P.S. Our P.O. is still at Chattanooga and just the same direction as before. You must write to us when you can and tell Launa and Hines to write. Affairs may turn out that we may not hear from home though in a long time or you may not hear from us. Write

Kelly's Ferry Tennessee
August 22d 1863

My Dear Father

I wrote to you yesterday but do not know whether the letter was mailed or not. Immediately after I had written that letter our company was ordered out on picket, to guard Kelly's Ferry, which is about ten or twelve miles from Chattanooga South of Chattanooga on the Tennessee river. When we got here about 6 PM we found about 200 of Forrest's cavalry on the opposite side of the river trying to get over. They had been cut off from Chattanooga and their only mode of escape was through the means of swimming their horses across the river. I never heard such a noise hardly in my life. The men were afraid to ride their

horses in but tried to drive them in and make them come across by themselves, but they did not succeed in getting many across in that way. They tried this until nearly dark and then there were a few men who were brave enough to ride them over. So they began the task and (with the help of two little dug-outs in which a couple of men would get and one would paddle and the other lead a horse) they succeeded during the night in landing all their horses and men on this side of the river. Only one horse was drowned. They (the cavalry) told us that the Yankees would be certain to be here by ten o'clock this morning, but it is now about three o'clock and as yet we have seen no enemy. We are certainly in a very tick-

tion position here. If we are attacked here we will have to fall back to Chattanooga and cross the mountains in the retreat. That was the instructions given to Maj Pearce when we were posted here. Our company, sixty strong, is the only one here. We have to defend the ferry by ourselves and you see that if we are cut off (which it is said can easily be done) we will have two miles of the worst kind of road to travel and fighting, too all the way, will be hard on us. The Maj of our Regt (Pearce) commands the picketts. There is no telling when the enemy will begin shelling us. If they do bring a battery and plant it on the mountain right opposite us which they can ea-

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sily do they can very nearly ruin us. But I am beginning to believe that they are not going to pay us a call. Yes, we are right on the out-post with the Tennessee river for our line and looking for the enemy at any moment. This morning I went in swimming and thought I would take a trip to the Yankee Lines. So I swam the river which is just a quarter of a mile lacking ten yards. When I got over I thought I descried two Yankees up the River but on close Inspection I found it was only a stump. While I was still over in the Yankee Lines a horsemen came riding up to the river. I knew he was one of our men as soon as I saw him. I found on conversing with him that he belonged to a Tennessee company that was captured by

the enemy the day before yesterday in the Sequatchie Valley. He with a few men escaped and had got separated and he made for this ferry as his last chance for an escape. Some of our boys brought over the two dugouts and one of them took the cavalryman his saddle bridle, accoutrements &c. and brought him over, and Sergt Tally and myself being already in swimming took his horse and I paddled the canoe over and Tally led the horse. We landed the jaded rider and his steed on the safe side of the river and left him to pursue his course at his will. He reported the enemy not far from here, says he shot at four last night about ten o'clock. I dont know what the poor fellow would have done if we had not ferried him over. Well I suppose that you have

heard the result of the shelling of Chattanooga yesterday. I expect more than I have. I only heard that there were four citizens wounded in town and that sixty wagons and a company of the 34th Ala (Col Mitchell) were captured on the opposite side of the river from town. There is some one to blame and it is generally attributed to the Cavalry but the Cavalry as a matter of course condemn Bragg. I understand from those frightened Cavalrymen that the enemy are 15 000 strong but from the way they acted at the river last night in their flight I hardly know how to trust them. Time will only reveal matters here now. One thing I know if one company is engaged at this fording by the enemy it will suffice to-

ently. But the boys are all in high spirits especially as we are getting plenty of peaches to eat and by ourselves as it were away from the army. Then we can go in swimming at any time although we do it at the risk of being shot in the water by the enemy. The boys all say that the chances for a fight are pretty good, as the cavalry have all fallen back and gone to the rear of the infantry. There is no cavalry at all between us and the enemy now, nothing but the solitary Tennessee river, which however I consider as a more formidable obstacle than our cavalry. Yes, I feel much safer with the Tennessee between me and the Yankees than the Cavalry.

I expect our company is permanently detailed to guard this ferry and will not be with

the Regiment again in some time. I would like very much to hear from Aunt Eliza and Milton and Mr Oliver. I have no idea though that they were hurt as they were on the far edge of town and the enemy cannot shell that far over.

I must close now and watch for an opportunity to mail this letter. I wish this company could spend the rest of the summer on this detached service at Kelly's Ferry. We are surrounded on every side by a high mountain and as a matter of course it's the very place for rocks. But mountain scenery has long since knocked all the poetical talent (if I had any) out of my head. Bro James and myself are both well. Bro complaining a little. Love to all the family

Your Affc son
Thos B Hall

ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY

P.S. Our P.O. is still ~~at~~ Chattanooga and just the same direction as before. You must write to us when you can and tell Laura and Hines to write. Affairs may turn out that we may not hear from home though in a long time or you may not hear from us. TBHall

Kellys Ferry Tennesee
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