Helena, Arkansas
Friday, April 3, 1863

My dear wife,

Since I wrote last Tuesday I have received two letters from you both with rather bad news. The first stated that father was very sick; the second stating that he was no better which leaves me in no little anxiety now. I can tell you and in the situation you described him to be in leaves me still more anxious, for I think the turning point must be pretty soon and sometimes I have my doubts and fears which way it will turn with him. But hope the next letter I get from you to hear for the better. You spoke in particular about the pay money well, I did not have any body explain it to me but suppose it to be like this.
In the first place, I received one month's pay in Camp Randall then I made the allotment of $10 a month which did not take effect until the first day of October now since I have been here I have received $10 besides the allotment. The first month's pay only paid from the day I enlisted (the 17th of Aug) till the 14th of Sept. and as the allotment did not take effect until Oct 1st I received my full wages from Sept 14th to Oct 1st which amounted to $690 then for the next month I received $31 which in all amounted to $90 while you only get the allotment for 2 months this is the long and short of the story. Since I have given you any account of deaths in the Regt two have died, both of whom were of our Op one by the name of Bradley Didden and the other is George Capen of Concord brother to Albert the 25
another man that has been murdered as one might safely call it—now the question is by whom & that I will leave for you to judge. He had been about three months he had the chronic diarrhea and the piles. I do not know but I am foolish but if I am I cannot help it but I think positively that we shall all be at home by next fall or before that is if we can judge anything by the news we receive for the news is as favorable as any one can ask for at present and I think also that the fighting will be done within the next three months after above is also the opinion of the officers in general the Col as well as the rest. I am as well and tough as usual and still continue to live by eating my regular rations. I hardly know what to write to finish but this sheet but if I
do not write it full the rest will go blank that is one thing I am certain of. I received a letter from another the same time I received yours last. She said that they were all well but she had been quite sick a part of the time so as to be confined to her bed. I have read none from George since I wrote to you before.

General German and the military Governor of this state had a batch shown yesterday which resulted in both of them getting pretty black eyes. But what it was about I could not learn. It begins to look a very little like spring the apple trees are in bloom and today I saw roses in full blossom which looked nice now. I tell you but they were different kinds of roses from those I ever saw before. I have written all I can think of at present therefore I will close by saying good bye for the present. Dear wife

Your Reassure
Mrs. J. R. Stearns
Waukesha
Mrs. Lavinia Stevens
Wautzville
Jefferson Co.
Wisconsin
Helena, Arkansas  
Sunday, April 5, 1863

My dear wife,

Today is Easter and we have no eggs but in fact I do not know as we need any for I think we have something that is full as good if not better for we all received those things the folks sent from that place in fact the whole Regiment are living like you now. I also read the box you sent to me and I tell you we needed all you we have had no vegetables to amount to anything since we have been in the Souther. There was a cheese some dried currants & raspberries came directed to the "Wattsville Boys" but we could not tell who sent them but I will
take it upon myself to render
our thanks to the giver and would
like know the name but whenever
it is we thank them gracefully
until some time we can do
them a better turn.

A long visit is made upon us
a visit today. He said he started
from this last Monday. He is now
on his way to this town which is
some where below here and as
he had an occasion to stop at this
place he came to make us the
visit. He looks well and tough.

It is a very pleasant day, but
it is not spent as a Sunday should
or would be if I were at home but
I have to do the best I can while
I am here. The water in the
river is most too high for
any or much going at Nicholas
at present but it is overflowing fast
and I think it is almost low enough.
To commence operations and capture that place, and I am certain they will take it before long if they try at all. I had a letter from George yesterday; he was well again. His Regt. has gone from Fort Henry to Fort Donelson. He says that it is the opinion of the officers of the Regt. that the war will close in four months, and there is about the opinion that prevails here but for my part sometimes I think it will and sometimes it will not. I hope it will for the war has hard times enough andsend people of the men at the wheel attend to their business as they should.

Dolphi started yesterday from Memphis. He is going in the hospital at first place. I saw him about a half an hour before he started. He looked pretty bad and had to lie down but he told me that he should
try to get his discharge as soon as he could and I think he will get it—
but you need not say anything about it. I am well as usual—present and hope that when these few lines come to hand they will find you all in a better condition than when I wrote last—especially further. Don't wait patiently for the next mail for I have not received any tidings from you since I wrote before. I mentioned very sudden yesterday in C. it was supposed that he fainted and some of his comrades were using means to restore breath into his body when it was discovered that he was dead. This is the only death which has happened since I wrote to you before.

Don't mention this in an awful hurry for I expect to go on guard tomorrow and if I do I might not get time to write a letter to put in the office by the time the mail goes out again which is Tuesday morning.

Now if you can read this you can do mark them & come but you must expose and scratching

But I must close.

From your ever loving,

Soldier.
Mrs. Spavinia Sterns

Waitsville

Jefferson Co.

Wisconsin
Helen, Ark.,

Thursday April 9 63

My dear wife

Once more

I am situated in a peculiar position in order to attempt to pen a few lines to you to give you some idea as far as I know about matters. Of things in general

It is rumored about camp today that we are under marching orders and for that I sit down to write this letter about two days before I should for I do not expect it will go until Saturday from this place but I hast to write. The next thing is where are we going well it is like all other things that pertain to military matter that is we cannot tell till after we have been there but the
general opinion is that we are going somewhere down the river and as for myself I can form no opinion whatever. If we should move you might get letters from me very regular but it will depend a great deal on conveyance and the place where we go to but if you should not get letters regular you need not worry about me. For if I have my health I will keep myself right on up with caution and will write as often as I can at least when I can get a chance to send a line. I received a letter from you last Tuesday stating that father was getting better which of course I am glad to hear and was also glad to hear the rest of you were well as usual. As to myself I am that same as usual well & tough.
I have not heard anything from Dolph since he went to
Memphis last Thursday. Saturday
he said he would write us
soon as he got there and expected
a letter today, but did not get it.
I received a letter from
Nelson today. He said they
were well and were getting
ready to move to the place
where he had hired out for the
year. He had closed his school.
He said it was the general
opinion of the people that the war would close soon.
He spoke about the conscripting
bill did not take very well in the
north. But if the war is not like
to close soon I rather think they
will not take some more
men from their homes and put
them in the field, but the need
not worry for they are not better than.
we are but I think a Nelson does that the war will close by and begin before long
I have bought $100 worth of postage stamps and therefore you need not send me any more until I need to send it for them. We have had no deaths in our Regt since I have given you the last account and there are none that are dangerous sick that I know of. Do not know of anything new to write this time therefore I shall have to close this and this I will do by saying good bye for the present,
This from your ever affectionate Beloved husband
Resem

Friday, April 10
We have not left yet but will have orders to have everything packed and ready at 10 o’clock this morning. So good bye for the present. (will write as soon as I can) Resem
2 Mrs. Lavinia Sterns
Waitsville
Jefferson Co
Wisconsin
My dear wife,

I expected to leave this place before this when I wrote to you last but I have not gone yet. I with a few more of our boys, are detailed for other duty which are in the city guarding some quartermaster stores. The rest of the boys from our place are with the regt. on board the boat which started down the river this forenoon.

Last night was the first I have stood under a roof except a few nights in a nigger shanty which I call no house at all since I left Napoleon which seemed a very little like old fashion with the exception of a woman and a bed.
I am glad to hear from you. I hope all is well with you. I have sent a dollar as you have requested. I am to forward the rest of the $5.00 as soon as I receive further instructions. I look forward to hearing from you again.
at this place which will suffice to half close the war that is
starting the negroes and organizing them into Regiments
which commenced only about a week ago and I understand
from the best accounts I can get that they have got now
more than enough to make a full regiment and are
constantly getting more and I tell you that it makes
Vandeb's cats to become a soldier and carry a musket
our soldiers meet them very
often coming along their line
open thereby displaying about
two rows of ivory and grinning
as if something was the matter
the first word will be near
approaching them will be
nearly as follows
a. Sager now, God! God! which
seems to do them good all over.
All we have lost some by heart.
That I know of since I gave
you the last account but
13 have been been discharged.
Since then one of whom was
from our Co. His name was
Miles Cox. I have not heard
from Delph since he went to Memphis
expected to the last mail.
Today we received our pay
up to the first of March which
is four months and you will
receive the allotment of. If you
do not know what else you can
do with it you can let Bullwinkle
have it if he wants it or you
it. Can demand in Treasury notes
and keep it just as you please.
I have written all I can think
of today as good afternoon for
the present.
Your ever affectionate husband
Mrs. Lavinia Sterns
Wauta ville
Jefferson Co
Wisconsin
Smith's Plantation
Louisiana April 19/63

Dear wife,

I received your letter today which was the first I had received since April 7 but as I wrote to you that I had duties on other duty and had left the Regt. and did not expect to receive any more mail until I joined it again I joined the Regt. about two hours ago at the place above mentioned.

I started from Helena Thursday evening and landed on the Louisiana side of the river about 12 miles above Vicksburg and yesterday I started again and arrived at this place today.

While I was passing along yesterday and today I saw some handsome country and plantation.
corn was already up large enough to hoe, but I am afraid that will
have to waste this summer for the
veneer have been thrown down
flat by our soldiers. I passed
through some flower gardens I
think beats all I ever saw before
and there is one on this plantation
and but a few miles from our
camp which outvies anything of
the kind I ever saw. There's
roses from a milky white to
a cherry red that is red purple,
sherry or any shade between and
a host of other flowers. There
was one rose bush that I took
particular notice of that was
a climbing rose bush in full
blossom now & tell you it
was splendid to look at.
I can't see why these
aristocrats of the south should
make all this for they were liv
at their ease and taking all the comfort imaginable, but such times have come to a close with them at least. This is my opinion expressed publicly.

There is one negro regiment organized at Helena and another under going the same process and probably is fully organized by this time. I think arming these black specimens of human nature is a great help to us. For not only deprives the access of so much labor but it puts into the field as many soldiers against them.

You spoke about the Dassafiras, you found in the west pocket but I am now so ill, I don't know that I cannot get any.

You spoke about the funny looking corn but if you seen the stalks, you would think they were still more funny for some
of them were so tall that they would measure nine feet below the ear and the ground, and nearly as large as your arm. I am well as usual at present, I have not heard from Dolph yet. The rest of the boys here are all well and doing very well.

War is now farther south than Vicksburg but whether we will participate in the battle is pending there or not I do not know. The opinion of a great many is that there will not be much of a brush at that place and I hope there won't for the cheaper that we can take it the better I shall have to bring this letter to close for I have written all I can think of now.

How I will bid you how do you do there Good Age and yourself, Non more at present but you will get more as soon as I can get a chance to send.

Yours ever affectionate husband

Rebecca
Mrs. Lavinia Stevens
Waitsville
Jefferson Co.
Wisconsin
April 20/63

My dear wife,

Although it was only yesterday I wrote to you and probably you will get both letters at once, but the reason I write this is because it was announced this morning that this was the last mail that we would have a chance to send while we stay at this place. It may be two or three weeks and it may be only a few days and for this reason I write so that you need not worry about me if you should not hear from me in some time. But I will write the first chance I get to send a letter. We received four months pay about ten days ago which pays us up to the first of March.
and you probably receive this allotment—$250.00 soon I wrote you a letter since we have been paid off and explained it to you before and sent you $30 of what I received if you received it just mention it in your letter.

We are camped on Smith's plantation about 30 miles and near a southeasterly direction in the state of Louisiana.

This will be a short letter owing writing is so soon after writing on yesterday. The peaches here are as large as walnuts which pretty good size for the time of year as I should judge. It is as warm today as any day in June. We can occasionally hear the booming of the cannon in the distance which sometimes like the 4th of July.
That money for you can tell better what to do with it than I can write and tell you from here unless you but if all things go well I shall expect to be at home soon about six months then I shall probably want to use some. Here's something that is called Spanish moss it grows on the tops of trees and hangs down in great clusters and looks pretty.

We have had no deaths in our Regt. that I know of since I have given you the last account.

I have written all I can think of at present and therefore I shall have to bring this short letter to a close and that I will do by bidding you good morning.

From your ever affectionate husband, Rosema
Dear Sir,

Direct your letter to Resemio...

Resemio
Mrs. Lavinia Kerns
Waitzville
Jefferson Co.
Wisconsin
Thursday April 23

My dear wife

Once more I take my pencil to write a few lines to you to let you know how I am getting along at present.

We left the place where we were camped when I wrote to you the last time last Tuesday and came here about ten miles from the place we left and are on another plantation but do not know the name of it and we are still in Louisiana.

If you look on your map you can tell very near where we are when we came from Helena we landed at Relief's landing from there we marched to a small place called Richmond and from there we started to go to another
place called Carthage which is on
the Pif river but we have not yet
got to the least - manned place
but we are within ten miles of
waiting for a bridge to be
built across a bayou when there
is snow I suppose we will march
on
As I told you in my
last letter I have seen some very
handsome plantations the fields
look like nearly (nearly) prairies
handsome gardens we find on
nearly every one of them and in
fact everything a mortal being on
earth could wish for
I think I can beat you on
fruit for I had some strawberries
that I found in some of these
gardens peaches are about
half grown and the trees are heavy
loaded with fruit. Least nights
we heard heavy cannonading for
about - half the night but it was
some distance from here.
We do not—get any news of any kind whatsoever, now we don't know how soon we can get any but expect that some of the trolleys that come from Milliken's landing will bring our mail.
We do not hear a word from Dolph, yes—although he agreed to write to us as soon as he got to his destination.
I am as well as ever yet—In fact, the health of the whole regiment is good. Cotton has been detailed to go into what is called the pioneer corps and probably will not have a chance to write. But late his folks told me I saw him yesterday and he is as well. I saw the skin of an alligator yesterday and it is about the nailest thing I ever saw.
I have written all I can think of this morning so I'll close this and I will write as soon as I can and probably we will be at another place.

So good morning dear wife.

From your ever loving husband

Rescue
J. Mrs. Leonia S. Sterns

Miltonville

Jefferson Co.

Wisconsin
Richland Plantation, Louisiana

Sunday, April 26, 1863

My dear wife,

Once I am trying to scratch a few lines to you as I feel it is duty which I owe to you and I feel assured that if I do not write every time I get a chance to send a letter, that you will feel worried about me being here. I am placed where I am but you need not feel worried at all for I am as well as ever and although I am near a place where there is a rebel force, I do not feel any more in danger of the bullets than I ever have before they do not alarm me in the least. I expect we will move from this place in a day or two to a small place on the river called Carthage and from there I do not know where.
we will go but it is the supposition of some that we will go to Port
by Hudson and some suppose we will move up the Black river
in the direction of Jackson

Yesterday the third anniversary
of our marriage I was employed
in carrying timber and otherwise
helping in building a bridge and
it was about as hard a day's work
as I ever done at home for
I feel considerable same today
it didn't seem much like
three years ago but never mind
the next anniversary I feel
confident that I shall be at home

Heranna seems to be a little
down at the heels but nothing
serious he will be up again
in a day or two or a week
at the most the rest of the
boys are all well as usual

The country down here is just
As level as a floor, the soil is rich and the country is also well timbered. A great deal of it is Sweet Gum and Pine Oak. There is a kind of shrub the Chinese tree that has blossoms nearly like the lilacs and the same smell. I soon in full bloom.

I can write but a short letter today for I have had no mail but once since April 7 and then I did not get much news and I beg in to think that news is about played out here and for this reason am unable to fill out this sheet but this is better than none and more than I have a chance to get now but after we get to another place I expect some mail.

This is all I think of now so good afternoon

Your affectionate husband
Resum
P.S.,
I have not time to write to write a letter to mother today will you do as much for me.

P.S.

Dr. H. Stenner
Co. F 9th Reg. Wis Vol
Via Cairo Ill
Mrs. Lavinia Stevens

Wautzville

Jefferson Co.

Wisconsin
Louisiana April 2, 1863

Dear wife,

Since I wrote to you last we have resumed our march one day and stopped on a plantation here last night. But I do not know the name of it. We are to start on our journey again this morning and I understand our destination is Grand Gulf in Mississippi near the mouth of the Big Black river.

I received two letters from you last night—one dated April 8th, the other the 12th and was glad to hear that you were all well as usual. It appears that you have heard from Dolph and that he went to St. Louis instead of Memphis where we supposed he went. He said he would write.
to me as soon as he got to his destination but the only word I have heard from him is what you wrote. I am now one of the color guard and am at present excluded from all duty which seems quite funny to me to have scarcely anything to do.

The color guard consists of a sergeant and 6 corporals and I am one of the latter.

We have lost many by death and I know of some that I have given an account and at present there is but little news that I know anything about.

I am well at present and able to consume my regular rations of hard crackers bacon coffee beef and I expect one are all well as usual at present and I hope that these few lines will find
all at once in the same situation
I have not told you anything
about the number of troops they
are they are marching in the
same direction as ourselves
because I do not know but
there are two divisions besides
that came here yesterday our
division commands by Gen.
Heaven consists of only two
brigades and our brigade is
made up of five regiments the
11th, 24th, 3rd, 30th, 96 Indiana
besides our own.

You will have to excuse short
letters for it is impossible for
me to write anything else in such
times as these that it is whenever
we are on a march or only a play
or live in a place but I can
say how do you do and good bys
and that is about all.

I suppose I might fill this sheet—
by writing a few comments on the news that you wrote but it is as much as I can do to write what I do without writing anything about the rest of what I get from home unless something special or when I have got more time than I have got time now.

This morning but I will write as soon as I can again. So good bye for the present.

Yours ever affectionately

[Signature]
Mrs. Davinia Stennis
Waitsville
Jefferson Co.
Wisconsin
Gutherson
Camping ten miles northwest

Tuesday, May 5, 1863

My dear wife,

When I wrote to you last, I was in Louisiana on a march southward, and we still continued to march in that direction until April 30 when we crossed the river again into Mississippi. On the 29th, we arrived nearly opposite Grand Gulf, a fortified place at the mouth of the Black River and it was bombarded that day by our gunboats. We found opposite that place until sometime in the afternoon when we resumed our march again as I have stated above and crossed the river at Rodney the 20th in the morning, at four o'clock, everything being in readiness we again resumed our march, and continued until daylight on the 1st of May
I would tell you how many troops there were if I knew but you at the north know better than we do here. Well at daylight, May 14, we made a halt to get our breakfast and cannonading immediately commenced between our batteries and those of the rebels that were stationed near a church called Magnolia Church and by the time we could eat in fact some had not got their breakfast we were ordered on to move the rebels were formed in line on the brow of the hill and were marched up hill and down through cannon balls most of the way until we came to an open space when we were ordered to halt and lay down, and although I was very sleepy I could not get to sleep on account of shell grape and muskets balls whized so lively that sleep was inevitable. Musketry and cannonading had been kept up for an hour or more on both sides when we were again ordered forward
and soon we came to an open field
when we were again halted and
laid down again and as soon as we
did so I looked around and saw a rebel
cannon planted behind us within the distance
of 20 rods which made me look for a chance to get out of the way when I saw some of our soldiers coming
forward and take the rebels prisoners
and also took possession of the cannon
which relieved me greatly. Soon
we were again with 17th ordered to
move to the right but before our boys
could get a chance to fire a single volley the rebels were either killed or taken prisoners except a few that
shattered by this time we were
somewhat fatigued and our division
here came to a rest while some fresh troops went in. After we had rested a while we were this time ordered forward this time were marched into murderous shower
bullets and for one hour and twenty
minutes we stood, giving and taking
the messengers of death.

I have not since known
any more as present but
suffer, it; to say that now
one was hurt; there you know
except Ed Hawes who was
killed. Write to another
for me when you get this.
Mrs. Pavonia Stern
Waitzville, Jefferson Co.
Wisconsin
Camps about 20 miles north of
Saturday, May 9, 1863

My dear wife

When I wrote to you last (May 5) I intended to give you a long letter but just as I was giving you a description of the battle that the 29th Troops a part of the men came around about there would be a chance to send letters if we got them ready in ten minutes and therefore if you see this I had to close quickly and then leaving you in the middle of a letter to wonder how one came out.

Probably you have heard the account of the battle that took place about two miles from Port Gibson before this time and if you have not you will before yet this. for I do not know how soon I can send this letter you it may be in a few days and it may be two weeks we can get mail easier than we came
As you will hear the accounts of the battle through this paper I will say nothing about it in this letter no more than to tell you our loss. the loss of the 50th is 10 killed and 64 wounded. Some are probably mortally wounded. Some of whom have already died of their wounds.

Edward Hawkins was mortally wounded and died in about six or eight hours. No one else of your acquaintance was hurt.

Our Co. lost 2 killed and 24 wounded, one of whom was mortally wounded and has since died.

This is the first time the 29th has faced and I think it is composed of pretty fighting soldiers.

The crops, wheat 25 have been good. Very fine corn stands as high as a man's knees in places. I saw a field of wheat on the C. H. Valley near the head and about three feet high.
letter from you the 5th and was glad to hear that you were all well.
I continue to remain in the same state of health as ever and hope to continue so for it is no pleasant job to be deprived of one's health in this part of the country.
I will now lay this aside now and finish it when I have an chance to send it.
I have just had notice that all letters that are to be sent by this mail must be ready soon and as it has been but a short time since I have written the letter I have nothing to add.
All the boys are in good health and spirits and are in something of a hurry to do up the fighting to finish up the rebellion so they can get home.
I have written all I can think of at present.

One thing forgotten. I lost my Cayenne pepper the day before the battle and also an India rubberg blanket which cost 82.90. They were stolen from my knapsack. Send me some more pepper as soon as you can.

No more at present so good afternoon.

Your affectionate husband,

Reign
Mrs. Savinia Stevens
Waitsville
Jefferson Co.
Wisconsin
My dear wife,

I received two letters from you yesterday which was the first mail I had in some time for we are not in a situation to get or send mail at present as I have told you before in my letters but I send them when ever I can get a chance for I know you will be looking with anxious eye for probably you have heard before the news of the battle near Port Gibson May 1st but I have written two letters to you since then but to the last I think was dated the 7th of May we thought that was quite a hard fight but we had another here (Champion Hill) at the "Immortal 29th" and
a hand in that seat- the other
all do nothing there were some
here that were at Shiloh, and they
say though this did not last as
long but it was a harder fight.
this time our Co. suffered the loss
of 13 wounded, one of whom died
of his wounds soon after which
stands 1 killed and 11 wounded.

Herren Green is one of the wounded
though his wound is but a flesh wound
in the thigh and has not crippled
for life as it has some the rest of
you are acquainted with game on
a whole hide but I tell the rest of
us had a number of close calls but
a miss is as good as a mile.

If am enjoying good health
at present and hope all at home are
in the same situation.

We have camped here since this
battle but expect to move in 2
day or two again. I tell you as well as all the rest that we give the rebels a round thrashing and took quite a number of pieces of artillery and a good many prisoners including some officers.
The ink that I am writing this letter with I found in a Seeshe Knapseck which was left on the
also found a pocket Testament in the camp that I am going to
bring home with me.
Since this army has crossed the river into this state we have made a regular road where we
have come so far but there is no use of my telling you that for you can get the news as soon
as we can ourselves. This army has taken possession of Jackson
cut off the supplies in that direction from Vicksburg and I think
we have fought our battle, and I think that place is in our hands by this time if it is not, soon will be and I think now the fighting part of this war is nearly over and will close up soon at least I hope it will close up before long but if the rebels want another defeat we are ready to accommodate them in that line of business. I will not close this now for I do not know when I can send it but I lay it aside for the present.
Camp near Vicksburg, Miss

Tuesday, May 24, 1863

Dear wife,

I suppose about this time you are worrying yourself considerably because you do not hear from me but the reason of it is because I could not get a chance to send any more than I have but now I expect there will be a chance to send and if there is I will try to improve it.

We are now with sight of the fortifications of Vicksburg and our artillery and gunboats and mortar ships are playing on the city some. The infantry are not doing where we are situated except a few used as sharpshooters and the general opinion is that this place will be reduced by a siege and our mortars are giving
them shall ought and day so I do not think the rebels get a great deal of rest nor do they seem to do much firing back at us except a few sharpshooters. I want you to send me a little thread, a few needles, and a few pins for I have lost my needlebook with every thing else so I have not a needle except one denning needle. I have no thread nor a button nor anything in that line of business. In your last letter you asked me if it was warm here. I would say it was a little warm here than where you are, especially when we are marching with woolen clothes on a blanket a daversack with our grub a canteen with something more than a quart of water to go with it also sometimes one hundred pounds of ammunition to carry now I will tell you that makes
a fellow-sweat sometimes but nevermind. The war is going to stop by and by if it ever does and then I think that I shall get rid of caring this not that I find any fault about it nor have I sorry that I enlisted nor am I a coward but I think by the time this campaign is over than I have been about long enough away from home and would just as live return as not now you need not think I am homesick by this writing for I have not been homesick in the least nor do I think I shall unless I should be taken sick and then probably would not help being homesick none.

Some of the boys spoke to the Col yesterday if there would be a chance to get furloughs after this place was taken and he said we would all go home to stay this fall and
I have an idea that he would like
to get home as well as any of his
boys. We started across the river
with four sergeants and six corporals
and in the two engagements we have
passed through, two of our sergeants
have been wounded and one corporal
killed and four wounded which leaves
us but two sergeants and one corporal
and David is one of the sergeants and I
am the corporal. I still continue
to remain in good health and hope
all at home are in the same condition.

Now do not let your courage fail
for I have faith that I shall come
home and my faith I think is nearly
as large as a grain of mustard seed.

We left Winona Green in the
hospital at Champion hill and have
not heard from him since I wrote
to you before. No more at present.

From your ever loving husband,
Dear Vicksburg, Miss,

Thursday, May 28, 1863

My dear wife,

Once more I will try to pen a few lines to you to let you know that I am still in the land of the living. I received a letter from you today and was of course glad to hear from home once more and that you were all as comfortable as I could ask for.

It is as fine a day today as I ever wish to witness although it’s rather warm but the cool breeze this rustles through the trees gives us plenty of fresh air. But it does not seem as though it was as late in the season as it is from the fact that I have not seen much of a winter but on the other hand I know the season must be as late as it is for the green foliage.
and our boys are going and if one
of the trees is certainly a month
further along than in the north.

Today is about the tenth day of
the siege of this place the fighting
has been done mostly by sharpshooting
and cannonading but not very brisk
the gunboats & mortars giving them
a few shells occasionally from
the river and the batteries to the
land throwing some solid shot
and some shell and the sharpshoo-
to keep down behind their breastw
and thereby to protect our gunners.
The "Rebs" send a very few musk-
balls at our sharpshooters but they
are of no avail on account of our
rifle pits. We have got Vicksburg
completely surrounded and as soon
as our friends get tired of hearing
our salutations they can come
out and surrender or they can
give us an invitation to come
...as our peaceable terms for the place is large enough for us both and we must occupy it— as soon as our friends get tired of our noise, but how soon that will be I can not say but they must get hungry soon for they can get no more as fat as they have got and I do not believe they have got much left by this time."

Then asked my opinion about the man coming to a close soon and I do not think it will last a great while but I cannot give much of an opinion on the subject just now because I hear of but very little of what is going on and what I do hear are camp rumors mostly. Therefore you can form a better idea than I can because you know more about things in general than we do here.
When you get this I shall have to request you to either write to mother for me or send her this letter for I have but a few envelopes and do not know when I can get any more and it becomes necessary to kill the birds with a stone "now do not neglect it."

This leaves me in good health and I hope it will find you in the same state of enjoyment.

The rest of our boys that are with us are as common. I have not heard from Nelson in some time but do not see what is the matter for I answered their last letter before I left Helena. I think I hope to be at home with you this fall if not before but you must be patient and keep up good courage for I shall be there as soon as this war is over if the words will.
Mrs. Spavina Stevens
Waitsville Jefferson Co.
Wisconsin
My dear wife,

I have just received a letter from you dated May 27 containing the death of Dolph which I know must be a hard blow to his aged parents as well as to the rest of his connection. Well it did not take me by surprise altogether but I rather expected it. I judge something of his situation before he left Helena but I did have some hope of him and probably he might have lived if he could have gone home when he started for St. Louis but he is gone now and although he dies not on the battle field he fills a soldier's grave. I can not give you much account of things in operation here with exception...
me are laying here, yet in sight of the rebel fortifications the same as when I wrote you last. No fighting done except by sharpshooters and the cannon with the aid of the gunboats and mortar ships. We probably will stay here until at least the city falls by siege.

Our regiment has been detailed as sharpshooters four days since we have been here, and when a rebel showed his head above the wall (made of earth thrown up) we would make him dodge down again and probably some quicker than he raised up now. I tell you I am sorry we have met with such reverses in the Eastern departments, but after all they may gain the victory there. And I hope there will be some change in the program there before long.
I also had a letter from George today and he says that if they do not hear something important from the seat of war before long the soldiers where he is will get discouraged, for he says two years nearly they have been in the service and the army of the Potomac have not made much progress yet. I think thanks that the army here have done nobly and if we finally plant the banner of the United States over the City of Vicksburg which probably we shall this campaign will be considered as a decisive campaign of the rebellious Pan as well as usual at present and hope these few lines will find us all at home enjoying the same good health although
I have fallen away some since I left Helena, but it was not caused by sickness but by hard marching and fighting and this some of the time on short rations but now we have got where we can get plenty to eat. The weather is rather warm here and some warmer than in Wis. last year at this time and I hope I shall have the privilege of changing places before cold weather or at least before the 1st of June.

I know I can not write or rather send a letter very often but I will send one as often as I can. I shall have to bring this letter to a close although it does not contain much but it will tell you where I am and how I get along.
Mrs. Savonia Stern

Witsville

Jefferson

Wisconsin
Near Vicksburg, Miss.
Monday, June 8, 1863.

My dear wife,

I now resort to my pen, as it is the only means that I have to let you know how I get along. I received your letter dated May 25 and was glad to hear that you were all in good condition, but rather sorry that you got the news that Vicksburg had surrendered, which it has not yet which of course will displease you when you hear of it, but expect the city fall before long. The bombardment still continues the same as when I wrote to you before.

It seems that you have got the news that our company is pretty badly cut to pieces, but it is not
as you heard, the casualties of our Co. are as follows: 4 killed and 18 wounded, which is far from the figures you have received. The boys are in pretty good spirits at present, but there is one thing we do not like very well that is the reverses in the Eastern department, and I begin to think that our Potomac friends are not doing much but whose fault is it? It does seem that they are pretty badly managed or something else has been the matter or they would be some farther than they were 18 months ago. But I must not cease them too much for they may be making another move and may be a successful one but if they are not it is time they did and it be for the effect of somebody.
pockets that have not got rich enough yet—why they have not done it before.

I have been a little under this weather for the past few days with the diarrhoea, but seems to be some better now and I think I shall come out all right in a few days at least. I hope so. But worry as little as possible for if I should get any worse you will know it for I shall write and tell you.

The weather take one day with another is as hot as I ever witnessed the heat is steady so it is not so bad as to have one day hot the next colder and so on.

I had a letter from George yesterday he says he is well but gives no news of the war. I have no news to tell you about the war as I heard none for a number of days.
I have not heard from Nelson in some time and if I do not hear from him soon I shall think that he has forgotten there is such a being on earth as myself. I answered his last letter as soon as I received it.

I have written all I can think of at present and I guess you will think a short letter but it give you some idea about where I am situated.

At more at present go good morning.

Your affectionate husband

Recon.

P.S. Make lots of pranks this summer if you care for if I should (which I hope I shall not) stay in the south the coming winter I shall want you to send me about a five
Mrs. Giovanni Sterns
Wautsville
Jefferson Co.,
Wisconsin
My dear wife. Once more
I am endeavoring to scratch out a few lines to let you know how we get along. The last letter I wrote to you I told you that I was sick well this morning. I felt like a new man to what I did then. I am as well as common at present except the diarrhea left me somewhat weak but I think I shall soon gain my strength. The siege at this place goes on the same as ever and as the paddy says show but I suppose sure. I received a letter from you yesterday dated May 31st and by your writing you must get some amount
news in that quarter of the globe you told me about Nickelsbury being taken I was some surprised to hear that as I had doubted its being taken for sometime and do yet. Another thing about our Regt—being in five battlestns I have been with the Regt through the whole campaign and I have not seen but twice before me arrived at this place.

And about the 29th being cut-up so bad that there were only 92 men left—well now that is something we had not heard of ourselves. I could not tell you just how many we have got here now there being quite a number absent—sick and wounded but I can sit here and count more than the above numbers in fact our Com
numbers 50 including the sick that are with us and probably nearly 50 are fit for active duty. I told you a while ago to send me some envelopes but after you get this you need not for I can get them now and as many as 3 men. I would like very much to hear some news but I can not get much when I do get it it is all old that is mostry. If you get the Sentinel send me a copy once in a while for mine do not get one out of five lately once another thing is it runs out the 21st of this month. We are getting quite anxious to have the war closed up and I think it might if the whole thing had been carried on rigorously through
present campaign and it may be yet for the campaign is not closed yet and I think if they all are doing as much as we are here that there may be something done towards it yet and for my part I hope it will be closed up soon for I do not wish to spend another winter down here but I must see the end of Rebellions and if nothing happens I am going to do it. Her the rules the universe has not seen yet to take me away yet and I hope end prevail that it may be this will to spare me to see it through and return to the bosom of my friends. Don't think this a poor letter but if you prize a letter as I do you will think otherwise,

Always your loving husband

[Signature]
Miss Lavinia Stevens
Waitsville
Jefferson Co.
Wisconsin
Mrs. Vicksburg Wife
Tuesday June 16/63

My dear wife,

I received a letter from you yesterday dated June 8, and of course read it with joy and was happy to hear that all at home are as well as one could expect. There is nothing new going on here now. The siege continues the same as I have written to you before. Some shelling cannonading and some sharpshooting constitute the principal part of the siege, but I hope that the city will soon be in our hands and it may be in a few days and it may not be for some time. But time will tell when and how soon.
As you will see, I by mistake commenced writing on the first page of this sheet. But that matters not—the writing is all on the papers and I guess you will find it. The folks around here seem to have an idea the war is nearly drawn to a close and I hope it is but I could not give my opinion on the subject at present because of lately I have heard rumors of things I might say nothing but camp runners and there we can not believe to be sure we get letters but no papers. I hope soon we can get some news so that we can know something that is going on outside of our own camp. I am about the same as when I wrote to you before—though I am a little
stronger than I was then, and I feel confident that I shall be entirely well in a few days as least—I hope I shall. The rest of our boys are as well as usual. For a week or more past the weather has been some cooler than it was for about the same length of time before, and I hope it will continue so for when it is very hot the heat seems to affect me some but I think I shall be able to stand it through as well as the rest of them unless some disease should get hold of me. But that I shall have to trust luck to but if I could have my choice I give me my health for all anything else. I hardly know what to write to finish this letter.
but I hope the time is not far distant when I shall not have to write at all say at least @ few months for I hope the war will be closed up. I have not been homesick yes but all the consolation & soldiers separated from his dear friends and all the enjoyments of a happy life is that he knows he's fighting to preserve his country & that his forefather fought to establish and @ know that his friends are all in good health and as long he knows this he can go on with a cheerful heart no matter how hard his task Keep up good courage and hope for the future No more at presence write soon and often Your ever loving husband
Mrs. Spartina J. Stearns
Waitaville
Jefferson Co.
Wisconsin
Near Yorktown, Va.
Saturday June 20/63

My dear wife,

Though I have nothing new to write but still I will try to pen a line to you to let you know how I prosper at present. The siege of this place has continued the same since I wrote to you as it has before until about four o'clock this morning when cannonading commenced and still continues (about 8) but how it will continue I could not say. Our Regt. is now out of camp a few steps near the rifle and a part of them are deployed as sharpshooters you may wonder why I am not out with well the case is
something like this. I had the diarrhea for a number of days as I have written to you before. But now I have got better of that in fact I am entirely well as far as that is concerned. But for about a month I have been complaining of being lame in the legs and arms well this morning I thought I would find out what did ail me and went to the doctor for that purpose and he says it is rheumatism. I am unfit for active duty and unless it gets better I shall not be able to assist my comrades any more in reducing this place but I think after a few days I shall get better but do not worry about that for I am well and hearty in every other respect but that and that I consider
not a fatal disease and I am not so bad but that I cannot walk around yet. Since I have written to you before I sent a package containing a notebook and contents and also a letter dated the 8th of June.

I was very happy to receive these things but when I wrote Pckb i not expect you would take so much pains. That maple sugar tares is very natural now. I can tell you although there was not a great deal but more than I expected but wait till next spring and I will be. I will have more. Daniel seems to be a little down at the heels this morning and he has been sometimes well a few days.
and then again down at few days ago whenever I write I hardly know what to say of him. The rest of the boys seem to well at present and anxiously waiting the fall of this city but I guess our friends on the other side of the inclosure are not hungry enough to surrender and I think they will be after a time. When you write gives us an idea how farming gets along and how the crops look.

I see nothing new from one week to another or hardly hear anything new in that time which make the time pass off rather dull sometimes but the time passes quick after all here it is past the middle of June who can realize it for myself for near now it seems more like a dream than anything else. No more at present I will write again in a few days.
Mrs. Savinie Sherns
Waitonville
Pepperson Co.
Wisconsin
Near Vicksburg, Miss.

Wednesday June 23rd 1863

My dear wife,

I received a letter from you on Monday date of June 8th and of course was happy to get a line from home and more and to know that you are getting along as well as you are but I hope that you will all get better as soon as possible. We are still camped in same old place as where I have wrote a number of letters to you before and there is but little change in operations within my view except the change of time and the news that we get amounts to nothing and from this fact I can give you nothing of importance this time.
Bass spoke about what C. B. Estes wrote that we had to live on while on our march. I never have told you what we had to live on then.

Well it was something like this: when we left the river we marched on to Port Gibson. We had four days rations but not being very well supplied with transportation we were unable to take much with us. But we lived at very well while the four days rations lasted but after that we had hard living. I can assure you sometimes we had to live on one cracker a day except sometimes we could forage some meat. Some days we had no crackers and had to live on parched corn and molasses and some days we had nothing except what we could forage which would be a little meal or something else.
It not half enough for a man to eat, and in fact not fit for such a purpose but since we arrived here we have plenty but not as good as we have at home but as good as one could expect here under circumstances we have some potatoes some flour some crackers and plenty of meat consisting of ham shoulder & bacon and also some beef in addition to this we have rice beans sugar or coffee to eat.

My lameness is about the same as when I wrote to you before it seems to take hold of my old broken leg the worst I am in hopes that I shall get over it before long but if I do not if apply for a furlough after Richesburg is taken but I
not get it if I do. {Keep this letter clause for yourself}

I tell you William and I had a nice dinner yesterday noon. He went and got some blackberries that grew a short distance from here and he and I between us both made a shortcake and had that for dinner which did not relish very bad but I believe I had rather have one of your own made after all.

There are rumors around camp that deserters come into our lines every night but how true they are I could not say.

I shall have to bring this letter to a close.

Good afternoon.

Yours ever loving husband.

[Signature]
Mrs. Savinie Stern
Witsville
Jefferson Co. Wisconin
near Vicksburg, Miss.

Sunday June 28/65

My dear wife,

We are still camped in the same old place, and as I wrote to you last no change except in the change of time, although north of here some distance the soldiers made a charge a day or two ago, but the result as yet I have not learned.

I have heard no news since I wrote before that I can depend on as reliable except that Rebels are invading Pennsylvania which I think may prove to be a very fine thing as it may be the means of keeping up some of our leading men in the Eastern
department and to let them know that they must do something as well as us. The weather at present is as hot as I want to have it myself and if we should have much hotter weather than we have had for a few days I am afraid I shall place myself in the shade and I can easily do that for as long as we lay still I have nothing to do the Color Guards even if they are well there have nothing to do unless the Regt should move. My Lameess is about the as when I wrote to you last but I think the symptoms are better William & I had another blackberry shortcake for supper night
before last and yesterday my wife had some pork and beans and some biscuit (miners butter) and today we had some worming coffee when we have a chance we change from one thing to another which serves to help time pass off as much as anything else. I surely think that we are a good while reducing this place but it will save more lives to reduce it by siege than to carry it by a storm and I thinks when we do take this place together with Fort Hudson which I doubt not in the least that we shall will put a damper on the rebels and of the armies
may not be from any of your boys or in different departments are working with us, it may be our last fighting which I hope it will for I never want to witness another battlefield especially after the battle is over.

I can tell you no news even what transpires for you hear the truth of it all there is any truth about it. Before I can in fact I hear nothing from here until I get the news from the north. Send me two or three pens in the next letter you write. The rest of the boys are in keeling condition. I have not time to write a letter to another now for it is after dark and I must extinguish the light. Tell her that I am still alive and hope I shall soon be well. I have written all I can think of at present but still I might write about many things but to make it seem...
67

Mrs. Lavinia Sterns
Waitsville
Jefferson Co.
Wisconsin