

Hd.Qrs 2nd Division
April 10th '65

Dear Father

I have so much to write about that I can scarcely tell where to begin. From 12m until 2 P.M. yesterday we lay in the road doubtful as to whether the finishing touch to the Rebellion had yet to be laid on or whether Lee would surrender the troops still under his command without further bloodshed. When it was announced that the papers had been signed & that the Army of Northern Virginia had surrendered the troops became perfectly wild. Hats, haversacks, canteens, everything that the men could lay hands upon were thrown in the air, and such a shout was raised as was never heard in this army before. We now lay quiet, with the captured army immediately in our front. Stragglers from both sides visit the lines of the others & the best of feeling prevails. The terms are not precisely known & but little thought is wasted upon them, we are feeling perfect confidence in Grant's good judgment.¹

The work of the last fortnight has been very hard and men & animals have at times been nearly exhausted. Now however all feel fresh & strong. I was never better in my life. Had not had a bad feeling the whole campaign. My horses both stood me comfortably. My man refused \$350 for my mare & says that he must get \$600 before he sells her. Seward is all right. He has had some narrow escapes & has behaved as I always knew he would. Crombie went to Petersburg in charge of prisoners. Parsons is well. Poor Genl Smyth was killed three days ago. I will write more particularly about the circumstances. Genl. Barlow formerly of our First Division commands the Division.

My occupation is nearly gone & now that I see no speedy chance of being killed I really feel like making an effort & become a good active member of the Rochester community. I can think of no one in whom you are particularly interested who has been hurt.

Col.Ould commissioner of exchange went down to the Rebels last night and we hear that they are already exchanged. How true it is we cannot tell.²

I picked up a fine piece of horseflesh this noon. Whether I can hold on to it or not remains to be seen.

Love to all & believe me affect,

Sam Porter

I send you a little scrip³

Sam.

Notes:

¹ Lee's army surrendered at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865. Their trust in Grant's judgment was justified since he gave quite generous terms of surrender and left the Army of Northern Virginia with some degree of dignity in its defeat.

² Seward Gould was a major in the 4th NYHA and is mentioned in a number of Sam's letters.
John C. Crombie was 2nd Lt of Co. C in the 4th NYHA.
Theron Edwards Parsons was the Assistant Adjutant General (AAG) for the brigade on Gen. Smyth's staff.

Colonel Ould in the typescript of this letter in the Rochester Collection is called Col. Dudd!! While the name is noteworthy, there is no such name in the army records. However in the O.R. there is a "Judge Ould commissioner for exchange of prisoners" later identified as Robert Ould (*O.R.* 42, 3, p.522; *O.R. Series 3, 8*, pp.529-30,667-68). In Miller's *Photographic History*, Colonel Robert Ould is pictured on p.100 of the *Prisons and Hospitals* volume. As the agent for the Confederacy, he worked with his Federal counterpart, Colonel William H. Ludlow. Consequently his presence in the union lines after the cessation of hostilities would be understandable. Quite clearly Colonel 'Dudd' was a misread for Colonel Ould.

Francis Channing Barlow, Major General in the 2nd Corps, was commonly called 'the boy general' and even though he was 30 years old at the time, he did present a rather boyish appearance. His appearance was once described as "a mounted newsboy". Nevertheless beneath the juvenile looks beat the heart of a killer and warrior. He was totally fearless in battle and contemptuous of anyone who did not share his attitude. On August 18, 1864, Barlow turned over command of the 1st Division to Nelson Miles and was forced into extended medical leave. He returned to the army in time for the final campaign and was given command of the 2nd Division on April 6, 1865 (*O.R.* 46, 1, p.758). William Hays was relieved earlier in the day when he and his entire staff were found sound asleep instead of pursuing Lee's retreating army. In actuality Smyth had command of the division for only a few hours then was returned to command of his brigade.

³ The scrip he mentions is Confederate money – see letter of April 23.