Princeton. Novr. 10th 1862.

My dear Brothers, & Sister,

I wrote a Letter from this place about the 6th of last month to you, & am entirely unable to account for not having recd. [received] a reply. This is not the first letter that I have written you from Western Va, having dispatched two or more while we were at the Narrows, but to none of them has an answer been returned. We have been at this place ever since the 2nd of Novr. Our force comprises two Regts. [Regiments] & a Battery under command of Col. [Colonel] McCausland, a fine officer, of the 36th who was before the war Asst. Comdt. [Assistant Commandant] of Cadets at Lexington. This is a sort of advanced post guarding three roads all leading to the Va & Tenn. R.R. [railroad] one by the way of Giles C.H. [Courthouse] (sometimes called Pearisburg) ~~ano~~ [sic, crossed out] to Dublin, the 2nd by way of Rocky Gap, a strong position much resembling the Narrows) to Wytheville, where Genl. [General] Marshall is stationed, the 3rd by way of Tazewell Co. [County]. I consider therefore that this is the post of honor, & requires to be defended by the best & bravest troops out here, & these I believe the 60th & 36th have shown themselves to be. Genl. [General] Jenkins comdg. [commanding] Cavalry (whom I saw in the paper a day or two ago recommended for the Governorship) is in Greenbrier. His force numbers 5200 on the rolls 1600 (!) of whom are absent. Two of his Co's [companies] were captured a short time ago. A picket of Cavalry also came running into Lewisburg saying that the Yankees were approaching in overwhelming numbers. Of course the town was in very great commotion. The government stores were hurried off as fast as possible & the Cavalry got ready to fly. This affair being exagerated [sic, exaggerated] came to us in the form that Lewisburg was taken. Some, perhaps braver than the rest at last ventured out to to the spot where the Yankees were seen by the affrighted Picket as "thick as blossoms in May", & discovered that the whole matter had originated in the firing of a gun near there by someone, hunting, I suppose. The men have made themselves pretty comfortable by erecting chimneys & building little cabins. It is most probable that we will spend the winter here, but I give some credit to the report of an officer from the Narrows who there saw Genl. [General] Echols. The latter informed him that the troops here would in all probability be ordered to Fredericksburg to join Lee. Capt. [Captain] Dews (my Capt. [Captain]) left on the 5th in order to hire negroes as wagoners [sic, waggoners] to this Brigade. I am in command of the Company 1st Lieut [Lieutenant] Early not yet having recovered from his wound in the foot which he recd. [received] at Richmond. There are but 20 men for duty in my Co. [Company] ("C") several being sick & a no. [number] absent. I have sent for the Examiner & will send for the Virginian this evening. Although I wrote to the former nearly a month ago. I have not yet recd. [received] a single paper. There are some nice ladies here, the only inhabitants in the town, living in the only house, except one, all the rest having been burned last spring. They have a Piano, play chess, & possess many books of a readable character. It is a great treat once more to enjoy the society of real ladies, the first with whom I have become acquainted, since the war. What do you think of Old Abe's proclamation or rather message? He seems to expend his talents in powerful arguments especially in that portion where, commenting upon his favorite scheme he argues, "It is easier to pay a large debt than a larger." No such wisdom as this was exhibited during the siege of Sebastopol. But I must close. Write soon –

Receive the best love of your affections to Brother E. F. Cordell.