

Head Quarters¹
3rd Brigade
Sept 23rd

Dear Mary

Yesterday I had firmly determined to write home and made the attempt twice during the day. I was interrupted both times however and as I always dislike to go back to an unfinished letter I now take a fresh start. As I mentioned in my letter to father I have been detached at Brigade Hd Qrs & am very much pleased with the position. Another honor for which I am not so thankful was the appointing me Judge Advocate. These double duties keep me very busy and you must excuse me if my letters are short and few. The day after I was detailed as Aid our Brigade sent out where we now are "Prince George" Court House to try to head off the Rebel cavalry who had captured our cattle herds. This we failed to do, and expected at once to be sent back to the main body of troops. Here we are however and here we are likely to remain. We are in a very pleasant spot and if the roads permit navigation we could remain here very comfortably the whole summer. I have a four mile ride twice a day going to and from Court Martial which is not so pleasant, but when Court is dismissed I shall have a very easy time of it. Colonel Smyth reviewed the Brigade Day before yesterday and complimented our appearance.²

Excuse brevity & believe that I am actually busy all the time.

Sam Porter.

Notes:

¹ Head Quarters: On Sept. 15 Sam was appointed Acting Aide de Camp on brigade commander Pierce's staff so apparently he could tolerate Pierce if it involved a staff appointment (NARA file). In his letter, he mentions that his appointment was augmented to include Judge Advocate.

² The cattle herd raid is the great beef steak raid on Sept. 14-17, 1864 where Confederate Cavalry Chief Wade Hampton absconded with about 3000 beef cattle belonging the Union Army. They were stolen from the union supply depot near City Point. Needless to add the affair was brilliant for the Confederacy and another embarrassment for the Federals, Meade and especially Grant (*B&G Vol. 22*, issue 3, Summer 2005).

Smyth is Col. Alfred Thomas Smyth.

Prince George Court House is directly east of Petersburg, north of the intersection of modern h\Highway 460 and Interstate 295. The raid took place to the east of this locale.