

Cumberland Gap
May 16, 1862
Mary A. Hearn

My dear wife,

I received your kind letters of the 9th and 10th (in one envelope) and you cannot imagine the joy it gave me to hear from you and hear that you and our dear children were well. I had really give up all hope of ever hearing from you again. You don't know how I wished for each day to break waiting for the mail to come hoping that I would get a letter from you. Don't complain of not getting but one letter from me. I assure you it is not my fault. I think I have wrote you 7 letters since I left Columbus. The first one I wrote in Knoxville. The day after I got to the camp I wrote the one you got with the song ballad. I have written from once or twice a week ever since I left. I wrote two letters week before last for you to send me your Ambrotye (?) my cotton pants some sugar and peas which please send. I "guys" you will get one of the letters. I saw a letter advertised for you in the daily sun. You must inquire for advertised letters. I am very well at this time thanks be to our heavenly father. And trust and pray to God that you are all well and doing well. Last night I got your letter after I went to bed. I was so glad to hear from you. I got up and read it. I was thinking of home and then at last fell asleep. I had no more than fell asleep when we were awakened by the alarm that the Yankees were upon us. We fell out and went in the ditch. Had to stay there from half past eleven o'clock till this morning. The Yankees attacked our pickets but did not kill any of them as have _____ yet. We (They?) made no attack on our main body of troops. We expect to be attacked here constantly but I do not apprehend much danger, do not be uneasy about me. Just your trust in God and continue to pray for my protection & he has promised to hear us & answer our prayers if I should die or be killed in battle our father in heaven knows what is best for us.

But I plead with him to spare my unprofitable life to see you again in this world. My dearest Mary, how I do long to see you once more. Do not cry or grieve for me. I know it is hard to bear. Bear the best you can. I hope the war will soon close and I will come back to live with you till death parts us. I was so silly in leaving home and you & coming here surrounded by sickness and disease and death. I have been compelled to but I can't help myself now so I try to be contented or as much so as I can. It makes me cry to hear of you crying about me. Do not cry if you can help it. I do the best I can. I have a hard time here tis me that suffers nothing that I would _____ home no where to sleep but on my blanket on a chestnut _____ some nights I do not go to sleep any at all. I know you miss me but you have friends & a great many things that I am denied of here so dearest Mary don't cry for me if I live to come home it will be such a joyful time with us such as we have never experienced before. Look to that day and pray to God to spare us to meet once more. We have had two more to die since I wrote to you. Old man Tillery died suddenly on 12th- he had been complaining ever since we have been here but had got better. And wrote to his wife- He got dizzy until last Sunday. He came out to Roll call on Monday morning and at one o'clock he died. His wife lives near Smith's Station. The next day one of our Sargeants Henry Chrisman died- He had the measles. &

took cold with them and they killed him. He was a kind young man, beloved by all of us. There is a great deal of sickness now in camps. One man named Perry Stinchiland (?) was at the point of death. I know Doze (?) had a severe attack of pneumonia last Monday. I was detailed to wait on him. He got so they thought he was able to be removed to the hospital yesterday. They carried him away to Tazewell 13 miles from here. The day before he left he was struck with neuralgia in his right leg. I never saw a poor man suffer so much in my life as he did. You can imagine my feelings to see him go. I am afraid I shall never see him again but I hope for the better if he gets well I think he will be discharged. He has never been able to do anything since he has been in the service of accounts. I felt so lonesome when he left I could not help crying. Don't tell Jane about it till I hear from him. I hope he will get better. There was a young man shot accidentally in the Baker Volunteers in the next company to us yesterday morning. The poor fellow got the top of his head shot off. It was a dreadful sight. We see some dead nearly everyday and still these men are so unthoughtful and wicked. Capt. Phelps has prayers in his tent every night he invites all in & all our officers are members of the church and try to set a good example but a great many are hardlined they pray but little attention to it. As pertains to my religion I feel more dependence on God. I try to pray oftener than I ever did but I neglected duty so long. I let the cares of the world fill up my mind so long I do not feel my acceptance with God as I have in days gone by but of my sinful heart deliver me not I am determined if I go to Hell to go praying. Pray for me that I may feel my acceptance with God and finally get to heaven. I wrote for my paper but have not received it. We may be called away from here and as you want it you may send and get it. I will enclose an order which carry to the printing office and get it if I take a notion to take a paper I will send for a daily paper. Write to me if you get this order and let me know you get a paper. Write to me at least once in two weeks and let me hear from you. I have not got any money yet. Don't reckon when I shall, don't look like they care about paying us As to coming home I will come as soon as I can If I was to study about it I could not contain myself Give my love to your mama and the children and reserve a double portion for yourself. Kiss our dear little ones. Heaven protect them Bring them up right if I never see them no more in this world. I am glad to see you improving in writing-a little more careful in spelling and you wrote a very good letter. Oh that I could be with you once more so I will close.

Your loving husband
George Washington Hearn

Transcribed by Kathy Mayo Sanchez, July 12, 2002.