Camp of 3d Brigade 1st. Division
9th A.C.
Middleburg Ky
May 19, 1863

My dear Jane,

It is not often that people can have their wishes accomplished quickly, but it looks as though I am rather favored that way sometimes. While writing you yesterday I mentioned that when I wished to leave Newport News, the order of our moving was on the way. I now wish to leave here, and this morning orders came to have two days rations cooked and four days field rations in hand and be ready to move at a moments notice. That is all I know about it yet. So you see that we are in full prospect of a move. However if we move to day it will be backwards. Our pickets have not been called in, and I know that Col. Leasure is going to Stanford to day as a witness in a trial, so that we are either going to be here till tomorrow or if going to march to day it will be in that direction. Johnny is out on picket. I spoke to him as he passed our quarters going out last night. We have not heard of any movement on the part of the rest of the army that requires us to move.

There is to be a military picnic to day at Houstonville, got up by Genl. Welsh. He has invited one half of our officers. All the ambulances are in readiness to take them down there.

We have received no mail since the one that brought your last letter. Lieut. Justice went down to Houstonville this morning to bring up clothing and other articles for the brigade, and he will bring the mail also if it is there. He started before sunrise. We all had breakfast that early. It looks like the middle of the day to me and is not nine o'clock yet. The citizens are getting over this scare about Morgan's Cavalry coming. We can't find anything of them. We have a company of Wolford's Cavalry with us. These men are all from this part of the country and are at home here; they know all the roads and most of the people. We use them as scouts. They go out of the lines as far as they please, come back every day and report, but cannot find any enemy this side of the Cumberland river. We still have on a double picket force. This keeps half the regiment on duty all the time. At dress parade our regiment looks like a single company.

We have still very pleasant weather. It suits the farmers very well. From our situation up on the hill I can see them ploughing and harrowing in every direction from us. They have three or four teams in each field all going at once. It is very much like our own country for peace and quiet, every one following his business if the soldiers were not here. Having nothing to do however I have become tired of it. I watch the men farming a
while, then read a little, but soon get tired of that, then lie down and take a nap, then go to the river bank and scare the musk rats into their holes. If I had my gun, I could do a pretty good business shooting, but these rifles we have don't do to shoot birds as they fly, and are also too dangerous where people live so thickly for they might hit some one we cannot see, half a mile away. One company of pickets came out on Sunday morning to fire the loads of their guns. They fired towards the river, and from the hill I saw a man running as for his life abot half a mile off. They might have hit him, for from where they were they could not see him. The Sharp or Springfield rifle will kill at a mile off. The difficulty is to see well enough to take aim at that distance. Without a glass before the sight it cannot be done.

For fear we do start to day I must go and hunt up some one to do my washing. I miss my old washerman, since the 45th have moved down to Houstonville. He belonged to that regiment and now that we are ten miles off, it is rather inconvenient to take my small washing that distance.

The quartermaster has just returned bringing a large mail. The postmaster assorted it in our office. No letters for any of us. But he brings word that the 45th have left Houstonville and are advancing backwards. I suppose we will be going too before night. The Colonel has also returned without finishing his journey, and I also see officers coming back without having had their picnic. We have not got the papers yet to day and in absence of any news from other quarters can get hold of no news. We will soon have some manufactured. The imaginations of our men will have as many stories conjured up as they can get listeners to before an hour. Some one will have had a dream last night, or some frightened picket will have seen Morgan's ghost, or something of that kind.

Mr. Jones started down this morning to Stanford as a witness in a horse stealing case. He has returned too without going as far as Houstonville. He thinks the rebels are coming into Kentucky by the Cumberland Gap. Probably that is the case. These citizens often know better than we do, what the movements of the rebels are. Certain it is that there is no enemy very near us. Our Scouts are out for miles around and see nothing. We are ready to move and I will probably write you from somewhere else the next time. I must quit wishing to move hereafter, if that is what makes them accommodate me. I will enclose you a photograph of the quartermaster. He had five of the unusual size, and the young officers who were writing to the girls as was advertized wanted to get some from him to send to them, so as to get the girls to send their’s on. Each one as he was writing under a fictitious name, wanted to also send a fictitious photograph. The quartermaster for fear they might get his tore them all up. Among the pieces I
saw his face on one and picked it up and cut it round, and have been threatening to send it to someone so as to get one back for it. I have tormented him a good deal, and he is afraid I will send it. I send it, and will tell him it is gone. He says if I do there will be somebody about my size hanging by a rope some morning. I wish you had a carter de visite of some girls, any one at all to send to me and I will carry on the joke by showing it to him as being received in return for his. Just as you please, however.

They are calling me for dinner and I must close. We will at least have our dinner before we go if we go to day. We have hominy & pork.

Excuse my nonsense if you please this time dear. I will try to do better the next.

With much love I am darling

Your affectionately

William