

HEADQUARTERS CHIEF SIGNAL OFFICE
District of Cape Fear

Smithville, N. C., Oct. 22, 1864

I was rejoiced to receive yours of the as it assured me that you were still alive. I feared that you had been one of the unfortunate ones in the recent fighting in Virginia. I wrote to Jack at the same time I wrote to you but have received no answer. The reason why I had not written long ago was because I took it for granted that communication was cut off. Of course when you write you will tell him and the rest of the family that you have heard from me. When you write again, as you must do as soon as you can, give me as much news from K & Q & Essix as you can. I have not heard from them for a long time - very little since the commencement of the war. I fear, however, you will not have it in your power to write me a very long letter.

We are about to be attacked here by a powerful land and naval force. I haven't, between us, much confidence in the holding of this place and the surroundings. We have less than 3000 troops fit for use here and they are entirely raw. The forts are quite strong apparently but I fear will hardly resist the attack of the Yankee flotilla. From information just received we may be attacked at any moment. In the event we cannot resist successfully I shall probably be taken prisoner if I escape alive. Do not let this, however, prevent you from writing to me. It is probable that the fight will be a long one and our communication with Wilmington will in the meantime be kept up. Write me more about yourself. What are you, a private or an officer? What has become of Bernard E. Tell Pat when you write to her that I shall try to come to see her and Kitty this winter if I am not killed nor captured and can get a furlough - a long "if".

From what I can see you are on the eve of another hard old fight. Around P. I have no fears for the result. I am greatly encouraged by news from Va. & from Tenn. & Ga. Have strong hope that Lincoln may be defeated and that we may have peace yet before another 12 months roll over our heads. How often do you hear from home? I would like to hear from some of my kinfolk. Anyhow give me all the news from them.

Truly,

To Hutchinson

P.S.

Have heard from my family in Cals(?) on the 1st Oct. They were in Ky., well and very comfortably fixed - so as far as they are concerned I have no uneasiness.

I send you envelope - am thinking you are in trenches or that such things may be hard to get. You can write now without being troubled above.

I am,

R. Hutchinson

