

David Griffin Letters

Camp near Concord Church Tenn. March 2/63

My Dear Wife and Children, As we are expecting to move in a day or two from here, I thought that I would write a few lines to you this evening. I am well and hearty this evening, and I hope that you are the same. I received a letter from you to night [sic] dated Feb. 20th, in which you had enclosed Samuel's letter. I was glad to hear that you were all well, and that, the folks in Vt. was well when he wrote. I should think that he could tell where Henry is, so that I could write a letter to him. I guess that I shall have to write to him another letter, and ask him a few questions, but it does not do much good, for I cannot get any answer from the last one that I wrort [sic] to him. I see that they had a surprise party, I hope that it will be so that you can have a surprise party, before long, if it [crossed out] there should not be any one else there but your humble servant. I received a letter from Em. [sic] two days ago, stating that he was well, and enjoying himself first rate. I suppose that you hear from him often. I guess that I have received nearly all of your letters, or the most of them, I do not know as I ought to say anything about your letters untill [sic] I get them. If you get Samuel's likeness so that you can send it in a letter, send it to me, and I will send it back again to you. I am glad that the folks are kind to you, and I hope that they will receive their reward in doing so. I am glad in my heart that you have good meetings, and a good minister of the Gospel. I hope that you had a good visit, I have said something about it in my other letters. I do not think that Father is getting very rich in selling town lots, whereabouts has Chipman put up his house, does he think of marrying the "schoolmarm" yet. I think that Hill rather beat him but still he can take the "Old Maid for his "daddy in law," by takeing [sic] "Careline[" You do not say anything about Allen, whether he is agoing [sic] to get a woman, or not, tell him if he will come down here, I will get him as many as he can carry home, but perhaps they are not of the collor [crossed out] complexion that he would wish, we have about a dozen wenches outside the camp, and about 25 "buck niggers" they can all find enough to do, as teamsters, cooks, waiters etc, they have came in under the proclamation, evry [sic] regiment has as many or more than we do, I hope that they will all be taken away from the secesh, for it will go a good ways towards crippling [sic] the rebellion[.] I see that the Richmond (Jef. [sic] Davis'es [sic] papers,) begin to look on the dark side of the rebellion. I hope that they will feel the dark part of it, they think that they are in the last stage of the war, that they have got to fight, or die, or give up in shame. I hope that they will soon give up, so that we can all go home, in a short time.

We went out foraging yesterday, we went some seven miles and some of the roughest country I have seen for a long time, stony and hilly, the boys got some potatoes, hams, chickens, turkeys, eggs, tobacco etc., besides filling the waggons [sic] with corn and fodder. I got a few cotton seeds, that I will send to you. I think that it will grow in Mary's garden, you must plant it about the same time that they do corn, so that the frost will not kill it all that you have to do to it is to plant it in the ground. I have been to work on the bridge to day [sic], we finished it all up to night.

In Camp near Tryune [sic] Tenn. March 9th 1863

You will see by the date of this letter that we have moved since I commenced to write. I had to drill in the forenoon of the 3d, and in the afternoon we got orders to be ready to march at four o'clock, with two days rations, so I did not get any chance to write that day.

We were all ready and we started with the first Tenn. Cavalry [sic] towards the rebels, we marched about fifteen miles that night and came up to the rebel pickets, when we lay down for the rest of the night, our men took a rebel Major, prisoner that night, the next morning we were up at light, and our Cavalry [sic] commenced a skirmishing with the enemy, all the while driving them back, they captured about seventy rebel cavalymen [sic], wounding five or six, and taking a large number of horses and mules, about noon we were reinforced with the rest of our brigade, when we started on, we crossed little Harpeth river on trees that we fell across the stream, as the bridge had been burned, we went about six miles more, but did not get into any brush with the rebels, for they skedaddled too fast for us. I had to go on picket that night, it was quite cold, so that it froze hard, but nothing hapened [sic] through the night, the next morning, the 5th we started about ten o'clock, the advance soon coming up to the enemy's pickets but we did not meet with any opposition untill [sic] we got to Chapel Hill, about five miles, here our advance came up to their rear guard when sharp skirmishing commenced, as we were the rear regiment we were ordered up on a double quick, which we took for about three miles, when we formed in a battle line, and marched on, but the rebels did not make but one stand, and then they charged upon two companies of our Cavalry [sic], but they came back in order to draw the rebels back to where we were formed, but they did not come a great ways before they wheeled, and we went after them, some three miles further, but they had crossed Duck river, we had to wade a stream which was about half knee deep. As we had obeyed orders and done with one brigade, what Gen. Rosecrans ordered two to do we started back, for we were some fifteen miles in advance of the army, we marched about two miles back of where we camped the night before, our regiment did not fire a gun nor received a shot, the next day we started about four o'clock and marched some six or eight miles to this place, (Tryune [sic]) where we stayed that night, it rained hard all night, but we had some rubber blankets to stretch over us, we did not get very wet, and as I was very tired and sleepy, I fell asleep and slept so sound that I did not hear it rain, the next day we sent back for our tents and knapsacks, and moved about one mile, to where we are now, our tent came about ten o'clock, and they were very welcome, for we barely got into them when we had as heavy a thunder shower as I ever saw, but we spread down our blankets and got a good rest, yesterday we had to poliece [sic] up, (that is clean up) the streets and fix up our tents and beds, we had not got that done when we heard heavy artillery in front, and we were soon ordered "fall in," we marched out and got a position, but the firing soon ceased, they were shelling a house in which were a lot of rebel cavalry [sic], which made them scatter double quick, we stood in line untill [sic] four o'clock when we came back to camp, and we got our supper, and then we had a heavy

shower and it was quite cold, so we were glad to go to bed, so I did not write any, this morning it has come off fair and it is some warmer, we have got polieced [sic] up, and I have wrote so much, and now I must stop and get my dinner for it is after dinner time I am agoing [sic] to have some beans for my dinner.

I received a letter yesterday from you and Alice and Ida, and was glad to hear from you again and hear that was all well, it was dated Feb 25th and had the sermon, and a story in it, I liked the sermon very much. I would like to hear him preach, and to go to meeting with you but I cannot tell whether I shall ever be permitted to or not, but if not, I know that we shall meet together in Heaven. I have not answered Em.'s [sic] letter yet, but intend to as soon as I can. I have got three rings partly finished two for you and one for the children and I will send them along, you can polish them up by rubbing them with cloth, if they are not large enough for you, you can get someone to file them out a little larger, if you do not want them both, give the colered [sic] one to Mary, and keep the white one, if I can get any shells, and we are in camp for any length of time I can make some nice ones, let me know if they are of the right sise [sic], the cotton seed some of them I picked out, and a few I left them in the cotton just as they are picked of. I hope that they will grow so you can see how it looks[.]

I do not think that the Indian's will ever get down as far as you are, for I think that the Conscription will place enough men there to protect you. We got a great deal from the rebels on this last trip, in the way of forage, pork, turkeys, and chickens – so we had enough to eat all of the time, this is a rough, hilly country, but there is a good many good farms, but they do not look quite as well after we have camped upon them a while, for we burn evry [sic] rail that we can get hold of, and evry [sic] negro man goes away from them and goes with the army, they make good teamsters, negro families are sent to Nashville.

We have not received any pay yet, nor do I know when we will get any, but I hope before long[.] I do not get any more than a private, except a little extra clothing but not enough to make any difference. Wesley Baldwin has got his discharge, and if he gets home well, he will go and see you, if he does you must let him see my letters, and tell him to write me, there is no foundation to the report that the Potomac army is demoralized, it was started by some of the northern Copperheads. I hope that they will all be punished as they deserve to be. We have not received any news that is reliable, since we have been out, it is all together likely that we will remain here and untill [sic] the whole army advances, which I think by the movements will be before long, we are now in the front, on the Nashville Huntsville road, between Franklin and Murfresboro [sic], and about twenty five miles from Nashville, and about the same from the other two places, M. and Franklin[.]

I did not expect to write so much when I commenced, but I do not know when to stop. If I could talk with you for a few days, I could get catched [sic] up, the boys are all well, and are anxious if there is a fight, to be in. I do not think that you will find any of the 2nd back out when the moment comes, there was one man buried on the seventh, in Co. B,

our Co. has not got a man in the hospital[.] We mustered 43 men, now, which is about the average of the other Co's, the rest of them have died, deserted, or been discharged from service. I am as well as can be expected. I weigh 167 lbs. I will direct as you wish me to, but I think that "Nerva" is a good name for me, kiss all the babies for me and tell them that pa likes to have them all write, and I hope that I shall soon see them all, and you to [sic], give my respect to all, these few lines from a "soldier" to his wife and children, may God protect you in his mercy, good bye all,

D. B. Griffin

[kiss]

Camp near Tryune [sic] Tenn. March 17th 1863

Dear Wife and children, As We have not got much to do this Afternoon, and I do not know what to do, but to write a few lines to you, although I have not any news to tell you. I am well and hearty all of the time, as well as the rest of the boys. I do not think there is a dozen men on the sick list in camp. We are getting very hot weather for the last few days, and the trees and grass begins to put forth their green leaves and blades. I saw some peach trees yesterday, that had commenced blossoming, so you see that we shall soon have summer, again, but I hope that we shall not have to stay down here during another summer, but things look now as though we are agoing [sic] to remain here for some time, to come, for we are fortifying very strong, through the whole line, and if the rebels undertake to drive us away, I hope that they will be met with a warm reception. It is reported here that the rebels are evacuating Vicksburgh [sic] and concentrating at Chattanooga [sic], but if [crossed out] we have nothing of any reliability just yet, if it is so they may undertake to drive us back from here. We do not get only now and then a paper, and when we do there is not anything in them worth reading. I have not received any letters since I last wrote to you. I have written to Emery, the reason why I have not written to you before, is because we were expecting our pay evry [sic] day, but we have not got it yet, and when we do get any we do not get but two month pay, but they tell us it will not be but a few days before we get the rest of our pay for six months[.]

I hardly know what to write for I have not got anything to write about, it is very warm and the boys are playing ball, pitching quaits [sic], etc. and when we are not drilling or on guard, we pass away the time as best we can. I have partly learned how to play chess, so I study at that some. We had a sermon last Sunday from the Chaplain of the 1st East Tenn. Cav, he preached very well, that reg. is composed of men who have been driven from their homes in Tenn. by the rebels, for their Union sentiments, and they sware [sic] vengunce [sic] on those that have driven them away from their families and friends, they cannot even hear from their loved ones at home, as we do.

Wednesday morning 18th I have nothing new to write this morning, but I am well and I hope that I shall hear from you soon and hear that you are all well, and getting along

well. I expect there will be quite a time among the old batch [crossed out] bachelors, for they will all try to get married, in order to avoid the conscription, on the first call. I should like to see some of the young men of Minnesota rally to the call of their country, let them come forward at once, and try to end this wicked war, it will be done if every man in the North haves [sic] to come into the field, and the sooner they do it the better. As well as I love my family, (and God knows that I love them dearly) I could not stay there, while my country needs me. I should like to see you all, and perhaps I may before long but I do not build any "castles in the air" but time flies fast, and it will not be long before my term of enlistment will end, may we all live to join one another, again on this earth. I cannot think of any more to write this time so "goodbye all,"

D.B. Griffin

In Camp near Tryune [sic] Tenn. March 22nd 1863

My Dear "Nerva" and babies, friends and neighbors, one and all, I will try to write a few lines to you to day[sic] . I am well to [crossed out] and in good spirits. We have not had a great deal to do for the last week, but it still has been a prety [sic] busy time in camp, for the pay-master has been here and payed [sic] us off for two months, so we have had a little money to pay up our debts, and get a few things that we need, and a good many things that we do not actualy [sic] need, such as Whiskey at \$2.00 a quart, and quick sales at that, cheese 50cts a lb, but as your humble servant thinks more of his little family, than he does of gratifying his own desires, I have not indulged in such "costly" luxury. I will send \$20.00 to you in this letter, and I hope it will not be long before I am able to send you more. I have got all the money that I want to keep, for I do not need any thing but paper, ink, envelopes and stamps. I have got 25cts. worth (24 sheets) paper, and I have sent \$1.00 for stamped envelopes, I owed \$2.00 which I have payed [sic], and have got \$2.50 left, so you see that my "spree" did not cost me much [.] But the Capt. told us this morning, that we had had a two days spree now, and discipline was laid aside, and no notice has been taken of what we had done for the last two or three days, but that he wished it all stopped now, for the enemy were right in our front and that we were expecting an attack from them at any th [crossed out] time and he wished that we would all be ready to fall in at a moments [sic] notice, and be ready to "fight" if called upon to do so, and we are all ready, and willing too, and if needs be to benefit our country and friends, to die in the service of our country, and if theirre [ir crossed out] was a few of the Traitors of Fillmore Co. or Minn. in the lines of the enemy to stand up and fight in the ranks of the rebels against us, they would stand higher in our estimation to day [sic], than what they now do. I have heard a great deal of talk amongst the boys of the Reg. in denouncing their friends even, or them who they supposed were their friends, but they have denounced the doing of the administration, and are trying to discourage, those who have left all, home friends, and evry [sic] thing, in order to save the country from ruin and infamy, and in so doing they (the Copperheads) have got the ill will of all good Union loving men, and Officers in the

army, and if they persist in uttering their traitors [sic] sentiments, in the North I, nor any one else will be responsible, if their folly falls upon their own heads. The K.G.Cs. [see footnote below] are nothing else, but a den of lothing [sic], hissing reptiles and if the soldiers ever go home "victorious," (and I believe they will,) they will spurn them as they would so many serpents, wreaking vengense [sic] on them where they can find them, amongst which are the editors of the Chatfield Democrat, and others in Fillmore Co, but I hope that they will repent and help save the union. I am anxious to see the conscript act enforced, but I hardly think that they will ever be brought into action, but we cannot tell, what may turn up before three months roll around. We hear a good many rumors about Vicksburgh [sic], we heard the same rumor that you did, but no one believed it, it is the general belief that they are evacuating Vicksburgh [sic], they had a fight at Yazo [sic] Pass, our men taking a good many men and boats. I think from the present appearences [sic] that it will not be long before the Miss. river will be open for the navigation of the North, but we cannot believe hardly anything that we hear in the army. I do not intend to write any thing to you that is not true. I received a letter from you on the 20th, dated the 10th, so you see that it takes about ten days for a letter to go through by mail, and I will try to write one to you evry [sic] week, if I can get time. I should I like to have been there and had a visit with you, when the Mrs. Wheelers and others were there. I hope you had a good visit. I hope that Lenora is not that bad put to for a beau, that she would concent [sic] to have an old gray headed "married" man go home with her, I do not think that "little Dan" steps up to her very prompt[.] It seems that the "Old Maid," (Hill) got his "Ebenezer" raised a little when he was amilking [sic] "Rosa", and he could not contain himself. You wrote that evry [sic] thing was very high there, and that you did not know how people were a going to get along, but if you could see some of the folks down here, and they not able to get anything at any price, you would not worry at all, about it, if we all live through it, and are able to gain our [crossed out] the day, times will be better again. I hope that the weather is warmer up there, by this time. It is quite warm and pleasant [sic] here, some of the trees look quite green, peach trees are blossoming and garden flowers are in bloom, so you see that it is a good deal earlier [sic] here, than there, but still this is called a late spring, some years they plant their corn in March, but there is not much farming going on where the army stops, in fact they cannot do anything, no negroes, no horses, no fences, no cattle, nor anything left but houses and land and unless they are union men, they will not be of any use to them. It is amusing to see some of the old rich secesh, beg of when we were out after forage, but it is of no use, for where we can find any we take it, such is the way they are a getting their Southern rights.

I can see that Alice gains in her writing some. I receive her little letters with a good deal of pleasure. I hope that she will continue to write to me, can she read my letters? tell her that she must get her new dresses done, so that when I come home, (some off of these days,) she can show them to me, but I hope that she is a good girl, and helps her Mother and Sister and little brother. I thought that Edgar would weigh more than 33 lbs. by the looks of his picture, but he has to grow some before he gets as "big" as his "daddy," and Ida, "my black eyed girl" she tries to write me once in a while, if she keeps

on a trying, she will soon get so that she will write as well as I can, you must write about all of them. I hardly think that they will escape both the meazels [sic] and hooping [sic] cough, but if they get either, be carefull [sic] and keep them warm, and they will get along, and Mary and her babies too. I think of you all, and often. Mary you must write a few lines to your brother, if you can, you and "Nerva" can simpathise [sic] with each other, in your husbands [sic] absence, do you ever hear anything from Em's [sic] brother in the army, if so where is he now if living. I have not heard from nor seen him since we left Corrinth [sic]. Now "Nerva" I cannot think of much more to write this time. I want that you should answer this as soon as can, for I shall want to know whether you received the money or not, we will probably get payed [sic] off again in the course of a month or so, but if we do not, and you get this, it will last you some time yet, but I must stop for this time and I hope that this will find you all in good health, the health of the Reg. is good as yet. Now I will bid you all a good bye once, more, hoping [sic] that it will not be but a short time before we shall be permitted to meet one another, on this earth. I remain yours forever, D.B. Griffin.

Here is a couple of rings, which I have made, one for you and one for myself. I do not know but it is too large for you, but I guess not, they are made from muscle [sic] shells got out of the Cumberland river. I have got another on my little finger, if I can get time and anything to make them with I will make the children some may our love be like these rings, having no end.

[footnote: Knights of the Golden Circle. The secret society's original objective was to create a "circle" of at least 25 new slaveholding states out of territories annexed from Mexico, Cuba, and other parts of Central and South America and the Caribbean, in order to guarantee constitutional control by the South. It later favored secession. During the Civil War, Southern sympathizers, mainly in the Northern states of Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa, were branded with the earlier name.]

Triune Tenn. April 2nd 1863

My Dear Beloved Wife and Children,

I will try to write a few lines to you to day so as to let you know how I am, and what we are about. I am as well to day as usual, and I hope that I shall remain so during my term of enlistment or during the war, which I hope will be ended before another Winter, and for one I cannot see, for the life of me, what will hender [sic] the North from putting down evry [sic] armed traitor in the South, before that time, and I have faith to believe that it will be done. We are getting a strong army here again, and we are strongly fortified all along the line, both with siege pieces and field, and line after line of intrenchments, so if the rebel army sees fit to attact [sic] us, they will meet with a "warm" reception, but it is not generally [sic] thought, that they will make an attact [sic], but if they do not old "Rosy" will go out to see them before a great many weeks rolls around, and I do not think you will find many of the boys but what will march boldly up to the scratch, at the first sound

of the bugle, for we are anxious to end this contest and return to our families and friends, but we do not wish to go home, before we can do so honorably, and have our country at peace, not untill [sic] evry [sic] traitor shall be silenced and put down never again to show themselves, as such, as long as we have as good a government as we live under now, although they may do acts under the present circumstances, that would, in times of peace, be deemed unconstitutional. I hope that no one in Minn. Bi [crossed out] will go against the administration, nor any of its acts, untill [sic] the rebellion in the Southern states is put down, for ever.

You must not think, because a man is a Democrat, that he is opposed to the doings of the North, and in favor of the South, for there is just as strong supporters of the present administration in the democratic party as there is in any other party, in fact, a man cannot be a democrat unless he is in [crossed out] a supporter of the union.

Afternoon, Well we have been called out to meet the rebels, we went about two miles, and took a position behind a hill, and laid in readiness for them, but the 1st Tenn [sic] Cavalry [sic] drove them back acrost [sic] the river without any loss on either side, so after laying there about two hours we came back to camp and got our dinners. It is very warm to day [sic], but the wind blows hard, the last week in March was a cold blustering week, there was a frost nearly evry [sic] night, and the last two days we had "snow squals [sic]," and rain, it was as cold up there accordingly, you have had pretty cold weather[.]

I received a letter from you last night, dated March 23d, and was glad to hear from you all again, for it was almost two weeks since I heard from you. I am glad that you all keep well, for I should not like to hear that any of you were sick, and I not able to get home. I am glad that your neighbors see a little to your wellfare [sic], if nothing more than to shovel the snow off from your wood pile. I wish that you will [crossed out] give Mr. DeGrooat my best wishes. I hope that he is not a "Copperhead" as they call the "K.G.Cs," and I do not think that he is, for I do not believe that any man, who wants to save the Union, can be one. I hope that all in Spring Valley will try to encourage those who have enlisted in the cause of their country, by urging them on, by kind words, and kind acts to their families, and friends in their abesence [sic], and if we ever we [crossed out] are permitted to join our friends and families, that they will be amply rewarded, in having a peacefull[sic] and prosperous [sic] land to live in the remainder of their days, and if we cannot reward them with our hands, may God reward them in his mercy.

I wrote a letter to you a few days ago, in which I put \$20.00, which was all that I could spare, and I hope that you will get it all safe if not write to me as soon as you get this we only got two months pay. We are expecting the other four months pay this week or next, and then I will send you forty or fifty dollars more, and you had better keep the most of it for your own use, for it may be a long time before we are payed [sic] off again. I have sent for the Weekly Nashville Union for six months, and it will be sent direct to you, you will find nearly all of the news from the army in that and a good deal better than I can write it to you, and also a good deal of other news, there has a good many of the boys

signed for it in the same way, I think that it will do you more good than the dollar. I think that you have got the children some very good dresses, if they were dear, if you lived in the South, you could not get them any, at any price, not hardly any thing else, if all accounts are true, I do not see how they are agoing [sic] to live another year in the way they do now, almost entirely cut off from all communication from any other part of the globe, and their slaves leaving them, and where ever we go they do not raise anything, if they do, it will not do them any good, so unless they give up soon, they will be almost in a starving condition by another winter, but we look for some great change to be made within the next three months, and I think that it will be for the better for us. I sent three papers to you a few days ago, and I will send you a few more, if I can get hold of any good ones. I will stop untill [sic] after supper.

Evening Well we have been to supper, and had dress praderade [de crossed out.] I had some beef stake[sic], and coffee and crackers for supper. We have got orders to be ready to march in the morning at seven o'clock with two days rations in our haversacks, with shelter tents and blankets, picks and spades, so I think that we are about to advance our lines some. We have just had shelter tents issued to us. I cannot tell how I shall like them, they are pieces of canvass [sic] about six feet long and five foot wide, they are so fixed that two of them go together and make a good shelter, they are to be all the tents we have. We have also changed our muskets for the Enfield rifles, which are better guns and they are not as heavy as the muskets were, so you see that we are fully armed and equipped for the summer campaign, we have also got clothes enough to last us untill [sic] July, so you see too that "Uncle Sam" feeds and clothes his boys better than any other army in the world. I hope that Dan will come out there this spring and get him a home as soon as he can. There was two or three regiments taken prisoners at Franklin, as you said that you had heard, but that is about twenty miles from here. We were out some ten miles yesterday after forage, we did not see any rebels, we got all the waggons [sic] loaded up with corn and fodder, and got back to camp just at dark, the peach trees are all in full bloom, and I saw a few apple trees in blossom, the forrest [sic] trees are getting quite green, so I think that we will not have any more cold weather this spring. I have not got any shells to make rings with now, but if the streams get low again, perhaps I can get some. As it is getting late and this sheet is nearly full I shall have to close, so you must excuse me for this time. I should like to talk to you all night if I could, but I must stop and bid you all a good bye so good bye "Nerva" Alice, Ida and Edgar, with a kiss [here] D. B.Griffin.

In Camp near Triune April 11th 1863

My Dear Wife, Children and friends, I once more have got down upon my knapsack, with my pen in my hand, to write a few lines to you all, it has been a number of days since I last wrote, and I have been a putting it off, in hopes that I should get a letter from you, but I will not wait any longer. I am as well to day [sic] as usual. It is quite warm and dry, we have not had any rain for some time, and the springs are getting rather low

around here. The trees are putting on their new dress of green, and it begins to look like summer. There is not a great deal of farming done in this vicinity. I have seen them a planting corn in one place. We have been kept pretty busy since I last wrote, we have been out in front, a reconoitering [sic] and feeling of the enemy, but we did not see any here. There has been a number of skirmishes near Franklin [see footnote below], we could hear the firing [sic] here, and we were called up in line, ready to reenforce them if called upon, but we were not called upon. We are called out evry [sic] morning, with arms and accoutrements, and then we were either on drill, inspection, muster, review, or working on details, foraging [sic] or upon guard or picket, so we find plenty to do all of the time. I have not got any war news to tell you, if I had, you will get the news in the Nashville papers, which I had directed to you. We hear that they have commenced bombarding Charleston, and we are all anxiously awaiting the result, and also we look for something from Vixburgh [sic].

I have sent you \$20.00, and this makes the second letter since, I will let you know of it and evry [sic] one I write untill [sic] I hear from it, or from you. I was asking Capt. Barnes to day [sic] if he knew Mr. Gaskill in Spring Valley, he sayed [sic] that he did, and that Sargeant [sic] Gaskill of Co. B. was a son of his, so I went to him and told him what you had said about his brother being sick, he had not heard of it, he is anxious to hear from them, you must write about them, when you write, we are all anxious to hear from our friends, no matter from what source, so when you write you must write about all of the friends of the 2nd. Sargeant [sic] Gaskill is well. I have just heard that Luther Peasley and Willard Scott of Napierville were both Captain in the 105th Ill. regiment, now at Murfresboro [sic], and that Thad. Scott, had got a divorce from his wife, she was Elonor Butler, there is a good many of the Ill boys that I knew there. I shall be glad to see them, and shall go and see them if I get a chance. We have just received orders to have three days rations ready for our haversacks, so there is something for us to do I expect. We were mustered yesterday, in order to know how many men it will take to fill up our regiment, there has not many of the Deserters returned as yet. I do not know how many men there is in the Reg. but there is between 5 and 6 hundred.

I sent three papers to Alice the other day, so she must excuse me from writing this time, we have not got payed [sic] yet but expect it in a few days. I do not think of much to write this time so you must wait untill [sic] I get something to write about, the boys are all well that we knew, write as often as you can and oblige your husband, and friend, so Good bye all, this is from "Corp." Griffin, Co F. 2nd reg. Minn. Vol.

[Footnote: On April 10, 1863, CSA Gens. Earl Van Dorn, Bedford Forrest, attacked Union Gen. David Stanley at Franklin, Tennessee, then withdrew to Spring Hill.]

Camp Steadman, Triune Tenn. Apr. 16th 1863

Dear Wife and Children, I will write a few lines to you this afternoon, in order that you may know how I am. I am as well as usual to day [sic], but as I was on picket duty last

night, I am some sleepy and tired. There has not anything turned up of any interest since I last wrote to you. We have been out a foraging once, and as the fortifications are nearly all completed, we do not have as much to do, as we did have for a while. The rebs. [sic] attackted [sic] our men at Franklin, but they "mistook their man," and come off "second best," but you will see an account of it in the Nashville paper, which I hope you have received all right. I have only sent it for six months, so you will know how to pay the postage on it. I see the daily evry [sic] day, and there is nearly all in the weekly that there is in the daily, so if you get them, all correct, you will get more news from the army than I possibly could write. I think that it advocates the views of the soldiers about as well as any paper that I have seen, you must try and let Father's folks read them, as well as others. I received a letter from you two days ago, which was dated the 4th in which you sent Samuel's likeness and his letter. I cannot see the first look of Samuel in the likeness, some say that he resembles me, but I failed to see it. I have not received any letter from him[.] I received a letter to day from Em dated the 4th, he was well, and was expecting to move from there, in a short time, to where he did not know, he says that his [~~crossed out~~] his folks, and Dan's folks, were expected to be there, (with you) this spring, and that if we were there, we could have a nice visit, but thinks that if we ever get home we can make up for lost times and "back rations." I hope that we will be permitted to join our littl [sic] family circle before another fall, and I think that I shall be at home by a year from this fall, if living, so keep up good, cheer, for the time flies fast around. I was glad to learn that you were all well, and that you had received the money all right. "Nerva" I enjoy myself better, when I know that you are not a suffering for the want of any thing, to make you comfortable, than I should to keep more money by me to spend for that, that I do not need, and if, you do not blame yourself, no one will blame you for getting what you need, and what the children need. I think that you sacrasficed [sic] comfort enough when you let me go into the army, but I hope that we shall both live long enough to be amply rewarded for all of our trials, and that we shall see again our country at peace with all nations, and all traitors blotted out from the face of the earth.

I think that Mrs. Nichols is rather getting the start of you and some others. I should think that she was old enough to do better, but then I expect that the world will keep a rolling around untill [sic] the end of time, and that the people will multiply and replenish it. I would like to see Alf's boy, and them to [sic], till [sic] them to write to me, perhaps I shall see some of the Minnesota boys down here before long, to fill up the regiment, as conscripts, and I hope that they will all come willingly. I see that you are having an early spring. I hope that you can raise enough on your place to eat, and some to spare. If you have any way of paying off our little debts, do it and in any way that you are a mind to, but I want that you should keep enough money by you for your own use. I guess that I can send you more in the next letter, the boys are all well and hearty. I do not think of any more to write this time, so I will bid you all a good bye again and close, this from your husband and father. D.B. Griffin

Friday morning Apr. 17th 1863

Good morning "Nerva," it is a very pleasant [sic] morning here, how is it there. The first Tenn. Cav. had a skirmish yesterday with the rebels, in front of us, they captured six or seven, including a Lieutenant [sic], and wounded and killed a number, our loss was three wounded, one mortally. We were expecting an attack [sic] from them this morning, and we were up and ready for them, but they did not come on. We have had a considerable of rain for the last few days, but it has come off pleasant [sic] this morning, the trees are nearly as green as they are in the summer, but it is late spring for this country. I will send you five (\$5.00) dollars in this letter and will try to send you some in my next, we are to be payed [sic] in a day or two, for four months. I have sold enough of my rations to come to about four dollars, and when I am payed [sic] I am going [sic] to send Harpers Weekly to Alice and Ida, it will not make them feel bad will it? and perhaps some other papers. I had thought some of getting a furlough this spring if I could but I have given up the idea, for it would be only a few days that I could be with you, and when I had to come back you would feel worse than you to [crossed out] would, not to see me at all, so I will stick to it, until [sic] the end of my term, or to the close of the war, if I am well and lucky. I should like to see you all well enough but it will hardly pay. If Dan comes out there, (but I hardly think he will) tell him to write to me, and I should like to have others write to me to [sic]. You have never told me how much your taxes were last winter, I wish that you would, how much is a good cow worth up there? or the two year old? steer, what is wheat worth?

The Paymaster is here to day so we shall have some mo [crossed out] green backs, again. We have a good deal of reading matter in the camp just now. We take the Daily Nashville Union, and we get the Louisville and the Cincinnati [sic] papers, and a plenty of other reading matter, so we manage to enjoy ourselves first rate. My bedfellow has been unwell for some time past, but he is on the gain again. I will close this letter again and bid you all a good bye, again.

Good bye "Nerva,"

Good bye Alice, From your husband

Good bye Ida, and Father

D. B. Griffin

Good bye Edgar

Camp Steadman, Triune Apr. 27th 1863

Dear Wife and children – I will write a few lines to you this morning. I am well, as usual, and hope that you are all as well. I have not any news to write to you, we have not had any fight here yet, the reg. was out after forage the other day, and there was a squad of rebel cavelry [sic] near there, but a man gave them some signs, that the Federals were a coming, and they skedaddled, but we took the man prisoner [sic] and told the woman if she had any thing in the house, that she wanted to save, to take them out, quick, she

took out some of her bedding, and the match was lit, and soon the house was in ashes. I like to see the General's come down close upon the rebels, and their simpathisers [sic]. We are looking for something to be done before long, somewhere in the army, the news in the papers, go to show, that the move has commenced in the right way, the people are coming out for the Union every day.

I received a short letter from Samuel, which I will send to you. I wrote to him yesterday and I have asked him a good many questions, I tell you. I will tell [crossed out] send you ten dollars (\$10.00) in this letter, which makes \$25.00 this payment, you must keep count, so as to know whether you get it all or not. I am looking for a letter from you, which will tell me all about the folks upon the Prairie, as I suppose that you are there now. I should like to be there with you but there is no use of wishing, do you get any of the papers yet, and how do you like them, does anyone read the Nashville Union.

We are having very nice weather now, but it looks a little like rain, this morning. I cannot think of any thing to write this morning, so I will not try, the boys are all well, in the Co. and in the reg. I hope that we will remain so, the Tenn [sic] Cavelry [sic] lose a man about evry [sic] day, and there is a good many sick, you will see a good many letters from them in the Nashville Union, they are true union men, if some of the Copperheads had to go through what they have been through, they would curse the South, slaves and all, as bad as they do, may they soon be permitted to see or hear from their friends and families in east Tenn [sic], but I must stop for the want of something to say so good bye one and all, this from your beloved husband,

To "Nerva," and the babies

kiss them all for me and

take one for yourself.

Corp. D. B. Griffin

Camp Steadman, Triune Tenn. May 4th 1863

My Dear Wife and Children: Again I will try to write a few lines to you all. I am as well as usual this evening. We have kept ourselves prety [sic] busy since my last. In the first place we had to turn over our Sibley tents, and fix up our shelter (or "dog") tents as the boys call them, we button two or four together, and then fix them up from the ground, about four feet at the sides and 7 or 8 feet at the top, and then fix up our beds under them, and then we fixed up a shade over us and in front of us, so you see we can sit in the shade, or lay down and enjoy a good nap. I have just finished fixing mine this forenoon.

We had muster the last of Apr, so U.S. owes two months more pay, and I guess that we will not have to wait so long for our pay as we did before. I have sent you \$25.00, \$5.00 in the first and \$10.00 each in the last two letters that I wrote to you, and I will not send

you any more untill [sic] I hear from some of that. I hope that it will all get through safe, for you need it, or will sometime, but I have been quite lucky with what I have sent, some of the boys have lost some money through the mails. We have been a drilling a Briggade [sic] drill, that is the regiments in the Briggade [sic] all drill together (four reg.) [.]

We went out this afternoon to drill, but after drilling about one hour, in battallion [sic] drill, there came up a heavy shower, and the Gen. thought that it was a going to be most to [sic] heavy for us, so dismissed [sic] us, and we came back to camp on a double quick, we had quite a shower, and is quite cool and comfortable this evening. We have had some pretty warm days here already, but we were in camp.

It has been all quiet about here for sometime, our reg. has not been out for anything for a good while. We were some expecting an attact [sic] yesterday morning, but, as usual, the rebs [sic], did not come. It is not impossible for them to try us some of these days, but we are ready for them, as I hope we always will be. We are strongly entrenched and fortified, and I think we can stand a strong pull, with them. The papers give good accounts of the army both at the Rapahanack [sic] and on the Mississippi. I hope that evry [sic] thing will be sure and to the purpose if they do have to move slow. I hope that the war will be ended before harvest, and I be able to go home safe and sound, don't you "Nerva?" I received a letter to day dated the 27th Apr. from you, and was glad to hear that you were enjoying yourself down upon the Prairie, amongst your folks and friends, and where we have passed many a hapy [sic] day together, and I hope that we will be spared to pass many more. I do not see but what you get along with the farming first rate. I hope that you will enjoy yourself better this summer, than you did last, and I think you will[.]

I have sent you three papers, which will keep your spare moments occupied some, if you get them all. I want that you should keep the pictorials, for us to look over together, if Providence permits me to return home, to my family. I was sorry to hear of the trouble that Thomas Douglass had got into but I think that he will come out all right, for I think he was a good soldier, and done as well as he could do, probably, it is not as bad as represnted [sic], I hope not. I got the same news by James Thornton's letters from Dan. Paul. I wish that you had told me where the third reg. was, and where J. Nichols is and how he is, if you can find out by his folks. I shall look for a good long letter from you when you get back to the Valley again you must tell me how they all are, and how they all get along. You must send me a piece of Mary's "new dress," if you want one like it, or else tell me what kind of a dress you want, and if it should hapen [sic] right, I might send one to you, if I could not bring you one. I hope that I can, sure "Nerva." You say that all of the folks send there [sic] best respects to me, why dont [sic] they write a few lines to me, which they will not forget my little family in my absence. I will have to stop for to night [sic] for the wind flares the candle, and it is long past bed time, in the evenings when it is pleasent [sic], the boys have good times in dancing I do not dance much myself but I enjoy the fun of the thing first rate. I think that we shall have some more rain

before morning, but I must bid you all good night, and go to bed and dream about you which I often do. "Good night."

Tuesday morning, April 5th I am well this morning. It rained quite hard in the night but it has ceased now, and the air is clean and nice, the boys are all busy now, some are getting their breakfast, others washing, etc. I expect that you would laugh to see us cooking our meals, we all have the same things to cook, but we all cook in our own way, and in our own dishes. I have baked bread a number of times, and have good luck. I make water "risings" and they come up nice as you please. We are getting bread from the Commissary [sic] now, which is very good, we have a plenty of hard tack[.]

How many bushels of Wheat have you got left after saving what you wanted? is [sic] there enough to last you untill [sic] next harvest? Do you keep a cow at the Valley? or any hen's or pigs, how does Father take the place? olet it out? I do not think that you need to look for Dan, for I do not think that he will go there, but he still may. I hope that he will, and get him a home on the prairie, did you buy any of the white willow? how do they set it out, if it does well this year perhaps I will set some out for you next spring. I see by the papers that the K.G.C.'s are a little stiller than what they were, it is best for them to do so, for the Government, is taking hold of them in some places, and they are not received with any encouragement in the South, but as you are getting the Nashville paper, now I know that you will get nearly all of the news how is the paper liked there? Does Mary take any papers? Why don't she write some to me. I sha'nt [sic] kiss her when I come home if she don't. I want that she should have "lots" of good things to eat, when I come to see her, but I cannot tell her when that will be, but I must stop for this time, you can see by my letters that when I get a letter from you, that I can find something to write about, but when I have to write two or three letters between your letter's [sic] I do not find much to write about. I had put of [sic] writing this time longer than I should if I had got one from you, perhaps you wrote one between the two last ones I got, the 12th and 27th. Write often. I will close now and go and get my breakfast[.] I must bid you all a Good bye with a kiss and my love for yours from your Husband, and friend, D. B. Griffin

Triune, Tennessee May 11th 1863

My Dear Wife, Children, and Sister Mary, one and all, I will try to write a few lines to you this afternoon, although I have not much to write, for evry [sic] thing remains quiet here[.] No advancement being made from either side, as the country is prety [sic] thouroughly [sic] cleaned of its forage, we do not have to go out a foraging. But the Gen. finds enough for us to do in the way of drilling. We had a Co. drill this forenoon and the boys are out on a Division drill, both Brigades drilling together. I staid [crossed out] stopped in camp so as to draw rations for the Co. I am well to day [sic] as usual. I received a letter from Samuel to day [sic] which I will send to you with this. We have been a watching the reports of the Telegraph from Hookers [sic] army [see footnote below], but as yet we get nothing reliable. but there was a good deal of rejoicing in

camp to day [sic] when the news came in the mail, that the “stars and stripes” were a floating over the rebel capital, Richmond. I hope from the ends of my fingers, that the reports will prove true, but we will have to wait a few days longer to get the real truth of the matter, but they have had a hard fought battle, there is no doubt, but if our army is victorious, and the enemy is hemmed in between two armies, they will have to give in between this and next [missing]. I wont [sic] say when, would you? but God grant that it may be ended before long, and let the men go home to their families and “sweethearts,” parents and friends, but we, or the most of us have no desire to go home before the country is at peace, “honorable peace” too,’ do you want that I should Nerva? I know you don’t, but as you get the papers, (as I hope that you do) you will get all the news in them that I do, here. I have not got any letters from any one (except Samuel) since I last wrote, and I do not like to write two letters to you evry [sic] time I get one from you, for I cannot find any thing to talk about in the second one, but I cannot wait so long, so I write a little in order to let you know how I am, and where I am, and when we stay in a place a long time, and there is not anything a going on, it is the same thing right over and over. I like to write, and talk to you on paper even, and I know I should like to talk to you by “mouth,” but as we cannot, we must talk to each other all we can on paper, so you must write all the news, and ask all the questions you can think of. I have to burn up all of your letters, because I have no way to keep them but I expect that you have got a few of mine laid up for future perusal. My prayer is that I may be spared to rejoin my little family, in health. We enjoy ourselves as best we can, there is a floor laid right in front of my tent, and four of the boys have dressed themselves up in female apparel and are having a hapy [sic] time a dancing, one of them has got on my flag for an apron, we have had it a flying in the camp ever since we have been here, as it is now long after “taps” I must close, we have got orders to fall in with our guns and accoutourments [sic] to morrow [sic] morning, but as we get that order so often we do not think anything about it, but we may have a skirmish with the enemy before many days. I will not write any more this time, so I will bid you all good night and go to my bed. Good night “Nerva,” with a (kiss) for you and the babies [.] This from your husband in Tenn.

D. B. Griffin.

[Footnote: Union Gen. Joseph Hooker, facing CSA Gen. Robert E. Lee, in The Wilderness at the May1-3, 1863 Battle of Chancellorsville, a follow-up Union loss to Fredericksburg, though the Confederates suffered the loss of Gen. Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson.]

In Camp Triune Tenn. May 18th 1863

My dear Wife and Children, As I received a letter from you to day [sic] dated the 11th I will write a few lines to you this evening. I am as well as usual this evening, but am some tired as I have been to work upon the breastworks all day. The Gen has made some alterations, in the old ones, and made some new ones, and when they are all finished they will have some very strong works. We are expecting to have a fight at this

point, if the rebels make the attack [sic], if not I do not know [k is crossed out] know whether we will have any fight or not, but I hope that we will not meet with the same success that the Eastern army has at Fredericksburgh [sic], it is an awful loss to both armies, and nothing gained on either side. We think that Hooker is a good Gen. but there is something wrong, probably there is too [sic] much interference in other places, but as you get the papers now you can see what they are doing both there and here, and elsewhere. I have not received any letters since my last, and I was glad to get one from you to day [sic], but was very sorry [sic] to hear that my boy was not well, but was glad to hear that he was some better when you wrote. I hope that he will get well, and that we may be permitted to live and meet together an unbroken family at the close of the war, or of my term[.] I will forgive you this time for not writing oftener, but somehow I do not like to wait two weeks or more, for a letter from you when we are in camp, and the mails come regular every [sic] day, please write as often as you can, you know that I will write as often as I can find anything to write about. I have told you in my last letters to tell me all about your visit down on the prairie, and if you are all well I guess that you will. Alice says that she and Ida gets their pictorials and she thinks that they are very pretty. I hope that they will be worth the money to them. I know that they will like them, and I am satisfied with the investment. As you have received all of the money that I have sent to you, I will send you some more (\$11.00) in this letter, and I hope that you will use it, if you need it for, sickness or anything else to make you comfortable, because I shall send all that I can spare to you, and if we both live to join each others in our little family circle again may we both be "ten fold" paid for all the sacrifices and deprivations that we undergo while far from each others [sic] presence, and I want that you, and the children should enjoy yourselves while you can. I have a plenty of company such as it is, but then it is not like being in the the [crossed out] presence [sic] of one's family and friends, shut out from the presence [sic] of the female portion of the earth, from the loving smiles and kind words, that helps to lighten our way through life, as well as the prattle of the dear little ones. God bless and protect them. I feel like dropping [sic] a silent tear when I read that my little darling boy was sick, but I hope that he is well ere this. You wrote that you were down to Preston at the Union meeting. I heard about the meeting by one of the Co. A's boys who was there, he says that it was quite a gathering, and that the copperheads were pretty quiet there now, he says that he saw Leonora and Eph. Wheeler there, and a good many others. Who did you go down there with, do you hear from Emery often, I wish that you would write about him. I see in some of the papers that the Indians had been down near where he was this spring, but that they had not done much damage yet, and I hope that they will not do a great deal.

Alice wanted to know if I ever saw so many negroes as there is in the pictorials. I see more every [sic] day, and they look just bad as any that there is in the papers, regular darkeys [sic] from the plantation, of all colors from the sable black down to the white slaves of the south, "big bucks," wenches and nigger babies, with their thick curly wool and "long heels," thick lips and wide noses, of every [sic] feature natural to the race, but they are to be pitted,[sic] for they are going [sic] to have a hard time of it for a few

years at the least, but I hope that African Slavery will be ended and the blacks taken out of the country, this country was made for white men to till, and evry [sic] man to be his own master but enough of this. I was glad to hear that Mr. Westfall had given the folks down on the prairie a sermon but I suppose that it is to [sic] hard for them to believe that "the wages of sin is death," for all men, oh! no! nor that "Eternal life is the gift of God," for all men, "but only for a few," and "great I" is to be one of those few. I thank God that I can think for myself. I hope that he will continue to preach the gospel to them. I hope that you will have a chance to go to meeting often. I hear that Wesley Hazleton is in Chatfield have you ever heard from or seen him, he has taken a farm there, do you hear anything from Dan.

Now I must stop for to night [sic] for it is near 12 o'clock, and we have to get up at daylight, perhaps I will write a few lines in the morning but I will bid you all a good night, and go to bed, you must excuse my bad writing.

(Good night "Nerva")

(Good night Alice)

(Good night Ida)

(Good night Edgar)

A (kiss) for all

May God keep you and protect you through life and at last may we all meet in heaven. Good bye to night [sic]. D.B. Griffin.

Tuesday morning,

I am well, with the exception of the teeth ache, and the piles trouble me some, once in a while, but I keep about my duty. We have cool mornings and warm days, but it is not any warmer here than it is in Minn. It is a beautiful morning. I have no news to write, we were not attacted [sic] this morning, but we look for it evry [sic] day. I will stop for I have got to go to work before long so I will bid you all good bye write as often as you can for I am uneasy when I don't hear from you evry [sic] week.

D. B. Griffin

Triune Tenn. May 25th 1863

My Dear "Nerva." As I feel rather lonesome this evening I will commence a letter to you. I have not been very well for a few days past. I had a touch of the diareah [sic], and that set [crossed out] left me with the piles, so bad that I could hardly walk, set down nor lay down for three days, but I am good deal better yesterday and to day [sic], so I recon [sic] that I shall be all right again in a day or two. We have not had any fight here yet

and it is the impression of the boys that the rebels are a falling back from our front to go down and fight "Grant," but if all the reports are true, they will have to commence before long, or else they will have a hard bone to pick, but I will not surmise any of the results that are to take place on the Miss. but we know that our forces have done well, down there of late, and I hope they will meet with great success and end with the taking of Vicksburgh [sic], and the whole of the Miss. river, and it is almost as good now. We have been a building new forts and breastworks and strengthening the old ones for the last week, and it seems as though it would be almost impossible for us to be driven out of them, if we should ever be attacked [sic] here, but I have my doubts about the rebels visiting us here. We have an other [sic] change of Generals in our Division, Gen Schofield [see first footnote below] has gone to Missouri, he superceeds [sic] Gen Curtiss [see second footnote below], Gen Brennan [see third footnote below] has taken the command of this Div. The Div. had placed a good deal of confidence [sic] in Schofield as a Gen. and we were loth [sic] to part with him, but I hope the change will not be for the worse. Gen. Brennen appears to be very strict and carefull [sic], and he does not intend to be taken unawares by the enemy. We do not see into the movements of the army of the Potomac, so we let them work, nor do we know what keeps us still so long a time here.

I have not got any letters from you nor any one else since I last wrote, so I have not got any thing to write to you about, as I hope that you get all the news in the papers that I do. We have a good deal of reading matter in camp of all kinds. We have had our Co record printed and I sent one of them to you, they cost \$1.50 apiece, if you get it safe you would not sell it for that I know, you can get it framed or keep it as it is now. I sent you \$11.00 in the last letter I will not send you any in this one. I am very anxious to hear from you as to know how Edgar gets along[.] I hope that he is a getting well, I do not know how I should feel, to hear that any of you were dead, and I hope that you will not have to tell me of any such news. I hope that you will all get along well, and live, and that I shall live to meet you all alive and well. I have not received any letter from Em. [sic] perhaps he never received mine, you must write about him in your letters and about our folks to [sic] I like to hear from all the folks as often as I can. Mr. Cutting is not very well, the rest of the boys are well, there has not been a death in the regiment since we came to this camp, to my knowledge, and that is a saying a good deal, while the Tenn. reg. looses [sic] some ten a week, they have buried over 75 men since we came here, and a great many of them are sick now. I have not any more to write until I [sic] I get a letter from you, and I must get one before long, or else I shall be more lonesome still, my bed fellow is out on picket to night [sic], so I have got to sleep all "alone," don't you care, how does your garden look? did you plant the cotton seed? how much of a garden have you got? Is the children agoing [sic] to school this summer? do you hear from the third reg? etc. I will close for this time, and bid you all a good bye again, write often, please do "Nerva," accept these few lines with my best wishes, and a (kiss) for all. Good bye, from

D.B. Griffin

[first footnote: Union Gen. John McAlister Schofield, commanding the Army of the Frontier in Missouri, later the XXIII Corps in the Atlanta Campaign, and in 1888 rose to Commanding General of the US Army.]

[second footnote: Union Gen. Samuel Ryan Curtiss, who resigned his U.S. congressional seat from Iowa to lead a state regiment, rising to Commander of the Army of the Southwest and eventually placed in charge of the Departments of Missouri, Kansas, and the Northwest.]

[third footnote: Union Gen. John Milton Brannan, Brigade Commander, and later Chief of Artillery for the Army of the Cumberland.]

In Camp near Triune Tenn. Sunday morning May 31st 1863

Dear Wife and Children, I will write a few lines to you this morning. I am not as well as I wish that I was this morning, but I am a good better than I have been during the week. I have lost over ten lbs [sic] in the last week, but I feel about well this morning, but I am weak. I got a letter from you last Monday just after I sent one off to you, so I thought that I would wait a few days before I wrote again, but I did not intend to wait quite so long. I wrote a long letter to sister Mariah since and one of my eyes was quite sore two or three days, and it rained for the last two days, but the sun shines bright this morning, and the air is pure and cool. We have not much stir in camp for a week, but the news from Vicksburgh [sic], is watched with a good deal of interest from day to day, the most of us think that Grant will succeed in taking the place, he has done well so far as heard from, but the news comes slow[.] You can see all the news from here in the Weekly Union better than I can write it. The Cavelry [sic] went out in front yesterday, and saw a few of the rebels, having a little brush with them, killing two or three, our reg. was ordered out to support them, but had not gone far before they were ordered back. We are ordered out under arms evry [sic] morning at day light. Our new Gen. is not liked very well so far, he is not the man for the Volenteers [sic], he puts on to [sic] much style, and goes to [sic] much upon formalities to suit us, but perhaps he will make a good fighting man, but he will never get the confidence of the boys that Thomas, McCook, or Schofield did while they were with us[.] I hardly think that we are agoing [sic] to have any fight of importance here now, but I think that we will move somewhere before long, and probably ahead.

Our reg. is gone out for a regimental review this forenoon, and then they will not have any thing more to do to day [sic] unless something turns up. The mail has got in but not much news from Vicksburgh [sic]. Grant appears to hold his own, and a little more, but we are a having a hard fight there but I hope and pray that he will succeed in taking the place. But "Nerva" I got a letter from you dated the 23d and a good long one too, which done me more good than all the rest of the news we got. I felt a little ashamed of myself for not writing to you before, but you will see the reason. I cannot blame you, nor did I

mean to scold you for not writing oftener. I think that you have your hands full to take care of your own sick and all the other sick in Spring Valley, but I was glad to learn that Edgar was well again, but you must take care of yourself and not wear yourself out, before you rest yourself. I have a plenty of time to write when we are laying still in camp, but when we are on duty or the march, we do not get much time, and it is hard work to write about nothing. We draw bakers bread now, it is very good bread[.] I had some potatoes and fresh beef and bread for dinner. I have not eaten anything but a little bread and coffee for a week before. We have a plenty to eat drink and wear. It was getting very dry here, but the rain yesterday and the day before has raised the streams and springs some, we dug a well for our company and got good water. Can you get your cow pastured all summer, I hope that you can, for it will be a great help to you to have her where you can find her at night. I hope that the children will have a good school this summer and that they will learn fast, who keeps the school? I am glad that you have a plenty of reading these times. I shall like to set down with you, if I live to get home, and look over my old letters. I could connect them with all the places that I have passed through, and hundreds of incidents not worth while to write about. I hope that my expectations will be realized. I wish that I was there this spring so as [crossed out] to help you make your garden, do you have more than one lot for a garden? there has been some green peas and strawberries [sic] in camp, but they are all gone before this time the peach crop bids fair to be heavy in this quarter, and I expect that we will have to stay down here untill [sic] our time is up, so there is no use of our setting any time to be at home, but they will not keep us long after peace is declared. You seem to be willing not to have me come home untill [sic] I come home for good. I am glad that you are, for it would cost a good deal, and not do us much good, for Father seems to see to you, and keep things straight for you, just as well as though I came home to do it myself, so I will not worry myself about the affairs at all. I know what you meant when you spoke about Henry and Mariah's "children" you must not think that the Griffin's are all right because some of them are "lucky," perhaps Sarah has not stayed over with Mariah without some reason. I wrote a long letter to her, and I have asked her a good many questions, about her "children" and evrything [sic] else that I could think off [sic][.] I told her to write one to you or to me, if I get one I will send it to you. I am looking for a letter from Samuel evry [sic] day, and he said that he would send me some papers but I have not got any yet. I have not heard any thing from Em. [sic] yet. You wanted to know where the boys got their dresses to put on when they dance, they make them out of some old tent or blanket, and borrow some of the "wenches," they fit them as well as a "shirt does a bean pole," the flag is the same that I got at Louisville. We did not have any skirmish then, nor since, and the papers report that the rebel army is a falling back in our front all the time, we shall know before long. I hope that I can come home by another fall and then I will see about getting a dress for you and the children, the boys will soon begin to count the months, that they have got to stay in the service. I expect that they will go off very slow the last year, but we will try to be patient and do our duty to our country, while we do stay in the service, and let the future take care of itself. Mr. Cutting has been quite unwell, but is better now, Pete and the Case boys, Elicut, James

Thornton, Wallace Clark, Sergeant Gaskill and the other boys from around there are well. What Warner do you refer to when you speak of Mr. Warners reading the paper, etc. Sergeant Wallace of our Co. used to be well acquainted with the Kingsley boys of Spring Valley. It is a very warm afternoon and it feels like having showers before long.

I cannot think of much more to write this time, I did not intend to write as much as I have when I commenced, but when I got your's [sic] I found something to write about. The regiment is just agoing [sic] out on dress prarade.[sic] We have got a Brass Band organized again, so we have a plenty of good music now. The 9th Ohio and the 35th Ohio both have a band. Our band is a playing now so I must go out and hear them, they do not play as well as a good many, for some of them never played upon an instrament [sic] untill [sic] about four weeks ago, but they are improving very fast.

Monday Morning June 1st I feel quite well this morning, it rained hard last night, but it is clear this morning, and the birds are singing briskly, and the Sun is just a coming up. I was over in Co. A. last Eve. and I took up the Chatfield Democrat, and the first piece I read was a lie, and the whole paper was made up of lies, it was the editorial in regards to Valandigham's [see footnote below] arrest, he says that he had been arrested, tried and sentenced, "for no one knew what," strange he did not know for what, when evry [sic] paper in the Southern Confederacy knew. I wish that I could wield the pen. I would direct a few lines to him the boys say that he ought to "hung," but as my sheet is about full I will close by bidding you a good bye this morning.

Good bye one and all from your friend D. B. Griffin.

[footnote: Democratic Congressman from Ohio, Clement Laird Vallandigham, a prominent antiwar "Copperhead," convicted of treason and exiled to the Confederacy. He vigorously opposed Lincoln's 1864 reelection and, later, Reconstruction policies. [sic]]

In Camp near Triune Tenn. June 3d 1863

My Dear Wife and Companion, As I received a letter from you to day [sic], I will try to write a few lines in answer although I do not know what to write. I feel quite well to day [sic]. I left off going to the doctor Sunday morning. Monday morning we all had to go out on a Division review the first one we ever had, in our Division, we all had to have our knapsacks, haversacks and canteens on, besides having our gun and accoutrements on. We were out some four hours and I got very tired, the review went off very well, at night we had orders to be ready to march in the morning at six o'clock with one day's rations, we were up and ready, but it rained hard in the morning, so we did not start quite so early. Our reg. went out about twelve miles for the purpose of moving in a union family, we had a hard road to go on, through a cedar swamp, and over hills and rocks, but we got there all safe, and we got a few loads of corn and the familie's [sic] goods, and came back on a better road, but I did not walk but about four miles. I got so tired and the "piles" bothered me so that I got into a wagon and rode the rest of the way, and

I was very tired last night, but, I rested well through the night, but this morning I had the tooth ache some and I had it drawn out, so I guess that I will come out straight by and by. When we got back to camp last night we had orders to be ready to march by tomorrow morning, so we have been drawing rations and one thing nother [crossed out] other all day. Where we are going nor which way we cannot tell yet, we may not go at all, there has two more Brigades [sic] come here yesterday from Franklin, they had quite a fight at Franklin yesterday but the rebels were repulsed with quite a loss in kill and wounded and prisoners. We do not think there is much of a force of rebels very near us, now. The rest of our Division is a coming in now, so it like [crossed out] looks a little like old times to see soldiers a marching along. We will be very apt to advance in a day or two at least, and no knowing when I shall get another chance to write to you, but I will write as often as I can, if I am well, so you must not worry if you should not have a letter from me again very soon, your letter was dated May 26[.] I see that you thought that I was a scholding [sic] you in my letters, but it was not intended for any such a thing. I see that the trouble is in my not getting your letters so I will not say anything again[.] I asked you a few questions and you merely say that you have written to me before about it for instance I asked you about W. Hasleton and you say that he was as [sic] Fathers last winter and you wrote about it at the time. I never got any such letter, you say that you wrote all about your visit down upon the prairie, you wrote a letter when you were at fathers, stating that you had been to Beamans and Jerry's and was going [sic] to go to Boynyton's and over that way, and then the next you said that you had been there, but did not say one word about how they were, what they were about etc, if you have I never have received your letters. I knew by your letter that you were down to Preston, but I merely asked you who you got a chance to go with, not that I was "jealous," but just to know who your friends were, as it seemed a long time to me not to get any letters from you I thought that I would talk a little about it in my letters, but I did not think that you would take it that I was scholding [sic], you, Nerva[.]

Now I will leave it to Mary if I was a "scholding" [sic] or not, I will not say any more, but I do like to hear all that I can from you, you must not think it hard in me if I should ask you a few questions, will you. Now you must not take this as all scholding [sic] to, for I do not know what other way I should let you know what I want to, if I could talk to you I could tell you in different language. It rained hard last night, but it is quite warm to day [sic]. I saw a few pieces of good wheat yesterday, but it is generaly [sic] very thin, it begins to turn some now, but the corn is not very forward here this spring[.] I picked a few rasberries [sic] yesterday, the Blackberries [sic] are beginning to turn there is any amount of them this year, as well as peaches apples etc. We continue to get good news from Vicksburgh [sic], but they are a fighting hard, there. I hope that we will not get into any such a fight, if it can be helped, but if it is necessary let it come we are trained for it. If you want any more money before we are payed [sic] off again, I will send you some, but I have spent some more than I expected to, and I want to keep some by me so I will not send any more just yet unless you want it bad. If I cannot stand it to march all day I shall go to some hospital or convalescent camp for I find that a person gets along just as well, if he don't try to do the best he can, but I shall not shirk, there has a number of the

boys told me not to try to march along with the reg. when I am in my condition, but I tell them I shall go as far as I can before I stop, or leave the reg. I cannot think of much to write to night [sic] for I wrote you a long letter Sunday four of the boys went to the hospital yesterday because they could not stand it to march, and I guess if I had been here I should gone[.]

Sergeant Cutting went to the Hospital, he is pretty slim, I was weighed yesterday and I weighed 155 so you see that I am not quite so fleshy as I have been, but I feel quite well to day [sic] and if we do not have to march I shall get along first rate. I am not homesick nor do I intend to be, for that is a bad thing to have in the army[.] Was Alice very sick and have the other children had the same disease. I would like to see you all evry [sic] day, but I expect to have to wait untill [sic] the term of enlistment is out, you seem to think that perhaps they can keep us longer, but as I have told you before they cannot unless they pass a law to that effect, it will be a little over a year more now, we have been here $\frac{1}{4}$ of a year, and it is a short time to us, time does not seem so long to us as it did when we first came south, soldiering has become a second nature. But I will stop now by bidding you all a good bye again, and I hope and pray that we may all live to enjoy the comforts of home once more. May God bless and protect us all in his mercy.

Good bye My Dear "Nerva" with a kiss for all

Good bye My Dear Alice

Good bye My Dear Ida [kiss]

Good bye My Dear Edgar from your Dear Husband

and father in the army of the Cumberland

Corp. D. B. Griffin

P.S. Thursday morning. I feel quite well this morning. I have got to go on picket this morning. We have not got any orders to move as yet, and some think that we will not go from here as they have got to leave two reg here, to guard the place, but I do not want to stay. I will let you know, soon good bye,

D. B. Griffin

Camp near Triune Tenn. June 8th 1863

Dear Wife and Children, As I have an oportunity [sic] to write a few lines to you this morning, I will do so. I am about the same as I was when I last wrote, not exactly well [crossed out] sick nor either am I entirely well. The morning that I wrote, I expected to go out on picket, but the order was changed and I did not go. We had a grand review in the afternoon, there was twenty three regiments out besides the Batteries about 15,000 men, it was [an imposing – crossed out] grand sight I tell you now. I wish that you could have seen us as we marched around in front of the Gen (Granger) [see first footnote

below] each regimental band striking up some lively tunes as they passed him. We all had our knapsacks on, and I got quite tired. While we were there we heard heavy Canonading [sic] in the direction of Franklin, and when we came back to camp we received orders to get our supper just as soon as we could and take one days ration and 40 extra rounds of cartrages [sic] and a blanket, and to march to Franklin that night (15 miles) in a hard night's march we had of it to [sic]. It was just dark when we started, and for a while we were in the woods where you could not see anything, but we managed to get through after a good dealing [ing crossed out] of falling and stumbling over stumps and roots. I fell over one stump but did not hurt me any, after we got a few miles it commenced raining, with a good deal of lightning, which had the effect of macking [crossed out] makeing [sic] it look darker, and the road was very rough and slippery, and we had to go very slow. I hardly think there was a man in our Brigade (four regiment) but what were down in the mud or stumbled over the rocks and stumps before morning. We got to Franklin just at the break of day, wet, muddy, and tired. I stood it through with the rest of them, but I could not held mu [crossed out] much longer. We were taken in to a beautiful door yard where all was green, with grass and shade trees and were told to rest ourselves as fast as we could, we all lay down and were soon asleep. We found that the rebel cavelry [sic] under Forrest [see second footnote below] made a raid on the place in the afternon [sic], capturing a few of the pickets, robing [sic] the stores, and several other deprevations [sic], as well as cutting of the railroad and telegraph between there and Nashville and were about to take the fortifications as our Cavelry [sic] got there they had quite a skirmish with them, killing some and taking 16 prisoners which we brought back with us. We lay there all day a waiting for an attack from the rebels but they dare not come in again our Cavelry [sic] had a little skirmish with them in the fore part of the day but it did not amount to much. We lay there all day, and at night it rained and I got into a barn, and slept good all night. Franklin does not look much as it did when we went through there one year ago, there is not a fence left, not any thing a growing, and a good many of the houses empty. We started back to Triune about one o'clock, arriving in camp about sundown but I rode back in an ambulance. Yesterday the Tennessee Cavelry [sic] had quite a little skirmish here with the rebs [sic]. we got a few wounded and a few taken prisoners, and there were some of the rebs. [sic] killed and wounded, there appeared to be a reconoiter [sic] on the part of the rebs. [sic] along the whole line, to see whether we were here or not, and they found us a waiting for them at evry [sic] point[.] We are under marching orders now, that is to be ready to march at any moment, but when we go I cannot tell, the reg. is out a drilling this forenoon, but I did not go out, it is quite cool this morning, we had a little rain last night, but not much. I think that we are agoing [sic] to have good weather for a while now[.] I do not get any news any more than what you will see in the "Union." I will wait untill [sic] after the mail comes in, and perhaps I shall get some news to write about.

Afternoon Well, the mail has come in but there is nothing exciting in the papers. We are looking with a good deal of anxiety for the fall of Vixburgh [sic] just now. We think that if that falls it will weaken the rebelion [sic] a good deal, but wheather [sic] it will end it this fall or not, is rather doubtfull [sic]. I do not expect to go home before my time is out, so

look ahead with hope. But I got a letter from my dear "Nerva," dated June 2nd and was much pleased with it to [sic]. I was glad to know that you had a chance to go to meeting if the Methodist and Baptist are jealous of your Company. I guess that they would ride with almost anyone if they had no one to look out for them to ride any more than you and Mary has, it shows how large their souls are. I hope that some of them will be obliged to let their husbands and friends go into the army, and leave them to take care of themselves, it is the very ones that will talk the most, that would take the advantage of a woman and the absence of her husband, but Nerva do not mind their talk, go to meeting when you can and with Mr. Westfall if you can, if he is a good Universalist, he will protect you, and if I should live to come home I hope that I shall be able to repay him for all his troubles. As to Mary's being kissed and hugged, I should do the same thing, if I could see her or you either and I should not care what the folks say [sic] about it either. As to my placing sentinels up there to watch him, I had rather place them out here in front of the enemy where there is some danger of an attack from them enemy [crossed out] for I do not believe that any one would try to injure me or my family in my absence, if so they are worse than the southern traitor.

Yes I wish that I could have been there and heard him preach the sermon, but as I am not I will be content where I am, untill[sic] I am free again, and then if nothing hapens [sic] we will enjoy ourselves in going to metings [sic] and other places together. I have not got any clothes to send home this spring for I have not drawn any more than I actually needed, the company stoored [sic] some clothes in Nashville, and I put in one of my blankets with them. It would look rather queer to see Edgar in pants and boots and hat. I cannot see him only as the little babe I left in Eliza's arms, the night I came away, if I am gone three years you will not know me, nor I you. I am sorry that your eyes are sore I know how to pity you for one of my eyes had troubled me for a couple weeks or more, and now they are both quite weak, one of them is very red to day [sic] , and I cannot look upon my paper but a little while at a time, but I think that that [crossed out] they will get over it. I hope that yours will not get any worse off than they are[.] I cannot think of much more to write this time, how does the children get along with their school this summer, have they a good one. I would like to see you all to day [sic], but here I am away down in Tenn. and a fair prospect of going still further south "away down in dixie," but perhaps not. I wish that I could stop writing to you, and go to talking with you, and then I could find enough to talk about for awhile I guess, but I have been all day in writing this, and there is not anything to write about either, but I will close now by saying good bye to you all, and hope for the best to come this from your husband and father in the army of the Cumberland,

To Nerva and the babe'[sic].

Corp. D. B. Griffin Co F 2nd Minn.

[Footnote 1: Union Gen. Gordon Granger, a Division Commander under Gen. Rosecrans in the Army of the Cumberland.]

[Footnote 2: CSA Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest, often in independent command as a cavalry raider, capturing or destroying significant amounts of Union men and supplies.]

In camp near Triune Tenn. June 14th 1863

Dear "Nerva" and "babies," I will try to write a few lines to you this morning. I feel quite well this morning to what I have been this morn [~~crossed out~~] week past. I went on picket once but came in quite well [~~crossed out~~] sick, but I took some medicen [~~sic~~], and lay still, and I feel a good deal better this morning, but I shall not go upon duty again untill [~~sic~~] I'm strong enough to go it. We have not had any news here of any account since my last. The rebel cavelry [~~sic~~] made a dash or two upon our pickets, within the last week, and there was quite a smart skirmish last Thursday with them, they fired a few shell into our lines, but without any damage, we took a few prisoners and Wounded some, and we lost a few. I cannot hear a strait [~~sic~~] story about the fight so I will not attempt to describe it, you will see some sketches of it in the Union. We have got a very heavy body of troops at this point. I do not know how many, but I think there is about thirty thousand men. We received orders last night about eleven o'clock to have two days rations in our haversacks and be ready to march at a moments [~~sic~~] notice, but it is eight o'clock, and we have not got any marching orders yet, there is to be a general inspection to day [~~sic~~], but I do not have to go out, with them. We have had some rain, and the nights are quite cool, but it is very warm during the day. We do not hear any different news from Vicksburgh [~~sic~~] yet but all eyes and hearts look there for something decisive. I hope that Gen Grant will conquer them at last, but he has got a "hard hand to beat." If he does not take the place this time, there is no hopes of our getting out of the war before our time of enlistment is out, about 13 months more as I will be mustered out the same time the regiment is, (so count fast.) if we do not have to do any more for the next six months, than what we have done in the last six, we will not be hurt much. We have been in this camp nearly three months and a half, or nearly one third of a year, and it hardly seems more than so many weeks to us, the time goes off so fast. I hope that the time will soon come when we will be permitted to meet each other at our homes in Minnesota, and if we live it will soon roll around.

I received a letter from you yesterday dated June 6th and was well pleased with it as I always am with a letter from my "Nerva," and to hear that my little family is well, and enjoying themselves as well as they can[.] I hope that there will no cloud pass over your hopes, and that they will be fully realized in a short time, and that I shall return to you, to spend the remainder of my days in the presence of my family, but I see by your letters that there is a man coming up to fill my place one of these days, whose name is Edgar Lincoln. I think that he would look like someone's else boy, more than he would a boy of mine if I should see him going around the streets with a hat and "boots" on. I am glad that he is well, and I hope that he will grow up a good boy and be a blessing to his mother and sisters. I do not know why you cannot hear from Em. if he does go on an expiditon [~~sic~~] for they will keep open the communication with the State most likely. I

hope that he will come through all right, as well as myself, and I guess that we will. I am glad that "grisy" makes a good cow for you, what do you do with rosy this summer, and what does fathers [sic] folks do with the Oxen, are they doing well. I wish that they could earn a little Brakeing [sic] for you, if they could, is Allen a breaking any this summer. I wish I was there to work with him. I am sorry [sic] that you had your cotton plants picked off. I do not think of much more to write this time, the band is aplaying [sic] a fine tune now, and the companies are out on inspection, and I am getting dinner. I am getting some soup. I will close, good bye

D.B.G.

In camp near Triune Tenn. June 20th 1863

My Dear Wife and children, I feel as though I must write a few lines to you this afternoon, but I have not got any news to tell you for it is a very quiet time with us here, there has not been any movement of the troops here since I last wrote to you, and things remain about the same at Vicksburgh [sic] but it seems as though the rebels had made a stir among the men on the Potomac [see footnote below], and I am glad of it, for it will wake them up a little, and give them something to do, but I have confidence to believe that Gen. Hooker will give them all that they ask for in his way. I hope that they will not get back very safe again but the papers are very still upon the movements of the army, but as near as we can judge evry [sic] thing is a working well, and I hope that it will end well, and hasten the close of the war. I received a letter yesterday from Samuel and two to day [sic], one from you and Alice, and one from Sister Mariah, and I was glad to hear from you all, but none so well as from my own "Nerva," and the babies[.] I was glad to hear that you are all well, and are a getting along so finely this summer. I hope that you will have good luck, and that I shall be permitted to go home and find you all hapy [sic], before winter, but I expect to have to stay another year, if we do not it will be a "hapy [sic] disapointment [sic]" won't it "Nerva?"

I have rather been on the gain since I wrote to you but I am not very stout yet, my appetite [sic] is note [sic] very good yet, but I guess that I shall get along without going to the Hospital if we stay in camp, but I shall not try to march any yet, you must not worry about me to [sic] much for if I should get any worse, I will let you know as soon as I can write or get any one to write, but I hope that I will not have to do so. Where does Mary Vandervaust live, you wrote that Mary got a letter from her. I hope that you and Mary will not get all the Women jealous of you as well as the Methodist down on the prairie, you had better look out, or you will have some of them in your hair before you know it.

I expect that if I was at home that I should laugh some to see the boys out a drilling under Jerry, but as to my being put into office with them if I was there would not be so well for I think if I serve my time out in the army, that they can let me alone the remainder of my life[.] I would be willing to help them all that I could and that is all. I am glad that the children have a good school this summer, and I hope that they will learn

fast and well while they have a good chance. We have not had any very hot weather as yet, we have some very heavy showers, and the air keeps pure and cool. I hope that you will not suffer any up there for the want of rain, for we shall want all that you can raise to spare. I will send both of the letters and you must try to write Mariah a few lines if you can, I guess that she is getting along very well, she seems to have almost evry [sic] thing but the "baby." I shall write to her before long. I will see if I can find any one in the Tenn. Reg. from that part of the state, if I can find out anything I will let you know, and you can tell the woman so, but it is hard to find any one in a reg. unless I know the name of the town they live in. Capt [sic] Barnes has gone to Wisconsin on a furlough perhaps he will come there, he is not very well, there is not a great deal of sickness in the reg. now, we are in hopes that we will move before long for we are tired of being in one camp so long. I cannot think of any thing to write to day [sic] so I will close for this time, and bid you all good bye, from your Husband and Father

D. B. Griffin

To Nerva

Alice

Ida and Edgar

[Footnote: This would mark the beginning of Lee's northward push into Pennsylvania, paralleled initially by Union Gen. Hooker, then by Gen. Meade, culminating in the July 1-3, 1863 Battle of Gettysburg.]

