

Dear ?  
 Written  
 at time of  
 Lee's Surrender  
 Sent to  
 Dear  
 Oct. 1947  
 Helen

No. 29  
 Well Etta  
 Danville RR. Apl. 6, 1865

As I have a few leisure moments  
 this morning I will write a little on my  
 journal. I haven't had a chance to send my letter  
 yet --- Apl. 10, Well Etta with us here it is a happy  
 day & I suppose it is no less so in old Maine  
 as I suppose ere this you know of the surrender  
 of Genl. Lee & his whole army & if you could  
 have heard the cheering - firing blank cartridges  
 & seen the flags thrown to the breeze with the  
 air full of caps & hats flying I tell you it  
 would made you leap for joy & well it might  
 when we have been marching - fighting & sometimes  
 almost gone with fatigue & hunger to hear of the  
 surrender of Lee so quick is a great thing here  
 We have had no chance to send a letter - neither  
 receive any for a week - but think we will have  
 soon - we have laid here since M. yesterday and  
 dont know how much longer we may lay - I suppose  
 we will help guard prisoners the sometime when  
 arrangements is all made - our regt had quite  
 a skirmish last Friday at what is called the  
 high bridge about 2 or 3 miles from a little Village  
 called Farmville on the S.S.R.R. our regt was  
 sent out to reconoitre we went about one mile  
 & come to a long R.R. bridge on fire also a small  
 bridge by the side of it - we advanced down  
 to the river & went to putting out the fire when  
 the rebs just across began to fire on us we was  
 ordered to lay down when a Division Aid came  
 & gave our Col. orders to hold the bridge at  
 all hazzards until reinforcements came

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Contributed to Maine Memory Network by the Maine Historical Society (Local code: Coll. 1605 Fl. 4)

Date: April 6, 1865, Oct. 1947

Description: Letter from Willis M. Porter of Old Town, Maine, to his wife, Etta, about the surrender of General Lee from a Union Soldier's (his) point of view.

Don't know when I may have a chance to send this

& all this time the rebs was marching down in 2 lines of battle with a skirmish line in front & we only our regt to oppose them by this time we had the fire on the bridge all out but on came the rebs the bullets flying thicker & faster & their line of skirmishers close to the bridge when down over the hill came our men on the double quick yelling as they came then over the bridge we went & the rebs going as fast back over the hills on their side - we soon had a strong force across & gave chase but they thought running the best part of wisdom so we got a few prisoners & the rest run away only to surrender another day - O dearest Etta how thankful I ought to be that my life is spared to once more if nothing in providence prevents of enjoying the friendship of home - tho it may be some time yes it may be a month or more before we will all get home but we will then know how to enjoy home & its society - but I almost forgot to say our Col. was wounded severely at this bridge - we had one Lieut & a few enlisted men wounded but I am sorry for our Col. he was so cool in battle - almost the last words I heard him say was - "boys we must hold this bridge at all hazzards & I dont want one of you to flinch" - he was sitting on his horse when he was carried to the rear but havnt heard from him yet - I feel quite well now only tired & lame after marching so as it were day & night for a week past - I will close now wishing soon to see you in person - & well - write soon to your affectionate husband  
Willis M. Porter

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