In Trenches Petersburg
Sept 16th 1864

Dear Laura

Yours of 6th was handed me by Trenshaw upon his arrival on last Tuesday morning. The first I have had from you in a long time I really thought I should never hear from you again. I should have thought you would have written me often in your vacation.

But in the last two months how many letters have I received from you? exactly two. One a month. Three from father. and not one from any body else. I have written home from three to six letters a week regularly

Now dont you think I have cause to complain: Bolling & Crenshaw have returned, perhaps I shall hear from you oftener. The bottle did not come. But I am as much obliged to you, as if I had got it. I think Crenshaw lost it Jerry, or some one drank the last bottle father gave me, so that I have none now. I did not get the good of what I did have Crenshaw brought me two very nice shirts. I wish he had brought four. Two is not enough. I have no others at all: only had two old ones & threw them away as soon as I got the pretty ones. But do not understand me as complaining I am very thankful for what

has been done for me - I also got two pairs of socks. Of these I have enough now for a while. I have just been fortunate enough to get a splendid pair of shoes from the government. The only objection to them is, they are too large. I could easily get $100. for them. They cost me $20. I also drew from the government cloth enough to make a coat & perhaps a vest. This cost me $27. So you see except for pants I can do tolerably well. But the next question is how & where to have my coat made. Here they only ask $300. for making a coat. To this I dont feel like giving, if I can do better. We were all very much surprised to see

Renshaw looking so well. The men were all so glad to see Bolling back. As he walked through the rest - they all shouted. They are in much better spirits already. Bolling gets about tolerably well. We have moved our position some since he came. The left of our rest rests about where the right rested then. Our present position is not shelled quite as hard. The Yankee mortars cannot reach it quite as well. We found no bomb proofs here at all. Will have to fix up some. The general impression here is that, there will be some hard fighting on the right soon. I have just seen a note from Genl. Beauregards A.A.G., in which

he says "Hampton whipped Gregg, capturing 300 prisoners, & 2500 head of fat beef cattle. All were brought through safe. The trip was a complete success. Genl Beauregard will be here to night". These are the almost exact words he uses. We have had three or four men badly wounded since Bollings arrival. Have had one or two tolerable tight shellings. The Yanks are shelling us now with mortars but do no further damage than frighten us some. Gilbert stays in the trenches with us since B & C. came. He was struck by a rifle ball a day or two since, but only as the boys say "Mortally scared to death". It is hard for one

to write anything here, as we have the same things over one day after another & seldom have the trenches to hear or see anything new.

Sunday morn 18th Sept

Tis a calm, clear & pleasant morning over here only greeted by the hissing of rifle balls, with an occasional shell sent to remind us that there is still such a thing as a mortar. The ringing of bells in town invite us to attend church & strongly remind us of good days that were. We cannot accept the invitation but lay running, ourselves watching the enemy, as a hawk does chickens lest they may pounce upon us, when not ready & thus gain some decisive advantage

I attended church last sunday
went to the Presbyterian & heard
a very good sermon. They have a
splendid choir & good music &
which you know I am very fond
I have been at Petersburg (I mean it)
for three months (since 17th June)
and have never yet seen a young
lady that I thought pretty. Some
are good looking but none come
up to my standard of beauty,
as do some of your most gorgeous
friends. I have not yet had the
pleasure of forming the acquain-
tance of a single young lady in
Virginia. In your letter you took it
for granted that Bolling & Crenshaw
would tell me every thing &c. and
this you all do in writing. Now let

are tell you that I am hearing nearly every thing that occurs at home in this way. When you write tell me all you know that others do the same. You told me to get a furlow & come home this winter. I dont know yet what will be the chance for me, but from present prospects I think every man will be needed here during the winter. I fear any chance will be "slim". I should like the best in the world to spend Christmas at home, especially as it has been so long since I have seen one there. The last three I have spent in the army. I will fair to spend the fourth in the trenches. As long as I am actually needed here I do not care to go home

though I feel like I should willingly give any amount of money, to spend a few days only, with the family at home. It will certainly be three or four weeks before I can tell any thing about my chances. Then I will write you more definitely. Between now & then, my only chance is, to get wounded, which I would prefer not doing. We had one man very badly wounded yesterday, shot through the body. You wanted me to tell you if I would try to come home this winter, I cannot say yet, for I could not conscientiously apply for leave of absence, while the campaign is in full blast & yet, we do not know when it will close. If I see any chances for

me to get off. I will let you know in due time for you to prepare all of the good eatables you can start. Preckon you are lonesome now if Hines has gone to Tuscaloosa. But when you go to school that will give you company enough, though father will be very lonesome. Give my love to Miss McGlume when you see her. Bolling & Crenshaw represent the young ladies generally as getting on finely, prettier, if possible, than ever. I thought when I was at home there was very little room for improvement with some of them, but with others, it was very different. I have been trying to find out who Crenshaw admired among the many beauties of Montgry I have, I think, successfully

reduced it to one of two. Perhaps he himself is undecided. He thinks a good deal of Miss E. Wagner, but maybe more of Miss Anna-G I see very plainly that he told some awful tales on me, when he was at home, for instance about kissing Miss Maggie-H.
I shall not pretend to try to answer the charges. I reckon I have written enough foolishness for one time. Give my love to the girls. Tell Carrie I shall answer her letter soon. Love to the family. Sam Holt telegraphed father the day after their arrival. Write soon. Letters come through regularly in seven days by mail.

Your affect. brother
John E. Hall

ALL. DEPT. U.S. HISTORY

Tuesday Feb 23rd 1864

Brother I have not sent this off yet, but I shall finish it & send it now by mail. I received a letter from father a few minutes since dated 11th I shall write him to morrow. To day 12 months ago the battle of Chickamauga was fought & Tom received his fatal wound on this day. Many sacrificed their lives. Write often to

Your affd brother

John Calhoun Hall