

Letters Home: Civil War Descriptions

GRADE LEVEL: 9-12

INTRODUCTION

History courses often teach about wars by focusing on their causes, consequences, key battles or turning points. An alternative approach is to study how diverse individuals experienced and responded to such moments. Historical letters offer glimpses into the past that reveal the meanings that contemporaries made of events they experienced. They illustrate the values, beliefs, and understandings that mattered to historical actors and the ways in which political events intersected with personal agendas.

This activity encourages students to personalize the past by reading letters written by a wide range of Civil War contemporaries, including men and women, northerners and southerners, and blacks and whites.

In a follow up activity, pairs of students select their own identities (names, race/ethnicity, gender, age, side in the war, location, etc.) and write three letters to one another regarding memorable events occurring in 1863.

These exercises call on students to research events from the past and imagine how individuals from a range of backgrounds might interpret them.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The American Civil War (1861-1865) marked a profound transformation in U.S. government and society. It was the first modern war, in which armies consisting of militarily un-experienced recruits from a cross-section of both North and South faced one another across battlefields. There they employed weapons created by modern technology to destroy one another in unprecedented numbers. This was a war that rapidly escalated from an effort to preserve the Union to a conflict over the nature of that Union, a conflict that pitted slavery against freedom. And its consequences ran the gamut from centralizing federal power to legally freeing black Americans and stimulating significant economic development.

The war was marked by several key events. For example, during 1863 alone, Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, Union forces won in the battles of Gettysburg, Vicksburg, and Chattanooga, and some 50,000 New Yorkers, many of them members of the Irish working-class, looted stores and lynched and beat blacks in Draft Riots.

Americans experienced such events and the more general transitions the war stimulated differently depending on their geographic location, side in the war, class status, race, gender, and country of origin. Free African Americans in the north experienced the Emancipation Proclamation differently than slaves in loyal border states or those in Confederate states already under Union control, neither of whom were liberated by the Proclamation. While the Emancipation Proclamation might have inspired a northern black man to enlist in the war effort, an enslaved man might have reacted by running away.

Similarly, women experienced the war differently than men did. Whether they tended to farms and businesses in the absence of the men who had run such endeavors in times of peace or overtly engaged in the military effort as nurses, spies, or soldiers, their relationship to the war differed from their male counterparts. Class mattered too. Despite the 1863 Enrollment Act of Conscription, which made all single men between the ages of 20 and 45 and married men between 20 and 35 subject to a draft, wealthy northerners could hire substitutes to take their place. Ethnicity further served to distinguish the war experiences of contemporaries. Irish and German working-class immigrants, many of whom competed with African Americans for jobs, resented the war's turn to end slavery and resisted enlistment, most notably through the New York Draft Riots.

This activity encourages students to explore how diverse Americans responded to specific events during the course of the Civil War by analyzing letters written at the time and then composing their own.

THEMES: war, race, ethnicity, class, and gender

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Following this activity, students will be able to do the following:

1. Analyze Civil War correspondence to understand contemporary responses to current events.
2. Compare and contrast how race, class, gender, and ethnicity shaped responses to particular events.
3. Use contemporary discourse to write letters between imagined correspondents during the war.

NEW JERSEY STANDARDS

STANDARD 6.1 (Social Studies) All students will examine source data within the historical, social, political, geographic, or economic context in which it was created, testing credibility and evaluating bias.

STANDARD 6.4 (United States and New Jersey History) All students will analyze key issues, events, and personalities of the Civil War period, including New Jersey's role in the Abolitionist Movement and the national elections, the development of the Jersey Shore, and the roles of women and children in New Jersey factories.

MATERIALS

- Written Document Analysis Worksheet from the National Archives (Appendix A).
- Sullivan Ballou to Sarah Ballou, July 14, 1861, Camp Clark, Washington (Letter), from Ken Burns, *The Civil War* (Appendix B).

- Letters of David Demus and Mary Jane Demus, November 8, 1863 and February 23, 1864, Franklin County, Pennsylvania, from the Virginia Center for Digital History, *Valley of the Shadow* (Appendix C).
- Letters of E. and Fannie Hunt, December 1, 1861, Franklin County, Pennsylvania from *Valley of the Shadow* (Appendix D).
- Letters of Samuel M. Potter and Cynthia Potter, December 10, 1862 and July 20, 1863, Franklin County, Pennsylvania, *Valley of the Shadow* (Appendix E).
- Letters of Andrew Brooks and Mary Susan Brooks, January 23, 1861 and May 28, 1861, Augusta County, Virginia (Appendix F).
- Letters of John H. Cochran and his mother, December 11, and December 21, 1860, Augusta County, Virginia (Appendix G).
- Letter of Mary Todd Lincoln to Abraham Lincoln, November 3, 1862 and Eliza S. Quincy to Mary Todd Lincoln, January 2, 1863, the Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress (Appendix H).
- Access to the Internet, textbooks, or school library for information about the ways in which diverse Americans experienced the Civil War.

DETAILS OF ACTIVITY

Part 1: Writing Home (10 min.):

Ask students what medium they use to communicate with one another and their parents in day-to-day life. Ask them if they know what vehicles of communication existed during the American Civil War (1861-1865) (e.g. the telegraph and hand-written letters). Ask students when they last wrote or received a hand written letter and have them consider some of the differences between hand-written communication and e-mail, cell phones, Facebook and Tweeting.

Distribute the Sullivan Ballou letter (Appendix B). Briefly describe Ballou's background and then analyze the letter as a class. Ask the students to consider the following questions:

- When was the letter written and how does it fit into the historical narrative of the Civil War?
- Why do you think Ballou wrote this letter?
- How do you think his wife and children responded to it?
- What is the significance of the letter? What does it tell us about the Civil War and individuals' experiences of the war?

Part 2: Personalizing Civil War Events (30 min.):

Divide students into six groups and have each group read one of the pairs of letters in the appendices. The letters illustrate an array of perspectives, including southern and northern, black (Demus) and white. Distribute the Written Document Analysis Worksheet from the National Archives and have students use it to analyze their assigned documents. They should pay particular attention to when the letter was written and how it reflects events of the time as well as personal concerns. Based on the letter, what can students infer about the side of the war the author supports and his/her attitude toward the conflict? Have students consider how generalizable their findings are.

Part 3: Reporting Out (15 minutes)

Have one member from each group pretend to be the letter writer and share the contents of the letter by describing him/herself, his/her correspondent, and the nature of their correspondence. Ask students what they learned from this exercise about the Civil War and its contemporaries that they had not previously known.

Follow-up: Writing Civil War Letters (1-2 class periods, including additional homework time for research).

Divide students into pairs and assign half the class to be Union and the other half to be Confederates. Beyond that, students should be free to choose their own identities. They will need to select identities (names, race/ethnicity, gender, age, relationship, location, etc.) and write three letters to one another in character. Each letter should comment both on their personal lives (romances, finances, health, general updates about family and friends) and also on at least one key political event. Teachers might suggest limiting all three letters to a single pivotal year, such as 1863. Using resources noted below and independent investigation, students should research the key events of the time and the characters they are assuming. To appear authentic, ask students to handwrite letters, enclose them in envelopes, and include some sort of keepsake, such as a lock of hair, photograph, or poem.

REFERENCES and WEBSITES:

This lesson plan is adapted from “Civil War Letters,” part of PBS’s Civil War website developed as a supplement to Ken Burns’s documentary on the Civil War (http://www.pbs.org/civilwar/classroom/lesson_letters.html).

For basic information regarding significant events during the Civil War, see Time Line of the Civil War, Library of Congress, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/cwphtml/tl1861.html>.

For a nice overall synthesis of the Civil War, including chapters of ethnicity, nativism and African-American participation, see Eugene H. Berwanger (ed.), *The Civil War Era: Historical Viewpoints* (Forth Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1994).

For information about how women experienced the war, see the following websites:

Civil War Women, Online Archival Collections, Special Collections Library, Duke University, <http://library.duke.edu/specialcollections/collections/digitized/civil-war-women/>.

Civil War Women: Primary Sources on the Internet, Sallie Bingham Center for Women’s History and Culture, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, <http://library.duke.edu/specialcollections/ingham/guides/cwdocs.html>.

For other correspondence, pictures, diaries, and news accounts written by men and women in Augusta County, Virginia and Franklin County, Pennsylvania from the time of John Brown’s

Raid through Reconstruction, see Virginia Center for Digital History, *Valley of the Shadow: Two Communities in the American Civil War*, <http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/>.

To read more of Mary Todd Lincoln's correspondence search under keyword "Mary Todd Lincoln" at the Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/alhtml/malhome.html>.

Appendix A: Written Document Analysis Worksheet

1. TYPE OF DOCUMENT (Check one):

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> Map | <input type="checkbox"/> Advertisement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Letter | <input type="checkbox"/> Telegram | <input type="checkbox"/> Congressional record |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patent | <input type="checkbox"/> Press release | <input type="checkbox"/> Census report |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Memorandum | <input type="checkbox"/> Report | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

2. UNIQUE PHYSICAL QUALITIES OF THE DOCUMENT (Check one or more):

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interesting letterhead | <input type="checkbox"/> Notations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Handwritten | <input type="checkbox"/> "RECEIVED" stamp |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Typed | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seals | |

3. DATE(S) OF DOCUMENT:

4. AUTHOR (OR CREATOR) OF THE DOCUMENT:

POSITION (TITLE):

5. FOR WHAT AUDIENCE WAS THE DOCUMENT WRITTEN?

6. DOCUMENT INFORMATION (There are many possible ways to answer A-E.)

A. List three things the author said that you think are important:

B. Why do you think this document was written?

C. What evidence in the document helps you know why it was written? Quote from the document.

D. List two things the document tells you about life in the United States at the time it was written:

E. Write a question to the author that is left unanswered by the document:

Appendix B: Sullivan Ballou to Sarah Ballou, July 14, 1861

July 14, 1861

Camp Clark, Washington

My very dear Sarah:

The indications are very strong that we shall move in a few days—perhaps tomorrow. Lest I should not be able to write again, I feel impelled to write a few lines that may fall under your eye when I shall be no more . . .

I have no misgivings about, or lack of confidence in the cause in which I am engaged, and my courage does not halt or falter. I know how strongly American Civilization now leans on the triumph of the Government and how great a debt we owe to those who went before us through the blood and sufferings of the Revolution. And I am willing—perfectly willing—to lay down all my joys in this life, to help maintain this Government, and to pay that debt . . .

Sarah my love for you is deathless, it seems to bind me with mighty cables that nothing but Omnipotence could break; and yet my love of Country comes over me like a strong wind and bears me unresistibly on with all these chains to the battle field.

The memories of the blissful moments I have spent with you come creeping over me, and I feel most gratified to God and to you that I have enjoyed them for so long. And hard it is for me to give them up and burn to ashes the hopes of future years, when, God willing, we might still have lived and loved together, and seen our sons grown up to honorable manhood, around us. I have, I know, but few and small claims upon Divine Providence, but something whispers to me—perhaps it is the wafted prayer of my little Edgar, that I shall return to my loved ones unharmed. If I do not my dear Sarah, never forget how much I love you, and when my last breath escapes me on the battle field, it will whisper your name. Forgive my many faults and the many pains I have caused you. How thoughtless and foolish I have often times been! How gladly would I wash out with my tears every little spot upon your happiness . . .

But, O Sarah! If the dead can come back to this earth and flit unseen around those they loved, I shall always be near you; in the gladdest days and in the darkest nights . . . always, always, and if there be a soft breeze upon your cheek, it shall be my breath, as the cool air fans your throbbing temple, it shall be my spirit passing by. Sarah do not mourn me dead; think I am gone and wait for thee, for we shall meet again . . .

Sullivan Ballou was killed a week later at the first Battle of Bull Run, July 21, 1861.

Born March 28, 1829 in Smithfield, R.I., Ballou was educated at Phillips Academy in Andover, Mass.; Brown University in Providence, R.I. and the National Law School in Ballston, N.Y. He was admitted to the Rhode Island Bar in 1853.

Ballou devoted his brief life to public service. He was elected in 1854 as clerk of the Rhode Island House of Representatives, later serving as its speaker.

He married Sarah Hart Shumway on October 15, 1855, and the following year saw the birth of their first child, Edgar. A second son, William, was born in 1859.

Ballou immediately entered the military in 1861 after the war broke out. He became judge advocate of the Rhode Island militia and was 32 at the time of his death at the first Battle of Bull Run on July 21, 1861.

When he died, his wife was 24. She later moved to New Jersey to live out her life with her son, William, and never re-married. She died at age 80 in 1917. Sullivan and Sarah Ballou are buried next to each other at Swan Point Cemetery in Providence, RI. There are no known living descendants.

Ironically, Sullivan Ballou's letter was never mailed. Although Sarah would receive other, decidedly more upbeat letters, dated after the now-famous letter from the battlefield, the letter in question would be found among Sullivan Ballou's effects when Gov. William Sprague of Rhode Island traveled to Virginia to retrieve the remains of his state's sons who had fallen in battle.

This letter is accessible at: http://www.pbs.org/civilwar/war/ballou_letter.html

Appendix C: Letters of David Demus and Mary Jane Demus, November 8, 1863 and February 23, 1864

november the 8th 1863

My Dear Wife

I take this opportunity to inform you that i am Well at present and hoping that these few lines may find you in the same state of health i receive your letter on the 5th of this month and i Was very glad to hear from you all and i happy to hear that you have got such good health since i left home but i am afraid that you are going to hurt yourself Working i don't think that you ought to go out in the field to husk Corn or do any such Work i don't think nothing of you Working at Mr paterson some times but i don't Want to hear of you going in the field to any more and you need mind What you hear all the talk that his son Can talk Won't Hurt you i he think that i Won't get home soon but i Would a Come home this time but i thought We Will get our money in a few days and as soon as We get it i Will be at home to stay a Will and i have only got a dollar now but if you look in the next letter i Will send you some home We have got about ninety Dollar Coming to us now and tell me how hold the thing for you you [unclear: sed] [unclear: robsen] boys What [unclear: robson] Was it for i Want to now give my love to your father and lysbeth and solomon harson and aunt merrey harson and tell them to write to me Wants give my love to all the friends

nothing more at Present but still remain

your Dear husband

David Demus to mary Demus

Direct Mr David Demus
Hilton Head SC
54th Regiment
massachusetts
volunteers

the 23 of february 1864

My Dear husman

I take my pen in hand to inform to you that I am well at preasant and I hope that These few lines may find you The same stat of helth i recive you kinde letter the 18 of february i was glad to hare form you once more but i am sorry to hare that you ar to be in a norer battel i harey have the harte to rite eney mor it tak all mi time to [unclear: stutey] and thinke abote it i tre to keep mi seff in [unclear: harte] but it wis a hard things but i hope and pry that wee will git to see ech orer agane all we cane do put ar trut in god for he the only one wee cane look too i am glad to hare

you ar well have you [unclear: haed] gut rite well i am [unclear: fard] you will cash cold in you head i ant be sike one day sinc you ben gone do you thinke if i wos sick i woud not rite to you and leat you now yet haven ben so longe sinc i rote mab you diden git it i am liven at Mr. patterson i come home when yor rote to me you was come home then you diden come i went back agane i am gonen to stay a month and little beter then i am come hom then i am gone down to John the last of march than i will stay and halp him to move if you dont com home i will [unclear: har] out this somer for ever things ar so dear i cant stay at home for i mos earn mi [unclear: clos] so meney pepel gonen a way with and [unclear: colerd] [unclear: unel] Bill Burch and purk wason jame handey o seall famel [unclear: gonen] it so meney sails [unclear: pel hisson] have a sail this week [unclear: har] mother ar gonen to to west and pet a gonen with them thay cane go for me and we welkum for thay ante fiet to go to the west i dont now [unclear: woth] i come over hom to night to rite this letter i have to go back to night i cant rite ther for the cheldren boser me too moch give love to the rest gorge and the boys i am sorry to hare thay wont pay you but thay will som day i hope aunt Mary and unel solum sends thar love to you mi best to your selff thay dont hare eney things a bout Bill Bown and unel Joney aunt sharlot ar well it 8 a klok and must brings mi letter to a clos rite sone

good night pece be with you

Mary Jane Demes

to David Demes

These letters are accessible at: <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/civwarlett-browsemod?id=F3060> and <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/civwarlett-browse?id=F3009>.

Appendix D: Letters of E. and Fannie Hunt, December 1, 1861

[unclear: Haneville] Dec. the 1 = 1861

[unclear: Ever] dear Cousins

After so long a time i once more seat my self to write a few lines to you we are all well and hope this will find you all the same we received your most welcom letter in due time and was glad to hear from you once more we had a good deal of sickness in our famly this fall it commenced in Bateses famly first little sarah Jane was taken with the bloody flux and dide she was sick five weaks before little sarah Jane dide Bateses wife was taken with the same disease she lay for 6 weaks that she [unclear: want] expected to live but through the providence of god she is better father was taken with the same disease and for two weaks we did not think he would live but he is getting better now so you may judge wether we had our hands ful or not they is great excitement hear about the war evry boddy is for fight Illinois has turnd out 70 thousand troops for the war and can send as manny more if wanted i say down with the rebel flag if it takes all we have got, our property and our lives if cotton is king then let us no it but let us wallow in blood up to our horses bridle bits before we give it up let the canons roar till evry rebel shall lay down his arms and beg for mercy Lyman you wrote, you talked of comeing west you wanted to no the price of land hear it is various prices improved farms are worth from 15 to 25 dollars a Acre prairie from 10 to 12 dollars a Acre i think you had all better sell out and come west for i think you can live easier hear than you can there tell uncle and aunt to come west and see us and then he can see the Country for i am shure if he seas it he will like it we have plenty of fruit hear this fall father had all the apples and [unclear: curence] and [unclear: laughten] berries they wanted uncle Eshon Winchesters folks are all well uncle has took Bates farm for five years he likes the county verry mutch Samuel Winchester has gone to war he is in Kentucky Polly Jane is teaching school i must draw my letter to a close for fannie wants to write a few lines you must write oftneer and i will do the same.

this from

E. and F. Hunt

good night
mutch love to all

to L. Foster and Wife

Haneville Dec. 1st 61

Ever dear Cousins

I will improve the few leisure moments allotted me in answering your kind and ever welcome letter. We was happy indeed to hear from you once more, and to hear that you were all enjoying

so good a degree of health. Our family is all well at present. Cousin Lyman how little did I think when I saw you at Mr Alexanders that I should one day address you as cousin but strange things will happen

Tell Aunt Sarah that Mother Hunt has had a very hard time of it this fall Fathers being sick and Sarah too She was first at Sarah's and then at home I would go and take care of Father when she was up to Sarahs . But she stood it remarkably well she will outdo any girl in Ill.

We are having very cold weather here now, we have snow enough to make tolerable good sleighing Now Lyman when you write again have your wife write some we want to get more acquainted with her I must close for it is late

Much love to all From your aff. Cousins

E. & F. Hunt

These letters are accessible at: <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/civwarlett-browse?id=F0647>
and <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/civwarlett-browse?id=F0648>.

Appendix E: Letters of Samuel M. Potter and Cynthia Potter, December 10, 1862 and July 20, 1863

Camp Casey Dec. 10 1862
Dear Cynthia

Marys letter informing me of your sickness came safely to hand & I felt very glad that you got along so well with your fine boy. I do not know what name to give him now. After I get home & see him I can find out a name for him. Take good care of him till I see him. I am glad too that you have such good neighbors so that you had all necessary care in your sickness.

My dutys in the hospital are to give out the medicine the Surgeon prescribed. The sick call is at eight oclock in the morning when all the sick in the companies come up to the hospital with their sore toes, sore shins, sore heads, bad colds, rheumatisms about 30 or 40 every morning come to get medicine & it takes the Dr. about 2 or 3 hours examining their ailments & prescribing the medicine for them which I have to put up for each one. Some are sick in their tent. The doctor visits & prescribes for them so they are coming in all through the day for medicine & some of us have to be on hand to give it out. We have 10 patients in our hospital who have to have their medicine & my duty is to see that they get it at the right times & to see that the nurses do their duty keeping the hospital & patients clean & properly warmed & also to see that the patients each one gets his proper diet so one of us have to overlook the cooks to get what is suitable for the patients cooked. [One poor soldier will probably] So you see I am kept very close in the hospital. This afternoon the other hospital steward Dr. Casey & myself rode out for a couple hours. We visited some of the forts handy. Fort Lincoln is in sight only 1/4 of a mile from our camp.

Well Cynthia I would very much like to have been there with you. I have felt uneasy for some time but now since it is over & you are doing well that care has been lightened & I pray God that he may continue your health that you may train up those children in the fear of the Lord & I would pray that your health that we may meet again & enjoy each others society & have that pleasure in our children we have enjoyed.

Josey must be a good boy to his little brother & nurse him for me & I know Lucy & Bell will like the boy they have got. Bell be a good girl & Lucy must be good to her sister Bell as well as her little brother. Well Mary I feel proud of the compliment the old doctor paid you. You are deserving it. May God bless you Mary & enable you to grow in grace, to adorn the Christian character & to hav your hope in heaven. Well Cynthia let us all still put our trust in that Almighty power that has kept us all in the hollow of his hand & we will be happy. No more at present but remain

Your affectionate husband

S.M. Potter

Harpers Ferry Va. July 20th 1863

Dear Cynthia

Will you ever excuse me for not writing you for so long a time. I know you will & I must assure I feel very sorry for you & will hurry & tell you the reason for not writing sooner. Soon after the battle at Gettysburg I got sick. My stomach & liver were out of order. I hung on day after day hoping to get better but instead got worse. We were moving over the mountains until we came to Boneboro Md. when I got so sick as not to be able to go any farther. The Doctor sent me to a barn with John Milligan to wait on me. I lay there a week & got some better. Then we come down here yesterday Sabbath. I was still better but did not feel strong enough to ride every day with the regiment, when I got the Doctor to write an order for me to go to Baltimore to go to the hospital. Well the Dr. wrote the order & I came here. Saw the Quartermaster who had charge of the R.R. & he told me I would have to get a transportation order from Gen. Lockwood. I called on him & he sent me to his Medical Director who told me I would have to go into the hospital here. He could not send me to Baltimore so I stopped here. There are about 200 sick here. I have to act as Hospital Steward for them. They have not been in operation long & are not fully arrayed yet. The Drs. are very glad that I did come, as they had no one who knew anything about a Hospital Stewards duties & some of the Drs. dont know much about Hospital practice. They treat me very kindly. I hope to be able to get a furlough & get home before I got back to the Regt. I have felt very bad about you since I was sick knowing that you would be uneasy. You would go over to the postoffice & wait patiently for letter then to be dissappointed time after time. I know it would be very unpleasant for you. It has been the greatest trouble & sorrow I have known to be dissappointed in getting your letters & the children too would wonder where Pa is. I do wish I knew where he is. I think I can hear Josey saying. & so you are all at home again, you wrote to me in your last. I forgot myself when I was reading it & I thought I was at home on the back porch reading your letter & you were getting dinner for me. I felt bad about it & wished I could have got up & run there on the double quick. Well we have driven the rebs back into Old Va. again & hurt them some as they were going. Our regiment had a brush with them while I was sick & several were killed & some wounded. Abe Lezarden was killed & James Milligan was wounded. I hear our hospital was a factory & stands high on the Virginia side of the Potomac which washes the walls of the building. The Stewards room has a window looking out on the river & I am writing this on the window seat with the roar of the river in my ears as I write. This is called the Factory Hospital & if you write soon address Factory Hospital, Harpers Ferry.

Teusday . The mail has not gone yet but will in an hour or two & I will write a little more since this is the most enjoyment I have since your letters can not reach me from the Regiment. I feel quite well this morn & should go back to the Regiment but as they want me to stay here I will remain & see if I can not get a furlough. to get home. I would like so well to see you all once more. I would like to hear from you soon to find out how you all are. How Josey has got over scared at drowning. I hope he will be more careful of the millrace & keep a respectful distance from it. How do Lucy & Bell get along. Tell about them when you write & Jimmy I suppose Jumping Jimmy from what you say of his activity is he walking yet. How is the cow getting along. Do you have her in a pasture or is she living as usual in the road. I suppose you have a good garden. I hope to be able to help you eat some of it this summer, if my furlough comes all right. I will still leave you in the hands of our Great Preserver who has kept us all so long in the midst of dangers & preserve us from harm. Oh how I would like to be sitting beside you in the

old church on the hill listening to Mr. McKee. Those were among the most pleasant hours of my life there to have them with the children & me there & oh how I would like to enjoy them again. I hope God will preserve & protect us & permit us to meet again to enjoy the service of his sanctuary again on earth. Pray for me dear Cynthia that I may grow in grace maybe more sanctified & that I may be more acceptable to my Creator & I will still pray for my dear wife that she may be kept in the hollow of Gods hand, that no harm may befall her that she may be made holy & righteous that we all parents & children may be accepted by the Almighty through his son the Lord Jesus Christ. That will bless you all in the prayer of your most affectionate husband.

S. M. Potter

These letters are accessible at: <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/civwarlett-browse?id=F0013>
and <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/civwarlett-browse?id=F0020>.

Appendix F: Letters of Andrew Brooks and Mary Susan Brooks, January 23, 1861 and May 28, 1861

Jan 23 1861, Washington College, Lexington

Dear Sister,

The time has again come round for me to write home. And it must be done to night or you will not get one this week. Because we have a little more spare time Wednesday night than any other, and precious little then, for in addition to our regular studies we have a poor chance to do for examinations; two of which we will have next week, Greek, Mathematics.[1]

We are very well. The anniversary of the Graham Society [2] came off on last night. It was such a pleasant and beautiful moonlight that there was a large crowd. The anniversary address was delivered by Mr. Paxton of Rockbridge.[3] It was a very good address, well written and very well delivered.

The question, "If Turkey fails to protect her Christians [*added: should*] nations interfere" was then discussed by four other members of Society, whose names it is not necessary to mention.

All the front of the college was illuminated and made a very pretty appearance.

The people of this county held a meeting at the Court house, Monday to nominate candidates for the convention which resulted in the nomination of S McD Moore and James Dorman, two strong Union men, so that if the question of Virginia's secession depends upon their votes, she wont go out soon. Who are candidates in Augusta?[4]

From all I can hear, I think that the secessionists are rapidly gaining ground in Virginia, and would not be surprised if that convention should declare Virginia out of the Union. From present appearances it seems that we are almost sure to have civil war. There are such extensive military preparations going on in the north and from the threatening and insulting way in which the Republican papers and from the overbearing and contemptuous actions [*unclear:*] of Congress in refusing compromises giving the South the barest justice, it must be Lincoln's intention to compel the South to remain in the Union, if he can. And if he attempts that, the whole South will and ought to unite and oppose it. A week or two ago, a few of the boys secretly made and hoisted upon top of College a Disunion Flag, bearing a single red star and the word Disunion. But Dr. Junkin very soon had it taken down and there has been nothing said about disunion since.[5]

Yesterday was warm and clear, but now it is cold and snowing. I never saw weather so changeable, or so much rain, or so many cloudy and foggy days in my life as we have had here. It is hardly ever clear three days at one time.

We have been looking for a letter from home for two or three days to tell us about the wedding, but haven't got one yet. You must think we don't want to hear! Does Uncle Andy look like he is married?[6]

Writing letters is the hardest work that I have to do at College and since there is nothing here that will interest you, and believing that I have done remarkably well in having written this much, I quit.

Love to all, your brother

A. Brooks

Notes

[1] Andrew Brooks attended Washington College (present day Washington and Lee University) which was located in Lexington, Virginia. During the antebellum period, the typical student at Washington College studied the classics, mathematics, physical sciences, and rhetoric (Crenshaw 80-81). In the months leading up to the war, the issue of Virginia's secession was hotly debated amongst the students and faculty (Bean, 3-9).

[2] The Graham Philanthropic Society, which was founded in 1809, was a literary and debating society that held weekly debates, hosted notable speakers, and maintained a library. Each January, the Society observed its anniversary with a special celebration (Crenshaw 106-110).

[3] Andrew Brooks may be referring to James G. Paxton, editor of the Lexington *Valley Star* and a Democratic delegate to the General Assembly (Crenshaw 67-68). "Mr. Paxton" could also refer to Col. Frank Paxton, an alumnus of Washington College (Turner, 124).

[4] Verifying Andrew Brooks' comments, James White wrote on January 23 that "a convention of conservatives" from Rockbridge County had nominated Samuel McDowell Moore and James Dorman as delegates to the State Convention that met to decide whether to secede. On February 5, White reported that Moore and Dornan had won those seats (Turner 34-35). At the Virginia Convention, Dornan supported and Moore opposed secession; the secessionists won with a vote of 85 to 45 (Turner 38). Both and Moore and Dorman were members of the Virginia legislature; Dorman was also an alumnus of Washington College. (Crenshaw 63-4; 67).

[5] Rev. George Junkin, the president of Washington College, was born in Pennsylvania and supported the Union, even though he owned slaves. Junkin, a Whig, argued that the introduction of slavery into the territories was a non-issue and that secession could be avoided by regarding it as such. According to Junkin, Virginia initiated "a rebellion without cause" when it joined the Confederacy (quoted by Bean, 5). Junkin preached actively and passionately against secession and silenced students who delivered oratories in support of it. His actions and attitudes caused students to rebel, as they scribbled graffiti calling Junkin "a Pennsylvania abolitionist" on the columns of a building and flew flags celebrating the Confederacy over a statue of George Washington. When, after Virginia seceded, the faculty overruled Junkin's efforts to remove a Southern flag, he resigned and returned to Pennsylvania (Bean 6-7). Not all of his family left with him; Stonewall Jackson was his son-in-law.

[6] On January 17, 1861, Andrew Stuart (the brother of Andrew Brooks' mother Eleanor Tate Stuart Brooks) married Sarah McClure near Greenville, Augusta County (*The Republican Vindicator*, February 1, 1861, p. 3). According to the 1860 census, Sarah McClure was 36 in 1860; her father was a fairly wealthy farmer.

Dear Father,

When I wrote home last week I believed that our company would [*added: not*] be ordered out, but now we think we will be.

Two or three weeks ago, we determined to write to the Governor (before we would get coats) to know whether he would order us out or not. After waiting two weeks, Mr. Jas Davidson of this place came home from Richmond, bringing us word that the Governor would not call us out under any circumstances.[1] Saturday night Capt. Nelson received an official answer from S. Rafael French, Aid de Camp to the Governor requiring him to ascertain the consent of the parents of the boys and to report to the Governor, and he would then "decide the matter." By the same mail Prof. White received a letter from Greenlee Davidson (son of the above and clerk in the Executive department) telling him to ascertain the consent of the parents of the boys, and that the Governor "would order us to Harpers Ferry or the Manasas Junction"[2]. A good many of the boys had gone home. They have been written to, to return. The parents of a few of the boys will keep them at home, but we have been getting some recruits to fill their places. There is no doubt but that the company will be filled out, in a day or two. We are drilling four times a day. Recitations suspended.

The captain ordered us to get flannel shirts or jackets. We have no coat.

We are out of money and would like to have some this week if you can send it. The County Court appropriated \$25,000 to equip volunteers, allowing \$25 per man. An effort will be made to have [*deleted: ou*] the remainder of our uniform knapsacks paid &c -paid for out of this fund. Some of the court object to it, because we do not all belong to the county. We have heard a great many reports about the fighting at Hampton Harpers Ferry [*deleted: illeg.*], but they are too favorable to our side to be believed. I heard this evening that 7 houses in the upper end of Waynesborough were burning yesterday as the cars came by, couldn't hear whether it was by accident or had been set on fire[3]. In consequence of so many boys leaving, the Faculty has called a meeting of the Trustees, next Saturday, to graduate the Senior Class and suspend College. Whether the company goes or not it is not probable we will have any more College duties this session.[4]

We will write again as soon as we hear from the Governor.

I would like to have two new pair of woolen stockings.

William & I both want a new strong cotton shirt. We have one apiece, our sleeping shirts which have never been used. You need not send them here, as we will go to Staunton and most likely by Waynesboro of which we will give you notice. Has Ma gottenhome? and has she improved? Write to us soon.

As ever your son,

Andrew Brooks

Notes

[1] As Andrew observes, throughout May the company requested to be brought into service. Virginia's Governor John Letcher finally called the Liberty Hall Volunteers to action on June 2, 1861 and ordered them to proceed to Harper's Ferry, where the Valley forces were mobilizing.

[2] When the Liberty Hall Volunteers company was formed in April of 1861, Professor Alexander Nelson assumed the role of captain, but he was forced to resign in June because he contracted erysipelas (Bean 7, 9, 11). James White, a professor of Greek at Washington College, was commissioned as a Captain when Company I was organized on June 2, 1861. Because he was thirty-two at the time that he became a captain, White was nicknamed "Old Zeus." He resigned on September 6, 1861 due to illness (see Turner).

[3] Andrew Brooks may be referring to the fighting that broke out near Hampton Roads, Virginia on May 18, 1861 (Denney, 44). Harper's Ferry was a crucial site during the Civil War, not only because it was formerly a Federal arsenal, but because it was "the northern gateway to the Valley of Virginia" (Robertson, *The Stonewall Brigade*, 4). On April 18, 1861, even before Virginia seceded from the union, Virginia militia members took control of Harper's Ferry in order to win possession of the arsenal. Andrew's speculations demonstrate how rumors were swirling in the early days of the war.

[4] Classes at Washington College were suspended on June 1 (Turner, 39).

These letters are accessible at: <http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/papers/Bro1a23> and
<http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/papers/Bro1e28>.

Appendix G: Letters of John H. Cochran and his Mother, December 11, and December 21, 1860

Richmond Decr. 11th 60
Dear Mother

Your letter is received and contents noted. I will come up sometime after Christmass what time I cannot now say but as soon as circumstances will permit.

The country is now in a fearful state of agitation. So much so that thinking men believe that a war between the sections is imminent . Should things continue as they are I do not think that any one will venture into the tobacco business at least until near spring. We contemplate holding off until then as we expect that by that time things will have been settled or taken such a turn as to indicate whether the business will be safe or not. Ours [**business**] being a credit business and being carried on almost exclusively through agencies in the northern states would be the first and longest sufferer from civil war.

As you have seen by the papers your own glorious native state has at last determined to throw off the shackles of a government which it would be disgrace for any southern man to submit to. Glorious South Carolina how I wish I also could claim it for my native country. In this city the friends of Southern rights are not idle though we are not making any fuss or parade of our streangth . We could muster with a days notice five hundred good men and true who are determined to maintain our rights. Even though we have to fight in the language of the infamous traitor Douglass "with halters around our necks," Blue cockades are not uncommon here. I have been wearing one for nearly two months and so help me God I intend if necessary to make the declaration implied by it good even with my hearts blood.

As to the gun. Trades in guns and horses are proverbally uncertain. Frank when down here saw a gun that he liked as well as mine. And Paul who is very anxious to possess [**my**] mine has purchased that one with the hope of trading with him. It is as good as mine but Paul like myself has falled in love with mine. He made Frank an offer while down here which pleased him. If you do not object P. and myself have determined to send his and the boot agreed upon between him and Frank in place of mine. I hope this arrangement will be satisfactory to you and Frank as P. is very anxious to have my gun. It would not do at this time to send a gun by a negro even with an order as it would get him into trouble. The arrangement for paying suits me as well as any other.

I am glad to hear that the baby is better and hope he will continue to improve. I could not get your bill to day but as Paul is anxious for a reply to my propposition I determined to write to day so that I could get your reply as soon as possible. I will get your Bill as soon as possible and send it to you in my next. Paul sends his respects and says times are worse and worse.

Give my respects to all and believe me your affectionate son

J. H. Cochran

P.S. Enclosed I send you some speaches delivered in the Senate which will give you some idea of the feeling existing there.

Richmond Decr 21st 60
Dear Mother

Your letter was received on the 19th. I will send Franks gun up on monday by the express train. There is nothing talked about here but that all absorbing [*illeg.*] subject secession. South Carolina has gloriously vindicated her honor. She has passed her ordinance of secession and henceforth the 20th day of December will be as glorious a day for the South as ever the 4th of July was to the United States. We speak now of the United States as of a nation that has passed away as of a government that has lived out its allotted time and passed away into the dim past. More glorious things are looming up in the now near future.

Enclosed I send your bill. Mr. D. gave me \$25. I would send the change but it would not be safe I will bring it up with me when I come. As you see it is \$2.85.

Give my respects to all my friends. Hoping all are well I remain your affectionate son.

J. H. Cochran

These letters are available at: <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/civwarlett-browse?id=A0572>
and <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/civwarlett-browse?id=A0573>.

Appendix H: Letter of Mary Todd Lincoln to Abraham Lincoln, November 3, 1862 and Eliza S. Quincy to Mary Todd Lincoln, January 2, 1863.

My Dear Husband.

I wrote you on yesterday, yet omitted a very important item.² Elizabeth Keckley,³ who is with me and is working for the Contraband Association, at Wash-- is authorised by the White part of the concern by a written document -- to collect any thing for them -- here that, she can-- She has been very unsuccessful-- She says the immense number of Contrabands in W-- are suffering intensely, many without bed covering & having to use any bits of carpeting to cover themselves-- Many dying of want-- Out of the \$1000 fund deposited with you by Gen Corcoran, I have given her the privilege of investing \$200 her, in bed covering-- She is the most deeply grateful being, I ever saw, & this sum, I am sure, you will not object to being used in this way-- The cause of humanity requires it -- and there will be \$800 left of the fund-- I am sure, this will meet your approbation-- The soldiers are well supplied with comfort Please send check for \$200 -- out of that fund -- she will bring you on the bill.

[Note 1 The following was written during a month-long trip that Mrs. Lincoln and Tad took to New York and Boston in the fall of 1862.]

[Note 2 See Mary Todd Lincoln to Abraham Lincoln, November 2, [1862].]

[Note 3 Elizabeth Keckley was a former slave whom Mrs. Lincoln employed as a dressmaker. Mrs. Keckley became a close friend and confidante of Mrs. Lincoln and was perhaps the person most responsible for introducing Mrs. Lincoln to spiritualism. In 1862, Mrs. Keckley helped found the Contraband Relief Association in Washington. For more on the relationship between Keckley and Mary Lincoln, see Jean H. Baker, *Mary Todd Lincoln: A Biography* (New York: W. W. & Company, 1987); and Elizabeth Keckley, *Behind the Scenes, or, Thirty Years a Slave and Four Years in the White House* (New York: G. W. Carlton, 1868).]

This letter can be accessed at: http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?mal:8:/temp/~ammem_KinN::

From Eliza S. Quincy to Mary Todd Lincoln¹, January 2, 1863

My dear Madam

I enclose the Programme of the celebration of the President's Proclamation at the Boston Music Hall, -- yesterday, -- with M. S. notes of the incidents which occurred, during the performance.--

In full confidence of the steadiness of the President's purpose, -- the arrangements were all made several weeks ago.-- But it was not until the vast audience had assembled and the performances

had commenced that the news arrived that the Proclamation was actually on the wires of the telegraph.--

The reception of this intelligence was worthy of "the Declaration of Emancipation",! -- which must rank in future with that of Independence, -- & the 1st of January 1863, -- with the 4th of July 1776.--

It was a sublime moment, -- the thought of the millions upon millions of human beings whose happiness was to be affected & freedom secured by the words of President Lincoln, was almost overwhelming.

To us also the remembrance of many friends who had worked & labored in this cause, for many years, but who had departed without the accomplishing of those hopes, which we had lived to witness was very affecting.

It was a day & an occasion never to be forgotten.-- I wish you & the President could have enjoyed it with us, here.--

On our return home we found my father with your welcome packet in his hand.-- For that it his privilege to thank you.-- With our best respects to the President & our best wishes for 1863, -- for him & for yourself

I am very sincerely

Yrs

Eliza S. Quincy.

5 Park St Boston

January 2, 1863.

[Note 1 Eliza S. Quincy was the wife of Josiah Quincy.]

This letter can be accessed at: [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mal:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(d2092400\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mal:@field(DOCID+@lit(d2092400)))