

## Letter from Lieut. George Pettis

This is a letter from Lieutenant George Pettis, writing to his wife in February 1864 from Fort Sumner, New Mexico.

*Fort Sumner, New Mexico,  
February 26th, 1864.*

*My dear Wife:*

*It is now so long since I have heard from you, that I begin to think that you have quit writing. It is equally a long time since I have written to you, but I have travelled many a weary mile and passed many a cold, cheerless night, since I wrote you last.*

*I wrote to you last from Military post of Los Pinos, New Mexico,-- well, on the 7th of the present month I left that post, with 44 men of my company, having in charge 243 Navajo Indians, 81 of whom were men, the balance were women and children; the Indians comprised all ages, from the old man or woman of a hundred years, to the sucking babe; some of them were taken prisoners during the late expedition of Col. Kit Carson, against that nation; their fathers or brothers having been killed in battle; others of them came into the Forts Wingate and Canby and gave themselves up as prisoners. I had 16 wagons each drawn by 8 mules, which required about 35 Mexican teamsters; so you see that with soldiers, Indians, Mexicans, etc., etc., I had quite a command, but it required a constant vigilance on my part to prevent them from rising, if they wished so to do--and murdering us; also to prevent them from escaping. I was ordered to bring them to this post, (Fort Sumner); it is situated on the Río Pecos, and is about due east from Fort Craig, -- you will find it readily on a large map.*

*My dear wife, this is a terrible place; it is intended to make it the final home of all the Indians in this country; there are about fifteen hundred here now,-- Navajos and Apaches, and as many more are expected here during the next three months; there are five small companies, including mine, of soldiers here, and it requires our constant attention to look out for them, As fast as any Indians are taken in any part of the country, they are sent here. The Rio Pecos is a little stream winding through an immense plain, and the water is terrible, and it is all that can be had within 50 miles; it is full of alkali and operates on a person like castor oil,-- take the water, heat it a little, and the more you wash yourself with common soap, the dirtier you will get. We are one and all looking very anxiously for the 16th of August, when we will be allowed to go to our homes. Captain Cremony is here with his company; he is in very good health.*

*The mail came in today, but brought no letters from you. I will write to you by the next mail. Give my respects to all. My warmest love to yourself and babies, and believe me to be ever*

*Your loving husband,  
George.*

*Direct your letters to  
Lieut. Geo. H. Pettis,  
Company "K", 1st California Infantry,  
Fort Sumner,  
New Mexico.  
Via Denver City*