We left Camp, for a short time, mid-day, last Wednesday. The Government, on Wednesday, we were called up by the bell, at the long roll and kept our arms upon horseback and with the rapid firing of muskets and shells, we were all excited and comfortably engaged, according to the requirements of the occupants.

The band of the regiment had made a song as we were leaving the camp, bang of the proceedings with us, the batching of bullets, noise and cheers with the falling of trees made our campgrounds officer think, we must stop. But alas! we were not permitted to get by our fireplaces but three nights. Now the noble loggers, our camp guard and the twelve in our establishment, started batteries, day and night on the beautiful site of our little city, till as I was eagerly to relate as I hurriedly left our camp, and took off our position on line of battle and the reformed circular ridge covering the depot and the adjoining buildings. PM we had orders to start our tents, and standing in time and moment near the depot buildings. Promptly and every one coming me from London. We received our last orders if ever we shall get word of the enemy. How gladly we expect to leave us.

Etc.
In the old [?] house at Knoxville
Depot Tenn. Thanksgiving morning

Memorandum

A squad of 10 men are stationed in the old engine house we have loop-holed the walls and are to hold our position to the last if the picket in front are driven in. The brick walls afford us good protection while we can make the plain in front and flanks with our rifles for half a mile. We have been constantly on duty night and day [?] little [?] could catch for sleep since week ago last Monday morning. That morning at 5 o’clock we were called up by the beating of the long roll and left our nice cozy houses on which we had worked hard all the week before; each hut had its little fireplace, tables, shelves, bunks &c all nicely and comfortably arranged according to the necessity of its occupants.

The boys of the regiment had been as busy as bees during the cold days of the preceding week and the clicking of hatchets axes and spades with the falling of trees made our camp ground appear like a big work shop. But alas! we were not permitted to sit by our fireplaces but three nights. Now the rebels occupy our camp ground and have thrown up entrenchments, planted batteries, dug rifle pits on the beautiful cite of our little city. But as I was agoing to relate we hurriedly left our camp and took up our position in line of battle on the ridge semicircular ridge covering the depot and the adjoining buildings. PM we had orders to strike our tents and remove evrything inside our lines near the depot buildings. Burnside’s trains ar all coming in from Louden. We received or last mail To-day we shall get until we drive of the Rebs. or they go away and leave us.

Tuesday

We have been waiting for rebs but
Wednesday, 11th, 5 o'clock P.M., the men were then under arms, as full for the attack as possible. The enemy's line was in the rear of the breastworks, and a line of field pieces in front of it. The men were in a terrible excitement, the bullets entering each other's heads while they were getting out their ammunition. The enemy was driven back by the constant charge of our troops, and the heavy fire of their musketry. The town was captured, and the citizens were massacred by our soldiers whatever they went in search of them.

There was a dead girl in one of the houses, and a young man, who had been killed as many as 15 by the most elegant furniture. The choicest carpets, the richest wearing apparel, all left to be piloted by the soldiers and destroyed by the flames. Such a war! And who was not the furniture taken into the city, because an attack was daily expected. Government funds was all engaged in converting government property to a safe place they were1

The men were in the streets all hours of the day and night. My regiment has pressed a great many citizens while I was at work, night and day, felling trees, digging rifle pits and entrenchments.
none appear on our front. Burnside’s forces are nearly all collected about the city

Wednesday

We [?] in the same place all day at night [?] pickets the line being on the ridge before named

Nothing of interest as usual some fighting on the right and forces take 600 prisoners among whom was an [?] paroled Brig. Gen.

Friday

We wake and start digging rifle pits [?] and so forth are ordered to be cleared [?] fire burning for the rebels have established a line of pickets in front of ours and considerable firing takes place. The citizens are in a terrible excitement the balls whizing over their heads while they are getting out their furniture adds no little to their excitement. The reason of burning the holdings is this, to prevent the rebels sheltering themselves in the houses and picking off our men. The citizens are not able to get near all of their stuff into the city and the contents of parlors, chambers, closets, cupboards and cellars are pillaged by our soldiers whatever they want is carried of the rest trampled under foot broken or destroyed.

It was a sad sight to see houses so well furnished as any in NE, the most elegant furniture the choicest labraties [?] the nicest wearing apearal all left to be pillaged by the soldiers and destroyed by the flames. Such is war! But why was not the furniture taken into the city? Because an attack was daily expected Government trains was all engaged in conveying government property to a safe place they were rattling through the streets at all hours of the day and night. The military has pressed a great many citizens white & black to work on fortifications and soldiers are at work night and day falling trees diging rifle pits and entrenchments.
fat to see the graybacks blundering and stumbling around. A mine was stretched so as to tumble anyone who hit his foot against it into a deep wide ditch which surrounded the fort on all sides. The rebels tum-
bled into this ditch till it was full just as you would throw in cord wood and as there was no getting back they all tried to clamber into the fort.
This was the situation of the rebels when our guns fired they were all crying for the fort is ours,” “come on boys.”
The leader of the attacking forty summoned Capt Ben-
jamin to surrender. He replied by touching of the fire
gun, done with grape and canister which were
rounded down by hundreds then one after another of the eight guns were discharged each discharges setting
a wide gap in the rebel column. Meanwhile the whole
regiments of 1200 men each took their own line and
rather doing in a disorderly face before which the rebels
fell melting away as did before the mine. But our men
were in the most danger from those in the ditch which
the guns would not reach. They would actually be held
the musketry of the guns to pull themselves up into the fort.
A lane climbed up in this way and cried out, “I am
the man to whom this fort is to surrender. The howl
you are” answered the gunners as he touched off his piece
Having the lieutenant into a thousand pieces.
But as I was going to relate Lewis Benjamin found a
way to dispose of the rebels in the ditch by lighting the
cap of shells and tossing them into the ditch to
hand to explode among the rebel Lewis. By doing at the
same time to the rebels what are given in there for we
don’t want anything of you in there. Such works as
this as you would naturally suppose did last as long as
it takes me to describe it. The rebels retreated but not
fort to see the graybacks blundering and stumbling round. A wire was stretched so as to tumble any one who hit his foot against it into a deep wide ditch which surrounded the fort on all sides the rebels trumbled into this ditch till it was full just as you would throw in cord wood and as there was no getting back they all tried to clamber into the fort.

This was the situation of the rebels when our guns opened they were all crying “the fort is ours”, “come on boys”  The leader of the attacking party summoned Lieu. Benjamin to surrender he replied by touching of the first gun doubly loaded with grape and canester which mowed them down by hundreds, then one after another aft the eight guns were discharged each discharge cutting a wide gap in the rebel column. Meanwhile the two little regiments of 150 men each which supported the baterys were poring in distractive fire before which and that of the batteries the rebels were melting away as dew before the sun. But our men were in the most danger from those in the ditch which the guns would not reach They would actually take hold of the musles of the guns to pull themselves up into the fort  A Lieu. climbed up in this way and cried out “I am the man to whom this fort is to surrender “The h---l you are” answered the gunner as he touched of his piece blowing the lieutenant into a thousand pieces

But as I was going to relate Lieu. Benjamin found a way to dispose of the rebs in the ditch, by lighting the fuse of shells and tosting them into the ditch by hand to explode among the rebels Lieu. B saying at the same time to the rebs “what are you in there for we don’t want anything of you in there. Such work as this as you would naturally suppose did not last as long as it takes me to describe it. The rebels retreated but not
among a squad. So detailed the entrenchments in the
height depot and to hold our position to the last. We were
lucky enough to find several boxes of bread kept in the
building which was considered a great luxury.
Reduced terribly during the afternoon and night.
The civilians the engaged during the night in removing of
their goods, the rifle balls whistling over their heads, shelled
bushings about added no little to the excitement of
hammering citizens and smoke. It seems a bad for
such splendid dwellings to be destroyed, dwellings so
richly furnished as the finest houses in Vicks are, simply
sacked and straw strewn about every room. The citizens
are not able to get much of their property into the city
and the contents of parlors, chambers, closets, upboards, etc.
and pillars, are pillaged by our soldiers whatever they want is carried
off, then remember lamps, under foot; unless we destroy
I assumed too bold to see the most elegant furniture
the choicest libraries, the nicest wearing apparel all left
left to be destroyed by the flames. But one will ask why was
not this property taken into the city? because an attack
was hourly expected. Government teams (the only teams that
could pass in and out of the city) was all engaged in moving
government property to safe place they are rattleing our
the storm渐ravel at all times of the day and night
which with the falling of trees and the strange dozer of
buildings shows the rebels that we are preparing for them.
Nov. 1st. Relieved from the back building and went to
digging rifle pits. A few shots were exchanged between our
batteries and the rebels. Sharp skirmishing in the picket
line.
Nov. 2nd. Considerable firing between pickets. Silva Wood
and myself got an advance position behind a big log
and with a glass we amused ourselves looking and shooting at
among a squad of 30 detailed to cut loop holes in the freight depot and to hold our possesion to the last. We were lucky enough to find several boxes of hard bread in the building which we considered a great luxury.

Rained terribly during the afternoon and night

The citizens are engaged during the night in moving off their goods, the rifle balls whizzing over their heads shells dropping about added no little to the excitement of teamsters citizens and mules. It seems too bad for such splendid dwellings to be destroyed, dwellings as richly furnished as the finest dwelling houses in NE are completely sacked and straw strewn about evry room. The citizens are not able to get much of their property into the city and the contents of parlors, chambers, closests, cupboards, and cellars, are pillaged by our soldiers whatever they want is carried off the remainder trampled under foot, broken and destroyed

It seemed too bad to see the most elegant furniture the choicest libraries, the nicest wearing appearal all left to be destroyed by the flames. But one will ask why was not this property taken into the city? because an attack was hourly expected, Government teams (the only teams that could pass in and out of the city) was all engaged in moving government property to a safe place they are rattleing over the stony pavements at all hours of the day and night which with the falling of trees and the tearing down of buildings shows the rebels that we are preparing for them

Nov. 21st

Relieved from the brick building and went to digging rifle pits. A few shots were exchanged between our batteries and the rebels Sharp skirmishing on the picket line

Nov. 22d

Considerable firing between pickets Ziba Wood and myself got an advance possition behind a big log and with a glass we amused ourselves looking and shooting at
The rebels who areensely near, they take pains to show us they are avenging their captured and murdered men. As soon as we"d get a bullet in answer they told us they were going to capture us all and take us to Richmond. "We would answer "can't see it." They would threaten us in this manner, say "Bank, get any hard cash in your hand and any one on our line would reply me but we have plenty of whiskey and tobacco, say they were going to take bullet for exchange for John Morgan," or any one, "can't see it."

Nov. 8th. Relieved from picket at half-past 10. Finished another large set of in two Beecher charged in front of the skirmish line of the 1st Old regiment an one in the pickets of that regiment and part of the 11th N.Y. It was just at dark when the attack was made. I had just got lain down for the night and was mending myself with the probability of a good nights rest, and at least till 3 o'clock in the morning when the sharp firing of musketry admonished us to prepare for action and we were in the hot gun in hand in a few minutes.

The rebels only pushed the attack far enough to gain our picket line for a part of it, then set themselves to work laying rifle pits on our picket line. The soldiers left in the duties leave straw and holer north of the depot buildings each set fire to the bundles of straw and one after another building was enveloped in flames till 3 or 4 o'clock, building were all on fire lighting up the city and country for miles around and making a grand light.

Nov. 9th. Went on picket at 4 A.M. The 2nd U.S. 45 from one part of the 37th N.Y. 7th Penn charged on the rebels and drove them back to their old position, capturing some of prisoners, blankets, rifles, and so forth.

Nov. 25th. Relieved from picket at 7 A.M. and went into the engine house which had been taken hold and occupied by 50
the rebels who are pretty sausy they take pains to show us the blue overcoats they captured and vauntily ask us “where are your overcoats” we would send a bullet in answer. They told us they were going to capture us all and take us to Richmond. We would answer “cant see it”. They would hello in this manner Say Yank; got any hard tact? some one on our line would reply no but we have plenty of whiskey and tobacco. they said they were going to take Burnside to exchange for John Morgan Yank. replys can’t see it

Nov. 23d

Relieved from picket at 4 AM. Finished our rifle pits in town Rebs. charged the skirmish line of the 2d Md regiment drove in the pickets of that regiment and part of the 11th NH. It was just at dark when the attack was made. I had just got lain down for the night and was consoling myself with the probability of a good nights rest or at least till 3 o’clock in the morning, when the sharp firing of musketry admonished us to prepare for action and we were in the pits gun in hand in a few minutes

The rebels only pushed the attach far enough to gain our picket line, or a part of it, then set themselves to work digging rifle pits on our picket line. The soldiers left in the dwelling houses stores and hotels north of the depot buildings each set fire to the bundles of straw and one after another building was enveloped in flames till 30 or 40 buildings were all on fire lighting up the city and country for miles around and making a grand sight.

Nov. 24th

Went on picket at 4 AM. The 21st Mass, 48 Penn. and part of the 35th Mass. 51st Penn. charged on the rebels and drove them back to their old possition, capturing a number of prisoners, blankets, rifles and so forth.

Nov. 25th

Relieved from picket at 4AM and went into the engine house which had been loop holed and occupied by
Nov 27th. Went on picket smart firing between pickets it getting to be dangerous to show ones head above the reeds. What a nice little shelter this forenoon and we live well for fuel.

Nov 28th. Received from picket this morning and went to the engine house. A very rainy day but the pickets are shooting considerable. Suppose to keep up those sugars for it rains. In bombards about dark the rebels commenced to shell Fort Sanders and continued the bombardment all night.

The in the half round engine house kept awake as much as possible the commanders would not keep us awake so much sleep had me last but the instant the pickets in our front began firing me bed sprinkled with

There was one little dash when the pickets were in our front which was a failure and only saved to act on fire the remaining buildings north of the depot which kept the city illuminated for hours. At daylight Longstreet ordered three of his choicest brigades to charge on Fort Sanders they marched up in mass and reached the guns of the fort before our men opened, the rebels never fired till they had got so near our men could almost reach them with the muskets. The attacking party was forced to accept a hill which had lately been cleared of wood our men had thrown the telegraph wire and wound it around the clumps and stretched it from one to another about a foot from the ground so as to make a sort of net work. The rebels found it rather difficult to keep on their feet it was amusing and those on the
a Lieutenant and 10 men. The pickets are enlarging the pits we dug for them last night on the picket line Thanksgiving morning. Wake up with the prospect of a poor thanksgiving dinner. The boys shot a hog last night and I got enough for my breakfast but black bread is a poor substitute for potatoes.

Nov. 27th

Went on picket smart firing between pickets it is getting to be dangerous to show ones heads above the rifle pits. I shot a nice little heiffer this forenoon and we live well for beef.

Nov. 28

Relieved from picket this morning and went to the engine house. A very rainy day but the pickets are shooting considerable, I suppose to keep up their courage for it raines in torrents, about dark the rebels commenced to shell Fort Saunders and continued the bombardment all night.

We in the half round engine house kept awake as much as possible the canonading would not keep us awake so much sleep had we lost, but the instant the pickets in front began firing we had seized our rifles.

There was one little dash upon the picket line in our front which was a failure and only served to set on fire the remaining buildings north of the depot which kept the city illuminated for hours. At a little before day light Longstreet ordered three of his choicest brigades to charge on Fort Saunders they marched up in mass and almost reached the guns of the fort before our men opened, the rebels never fired till they had got so near our men could almost reach them with the bayonet. The attacking party was forced to ascent a hill which had lately been cleared of wood our men had taken the telegraph wire and wound it around the stumps and stretched it from one to another about a foot from the ground so as to make a sort of net work. The rebels found it rather difficult in the darkness to keep on their feet it was amusing said those in the
ill our troops had taken two prisoners they left as I was informed nearly 100 dead and wounded in front of the fort. The whole was full of dead and wounded, surrounded in very possible form and lying in every shape three or four feet deep. In the side there dead rebel logs as thick as potato hills in a potato field. Our loss in killed and wounded was only about 30.

Nov 28th. I was relieved in the morning from the engine house and went into the city where the regiment was stationed. Gen Burnside offered a prize for the rebels to bury their dead and remove their wounded it exceeded 7000 P.W. I went out to the fort and had a piece of the battle ground the rebels were busy in removing their dead and wounded some of our boys were voluntarily helping them. It was a sad sight to see many brave men cut down. The flower of the Southern army, the heroes of probably a dozen battles.

But after that short and desperate fight defended great issues. If the rebels had got possession of that fort they would have had the key to our whole position, their guns would have commanded every one of our batteries and they could have shelled the city to their leisure. We should have been compelled to surrender or retreat and done, but thank the Lord we much fort was in store for us. During the truce the pickets on both sides met half each other half very, and conversed as friendly as most among our boys. They traded for knives, water, candles, matches and any little trinket that was possible to trade. The rebels were anxious to obtain a chance relief to send home as we were to send yet relics from them. One of the boys in our regiment went with a note to a house between the lines and the two got quite a quantity of flour and bacon apples which they equally divided. The rebels all expressed themselves
till our folks had taken 300 prisoners they left as I am informed nearly 700 dead and wounded in front of the fort the ditch was full of dead and wounded, wounded in evry possible form and laying in evry shape three four and five deep. On the side hill dead rebels lay as thick as potato hills in a potato field. Our loss in killed and wounded was only about 30.

Nov. 29th

I was relived in the morning from the engine house and went into the city where the regiment was stationed. Gen Burnside offered a truce for the rebels to bury their dead and remove their wounded it extended till 5 PM. I went out to the Fort and had a view of the battle ground the rebels were busy in removing their dead and wounded some of our boys were voluntarily helping them. It was a sad sight to see so many brave men cut down; the flower of the Southern army, the herows of probably a dozen battles

But upon that short and desperate fight depended great issues. If the rebels had got possession of that fort they would have had the key to our whole possition their guns would have commanded evry one of our batteries and they could have shelled the city to their leisure. We should have been compelled to surrender or retreat and starve, but thank the Lord no such fate was in store for us. During the truce the pickets on both sides met each other half way and conversed as friendly as we do among our own boys; they traded jacknives, wallets combs, watches and evry little trinket it was possible to trade on the rebels were as anxious to obtain a Yankee relic to send home as we were to get relics from them. One of the boys in our Regiment went with a reb to a house between the lines and the two got quite a quantity of flour bacon apples &c which they evenly divided. The rebels all expressed themselves
tired of the war, and wished it over with. They were surprised to learn that the 9th Army Corps were in that part of the city they dreaded to meet the 9th boys said they did not care a straw for the 23d Army Corps but the 9th boys were regular devils to fight

Nov. 30

Very quiet along the picket line

Dec 1st

Nothing of interest occurred except the usual firing of pickets and our rations of corn meal is cut down from one lb. to half a lb.

Dec 2d On picket

“3 Was stationed in the fright depot

“4th Went on picket at night

“5th The rebels left during the night and we are not in the least sorry, but feel greatly relieved. We pickets advanced soon after daylight and we have taken a large number of stragglers prisoners. Our brigade except a few pickets went in persuit of the rebels on the Tazewell road marched 4 miles and returned to the city with no booty.

I have written a much more lengthy account of the siege of Knoxville then I expected to write when I began. I have related it as I learned the facts from those who were witnesses of the scenes I have attempted to describe. I of course saw but little of what occurred between two great armies, but what I did see I can write about knowingly. I hope you will not get discouraged in trying to read this. If I have succeeded in making this account interesting to you it is all I expect. However after you peruse it James please send it home by Mary Ann. and I would like to have Mother lay it away so if I should ever come home perhaps I may like to look it over