

Letters of Augustus W. Proseus

1862 – 1863

This collection of letters, written by Augustus W. Proseus, of the 111th N.Y.S. Volunteer Infantry, was included in the Civil War Pension Application file of Rebecca Proseus, mother of Augustus W. Proseus – Certificate No. 50285.

Rebecca Proseus, widow of Peter Proseus, began the application for a mother's pension on 27 July 1863, just twenty-five days after the death of her son on the battlefield at Gettysburg. The family must have been convinced that these precious letters proved that the widow Rebecca had been dependent upon her son at the time of his death and had been so for several years prior to his death. Perhaps his mother expected that they would be returned to the family, once the Pension Office had approved her application.

It appears from the notations on the letters and a summary of contents that indicated the many times that the soldier mentioned that he was sending money home for the support of his mother, that they were specifically selected to help prove the mother's case.

Augustus W. Proseus was a seasoned soldier at the time of his death. He enlisted first in the 17th N.Y.S.V. on 10 May 1861, at the age of 25 and was mustered into Co. I by Capt. Andrew Willson for a two-year term of service. He was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant on 4 July 1861 (with rank from May 10, 1861) and remained in service until his resignation on 14 Dec 1861.

On 20 August 1862, Augustus W. Proseus was once again an active participant in the Civil War, when he was mustered into Co. E of the 11th N.Y.S. Volunteer Infantry as a First Sergeant. On 17 January 1863 he was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant and on 1 March 1863 promoted to 1st Lieutenant. Records indicated that he was in command of his company from 15 May 1863 until his death on 2 July 1863.

Since the pages of the letters were not necessarily in order by date in the pension file, an attempt has been made to rearrange them for purpose of transcriptions. The transcriptions attempt to maintain the spelling, capitalization, and punctuation of the writer. Where there is no punctuation, such as a period to end a sentence, spaces have been used to indicate what may have been the end of a sentence or thought.

There are fourteen letters, written between 28 September 1862 and 7 June 1863. Eleven of them are addressed to "Dear Sister" who is Henrietta Proseus, older sister of Augustus. Two are addressed to his Mother and one addressed to both Mother and Sister (Henrietta).

It is possible that the family held onto some letters instead of using them as proof of his mother's need for a pension. It is obvious from the content of the letters that Augustus wrote many more letters during his time with the 111th NYS Volunteers and the 17th NYS Volunteers.

Camp Douglas Chicago Ill

Sept 28, 1862

Dear Sister

Their has been quite a change in my whereabouts since I last wrote but probably it will not frighten you for I think that I spoke of going to Chicago in my last. We left Annapolis the 24 inst for Baltimore by steamboat a distance of 32 miles. From Baltimore we went to Harrisburg by Railroad, from there to Pittsfield, [Pittsburg?] and next to Ft. Wayne from their to this place where we arrived at 1 Oclock A.M. It is quite probable that we will remain hear some time and drill but we are not allowed to have arms, so we will have a chance to learn the different Kinds of retreats. Camp Douglas is a very pleasant ground with Barracks for 20,000 men near the Lake I have been at work all day to get our barrack cleaned out and a bunk [?] to sleep in. I and Ed Parsons occupy a room about 10 x 12 with 4 men from Co H. Ed and I sleep together and upon the whole we have quite a cozy little room or will have when Co H moves out which will be in a few days. The Companies have had to consolidate a little for their are but 9 Barracks for 10 Companies But we'll have one more in a few days that accounts for those men from Co H being in here I am allowed a little more room on account of the high position I occupy in the Regt (First Sergeant) and I allow Ed with me. I have been building a table to write on it does not look well to work on Sunday, but it cannot be avoided in camp life. Their has been nothing like Sunday here today no more than it was two weeks ago when the cannon and shells kept up a constant roar all the time. I cannot attempt to describe it and can compare it to nothing I have ever before seen or heard of – I cannot write tonight so you can make any sense of it, for I have not slept any, or what you might call sleep for four nights, we road [sic] night and day on the Cars, and were crowded together in freight cars at that, so you may know that it was not verry pleasant.

I received two of your letters the morning we left Annapolis one written the 8th and the other the 15th by what you wrote in them I think their must have been two or three that has not reach me yet. I received one from Lottie the same day dated the 7th I shall write to her tonight and Direct to Lower Red Hook but I think she will not be their if not they will forward it. Have you ever received the satchel of clothes I sent from Auburn by express, if so please let me know in your next letter. I will send you five dollars this time and as soon as I hear from that will send 10 more if that will not be a nough [enough] to last till next pay day which will be the first of Nov Just let me know and I will send more I should have sent it long before but I did not think it safe to send money when we were serounded [surrounded] by the enemy write just as soon as you can Direct to Co E 111 Regt. Camp Douglas Chicago Ill I must write to Lottie an[d] Ed yet so I must close. Excuse all mistakes and Remember me to all

Brother Gus

No 2

Camp Douglas Chicago Ill

Oct 5, 1862

Dear Sister

I wrote you last Sunday but as I have not received an answer as yet I will write a few lines today. I have nothing of any importance to write for I have not been out of camp yet and there is nothing here that will interest you any. The paroled prisoners here do not have any drills of any kind so of course we have to remain her Idle. I call the rool [roll] once a day and aside from that have nothing to do but eat and Sleep the former I think I do more than my share of. Ed Parsons and I had a couple Ladies visit us last week, one of them was Sarah Miller formaly [formerly] from Sodus but lives now at Aurora Ill The other I have forgotten her name she was a friend of Sarah. Sarah Miller mad[e] some inquiries about you, she said she saw Kell Fairbanks at Chicago and that he made great inquiries about you. Wanted to know if you was married as yet etc. etc.

[t] rained nearly every day last week and as our Camp is on a prairie it's rather wet and muddy – But it is pleasant again and I am in hopes that the camp will soon become dry again. There are quite a number of our Company sick, but I believe none of them are from Sodus. Ed Proseus is at the Hospital quite Sick but nothing dangerous he has got the Chill fever I believe I am geting quite anxious to hear from home, and from the letter I wrote last Sunday for I enclosed 5 dollars in it. I have had but three letters since I left home two of them were from you dated Sept 7th and 14th and the one from Lottie was also the 7th. Those I received while at Annapolis all at a time

Most of our Reg has got their back letters but their has not been one for me. I am Shure their has been more written. I would write to Lottie again but do not know where to direct too [to] The last I wrote I directed to Dutchess Co. but I suppose she had left before it reached her. I will write again just as soon

as I receive one from you and send you some more money. Write soon and remember me to all the
Sodus folks. Write all the news you can get holt of. I have not heard from Ed as yet Love to all
As Ever Brother Augustus

No 3

Camp Douglas Chicago Ill

Oct. 8. 1862

Dear Sister

I have just received you[r] letter tonight and it is the first letter I have recd since I came here

I will answer it immediately of those six or seven that you say you have written I have received but two and those were forwarded to Annapolis, and one from Lottie at the same time

I shall write her tonight, but as I have no news to write both will have to be satisfied with short letters. I had a pass to day and went down to the city with Ed Parsons and intended to take the cars for Aurora, but we were to[o] late for the cars so we did not go, but it was not much of a disappointment to me but perhaps it was to Ed for Sarah Miller lives there we may not go now at all unless we get a good chance - It has been raining here this afternoon and this evening it's quite cool, but as a general thing we have pleasant weather. We are near the lake and 2 or 3 miles South of the City on the old fair grounds which cover I should think 200 acres. The talk in camp now is that we will be exchanged in less than a month, and I hope it may prove true, for I had rather be in the field than laying around here idle - Some of the men when we were taken prisoners at Harpers Ferry was told that we would all go home or were [where] we chose [chose], by those greasy lousey Rebels and were fools enough to believe them and now they [find?] it hard that they are compelled to stay here. I am glad to say there but few of that class in our Company but if there were none I should like it better. Three of the Com. Have Deserted but we have men on their track that will bring them back in due time two of the deserters are from Marion and one from Arcadia. Lieut Soverhill is at home on a furlough but it has nearly expired - - - About those tomb Stones The man that I bargained with for them is in our company and the price of them was to \$25 but I do not know as they are as good as Gardner agreed [sic] to furnish. if they are not as he agreed you need not accept them you had better have some one look at them that is a judge Uncle Orrin would be

a good one their was no time set which I was to pay for them, but just as quick as we are paid again, which will be some time in Nov. I will send the money to pay for them ---

I will send you \$10 in this letter and if you want more before next Nov. just let me know. I had ment [meant] to send the money while at Auburn but could get no chance and while at the Ferry I did not consider it safe to send money in a letter I have not heard from Ed as yet I wrote you but a day or two ago, but only a few lines.

[Written on first page, along left hand margin] I have nothing more to write now - my health is good and I think that I am getting quite fleshy Remember me to all the Sodus folks etc etc.

You had better have Winchester look at those notes for they may not be Jenuine [?] if not return them immediately, but I guess there is no danger

Love to you all

Gus

[Written along top margin of first page – perhaps in pencil as it is more faint, believe it was written later by someone else “ About Tomb stones 25\$ & 5\$ _____ “]

NO Number, but it could be #4?

Camp Douglas Chicago, Ill

October 17, 1862

Dear Sister

Your letters of the 7th & 10th was received in due time, but it takes 5 days for a letter to come from Sodus here I had just written to you in the morning when I received yours in the afternoon or I should have answered your first sooner.

I just received one from Lottie, the first that I have received since I came here she wrote me it seems before but I did not receive it, the last she wrote came in two days, twice as quickly as they come from Sodus, in my last letter I enclosed 10 dollars and I hope you have received that. We had a fire down here in camp and some of the Barracks burned down last night but it did not come near us, some think that the Soldiers set them on fire. You wished me to write in regard to Henry Knight whether I thought he was shot by their own men. I can tell what I think, and it is no knowing. It seems that the enemy did fire one round at us and then run, some I am quite shure were shot by our own men but it is hard telling who. When the fire commenced Co D was ordered to left wheel which brought the right of the company quite a distance down the hill and of course it was more exposed to the fire of our men, and from the enemy. I will show you the position [position] in which our Reg was drawn up on other sheet of paper. Henry could not speak after he was shot. I saw him a few moments before he died but he was unconscious. The doctor told me that he had asked him some questions but he could not speak, but would press his hand when he asked a question. It would have been impossible to have sent his body home then and it would be still more now. Every thing was done for him that could have been under the circumstances ----

I believe I wrote to you that Kell Fairbanks had been here last Sunday and also Joe Collins and a number more. Ed Proseus is nearly well again and all the Sodus Boys are getting along well. I have no news to write more than that we are all well. It is getting quite late and as I want to write some to mother I must close this. Wright [sic] often. Give my Love to all inquiring friends

Good by

Gus

No. 5 crossed out and number 6 added

[In pencil at bottom of page] "About money & mother"

Undated, but believe it may have been included with letter addressed to Sister, dated Oct 17, 1862 so am placing it here for now.

To Mother

Dear Mother

As I have not written to you as yet I will take this opportunity to write you a few lines. I have written all the news to Net [?] and I suppose she reads my letters to you, (and if she don't I will give her a good scholding next time) so I shall have to fill this sheet with questions. In the first place have you got wood as yet and can you get any one to saw it? have you got the cistern covered up, and have you money enough to get all those things if not let me know and I will send it to you. I hear that Malory [?] has sold his shop to Sprong, perhaps it is not so for I did not come verry straight. Have you got hay for the cow this winter? you will have to get some one to fix] the stable before cold weather. If I only could get home now for a month or so I could straghten things up some, but I suppose it will be impossible. Have they got the new church done as yet? And how does it look. You must write me all the news. I have been fixing up my rooms today. I have enlarged the room and taken in Capt. Lusk & Lieut Laing & Soverhill So Ed Parsons & I stay with the commissioned officers, geting up in the world Tomorrow we will get a stove in and then we can make it quite comfortable. We have fine weather again, and I begin to like it hear I took a walk in the prairie the other day and saw lots of chickens and I realy wished that I could get my teeth in some of them after they were cooked. How many chickens have you? My candle has burned nearly out and I must close, so good by for this time I remain as

Ever your affectionate

Son Augustus

Camp Douglas Chicago Ill

Nov. 13, 1862

Dear Sister

Your most welcome letter was recd yesterday, and I am sorry that you were so sadly disapointed after going to so much trouble. I should have enjoyed the chicken very much and should be very glad to come home on a visit but I do not now nor never have expected such a thing. It is strange that their are so many false reports reaches you. It is true that their was reports published in the paper to that effect but without any ground. The talk among the boys was that we were a going to N.Y., but I have seen to[o] much of this kind of talk to believe a word of it. I notice that the Republican [Lyons Republican newspaper?] you sent states that we have received our pay, but that is not so we may get it in two weeks, I think it likely that we may. The reports now are that we are to be exchanged soon and some even say that that we are exchanged but we are not, and there seems to be but a small chance for us. I hope it may prove true that we are exchanged. I should judge from what I have heard, that the people in Wayne & Cayuga were badly fooled in regard to our coming home. I hope it may not occur again for they have all stoped writing to me. Lottie too must think that I am coming home for I have not had a letter from her in over two weeks.

Now don't you stop writing again until I write and tell you that we are to leave. I will let you know in time, and don't go to the trouble to kill another pullet for me until I get home which I fear will not be this winter. I shall try and get a furlough to go and visit Ed if it is possible, but I do not have much hopes

[Following page has No. 5 written at top, but content makes it more likely to have been written in early November and therefore after the letter identified as No. 6, dated Oct 17, 1862. It is possible that it is a continuation of letter dated Nov.13, 1862, so that is why I place it here.]

I have not seen anything of that letter that you promised to write monday it is time for that to be here. The one you wrote friday night was nearly six days coming (a dreadful long time) I received a letter from Ed to day he writes that they are all well and he is busy husking corn He says that my namesake has got nearly long enough to handle a sword I suppose that Lottie will be home by the time this reaches you tell her that she must write me a little more punctual than she has been doing I have received but three letters from her since I left (avarage one a month) but I know there have been some lost. Just as quick as I get my pay I will send the money to pay for that tomb stone You must write all about your School when you write again - Ed Proseus was here today he is not discharged from the hospital as yet, but he is well and all that is lacking is strength He said he expected to here [hear] every day that his father was ded [dead] - the last he heard from them was that he could not live but a few days. There seems to be a great many deaths this fall. Aunt Lucy's death very unexpected to me. One of our company died Oct 30 of the diphtheria his name was Amos Parker from Marion. Our Company is the largest in the Regt now, we number 92 Enlisted men & three Commissioned Officers – Five men have deserted. Capt. Lusk is now at Newark on a furlough of Twenty days he said if he went to Sodus he would call and see you. Allen Hiserote left here a week ago last Monday for Sodus. you never knew him for we was away before you came home. He used to go to school at the Academy and Enlisted in the 17th Regt the same time I did. He said he would call and see you Mother must remember him. He said that Capt. Miller thought all the world of his Comp I can think of nothing more to write now.

Remember me to all

Good by

Gus

Camp Pomeroy Virginia

Dec. 24. 1862

Dear Sister

Your most welcome letter was received last night and I can assure you that it was read with much pleasure. The money and stamps came safe and I think I shall have enough to last until we are paid off now. The thing you sent by Rat [?] came safe, and very acceptable and you can not imagine how much I enjoy them. I will tell you what we intend to have for dinner to morrow (Christmas). I say we for Ed & I live together. For breakfast we intend to have sausages Breat [Bread] butter coffee & ginger snaps. for dinner Beef Steak Oysters Bread butter & Coffee & for supper Coffee Bread Butter Stewed Berries & ginger snaps don't you think we will have a feast Well we have been feasting ever since we recd our things. Ed got a baked Chicken some butter, a soft cake some dried berries and Cherries, a can of pickled peaches & four apples. His letter stated that their had been some cheese sugar & Coffee sent but he did not get them if they were sent some of the other boys got them. The weather here is warm and pleasant and we are having good times the boys are to work on the Fort most of the time The fort (Fort Lyons) when it is finished will enclose 53 acres. we are about a mile from it.

I intended to write yet but after supper I found that I had eaten so much that I could not set up comfortably so I waited until to day – don't you think I had a good excuse? who could govern their appetite when they had such good things to Eat. I could not and so I didn't - If I don't stop eating so much I will be as fat Lottie by and by and then I fear I should be so handsome that I will would not have to come home for fear of the girls. (That's a joke) as A Wood says - but every one that writes to me has something to say about & how handsome Lottie has grown - I had a letter from Ella the other day and she says Lottie look[s] a "great deal better than when she left." Now it makes me angry to hear them say how much better she looked and not say one word about your good looks, don't it you? You just speak

[?] to Ella about is, and pull her ears for me. Perhaps though they think there is no chance for any improvement in your looks better than she did, and still think there is a chance for improvement yet. But than I can't think so for they say she looks like me, and that in my estimation is sufficient proof that she is beautiful and I guess they all think so --- Tell her not to spoil all her good looks by covering her beautiful Yaller hair with that net she is constructing

I have not heard from Ed in a long time have not had but two letters from since I left home and those I received while at Chicago --- I shall have to give him a good scolding next time I write him. I am glad that Lottie paid that man for those Tombstones. I forgot to tell about it in my last, but it is all right and she may charge it to me. I think the regt will be paid off the first or second week in January and then I shall send \$70 home again we will receive four months pay and mine will amount to \$80. I suppose that Wiley will want his pay but he must wait until I get my pay. I suppose that you are having sleighing in Sodus at this [?] and perhaps Cold stormy weather, instead of such nice warm days as we have here. to day I am siting [sic] in my tent with my coat off and no fire in the stove, and am plenty warm enough. I hope you will not have to stand out in the snow again watching a burning Chimney, and I shall write to Mother and tell her how you threw all her salt in the stove, for I will warrant [?] you never told her. I should like to know whether you stood midway in the snow, between the house and shop or midway between the House & shop in the snow. If the former it must have been a sorry Light [sight?] to see "two thinly clad damsels standing in the snow midway, between the house & shop? I should think that Mother's slippers would have kept you top of the snow, something like snow shoes. I suppose if Mother had known any thing about it she would have asked, "Had I better commence taking up the carpets" the same as when Rodricks house was on fire ... But enough of this

[No. 7 written at top – because of content, believe the following was part of letter dated Dec. 24, 1862]

and I hope no one of you will take any pride in what I have said about your good looks [?] , slippers [?]
etc & etc, for I don't mean any of it, but I think that Aunt Louisa has made a beautiful selection, and I
shall be glad to call him Uncle Coy [?]

I have written all that I can think of this time I will write to Lottie Sunday I want you should write me
regularly once a week & I will answer it regularly, and Lottie must do the same, so if you will both write
once a week, one the first and one the middle, I can in that way hear for [from?] home twice a week, and
if I answer them (which I will) you can hear from me twice a week. Do you understand the basis of
operation? write soon and give me all the news. I have nothing more to write that I can think of
Remember me to all -- accept this & oblige

[no signature]

*[written at bottom along the left side of page – probably in pencil – About the Tomb stones & money for
mother]*

Camp Hays Va

Feb. 1. 1863

Dear Sister

Your most welcomed letter came safe to hand and was read with much pleasure. You may think that we have moved again by the heading of this, but it is not the case, only changed the name of our Camp again. There has nothing of any importance occurred since I last wrote you so I have not much to write. I believe that I told you in my last that I was -- accept to act as Lieut of the Picket the next day -- Well I acted, but every thing passed off quiet -- "All quiet on the Potomac" -- Nary Reb was to be seen. Since then I was detailed as Lieut of the reserve for Thursday night and met with the same success as when on picket. I suppose you don't know what I mean by "reserves" so I will explain. Every night there is 40 or 50 men sent to our picket lines to support them in case of any attack and remain until day light. Their has been great changes in the weather since I last wrote, we have had rain mud and snow alternate tonight it is raining. I fear that we will loose [sic] one of our Sodus boys -- Emory Pratt is very sick with the Typoid fever & the Dr say he cannot recover. It is to[o] bad to loose [sic] as good a soldier as he has proved himself and his loss will be felt in the ranks as well and as deeply as by his friends. We are much in need of men like him. Were they all of that class I think we would meet with better success than we have for the times back. He has always been ready for all Kinds of duty, and proformed [sic] it faithfully. Still I hope he may be spared. "While there is life there is hope." It does really seem to me that nearly half of our Soldiers care nothing for our Union. They would be willing to sacrifice all if they they could get out of the service. Poor cowards that they are - they don't know how to prise [prize?] what they have never been deprived of Some are homesick, and don't know that they are here to protect their homes. Could they really know the value of a home it seems to me that they would be willing to suffer the few hardships of a soldier life for its protection, but enough of this. It is getting quite late and

as I want to write a few lines to Mother I will close this. I will send you some grass [?] that grew in my tent, but I suppose it will be hay when you get it good night sister Hettie

No. 9

Dear Mother

Words cannot half express the gratitude I feel [sic] when I think what a dear good Mother you have always been to me. I fear that at times I have proved unworthy of your Love, but I know that I have always been forgiven I am glad to know that your house is a happy one, and my every endeavor shall be to have it to remain thus. I can do no more at present for its protection in my opinion than to aid in putting down this rebellion. Though it deprives me of many of the pleasures I might enjoy were I with you, still I feel it a duty which every one owes to their Country and their homes. It relieves me of a load when I can think that you are happy. I believe the war cannot last much longer though at present it does look dark. I cannot wish to see it closed by a compromise for I think that would be dishonorable after so many lives have been lost. There is but one way that I can think of and that is for the south to lay down their arms and submit to a government they have been trying to destroy – Then I can be content to remain at home and do all in my power to make it pleasant for you. It is now time to put out my lite so I must close. With much love I remain as ever

Your affectionate Son

Camp Hays, Va

Feb 8, 1863

Dear Sister

Your most welcome letter was received last night and read with much pleasure, but as usual I have nothing to write to night that will be interesting to you. Your letter came in camp Friday, but as I was out on picket I did not get it until last night. I am sorry that you were displeased for not receiving a letter from me. I think you could not have received all my letters I have written every Sunday to you since Lottie has been at Newark and one week I wrote twice. Now don't think when you don't get my letter that yours are not interesting to me. The weather has been quite cold for a week past, but to day in [it] has the appearance of warm weather again. I was out on picket twice last week, or I should had com [?]

[the following seems to refer to the picket duty, but the end statement of the previous page and that of this page do not seem to flow]

of them twice and one night it rained and it snowed the whole time and the other was a cold as Greenland, so I did not have a very pleasant time of it. I do not do much at the Orderly business nowadays, for I have enough of the Lieut to act. I expect to get my Commiss tomorrow or next day so if you hear of a long envelop or letter coming to Sodus directed to A. W. Proseus you may take it out and keep it open it if you please but don't send it back. I shall send it home if I get and after that you may direct Lieut etc. George Paddock is now in camp he came to see Pratt. I am glad to say there are good hope of his (Pratts) recovery. I could not think who it was that was writing such stories home about our being naked and starving.

I am sorry to say that Malory and Snyder don't make the Soldiers I had expected they would. They are so homesick that they don't know what they are about. I can't see why the Capt. Has done to Malory that he should write as he does. I heard the Capt [Capt] say the other day that if he could get any thing out of Malory he would make a sergeant of him but if he don't do any duty he can't expect it. If it had not been for the Capt Mal would have been reduced to the ranks a week or two ago. There are some that would do any thing to get out of the service, and I can't see any reason but cowardice for it. Our Col is at Albany now or has been we expect him here to morrow and I suppose he will bring his Commiss and perhaps mine. The pay master is reported in this vicinity and we will be paid tomorrow or next day "good news" If we get it I shall write the middle of the week again and send you some money to get what you are in want of such as wood etc. They say we will be paid for but two months this time. I have no more to write at present so will close.

Remember m to all Love to mother & Aunt Louise don't get mad and not write me again

Good night from

Augustus

No 10

Camp Hays Va

Feb. 10. 1863

Dear Sister & Mother

I wrote you Sunday but as I told you that I would write you as soon as we were paid off I will take this opportunity to do so. Our regt recd two months pay to day, we were paid up to the 1st of Nov. I received 42 dollars. I will send home (\$30) thirty dollars. I wish it was so I could send you more but we did [not] get piad [paid] up to the 1st of Jan as I supposed.

Our Lt. Col has returned and is now Col & the Maj. Lt. Col , so we have a Maj lacking. It is not desided as yet who will be, but I think that Cap Lusk stands the best chance of any in the Regt. The Col saw my commiss all filled out before he left Albany & I suppose it is now at Washington. I don't know what Clothes of mine I shall want sent me as yet perhaps nothing more than my sash & over coat Sling -= I shall write you again the last of this week.

I have nothing to write of any interest. The weather has be quite warm for the past few days. Now if you want to use all of this money you need not pay Wyley until we next paid off I would not pay him more than half at any rate now he ought to wait one year for the whole. Remember me to all inquiring friends

Good night

Gus

P.S. Direct

Lieut W. W. Proseus

Etc etc.

Blank page – No 11

Camp Hays Centerville VA

Feb 22, 1863

Dear Sister

Yours of Tuesday evening was recd last night and read with much pleasure. I did not expect an answer so soon and you must know that it relieved me considerably to hear that the money went safe. While I think of it I wish you would change your day of writing me to Tuesday evening. Those that you write Thursday does not reach me until Wednesday night the next week. You see it takes them nearly a week. I received one from Lottie too last night and Friday night one from Ed & Cill [Bill?] Parsons also. Ed had just received his "barrel" that you sent him last fall. It has been a great while going, but he says every thing came safe and in good order. He ways that Em woke up one morning and said she had dreamed that her Aunt Hettie & Uncle Gus was coming to visit her – I never knew that Children as young as she ever drempt. Well I hope her dream may come to pass some time? don't you!

I have just finished my dinner & finished a letter to Lottie that I commenced this morning. I will tell you what I had for dinner and I guess you will think that I am living on the "top shelf" We had sausages, bread, butter, stewed peaches, tea, sugar, Cheese & ginger snaps. For breakfast this morning with beef steak in the place of sausages. Well I suppose you will want to know how we got all those nice things - Well we buy them of the Sutler I say we I mean Capt Lusk Lieut Laing & Lieut Proseus I received my Commission last Mon. & take rank & pay from January 17th. I hear that we are to be paid again in about 12 days and up to the first of March. I will then receive nearly \$200 more money than I shall know what to do with. I have been thinkin[g] some of buying our house and lot or that is buying out you Lottie and Ed if you are all willing to sell Mother I would want her to stay I should to buy it subject to her 1/3 But I guess that I had better wait until this war closes - if it ever does I think that six months more will close the war or at least all the fighting will be done inside of that time. This rebellion

has been carried up to such a height, that when it once begins to fall its fall will be rappid [sic] and will entirely demolish it.

I had to lay this one [a]side for a short time long enough to go to Head Quarter and look at some Clothes. When I get my new suit I shall go to Washington and get some pictures taken and send you one. Now I will tell you what I want you to send me. In the first place get me the best trunk that you can find in any of the stores, of good size or about the size of yours or a little larger if you can find such and if it has not got good strong straps on get the Harness maker to put some one and in that you can pack my things Send my Dress Coat (I mean my Millitary [sic] or "long tail blue") Over Coat sling (that leather Harness), sash, and one of those hooks for my Sword Belt it look something like this (8) or I guess I can do better this time ([drawing of hook]) not much neither but I guess you will know what I mean. There are two on the belt and they are what hooks in the rings of the Sword send one of them the Sword & Belt I don't want if you have got it you may send a darning needle & some yarn socks I have plenty of put in a few needles & some black linen thread. If Uncle Proseus wants to send any thing to Ed you can let them put it in the trunk that is all that I think of unless you have an extra Comfortable that you can spare just as well or not than if the trunk is not full you can send whatever you have in the eating line – I will send \$5.00 to pay the express of the trunk and other traps [?] you send I suppose the charge will be \$200 [\$2.00?] by express -- If you have not money enough to pay for the trunk get it Charged to Me I guess Gaylord will trust me a short time –

This has been an awfull stormy day. It commenced snowing last night about 10 & has been snowing ever since. The Snow is six inches deep and the wind blows hard enough & Cold enough to freeze our nose.

Then you went to the exhibition with Mary did you? Well what do you think of her. I recd a letter from her while at Chicago and she stated in that, that she would like to know the reason of my long continued

silence toward her and said if she had done any thing to offend me, "Let it be my duty to Kindly correct and not keep that cold Silence that was freezing her" I answered it satisfactory I believe since then I have a couple letters from her friendship letters not the other kind. I think she has improved much much [sic] in writing Do you hear any thing about Zell McCarty Is she in Sodus this winter and does she go with any one – but I suppose that you know nothing about her Your and Mother letter was also recd last week I don't see what D' Ulassy [?] could have done to Malony, Emory Pratt is getting well. I suppose that George Whitbeck is at home by this time. I believe that I have written all that I can think of this time –

I hope that you will be able to read this. Direct that trunk Lieut S. W. Proseus, Co. E, 111th Rgt N.Y.S.V. Washington D.C. No more now

Bro Gus

No. 13

Guard House

Camp Hays Centerville VA

May 3, 1863

Dear Sister

Your welcome letters have both been received, one to night and the other last Friday night -- So you see that I shall try and work a little head work by answering them both at a time. I must confess that I don't feel much like writing to night but I shall endeavor to do the best I can. The weather very fine here nowadays almost to[o] warm for comfortable and the roads are getting dusty To night we received an order to be prepared to march in the morning with three days rations in our haversacks, but perhaps we may not leave after all. Should we and I get a chance I will write to you a line or so just as we start. I am tired of staying Centerville any longer, so every thing that indicates a march pleases me if it don't you. I have confidence in Gen Hooker and think he intends to conquer and I believe whatever he undertakes he will go through with. According to newspaper reports he has crossed the river and done it in such a quiet way that the enemy knew nothing about it, for it seems that he supprised [sic] and captured the pickets. Well what an awful letter I have written so far. The Guard house is not a very pleasant place for letter writing especially when one has to use his knees for a writing desk and has to incumbered with a Sword, Sash & belt or rather harness. I have not been to Washington or got to have those photographs taken for the reason that I had not got my papers as yet, but if we don't move the first of the week I shall have them and then I shall lose no time going to Wash -

I have received no pay as yet but can get when at Washington I can borrow what money I want here and will send home ten dollars \$10 for I suppose you have not got a large amt on hand. I like your dress

much and think it rather prettier than Lotties – but I guess that you forgot to put in a piece of her's at least I did not find it. Lottie sent me a piece so it is just as well.

Have you got that record of Co. E I sent you. I sent one to Lottie and Ed the same time. I will send you a star to work on toe of a pair of slipper should you ever have occasion to use it. It is perfectly Original I never saw anything of the kind before. The part marked with a pencil should be Green and the other red -- You must be shure and send me your photograph just soon as you get it. Did Zell have anything to say about me -- I was on picket Tuesday night when you wrote me I can think of nothing more to write this time and as it is time for me to visit my Guard I must close write soon and direct as usual

Love to all

Gus

Camp Hays Centerville Va

June 7, 1863

Dear Sister

As I am officer of the day to night I think I can improve the long hours best that I have to remain up, by writing to you and Mother. In fact I have not much to write about and as it is quite Chilly to night what little I might write seems to be frozen up so I can't think of it. Well to start with your letter of last Sunday was recd last night and recd with pleasure. The next thing of any importance and which is of course uppermost in my mind is the Ladies that are in camp. We have what I call a crinoline Brigade which bids fare to be one of the great magnitude if not multitude. Recruits arrive every day by dozens, and if they continue for a month in the same rates, many of us will have to surrender unconditionally. Mrs. Lusk & Mrs. Brown arrived yesterday and what bothers me most is that they are all Mrs. So & so – but enough of this. I received a letter from Lottie also yesterday and those everlasting photographs. You must burn the two that I sent you a week ago for they are not fit to have any where in sight. And these are not much better but I think they look more natural. I will send you one and one for Anna that is if you think she will accept it. And send me hers in return. I will see how many I have printed before I send on to Augusta S [G?]

Mrs. Moses is in Camp. the Dr. is so he can walk about but I should judge he was quite weak as yet. Then you do see that cowardly Whitbeck occasionally. I hear that he says he has a discharge but I don't think it is the case, for we have received no notice of it as yet, which I am shure we would were it so. He has never had a descriptive list sent him yet from here and the Col will not send it. Col MacDougall wrote to the Surgeon in Rochester and said that he Whitbeck was nothing more than a deserter. All the

boy[s] in the company think that he has made all his lameness. He told three or four boys when we left Chicago that he had two games he should play to get out of the service, for he said he could not bear the thought of coming down here to be shot at. I think such men do more hurt than good in the army and the quicker the army, and also the peaceful part of the world, are rid of them the better.

You must tell mother not to saw her wood nor hoe in the garden. I had ten times rather pay any one for doing it than to have her do it. I shall get my pay this week and will send her all the money she wants there must be those that She can hire. I had rather pay three times what it is worth than to have her do it be shure now and have her get some one to do it. If she don't I shall write and get some one to do it --- Where is Will Noble now, and why don't you write him. I shall say to you as I do to Mother if you don't write to him I shall or hire some one to do it. I can think of nothing more to write. So good night
Love to All

Bro Gus

P.S. I did not bring Em's likeness with me when I left the last I saw of them was in the my stand
Drawer upstairs

No. 17

