

Re-writing/Translation of letter written by Rachel Sell to Aunt and Uncle Keffer  
(Words in italics could not be deciphered clearly - punctuation added for clarity)

November 16, 1863

Stoystown Somerset County Penn

Dear Uncle and Aunt

Respected friends, good friends never forget past acquaintances. I feel it my duty to set down *and* take up my pen to inform you that we are all well - hoping to find you all in remarkable good health. I am at home now and intending to give all the news I can, but haven't much news except about the war affairs.

I have at least 8 of my nephews in the army and one brother-in-law and all my friends that I have at ??? are too numerous to mention on this little inch of paper, but the hardest battle that ever was fought yet in America was fought in Pennsylvania, the old Keystone State on the first, and second, and third of July last not so very far from here. For we could hear the roaring artillery from daylight 'til dark and sometimes 'til after midnight. They *thought* they would put up winter quarters in ??? old Keystone State but they missed it. That time the rebels laid as thick as wind *roars* on the ground and hadn't they retreated back to the river the third night, our boys would have laid them all dead on the battlefield of Gettysburg. In that bloody field Mary's second son was wounded. He was flag bearer. We have a pinch of that glorious old flag which he was wounded under while leading his men to the church. But thank God we came out victorious in Pennsylvania and so we do in every point.

Dear aunt, I do wish you would be here for we want all kind-hearted ladies here at present for to help the poor wounded soldiers along. If you had been here the time the battle at West Chester to see the poor soldiers come flocking in from army quarters. Some had their swords, bowie knife and sabres stained with blood. Yet when they came to Harristown and some cried and lamented while others cursed and some ??? to revenge. *Tears come at* blood indeed.

You can't have no idea how it looks to see a company of soldiers coming from the battlefield. You can't compare it to anything at all. With this I shall close but if you write again, let me know how *Sariannah Barbay* is getting along and how Hannah and Mary Jane Keffer is getting along. I will let you know that Moores are all well at present time and also Aunt Catharine Stineman is well and is with her son Bates. Tell aunt, *Modlana* Miller is dead. She had the palpitations of the heart and also her daughter *Betsey* Russel died two months before her mother, and also Jacob *Pech* was drafted last fall, but he was at home again.

Our market is good and everything plenty. Corn is very plenty and cheap at that. Corn is \$1.02 per bushel, and wheat \$1.50, rye \$1.25, oats \$.75, buckwheat \$1.00, potatoes \$1.00, butter 25 cents, eggs 20 cents, apples \$1.00. With this I shall close for the present time, hoping to hear from you soon. I am very glad that uncle and aunt are well cared for. Please let me know in your next letter how all the friends are.

From your kind friend,  
Rachel Sell to Aunt Uncle Keffer