

10-26-1862

Letter from William McKinney to His Cousin Martha McKinney, October 26, 1862

William M. McKinney

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Camp of 15th Inf Reg^t - 21st Brigade -
6th Division - near Columbia - Calver
County - Ky - Oct 26th 1862

Cousin Mattie -

Arrived here
yesterday evening after a four days
march from near Mount Vernon -
90 miles east of this, making about
300 miles marching since we left
Louisville last. Are here without tents
blankets or baggage and snow eight
inches deep and still falling.

Snowed all night - last night - the
wind now blowing as cold as
Greenland. I am writing - sitting
a large log fire - the wind blowing
the snow all around me - filling my
eyes with smoke. This is rough work
I assure you - numbers of the men
entirely barefoot - many with very poor shoes.

It looks very hard to see men sitting
around the fires - barefoot - shivering with
cold - some without either overcoats or
blankets. We are expecting our baggage
from Lewisville here in a day or
two - but that is not now and it
may not come. Last night - I rolled
up in a blanket - so tired and feet
sore from marching - that I could
have slept through an earthquake -
when I wakened up this morning -
found myself completely buried in
the snow. This is what I call sabber-
ing in earnest - but it seems as if
we were accomplishing nothing - I
suppose - however - we run Brazy out
of the State. I presume we will
remain here four or five days - and
perhaps longer - I have no idea when
we will be ordered to next - nor do
I care. We have been living on half
rations for some days - and are
on half pore now and will be for

same day - until provisions arrive
from Lebanon. We have been and
now are in a very poor country -
it will afford us little or nothing in
the way of subsistence. I do really
wish we could get some place where
we could get some rest - we have had
none for the last three months. I
have suffered more on this last march
than any other that we have ever made -
I have had very sore feet all the time -
have marched day after day - the blood
oozing from blisters worn raw.
I have symptoms of rheumatism
similar to that I had last winter -
I am dreading a winter Campaign -
The truth is - we cannot stand it - at
this rate - we must be better prepared
to endure the cold and rain. I do
wish you could look into our
Camp to day - and see how we
live - you might laugh - but I rather
think you would be more likely to cry -

seeing the poor fellows crowding around
the fires - shivering - their teeth chattering
together - their feet bare - toes peeping
out of their worn out shoes - the hope to
get a fresh supply of clothing soon - but
that is not now - we started out - fully
equipped from Louisville - but so long
a march through a rough country - has
worn most of our clothes almost out.
I have not slept under a tent - or
under any kind since the 1st of
August - you may imagine your
cousin is rather a ragged looking
customer - at least I suppose so -
though I have not looked into a
glass since I left Louisville - almost
a month ago. I hope we will
get a mail soon - I know there
must be a score of letters for me
some place - but they are not here.
I have not heard from home for
a long time - do not know what
is going on there - I wrote you last
from near Mount Vernon - about
two days ago - hope you have received.
I am writing to pass away the
time - do not know that I will
get a chance to send it - in a week.
When I get a good chance to
write you a long letter - will
do it - but under present circumstances
you must be content with a short
note from your Cousin McKim