

A Guide to the Johnson Family Papers, 1858-1865 MS.0341

Johnson Family papers
1858-1865

Title Statement

A Guide to the Johnson Family Papers, 1858-1865 MS.0341

Author: Diane B. Jacob

Publication Statement

Publisher: Virginia Military Institute Archives

VMI Archives
Preston Library
Lexington, VA 24450
Business Number: 540-464-7516
archives@vmi.edu
URL: <http://www.vmi.edu/archives>

© 2002 Virginia Military Institute Archives

Profile Description

Creation: This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2026-05-28 07:01:28 -0400.

Language Usage: Description is in English

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MS.0341

Unit ID

/repositories/3/resources/609

Unit Date

1858-1865

Language

English

Creator

Johnson, Porter, 1845-1917

Creator

Johnson, Mortimer H. (Mortimer Howell), 1815-1889

Extent

26 items

Physical Location

Manuscripts stacks

Repository

Virginia Military Institute Archives

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

There are no restrictions.

Conditions Governing Use

Manuscript collections in the VMI Archives are made available for educational and research use. The VMI Archives should be cited as the source. The user assumes all responsibility for identifying and satisfying any copyright holders. Materials from our collections may not be redistributed, published or reproduced without permission from the VMI Archives. Contact the VMI Archives for additional information.

Preferred Citation

Johnson Family papers, 1858-1865. MS 0342. VMI Archives, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Virginia.

Biographical / Historical

Mortimer Howell Johnson (1815-1889), a lawyer, was born at Bridgeport, Harrison County, West Virginia in 1815. He married Eliza Dulaney Kemble, born in Kingwood, Preston County, West Virginia. The Johnson Family resided in Brownsburg, Rockbridge County, Virginia at beginning of the Civil War, and Mortimer enlisted in April 1864 (at age 48) in the Rockbridge Senior Reserves. He was described as having a dark complexion, dark hair and eyes, and 5 foot 6 inches tall. He died on December 13, 1889 in Charleston, West Virginia and is buried at the High Bridge Presbyterian Church cemetery, Rockbridge County, Virginia. He was the father of Porter Johnson, VMI Class of 1867.

Porter Johnson (1845-1917) was born in 1845 in Taylor County, West Virginia. He matriculated at VMI on September 1, 1863 and was a cadet private at the Battle of New Market on May 15, 1864. Porter resigned from Corps of Cadets on March 6, 1865 and joined the 8th Confederate Battalion commanded by Colonel Garnett Andrews. He was captured at Salisbury, North Carolina on April 12, 1865 and imprisoned, and was paroled June 13, 1865. He returned to Rockbridge County where he was a farmer. He died on June 9, 1917.

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of 26 letters, bulk 1862-1865, from Mortimer Howell Johnson and his son Porter to members of their immediate family. The Johnson Family, originally from West Virginia, moved to Brownsburg in Rockbridge County, Virginia, although they maintained close ties to their former home.

Topics in Mortimer's letters include civilian life during the war, the animosity between Union and Confederate sympathizers in West Virginia (the letter of April 28, 1863 discusses the Union loyalty of Stonewall Jackson's sister, Laura Jackson Arnold), the Battle of Fredericksburg and its aftermath (December 1862), the Jones-Imboden Raid (West Virginia, April 1863).

Porter's letters include a discussion of VMI cadet life at the Alms House in Richmond, Virginia where the Corps was headquartered during the last months of the Civil War.

Related Materials

Porter Johnson's memoir of the Battle of New Market is available online

Keywords

Virginia Military Institute -- Cadet life -- 1861-1865

Virginia Military Institute—Class of 1867

New Market Cadets

Virginia Military Institute—Civil War, 1861-1865

Fredericksburg (Va.)—History—Civil War, 1861-1865

Fredericksburg (Va.), Battle of, 1862

West Virginia—History—Civil War, 1861-1865

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Home life

Railroads -- Virginia -- Siege, 1863

Virginia Military Institute—Cadet life—1860-1869

Correspondence

Arnold, Laura Ann Jackson, 1826-1911

Johnson Family

Online Access

Online Access

The Johnson Family papers are available online

Description of Subordinate Components

Mortimer H. Johnson correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1765

Unit Date 1858-1865

Language English

Extent 20 items

Letter to Leake Johnson

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1767

Unit Date 1858 February 10

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from Richmond, Virginia. Letter contains family news and comments on work of the state legislature.

Keywords

Correspondence

Transcription

Richmond, Feby 10 58

Dear Leake I received your letter this morning and was glad to hear that you are well and that you have made up your mind to be a good boy and learn to read and write, so that when I am away from home you can write to me for yourself. It would afford me great pleasure to see you and to have you here with me. It would please you very much to see the big brass horse on the Washington monument. But Leake, if you will be a good boy and learn your book and acquire a great deal of information and knowledge, you can come down here yourself some day and see Richmond and all the sights that are worth seeing here. The legislature is working very slow and not doing much good for the country. The House is not in session yet this morning. At 8 o'clock I left my boarding house came by the Post Office and barber shop at half past 9 in the house and engaged in writing this letter to you. The house meets at 11 o'clock and adjourns about 3 o'clock, so that we get dinner at half past 3. Sometimes the house does not adjourn until later. You set down in the house with a comfortable cushioned chair to sit upon, a desk before you to write upon and it frequently happens that while a member thinks he is making a very fine speech, one half the members are engaged in writing letters or reading newspapers. I suppose you have heard of the fight that happened in Congress last Saturday. It was disgraceful to the Nation and the men that were engaged in it are heartily ashamed of it. You are the first that mentioned Katy in your letters. I had almost forgotten her. How is Sam Burdett and the rest of the boys or have you been so close at home that you have not seen them. I want you above all things Leake to be kind to others. How would you like to deny yourself at table and refuse to eat, until you see all the rest comfortably seated. This would be true politeness, and you would soon learn to be happy in seeing others happy. This would soon afford you a great pleasure, and you would then learn to "do unto others as you would have others do unto you." Hoping to hear from you soon. I remain

Truly yours M. H. Johnson

Letter to C. W. Newlon

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1768

Unit Date 1862 February 2

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from Brownsburg, Virginia. Letter regards the inflated prices of grain used to produce whiskey for soldiers.

Keywords

Correspondence

Virginia—History—Civil War, 1861-1865

Transcription

Brownsburg, Rockbridge Virginia February 2, 1862 C.W. Newlon, Esq

Dear Sir Expecting you home in a few days. I have concluded to write to you again upon the subject of impressments and praying that something may be done, and that promptly to arrest the distillation of grain. Corn is now \$1.12 and it would not surprise me if it reached \$2.00 per bushel before the 1st of April. Ten barrels of whiskey were sold in this county a few days since at the almost fabulous price of three dollars per gal. If these prices are demanded and obtained for new liquor fresh from the still what is to prevent corn from being advanced before October to \$5.00 per bu. Self preservation is the 1st law of nature and why should not that law apply to nations as well as to individuals. What will be our condition should the enemy push their raids so far into the interior as to destroy our railroad connections. If we expect to maintain our position, our stores of subsistence should be preserved. The North expected to starve us out when the war commenced. All that recognize a superintending providence had cause to thank the giver of daily bread last year for our unusually heavy crop of all kinds of grain. It was every where considered as an evidence that the Lord was on our side. Grant that it was so will he continue to be if we abuse his choicest favors-- if we convert ourselves into a nation of extortioners and have for our soldiers an army of drunkards. Grant as some contend that liquor is necessary for the soldiers should not a limit be placed upon the price of it . Liquor for which 3 dollars per gal is paid after running the blockade of the camp is frequently sold to the soldier at the high price of from one to five dollars per pint. If it is necessary for the soldier it should be added to his rations and handed out under proper rules and regulations and every other person detected in smuggling liquor into the camp should be summarily and severely punished. Upon the summits of the Alleghanys Gen. Johnson does not think it necessary to the health of the soldier and has with great diligence prevented its introduction to his camp. From what I can learn he has emptied of their contents more than fifty barrels in the last few weeks. This is seizing the bull by the horns . He is not tainted with that miserable fastidious delicacy of sentiment that is fearful of hurting somebody's feelings. He is entrusted with the defense of one of the important passes into the valley of Virginia and with a moral heroism equal to his fierce courage in the hours of conflict with the enemy he does not stop to inquire whether any body is hurt. How are the people of the valley who remain at home acting towards the heroic defenders of the Alleghany but for whose indomitable courage in repulsing an overwhelming body of the enemy the valley would now be overrun by marauding hordes of black Republican soldiers. While these brave men are enduring the rigors of a climate at an elevation where snow, rain or hail is an every day occurrence these that remain at home are engaged in all kinds of speculation. Every lb of butter though produced in unusually huge quantities is retailed to the soldiers at fifty cents per lb & c.

Letter to Eliza Johnson

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1769

Unit Date 1862 September 20

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from Staunton, Virginia. Letter regards family news and expresses concerns about high cost of food.

Keywords

Correspondence

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Home life

Transcription

Staunton, Sept. 20th, 1862

My Dear Wife It is possible that some ladies will leave here in a few days for Upshur County. I avail myself of the opportunity to inform you so far we are all well though there is and has been a great deal of sickness all over of this country. The girls are now boarding at a very good house in Brownsburg. The family not wanting help [Alcinda] is at Mr. Newlons. Porter and I left Brownsburg the last of September for the Mountains. We were one day too late to go with [Jenkins] or we might have attempted to get home. Porter has gone down the Valley towards Winchester and I shall start down today and fall in with him. We shall go as far as Maryland thence to Faquier and probably Rappahannock. I saw Gen Johnson a few days since, he was in good health and spirits. I have not heard from Philander for some time but suppose that he is well. W. P. Kemble is still at Clarksville, Mecklenburg Co., Va. W. E. Kimble is at Richmond and well. He sent me 250 dollars. [Benton] sent me 250 dollars some time since. I received a letter from [Benton]- also one from Porter a few days since. They have both gone to Missouri to assist in organizing the troops in that State. Events are transpiring so rapidly at the present time that I should suppose both would tire of death and carnage. If the tide of war does not bring us home this fall I scarcely know what course to ask you to pursue. If you could bring sufficient with you to go to house keeping and meat to eat and other small articles there would be no difficulty in procuring a house in any part of the country, but it is almost impossible to procure any thing at this time in this country. Bacon is

fifty cents sugar 80, coffee 2.00. -- calico 1.50 per yd., & c. But you have doubtly seen the prices of articles south in the Northern papers. I have not received a line from you since May. I saw young Cochran a few days since, he said he had seen you somewhere before he left, but did not speak to you. It was a satisfaction to know that you were well. I do not now know whether you have received any of my letters written with regard to the suits brought against me, therefore I repeat here what I have said in all my letters -- to pay no attention to their suits and do not trouble yourself as to what disposition is made of the property- simply preserve all my books and papers. If you can get any thing from [T___] or Potts, do so, receipting to them for what you get. The girls are well pleased at the house they are now boarding at. The refugee families are all well. I do not know who of our soldiers have been killed in the fights at Manassas, Harpers Ferry, and in Maryland, but think the Taylor boys have escaped. Give my love to Leake and tell him for me to keep at his books. Believe me truly yours M H Johnson

Letter fragment to Eliza Johnson

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1770

Unit Date 1862 October

Language English

Scope and Contents

Letter regards family news and mentions woman who is a Union sympathizer. Letter also mentions that Porter Johnson is eager to join the army.

Keywords

Correspondence

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Home life

Johnson Family

Johnson, Porter, 1845-1917

Transcription

Porter has been anxious to go into the army this winter and I have half promised him that could he get to see you again he might go. He feels mortified at his present position and he is ambitious to take some part in the war. His idea is that a man has but one time to die and that a few years more or less will not make any difference. He says that he is able to carry a musket and that if he does not raise his arm in defence of his country under existing circumstances he shall never feel like asking a Southern woman to marry him and that a northern woman he would not have under any circumstances. George Armstrong was at Brownsburg when I left. He had come down on a visit. He is able to walk with the use of one crutch. He is conditionally true to his engagement . If what he shall have heard about be true of her joining in the reception at Grafton of the Yankee invaders he will suffer his other leg to be crippled and both arms torn from his body before he would have her or any other woman that by act of courtesy received a yankee favorably. George is a brave man, he is true to his country, and true to his love provided she has been true to herself. I approve his course. I detest with intense hatred the time serving policy pursued in our country and I told Mr. [Ceplin] very frankly that it was with reluctance that I gave my hand to a man who was in the habit of shaking hands with the Yankees or what is worse the Union men of NW Virginia and I do not think I am an exception. Tho I have mentioned to you the sickness here, do not give yourself any uneasiness about it. Mr. Newlon promised that if Alcinda or her child gets sick, that he will take care of them. As we have been favored so far I still trust to Providence to preserve us in future. The girls are at a good house and should they get sick are in good hands- - Fanny is very careful they have all been using preventives so be of good cheer and do not get out of heart. Philander is well though I have not seen him for about a year. Porter and I went to Winchester, stayed in the Army ten days, but Philander was absent. We passed him as we went down the Valley and did not know. The fences are burned, this makes the road wide. To be relieved of the dust we were frequently 50 yards from the road. Philander has charge of about 100 wagons and was going to Rockingham for corn, thus we missed him. I suppose he gets about 100 dollars per month. I do not think he is drinking in fact he has not been. Porter I suppose will go the Army to see him. Say to Mr. Gawthrop that his son is well. He has been detailed as a butcher at \$50 per month. William Sharps is his assistant. Saml Tucker was seriously wounded at the battle of Manassas, but it is thought will recover. Uriah has recovered from his wound and is again in the Army. Jac is not yet able to go in the Army but is at the hospital taking care of Saml. H. Mahany and John are well, also the two Robinsons and James Boyd. I received a letter from Brother Porter and one from Thomas written the 27th of August, I have not heard since. They were well at that time. I do not think they were in the battle of Corinth as they had been sent on other service at that time. Porter expressed a desire that his family should be on this side of the line - his principle fear was that Tell might be made to swear he does not wish him to take an oath on any account. If there is no danger of Tell being sworn probably they had better stay where they are. W.P. Goff must be informed that he will be held personally responsible should he on any account permit or not prevent the administering of any of them oaths to Tell. Porter also swears by all that is sacred that he will hold some men in Clarksburg responsible for any indignity that may be offered to Father in any way, shape or form. Tell

Emily that I try to keep Porter apprized that she is well & c. I have just seen a young man from Clarksburg and I shall write to Porter in the morning. I again repeat my advice to Father to quit business, have no cattle or other goods, convert everything into gold at even 40 percent and bury it, and put no tombstone to its grave. Give my love to Leake, tell him to be a good boy to attend to his book and say his lessons to you. I do not want him sent to school. I would not have him taught by anyone I know save yourself. I do not want him to associate with the children of the Union people in your section of the State. Tell Leake that Porter and I have slept out of doors a good many nights. We do this sooner than ask people to keep us all night, it is nothing to be refused a lodging for the night for love or money-- still there are some clever people. I have but one motto that is to "run with patience the race set before," this I intend to do. So be of good cheer and do not despair. Truly yours, M. H. Johnson Since writing Mr. C. has been looking over his letters and [shares] the enclosed note from Miss Armstrong. W.P. Kimble is well, he is at Clarksville, Mecklenburg County Virginia. I loaned to Henry C Middleton fifty dollars when I was at the oil wells. Write him a note to send you the money, say to him that you are in need of it. To your friends buying in and hold for redemption such articles as you need I have no objection, but things that you do not need and than can be replaced let them go---

Letter to Eliza Johnson

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1771

Unit Date 1862 December

Language English

Scope and Contents

Letter regards the Battle of Fredericksburg, Virginia.

Keywords

Fredericksburg (Va.), Battle of, 1862

Correspondence

Fredericksburg (Va.)—History—Civil War, 1861-1865

Johnson, Porter, 1845-1917

Transcription

Monday Evening My Dear Wife I write you this note to let you know that I arrived here safely last evening. I do not look for Porter and Bradford for several days. The roads are very much cut up and I expect they will have a hard time. I started Dick to meet them, but he may miss them entirely. Our loss in the fighting that has taken place is 1742 in killed and wounded. Our dead have been buried. The Yankee dead remain unburied. The field of battle is still in dispute. The Yankees have not asked the privilege of burying their dead and we cannot [venture] to do it. Ours were carried off during the fight. We occupied the best position and think the enemy loss 5 to our one. I have just been to take a look at the Yankee Army. They are drawn up in line of battle, but as it is now 4 o'clock we do not think there will be a fight today. The principal fight was on Friday--though in sight we feel secure. My back is better though I am yet suffering. I was offered 200 dollars for the wagon and 2 sets harness, but could get no transportation at Staunton for our load. I am writing on a moments notice so excuse this hasty note. We are 10 miles from the office----

Letter to Eliza Johnson

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1772

Unit Date 1862 December 18

Language English

Scope and Contents

Letter regards the Battle of Fredericksburg, Virginia.

Keywords

Correspondence

Fredericksburg (Va.)—History—Civil War, 1861-1865

Fredericksburg (Va.), Battle of, 1862

Johnson, Porter, 1845-1917

Transcription

Thursday morning My Dear Wife Porter and Bradford have not arrived yet--but unless I write today you will not hear from me until next week. This may reach you on Saturday and even [now] I must write very hastily. The loss of the abolitionists in the last battle near Fredericksburg was greater than we at first supposed. They are again on the other side of the River. I spent yesterday afternoon in going over a portion of the battle field near or adjoining the City. On the portion of the field I visited there were at

least 500 dead. Under a flag of truce they were burying their dead but doing it in a very careless manner. Unless they worked last night they cannot get through before sometime today. After going through Fredericksburg and seeing the results of their vandalism I felt no sympathy for their justly merited fate. Scattered books, broken [----], furniture of all kinds and every description carried into the streets and broken to pieces. Our own loss is narrowed down to less than 400 killed and less than a thousand wounded, while the loss of the enemy cannot be less than 2000 killed and from 10 to 20 thousand wounded and missing. All who have visited the ground concur in the opinion that the dead are thicker upon the ground than any [field] they have seen. One could have walked for 400 yds upon the dead. This was close up to the houses reaching back 400 yds to a stone wall. Burnside is considered a fool for making the attack, as from his camp he could see our position and defenses. Our army could have withstood an attack by 400 thousand men. Our victory was complete. I have not yet seen any Yankee account of the battle. There was some conversation on yesterday between our men and the men detailed to bury the dead. They all agreed that their defeat was a terrible one. A physician told Judge G. that he thought this [-----] would certainly satisfy the North. We lost [260] as prisoners who were exchanged on yesterday. We have besides about 1000 prisoners who will be paroled but you will get the news from the papers before this reaches you. All is quiet this morning. Write to me and let me know how you are getting along. Write at least twice a week as in that way probably one of the letters might reach me. Give my love to the children and believe me truly yours, MHJ PS. The 25th and 31st were not engaged. I have not seen Philander he is 12 miles distant.

Letter to Eliza Johnson

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1773

Unit Date 1862 December 25

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from Fredericksburg, Virginia. Letter regards the Battle of Fredericksburg and personal news.

Keywords

Correspondence

Fredericksburg (Va.)—History—Civil War, 1861-1865

Fredericksburg (Va.), Battle of, 1862

Johnson, Porter, 1845-1917

Transcription

Camp Fredericksburg Dec. 25th 1862 My Dear Wife I should like this morning to be with you very much but as that cannot be the best I can do is to write you and let you know how glad I would be were it so. Days and weeks seem to me much longer now than they were before your arrival, before I could not be with you if I would; now I might were it not that I would have to give up a situation in order to gratify my wishes and my feelings. I have not heard from you since I left, but hope that you are all well and getting along well. The weather here has been much colder than the spell was at Brownsburg while I was there. From all we can gather from the Northern papers their defeat was much greater than we supposed immediately after the battle. One of their correspondents estimates 3000 wounded in one of their divisions and that the wounded are in our hands. This is not so. Their number of dead is greater than their estimate. Many of the southern Regts take no prisoners especially the Louisianians - who are determined to have revenge for the outrages of Butler and his troops -. One can form but a faint idea of the horrors of a battle field without an actual inspection upon the ground. I can assure you I should feel rejoice if the war could close without such another scene as we have witnessed here - but if our foes will not cease the War which it is in their power to do then I hope that every conflict will result as favorable to us as this great fight at Fredericksburg. Porter went to see Philander and took to him the little things you had sent to him. He needs two flannel shirts also his hat. Hopes to be able to go and see you before a great while. Jackson's Army is about 20 miles from our camp. Porter carried Mr. Rapps package and boots to him, but learned that he had been wounded and taken to Lynchburg - this I suppose is no news at Brownsburg by this time. Ask what shall be done with what was sent to him. When I wrote you last my information was that the 31st and 25th were not engaged but this was not correct. I do not know how many were wounded or killed in either but do not think the loss was great. We have a very fine band in the same field we are in. Last night among others they played "Old Dog Tray." It made me think of Carlo and your description of his faithfulness. There seems to be no gloom or dreariness of thought among our soldiers so far as my observation extends. All seem cheerful and gay. The dead are buried - the wounded and sick sent off - so that the well alone are left. Victory inspires confidence and certainly a great victory has attended our armies and what is more the North feels and [----] it. When Mr. Newlon goes to Richmond let him renew our subscription to the Examiner for six months or if you prefer some other paper. Let him subscribe to the paper you prefer. Porter did not arrive here until the dead were buried so that he missed a sight. I have very much desired he should see under the hope it would lessen his desire to join the army before he is 18. Our lead was too much for the bad team we had. I left 2 barrels of

apples and 65 lbs butter at Staunton. Porter afterwards left 2 barrels at Waynesboro -- arriving here with 3 2/3 bls of apples and part of his butter. The expenses of the trip were over 40 dollars - unless those left behind come on it will prove a losing business.

Letter to Eliza Johnson

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1774

Unit Date 1862 December 29

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from Fredericksburg, Virginia. Letter regards family and business news.

Keywords

Correspondence

Johnson Family

Lee, Robert E. (Robert Edward), 1807-1870

Johnson, Porter, 1845-1917

Transcription

Camp Fredericksburg December 29, 1862 My Dear Wife I am still without a letter from you, nor have I heard from Brownsburg since I left. We move in the morning to some point 25 miles nearer to Richmond so you need not answer this note until you hear from me again. Only portions of the army fall back at this time, but it is supposed that Gen. Lee with the main army will follow in a short time; the object being to eat up everything as we fall back so that the enemy will find it difficult to sustain or rather to support their army should they elect to advance. I sold the wagon, harness and the two old horses for 625 dollars including the horse I had when you arrived. I thought it better to keep the two young mares for the present. Porter was offered 300 dollars for the bay mare today but thinks she will bring more money. I have heard nothing of the butter and apples left at Staunton and Waynesboro and probably never will. If so I shall lose by my investment as I sold what arrived here for cost and expenses. You had better have your apples opened and see that they are not rotting. These that arrived here had rotted considerably. Richard started to Staunton on Saturday morning and will not return for some two weeks. I have suffered considerably for the last few days with my back and have had to use half of a bottle of liniment tonight being the first I have used since the morning I left. Porter is in good health and if he keeps well and we settle down for the winter I think I can learn him so that he can do my writing and give me an opportunity to stay with you for a short time in the month of Feby. I should like to be with you sooner but do not see how I can get away sooner with the amount of writing on hand. I have taken up for the benefit of the 31st Regt a small collection among the men in our train. You will ask Mr. Withrow to hand to the Ladies Society of Brownsburg thirty dollars with the request that they purchase yarn and convert it into socks for the men in that Regt. I shall try to send them a farther sum sometime next month. If you need money call on Mr. Withrow for what you may need until I have an opportunity to send you some which will be before long. It is now near 11 o'clock. I was writing all day, have been packing up tonight so that we can make an early start in the morning having gotten every thing ready. Though tired I felt like writing to you if for nothing else to say how glad I would be to be with you. Give my love to all the children and accept for yourself my last thought for the night and my last letter for 1862.

Letter fragment to Eliza Johnson

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1775

Unit Date 1862

Language English

Scope and Contents

Letter regards family friends who have been wounded, refugee families, and a problem with currency.

Keywords

Correspondence

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Home life

Jackson, Stonewall, 1824-1863

Johnson Family

Letcher, John, 1813-1884

Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865 (General subdivision: Assassination.)

Transcription

...Philander was well last week. I have not seen him since the fight at P Republic. He has been to Richmond and is now with Jackson's Army (where Jackson is no one even knows except the Yankees).

W.E. Kemble is at Richmond Asst Surgeon at some of the hospitals--W P Kemble is well though I have not seen him for 9 months, we have not met. Young Gawthrop, Jones, Armstrong and the men generally from our section are well--The 3 Tuckers have all been wounded but are getting well. You will see that [Jack] Tucker's wife does not suffer--a braver man does not exist. Hansbrough I heard was in Richmond a few days since, I have not seen him since last November. Mr. Armstrong and family are at Buckingham Courthouse. George is recovering from his wound slowly. I saw a letter from him a few days since to Doct Newlon in which he stated that the ladies "God bless em" had been very kind to him and he was not certain but that there was a warm corner in his heart for one of them "having been disappointed in his first love he did not know whether he should ever love again." Doct Newlon said the interpretation was that Vic had joined in the procession at Grafton to welcome the yankee troops. We heard at the time that there was a procession at Grafton and there may be some foundation for the story. If she was one of that number I do blame George, but on the contrary approve his view. In most the Southern cities the true Southern women refuse to recognize in any way the whole tribe of invaders. I admire their course. I wrote to you last winter to tell J W B to keep quiet. I have never heard whether you received my letter or any other of the many letters I have written this spring. If they have fallen into Yankee hands, they have found out that I feel but little respect for them and less for the time serving people in your section of the State (W. Va). Fanny has also written to you, but whether the letters ever reached you or not, I do not know. The Refugee families have all escaped sickness so far--this is wonderful considering the amount of sickness we have seen of all kinds. Porter is a very good boy and says he thinks he will return to you as good as he left. I have promised him that he may go to the Army whenever he has seen you--it galls him very much that I will not let him go. The boys are more anxious to go than the men. Charles Newlon Jr. has joined a Cavalry Co. and is now at Union Monroe. Mrs. N was opposed to it, but Newlon desired him to go. Newlon's family are still at Brownsburg all well. D. Goff, Claud[---] and their families 5 miles west of Staunton, the longer they stay away the firmer South they become. The Crawfords from Beverly are all well and near Brownsburg. B. Bassel and my self are now writing these letters at the same table while Geo. Johnson is reading the news. You will send word to Mahoney's family that he is well and making money and that he expects Smith to pay them the amt furnished by him to Wash--which was considerable--and if they should need it,--more. Mahoney I suppose has made over 7000 seven thousand dollars--he is trading in every way. Edward Payne was at Staunton a few days since. He brought up a Sincel or Sinclair captured at Moorefield. I did not see Payne and my informant could not remember the name, said he was a wagoner. The Yankees were paroled, but not so with the Virginians. Gov. Letcher has something to say to Virginians captured in the service of Lincoln. If you get any money either get gold or valley money do not trust to N W. Virginia money and for this reason--If in the tide of War our armies should ever win the N West your money will not be good, as the men having charge of the banks will leave and carry with them the specie. Father thinks he knows too much to be advised. I am surprised at his doing business or attempting to do it. But if in the tide of War our army should get your way our friends should lay out all their Northern money for bacon and other articles needed in the south. I give a hint if they do not profit by it--I cannot keep it--I am not doing anything to make money. I have refused to join in the mania for speculation that has 1/2 ruined the Patriotism of the south. All speculation here causes the poor to suffer. If we had not stopped making whiskey corn would have been from five to ten dollars per bushel. Whiskey sells at 5 dollars per gal by the barrel and often as five dollars per pint by retail...

Letter to Eliza Johnson

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1776

Unit Date 1863 January 25

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from "Camp near Verden." Letter regards family news and mentions situation in West Virginia.

Keywords

Correspondence

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Home life

Johnson Family

Johnson, Porter, 1845-1917

Transcription

Camp near Verden January 25, 1863 My Dear Wife Yours of the 15th was received one week since for your expressions of kindness receive my sincere thanks. Your uneasiness about my health and amount of labor is too great. The amt of labor is not so very great except at particular times. If I did not suffer with my back, it would not be much. I was in Richmond this week saw your brother William, he was ordered to N Carolina the day I arrived in Richmond and left next morning. I saw Trayhorn the bogus Sheriff of Barbour who was arrested by Capt Hill of Imboden's command and brought to Richmond. After his arrest a company from [M or W-----] went to Barbour killed 2 citizens and carried 8 more to Wheeling to be

held as hostages for the safety of Trayhorn. I learn from Judge Camden who left Richmond yesterday that John Williamson and Wm. Elliot had arrived in Richmond as Commissioners from Pierpoint to effect the release of Trayhorn. Saml. Elliot had been carried to Wheeling as one of the hostages. I saw the judge but a moment and did not learn the particulars about the killing of the men in Barbour. Mrs Rapps [] is here did not receive your letter about it until Goff had left and I was not here when Bradford left. If there was anything else it has been stolen. I found the bundle open one day but not hearing what was in it I could not tell whether anything was missing or not. I hope it was nothing of much value. When at home I lost the key of the trunk was not the stray key at Mr. Withrow's mine--We do not need any blankets have plenty--I shall write you in a few days. Do not count time as I am not certain when I can be at home. Give my love to all the children--write to Porter about improvement of his time--he has books--

Letter to Eliza Johnson

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1777

Unit Date 1863 March 10

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from Lynchburg, Virginia. Letter regards personal news, and inflated prices.

Keywords

Correspondence

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Home life

Johnson, Porter, 1845-1917

Transcription

Lynchburg, Tuesday March 10, 1863 My Dear Wife I might have stayed another hour with you on Sunday, but I wanted to give Leake ample time to return and not ride fast as it was very warm on Sunday. I arrived at the landing at least 3 hours before the boat started--arrived here yesterday morning by 9 oclock--shall leave in the morning for Hanover--not certain that I shall have hired a single teamster. There has been a heavy fall of snow today, but it is raining now and everything looks gloomy and I feel so I cannot help it. Here you see nothing and hear nothing but tobacco--save when a soldier steps up to pay his bill or asks what he will have to pay for a days board and is answered 5, 6 or 7 dollars. I feel satisfied from his look, that he wishes all these people in Yankeedom and their town in ashes. I do not feel hopeful at this time as to the result of the contest. I do not fear that Yankees can whip us, but I do fear that the desire of gain, the thirst for money will yet overwhelm us. One can hardly feel like risking his life for such a set, but our rulers are to blame. If in the first place a tariff of prices had been fixed upon the leading articles--such a state of things would never have existed. Before Porter starts for his [mare] he had better see if he can get anything to feed her on--if he cannot she will be badly off. I bought yesterday near 1/2 pint cabbage seed for \$4.00--this you will think a large quantity. I want to raise a full garden, what we do not want we can sell. I also bought a paper of Turnip, salsify, and parsley and lettuce. I think in all probability I shall return home to stay before long and the more I think about it and the more I see how the soldiers are treated the less I approve of Porter's determination to go into the service before his time, but he will have to decide for himself. I am not certain now about starting in the morning as the man that was to meet me here this evening has not done so. You need not write until you hear from me again, that is if you all keep well--

Letter to Eliza Johnson

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1778

Unit Date 1863 March 14-15

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from "Camp Near Verden." Letter regards family and business news.

Keywords

Correspondence

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Home life

Johnson Family

Johnson, Porter, 1845-1917

Transcription

Camp Near Verden March 14, 1863 My Dear Wife I returned here on Thursday. I went to Richmond today on business--was there but 4 hours. Just before leaving I met with Porter Johnson who had arrived in Richmond last night. He had been told by some one that I was in Richmond, was on the look out for me. I

shook hands with him without recognizing him. I was not thinking about him--did not look particularly before I remarked "I believe I do not remember you."---He had not received any of our letters. I had but little conversation with him and did not learn his business. I shall go down to Richmond on Monday to see him. He may visit Brownsburg before his return to Missouri. I met young Camden at the cars in Lynchburg and sent the garden seeds by him. I shall try and get some more seeds in this neighborhood. I found your letter on my return--read it with much satisfaction though I had seen you since it was written. Norvel Lewis of Clarksburg died in Richmond last Saturday. He had been drinking for some days, was prostrated at once and all that could be done did not revive him. Porter knew him well and I hope his fate will be a warning to him never to drink liquor. His death has produced a great grief among those that knew him. I shall write again by Wednesday's mail. Let me know when you are to move. Probably if Porter concludes to come up I may be up with him. If you have nothing in the house do not fret about it. You cannot have less furniture than we have in camp and we got along very well. So long as we keep our health take the world easy--it is not worth while to fret about what we cannot help. I sold the bay mare this evening for \$300, she was being reduced each day, so I thought it better to part with her. After you are moved, I will write to Porter when to come after his mare. Give my love to the children and believe me truly yours M H Johnson March 15 63 My Dear Wife Capt. Semmes did not leave this morning as he expected. Tell Porter I have examined his mare today. I do not think she has fallen off much. Write to me on the receipt of this and forward to Verden. Let me know when you will move or whether you have moved. There has been no weather for gardening, so I do not expect that Porter has done anything yet. I can get some sweet potatoes from [S]--had I better do so

Letter to Eliza Johnson

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1779

Unit Date 1863 March 29

Language English

Scope and Contents

Letter regards family and business news.

Keywords

Correspondence

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Home life

Transcription

Sunday March 29 [1863]

My Dear Wife Yours of the 25th was received last evening. On Tuesday I went to Richmond and returned on Thursday. On Friday morning I went to Fredericksburg and returned on yesterday. I saw Philander--he was well and had received your letter. He had joined a company in the 13th Virginia Regt and thought probably he might go into actual service.

Since I left Fredericksburg our army have used up a large proportion of the timber for firewood--the timber being cut down--the Yankee truly are in full view for miles. The soldiers have been ordered to send nearly all their baggage to Richmond so as to have nothing but what they can carry upon their backs. Some think there will be a movement either forward or backward in a few days.

Porter's business at Richmond is to have adjusted the pay coming to the Missouri troops. He was nearly through with his business when I left Richmond. He had not determined on what route he would return to the west. I regret very much that we moved into that house since they have taken the store room for a hospital--as sickness has generally followed the army. But I suppose among [P] of Brownsburg it would be heretical to suppose that anyone would be sick without a special decree from above.

I think it probable that I may be that way in 10 or 15 days. There is some business to do in Culpeper and probably in Buckingham. I may go on horseback if so I shall ride mare and go into Brownsburg. I am not positive about it. We had a very rainy day yesterday--it is cold today. It is near the first of April and there is very little plowing done in this neighbourhood, everything is very backward, nothing green except wheat and that very poor.

Give my love to the children and believe me truly yours, M H Johnson

Letter to Eliza Johnson

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1780

Unit Date 1863 April 25

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from Beverly, West Virginia. Letter regards the Jones-Imboden Raid.

Keywords

Correspondence

West Virginia—History—Civil War, 1861-1865

Transcription

Beverly Saturday 25 [April] 1863

My Dear Wife Beverly was taken yesterday after about two hours cannonading and some but not much skirmishing of infantry. The abolitionists were about 1300 in number. Latham succeeded in burning all his stores. [He] succeeded in getting away in the direction of Philippi with little or no loss of men. Our cavalry pursued, but I fear without any success.

If Porter has not started tell him to stay where he is. The bad management here has [lessened] my confidence in this command. The bridges are gone over Greenbrier river and the road might not be safe on account of Union men. I hope he has not started or that you did not receive my last letter. I am very tired and pretty well worn out. I have no doubt but Latham will burn the bridge at Philippi.

Yours in haste MHJ

Letter to Eliza Johnson

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1781

Unit Date 1863 April 28-May 1

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written at "Hillery's, 9 miles west of Beverley," West Virginia. Letter regards the Jones-Imboden Raid, West Virginia and the Union sympathies of Laura Ann Arnold (Jackson).

Keywords

Correspondence

West Virginia—History—Civil War, 1861-1865

Arnold, Laura Ann Jackson, 1826-1911

Transcription

Hillery's, 9 miles West of Beverly Tuesday April [28, 1863]

My Dear Wife Fortune has favored us though we do not deserve it. We had advanced to within 12 miles of Philippi--the same distance from Buckannon--news came that 8 Brigades had reinforced the enemy--we commenced to retreat on Beverly and had reached this point. This morning we know that the enemy have fled from Buckhannon & Philippi--that Jones has captured New Creek and destroyed the Railroad at Rowlesburg. We start west again this morning either by Buckannon or Philippi.

Had Jackson been in command we would have been in Clarksburg today, The railroad would have been destroyed. When we turned back almost every man was dissatisfied--all wanted to fight the enemy without regard to numbers. Mrs. J. Arnold --sister of Gen. Jackson--went off with the yankees. Arnold stayed at home says he is a good southern man, that his wife is crazy but Hell he says, could not govern a Jackson.

If Porter comes he must come with a crowd or with the mail which has a guard. Love to you all.

May 1st 1863

I was too late for the mail when I wrote the note on this sheet. We have been here two days. I do not know when we shall leave. I shall not be able to leave this command while it stays here and shall have to share its fortunes. The enemy have retired to Grafton & Clarksburg. Our information is very uncertain. Gen. Jones we are informed is at Evansville. It is very hard to communicate with him and we may have to form a junction with him before we advance against Clarksburg.

The Union people have fled by thousands. Dick was near Henson Hoff's--Hoff and his two sons have fled. He had held office under the Lincoln Government. If Porter has not started he had better come with the crowd that guards the mail. I have purchased dress patterns enough for our family for some time to come (calico Gingham) & also for Mr. Withrow's and some others, cloth for Porter and entire suit overcoat & c. I have boxed them up- do not know when they will reach you. I have been appointed agent to take charge of all abandoned property. This will be a heavy work--

Letter to Eliza Johnson

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1782

Unit Date 1863 May 5

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from Weston, West Virginia. Letter regards the Jones-Imboden Raid and burning of bridge at Fairmont.

Keywords

Correspondence

West Virginia—History—Civil War, 1861-1865

Transcription

Weston May 5th [1863]

My Dear Wife I believe I wrote to you from Beverly. I have written to you since but missed the mail. After the affair at Beverly on Friday we left Beverly on Saturday about noon, marched 9 miles and encamped on Sunday. We marched to a point equidistant from Buckhannon and Philippi. Hearing nothing from Jones and learning that Mulligan had reinforced Gen Roberts we fell back to within 9 miles of Beverly. We again started for Buckhannon before reaching that point the enemy had evacuated the place--burnt a [] amt of commissaries stores & c. A large no of the Union men going with them.

We remained at Buckhannon two or three days waiting to hear from Gen. Jones, having lost sight of him at Evansville. Gen. Jones arrived at Buckhannon Saturday morning, having been at [], Morgantown, Fairmont, [Skinnton], Bridgeport, Philippi. We immediately marched to Weston arriving here on Sunday morning. Beyond Evansville the Railroad was torn up for a considerable distance. The fine bridge at Fairmont was [blown] down. There was a fight at Fairmont, several killed, 400 prisoners taken. 3 killed at Bridgeport & c. Gen Jones command brought in 1200 horses taken from Union and secession men without pay. Father lost about 30 so the men say--he will be paid some day Gen Jones has consented that Dick may take one of the horses taken from Father. I am glad our troops got the horses pay or no pay.

Mason [Hisser] & Ed Payne now along--I do not know when the next move will be made. The enemy are massing their strength at Clarksburg and probably outnumber us. It think it likely that Gen. Jones will make another raid around the enemy before Gen. Imboden advances upon Clarksburg. A fight may take place at Clarksburg, some days hence. Our friends are completely subdued, talk in whispers are afraid to speak out.

At Buckhannon I purchased about two hundred dollars worth of goods, mostly plain dry goods--put them in a box with some purchased by the Qr Master of the 31st Virginia Regt. I believe he has the goods with him, do not know whether he will ever have an opportunity to send them out. I have purchased fifty dollars worth here but do ot know what to do with them--having no transportation. There are plenty fo goods but the difficulty is what to do with them. Porter arrived here yesterday, he is well. I do not know when either of us will return.

Letter to Eliza Johnson

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1783

Unit Date 1864 September 23

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from Camp Kemper, near Staunton, Virginia. Letter regards the Battle of Winchester, Virginia.

Keywords

Correspondence

Winchester (Va.)—History—Civil War, 1861-1865

Transcription

Camp Kemper, Near Staunton Sept 23d 1864

My Dear Wife I reported here this morning, at Staunton yesterday morning--may start to Richmond any morning on short notice. Found Dick's horse of no value he gave out before I had reached Middlebrook. With much labour I reached a point 3 miles beyond Staunton by 9 o'clock at night--next morning sent the horse to English's. I staid in Staunton 2 days with the hope of hearing some of the particulars of the fight in the Valley, some of the casualties but could learn nothing of the kind.

The account of the battle is about as follows. The enemy in far superior number attacked Early about day light. We held our own until 3 o'clock driving the enemy some two miles--at which time our Cavalry upon the left embracing Vaughan's, Imboden's, McCausland's, and Wickham's brigade gave way. This placed the enemy's cavalry in Winchester in the rear of our infantry and close upon our wagon train. The wagon train would have been destroyed but for the large number of stragglers with the train--the Yankee Cavalry mistaking them for a strong guard. Our infantry retired fighting saving the train and all the artillery but 3 pieces. I cannot learn the names of any of the killed wounded or captured except Gen.

Rodes & Gen. Godwin killed. Gen Lee wounded. I shall go back to Staunton this evening and if I can learn any other names I will enclose them in this letter. Gen. Breckinridge is in Staunton today on his way to take command in S.W. Virginia. Nearly all our dead and wounded fell into the hands of the enemy--our loss being about 3,000. Those who passed over the ground from which we drove the enemy until 3 o'clock think the loss of the enemy greater than ours.

You have doubtless heard before this of the arrival of Richard Brown's family at Doct McChesney's. 5 families in all came through--the Yankees giving permission to all to come who desired to do so. Tell Leake to tell Mr. Higgenbotham that his detail was granted upon the ground of private necessity until the first of November. The detail has been here since the 15 of August. Tell Leake to gather all the fodder he can, but not to work too hard. If our army should fall back up the Valley have the barrels that are fixed filled with flour so that you can move it from the mill should it become necessary.

Yours M H Johnson

Fitz Lee Cavalry were whipped on Thursday in the Page Valley losing 4 pieces of Artillery. Gen Early was at Woodstock last night having lost 12 pieces of artillery at Fisher's Hill or some other point--he is falling back up the Valley. The excitement here is on the increase. Capt. Corder was killed. Col. Patton of the 22 badly wounded and in the hands of the enemy. Accounts on both sides in the Examiner not far from the truth regarding the stand point from which the view is taken. All say our cavalry has acted badly. Let the advocates of plunder remember.

Letter to Eliza Johnson

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1784

Unit Date 1864 October 11

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from Richmond, Virginia. Letter regards general family, business, and Civil War news.

Keywords

Correspondence

United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865

Johnson Family

Transcription

Richmond Oct 11 64

My Dear Wife Leaving Staunton on Sunday evening of the break up I reached this place on Tuesday evening. Have been well since. The reserves are here on guard duty--encamped on the Manchester side of the river. At the great fright here last Friday week a portion of our command was sent to the front. I was not among the number. On Monday morning there was a severe frost here--ice forming upon buckets of water outside the tents. I suppose the early frost has [swept] or ruined our cane patch. I would be better to procure barrels and have as much of the flour ground as you can. Porter had better have his ground and forwarded to Richmond--if he desires it at this point before he leaves. I see the cadets are ordered to Richmond. Tell Porter if he has not started that he will find me at the camp at Manchester.

Every thing is again very quiet about here for the last few days not a distant cannon has been heard for several days. Henry Mahoney was among the returned prisoners. A gentleman desires Ella Wade to be informed that her husband at Fort McHenry was well last week. If Porter has not started he should bring with him his white overcoat and blanket as the nights are very cold here--at least have been. I have not heard from home since I left. You have doubtless heard of the arrival at Lebanon of J H Haymond's family--well provided with many things. Direct care of Mr. Bennett.

Letter to Eliza Johnson

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1785

Unit Date 1864 December 4

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from Lexington, Virginia. Letter regards family and business news.

Keywords

Correspondence

Johnson Family

Transcription

Lexington, Sunday Dec. 4th, 1864

My Dear Wife I have been busy all day but I know you will be disappointed if you do not get a line from me tomorrow. It was impossible for me to leave here today but I will try and be at home next Sunday. Gen. Smith says that the Cadets will have a short furlough but I think it doubtful. I am hoping that Porter will get permission to come home for a few days, but suppose he will have to bear his own expenses--probably the money would be better spent by him in buying such little things as he needs, but if he comes all right. The Gen. says they will draw another suit of clothes.

I had but little to eat when Philander was here and made but a poor show. Tell Leake that Jeff and I made a fine feast on his rabbit. Jeff is very well contented, but wants to eat when I do and becomes very impatient if I do let him eat with me. I shall have a clerk after today and a very good one if he will keep sober--which he has promised to do, but which no one believes he will do. I was hungry I believe and will have eaten up what you sent in a day or two--you can send me enough bread and meat to last until Saturday--send by the stage driver, also write me at the same time. Send me any of the rib pieces as I have a cap I can make [h]. Excuse this scrawl and believe me truly yours. Brother Porter complains that I do not write to him. M H Johnson

Tell Mr. Newlon & Crawford if they come this way to come and stay with me.

Letter to Eliza Johnson

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1786

Unit Date 1865 March 7

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from Lexington, Virginia. Letter regards General Sheridan's location in the valley.

Keywords

Correspondence

Virginia—History—Civil War, 1861-1865

Sheridan, Philip Henry, 1831-1888

Transcription

Lexington, March 7 65

My Dear Wife The latest news from Staunton is about as we first heard. Our loss--1200 in prisoners, only 4 killed and wounded. Col. Harmon killed. Mr. Church's story all a fabrication.

Jackson is expected at Brownsburg tonight--whether he will have any troops with him or not I do not know. If you are all well send Leake to the Gen and ask him to stay all night.

Jackson's and Imboden's men united with Rosser and pursued the enemy down the valley and may attack the guard and try to rescue the prisoners--but I hardly expect it as the Guard is a large one and Sheridan said to be along the the guard.

Truly yours, MHJ

Porter Johnson correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1766

Unit Date 1865

Language English

Extent 6 items

Letter to sister

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1787

Unit Date 1865 January 12

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from the Alms House in Richmond, Virginia, where VMI was headquartered from December 1864 until Richmond was evacuated in April 1865. Letter regards life at the Alms House.

Keywords

Virginia Military Institute—Cadet life—1860-1869

Correspondence

Transcription

Richmond Jany 12, 1865

My Darling Sister Your sweet little letter was received this evening. I was truly glad to hear from home and you. I have now been from home over two weeks, and not a line until I received your letter this evening. I did not know but some evil genii had enchanted you all with some magic spell and changed you all into beast or birds, so you cannot imagine how much relieved I was when I read your letter and found you all still retain your original forms. I arrived safely here several days after I left home. Uncle Will arrived several days ago. I got the things he brought. I am exceedingly obliged to mother for them, they were very nice indeed.

We are very poorly fixed here for study, twenty in a room, one small table, no chairs or stools, but one gas burner, and attached to the side of the wall instead of the center of the room where it ought to be. There is but one little stove in the room and the meanest coal that you can imagine. We have but two meals a day which is quite often enough of the kind, bread and beef for breakfast and beef and bread for dinner. However I am living and well. I have been but to two meals in the mess hall in the last four days. I intend to leave here as soon as possible. I will have to cut my letter short as the gentleman who is going to carry it is in a hurry.

I was on guard last night and sat up until midnight reading Hiawatha which will probably account for the following lines. 2 I was just thinking what I should write you about my stay in Staunton when these lines occurred to me. I expect they will cause some amusement for you. It is my first attempt at writing poetry and I am not certain that I succeed very well, but it was written on the spur of the moment and under great difficulties. You must excuse all mistakes as I am writing in the dark nearly. To all good night.

From your affectionate Brother Porter

PS Write soon and give me all of the items of news and what you all think of my leaving here. Uncle [Porter] thinks I had as well leave. Goodbye Porter

Letter to mother

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1788

Unit Date 1865 February 5

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from the Alms House in Richmond, Virginia, where VMI was headquartered from December 1864 until Richmond was evacuated in April 1865. Letter regards general news.

Keywords

Correspondence

Virginia Military Institute—Cadet life—1860-1869

Transcription

Richmond Feb 5th 1865

Dear Mother Your kind letter was received and read with pleasure. I was glad to get a letter from you once more, one written by your own dear self. I am very sorry now that I have not written to you ere this but I was thinking like yourself that every mail would bring me a letter from mother, but none came. I am convinced now that I ought not to have waited so long, as I see it was my duty as well as pleasure to write to my dear mother. I am so sorry that by not writing to you that I should have caused one shadow to hover o'er your brow or one pang of sadness to enter your heart. I would not intentionally grieve my mother for anything in reason. I am a naughty boy, but mother dear you must forgive me this time.

I am so sorry for you all at home that the weather is so cold. I sincerely hope you have plenty of wood. We have not had cold weather here [] and I have been very comfortable. Although I did not find but one of my blankets, however the one that was lost did not belong to me and the one to whom it did belong being wealthy very kindly told me it made no difference about it. Although I suffer a great many inconveniences here they are nothing to me compared with what you have to put up with. You must make yourself perfectly easy about me and do not imagine me suffering when I am very comfortable. We have Bible class every Sunday. I recite to Col. Preston, or rather hear him lecture. He makes the time spent with him pass very pleasantly and also imparts much useful and interesting knowledge. I had a permit last Wednesday. Called to see Mrs. Neason, she was very cordial indeed & invited me to spend all the time that I had to myself with her and to come every permit I got and spend the day which I promised to do. She complimented you very highly on the [way] you managed your affairs in West Virginia. I expect to get a permit on Saturday week when I shall go and see her again.

I intend to leave here the first of March. I came here by my own consent and with the understanding that I was to leave at the end of a year. I will soon have been two instead of one. I am sorry to say I am not getting along as well with my studies as I would wish.

Letter to Mortimer Johnson

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1789

Unit Date 1865 February 23

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from the Alms House in Richmond, Virginia. Letter regards Porter Johnson's decision to join the Army.

Keywords

Correspondence

Virginia Military Institute—Cadet life—1860-1869

Transcription

Richmond Feb 23d 1865

Dear Father Your welcome letter was received last night. Uncle Porter had been here in the evening and told that he had received a letter from you stating that you had written me permission to resign. I am very much gratified at your kind concess[ion] in my wishes, and pleased to find that your own ideas correspond with mine on so important a subject.

I feel it due to myself as well as to you to state to you some of the reasons I have for leaving here and giving up the only opportunity which I shall perhaps ever have of getting an education. In the first place I am past nineteen years old and I think that it is my duty to be in the army. All who stay here after they become eighteen are generally considered shirkers. Then I do not think that the school will continue much longer than the first of April, for is it reasonable to suppose or can it even be expected that in this the death struggle of the Confederacy when every man woman and child should be at his or her post, when every nerve is to be strained to attain the object which we have so long fought for, that two or three hundred well drilled, able bodied men will be allowed to remain idle and inactive? I am sure the answer of any rational man will be No!

Then acting on the supposition that the corps will be ordered into service soon at all events, I think it advisable to resign while I can, and while I have the power to join any command that I think proper. A right granted all cadets resigning by order of the Sct War. And as for education, I look at it in this light. If we are subjugated the less education and refinement a man has the better for him, for the nearer the man approaches the brute the less feeling he has, and in the above contingency our condition will be little better than that of brutes. To look at the same question from another point, if the war continues, I will have to enter the army sooner or later. If I am killed education will profit me nothing, but suppose we gain our independence and I should be so fortunate as to survive the war, almost every youth in the Confederacy will be in my own lamentable condition without education or polish.

I think I shall hand in my resignation in about a week or so, I wish to finish analytic before leaving. I would like to join cavalry but do not see how I am to keep myself in horses.

Next I thought of mounted horse artillery but for the present I thought of accepting a second Ltc in the 2d Foreign Battalion, a position which I can get I think without much trouble. Uncle Porter advised me to take it at once as he thought it better to leave now if I could get a position than to wait a while and go as a private. There are several of my acquaintances in the same Battalion and one of my most intimate friends left the other day for a 1st Lt in the same. I cannot use the permission you sent me, it is right with the exception that you omitted to state that I resigned to enter the military service of the C.S. Please send me another with this addition.

Please excuse mistakes as I have written under difficulties and in haste.

From your affectionate Son, Porter.

Letter to Mortimer Johnson

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1790

Unit Date 1865 March 27

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written at "New's Ferry." Letter regards Porter Johnson joining the Army.

Keywords

Correspondence

Transcription

New's Ferry, March 27th 1865

Dear Father I received both of your last letters. The one dated the 4th March first and the one dated 1st,

a few days ago. I would have written to you before this, but thought I would wait until certain communication could be established. I did not get to see Mr. Newlon before he left or would have written by him.

I resigned about two weeks ago. I have been in the trenches one week since, with the Corps. It then took me a week or such a matter to make my arrangements to leave the city. I have accepted the place I wrote you about, and am now on my way to join my command, it is at Charlotte, NC. I would like very much to have come home before going into the army, but the way not being open when I had the time at my own disposal I did not attempt it.

It would have been a needless expense, and one which Uncle Porter advised me not to incur, though if the way had been clear I certainly should have come. My expenses at the V.M.I. were one hundred and fifty (\$150) dollars. I will enclose you a statement of my financial account. I left Richmond Thursday and was two days getting to this place. I am at present at Mr Chalmers, the father of one of my classmates and friends. The son invited The son invited to his fathers house. I wanted some place on the line to leave my trunk. This is the place exactly, it is on a direct line from the south to R and quite safe from the enemy there. The family are so kind. Mr C has invited me to make his house my home, as long as I am pleased to stay, but I shall only remain two or three days.

I am tolerably equipped. Uncle P bought me a small pair of saddle bags for fifty (50) dollars. He also gave me an oilcloth. I am going to take as little baggage with me as possible and will try and take care of it. On parting from Mr Neeson he gave me some good advice just as you would have done and I saw that he felt a deep interest in my welfare. He also offered me money but I declined because I thought Uncle P had given me what he thought proper. You cannot be too grateful to Mr. Neeson and his family for their kindness to me. I wish you would write to him about it. I wish them to know how grateful I feel to them.

I hope to see you again but have not the most remote idea when. When you write to me again direct to Lt. Porter Johnson 2d Foreign Battalion, Charlotte NC. Write soon to your affectionate son. Porter Johnson

Letter to mother

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1791

Unit Date 1865 March 27

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written at "New's Ferry." Letter regards general news.

Keywords

Correspondence

Transcription

Dearling Mother I have not received a single line from you since a few days before the enemy's raid. I have heard once from home through Papa, but it made me sad than otherwise though I was truly glad to know that you were all well. My dear mother, I have now launched my bark on the ocean of life, and though the clouds lower around me and the waves roll high, I hope by the help of God, to [sp---t] the flood.

I have thought a great deal about home and friends. I would have liked very much to have come home to see all of the dear ones again, but as it would have been a mere gratification and would have accomplished nothing I suppose it is best as it is. I am now staying at a very kind gentlemans in Halifax County.

I have met with some very kind friends indeed since I resigned. Mrs Neeson has been almost a mother to me, just as kind as she could be. She often talks of you and thinks Papa one of the best men in the world. I almost fell in love with her daughter Mary a quiet unassuming and modest girl of fourteen summers. There is a little bright eyed beauty of twelve years, sitting by me while I write, [] my []. Give my best love to all. The girls must write me soon. Give my especial love to Leake, tell him to be a good boy and mind his mother. Write to me soon mother!

Your devoted son, Porter

Letter to mother

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1792

Unit Date 1865 June 16

Language English

Scope and Contents

Written from Prison Hospital, Camp Chase, Ohio. Letter regards an order for release of prisoners.

Keywords

Correspondence

Transcription

Prison Hospital Camp Chase, Ohio, June 18, 1865

Dear Mother The order for release of prisoners has at last arrived. I expect to be released in about a week. It is a bitter pill but has to be swallowed. I do not expect to be home immediately. J.W. McCorkle is sick, he expects to go to his Uncles in Cabell county. I must go with him. He would do the same for me and more. Then I will go by West Va. I shall stop a few days then hasten home as fast as possible. I am in good health. I have not heard from any at Bridgeport for three weeks, they were all well at that time. Eddie Withrow is well, he is going directly home. Jake [Tucker] is well. The thoughts of soon again being clasped in a mothers embrace, Oh! isn't it glorious. My best love to all, regards to my friends.

From your Affectionate Son Porter Johnson esq Soon to be Citizen of the United States of America Good and Loyal

Letter to sister

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/5389

Unit Date 1865 February 5

Language English

Scope and Contents

Letter regards dress parades.

Keywords

Correspondence

Virginia Military Institute—Cadet life—1860-1869

Lee, Robert E. (Robert Edward), 1807-1870

Transcription

Dear Sister Allie Your letter came duly to hand. I am truly happy to see you are such a punctual correspondent. Did you send the book I wrote for by Mr. C. I saw him the other day but he did not say whether he had brought it or not. I saw a splendid life size picture of Gen. Lee put up in the House of Delegates on Wednesday, it was by Bruce a very ordinary looking man. He asks six five thousand (\$65,000) dollars for it. You ought to be here to see the crowds of ladies that flock to see us on dress parade and some very pretty ones I can tell you. I have almost fallen in love with one or two myself. Miss Lou H was out to see us today escorted by Maj. Stuart. She invited me to see her she was looking better than I ever saw her.