

Letter From Dunham, H R written Wednesday, May 24th, 1865

Generated on May 31st, 2020 4:41 PM from SoldierStudies.org

Soldier: Dunham, H R
Allegiance: Union
Unit/Service Branch: 30th Infantry
Date Written: Wednesday, May 24th, 1865
Location: Near Goldsboro N.C.
Correspondence Type: Letter
Subjects: Daily Life, Family, On the March, Slavery, Trading

Dear Aunt Angle,

Your favor of the 26th of March alias April 9th alias May 7th mailed on the 8th of May was received on the 18th of May at 21/2 P.M. I was very thankful for this letter for it evidently was a studied and carefully written letter every sentence must have been hewn to fit and been carefully studied and duly pondered upon, else it never would have taken from the 26th day of March to the 8th day of May to have written it. In future please don't take so much pains with the letters you write to me. 2 hours is as much time as I can afford to devote to a letter and I would rather have letters written right off hand than these studies, compositions. In one case it is like listening to the talk of the person, and in the other it is just as far from being natural as it well can be. It's like hearing them read a story. So don't devote more than two or three hours to writing letters to me in future. I like long letters but I want them off hand. Mind I don't complain of the length of the letter only of the length of time you were in writing it. I perceive that Miss Etta is second in command by the last part of the letter which contains the following truly military sentence "Ma you see commenced this but had to leave it + go to meeting so it falls upon me to finish it' beating about the bush there it was a "military necessity" for her to finish it, as the command devolved on her.

I suppose that you have heard the history of our march from Northeast Station to Coxe's Bridge, our fight there, and our march back to Faisons Station N.C. Our march from there to Raleigh N.C.; Our marching and countermarching at that place, our march from that place to Goldboro N.C. and lastly our trip down to Keenansville in Duplin County N.C. About half way from Goldsboro to Wilmington N.C. and near the Rail Road. Well, when we returned from the last trip I found your letter waiting for me. But isn't it all recorded in my correspondance to Uncle Jeff, Etilin and the rest of the folks, so I forbear repeating it. I don't like to write these things all over for fear of repeating. Now each of the folks at home do likewise and I don't get half of the news. Each one thinks that the other is going to write all about it, so all of them leave it out and I miss it entirely just because they are afraid of repeating it. Write all the news and all that is going or whether anyone else does or not.

The fighting is all done now I think and marching is all done I hope. So I will have nothing but the steady route of camp to write about I suppose hereafter. I find it hard work to collect sufficient material to write a letter and then I fear it isn't readable. This hot weather, I am afraid that there is not enough in my letters to keep person reading them awake, possibly there there may be for a place as cool a Laporte but I doubt whether it would in this latitude. I have heard a great deal about the "Sunny South" but I would prefer Greenland to any "Sunny South" I ever saw.

There is a rumor in camp that there are orders at Division Headquarters forbidding the mustering in or mustering for promotion any more officers for colored troops. That looks as though we all should be discharged before long. I won't resign, but I don't care much how soon they muster us out, especially if they won't allow us to be promoted. I have been thinking that probably the Regiment will be consolidated and the extra officers mustered out. We shall soon know more about it, however, as we will get the orders before long.

I can't make as much money at home as I can here, but I can enjoy myself a great deal better and after all that is what we live for in this world, at least that is my notion. I no longer feel it to be my duty to stay here, therefore, I feel like consulting my own convenience and wishes in the matter. All that makes me stay here now is about \$140.00 a month.

I think that I would find it difficult to make a living at practicing law in Sullivan Co. at present, wouldn't I? Or is Grim about played out? Please talk the matter over with Uncle Jeff (I.E.) hold a "council of war" and let me know what conclusion you come to. I feel as though I have had to rough it here most too long to leave the service as soon we get where we can have easy times. But the fact is I don't like to be where I can't do as I am a mind to. I am something like the boy who wrote the composition about the seasons. (It was something like this), "There are 4 seasons, Spring, Summer Autumn, and Winter. Some prefer one and some the other, "but as for me 'Give me Liberty or Give Me Death.'"

An Officer in the army is but little better, at best, than a Slave. He is bound to obey orders, no matter whether the officer giving them knows anything or not if he is only the Superior Officer even if he don't know half as much as the one he orders. I find it very galling to me sometimes to be ordered around by some of officers who have not half as much reason or judgement as Frankie Ingham. I could get along very well if they would allow us to tell them what we thought

of them, but that won't answer. We must obey orders although we know that they are wrong, without a word of complaint.

I tell you, anyone in the army is under a despotism as much as any one in Turkey, Russia, or any other place.

It is all very nice to talk about, but it's anything but funny sometimes.

Tell Miss Etta that I am looking anxiously for that letter she promised me. I wish you would send me a dozen of my photographs, some of each kind about half (or more) of the Guerrillas. I want to exchange photographs with all the officers of our Regt. So send me at least a dozen and I will see that you are paid for them, before a great while. Send the bill with them. Can't you print some vignettes of the one sitting down?

Write soon. Give my love to all enquiring friends and especially to all enquiring Girls.

Direct as before.

John Reynolds, I understand, is in the 79th Pa. Vols. If he is, he is in one of the Brigades. I think the First Brigade 2nd Division 10th Corps. We are in the 1st Brigade 3rd Division 10th Corps. The Second Division is stationed at Raleigh, and the 3rd at Goldsboro N.C. If I had known that he was in the 79th P.V. when we were at Raleigh I could have found him, but we are a long way apart now.

Yours truly
H.R. Dunham