

Camp at Bridgeport Alabama Oct 4th 1863

Dear Mother

I suppose you will be as much surprised to hear from me here as I am to be here: but here we are and for what purpose remains to be seen.

We left Cattletts Station Va on friday Sep 24th and passing through Washington, Baltimore, Bellair, Columbus, Dayton, Indianapolis, Louisville, & Nashville we arrived here on thursday night Oct 1st after being on the road night and day for seven days and narrowly escaping death about three miles from here by the Trains coming into collision. Fortunately no one was killed, and only four injured including an officer. I telegraphed to you in care of Henry Brown from Columbus but I suppose you did not recieve it as the time was so short. I could not find out which route we would take till I got to Columbus or I should have sent it sooner. Our Orders were very strict and neither officers nor men were allowed to leave the train so that it was impossible for me to go to see you. Cousin Pat was at the Cin Depot so I heard from Mr. Beckett the major's brother but the Train only stopped at the Xenia Depot so I did not get to speak to him.

The people at Xenia turned out enmasse and treated us splendidly for which we are a thousand times obliged The boys have not got done talking about them yet nor wont forget them in a hurry

I have just recieved a visit from Goodlett Adams a son of Mr. Adams of Keokuk Iowa a very gentlemanly young fellow. He heard of me somehow and claimed relationship but for sometime I could not see how it was until he told me it was through the Goodletts. He asked me about so many persons that I had never even heard of that I was ashamed of myself. He is in the 16th Illinois I heard from Mr. Beckett of Will Jones death and heard of the First Ohio yesterday from some of the boys that were going through. Will got through the fight safe. I believe the only officer hurt was a Capt Dornbush of Dayton who was badly wounded.

We are thirty miles from Chatanooga awaiting the arrival of the 12th Corps the two ours and the 11th will comprise Gen Hooker's Command. The Rebs are between us Rosencrans and perhaps it will be our duty to open the communication.

The Soldiers that come back from the front think that they have had an awful fight and look upon us as if we were featherbed soldiers that know nothing about war but judging from the number of Killed and wounded and the length of time they were fighting (nearly three days) this fight does not deserve to be mentioned in the same day with Chancellorsville, Gettysburg nor even Bulls Run where we lost more men killed than were lost on both sides here. I do not wish to detract one iota from the Laurels won by the Army of the Cumberland but still would like a little credit for what the Army of the Potomac has done.

I was surprised at the bleak and barren aspect of the country all the way from here to Louisville It is very thinly settled by a very poor class of people who apparently do not care or know anything about the war. Nashville or least what I saw of it is miserably dirty and squalid so scattered that it looks as if the houses had been shook out of a pepper box. The Country that we are in now is very mountainous and good for nothing as an agricultural

country. Upon the whole I think we got out of the frying pan into the fire when we left Virginia to come here: and to make the matter worse the whole army is on half rations as the RR is wholly taken up by the transpotation of troops and it is the only means of procuring subsistance. All of Rosencran's supplies have to be hauled around about fifty miles to escape the guerillas nor do they always escape as only day before yesterday they captured an ammunition Train of one hundred and fifty wagons.

As it is nearly mail time I will close this time I may not see Will for sometime but will as soon as I possibly can. Remember me to all

Your affectionate son

Robt Patterson

Direct to 61st Ohio 1st Brig 3rd Division 11th Corps
via Nashville Tenn

care Wm Sheets Indianapolis