Camp 17th U.S. Infantry
near Catlett Station Va.
January 27th, 1864

Dear Sarah,

Feeling somewhat lonely this evening, I thought I might try to drive away all such gloomy thoughts by writing. Thereafter seat myself for that purpose with pen in hand.

First let me tell you what we are doing, which is little or no good. Guarding a R.R. & C: Yet it very necessary that it should be guarded, as we are entirely dependent upon it for subsistence, still it seem like dying the same thing over & over again.

Our details are very heavy, and the men are in bed only ever other night, while the officers are off duty two thirds of the time. That is, they are never off duty, but their duty is very light except upon certain days.

I think we will remain here until the Spring Campaign opens, which will not be very long if this pleasant weather continues for any time.

We are having delightful weather.
like spring time in New Hampshire.
I have been sitting in my tent nearly all day without fire. I had neither eat nor drink, and yet I was full warm enough for comfort.

It is reported that the Guerrillas came and took a look at us, but the night of the 22d but if it is true, they did not come through our lines or in any way make themselves known.

The report originates from a darky woman, who says she heard them tell Finks the next day, that they came out to our camp but found the sentinels were walking their bees and seeing lights in several huts, concluded they would not be able to take us by surprise and therefore dangerous, consequently they abandoned their undertaking.

We have but a few men, yet (over one man never lived) and you can believe, if they are surrounded, some of these nights (which I very much doubt) they are not going to lay down their arms, until they have made at least one desperate struggle for it to regain their freedom. However we are pretty strongly guarded and I have no apprehensions of a surprise.
Ben Tyres has just returned from a 
leave of absence, and brought his wife. 
This looks encouraging for the winter 
to be spent here. Yet I would much 
rather spend it elsewhere, not however 
in Richmond, only upon my own farms. 
Four of the Company I command 
are stopping there for the present. 
They were captured on the 13th of October, 
by Guerrillas (the night we captured Valley Farms). 
I received a letter from one of them 
but a few days since. He did not give 
any information regarding his treatment; 
probably if he had, I never would have 
received his letter.

I will entertain a hope that I may 
be able to procure a leave before spring. 
Although the chances grow up every day, 
nevertheless you may rest assured my 
dear Sarah that if an opportunity 
is offered, I shall most heartily accept. 
When you see my folks, please say to 
them that I am well but shall act for the 
same rule towards them. That they also 
write me, write once a month. 
Remember me to all write often. 

Yours ever

[Signature]