

Sgt. Benjamin F. Porter – Company E, 11th Alabama Infantry

Benjamin was born December 25, 1843, in Mobile County, Alabama. The 1860 census shows him as a 16 year old farm worker on his father's farm.

He enlisted on June 11, 1861, in Mobile County, Alabama, as 4th Sergeant in Company E of the 11th Alabama Infantry. Benjamin is shown present on muster rolls of August and October, 1861.

On June 2, 1862, from the Chickahominy Swamp he wrote, "*Ma . . . in battle on Chicahomany swamp . . . the mud was half leg deep nearly all the time & when we wer not in the mud, we wer wadin up to our necs in water . . . the River was over flowed & all the bridges was washed away & only part ther forces [Yanks] on this side. . . we completely drove them . . . & they left all there canons . . . provisions napsaks . . . & infact everything that they had . . . Prey for me . . . preyers are of great youse. . .*"

In September, 1862, he is captured at the battle of Sharpsburg (Antietam) and sent to Fort Delaware Prison Camp. Writing of the terrible lice in the prison he noted "*Under our arms and other parts of our body were raw and bleeding from the bites of the lice. Some men just could not stand this treatment and . . . enlisted [in the Union army] to go west [and fight Indians].*" Benjamin is transferred to Aikens Landing, Virginia, on October 2, 1862, and exchanged on November 10, 1862.

At the battle of Salem Church, near Fredericksburg, on May 3, 1863, he is wounded in the arm. Chimborazo Hospital #4 describes his wound as a gunshot wound to the shoulder and Benjamin is transferred to the Danville Hospital on June 13, 1863, arrived on June 15, and is returned to duty on June 29, 1863.

He is seriously wounded in the lung at Rocky Run, Virginia, on October, 27, 1864. In November, 1864, the General Hospital in Petersburg grants Sgt. Porter a 60 day furlough with a gunshot wound in the lower right lung. In February, 1865, Ben is furloughed home as 'unfit for duty' and still in serious condition from his wound. Benjamin had been in a skirmish line advancing through a corn field. He was kneeling when a sharpshooters shot "*entered through my right collar bone, ranging down through the right lung and coming out just above my kidneys on the left side.*"

Postwar he served as Probate Judge in Washington County, Alabama from 1880 to 1898. Ben passed away in 1917 at the age of 73. Early in the war Ben had instructed his sister Jane to save all of his letters. She did and his son, Benjamin, in the 1900's, would find them all in an old family trunk, in the attic, along with a journal recording various stories and memories.

(*Prey for Us All – The war letters of Benjamin Franklin Porter, 11th Alabama*: Ellen Williams, editor – Mobile, 2006, Introduction, p. 34, 105, 109. Compiled Service Records Confederate, Brewer Library, U.D.C., Richmond, Virginia Micro 311, Roll 206.)

