

very glad to see them. We had a good visit. Tuesday we took them down to the river opposite Fredricksburg. They thought they had seen everything. While we were there Professor Low went up in his balloon. Several of them said, "Come let's get out of this for they will shoot us. Come quick". It was fun for us to see them perform. Groke Leameroug ventured so far after a good deal of coaxing to cross the river with the flag of truce boat, and he felt bigger than Abe Lincoln. Last night one hundred teams were sent down to the river with cordroy to build an approach for a pontoon bridge near White Oak Church. We expect to get the order to lay a bridge every moment. Doubtless before this reaches you we will go through the performance in laying another bridge four miles below the City. It seems that Burnside is going to make another attempt to cross the Rappahannock. But I hope he will meet with better success than he did in crossing before.

Now Mother, please grant me this one favor. That is, do not worry and fret your life away for me. I have and shall endeavor to take care of myself and more, I have and shall endeavor to do my duty as becomes a soldier.

Give my respects to all inquiring friends.

Goodbye. I remain as ever

Your affectionate son

Sargent John W. Townsend

Co. A 50 Rgt. N.Y.S.Vol.

Washington D of Columbia

Engineer Brigade

P.S. Write soon for I have not as yet heard from the money that I sent to Orville.

Camp near Stonemans M---Stafford County  
Virginia February the 10th 1863

Dear Sister

I received your kind and affectionate letter of Jan the 12th. I was glad to hear from you and thank you for your good advice. I should like to see you very much. They are granting furloughs at present but I hardly think it worth while to get one for so short a time. They only grant them for 15 days. I could not much more than get home and back in that time. I am quite sure I will get one if I ask for it for I am about the only one in the company but what has had a furlough but there is so many in the company that are sick and have families at home who think they ought to have the preference than I hate to ask for one, not but I would like to come home. Nothing except Peace to our Country will please me as well as it would to come home and make you all a good visit, but as that seems impossible,

must be contented to remain in the field. You may wonder as I often do myself, here I am so contented away from home and under the circumstances that I often times ---. But I think it is owing to the fact that I have a greatly number of friends in the company. I do not think I have one enemy in the Company. We are all Brothers together. Besides, I think I have one of the best tent mates there is in the Company. Joe Burdin. We have tented together ever since we left Elmira, but we are much better situated now than we have ever before been. Burdin is Orderly Sergeant now so we have a tent by ourselves. The same that we generally have from five to six in. We each get our thirty-four dollars per month so we can afford to get many little luxuries and live as nice as we please. We make our own coffee. We get condensed milk for sixty cents a pint and I begin to flatter myself that I can make a splendid cup of coffee. We received soft bread today. The first we have received from the government since we first landed at Aqua Creek. But there is plenty of Bakerys here so we can get warm bread whenever we want. We have to pay 60 ct. a pound for butter here but we can get it at Aqua Creek for 40. So we think that very cheap. We can ride on the railroad to the Creek whenever we please. That is the privilege of all belonging to the Engineers Corp. The castles we wear on our caps is all the pass we want.

I hear that the 107 Regt is now at Wind Mill Point which is one mile and a half from Aqua Creek. I an going to the Creek tomorrow if I find for certain they are there. I shall go and see Horace. I have written to him but as yet have received no answer. We have been to work for one week within two miles of Windmill Point building a wooden bridge across the Potomac Creek. We would ride out on the cars in the morning and back again at night. We lay a Pontoon Bridge across the creek a few days agw to let Gen Siegal Corp pass over. I thind we are done laying pontoons across the Rappahannock River. The 3rd, 6th, and 8th army Corps have embarked at Aqua Creek for some point farther in Dixie. I don't think they will only leave men enough to keep the rebels from crossing the river. The men seem to be more encouraged now we have a change of commanders. They seem to be going to work on a different plan than they have been working on and that is to attack all the principal places at once so not to give the enemy a chance to concentrate his forces. Success to their undertaking I think the Engineer Corp will have soon. I think we will first go back to Washington, repair our pontoons then start anew for Dixie. It is just what will suit me. I want to go farther South. I would like to be with Ace on the Banks Expedition. What a nice time he will have. How long did he enlist for, 9 months or three years. When you write, give me his address. I must close for this time. Give my love to all the children.

Tell Anne to write again: I think she writes very nice. I can read it without any trouble. Much better I dare say than you can read this for I have written it in such a hurry.

John W. Townsend

Please write soon.

Logan May 23rd 1863

Mr J.W. Townsend

Remembered Friend

Yours of the 11th has been received and read with interest. However, I did not do as you requested me, for I not only read it twice, but ~~it~~ was just as interesting after reading it thrice as it was at the first perusal. You must indeed have seen some exciting times whilst laying the pontoons across the Rappahannock, but I don't believe you could have suffered any worse from fear whilst thus engaged than you did in the storming of "Fort Bob" Ha Ha! John has your head recovered from the awful concussion it was exposed to in that fearful drama? John I think you are really provoking now, to even think that I would have any part or lot in a "tragedy" calculated to demoralize a "Lainkim Soilder" or send him back to the seat of war regretting his visit home I tell you what it is! I knew nothing of the plot until Phebe brought the basin down with vengeance upon your devoted head. Well, I will say no more about it now, only be good-and try to forgive.

John I am enjoying myself very much. I think the city air agrees with my delicate constitution. I have a larger school than I had last summer. All the young ladies of Pold City attend. I only wish that the war was over so that there might be a possibility of their taking "schools" for themselves. It does make me feel so old and dignified to have such "great big Varmants" under my care, to encourage, reprove, and instruct. Nevertheless, they are company for me and as there always is a bright side as well as a dark side to every picture, I always try to look on the bright side of everything, for I like everything that is bright beautiful and good although I can not boast of possessing either of these qualities seperatly nor in all combined, still I can judge of their merits as possessed by others. I have not had an occassion to use the rod of correction in my school as yet - everything goes off pleasantly. The scholars take great interest in their studies so that I have altogether a v e y i teresting school. Emily Crandall teaches in the adjoining district. I see her quite often. She is now embroidering a pair of slippers for Charlie Bassett. I presume she will have them finished by the time the war is over. Yes, John, I now see plenty of news from Hookers army. I think you may well be proud of your Generals (Hooker and

Stoneman). They are men who possess the right kind of metal and who know how to punish the rebels severely.

John, I have no news to tell you of "It is all quiet along the Potomac at present". I have not seen Charlie or Phebe since the last "battle" at "Compton Cottage". But I suppose you hear from them often.

Your folks are all well and wike awake. Lissie was down to our house last week.

John you must excuse this miserable letter. My scholars are coming in and I shall be obliged to finish this. Please write again as soon as convenient and oblige

Your friend,  
Mae Spence  
Logan  
Schuyler Co.  
New York

Headquarters of Eng. Corps.  
Falmouth Va. June the 7th 1863

Dear Mother

We received orders yesterday morning the 6th to throw our pontoons across the River one mile below Fredericksburg. We were under a galling fire from the enemy sharpshooters about one hour while getting a detachment of infantry across in boats. I do not know how many were killed but there was quite a number wounded from our detachment. But for my part I came through without a scratch. Joe Burdin also. I have not time to write the particulars now for we have got to go to the River again. Our bridge was completed last night about 8 o'clock. The enemy have not made any resistance yet aside from 1 skirmish. I think today will tell the story in regard to the report of their evacuating. Our artillery played handsomly upon them while we were making the bridge.

I will write you again soon as I can on more of the particulars. Please do not worry about me for the danger is all over now with the Engineers for we will not have to bridge any more in front of the enemy as we will have support on the other side.

From your affectionate son  
John W Townsend

We received our pay day before yesterday. I will send fifty dollars by express the first opportunity.

Ruffus Johnson is here. He saw the fight yesterday.

Alexandria Virginia  
June the 17th 1863  
Wednesday evening

Dear Mother

Since I wrote you last there has been a great change in the Base of the Army of the Potomac.

The Army has evacuated the line of the Rappahannock. We dismantled our bridges after the troops had recrossed the river the night of the 13th inst. The nicest retreat we have yet made. As the old saying is, Practice makes perfect. But I must not attempt to write you the particulars now, for we have not had a nights sleep since we took up our bridges and I do not feel much like writing tonight. But will promise to write the particulars in full the first opportunity.

Our camp is now located in a beautiful park in the suburbs of Alexandria. Perhaps we will remain here some time, or at least have our headquarters here. Our men have all left Aqua Creek. But the buildings are being guarded with gunboats for the present. But I shall not be surprised to hear of their being burnt at any day.

We have sent several pontoons up to Harpers Ferry and I shall not be surprised if we did have to come back in York States with our Pontoon Bridges. The Rebels are getting pretty near. The Rebs are approaching Harrisburg Pa.

Excuse this note, I will write you another soon. The Boys are all well in good spirits, but rather tired. Good night.  
Your affectionate Son

John W. Townsend

Headquarters of Engineers Brigade  
Washington City, June the 24th 1863

My Dear Mother and Father

This is the third time that I have written you and yet received no answer. Mother why is it that you do not write oftener? You say that my letters are a great comfort to you. Do you think that they are more comfort to you than yours are to me? I asy not. There is nothing that gives me more pleasure than to receive a long letter from Mother.

When I wrote you last I promised to write you all the particulars in regard to our late crossing and retreat from the Rappahannock. But I see by the papers you sent me that you have read all of the details connected with our crossing and as far as our retreating, I never could see anything very interesting about that and as I have but a few moments to write, I will not detain you but a short time. We are back on our old camp ground again having been absent nearly eight months. It

seems quite lide home to get back here again. All of our old friends and neighbors was glad to see the 50th back again. Our camp has been full of visitors ever since we returned asking thousands of questions. But we leave them again tomorrow. As near as I can find out, we are going near Harpers Ferry up the Potomac. Our boys has a bridge now at Edwards Ferry thirteen hundred feet long. We sent one last night of 60 boats and we will leave in the morning with the remainder of our pontoon property such as we will need with the bridges. We are reckoning on seeing something new having never been on the Uppe Potomac no farther than Georgetown.

I have almost lost sight of the Army of the Potomac. I think if old Joe Hooker does not look sharp he will loose them too. I am thinking little Mac will have to come to the rescue. The rebels are getting pretty close. They are threatening our more northern towns and cities. The streets of Alexandria have been barricaded by standing logs ten feet long up on end pierced(?) with loop holes for muskets and a space in the center just wide enough to admit one wagon and this is closed with a heavy gate. Baltimore City is being fortified in a similar way. Forts are being constructed on every hill top. There is but little chance for the farmers to work their land. It seems that there is something to be done soon. Some tall fighting as running one of the three. I think that Gen. Lee will get his army in a place where they will find it difficult to get out if he is not wide awake. Our boys was up the Potomac the other day and brought back a Rebel deserter. He is the most intelligent fellow that I have yet seen from the rebel army. He says after fighting over two years he is convinced the Southern Confederacy is wrong. He says that we have a desperate set of fellows to deal with. He was in the battle of Chancellorville and says if Hooker had held out one hour longer he would have captured Lees whole army. He also says that as a general thing the soldiers are not the least afraid of Hooker when Lee leads. McClellan was the only man they feared excepting Rozengroot. They are confident they can hold Vicksburg against all the forces we can bring to bear against them. It is getting too dark to write so I will close hoping to hear from you soon. Give my love to all inquiring friends. Do not forget Uncle Bart and Aunt Till.

From your affectionate son  
John W Townsend

P.S. Mother I forgot to tell you that I an well, enjoying the best of health. Perfectly contented and only hope you enjoy the same blessing.

Seneca July 2nd 1863

My Dear Uncle

As I have a few leisure moments this evening I thought I would improve them in answering your kind letter which came to hand last Sunday. We are all well except the two youngest which have the whooping cough very badly. The rest of the folks are all well in the neighborhood with the exception of "Aunt Till" and she is well. "Grandma" called here this afternoon. She has just come from "Uncle Hars". He and Jim is home, has a furlough for sixty days. Grandma says he looks very badly indeed. He has the Army disease. Cousin Sate is as much taken up with Peterson as ever and I will enclose his photograph so that you may be better able to form an opinion of what is so charming to Sate. View it well and then look up and say, is not that splendid, only forty two! You can return it in your next letter and Sate will be none the wiser for what you have seen.

But to change the subject, I will tell you I have sad news, very sad news to tell you, but you must know the worse and you must prepare for it. Oh "Uncle John" I can hardly bear to destroy your comfort to such an alarming degree but I can keep it from you no longer. Mae Spence has hurt her ankle. The particulars are as follows. Last Saturday about eleven o'clock her and Kate went out to pick up some chips. She had a large basket. Her foot slipped and she hurt her ankle. But do not allow yourself to be made utterly unhappy for its most or quite well now.

Pa has got that field all cleared-the one south of the house where the stump lay when you was here and finished it today. He put buckwheat in it. I understood yesterday that "Gen Hooker" has resigned and "Gen Mead" is in his place, and that a large rebel force are now at, or near, Harrisburg Penn. but all we hear is so uncertain we can depend on nothing we hear.

Well Uncle John, how do you spend your "forth"? Tell me all about it. Our folks think of going up to Watkins, Jefferson or Head of the Lake. They do not know which yet. But poor me has got to stay home to watch the cabbage and hoe the beets with a friend of mine. But I am to have a little pop gun if I stay home so I do not care if I have got to stay at home, would you?

But I will weary your patience no longer with such foolishness but next time will try and be more sensible. Write soon.

Yours in haste

Lissie Townsend

P.S. I will promise to give you the name of that lady if you will promise to keep it a secret. It is Miss Sule Brady. Now if you know anyone that likes fun get them to write to her first and she is just the one that will answer it and have lots of fun.

L.T.



Headquarters of Detachment Eng.  
Near Harpers Ferry July the 8th 1863

My Dear Mother and Friends,

On my arrival back to Washington after our nine days march in Maryland, I had the pleasure of receiving nine letters and the most interesting one was from you. Do not think strange for my not answering before, for as it has often been the case before I have not had time. We had a splendid time in Maryland. I never enjoyed a march better, but I can hardly call it marching, for we had but little marching to do. We had everything carried for us - even our guns, and could ride or walk at our leisure. We had occasion to return our most grateful thanks more than once to the Union ladies of Maryland who gave us compliments in the shape of pies, cakes, biscuits, etc. But I can assure you that claps of persons was scarce. The majority was rank. Some would hardly give a drink of water. But my time will not allow me to write the particulars in regard to our march.

Monday we received marching orders and broke camp at dark. Moved down to the Washington Depot. Bivouacked for the night in a park near the Capitol. Next morning loaded a pontoon train of forty boats on the cars. Another train of sixty boats was launched into the Harpers Ferry and Chesapeake Canal. Both trains destined for Harpers Ferry. The train that I went with went by rail. We left Washington at 10 A.M. Washington and Baltimore Road with a train of fifty cars and two locomotives. We arrived at the relay house near Annapolis Junction about noon. There we left the Baltimore Road, branched off on the Ohio Road. Ran all night as well as we could, the track being blocked up with other trains. We arrived at Fredrick Junction, where the cars cross the Monockesy River, at noon, and at three o'clock we find ourselves opposite that quiet place I have heard so much about but never have seen and an awful looking place it is. While I am writing I am sitting in the side of a mountain with my feet braced against the roots of a tree to keep from sliding into the Potomac. Just on the opposite side of the river is the village of Harpers Ferry. Off in the distance I can see the place where old John Brown was hung.

Harpers Ferry, you must understand is now occupied by the Rebs. It was evacuated a few days ago by our men. The Pontoon Bridge that Company G of the 50 has had there nearly a year was cut loose and the boats stove to pieces to keep the Rebs from getting them out. They now lay scattered along the river in every direction. Yesterday afternoon, after we arrived here, Company A was sent out by Gen. Benham to search every home in this vicinity in search of parties of Rebs that was reported seen at certain houses and of Government property that we could find. We only found 500 gunny bags used on fortifications, a few army blankets, gun cartridges, etc. but not a Rebel in arms could we find. Last night there was three men shot by



guerillas while guarding the Railroad opposite the ferry.  
Yesterday we could hear heavy firing.  
P.S. Give my compliments to Mr. Comptons folks. Tell Jake I  
will answer his letter soon as I get time. Write soon.

Headquarters Eng. Corp  
Navy Yard D.C. Aug the 4th 1863

My Dear Mother

Your always kind and affectionate letter was received yesterday and read with interest. Very glad to hear that you was all well. I was very anxious to hear from home for I heard that Horace was not expected to live. But your letter set my mind at ease in that respect.

We left Harpers Ferry Sunday morning. Took the cars for Washington where we arrived Monday morning and reported to the Regt. and we are now encamped on our old Camp ground formerly known as Camp Leslie. Drafting commenced in Washington yesterday I have heard of no resistance being made as yet. Everything seems to go off quietly. I saw a northern paper yesterday containing the names of those drafted in the counties of Schuyler and Seneca. Among the lucky ones I find many familiar names.- John Spence, James Bond, Gilbert Mathews and many others. I dare say they will find the battlefield a little different from the Harvest field. There is officers detailed from each Regt. and Company to bring in those that are drafted. Seargent Joe Burdin is the one selected from our Company. You need not be surprised if you see him home in a few days. The weather here is warm -- very warm. I have no idea where our next move will be. Perhaps the Peninsula as the line of the Rappahannock again. Our Army occupies nearly their old position on the Rappahanock that they did last winter. I do not know as I care about going back on the Rappahannock again, but if we are ordered there I should go cheerfully. I am enjoying good health although I am not quite so fleshy as when I was home last winter. The warm weather has affected me a little, but I think I will get along for I weigh one hundred and seventy-five pounds. I am still contented and in the best of spirits. Now why do you worry and give yourself so much unnecessary trouble concerning me? I am sure I can see no reason why you should make yourself sick on my account.

Mother, if I was sure you took the comfort that I do, I should be more contented than ever for I judge from your letters that you think because I am a soldier I am in danger every moment. But you are very much mistaken. It is so very warm I will not write any more this time. Give my love to all the

household and all inquiring friends.

From your affectionate son

John W. Townsend

P.S. Give my love to Uncle Bart and Till. Tell them I commenced to write a letter to them while we was at Harpers Ferry, but I did not have time to finish it, but I will try to finish it the first opportunity.

John W. Townsend

At home Oct 25 1863

Dear Friend

I shall give you much credit for answering my letter so soon after its receipt.

We came home yesterday and found our folks all well and glad to see us. The Institute broke up Friday evening. We had a lecture on colors. A couple of young ladies read a paper. After that I read an essay on the subject of teaching. The exercises were held in the Military Hall which was crowded to overflowing. John if you had been there you would have seen how frightened I was when I read. I can't begin to tell you anything about it only that I had to breath as fast as possible to keep my heart from jumping out of my throat. Well, 'tis all over now, and if you were here I could tell you what fun we had during the past two weeks at Havana. Lissie was perfectly delighted and felt sorry when the time arrived for us to go home. While we were there we saw a whole regiment of soldiers. They were from Geneva on their way to Dixie. They stopped in Havana about two hours. John you were entirely out of reckoning when you supposed that the people here at the North count the soldiers as "nobodies". They are respected and honored as our countries worthiest benefactors and will ever be kindly thought of by everybody who are true to their country and the laws of right. You fancy me surrounded with those who are more worthy of my regard than any soldier, Now John, I must say if you were speaking of yourself that I think very different from what you suppose. If there is anyone more worthy of my respect than the soldier who went to fight for his country, certainly I know not where to find them. I mean no flattery in saying that since you became a soldier I have respected you more than ever and nothing can afford me greater pleasure than to hear from you occasionally. What a cold day it is. I am so cold that I can scarcely write - quite a change in the weather since one week ago today. Then it was so pleasant and warm that we were

comfortable with the doors and windows open. Two weeks ago today Squire Wright was buried. He was ill but a few days. He was a man that did a great deal of business and will be missed by his family and friends. Our Sunday school closes today. 'Tis nearly time to go so I will have to write fast and if you cannot read my writing just bring it here and I will read it for you. John you say that the 50th is reenlisting. I suppose you will be home, of course, before you reenlist. Please write very soon. I thank you very kindly for your photograph. It is a very good picture. I shall look at it often. Please write as soon as convenient

and oblige

Mae

Sunday afternoon  
Washington Nov the 1st 1863

Dear Mother

Received your letter yesterday and was happy to know that it left you in comfortable health, but as regards myself, I have been troubled for two or three days with a very bad cold, but I am quite well again at present.

This forenoon we had a Grand Brigade Review and inspection Gen. Benham in Perron. The scene was very interesting. Everything passed off pleasantly and yesterday we were mustered for pay by Colonel Wm G. Pettis of the 50th Eng.

There is no news of importance especially from the Army of the Potomac. Gen. Mead is busy repairing the Warrenton and Alexandria Railroad and guarding the same. There has been quite an excitement for the past week in the 50th. We all thought we was going home on a ten day furlough to attend election. The names of all those who would like to go home to vote if they could have their expenses paid. The names was taken to the War Department, approved, and sent to the Secretary of War. A Telegraphic dispatch was sent to Gen. Mead to know if he would want the service of the balance of the 50th for the next ten days. Gen Mead sent back word that he had all the Eng. he required for the present and approved of our going home to the support of the Administration. The papers came back all right and all that was wanting was the signature of the Col. He being a Democrat would not give his consent. Consequently we have made up our minds to tarry with him until the 10th of September --- then we can vote for whom we please and ask no favors of Col. Pettis or any other man.

You did not state in your letter by which express you sent

your box. I inquired yesterday at both Harlens and Adams Express offices. But could find none. But by looking at the date of your letter, it had not had time to get here. Doubtless it will be there tomorrow. I do not think there will be any difficulty in its safe arrival. You ask me if I knew where Horace was. No I do not, the last I heard from him he was in the hospital at Alexandria but I have not been there to see him for I have been waiting to know the particulars in regard to the no. and ward and hospital he is in. Please write soon and give my love to all inquiring friends.

Your affect. son

Seargent John W. Townsend

continued in next page

Monday morning

Last night the Regt received marching orders. Last night Companys A and G fitted up a train of twenty boats. Company F left for the front at midnight, took the cars. The balance of the Regt will go by water down the River as we are busy fitting up Pontoon trains in the river. The wagons are to be loaded on Barges which leads me to think our destination will be likely to transport them on the pontoons if they were not to leave the Potomac river.

This accounts for our not coming home to vote. I had the misfortune while loading the boats to loose a fingernail and I find my fingers very much in my way about writing, so I will close.

Your affect son

John W Townsend

Company A will remain in Washington D.C. Write soon.

P.S. I will enclose a photograph of Sergt Frank E. Miller of Co. A. He is a native of Pennsylvania.

John, I was quite disappointed when I received your letter and found that you had failed to send me your photograph. I want you to be sure and send it in your next and when I answer your next letter I will send you mine, that is if you care about having it. Be sure to send me yours for I am not joking. I mean what I have written.

M---

Painted Post Nov 16

Mr Townsend Dear friend

As I have neglected in answering your most welcome letter I would wish to be excused for my neglect. My health has not been very good for the past two months; but feel rather better. Hoping these few lines will find you in good health for it is a great blessing when I think of the --- of affliction that we have to endure it seems as though I could not endure it. I suppose that we have lost our oldest son. We cannot get any intelligence from him. Now you must not think that we had forgotten you for we have not, nor never shall when we call to mind past. Now as to what I wrote in my other letter I cannot tell for I felt very bad and tired. My journey was rather hard for me but finding such kind friends with me while I was with my poor sick son it makes all my troubles light. We shall ever feel grateful and thankful to those kind friends that done so much for my dear son. Two of our neighbors from there has come home and we were glad to see them. They spoke very highly of those officers. Tell the doctor that one of the writings he gave me has gone to the war department and that was just what will be of use to us. If we did not thank you and the captain and all of the company in our letter that we sent, we do now sincerely thank you one and all, hoping that the blessings of God may be with you and that you all may share in his mercys.

I felt bad when you spoke about your niece that was taken home dead. O how bad to go away from home in good health and never return, no not even dead. O I cannot be thankful enough that we could have our dear son brought home when there is so many that cannot have this privilege, but I will close hoping that you will excuse all mistakes from a friend and well wishes to those that has left home and all that is dear to them to share the fate of war.

Elmira Brown

P.S. I do not send this by a private conveyence to save three cents, but I thought he would take it safe by Mr Houghtayling.

At Home Tuesday evening  
Dec. 29th 1863

Friend John

'Tis with much pleasure I take this opportunity to answer your long looked for, kind, and very welcome letter. The reason I did not answer it before, I thought I would follow the example you set me, and defer writing nearly an age, so you must not blame me for not writing sooner as I meant, simply, to follow your example.

John, there is a donation at polkville tonight, for brother Wooden. I suppose that every body is there now, around here.

As for myself I chose to remain at home and write to an absent friend whom I would be delighted to see. I could tell you more news in two minutes than I could write in two hours. John whom do you suppose Kate went with tonight? You will be surprised when I tell you that Zekie drove down here for her. He looked as slick as boys generally do on such occasions. Ha Ha! I wish you could have seen Kate and him. I tried to keep on a sober face but the effort to do so was all in vain.

Today noon we had lots of fun talking about the donation. O, I almost forgot to tell you that I am teaching at Suttonburg this winter, but I suppose you have heard of it ere this from other sources. I like my school first rate. John don't you think all the boys in the neighbourhood visits my school occasionally but Jake. What do you suppose is the matter of him? He don't even look toward the school house when he chances to pass that way. Lissie comes to school every day and takes treat interest in her studies. She could make an excellent scholar if she only had an opportunity. Bet Compton also attends school. The girls tease her every day about Frank Milliman who takes her out occasionally. The last time they rode out was last Friday (Christmas). John I suppose you have heard of the wonderful weddings around here. There has not been any more such work going on since Hester Lane and Eliza Low took the "fearful Step". I speak of them, because they were once your schoolmates.

Many of the boys around here fear and tremble on account of the coming draft. I think if I were in their place, I would never have the name of being drafted into the service of our Country.

War meetings are being held around here and great inducements thrown out to obtain volunteers. Will expects to be drafted, and if he should be, I suppose he would soon die of grief from parting from his fathers-friends. John do not let any one see my letters. Please burn them up as soon as you read them. Don't forget to write soon, very soon. I want to hear from you very much. Your friends are in good health so far as I know of. We are having sleighing out here, but I do not have many opportunities for enjoying it on account of my daily routine of school duties.

From your friend  
Mate

Washington, Sunday eve.  
January the 10th 1864

My Dear Mother

Your always kind and ever welcome letter was received and perused with pleasure. I was glad to learn that you was all enjoying good health. As for myself I am as usual favored

with good health.

For the past week we have had quite cold weather. Friday and Saturday there was quite good sleighing in Washington. The Eastern Branch of Potomac is frozen over. The constant plying of boats has kept navigation open between Washington and Alexandria and Mount Vernon..

But I must now tell you about my reenlisting for three years. I went as far as to put down my name and for fear you would not sanction my reenlisting, I withdrew my name again. Had I been sure of your free consent, I would have been a veteran volunteer. Nearly the entire Regiment has reenlisted. The North Hector Boys will be home on thirty (30) days furlough. I think they will start this week. There Furloughs are now made but there is not 50 of the old members of the 50th Regiment left but what has enlisted. One reason that induced me to put down my name was because I did not like to leave my old comrades in arms.

There was a Bill in the Senate the other day to continue the large Bounties and inducements to Volunteers until the 5th of February. If the Bill should pass there will be but few of the old members of the fiftieth to come home. ~~next~~ August when our term of service expires. Christmas I was over to Alexandria. Saw Wallace and family. They was all well. How is Gilbert and family? Why does he not write? I have had but one letter from him since I was home on furlough. Well, I do not know and I have much reason to complain. I average a letter from some one of the family about once in six weeks. I write about ten letters home for one.

Give my respects to Uncle Bart and Aunt Till. Don't forget and write soon.

Your affect. son  
John W. Townsend

P.S. Mother

If Eliah Arburn comes to you for my cutter lend it to him if you do not want to use it yourself whenever he wants it and oblige

John W. Townsend

Alexandria Va. Jan 27, 1864

Brother Gilbert and family

I received your kind and welcome letter and hasten to answer it. I am happy to tell you we are all well and hope these few lines will find you enjoying the same blessing. I was glad to hear from all our dear friends in Hector for I tell you we often think of you and talk about the friends we love. We Received the barrel of butter and good things and we are



having a feast on the butter. The barrel arrived here the twenty-fifth, the same day that I received your letter. You must thank Orville for us for his trouble and tell him he must let this setter suffice for you all as I get so little time to write. Tell him he will get his pay by calling on Mr Nigh for the barrel and something on his note. We did not send as much money as we intended to. We sent fifty dollars by George Faucett. He expected to send a hundred and fifty, but he lent Steward Moran a hundred and did not get it in time as he expected and probably will not get it till next pay day which will be in about five weeks. I am very sorry for I suppose Orville wanted his pay and perhaps will feel disappointed, but tell him he shall have every dollar before long. We are all very comfortable and our little store of furniture keeps gradually increasing. The Ward Master sent me a nice stand today. The Soldiers are very kind to us and the Mansion House folks will so almost anything for us. We feel very much at home amongst them. We have changed our rooms for downstairs rooms. We have now two nice large rooms for seven dollars a month. We think we have made a good exchange. The sick in the hospital had nearly all recovered when tonight there has come in fifty more sick. Last Thursday night there was a crazy man jumped out of the top windows in the Hospital, fifty five feet high, and I saw the points of the heel of his shoe in the floor below where he dropped. He lived till Saturday night in dreadful agony and died. Poor fellow, I was glad when I heard he was dead. The weather is very warm here now. The thermometer was 73 degrees above zero today.

I cannot think of any more news to tell you. Remember us kindly to Jane and Ann. How well I would love to see them and visit with them a while, but that cannot be now. But I hope I shall again meet you all at your homes and old familiar firesides where we have often enjoyed ourselves whilst visiting together. The family all join in sending their love to you all. Not one forgotten. Tell Bep and Gene to try and see if they can't write me a few lines just to tell me they do not forget their old friend. Much love to our Mother. Tell Jane Foster I want her to write to me. Do not forget to give my love to home, and believe me, as ever,

your affectionate sister

A.S.Townsend

Write soon.

Searsburg N.Y.

Feb the 14th 1864

Friend John

Please do not look so cross at the outlandish sheet of paper. You accused me of not caring much about writing to you, also not having time to write oftener than once in six weeks,

now I am going to show you as well as tell you that you are in the wrong, and if you do not want to see a sheet of "fool's Cap" when you open my letters, never accuse me of not caring about writing to my soldier friend again, for it is always a pleasure for me to sit down and pen my thoughts to you. No one need expect me to write of that in which I feel no interest, or to one in which I am not interested, and to me the value of a friends letter is in proportion to the extent and truthfulness of the picture it furnishes of his thoughts, sayings, and doings from day to day. Here one is not allowed but his familiar self must appear and his feelings will generally flow from the heart to the pen and speak along the page of the great end of social correspondence is forgotten. I do not write thus to direct you, but rather as an apology for myself. Your pen will succeed in interesting me if you will only allow it to transcribe your genuine thoughts. You certainly will not have occasion to reprimand me again in my delaying to write, for I think you are sincere in regard to what you said concerning "Soldiers Mail". If you were not, it will be the worst for yourself for you will have my nonsense to read and perhaps to answer, -variety is the spice of life. If my letters were as as smart and written in as good style as some you receive, why they certainly would be a true index of the writer! It may be that I am tiring your patience with dry nothingness. If so, I beg your pardon and will change the subject. First, I must tell you where you are mistaken. That is in regards to one of your correspondents going to Cal. Instead of self, it was selfs brother Charlie. I rather think he has given it up. I do not hear him say anything more about it. But what am I to understand by your being lonesome if I went to Cal. Could we not correspond just the same, or would you not claim a Californian as a friend? It will not matter. I'm not going. Oh yes, to be sure, I'm glad you did not reenlist. Not but what I think just as much of the stars and stripes as anyone and think just as much of having the secesh flag trampled down, but sometimes when I think how they are destroying our country and boys and to think Slavery the cause, I almost, yes quite forget how our forefathers fought and gained the Flag of our Union. But after one has spent three years in their countrys service, I think they well can say they have done their share. I met your friend J. Burdin at J Monks to a party given in honor of Charlie Monks and sister who have come home from the West on a visit, and if your other tent mate is as fine looking and appealing, I think you are rather a lucky boy. J Vurdin asked me when I had heard from John. How did he know I ever heard from him? I also had an invitation to visit with him yesterday afternoon, but could not go on account of Grandfathers folks being gone to Ithaca. Searsburg Society is in quite a commotion.

One in which I'm afraid it will not very soon get over. The Society is divided, one side is Burrs, the other, Seares. They both have quite a train. But I honestly think I shall take up for neither side, as yet I have not, but I am classed with the Seares. That name does not sound as it used to once. The day will come wherein the Seares will not take a very high stand in society. I think that they are aware of it and are now trying to run the race as soon as possible. Oh well, John, I might as well tell you first as last that my brother Therm has enlisted. Goes Monday to be examined. I did think I would not tell you, why, I can hardly say. Oh, I do think it wrong for them to take such young boys in the army. They certainly can not stand it one half as well as the older ones. It may be he will not have to go. I certainly hope it may be the case. Wednesday night donation at Steamburg at Peter Ditmars former residence. Manda Davis one of the committee. Perhaps you know the lady, of you have the honor of knowing a very fine girl.

Sunday afternoon

Dinner over, and what do you suppose it consisted of? Nothing more nor less than clam soup. Tip Top. It was pronounced the very best of the season by all around the table, and there is just about enough left for one more person, and if you were here, gladly would I give it to you and everything else good. I do hope to see you here some day, that I may talk instead of writing to you. I have not a very good talent for getting my thoughts on paper. Certainly you are aware of that ere this. Why is it you never told me about Sate Townsend being at Washington? I never heard of it until lately and I could not scarcely believe it. We have not been very much troubled with snow banks this winter. We have been waiting all winter for it to come sleighing so we could go out to Rath or even good wagoning. I am afraid I shall have to stay home, of dear. Do you begin to think my time has been very much limited today? I certainly could write oftener if I thought my letters were half as acceptable as yours are to me. Now if you do not wish me to write so much nothingness again, do not accuse me of forgetting my Soldier Friend.

Your ever true friend and well wisher

Phoebe E. Wright

P.S. The report is that Wed night Clem Sears and Mary E Brown are to be married, if not then, they will soon. P.E.W.

P.S. 2nd Received a very nice valentine from Clem last night. I wish that Mary knew it, no I do not, neither and in the val. was a collar. ha ha Phebe

P.S. 3rd It is trying so hard to snow, oh I do hope it will P.E.W.

Will you please to be so kind as to answer my letter as soon as I did yours. Ask your friend J.B. how he likes your cousin Laura Sears.

Searsburg N.Y.

At home April the 13th 1864

Remembered Soldier

You wished me to state the reason we did not make the promised visit. I will, and in plain English. It was simply this. Company. Now please let me return the compliment. Why did you not make Charlie and self a visit. Only think, you call us your friends etc. and can come home on a thirty day furlough and only give us one little call. And more than that, what ever put the idea in your head that I was not your friend. I can not imagine what I have done to merit such an epistle as the last I received bearing your signature. Take it to yourself and think how you would feel to have any one write to you in the same tone your last was written in. Did you think while writing it would make me a little out of sorts and not answer. If that is what you want, you must tell me in plain English, for I understand no other language and tell me my letters are intruding on your time and talents and they shall cease. But I certainly hope nothing of that kind will happen for I consider it a very pleasant task to devote a little of my time in scribbling to you whom I considered as one of my friends. Yes, one of my best friends. But so he did not think enough of me to hardly look at me long enough to say how do you do and goodbye when you were home. Then you are excusable for you have so many friends on the hill to visit. I know I had not ought to censure you but then it did seem just as if you might come if you had felt inclined. To be continued. That is, with your permission.

From one that is ever wishing you success

Also your friend

Phoebe E Wright

P.S. Take good care of by brother. Remember he is very young to be placed in the position he now holds.

P.S. Write soon if you deem me worthy receiving your letters, and if not, well I suppose I will have to submit, for Uncle Sams boys are lawless.

Hector, April 29th 1864

My Dear Friend

I could not have been better pleased that I was this morning when our mail arrived to find myself the recipient of your kind letter. I was washing the breakfast dishes when Kate came in and said "A letter for you Mae". And now the last dish having received its common ablution, and being stowed away somewhere, I don't care much where I placed them, for I dislike the business, I avail myself of the present opportunity to pen a few lines for your perusal - and a poor pen I have taken for

the purpose. It writes about like a stick would.

John has just started for Trumansburg and Will has hitched up his colt and, as he says, is "trying to break it handy". It seems to go very good. I guess he will not have much trouble with it. But the colt John purchased is a perfect little "fly-away". It kicks higher than a kite every time he hitches it to a carriage. I must tell you of a little transaction that occurred the Sunday we called on our cousin Seina. Will told me that shortly after we were gone, John hitched up the colt, but before he had proceeded far, he found himself landed on the ground. The sulky and harness were all broken in pieces. So the chap put the little animal back into the stable and took one of Uncle Willies old farm horses and sallied forth again. I can't say how far he went, but I was awakened about two or three o'clock A.M. by a sound like someone stumbling around in the dark, tumbling over the chairs, etc. John I hope you did not make quite so much noise when you got home that evening (Saturday morning). 'Tis a bright beautiful morning - the first clear morning we have had this week. Will has gone to Geneva to get that new carriage I suppose. He told me last night not to tell anyone about the house. Our folks think it the "queerest caper" for him to get up so early and start off without saying anything or telling where he is going. But I kept so still they mistrust that I know something about it.

John, as I cast my eyes from the window, I see Jake passing by with a load of grain. I guess he is going to mill. I would bow to him if I were sure he would not blush. Jake said that if you had not come down there to the "picked company" that evening, he would have been somewhere else. The only reason he stayed at home was just because you were coming. Now, John, I have not had the fun of attending any picked companies since you left, but I suppose by the time I write you again, I will find myself associating with some of the elite around the borders of Logan. Are you not fearful lest I may learn to swear? To talk polite, I mean. Well, I have spent two summers, and I think I will have to stay a much longer time among them before I learn their language for you see I am not a very apt scholar.

John, I wish you were going to be here tomorrow, for I expect our little school marm. She is going to make her home here and won't that be delightful. But there it is again. I must be away down there to Logan. I dread the responsibility that is incumbent on any person who assumes a teachers position. John, did Harry Stilwell ever tell you about his experience in attending Starkey Sem.? I could not help but think that evening that he was at our house that if they should undertake to tease him now as they did then, they would find their match.

Oh they used to tease him almost to death, he was so bashful then. I remember one time he got so homesick, he left school and went home, but his folks sent him back again and when the girls saw him coming they all ran down to the gate to meet him and shake hands and welcome him back to the Sem. I never saw such a frightened boy as he was - he scarcely knew what to make of it.

John, I called to see our new neighbor on the corner the other day (Jim and Scott). By the way, John, I fear Mate Couse and "That Boy" are becoming fast friends. Oh I wanted to tell you what Uncle Billy said last fourth (the time we were laughing about what Em told you) but I did not dare to. 'Twas something that set snigger than all that. You would have laughed more than ever if you knew what it was he said. John, since I last wrote you there has been another wedding. I suppose you have already heard that John Brown and Sarah Sprague are married. John, I have got some new fashion paper and I scarcely know how to write straight-it not being ruled, but if you can read it I don't know as it makes any material difference. John your letter was more lenient than I expected. I did deserve a good scolding and I expected it. You was so kind and good to write so soon after your arrival. But I did the best I could. The first thing I did after I got home was to answer your letter. Had I written where I was visiting I would have had no chance to mail it. This, John, is the only reason why I did not write sooner, and I must say that your suppositions are altogether wrong. I called to see your Mother last week. She told me that she had written two letters to you and I must confess that I did feel ashamed to think that that poor sick woman had sent two letters since you had written to me. Your mother is looking quite hale again. She seems to be in good spirits and I had a very pleasant chat with her.

Yes, John, I remember the promise I made you about writing. I think I promised to write as long as my letters are agreeable to you, but I thought you knew me better than to suppose me capable of using flattery in the least degree. I was sincere in everything and wrote confidently as I never could write to no other person of my acquaintance. I always say just what I think, regardless of consequences. But you say you can hardly believe me sincere in all that I wrote. I am sorry that you lack that confidence in me which is necessary to make us confiding friends. I never have, never could be guilty of flattering to deceive, and I do not wish you to entertain such a thought of me. I would tell you now if you were here, the same as I have written. I was highly pleased with the pictures I found enclosed in your letter. I suppose you thought I would send

the first one back, but I mean to keep that forever, because it is the first present that you ever gave me of the kind. Those last two are splendid pictures, I should like very much to have kept them both. Don't you wish I would stop writing? Well, I will for the present, but if you don't write me a long letter next time, I will have no mercy on you. If the R empty put ---. If the grate be empty put coal on.

John I am going to give you a word to spell and tell you and tell you what the letters are that compose it and then you must write me what word it spells. 'Tis spelled with five letters. In the first letter is five hundred, the last is five hundred. The middle letter is five and the first of our letters and the first of our figures fill the spaces between. Can you tell me what word it spells? Kate sends her compliments to you. She just came and looked over my shoulder saying "John don't thank you to write in every corner. You have got an awful sight in that letter for 'tis written fine and close together." She says she will have that waltz learned perfectly by the time you come home again. Please write soon. Just this minute I received and read a letter from Cousin John Spence and have laughed over it until I am almost exhausted. I wish you were here to read it. He has been promoted since his last letter and is feeling fine over it.

M

Sunday P.M.

John, I have just returned home from church. The house was crowded. Everybody was there. I saw all of your folks but your mother. Lissie feels very bad. She wears the garb of mourning. Satie was buried yesterday instead of today. I did not get to see her. Dear girl, I hope she is better off than she would have been to remain longer in this world of pain and sorrow. Please write soon - don't wait one minute and believe me as I ever hope to be your

true friend  
Mae

Searsburg N.Y.  
May the 19th 1864

To you Sir

Sergt Townsend these few lines are written by a friend whom you say you highly esteem. Now sometimes actions will speak louder than words, and I do certainly think if you had cared much for my friendship when you were home and came within sight of my home some half dozen times to my certain knowledge you would called if nothing more - but never mind, it's a long road that never turns.

This is one fine day. I can scarcely stay in my room to write. I would just like to take a run to the woods, but no, I have lots of writing to do this very day, and thinking if I did



not write to you first I would get one good scolding, for I have not forgotten the said note you sent me in Charlies letter - but you cannot come up to him \* he is not quite as sparing of his words as you were. I suppose he thinks he has a perfect right to scold me.

C. Morgan received a letter from Lieut. Burden which was written the next day after you and stated that Theron was not well. Now I shall have to scold you a little, for if he was sick when you wrote, I think you did very wrong in writing that he was well, but I certainly do not know what Mother would have done if I had not told her what you wrote. She thought that if you had said he was well it must be so. But not so with me, for if he is sick, who has a better right to know it than his sister. Now please to write just how he is and how he appears to enjoy himself also whether he keeps good company. He is a very young boy to be placed in the army. I'm confident he could be very easily led from the right path more so than Minis. He (Minis) is a boy that has a mind of his own and does not very easily give way when he thinks he is doing right. Very different from Theron.

Farmers in general are feeling quite blue for it has been so very wet they could not get their grain in. Grandfather has been trying to make a little garden this week and Jake is harrowing the dorn ground. I expect to help plant for help is very scarce. Oh my, I'm getting to be quite a farmer. I'm not certain but what us girls will have to learn how to do all kinds of farming, for the men both young and old are going in the army and when they are once there it is about the last of them. Oh when will this cruel war end? I am about discouraged. According to all accounts this last battle has not amounted to any very great sum in subduing the rebellion, but on the other hand it has amounted to quite a sum of lives on both sides. Friend John, excuse this poor letter for I am in very much of a hurry. I have to read the Sunday School paper this week and have all the writing to do this very day.

Fare thee well and to fare well is to do well.

Your friend

Phoebe E Wright

Write soon as you can conveniently.

P.E.W.

Rochester, May 19th 1864

Dear Sister Louisa

You will be surprised to hear from me in this section of Uncle Sam's Dominion. I left Texas two weeks before the army left for the Red River country and was just in time for Lanigans ball, or with more truth, Banks ball. I had the honour of been

in some hard fights, but the three days fight surpassed all I had ever seen. You are already in possession of the particulars of our battles in the Red River country and our retreat to Alexandria; therefore I will not trespass on your time, but will briefly tell you how I happened to be here. Although I escaped without any severe bruises, yet I have not been altogether free from them. I am now quite well again. At some other time I will tell you all about my doings in Texas as well as my hairbreadth escapes during the three days fight. I thought I fought hard enough and suffered enough to be entitled to some indulgence, so I concluded to apply for a leave of absence and am happy to say, I was successful. Now that I am North, I think I will remain so, and send in my resignation as Captain which will be accepted for the reasons I will explain in said application. I will bring this small letter to a close and trust you will give me all the particulars in your next letter. Please let us know how Mother is getting on as Eveline is very uneasy about her. Our love to all the family and in particular to John.

James and Eveline Godfrey

Headquarters of Eng Brigade  
Near Falmouth Va. May the 28 1864

My Dear Mother

Your very kind and affectionate letter of the 20th came to hand yesterday and was very glad to hear from you to learn that you was well. Mother for my part, I never felt better than I do now. I am favored with the best of health and am perfectly contented. The news from our armies in the Southeast is very encouraging. The Capture of Vicksburg is certain. Grant has the rebels completely surrounded. He says that Gen Pempton offered to lay down their arms and surrender the city if he would let his men march out. He must be a fool to think that Grant will accept anything except an unconditional surrender.

Everything is quiet within the lines of Hookers army. Gen Hooker and Benham have just returned from Washington where they have been for orders. There have so many troops left the Army of the Potomac their term of service having expired, that we do not anticipate a forward movement here in some time unless the enemy make some move- as withdraw some of his forces at Fredericksburg. Professor Low keeps a good look out from his Balloon which is up nearly all the time. Yesterday he was very near them. His Balloon was directly over the river within pistol shot of the Rebs, yet they dare not shoot for fear our Batterys will open up in the city.

We are getting rested out from the effects of our late

move and are ready for another move. The order cannot come too soon. We are getting tired of the camp. We never enjoy ourselves so well as when in active service. We have had some very warm weather but for two or three days it has been quite cold. No rain since we left U.S. Ford.

I am Officer of the Guard today. I have left my writing three times to turn out the guard to present arms to those who are entitled by rank to the compliment and for fear I will have to lay down this letter for the fourth time, I will close. Give my love to the family and all inquiring friends.

From your affectionate son

John W. Townsend

P.S. Excuse this hastily written letter and answer soon.

Logan July 6th 1864

My dear Friend

'Tis not to answer a letter that I sit down to write to you for I wrote and answered your letter nearly four weeks ago, but I have heard nothing from you in that time and thinking perhaps you might not have received my letter, I will forward a few lines, for I am very anxious to hear from you.

The glorious Fourth with all its fun, nonsense and excitement is over - and I guess there are not a few but what feel the worse for it. As for myself, I never felt better. Perhaps you would like to hear how matters and things went around Logan and vicinity on that great important day. Indeed, I have so much to tell you, I hardly know what to say first. I have heard it said that charity begins at home, but I don't believe it, so I will inform you of the surroundings and let home matters rest for the present. Now you will agree to that won't you? Well, by the way, the young folks around here turned out en masse to celebrate the Fourth. The sky was without a cloud, and the cool air as it rustled through the green leaves, brought health and refreshment to the body of every living creature. Oh what a glorious time and opportunity to display fine carriages, fine horses and more than that, five drivers, and among this dire display - you must know that Old Hector was not illy-represented. E. Compton and C. Hager attended Father Gerows two young ladies of course. George Egbert drove over to Uncle Andrew Milliman for Hirt. Em Johnson took Stella Burr. Will Spence went down to Auntie Bassetts after Em Crandall. Frank Milliman drove up to Uncle Billys for his youngest daughter. That old Batch from Covert took Kate Spence. Now guess who John Spence selected among the many. I think I hear you say you could not begin to guess, so I may as well tell you it was Cassy Bond. I have

not got through with the programme yet for there are two more names that I almost forgot to mention. 'Tis Leroy H and Bet Compton. Lissie and Evaline went with their folks. Don't you think Lis gave Max the mitten Was that not awful mean? At such times as this when beaus are so very scarce? I will not tell you now who I went with, just to see if you will ever find out. But you may bet it was not the one that I "took such good care of" one year ago. Oh, no. I shall never undertake such a task again, but I will say no more about that now. Don't you think Uncle Billys family turned out well to celebrate the day of our national independence? Oh I would like to tell you something about Kate but it will not do to put it down with black and white yet a while - so be patient. Yesterday John Panoluts frneral was attended at the Baptist Church in Lodi. Do you ever remember of attending meetings there? I suppose you have heard that Henry Bump is killed? He was shot in the head and died instantly. Pete Hager is wounded. His father has been to see him. Scarcely a week passes but that we hear of someone of our acquaintance has fallen or that they are wounded, thus causing us to realize more fully the disaster of war. Wood Day was wounded and home on a furlough. He and Nell Egbert visited my school last week. I saw Ed Brown this morning. He is going back to Washington next Monday. John, I will not trespass upon your good nature by writing any further. I can't imagine why you do not write.

I hope you are not sick, and if you are mad at me, just write and say so. I can stand anything better than silence  
From .

Your ever true friend

Mae

Excuse me for troubling you with this, for I am dying to hear from you.

Alexandria July the 18 1864

Dear Persina

I received your much loved letter yesterday and was glad to hear from you once more and to have such a long silence broken. I am sorry you should think there was anything wrong for that is not the case. It is only through my sad neglect of not writing you. It is such a job for me to write, I would almost as soon think of serving out a years time in the penitentiary as to think of writing a letter and when I write to one of our friends, I take it for granted it will serve for all but do not any of you think hard of us if you should fail to receive timely letters. We are all well except the little boys. The very warm weather we have here does not at all agree with

with them. They seem to grow thin every day. If it did not take so much money, I would come and make you a visit through the hot weather. They tell me here the month of August is the worst of all. Arthur is not dead, however I suppose you have heard by this about the excitement here. How the Rebs have been cutting up their shins about Washington and Alexandria and how our folks sent them back sooner than they come. I guess they won't want to visit us again very soon, but if they should, we will all the better prepared for them. But to tell you the truth, I should like to be a little further off from them. They was within three miles of us, and done a great deal of damage, and I should not have been much surprissd if they had made a dash in here. But everything is quiet now and we do not hear nor know much what is going on. I must tell you what I had for dinner today for it is Sunday I went out to the market last night and bought a quarter of a peck of ripe tomatoes and a quarter of a peck of young potatoes. Paid 35 cents for tomatoes and twenty five cents for my potatoes and there was not half a mess of either for I always like a good deal of anything that is good. Well, we had them of course, and Blackberry pie that I made myself, so you see, for once we made out. I have been a blackberrying twice. Once Jimmy and I in company with some others crossed over in to Maryland. We picked a fourteen quart pail full in about two hours. Then we ate our picnic dinne and had a nice sail home. Friday we went out, a lot of us in an ambulance in the country that is here in old Virginia. Had a splendid time and got a nice lot of berries. The farmers here are all done harvesting two weeks ago but to return to this dusty city it makes me so homesick that I almost die, but I don't think of home more than I can help. When have you heard from John? We haven't heard from him in a long time. We are wondering whether he is at Washington yet or not. Please let us know when you write again. You must send this letter all around to our friends. Ask them to accept it as a letter for themselves. Also our love for all - not one forgotten. When we shall see you again, I cannot tell. Not till his time shall expire unless he should be sent away, then of course we should come back. We are doing middling well - nothing to brag of. Write soon and believe me as ever ,

Your affectionate sister

A.G.Townsend

Tell Gilbert and Orville to come down and be sure and fetch something good to eat.

Head Quarters 50th N.Y. Engineers  
Washington Aug the 12th 1864

Dear Mother

Your welcome letter found me enjoying excellent health. I never felt so well as I do this summer. I have not seen a sick hour this summer, for which I feel very thankful, also to hear that you are enjoying your health so well.

Oh Mother you cannot imagine my feeling when the sad intelligence reached me of Sarahs death. At first I could not believe it was possible. I did not hear of it until Sunday. The next morning I went over to Alexandria but only to be sadly disappointed. Satie the dear girl was gone. Jimmy was there but I could not bear to hear him discribe her last hours. I did not remain there but a short time before I took the same boat for Washington that she was brought over on. When I heard that Sarah was dead I had just returned from the city having been down to get the dead body of one of our boys expressed through to Pantet Point N.Y. For the past eight days we have sent home five of our Company Boys dead. Three of them was sent from City Point Va. It seems strange to me that Horaces folks did not let me know Sarah was sick being so near. Had I have known it, I should got a furlough and come home with them.

I am left here all alone now. Yesterday Capt. Robbins left for Harpers Ferry in charge of a Pontoon train with a detachment of twenty four men and left me here with eighty men. We have just received news from Harpers Ferry that they was a heavy fight going on near there. If that be true doubtless our boys with the boats will see some fun before they return. I went as far as Georgetown with them. The weather here is very warm. But while I write we are being favored with the first thunder storm of the season. This has been the hottest summer and we have had the least thunder that has been known for several years. There is no news of importance here. We expect to hear of some warm work soon from Harpers Ferry. The Rebels are trying to draw Grants attention from Richmond by making raids into Maryland and threatening Baltimore and Washington. I believe this rebellion is nearer to an end than we think for and the Union army to be victorious. If we was with Major Fords detachment now we would be in rather an exciting position. It has become a great fashion for fighting in front of Petersburg to undermine the forts. The Rebels are now being at work digging under some of our forts and Major Fords men is continuing to prevent their getting near enough to do damage. I expect soon to hear of a great battle being fought underground.

'Tis late and I must close. My love to all. Write soon to

Your affectionate son

Sergt John W. Townsend  
Co A. 50th N.Y. Engineers  
Washington D.C.

The enclosed likings is the boys who belong to the band. Keep them for me.

General Meads Headquarters Nov 17 1864

Dear Father and Mother

I would have written before this if I had a good opportunity. Now as I have such I will give you in a few words what took place since I left your hospitable house. We arrived in due time in Rochester. I could not be contented in teaching so I made up my mind that I should join the army not as a mere recruit, but as an old veteran who had fought and bled for the cause of freedom. I made a proper application and met with every encouragement. On the 27th of last month I had an opportunity of distinguishing myself and succeed better than I expected. On the 5th of this month I had a narrow escape but succeeded in accomplishing what was entrusted to me. As I was leaving Gen. Meades headquarters who should I meet but General Cahil, a particular friend of mine and who at once introduced me to the Gen. He told all present of my conduct while in Texas, and why I had to resign. All the particulars I will tell you should I eve return. I am now on detached service and will continue to perhaps for the winter. I belong to no regiment and consequently have many privileges. The duty which I have to perform is of the most dangerous kind, and yet the most honourable. God only knows how soon I may be among the missing. I have just received a letter from Eveline. She is well. I wish you could make he a visit. She will pay your way both ways. I think it would benefit your health. I think No. 36 $\frac{1}{2}$  Andrew Street is the proper number. If you cannot as yet make it convenient to make the visit, you must write to Eveline and mention what you would wish her to buy for you as a present from me. I wish I could make Father a present but I will be able to do so yet. He has always used me well, for which I thank him.

I want you to write as soon as you can and tell all the particulars. I have written a letter to John but as yet did not get an answer. Please tell Melissa that I have a very nice young Lieutenant in view for her, and tell her I hope she will pardon our quick departure, as we intended to bid them a goodbye before we left, but I had the blues. She may blame me and not her Aunt Eveline. If you are on good terms with her and her mother, you may show the letter and if not, you need not say a word about the lette .

Your affectionate son

James F. Godfrey.

P.S. Direct your letter in this way

to Captain James F. Godfrey  
City Point  
Virginia.



Home - Saturday P.M.  
Dec 17, 1864

Dear Friend

I received your kind favor of the 7th inst. last evening and was much pleased to hear from you. I am glad to hear that you enjoyed your Thanksgiving dinner so well. As for me, I had school on that day and of course when you were gormandizing turkeys and lots of nice things, I sat in the old schoolhouse nibbling some dry bread and butter and perhaps saying to myself "surely this world is not all sunshine". But who cares for Thanksgiving - Oh! I meant to say that I felt just as thankful under the circumstances as I possibly could. Never mind, I am anticipating a nice time Christmas. They are going to have a Christmas tree at North Hector and I am to go with my brother. If you will only come home then you may go too.

John, I have a cousin in your company. Does he ever think of me? I hear that he is becoming very reckless. Just keep your eye on him for me - will you? I hear that he is quite apt to put on style just as you say you did Thanksgiving eve. Oh this putting on style and taking a social drink with friends occasionally is a perfect nuisance. I came to this conclusion the night that we all drank so freely at Mr. Cleveland's. You may laugh, John, but as sure as I'm living, when I read what you wrote about taking a social drink, it made the cold chills run over me, for I expected as I read further, to hear you tell how you got drunk etc. but was happy to find that you "had not money enough" Ha ha .

John it seems quite lonesome here without Max and the other boys that went to the war when he went. Jake is here yet, but you know he is a perfect woman hater. I do believe he would be glad if all the girls were dead. I will tell you just how he acted the other day when Mr Millimans girls, Lib Huston and myself were there at his house. He would not come in the house and went over to Labee's and got his supper. But his brother was quite sociable, just as he always is. As full of cane as he can be. Day before yesterday Leroy and John went over to Ithaca and John purchased him some fine clothes and a splendid buffalo skin and last evening when I was going home from school, John came along with his rig and of course I had a ride the rest of the way home.

John and Will have just gone to the debating school at the Block ---. They started a debating society there about four weeks ago and I guess by their talk it resembles the society that was once formed at the Suttons. I think these societies, if well conducted, are beneficial to society. But where they meet and debate on low and commonplace subjects with no view to gain instruction but merely to vie with each other in displaying vulgar wit, and ridicule each others opinions, they are of no

benefit whatever and are a disgrace to the party concerned. The boys are very anxious to have the ladies attend the debate, but I do not think they will get the ladies to attend.

John, perhaps you would like to know how I am getting along at school. I like it better every day. It is a much easier school to gove n than the one I had at Polkville. I do not have to whip any - have not had a whip in school this winter. I do not believe it is right to punish a scholar by such means. It is a cruel practice first instituted by savages and a scholar that I cannot lead I would never try to drive. John Bogrett teaches at Lodi center - they do not like him. The scholars are leaving his school and coming to mine. I have perfect control over my scholars from the biggest to the least. If you don't believe it just call and see. Your niece Lissie is teaching in Davis District. She has got among a hard nation. I almost fear for her success in such a place.

Kate and Em are at school. Em went last Monday morning for the first time since she was sick. She was out of school two weeks and had rather a serious time of it. John, as regards the favor you asked of me - I would be pleased to send you Kates picture if I could ever have the privilege of doing so - she has had a number taken but I can never get my hands on one of them. What she does with them or where they go is more than I can tell. However the next time she comes home, I will tell her what you said concerning it and then perhaps she may send you one of her pictures. If she does not, you shall have the first one that I can get my hands on.

John do you remember the night that Mate Couse ran by Will and I one night when we were going to a party? I am sorry to inform you that this same Mate has recently gone the way of all the earth. She married Bill Erway of Burdett. I think she might have waited until "This cruel war is over". But I am not capable of being her judge in this affair. John I would like to write more if I had time, but I am not sure but that I have already written more than you will care to read. You request me to write often. I promise you John that I will write just as often as you do. I shall take your example. Now, am I not right? Oh do not forget to send me that picture and if you will send that one back that I sent you, I can send you a better one.

Please write often to your  
Friend Mae

Monday evening  
Jan the 23rd 1865

My dear old Soldier Friend

Certainly it seems like old times to write to you, I wish I knew who was to blame regarding that letter. I'd give them

a good shaking for stealing my soldier boys correspondence, but never mind, we are on speaking terms again, but I tell you what, I was mad there one while, to think you never wrote any explanation. You may thank Charlie for not receiving your letters. Enough of this for I think you one of the best boys in Dixie. So never mind, we will let by gones be by gones, so here goes for a good old fashioned letter. Searsburg has not met with any very great change with the exception of many of the scons taking to themselves companions for life. The Searsburg Society is about Euchered. The Hill news with me are scarce, for I have never visited the place since you brought me home through the snow banks. Oh that was very wrong in my staying and having you bring me home when you had such a very short time to stay with your friends. Hoping you will forgive me, I will pass on.

Yes last summer report stated that J Spence called often on S Bradley but keep good courage. I guess she is only fooling himhim but John this is my private opinion of the girl - that she is not, there I will not tell you for fear of offending. Do excuse me. Dave Sears has promised me more than forty-leven times to take me to see Mae Spence but has never done it as yet. She is the only one in the whole family that I would turn my finger over for. By the by, how have you and Mae made it? Which do you play, hearts or spades? Now don't scold me for I am feeling uncommon good for me tonight. Now don't tell Mae, but truly I attend a grand oyster supper the other night with Ossain, danced in four different rooms. The oysters were bet on the election. Two hundred took supper, gay time, had an invite at J Monks tonight, but did not like C Yates style, therefore declined, he used to be styled. Speck. Think him a perfect simpleton. All the boys worth noticing have fled to the Southern clime. Tomorrow night the Townsend --- --- Society meet at ---. Mind you I am ---- for that simple Speck will be there and I do so dislike him I cannot endure his attention but - oh dear this is a letter of nonsense and when any ones mind is filled with trash you cannot expect anything else. I asked G mother what I should say for her, she said tell them I am sorry my girl is getting so frivelous and gay. Now John, she doen not know who I am writing to. Ifashe did I am sure she would send a very word for she thinks you - well then I was going to tell you just what my good old G. M. once said, but no, I will not for fear it will make you a little vain. I will admit that I am getting to be a very great renegade and often go when I would much rather stay at home, but when invited seems as if I must go. There are exceptions often, for when Specks invitations come I feel like throwing them in hes face. Oh dear me, can you pass this heap of nonsense by and say I am a good girl and can once in a while write a sensible letter. Please say yes. G F is nodding over his ---. G M is snoring. Your Searsburg madcap. We have a certain J.R.Shaw teaching our school this

winter, perhaps you are acquainted with him, studying to be a preacher. He came and staid all night with Bobbie and self last week one night minus the old people. He drank so much egg cider it made him feel about as happy as I have seen people before now in camp meeting. Oh that was fun for me mind you. How now is the war about to a close - let me see, your month is nearly up. Ho, my Joe John, I am afraid you will loose that.

Your true, blue friend but

a little deranged

Phe---

Branchport Mar 6th 1865

Mr Townsend

Having heard of you through a friend, three fun-loving girls take this opportunity of opening a correspondence with you. Our object being for fun and mutual improvement and perhaps matrimony. Our ages are respectfully 19 and 20. We have all dark hair and eyes, a little over five feet tall. If this is considered worthy of a reply, please write soon. Photographs will be exchanged if desired.

Mary, Helen, Lottie

Address Box 39

Branchport

Gates Co.

N.Y.

Saturday Mar 25th

John

I have had this letter written a week but have not had an opportunity to mail it. I expect you will feel mad at me for not answering your letter before. I beg your forebearance this time for you know that your letter was behind time nearly four weeks. Mr Cleveland has moved and our new post master (Mr Minor) is going to send the mail out three times a week. We never had such delays with our mail as we have had this winter. We could not get our papers to read until one week after their date. But I think there may be different arrangements after the roads and weather becomes settled. I hope to hear from you often this summer. Your letters are always interesting and it will be a pleasant part of my enjoyment to answer them.

Then you are getting sick of Washington, are you? Some of the boys write home that they are sick when they think of leaving Washington. They say they are having such nice times there.

John, did you receive any Valentines this year? I received two. One of them was from Washington. It was splendid and it

contained a lock of brown hair. But I was not familiar with the handwriting. I cannot imagine who the compliment was from.

Answer to your P.S. You must not be mad at me for "having such a nice time sleighriding". I am sure it would have elicited your sympathy had you seen what graceful moves we made in upsetting, getting fast in snow banks, etc. Then you know my cousin Ditmars is such a splendid specimen of gentility!! Surely you cannot wonder at his going in the ditch. He is such a good driver. I almost forgot to inform you that our friend Jake is sick. Perhaps he has been eating too much. Don't you think it would be a good time to go see him now he is sick and cannot escape out of the house? I hope he may soon recover, for he is one good boy, no matter if he is bashful. John please excuse this long letter - and don't fail to write soon to

Your true friend

Mae

Searsburg N.Y.

March the 29th 1865

Dear Soldier of the Army,

Yours of the 24th just received this afternoon and to let you know that yourself was appreciated much more than a wagon would have been, I have taken this early opportunity to reply not in person but by letter. You are looking fine but honestly I cannot appreciate a dumb picture and go in raptures as some will. I acknowledge it is quite a satisfaction to have the outlines of our friends features on pasteboard, but it is nothing in comparison of seeing the true friend himself and having a fine tete-a-tete.

Saw your niece Lissie Townsend last evening at the Geo. Sears at the Mite Party. I am fearful she did not enjoy it as well as self. She is learning to trip at the sound of the vicle. She does well for a beginner. O how I wish you had been there. You might of "danced all night and went home with the gals in the morning". My friend Laura Sears leaves next Monday morning for Andover. She intends to spend the summer I believe. Oh I shall be very lonesome, although there is one hope, and that is the pen. What a grand institution. May the one who first formed the pen be the first to arise in the resurection morn and may he be pe mitted to dwell with the Angels and holy ones of old Amen.

Jesden De Wolf was laid beneath the sod this day. Died with the heart disease. He was found dead in his bed last Monday morning. What a shock. Saw your friend J.S.Totten yesterday at Mr. Thomas' Examination class. He granted nary certificate he was out. Don't think we were all fools, for I

myself constituted one of the No. I am thinking quite strongly of teaching next winter. My object in teaching winters is simply this. I can command higher wages and I am one of the kind who will not labor for a mite. We are having a remarkably early spring for this country. It has been raining and still continues to do so. My friend Rob Morgan is in the Hospital sick, poor fellow. I did not mean that I did not want you to come home but I think you have not intended to come any of the time - just fooling everybody. The roads are very much improved. I think it would be very pleasant to have you come out to the next Mite Party at Mr Comptons the other side of Townsendville. Saw Ann Burden yeste day. Oh yes, I would be glad to send my picture, but do not think I asked you for yours thinking you would return the compliment by expressing a wish for one in return.

We are going to have beef sup for dinner. Come around in time and you shall have a dish.

Avril Harris and his better half are fixing to keep house near Trumansburg.

Well I do think that I have scribbled nearly if not worse than you and have no earthly excuse for so doing, but scribble as much as you please. I can read your writing and am always glad to get some to read.

Be a good boy and answer in good time.

One of your best friends

Phebe E Wright

Searsburg

P.S..We have just had our dinner. There is lots of sup left. Also pudding. Shall I save it? Well we are now going to the Berg. Excuse me for writing so much more than you.

Searsburg N.Y.

Sunday Apr 30 1865

Dear Friend

For I shall claim you as a friend until I learn the reason of your not answering my letter. If I have offended you in any way I would rather know it than be kept in an agony of suspense. It is the worst kind of punishment. Please write and let me know the worst.

Your friend

Phoebe E Wright

Searsburg N.Y.  
May the 9th 1865

My Dear Soldier Friend

I can scarcely realize this great rebellion has at last been quelled and it is true, my dear friend that you and my dear brother are coming home, and soon too. Oh, I can scarcely realize that I am to see you face to face again and have the privilege of having a friendly visit instead of this slow way, writing, but then the pen is a very great institution. Only think of the many pleasant interviews I have had with you in the shape of a letter. O, these will be long remembered by me and looked upon as very pleasant seasons with me. O, I shall miss your friendly letters and often think of you as one of my soldier friends. Still I wish to retain you as my friend if this war has ended or else I shall almost wish you were back in Washington where I could have the pleasure of writing to you. But I know you will not be so very cruel as to forget this poor lone friend of yours if she does not live on the Hill. Will you?

We have had a fine show today or this forenoon, and everything looks so very cheerful or else it is all in my eye. I know things looked that way to me. One thing was, I had your letter in my pocket. I had been down to Eld Cushing and received it while there but wished to enjoy the pleasure of its contents alone in my own room. My people have been to Trumansburg today and have come home full of news and all similar to a bottle of beer, so do not wonder if my letter is not very interesting and filled with mistakes for it was too cold for me to write in my room.

James Osborn came home this afternoon but could not find his wife, poor fellow. He is looking very bad. One of my friends nearby has a new piano and is just learning to play thereon, horrors. I am thankful I do not live any nearer. Do not think I do not love music, for I do. O what would I give if I could only learn to sing. My canary's make all the music we have. Sometimes that is enough, for they are very noisy. O, yes you are soon coming home. O that will be good. Yes, maybe you are home now while I am writing this. Who knows?

May the 20th Wednesday Morning

No, do not scold if I do not write any news for I cannot think of anything, only this. The Rebellion is crushed and many of our friends are coming home, but alas, how many have gone to their final resting place. Many are the homes that will look more desolate than ever, when they see the returning soldiers and think their loved ones are lying in a strange land and no loving Mother, sister, or friend to decorate their graves. But such are the fortunes of war.

O, if you had only been home last Friday night. We had one gay time. By the by, do you see anything of Myron Bordman? When you come home, I have a good joke to tell you about one of



his Special Correspondents. If you were not coming so very soon I would write the particulars. Also one thing I wish to explain to you sometime that is concerning your wild friends brother. J.D.Tottin and family are well I guess for I saw them at meeting Sunday. O he is a tip top boy, as lively as ever, if he is married, and that is just what I like to see. But oh dear, his wife os mon---. There I came very near expressing my private opinion. Forgive me. I will try and do better in the future! Many thanks to you for not forgetting my Brother when you write. O, I do hope he will come home a good boy. I cannot expect him to come home the same as when he went away, for that would be almost impossible. Therefore I hope to see him come back good. Write soon and tell me when you are coming home for it does seem as if the news is too good to be true.

Your true friend

Phoebe E.

Do not forget you have a friend a little south of Searsburg when you come home, as you once did. I have not hardly forgiven you for that yet.

Trenton N.J. May 16th 1865

Friend Townsend

That box sent me by Lieut. Robbins was duly received a few days ago.

Please accept my thanks for your beartiful mineature pontoon wagon and boat. I have long wished for just such a model - not only to preserve as a memento of nearly four years of service, but to aid me in explining to many of my friends, our system of Pontoonneering in the A.P. In making models for my respected seniors you had already done about enough, and I had given up all hopes of ever obtaining what I so much desired. The wagon has been admired by many, and I shall ever carefully preserve it and hand it down to my childred if I am ever so fortunate or unfortunate as to have any. Again, thanking you for your kind present, I remain

Truly yours

Geo. W. Ford

Aug 13th 1865

Friend John

Yours of the 12th came safe to hand last eve. and I would say that on account of the boys being drafted and have to report to Mich Saturday and so the picknick is postponed. I supposethat you had a good time down to the Lake. Hoping to see you soon.

I am

Your friend

Ossian

Home August 20th 1865

Dear Friend

I have deferred writing day after day expecting to get Georgie's picture to send, but everytime we make an appointment, something happens to prevent me from going. She is very anxious for you to have it, but feels very indignant because you sent the money. She wants to know if you think she could not get a picture unless you sent the money. She is a spitfire, you know. We will go this week to get the picture and will send it immediately. I suppose you are dying to see it.

O Townsend, you have no idea how much we miss you. I look for you every ironing day. Your letter came when I was busy ironing. Mother sends her best love and says she would like very much to see you. Her health is failing rapidly - she is scarcely able to get around the house. Frank left home more than a week ago. We do not know where he is unless in Pennsylvania with Frank Miller. Tom started North yesterday, so we have but a small family left. I feel very lonely without them, and do not intend to remain at home any more than I can help while they are absent. Tomorrow I am going on an excursion to Mt. Vernon with a party of friends and anticipate a good time. Next month I am going to Baltimore by boat, and O what fun we will have. Townsend, I am real disapated of late, do not sleep home more than two nights a week. Was out last night. I hope you will not form a bad opinion of me though. I am in good company all the while. Mr Cowan sends his love. Townsend you must excuse me for calling you thus. I am so accustomed to it and it sounds too formal to say Mr Townsend. How is Joe? Bless his heart. Give my pious regards to him and tell him not to get married before he comes to Washington again. I thank you both for the kind opinion you express and hope I will never do anything that will cause you to change it, for I have always esteemed you as my best friends. Dr. Reynolds is in Washington again, and I understand that he intends to remain here. Bless him. Capt. Hine has been here a week, he spent two evenings with me. Toot was here and enjoyed his visits extremely well. He is looking very thin- says he is pining away on account of Toot. She has been sick ever since he came. Took terrible effects.

John came near being killed again a few days ago. He is clerking for Mr Clark during vacation and goes to the office in one of the wagons. The horses ran away and threw him off. Bruised his side very badly, unfortunate creature. I am afraid he will be killed yet. He is very well at present. All the family wishes to be kindly remembered. Write very soon Townsend and tell me if girls treat you any better than they did when you wrote last. I sympathize with you. Tell when you and Joe are going to be married. I understand that your correspondence with G--- is very interesting and that you are both very punctual to write. Townsend, I am afraid you are getting serious. But

enough of this nonsense. I know you will say I am as foolish as ever. Therefore, as I have several letters that I wish to answer today, I will close. Hoping to hear from you soon, I remain your true friend

Mate.

Kiss Joe for me but don't tell his girl. Destroy this immediately or I will not write to you again. Write me a long letter and tell me all you know about my acquaintances. How is Capt. Robbins? Is he wild as ever?

Mate

Syracuse N.Y. Sept 6th 1865

Friend Townsend

I have today forwarded to you address, your discharge, warrant and three views which you left in Capt Robbins room at the Brainard House, Elmira N.Y.

I left Elmira on July 1st and returned July 6th when I found these papers. I immediately wrote to Capt Robbins requesting him to furnish me your address that I might send these papers to you but he has never condescended to reply. Upon my return to Rochester on Saturday last I learned that your sister had called at my house for these papers but as I was absent, they were not given to her. I regret that you have had so much trouble. Had Capt Robbins answered my letter, your papers would have been forwarded to you long ago, or had you written to me yourself you would have had them. I am so busy that I am seldom at home. My office is here, and residence at Rochester, but I can only get there to spend a day and then hurry back, and that only about once a month. Please write and let me know that you have received your papers all safe - and if you know Lt. Byrams address, send it to me. Tell him from me that we have been expecting him in Rochester.

Mrs Gwynne and Nellie unite with me in kind regards to yourself.

Yours very truly  
Sidney Geo. Gwynne  
Civil Engineer

address to me at  
Syracuse  
N.Y.  
P.O.Box 406

June the 6th

Kind Friend

Where do you think we was just one year ago this very hour? We were laying with a pontoon bridge train on the Banks of the Rappahannock one mile below Fredericksburg. We lay there watching our Southern friends fill their rifle pits with sharp shooters from 9 A. M. until 3 P.M. waiting for our artillery and infantry to support us while laying the bridge. Well do I remember the time about 4 oclock P.M. Everything was ready. Oh was it not a splendid sight to see that long row of brass cannon a space left in the centre for the pontoons to pass through to get down to the river. Our sharpshooters lay on the ground a little in advance of the artillery the infantry lay in rear of of the cannons. Everything was all in readiness. For about one half hour all was still as death. It seemed that both parties hesitated to commence the work of death but that suspense was not to be long. Well do I remember the sound of the first whining ball that came whizing by my head. In an instant Bang went one of our brass cannon, then a volley of musketry was sent from the rebel rifle pits. Then bang, bang went a broadside from our artillery. The ball had commenced. Wounded were being hurried to the rear. All was excitement, yet not confusion. You can imagine my feelings when I shook hands with some of my comrades who were to remain behind, leaving all of my valuables, keepsakes etc, behind with directions to send them to the proper owners should I fall, then bidding goodbye, hasten to the scene of conflict, not knowing my fate, and there what a sight. We undertook to draw the pontoons down to the river with the mules. Every mule to the first wagon was shot down, so we had to cut them loose and draw them cown by hand under a galling fire. But many thanks to kind Providence, I have escaped so far without harm and never yet been absent from the company. When there was work to be done under fire and in fact I hage been in the service nearly three years and never missed a roll call except being absent on duty. Pardon me for detaining you so long. I fear I have written too much. Don't think you will ask me to write a long letter next time.

Mason July 8 th 1867

Friend John

I received a letter from you oh so long ago I can just remember and I even I have shamefully neglected to answer. Your letter arrived in Mo. after I came away when it was remailed and sent here. You see I have been changing latitude. Yes, I am

here in Mich. almost within a stones throw of you. I believe I wrote you of my not liking it in Mo. but I did not think then of leaving it so soon, but finding a good chance of selling and making a good profit, I did so I came here. I made about \$300 and was sick all winter.

While in Mo. I heard of Chs Wright death in St. Louis. Had I known of his being so near and sick, I should have gone and seen him.

John, How short the time seems since we were all little shavers playing around old Suttons, but rapidly things are changing. Our playfellows are scattered to the four winds and some, yes many have gone to their last account. But time moves and we must move with it. John let us shape our course clear of sin and selfishness and live like men and Christians.

Well my health has been good since I have been here and so has Marys. Ellie was very sick at first. I like the country here right smart and have bought 80 acres but am dealing in patent rights at present.

This is as fine a country as I was ever in but still 'tis not old Hector and I miss old Seneca and I believe if I should live away fifty years, I could not overcome the attachment I have for my native place. Some can go away from home contented to stay but somehow I can't overcome this weakness. No sheet of water have I seen that compared with Seneca with its broad slopes and to speak the truth no better farming country than borders on the lakes, though I have passed through the Garden of the U.S. as it is called, but I am prejudiced for I love my old home and never shall get over it. John you did not dream I was such a booby! Well, I can't help it, but don't imagine from the tenor of this that I am drooping and moping around pining for home - far from it. We have many pleasant times, plenty of friends and I am in active business and making money.

When I travel I make from \$10 to \$15 a day. I think of dealing in New York next winter in the same thing.

Mich. affords a better chance for making money than any western State I have been in. Mechanics command enormous wage. At your trade you should do better here than in Mo. for all their wagons are imported, besides you would have to ship your timber etc. I live  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Mason 12 miles from Lansing the state capitol. Now John, don't wait as long as I have before you write. I am ashamed of it and you must excuse me. Excuse the bad writing for Ellie sits on my lap and bothers me.

Give my respects to Jake and all the boys.

Yours truly

John D Totten

Write soon.

Rochester October 10 1869

Dear Mother

We ought to have written before this to you but we were waiting to hear from Horace and ascertain from him a satisfactory account from there. I have sent him some circulars and a subscription list in order to test the minds of the people. If they were anxious to have a school they would show it by their subscription list. I have received two letters from a Mr Squire there requesting me to come on or about the 20th of this month but it would be impossible for me to do so. I have commenced my term which will expire on the 26th of November at which time I may be prepared to commence school there, but if I should not receive some encouragement from there I think it would not be advisable to move there. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. I should like very much to go and start a school there if the prospects were good. I think I could have a boarding school established there about next fall. A dozen of boarders with my day school would pay. Should I conclude to come, I have partly engaged a young lady assistant who is qualified to teach vocal and instrumental music, French, Drawing and other female accomplishments, but without some satisfactory evidence that a school of such a grade is needed there, I think it would be imprudent to go. I want you to see John immediately and tell him from me to go down to North Hector and see some of the people there. I am afraid that Horace is too backward in such things. I have written to John, but as yet I have not received an answer. Should you see Horace in the meantime, tell him that I am very anxious to hear from him. I have, I think, done my part so far as sending circulars etc. and all is required for him to do is sound the people there and write me the results.

Dear Mother, we hope you are well and enjoying yourself. We are very anxious to hear from you and hope to see you soon. It would be a great disappointment to Eveline if she could not go, so I am in hopes everything will turn out there as we could wish. Please tell John to write as soon as he sees Horace and tell me all the particulars. We want you to write in your own old fashioned way as it will give us great pleasure once more to see your handwriting. Give our love to Pop and all our relatives there. Please accept our love and every good wish.

James and Eveline Godfrey

Denver Colorado, March 9th 1876

Dear John

We have at last arrived at the El Dorado of the west after a very pleasant journey and many amusing adventures on the road. I wished for you a great many times on the road for I know you would have enjoyed the trip hugely. I haven't time to tell you of all that happened to us on the Journey but we had some very agreeable traveling companions and it was the pleasantest trip that I have ever experienced. In Eastern Kansas we passed through the richest farming country that I have ever seen. We passed one wheat field of two thousand acres looking very fine. What do you think of that for a field of wheat?

The climate is fine.

After we got out on the plains about four hundred miles across we encountered a fearful storm of wind, rain and snow, but by putting on an extra engine, we managed to worry through. We saw a small herd of buffalo about a third of a mile away. I raised the car window and fired my revolver at them. So did some of the Boys. They scampered off pretty lively. We did not drop many of them. Not enough to make it worth while to stop the train for their hides, or I would have sent you one. We saw sots of antelopes scampering over the plains. They are a beautiful and graceful animal, as fleet as the wind. We had several shots at them, but with no better success than with the Buffalo, but it was exciting, and I never enjoyed a trip so much in my life. We were four days and five nights on the road from home, and I was almost sorry when we reached Denver on Monday evening, but all good journies, like everything else, must come to an end. Denver is the most magnificent city that I have ever seen for its size. The most stylish turn outs. The best dressed people. The grandest business places. The most magnificent churches, schools and public buildings. It approaches as near the City of the New Jerusalem as you can well conceive of a city on earth. They tell me that you could dig down here in the streets most anywheres and wash out at least fifty cents worth of gold per day. Of course that would not pay, you know, but I merely mention it to show what kind of a country it is. They are building a magnificent church here of stone which contains from eight to twelve dollars worth of silver to every ton of stone. Think of it a silver church.

The climate here is splendid. The air is so pure that you can see a great distance. On the train we saw Pikes Peak one hundred and thirty five miles away, and from Denver to the Rocky Mountains it is twelve miles, yet it does not look more than two or three. The atmosphere is so light that a person is not held responsible for what they say. So if I tell big stories you must attribute it to the atmosphere.

We have not seen Major Barker yet. He has been away from

the city since we have been here. Coming home tonight, we will see him tomorrow, so that we will not make up our minds what course to take until we see him. I think though that we are sure to go to the San Juan country. It is destined to be the greatest country in the west in a very few years.

We are here too early for the mines, so we will be obliged to lay on our oars for some time unless we can get a job which is not likely here. The Wagon and Blacksmith business is over come here, but it will not be in the mines.

I presume I shall want some more money to fit me out properly, and John I wish you would see what you can do about the money coming from Pathews, and I will write to Father and tell him to rush around and see what he can do. And whatever he does and you can do, you can put the funds together and send me a draft. The prospects are splendid in the San Juan and I am going to be rich in five years if nothing happens to me.

I like it tip top. Not in the least bit homesick. By the way, I suppose I am as much talked about as Henry Ward Beecher in that section, ain't I? Do they go for me bad? How does Jim get along? Good I hope. Give my regards to all the boys. Tell them I am Hunky. Give my love to Kate and the children and write soon.

Y ours

Thermon Stevens

Denver Colorado

April 6th 1876  
Denver City, Colo.

Dear John

Your very interesting letter was received today and I was so pleased to hear from you that I show my appreciation by answering immediatly. Your letter was brim full of welcome news and I am truly grateful to you for the favor. I thought that some of the youth of North Hector were ambitious to be Commodore and I could think of no one else that would be so apt to covet the honor as Squire or Welding. Especially Squire, although he refused to hold office under the old administration and I am glad, in view of the course he has taken all the way through that he has failed to realize his ambitious hopes. Next to yourself (who would have been my first choice) you have got the one that I would have recommended for the position but I did not like to name my choice until it is all over for I know not what the opinion of others might be, and I thought I would have Drake free to exercise his own judgement in regard to the matter.



Who did you elect for Treasurer?

How does Horace make it go as a landlord? How does he and John Bassite make it go? I understand that Orvilles folks are all going to the Mountain House this summer. I am surprised to hear that there will be no camp meetings this summer. What will our Hotel folks do. I was glad to hear that the affair was satisfactory with Mr Mathews. How did the sleigh look? So George and Jim did not make a cent out of that operation, did they. I am very much obliged to you for sending me such prompt returns. I received Draft from father with the money all right - went to the Bank today and got the money all right. Miner Bennett has also got his. But I am harrassed with doubts in regard to Frank. I fear he won't get his and in case he does not, we will be obliged to carry him through, which will be quite a block to our wheels, but we will do the best we can. We have been looking for a span of mules. Today found a splendid span for "280. Don't know yet whether we will take them or not. There is an old miner going with our party, so we will be well fixed, and I feel very sanguine of success although we will be obliged to encounter a great deal of hardships. But if we make a raise, that will repay us for all. I will be successful, or my bones shall bleach in the Mountains of Colorado. I thank you Dear Friend for the assurance that with all my faults I am missed from among you and it will help me to bear the privations that I am about to encounter, to know that I have good and true friends at home that are thinking kindly of me, and I shall think of you often and write you as often as possible. We wish to start by at least the 10th. Give my regards to all and write soon and direct to Denver in care of E.D. Bragaw who will forward it to me.

Yours

Theron

Enclosed find note to Sate.