter if you see fit. Also **Tilden** says if his **Daddy** votes for Vallandigham that he never wants to go inside of his house again and he wants you to tell **his father**. So I guess that I will quit writing for this time. My respects and good wishes I send to all who are for the persecution of the war and if there is any of the copperheads wants anything of me, they will have to come down to Alabama and they can have my prompt attention in any way they see fit to meet me. Yours in haste,

John C. Leonard and Tilden Kleckner to E. F. Kleckner

This is the last letter of this collection written by John C. Leonard before the Battle of Chickamauga, where he was taken prisoner on September 20, 1863. He was in Libby Prison in Richmond, and died June 11, 1864 at Andersonville, Ga.

37. Dear Sister Camp General Field Hospital, two miles north of Chattanooga, Tenn. Oct 26th, 1863

It is with a great amount of pleasure that I embrace this opportunity of answering your ever welcome letter which I received a few days ago and you can rest assured that it was a welcome messenger, especially to a soldier that has to lay on the flat of his back all the time and suffer the pain of a gun shot wound. But when I enlisted, I enlisted to fight for my country and do my duty as a soldier and it was my misfortune to fall in the great Battle of Chickamauga. I fell at my post doing my duty with a number of other boys out of our Regiment and now I will have to bear it as well as I can. My wound is a pretty bad one. The ball went in below the left knee and extended downward. The ball was in my leg five days before it was cut out. Since that time I have had my leg lanced twice and now it is discharging freely and doing as well as can be expected. I think from appearance at this time I will get along pretty well. I am in the field hospital two miles north of Chattanooga. I am taken as good care of as can be in a place like this is. **Solomon Wells** is here helping to take care of our boys. It is not like being at home, but I am a great deal better off than some other poor soldiers that fell in to the Rebels hands. No doubt you have heard before this time who was killed and wounded. **John** was taken prisoner, and Joseph Camp. We all thought that the Battle of Stone River was a hard fight, but it was nothing to what this battle was. Cannonballs, shells and bullets fell around us as thick as hail. Our army is in and around Chattanooga. Our pickets and the Rebel pickets converse with one another every day and exchange papers. You spoke in your letter of sending me some money. You need not mind it. I have some money and there is no chance to buy anything here and if I need any I can get it of some of the boys. Give my respect to **father** and **mother**. I hope that **father** can see by this time the folly of voting for a traitor. You tell mother that if she wants me to come home that as soon as I am able I will try and come home.

I will have to close my letter for this by requesting you to write soon as convenient if you please. Letters do as much good as anything I can get now days.

Written for Till by Rufus Fellers, member of Company A, **21st Ohio**. For further particulars inquire of Joseph Pickett. Yours with respect. Direct to Tilden Kleckner, Co. A, **21st Ohio Regt**, in care of Lieutenant Daniel Richards.

Tilden Kleckner to Mrs. E. F. Kleckner

This is the last letter of this collection. Tilden died in the hospital three weeks after this letter was written.

Index of names mentioned in the letters.

John Curry Leonard (*son of Samuel B*) Wrote 20 letters, referred to in 16,17,18,22,24,37.
Absalom E. Kleckner (*husb of Elizabeth*) Wrote 14 letters, referred to in 3,4,6,7,8,12,13,19,26,28,19,30,31,32,34.
Tilden Kleckner (*brother of Absalom*) Wrote the last letter, referred to in 2,3,6,7,13,19,24,26,31,32,33,34,35,36.
Elizabeth F. Leonard Kleckner (*sister of John C, husband of Abh*) Wrote #25. Most of the 37 letters were written to her.

The following others were referred to in these letters. Soldiers are underlined.

Samuel B. & Isabell Leonard (*Pap, Mam*). #2, 33 were written to them. Referred to in 3,6,13,15,19,20,25,30,35
Isaac W. Leonard (*son of Benjamin and Eliza Crum Leonard*). 3
John Leonard (*brother of Isaac W*). 3
Robert L Leonard (*9 year old brother of John C and Elizabeth*). 3,4,13,19,35
William K. Leonard (*brother of Samuel B*). 13,27,30,31
Martha Jane Moorhead Leonard (*wife of William K*). 3,13,17,25,34,35
Silas and Elizabeth Leonard (*brother of Samuel B*). 3,25
Robert and Elizabeth Bayless Leonard (*father of Samuel B, Silas and William K*). 3
George Foster Leonard (*son of Abner & Margaret, cousin of Samuel B, Silas, William K*). 4
Stephen B. Leonard (*brother of George Foster Leonard*). 16,19,28,36
Solomon Wells (*brother-in-law of Stephen B*). 18,36,37
Banks Moore (*son of William Moore, grandson of Richard Bayless*). 6
Benjamin (*Ben*) Leonard (*father of Isaac W. and John*). 21
I. Kleckner (*Pap, father of Absalom, Tilden, John*). 5,7,9,13,24,25,32,33,35,36,37
John Dugeon (*neighbor, probably father of Joseph, husband of Eliza B. Leonard, sister of George Foster Leonard*). 25
Joe Twining (*close friend of John C Leonard*). Referred to in 3,4,6,8,25,26,32,33

LEONARD FAMILY HISTORY

A portrait of George Foster and Catherine Diehl Leonard, and their youngest son, Robert Erwin Leonard. Taken about 1886 or 1887 at Rohner Studio, Carroll, Ia.