It is the impression here that had
Burnside's Division of Colored Troops
remained firm & not far so far
gracefully we would have been victims
& relieved Petersburg. As it was we
lost very heavily. The morning of
the battle I went out in front
of the 1st Corps & saw our Artillery
shelling forth their messengers of death.
It was a fine sight. Petersburg could
be plainly seen about a mile distant
of its large buildings in flames
though our attempt to break through
the enemy's works failed & though
we lost heavily we are not discouraged
by an ending to try again.
But I trust my health will stand
filled & from this my pen misses,
Hoping that your health is
much improved & that in a few
weeks I shall see you. I mean next
winter. I remain as Ever

Your friend
Cha[.] C. Ames.
I made a poor selection. When I see you in person when I am greatly excited in that 'rocking chair,' as I know, as I am in hopes to be sometime, then will I speak at greater length in regard to my campaign in the Army of the Potomac.

Let me make a brief mention of my duties as a Delegate. My work is principally in the hospitals among the sick, wounded, & dying. I go through a certain number of wards talk with each one, find out what he wants that he does not have & so far as I am able, supply for him what wants. I also distribute religious reading of most every description, both books & papers. Also write home for the sick soldier if he wishes me & is too feeble to write himself.

Every evening I go through the wards & make a short prayer in each. Thus far as in me lies I attend to their temporal & spiritual needs.

I went last week with the 2nd Corps over to Deep Bottom on the James river about twenty miles distant. The wounded were brought to our hospital in one of our tents & we had nearly forty rebels. They were badly wounded, many had their limbs amputated very did. Some gave expression to their pain by groans, some by crying to God for mercy & help.

In one of our hospitals after a battle one sees a different picture of war than is seen on Boston Common when the wild convict soldiers march to the martial music of the band & listen to the stern eloquence of our Senator & Obadiah & Bob long different the two pictures!

Last Friday night we marched back to our old place & arrived just in time to be present at the beginning of the mine of the unsuccessful attack on the enemy's works. The cannonading was terrific.
[1864-08-04; letter from Charles C. Ames to Joshua & Minerva Sears:]

Hospital in the field Before Petersburg
Army of the Potomac.
Aug. 4th 1864.

My friends, Mr. & Mrs. Sears:

I cannot help smiling as I date my letter when I think how surprised you will be to find me away down in “Dixie land” about three miles from the besieged City of Petersburg. I left College about four weeks ago, to spend my vacation in the Army as a Delegate of the Christian Commission. Shall leave here for home sometime next week.

I have so much to write you, so many incidents that are daily occurring. What sights I have seen, & what sounds I have heard in the few brief weeks of my stay, that I hardly know what to write or where to commence. Please excuse me, if out of the multiplicity of materials I have for an interesting letter, [over page] I make a poor selection. When I see you in person when I am cozily seated in that “rocking chair” – Mrs S. knows – as I am in hopes to be sometime, then will I speak at a greater length in regard to my campaign with Army of the Potomac.

Let me make a brief mention of my duties as a Delegate. My work is principally in the Hospitals among the sick wounded & dying. I go through a certain number of wards, talk with each one, find out what he wants that he does not have & so far as I am able, supply for him those wants. I also distribute religious reading of almost every description, both tracts & papers. Also I write home for the sick soldier if he wishes me to do so & is too feeble to write himself.

Every evening I go through the wards & make a short prayer in each. Thus, so far as in me lies, I attend to their temporal & spiritual wants. [next page]

I went last week with the 2nd Corps over to Deep Bottom on the James River about twenty miles distant. The wounded were brought to our hospital. In one of our tents we had nearly forty Rebels. They were badly wounded; many had their limbs amputated & many died. Some gave expression to their pain by groans; some by crying to God for mercy & help.

In one of our hospitals after a battle, one sees a different picture of war than is seen on Boston Common where the well dressed soldier marches to the martial music of the band & listens to the stirring eloquence of our Statesmen & Orators. How different the two pictures!

Last Friday night we marched back to your old place, & arrived just in time to be present at the explosion of the mine, & the unsuccessful attack on the enemy’s works. The canonading was terrific. [over page] It is the impression here that had Burnside’s Division of Colored troops remained firm, & not ran so disgracefully we would have been victims & entered Petersburg. As it was we lost very heavily. The morning of the battle I went out in front of the 18th Corps & saw our Artillery belching forth their messengers of death. It was a fine sight. Petersburg could be plainly seen,
about a mile distant, & one of its large buildings in flames. Though our attempt to break through the enemy’s works failed & though we lost heavily we are not discouraged & are willing to “try again.”

But I find my sheet well nigh filled & time forbids my writing more. Hoping that Mrs. Sears health is much improved & that in a few weeks I shall see you – I mean next winter.

I remain as Ever
Your friend
Cha² C. Ames.