

**Samuel S. Brooke Papers**  
**Letter, 1862 April 17**  
**Civil War life in Fredericksburg, Virginia**  
**VMI Archives Manuscript #221**  
*This letter was written by Brooke's sister.*

**Fredericksburg, April 17th/62**

Dear Sam & Mr. Bruce-

The Yankees will be in town today at eleven o'clock. This may be the last letter I shall be able to write you for some time. The enemy took Falmouth yesterday. Our forces retreated yesterday, and now not a Confederate flag, soldier, or tent can be seen. Our force is said to have been [3,200?], the Yankees are estimated at from 15,000 to 800<sup>1</sup>. We had some skirmishing with them and lost a man or two, several men wounded, we killed several of the enemy. It was the saddest sight I ever saw, to see our men retreating yesterday, almost at double quick, leaving us behind to the enemy, and the black smoke rolling up from the burning bridges.

They sent a white flag over yesterday and we sent some men with one back to them. Then two Yankees came over and said, "Gen. Augur (their Gen.) said he would take possession of the city at eleven o'clock today and that private property should be respected," but who believes a word they say. We tried to hide every thing we could yesterday. I am afraid Mr. William Moncure is going to leave us. I suppose you know we have Mrs. W. Moncure & family & Mrs. Bankhead with us. We have gotten fixed in our new home and are as comfortable as circumstances admit. Mr. [A\_\_t] is very kind to us. Yesterday he was here three times--we value a friend now highly.

A great many people left town yesterday. The trains will only run to [\_\_lford] now. The last one went out yesterday. I do wish we was behind the lines and feel much afraid of the Yankees, but I know it was impossible for us to go, and we will have to make the best of it. It all looks very dark now, but I know nothing happens by chance, and whatever is, must be the best for us. I do hope brighter days are coming.

<sup>1</sup>She may have meant 1500, or 8,000?

**Samuel S. Brooke Papers**  
**Letter, 1862 May 17**  
**Civil War family life; homefront in Virginia**  
**VMI Archives Manuscript #221**

*This letter was written by Brooke's aunt.*

Richmond, May 17th

Dear Sam:

I write this letter with a sad heart because besides my own sorrow I have melancholy tidings for you. It deeply grieves me to tell you your poor mother is dead. I received the melancholy news through a letter from Sugar which I did not receive until it had been written a week. She seems to have been much worse after they moved, took a great dislike to stimulants (by which her strength had been kept up), grew gradually weaker to the last. I wish I could say anything to comfort you, dear Sam, but I know your affectionate heart will deeply mourn her loss. Her life has lately been one of constant suffering. This is now over. Let us hope she has found that rest and peace she so much desired.

I wrote you more than a week ago and sent the letter with a bundle Mrs. St. G. Tucker was sending to Mr. Tucker, but I now find it has never reached you. Mr. Tucker came in very unexpectedly yesterday and says he has never received his bundle and also that he has not seen you and did not know you were with the army, but now promises to find you and to send the letter if he gets the bundle. It is a terrible feature of this war that it cuts off all communication with those we love.

I have been very anxious to send you and Mr. B. something to eat but they tell me it is vain to hope it would ever reach you. I think a great deal of you and wonder how you bear the hardships of camp life. Oh! I hope you can look to God as your friend and Father and can hope that through the merits of your saviour, your sins are pardoned. You have had many warnings, in the loss of those dear to you, that you should also be in a state of preparation for death. I hope you will think of this and that God who has afflicted you will also comfort you.

Your Uncle's family will leave here on Monday evening for the country, and as we cannot now get to Fredericksburg we shall go with them. If we could have kept clear of the Yankees we intended to have returned to live with T. and your sisters, but I cannot put myself in the power of our enemies without protection. The Doctor you know cannot return, but is obliged to remain here. He seems truly unhappy about his family. We are going by the canal to some place in Albemarle. I shall leave my direction with Mrs. Daniel and when you write send the letter to her and she will forward it to me. You can send it with Johnnie's.

I dislike much to go, for I shall feel more cut off from you and your sisters than ever, but your Uncle thinks it necessary to place us in a place of comparative safety and also of freedom from the turmoil of the city. Your Aunt Louisa sends her love to you. She has not been well but I hope when she has country air, and quiet, she will be better. Give my love to Mr. Bruce. Write me whenever you can and believe me your ever affectionate Aunt A. M. B.

**Samuel S. Brooke Papers**  
**Letter, 1862 June 26**  
**Civil War family life; homefront in Virginia**  
**VMI Archives Manuscript #221**

*This letter was written by Brooke's aunt.*

Fluvanna, June 26

Dear Sam:

I should have answered both your letter and Mrs. Daniel's which I received by Mrs. Brent, but I have been more indisposed lately and when mail day came felt too weak to make even that exertion. My complaint is the same to which I referred in a former letter to Mrs. D., not dangerous but very weakening and troublesome.

Your last was more satisfactory, but still tells nothing of your real self, your thoughts and feeling, why do you not speak of your hopes for the future, your chances of promotion, or you might say whether camp life has a good or bad influence on yourself. I know Dear Sam you have felt your afflictions deeply and to one of your affectionate heart the situation of your sisters must be a source of constant anxiety, but you repress all these feelings, and in writing to an old and constant friend, on who deeply shares your cares, you say nothing. Oh my dear, this is not right. I think I would give more to know the state of your mind and heart than to be sure that Jackson had come to Richmond and defeated McClellan, but I will say no more.

I hope you will not be so imprudent as to go to Fredericksburg. It could do no possible good and might result in a long imprisonment and add to our other misfortunes, the bitterest of all. Dr. Daniel must be a complete will of wisp, the first letter I received from him was from the canal boat. He there says he is going to Charlottesville and that he should remain there some time. I immediately wrote to him there, which letter he never received. He next writes me a short note, and says he is staying at Mr. Jas. Scott's, and that I must direct to him at Harris P. O., Louisa County, to the care of Mr. Scott. I again obeyed and enclosed a letter to Fenton and Sugar which I hoped he might find means of sending. He says he has had no definite news from Fenton but had sent her a verbal message. The date of his note is 7 of June, it is very short and quite unsatisfactory. Since then I have not heard a word from him or from our dear ones in Fredericksburg.

I would like to consult him about my own case if I could get at him. There is a Dr. Wynn who lives quite near and who has treated your Uncle's children very successfully, but I dread a strange doctor so much, that I have not yet consulted him. I was truly glad to hear that you were better and hope will continue to improve. You do not say whether Dr. Tucker continues to

practice on you.

Your uncle H. is obliged to be in Richmond by the 10th of July. You must try to see him. He told me he had been looking for you for some time before he found you. He is I know as kindly disposed towards you as possible, and I have had a long talk with him about you and your affairs. He returned here to find his youngest child at the point of death. I have never seen so ill a child. She is now almost well, only weak. You must thank Mrs. Daniel for her letter and for the papers and for her kindness to you. Give my love to her and say that I will write to her as soon as possible. And now God bless and protect you dear Sam. Write soon and often to your true friend, Aunt M. Brooke. Your Aunt Louisa has been suffering with a very sore eye. She sends much love to you.

**Samuel S. Brooke Papers**  
**Letter, 1863 August 18**  
**47th Virginia Infantry Regiment**  
**VMI Archives Manuscript #221**

***From Brooke to his sister. The regiment had recently returned to Virginia from Pennsylvania, where the unit fought at Gettysburg. The men were in camp at Orange Court House during August and September.***

Camp near Orange C. H.  
Augst. 18th, 1863

Dear Sister--

I wrote a long letter to sister Fenton yesterday & have, I believe, written myself out of news & and everything else. I am afraid I shall have to write you a short and uninteresting letter.

We heard yesterday that the Yankees has retreated to the other side of the Rappahanock. What their next move might be I don't know. Some seem to think that they will go on the peninsulas or somewhere on the south side of the James River, but I do not think so. I think they will always keep an army between us & Washington, & their army is now too weak to be divided.

Fenton says in her letter that she & the Dr. have gotten situations in Camp Jackson. Where is Camp Jackson? I do not remember ever to have heard of it. I hope they will be comfortably fixed & succeed as well as they wish in their new situation. I expect that Maj. Bruce will get a transfer to Engineering dept: he is applying for it. I hope he will succeed. He is tired to death I know with this kind of service and so am I. Marching I do detest & fighting I love no better, but there is no other alternative for me. I am not an Engineer & anything else that I know of but a blockhead an annoyance to myself and all concerned with me. I had thought of running off & jumping aboard the *Florida* or something of the sort but when I reflected that the *Florida* was probably too far from shore for me to jump into her I abandoned the idea.

We are however very comfortably fixed here, have a tent & plenty of beef to eat, etc. I have not been out of camp but once since I have been here, they are very strict and no one can leave camp without a pass signed by a Maj. Genl. It is most agreeably cool this morning, something like fall, heretofore it has been scorching hot & I am glad to see a prospect for a more agreeable spell. I have been looking out for another letter from some of you. When I am not on duty I just lie in my tent and calculate the probability of my getting a letter on that day or the next and am almost always disappointed. I do not believe I get half the letters you write me. I have not heard but once from you since you married & that has been a month ago. One letter a month! But I know you have a great many things to occupy your mind.

Dr. Bankhead has just come in & I have to entertain him as no one else is here. He comes over very frequently. I am afraid I shall have to cut my letter short as I have been talking to him until it is nearly time for the mail to go. I shall look daily for a letter from some of you. How are the girls in Danville? I hope you will be able to find a school they will like better something more private than a regular boarding school I would suggest. I think there are serious objections to a boarding school such as I imagine [Mr. Dames'?] to be but you all know more about all that than I do. I would give anything to see you all if it was only for 5 minutes, but it is an impossibility to do so now. We have now but 6 officers in the whole Regiment exclusive of the Field & staff. The Regt. is divided into 5 companies commanded by Capts. Wharton, Woolfolk, Garland, Green & myself, & one Lieutenant. Clarence Woolfolk is now Capt. I suppose that you knew that before. I must now close as it is moving near to the time when the mail starts & Dr. B is dinging in my ears so I can not write. Write to me soon very soon. Give my best love to Mr. A\_\_\_, Aunt Louisa, Fenton, the Dr. & the boys.

Give my best love to the Girls when you write to them & remember me to all enquiring friends.

Your devoted brother, Saml. S. Brooke.

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**Samuel S. Brooke Papers**  
**Letter, 1864 March 27**  
**47th Virginia Infantry Regiment**  
**VMI Archives Manuscript #221**  
***From Brooke to his sister***

Camp near Orange C. H.  
March 27, 1864

My dear Sister--

I received your letter yesterday and had only one fault to find with that was it was too short. You gave me a great deal of news nevertheless. I suppose by the time you get this Peter Hull will have arrived in town. You must know that Peter and myself are rivals either for Miss Monie or Miss Millie I don't know which, so you must spy upon him and watch him even as the cat doeth the small rat and report promptly all things of suspicious nature. I want to be even with him when he comes to camp, for when I came back he knew everything I had said and done while I was down there. You said in your letter that Miss Monie had deserted me "Entre nous." I don't care a fig if she has but you need [not] let her think that. I want to have some fun out of Peter Hull, he is evidently extremely jealous of me but I can't tell exactly whether it is Miss Monie or Miss Millie he doth affect the most. Whichever one it is there am I also. I expect you are tired of this nonsense but really it is so dull up here that I have nothing to write about.

I suppose you saw in the papers an account of the Tournament we had up here. It was a poor affair I thought, and the Queen of Love and Beauty was as ugly as a stump fence. They are going to have another on a grander scale soon I believe. I will give you a full description of it when it occurs. Capt. Green I believe will ride. None others from the Regt. have any hand in it. If either of the Miss "M's" would come up I would probably scare up an Ishmaelite and tilt for them, don't tell them I said so.

Everything is extremely quiet here. Snow fell to the depth of several inches and it rained all day yesterday so I suppose Old Meade will be weather bound for a few weeks. I do not now think we will go to Tennessee, it was merely a rumor that I mentioned before when it was thought that all the severe fighting would be done in the South West. It is now thought that yet another grand effort to take Richmond this year will be made by "Grant" in "Propria persona" who will doubtless follow in the foot steps of his illustrious predecessors and walk the plank into obscurity after his first engagement with Uncle Bob Lee.

There is nothing as yet particularly cheering or disheartening in the Military horizon. I think the prospect for an active and laborious campaign in Virginia is pretty clear and we will again this spring renew our old occupation and struggle between life and death for six more weary

months. A pleasant thing to contemplate to one who has experience it. As to peace Heaven only knows when that will come. I suppose however that war can't last forever but I can see no indication of an early peace. We have gotten so used to war now that aplenty to eat is all we look for. We expect to make this our trade for we have become fitted for nothing else now.

Tell Maria I received her letter a few days ago and am much gratified at it and will answer it soon. I hope she will write to me again soon. I have been so uncomfortably fixed this bad weather and having to appear at times as witness before Courts Martial that I have postponed writing from time to time, and I wrote such a flood of them at first. I thought I would have off a while.

I am surprised Jennie did not get her letter. I sent it by private hands but who it was I have really forgotten, either Jno. Dent or Tom Berry I think, but it was an uninteresting letter anyway so she lost nothing.

I suppose you and Jennie will be over with Maria by the time this gets to you, or ready to go at all events. I would like very much to drop in to see you a little while but there is no chance of that now. I might have gotten a few days some time ago probably but made no attempt to do so. I have had my share this winter and do not expect to see you all again until this campaign is over if I am so fortunate as to survive the storm that will soon burst over us.

Will Fenton & Mrs. D continue their boarding house at the present high prices? I cannot tell how they manage to get anything eatable now up here where the army has been camped so long. You cannot get anything for love or money and we have to depend on our rations entirely which amount to 1/4 lb. bacon per day apiece about as big as your two fore fingers and a 1/2 lb. flour or meal. I hope however it may get no worse for I can hardly tell where on earth they get this from but I hope it will hold out until the campaign is over at all.

{end, unsigned}