

Camp near, Suffolk, Court House, Va.
 April, 16th., 1862.

Dear Uncle and Aunt,

I take my pen this morning to write to you, and to commence with I must ask you to excuse all mistakes and poor writing for I was in a great hurry as I have very little time to write, we have been under marching orders for the past 24 hours and without doubt we shall take up our line of march tomorrow morning or sooner more of us know which way we are going, it is thought by some that we are to march to Culpepper courthouse but there's nothing certain about it, I think that we are going to some ford to cross the Rappahannock and then try to flank the rebels on the right while Hooker engages them on the front; but where ever we are to march you can ^{make} your mind's up that there's a going to be work done, for the whole army I think is a going to act in concert. eighteen thousand cavalymen have passed our camp in the last two days they were going to Kelly's ford to cross the river, that ford is between here and Culpepper most likely

we shall follow them acrossed the great river. We
 we have three days rations in our haversacks
 and five days in our knapsacks making eight
 days rations that we have to carry with us its
 quite a load with our other traps; my health
 is very good now; I dont think I am quite as
 strong as I was before my sickness; I am
 going to try the march with the boys and
 go as far as I can and then I can stop; but
 I think that I can stand my hand at
 tramping with any of the boys yet; I take it
 that the folks up there have commenced
 spring's work and have not time to write
 any letters; I received one from you and
~~one from~~ Father is all the letters that
 has hailed from that way lately; but
 then you know perhaps its as well for
 it looks now as though us fellows were
 going to have something to do for awhile
 besides answering letters; I could have been
 excused from this march by the doctor's
 and sent to the convalescent camp; but
 that is not what I come down here for; I
 come down here to do a little fighting, if
 called upon and although I have no great desire
 to go into battle still if this regiment goes
 into a fight I want to take an active part
 in the same; for we must have all the

men engaged and their victory must be ours
 our Brigadier General left us about one month
 since and we have had a new one placed over
 us he is a very nice and a very smart man,
 when he is a man, but you know that
 when a man is a beast there is very little
 man left about him, and you know too
 that when a man is drunk he is very
 near a beast and if that is so our new
 General is very near a beast the greater
 part of the time; Col: McDougal is acting
 Brigadier General now and he has command of
 the brigade; Col: Norton is acting Col of our
 regiment. but I suppose you would like to
 know how this all come about well our new
 Gen: was thrown from his horse and the
 fall broke his leg so you see there was
 quite a chance for promotion; report says
 that he had been drinking a little and that
 was the way he came to get throwed off;
 but I must lay aside my writing for awhile
 as Col: Norton wants me to ride his horse
 over to Gen: Slocum's and carry some
 papers; Slocum is Command^r of the 12th army
 corp; well I have got back and now I will
 finish my letter; tell Father that we
 received four months pay yesterday
 and he will find forty dollars at

Mr. W. Mason A. Clerk at Iowanville the money
 will be there by the time you receive
 this. The report has just reached camp
 that Genl. Forest in North Carolina has
 surrendered his forces consisting of
 thirteen thousand men to the rebels
 if it is true it will be a hard blow
 for the Union, but we will try
 and make it up if we have a fight
 near the Rappahannock but if we
 fail and the rebels carry the day
 this war will not close this season
 I don't think but I must bring my
 letter to a close give my respects to
 Louisa ~~Wett~~ and tell her that I have had
 extract extraordinary good luck about losing
 my hat since I have been in Dixie.
 if I had lost it I don't think I should
 have found it in a cellar way for I have
 not seen a house in two months big
 enough to have a cellar under it please
 write us soon as you get this. Good Bye
 from your Stephen
 Henry Welch

Mr Franklin Janssen

South Granville

W^o By