



Edwin Zavitz's Letters:

Living in the Spirit of Peace, Relief Work in France during World War I Part II

Introduction by Jane Zavitz-Bond

Welcome to the second instalment of the Edwin C. Zavitz letters written in the World War I era while Edwin Zavitz was serving for peace with the Friends War Victims Relief Committee. We look particularly at the Christmas celebration in the Gruny

School building after sufficient repairs in the village were made for most villagers to return. We sense a change in their spirits with a return to some joy for the first time since the War began. The relief had been to downtrodden villagers suffering from the

destruction and deprivations of war. Their emotions were drained, as Edwin Zavitz described in his earlier letters. The joy came with the miracle of Christmas with caring gifts as they could be under their own roofs again. The war was receding, bringing hope for peace.

Finding descendants of those mentioned in the 1917 Christmas celebration letter remains a challenge. Bryan Dragon, making the Gruny contact, writes that the village is still quite isolated and few speak English, so he and Simone have translated Edwin's Gruny letters into French. There will be a few teachers and others who can read the letters as written and likely become enchanted, as Bryan was.

The impact of Edwin's War Victims' Relief Committee continued throughout his life in education as seen in his love for young people. He went from Gruny to be placed in three other educational sites, each adding to his sense of vacation in teaching. The last of his letters tell of visits to American Friends on behalf of the newly created American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), also celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2017. Its work after WWII included the exchange of students from North America and Europe and an affiliated school program. Both are ideas Edwin set up from France in WWI, and which he surely encouraged when AFSC sent him to France after WWII to investigate needs and see what might be done. Educational exchange brings understanding with friendships for future world peace. Olney Friends School in Barnesville, Ohio, where I taught, and other Friends Schools participated in the AFSC student exchange and school affiliation

programs. Today those students exchange alumni from both continents continue to enrich the life around them, even as they expanded awareness in their initial exchanges.

Education is a major key to peace. Read and consider how changes come from person to person living with care for others day by day. May the joy of Gruny's children one hundred years ago encourage us all to care for all children today. Today Edwin Zavitz's influence remains in AFSC projects which educate for peace and human rights, including the environment. Sidwell Friends School is a leader in education and chosen by many in the DC governmental and diplomatic communities to educate children, potential leaders. Both institutions ripple into the future.

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F.W.V.R.C. A.P.O., S.5 B.E.F France
AMERICAN FRIENDS RECONSTRUCTION UNIT

Thursday, Nov. 8, 1917

Dear Home Folks,

Yesterday afternoon when I was perched up on top of the big school house roof, one of the fellows brought your letter over from the house and on up to me on the scaffold where I saw and read it. Even if the delivery is slow it is convenient. But the new address brings letters more promptly. Mailed Oct. 15. Received Nov. 7 isn't so bad. I had one the day before written and mailed in Phila the 18th.

It was better than ever to hear from you all away over there. Letters are great bits of

encouragement to us so far away from most all the people we know. I had been intending to write to you for a long time but it didn't get done. Somehow a good many of my letters get sent in another direction now, and my home record isn't what it used to be. But this evening I have fixed myself for a good long session with you.

Our work is progressing remarkably well. We are fixed up very comfortably and the outdoor work and good food and regular hours are really making me fat. I could stand it when I left United States too, for I was almost devoid of any adipose. We have our room as cozy and as comfortable as you could imagine. There are four of us sleep in it. Tonight a couple of us moved in a table from the tool room and beside a little German French stove, which is cheerily burning. We are writing letters and feeling about as much at home as is possible so far from the place we would like best to be.

I forget how much I told you in the last letter of the arrangement of our repair Unit here at Grunty. We are 16 now, live in a house occupied for 3 yrs by German officers, have a French woman do most of the cooking and work as long each day as we can see, repairing houses in the little village. Just now another fellow and I are patching the school house slate roof, which was badly wrecked at one end. It is a splendid job when the weather is at all propitious, but Nov. weather is about the same in French as in English. It has rained nearly every day and usually manages to keep the roof and ladders interestingly wet. Today was fine. Sun shone nearly all day, with just time enough out for a rain about ten o'clock. It get too dark to see to work

by 4.30 or 4.45 so our days aren't long. We manage to get to work about eight.

Other fellows are cleaning bricks, laying them, glazing fixing up ceilings and stairs etc. This sort of a job gives a grand variety of work and we ought to learn something while we are here.

The people are gradually growing a little more interested in our work, but they are remarkably indifferent, mostly. It seems strange really that they should care so little, but they take us for granted and it does not seem to matter much whether we are working on their house or somebody's else. There are a few exceptions. Some few come about and chat with us quite a good deal.

There are about 25 children in school. They have holiday on Thursday instead of Sat. as we do. Yesterday during their recess. I began playing with them from the top of the roof and pretty soon I had them singing a little French song that I knew and which I suggested and led them. Later I came down and played some games with them in the yard and showed them how to do some interesting things with paper. I guess I must have prolonged their recess rather generously. The teacher was watching us and we all had quite a time. I felt at home playing with some school children once more.

Last week five of us took an interesting day's trip to the old First Line trenches about five miles from here where the Germans and Allies held for two years prior to the withdrawal of the Germans this spring. We packed a lunch in our knapsacks and left after breakfast. After stopping along the way at several interesting destroyed places we reached the trenches by eleven. We came of course to the German

lines first and spent all our time until two o'clock wandering about in the maze of ditches and dugouts. The trenches run in all directions so that there is a turn about every fifteen or twenty feet. The zig zag is to prevent easy trench raids. The trenches have crumbled in somewhat but still are deep enough for a man to keep well below line of sight. Some of them are ten feet deep and six or eight feet wide. The Germans were great on underground work and have huge dug outs branching down from the main line trenches every few yards. They go down about 20 steps into a little room or alleyway lined with bunks etc. We explored as many of them as we had time to – had to crawl down with a candle for light, sometimes almost on our hands and knees. We found many little souvenirs down there and it was fascinating to try to imagine scenes that took place there. There were hand grenades and shells and cartridges lying around everywhere. We had lunch in a Boche trench, right up at the front, where we could stand up on the firing benches and look out across “no mans land” thru the barb wire and shell holes. We made a little fire and heated some beans and had a fine time. Later we crossed No Man's Land and climbed over the terrible barbed wire and went into the Allies Trenches about 200 yards away. There we found much the same sort of things. all of it horrible to realize how recently they had been scenes of real war. Sometime I can tell much more than I have the ability to write about the many interesting things we are coming against here.

Rest assured that when I get home, whenever that will be, I will make it a point to visit you as soon as I can and tell about

the trip. There will be so many things happen when this trip is over. It seems a bit hard to wait and to work over here, especially just now. Mother, thee and some of the rest will understand what I mean. I am awaiting with a great deal of interest the answer to some of my Paris letters.

Love to all,
Edwin

I haven't seen Alfred Jr. yet. I hear there is some illegible forestry work being done down near Dole where some of our men are working.

Remember me to everybody who asks. I wish I could send more news to the whole community, but they will get it in time. Aunt Ettie & Aunt Tamer. I often think of you and send love now. Special greetings to the Willsons. I wish I could Xmas again with you all. I suppose Aunt J. will be in California by now.

Best I think.
With the best of love to you all.
I am, as ever,

Edwin

Printed section:

FRIENDS' WAR VICTIMS RELIEF
COMMITTEE

(Mission Anglo-Americaine de la Société
des Amis en France)

Correspondence with Workers in the Field

Letters, newspapers, etc. may be sent to
workers in either of the following ways:

1. BY THE ORDINARY POSTAL SERVICE. (Postage 2 ½ d or 5 cents)

Letters may be addressed to workers in their groups if they are definitely located or they may be sent for forwarding to the headquarters of the Expedition in France (new address):-

Mission Anglo-Americaine de la Société des Amis

53 rue de Rivoli, Paris, France.

2. BY THE BRITISH ARMY POSTAL SERVICE (Postage 1 d. or 2 cents)

By this method letters are received at headquarters for distribution. The full address is:

(Name of worker)
F.W.V.R.C.,
A.P.O., S.5,
B.E.F., France.

The address should bear no other mention whatever. Names of towns, or the words "Mission Anglaise", "Mission Anglo-Americaine", or "American Friends' Unit" only cause confusion and may lead to the non-delivery of the correspondence sent by A.P.O.

Correspondents are reminded that, as a civilian Unit, we use the A.P.O. by courtesy of the British Army. The expression of strong political opinions by friends at home might prejudice the recipient and the Unit as a whole.

Letters sent to France may be of any length. *Handwritten addition:* Good idea.

PARCELS may be sent by the A.P.O. Enquire at post-office for rates. Parcels should not contain letters.

Handwritten addition: Try it if you want to. Our sugar allowance is two spoonfulls sic pr day. I enjoyed Helen's letter. Russell I'd be glad of a word from you. None of my letters coming in have been censored as yet. I wonder if the ones I send are opened.

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Paper is too valuable to waste a sheet like this – This being French may not bother you at all. However you will excuse it, won't you?

F.W.V.R.C. A.P.O., S.5. B.E.F. France

Nov. 20. 1917.

Dear Folks at Home. –

Wouldn't it be fine if I could spend an evening in America tonight? I would enjoy it I guess, but why waste time worrying and imagining. The time will come before long and I surely will be ready for it.

Mother's and Aunt Tamer's letters of 10/24 came last week. It is good to hear that you are all well at home and that things are going as usual. There must be quite a majority of "wimen" in the household as Aunt Tamer says. She thinks father has his hands full. I hope he does.

I haven't heard from Aunt Jennie since she arrived in California. It takes about three weeks for a letter to come from the other side and I suppose she wouldn't get there until the first week in November. I surely hope her winter will be what she anticipates.

I don't know whether I have had four letters from home or only three since I

came to France. Mother says they had sent four. Probably so. I think the mail service is pretty good. None of my letters have been censored coming in and I haven't heard that any were opened on the way to America. There is a good circuit between here and Phila I know, for which I thank the postal authorities.

From what mother wrote in her last letter I couldn't make out whether she had received a certain confidential letter of mine or not. It must have been time but she didn't comment on it at all and I surely think it was a big enough bit of news to cause some few words of reprimand or otherwise. Just wait till I get back to that country. I'll show you that you are going to have another member in your family who will do credit to it. Among yourselves this need be no secret. I mean the members of our household, but please don't spread the word any farther just yet.

Well, we are working away as usual out here in this little French country village. I am putting on a new slate roof, which for the two of us is several weeks job. It has been good weather for more than a week now, no rain and not very cold. The days are very short however. We have to stop work by 4.30 now or 4.00 if we are doing interior work. I wish it didn't get dark quite so soon, we could get more accomplished.

A week or so ago we got the rest of our personal equipment. An overcoat which we are to wear with our uniforms and a corduroy [sic] work suit came also a pair of heavy shoes for each fellow. We have mattresses now and warm woolen sleeping bags, so we can keep warm now in pretty cold weather. I am surprised that it has not been colder. We had a few days of cold a

few weeks ago, but lately it has been mild. For the middle of November it is more moderate than we expected to find. There has been no sign of snow yet. Maybe we will get all the cold we are looking for, but with lots of wood and a little coal and several stoves we ought to be able to keep warm. It's the rain and damp and mud that Northern France is noted for and I guess it is possible to have it disagreeable, but our work doesn't take us into so very much bad mud.

I have a chance to do a little doctoring here in town. A little boy is sick with ulcerated stomatitis. It is an infection resulting from a rundown condition. He is a pitiful little fellow. I noticed him before he was taken sick and thought he could hardly escape some trouble soon. He is thin and poorly clad & nourished. The mother lives in a filthy home with four boys and it's a wonder more aren't sick. A Dr. from a nearby town, a Red Cross American Doctor, came over to see him yesterday and wanted to take him to the hospital but the mother wouldn't listen to it. Dr. said the child had little chance of getting well here, but the mother wouldn't consent to have him taken away. I go in three times a day and wash out his mouth and try to do something for him, but it isn't very encouraging. The mother is sort of half witted and the child never was bright. He was very badly frightened poor kid when the Germans were here and never got over it. The mother talks the most ununderstandable French I ever heard. She has a few teeth out and just gurgles her words. She is tongue tied too. With that combination it's hard to find out much about the little boy.

Tonight when I went in to treat the boy about a half dozen other youngsters filed in from the yard to see the job, but we had them sit down outside the room. They, the children, are all on good terms with me, and all of them know me. They call me Monsieur Victor. I don't know how they got the name but all of them know it. I heard a couple of them talking today about me and one said to the other. He is a teacher, a doctor, a roofer and an acrobat! There is a little bit of hero worship going on so I must try to live up to the challenge. Did I tell you how I taught the school, or rather had the school for a half an hour one day. That was great fun. They always ask me for chocolate when they see me.

It has been quite a while now since we have taken any side excursions to battle fields etc. The things about here that were at first so exciting have become so common. We even don't look up when there are explosions that make the shingles rattle on the roof where we are working. They are setting off a lot of unexploded shells every day which certainly make a lot of noise. When we compare that to the roar & constant rumble we hear from 15 miles away, we can imagine what it must be at the front.

Our evenings are long here. I usually get myself comfortably fixed around my little stove and write or read. I'm afraid my letters most all go one way. It spoils my other correspondence too I know. I am frank to admit my home letters aren't quite as full nor as frequent as they used to be. But don't think that I am not as much interested in home affairs as I ever was. Just because I have found a new and a wonderful person to fill up my life doesn't

mean I abandon all the former ties. Oh! I wish you knew Marion. None of you have any idea how fine she is. Aunt Jennie doesn't know her at all. It's going to be one of my great joys to bring her home someday. Just wait!

Over here it's hard to imagine what it will be like again when we go back to a normal civil life. War will have had its influence felt at home no doubt and it may be several years before we can expect to see a normal life. But first we want to see the close of the war, which can't come any too soon.

We get an "Intelligencer" once in a while here. It is good to see it. Some New York papers come about three weeks late but they are news to us.

Thanksgiving comes next week. the 29th. The fellows want to have sort of a big day among ourselves. We are going to have a party and entertain our English Friends. I for one would be able to celebrate Thanksgiving on a very small and simple meal but some others want a blow out. It hardly seems the time nor place.

Don't forget that letters are a great delicacy to us away over here. Everybody write. Aunt Tamer thee doesn't know how I enjoyed thy letter. It was so newsy.

Love to you all. It may be time for Merry Xmas.

Edwin.

E. HOWARD MARSHALL
(Home Address, Union, Iowa)
Sunday Evening 12/23/17.

Dear Folks at Home. —

I notice by my letter record that the last time I wrote you was nearly two weeks ago. Time surely goes fast. I made up my mind

then to write in a little while again, but you see the result.

This week past the good letter came from you with the surprise letter in it from Father. I surely was glad to get it, but I must admit it took quite an occasion to draw it forth. I hope we won't have to wait for an equally momentous event to get the next one. Nevertheless I appreciated it more than I can tell. You know what Father and Mother say to a young man in my condition are the things that mean more than any one's else congratulations. Father thee couldn't have wished me – us – any more happiness than just what thee and mother have enjoyed during your many years of married life. I have often thought of your perfect love for each other and for us, your children, and hold you as my ideal of perfect married happiness. I only hope I may be big enough to play my part in another home equally as wonderful. Thank thee Father for thy letter. Let me wish that thee and mother may continue to set our example for many years to come.

I have letters very often from Marion and they do come in good. It seems strange that we should be so far away from each other just now – farther than we have ever been before, when we would be closer, but it may prove a time of waiting that will make our lives all the sweeter in the future.

For the past week we have had real winter. There have been six inches of snow on the ground since last Sunday and it has scarcely thawed any since. We didn't do much roofing as you can imagine. There aren't many things we can do in such weather so we were tied up somewhat. Another fellow and I spent three days cutting wood in the orchard back of our

house where the trees are all felled and left that way by the Germans. It was a great job. Do you remember how we enjoyed cutting wood the Xmas Ellwood, Art & Wyatt were at our place? We had some days this week just as good. The snow was dry. We used big sacks on our shoes so our feet kept warm and dry. The trees were covered with snow and heavy frost, so for once the ugliness of all the destruction around here was disguised by nature. It felt good again to chop and pull on one end of a saw.

The first day or two of the week four of us were busy on a snow plow for the village. Monday morning when the snow was all over every thing, the mayor asked us if we would make a snow plow. We scouted around for materials and found lots of German stuff that just suited. In the old dugouts back of the village there were broad planks. We shod them on the bottom edge with some angle irons that were lying around, and made a couple of straps to put down the sides with a ring in both of them at the point to pull by. It meant some forge work and some cutting but in a couple of days we had a splendid snow plow. *Transcriber's note: See the sketch in the original.* ready for the village and it was made entirely of old German material – a good souvenir for the village to keep.

The snow hadn't all melted before we had our plow done, so we made the rounds with the mayor and his men and helped manoeuvre the machine. It worked splendidly and pleased the mayor a lot.

Wednesday. Dec. 26. 1917.

This poor letter was left unfinished the other day but enough has happened since to make plenty of news for a great long

epistle. I'm going to write a while tonight hoping I can get enough done to send.

Christmas has passed and it surely has been one of the best that I have ever seen or enjoyed.

Monday we had the Xmas party for the school children. We had been talking it up for weeks and everybody in the village was awaiting it with great expectation. A woman from New York had sent a lot of money to one of our fellows to spend for a Christmas for our children and he went to Paris to buy presents. The money was a generous sum and he got a grand collection of presents. We made up packages for each child in the village. There are about 40 of them. There were hats, sweaters, mittens, stockings, dolls, knives, horns, boats, scissors, books, crayons. etc. The bundles were really good ones.

Monday morning we decorated the school room with greens and flags and put up a big Xmas tree. It surely made a contrast with the condition of the school room ~~at so~~ few months ago when one wall was blown down and the inside filled with German beds. At two o'clock the people were all arrived. It was the first time since the war that there had been an occasion for the people to dress up and come to a meeting and believe me they took advantage of it. They came decked and scrubbed. The youngsters were on hand an hour in advance. In all we had over a hundred in the room.

The children had prepared some songs and recitations and they were given in the usual Xmas concert manner. Then we gave them some music from our orchestra a song or two and some tricks of magic by one of the fellows who does such stunts -

& splendidly. At last there were the presents. I had the fun of playing Santa Claus and it was a great pleasure. Imagine how eyes popped and snapped when the names were called and the big packages passed out. I have never seen children so radiantly happy. The last of the afternoon was the distribution of candy and cakes to everybody. That was a great treat too. You should have seen them vanish.

The party was over by four o'clock and the people and youngsters went away everyone with a smile on his face which was by far the best thing we had accomplished. It was a wonderful party.

Monday night I thought I had had a great day. I didn't see how we could have spent a much finer one. but now Monday seems pale compared with what has happened yesterday and today.

Our Christmas day was wonderful, nothing short of it. I only wish I could describe it so you could get an idea of how much we enjoyed it. In the first place the dinner was without any exception one of the best meals I ever had. We had saved up on our sugar and milk and had a good supply of materials on hand and four of us spent most of the day cooking, but when we sat down to the table at five, it was well worth the while. You probably won't believe me when I tell you what we had to eat. The dinner was in five courses and everything cooked to perfection even if I do say it myself as shouldn't. Listen. - This is the way we poor fellows underwent hardships and sacrifices yesterday -

Purée de foi du boeuf - (Translated it means delicious soup made of ground beef live. Roast turkey, stuffed with raisin and chestnut dressing, the like of which I have

never tasted before, boiled onions, green beans, mashed potatoes and gravy superieur, fruit salad, apple sauce, pumpkin pie. (There aint such a good pie growed yet except in our oven.) Plum pudding, made here by men who aren't given credit for knowing much about the art of cooking, but which will remain a remembrance for years. – Apples and pears, candy and coffee. That was a wonderful dinner. There were 15 of us. The fellows from near here came over to fill up because some of our men had gone to England for Xmas. The dining room was decorated with greens and Xmas bells and you wouldn't have believed that we were away over here away from everybody we loved and pining away. It was a jolly Xmas. We spent the evening listening to music and singing ourselves in. ... on his lower leg. Have dressed it a couple of times since and its coming along fine. A woman has had a badly infected foot which is just about cured. but I have dressed it every day for over two weeks. The son and daughter each have a bad infection so I have a big job at their house every morning. Another boy has a bad ear and there are various mumps and tooth aches which I can relieve a bit. I never dreamed of being able to do so much in this line, but there is nobody else here to do it and it needs to be done.

For the past few days a couple of us have been tearing lumber out of the floors and walls of the big German Ammunition caves near here which I must have told you about previously. We can save some beautiful boards and planks. They are surely well-built those dugouts, with heavy timbers and clean straight lumber of the best. The floor is made of 2" planks some of them 16 inches wide and twelve feet long. Yesterday

we hauled over to our barn enough of them to be worth nearly \$100. It is a pleasure to be able to put some of these machines of war to a practical use for the sheltering of the civilians.

1-6-18

We didn't undertake to celebrate New Year's Day very strenuously but it resulted in being a day of open house for us. I was doing the cooking and was about the only fellow about the house all day. In all we had about 40 visitors, mostly children who had come to wish us a Happy New Year and to read a "Compliment" to us. The day is a big day for the French. Everybody as we found out, goes to visit everybody else and we eat our share. They came in droves and stayed interminably. The only way we could get them to conclude their visit was to suggest that they come outdoors to have a picture taken and to be sure they took all their caps and fuchu (scarfs) with them. But I shouldn't make fun of them for they made quite a serious matter of it. The "Compliments" were funny, but still very serious. I'm going to copy one of them in my letter and let you read it. Do you want it in French? I guess so because Russell ought to be able to translate it. Here you are.

Gruny, 31 Decembre. 1917.

Messieurs et Chers Bienfaiteurs.

Au nom de mon famille, sensiblement touchée de vos bontés à l'égard des enfants de Gruny, et en mon nom personnel, je viens aujourd'hui, sur le seuil de l'année nouvelle qui va de nouveau s'ouvrir devant nous vous adresser avec mes voeux de bonne année et mes souhaits les plus sincères

mon plus grand Merci pour l'agréable Noël qui nous a fait oublier les trois années passées au milieu des barbares.

Quoique ma plume soit mal habile à m'exprimer, soyez persuades, chers bienfaiteurs que ce Merci vient au fond du coeur.

Puisse cette nouvelle année nous apporter la victoire et la paix que les places des absents serait bientôt comblées aux foyers et espérons que le prochain Noël sera cette fois fêté par les familles au complet.

Donc chers bienfaiteurs avec mes sincères voeux pour 1918 une fois encore Merci.

Gambart Andrée.

Now I guess I had better translate it for you. You might get some benefit from another version of it. Russells translation will probably not bring out the same points as mine.

"In the name of my family, sensibly touched by your ... Yesterday afternoon while I was working in the kitchen we were invaded by the whole bevy of children who come all decked in their new presents, carrying dolls and toy watches and medals, to pay respects to us who had made their Christmas worth while. It was a rare treat. They called for me so I was the one who entertained them. They came in the dining room nearly 30 of them. I had some candy for them and talked to them. They sang their songs and we had quite another concert. I told them all about my school in Washington and asked if they wouldn't like to send some letters to some of my American friends. They said they would so I gave seven of the oldest addresses and names of our Wash. children. Tonight I have [as] many letters here all ready to send.

I'll translate one that was written by a dear little girl and which I'm sending to Betty Baker. the daughter of Sect Baker. Sect of War.

Gruny, Dec 26. 1917.

My dear friend. —

It is with pleasure that I have the honor of making your acquaintance through Mr. Zavitz, your teacher, who is staying here at Gruny. I came back here with my parents the 7th of December, thanks to the kindness of our dear friends the Anglo-Americans who have repaired a house for us to find shelter in.

He gave us a little party for our first Christmas since three years of war, at which I was very happy to receive some playthings as well as some things to wear during the winter. Let's hope that next winter we may celebrate a Christmas together. a Christmas of Victory.

My parents join me in sending you their best wishes

A friend who is thinking of you.
Solange Rouzé

Here is my address.

Solange Rouzé
at the house of her parents
Gruny

Par Roye
Somme.

I think this is a remarkable little letter. Solange is only eleven.

Today I have done some visiting to see some sick people and have entertained

some happy children. This I believe is good reconstruction.

I must close now. Lots of love to you all.

Edwin

The box hasn't come yet.

Please return as soon as you can - Signature

*(transcriber note – added note in different writing
-)*

First Day Afternoon. 1/6/18.

Dear Home Folks. –

About ten minutes ago, just before I was ready to begin a letter to you, one of the boys came in with a good letter from home. It was from mother and Aunt Tamer and had been mailed Dec. 10. I always want to answer a letter as soon as I have received it, but rarely do I have as good a chance.

I expect the letter mother referred to that Helen had written while the folks were away at Sparta, has not come yet. The last one I received was sent Nov. 19, and was the one containing the surprise from Father. Helen's and Russell's letter sent Nov 5, came some time before so I suppose another one is due. It seems strange that you haven't heard from me since I have received some news from you. The mails are irregular and no doubt some letters never come, but altogether I believe we are getting pretty good service. I know I write enough letters out here to fill a boat myself. I surely hope most of them get to their destination.

So, Grandma Cornell has passed away. It has been a long time since she has been herself. Ninety-eight is a ripe age. My memory of her and of Grandfather Cornell

in their little white house in Sparta is very distinct and dear. Our visits made their impression on me, even though I was pretty young. I also so often recall Grandfather and Grandmother Zavitz. Just the other day when I was splitting wood I remembered how Grandfather had showed me how to strike the block and how to know where it would split best.

The Christmas box that you sent hasn't put in an appearance yet, but it is not time to give up hopes. The Christmas mail and especially Christmas packages are apt to be held up because you know there must be a tremendous number of them being sent over this year. I have had a few packages from America. Marion sent a box of peanut brittle that came through O.K. I got a scarf and some woollen things from some friends in Washington and quite a lot of things from the children at our school. They sent four boxes. Three of them came but they were in funny condition. One contained a can of cocoa and twenty cakes of ivory soap. The can was broken and cocoa all over the soap. A box of sugar came from them also a couple of cans of instantaneous coffee which carried all right and which we are enjoying very much. There are three or four more packages still coming but I don't know when they will arrive.

I see by my letter list that I sent you a line last week the 27th. I must have told then about our Christmas. It was indeed a good one.

Since then we have had consistent cold weather, so cold that we couldn't do much work out doors. I have been working with another fellow putting a ceiling in a room, but even in doors it was cold enough to be

uncomfortable working. There is enough snow on the ground for fine sleighing but we have seen no sleighs here. They say they never have them. The French people do not do much in such cold weather. When it freezes up they do too and don't stir out of the houses nor away from the fire much. They seem to be surprised that we care to work during such cold weather.

We manage to keep pretty warm. Our beds aren't very hot but with a sleeping bag and three blankets we can keep reasonably comfortable. The beds are little canvas cots with a thin cork mattress on them. I wear socks and a little sweater over my pajamas when it's coldest and can manage to keep pretty warm. It's cold enough dressing in a room whose windows are cloth and whose door is open, but I am as healthy or more so than I have ever been and do not mind it at all. I really am getting quite fat, by some scales in Roye our nearest village I calculated my weight to be 81 kilos which when translated amounts to over 180 lbs. The food we have is splendid. It is course, but wholesome and we have lots of it. I do not ask for better rations. We eat lots of oatmeal and plenty of bread. The bread is very heavy and very substantial. It comes in round loaves about a foot in diameter and four or five inches thick is made of whole wheat flour and has a sweet taste. It is delicious toasted and we ~~often~~ eat a lot toasted always for breakfast and frequently at other meals for all we need to do is put some thin slices in the oven and it dries out perfectly crisp and is fine.

All our stoves except the cook stove, are small so we have to keep them stoked pretty full. The dining room is heated only during meals and our sleeping rooms during

the evening when we are writing or reading. I have a tiny stove *see sketch in the original* about the size of a big stove pipe which burns well but which has limitations. If I sit with my back to it I can keep warm – but it doesn't throw heat far. But nevertheless I am cozy during the long evening and always write letters until I get sleepy. The evenings are long too. The sun sets at 3.30 about and it soon gets dark. We have supper at 5.30 and I usually go to bed by ten. The only light we have now is candles. Coal oil cannot be obtained just at present, although we have had some. I have just had to light a couple of candles and shut the shutters which consist of a blanket hung up. We are not allowed to let any light be shown thru the windows.

This week past I have had fifteen letters. Isn't that pretty good? Do you wonder I have to keep busy answering them. Three of them were good fat ones from Marion. She certainly can write good letters. She isn't as well as I would like to see her but she has enough to do to keep as busy as two people should be. Strange to say, she pleads with me to come home as soon as my nine months are over. It puts me between two fires when I know she wants and needs me at home and yet while the work here is just beginning. If the war should stop tomorrow there would be work for Friends here for five years. It is going to be hard to decide what to do when March comes. I wonder if you have sent a letter to Marion or have received one. I can't wait for you to know each other. All the descriptions I have given in the past are worthless in giving you an impression of her. You must see her and live with her before you will know her.

My medical practice has been increasing rapidly these days. There is no doctor around for people to call in so the French people have come to have quite a little faith in me and some days I am interrupted several times to go to see someone sick or to dress a wound. The other night the man who brings bread was kicked by the horse and came here to get fixed up. He has a bad bruise and a little hole *no continuation*

§

... kindnesses to the children of Gruný, and in my own name personally. I came today on the eve of the new year which is opening up before us anew – to address you with my wishes for a happy New Year and the most sincere feeling of the greatest thanks for the agreeable Christmas which you have made for us and which has made us forget the three past years of privation in the midst of barbarians.

Though my pen be poorly capable of expressing my thoughts, be persuaded dear benefactors that this gratitude comes from the bottom of our hearts.

May this new year bring us victory and peace so that the places of the absent may be soon taken around the fireplace and let us hope that the next Christmas will be celebrated by families complete.

Then dear benefactors with my sincere wishes for 1918, accept once again my thanks.

Andrée Gambaut”

Andrée is only eleven years old but her letter is written beautifully. She hasn't been in school either for three years. I guess her grandmother, with whom she lives had something to do with the composition of

this. There were about six others (compliments) that were presented to us New Year's Day. You can see the people are feeling friendly toward us to say the least. The day after Xmas concert there were three long "compliments" read one of them by Monsieur le Maire. The Xmas compliments have been sent to Paris to be printed both in French and in translation, so perhaps someday you may see them too.

I had a couple of cards from Aunt Jennie last week. She seems to be having a fine time. It surely does me good to know it too. She has deserved this winter pleasure for a long time. It takes my letters a long time to go to California, and I must admit I haven't written as often as I should, but as I said before I have a lot to write. Today I have done a good job. I have three letters ready to send off to three classes in the school at Washington. That's the way I answer the many letters the children have written.

Father said in his letter something about Edward B wishing he was in France. Does he really have any definite idea of coming? There is going to be a great demand for workers soon. The Red Cross has cabled to America recently to send 300 more Quakers for Reconstruction work and more will be needed in the spring.

Well, I decided this morning before I got out of bed that I was going to write a long letter home today. There it is and I have had one from you too. Aunt Tamer thee is a dear to write me so often. I do enjoy thy letters so much. Aunt Ettie I'm sorry thee hasn't been feeling so well. Perhaps thee is better now. I am sorry we have so successfully missed seeing each other in the last few years. My love to the Wilsons. I am glad they have a new house. It must be

comfortable. I enjoyed Clara's last letter and the pictures. Will they consider this an answer? So Uncle Edgars' are in Lobo at last. My love to them and to Uncle Webster and to everybody in Coldstream. I'm going to miss my annual visit there a lot this year. Hello Russell & Helen. illegible again. Your letters were fine. I like to get good long ones.

The best of love to you all, always.
Edwin.

Could you answer this letter and let some other people read it? They might be interested in the news.

January 7, 1918

THE AMERICAN FRIEND

Shell Holes, Trenches and Barbed Wire
Hold No Terrors for the Plow of an Iowa
Farmer in France

Somewhere in France, Jan. 7, '18 "Meade, Elliott and I are living in a ruined village near the front lines of last year. For almost three years it was in the hands of the Germans. There are about seventy people living here now, but no boys over thirteen nor women under fifty. Most of the houses were destroyed, so the people are living in the two room wooden barracks put up by the Army. It is a farmers' village so they are altogether dependent upon the land for a living.

Our work has been plowing the fields for the sowing of wheat. There are only three plows here besides our own, one of them pulled by oxen. We took turns "chaque jour

retour" being plowboy one day and cook the next. We filled up shell holes, trenches and gun placements, removed barbed wire, dug up telephone poles, and replaced lost corner stones. We had the team in the field every day, hot or cold, rain or shine (mostly rain) from the day we arrived, Nov. 1st until the snow came, Dec. 16th, and succeeded in turning over eighteen farms. A farm here usually is less than two acres, but the fact that the people here can make a living from so small a piece of land enables us to help more families than we could if each one required forty acres plowed as they do in the West.

A few days before Christmas Murray and Calvert came up from G) with a dainty Parisian doll for the little three year old daughter of Madame Vail, the woman who cooks dinner for us. I wish you might have seen the look on the little girl's face as she reached out both arms and said "O-o-o-o-al in plain English. We can hear her laughing and singing to that doll all day long now. The tree that Elliott loaded for the children here at Christmas was decorated by Murray at G. for their fete the day before. Russel, Titcomb and Hadley came up and furnished music for us.

A description of our cabin will give you some idea of how we live. It could well be mistaken for a hunter's shack in the mountains, for we have decorated it with souvenirs of the war that we found in the dugouts and trenches near the village. It is about ten by sixteen feet, with three solid brick walls and two windows and a door in the fourth wall opening into the court. It is much warmer than the French houses for we have a tight plank floor instead of the usual tile, and we keep our little German

trench stove red hot while cooking breakfast and supper. Our table we took from the old chateau which the Germans used for a Red Cross Hospital, giving it a good bath with soap and boiling water before trusting our food supplies on it. The rest of our furniture consists of two folding cots, two chairs, a bench, and some shelves along the wall. We are going back to the primitive as fast as possible.

Our village is built on a curve of the paved road from R- to P-. The road is lined on both sides with tall trees and in places screened by panels of brush put up by the Boche. There are two kinds of trees here, apple trees and other trees. The former may be found along the roadsides, especially branch roads, or in orchards, or scattered just any place in the fields. The other trees are along the main roads, in the villages, or in large groves or "Bois". We get plenty of dry wood, though the apple trees have not been cut down so thoroughly around our village as in other places. The land is very level and it rains nearly every day, but the soil seems to be able to absorb any amount of water. and is very fertile. The sod is so heavy that we had a good deal of trouble plowing until we got rolling coulters.

A few weeks ago Elliott and I visited the side of two villages about five miles away, which had the misfortune to be in no man's land. Only two or three walls are standing now, nobody lives there, and there is not one building worth repairing. The farms around the villages are literally covered with barbed wire, furrowed with trenches, dotted with wooden crosses and naked tree stumps and torn in bits by shell craters large and small as thick as waves in a choppy sea. As far as one can see in any direction from the

highest pile of bricks we could find, the trees which mark the surrounding villages are shattered and torn by shell fire, and jagged red brick walls show where houses formerly stood. It will be many, many years before the scars of war are removed from places like that"

Monday Feb 18. 1918.

Dear Home Folks and Aunt Jennie.-

I hope you received my letter that I sent about two weeks and a half ago, telling about my new location. Time has passed so fast that I find it is long since time for another word. Your last letter was received Jan. 31, so you see I am nearly keeping my end of the game up.

Affairs are going fine at Le Glandier. Since I wrote last we have the playground much better organized and equipped and it looks much more as we want it to. Two English friends have come now to help Henry Strater and me so we have lighter work than we had at first. Moreton and Vickers are fine fellows. They only add to our general good opinion of the English Friends we have been working with here in France. They are eager workers and excellent companions. Moreton was a teacher in a Friends' school in England before the war. Both he and Vickers have had experience in the managing of children.

Fortunately for us nearly every day is fair at Le Glandier. That means we can stay out in the "cour" all day long and have the children playing there. Half of them go to school at a time so we have a lot to deal with all day long. In the morning it is real cold and it is pitiful to see the poor youngsters, too cold to play, stand around

waiting for the sun to warm things up. There is no adequate room to house all that want to play inside, or all that ought to be inside when it is so cold. But by 10 o'clock the sun has thawed things out and all goes well the rest of the day. The boys nearly all want to play football (soccer) and two or three groups are kept busy at it nearly all the day long. We have interested a few of them in basketball and baseball has also been adopted by a group. It sounds funny to hear them say "wan schtrike" etc and jabber French the rest of the time. You can easily tell that they do not belong to a Baseball race because even the boys do not know how to throw. They are very skillful at football but baseball and basketball aren't very old with them yet.

The little girls like best to skip rope. I bought 30 francs worth of little rope not long ago and have put it to use. Some of them do wonderful skipping stunts. We have some equipment for hockey, but it isn't used much as yet. The girls do not have any idea of competitive playing and prefer to skip rope or play a singing game. You'd smile to see me playing a French singing game with a circle of girls. If I play with them there is no trouble getting a game started. Perhaps they like to see me make a youngster out of myself, which I am glad to say I have not forgotten how to do, even a French youngster.

When it does rain, which isn't very often, the children are really glad for it gives them a chance to go to the barn and play in the swings and ropes that we have there. This place used to be a summer resort. after the monks left and we found a lot of swings and playground apparatus here which by good luck was just the right size to put up

illegible the iron cross beam in the barn. We are having a frame made for the swings etc. to put in the playground, but in the meantime it is a fine place in the barn. As most other children they love to swing and are happy when they can go to the barn to play. I'm asked the question a thousand times a day "Est-ce que nous pouvons aller à la grange pour jouer a l' escarpolette?" but I always tell them that is reserved for rainy weather.

Sundays are our busy days. The children are all free all day long and some of them have Sunday as the only time they can play, especially those older ones who work when they are not in school. There are six school days in the week all alike. The French schools have Thursday (Jeudi) a holiday but here we work all the time. Yesterday we each took groups of children out walking. They love to go out partly to get out in the hills and partly to hunt chestnuts which are still to be found under the leaves. Nearly every tree around here is a chestnut and nuts are plentiful. They are big ones: nearly an inch in diameter and awfully good. We have them on the table frequently. The children are crazy about them and are happy when they can find some. I went with about 30 of the older girls. We had a good ramble, climbing hills and hunting chestnuts. The week before I had 100 of them out, and read "Alice in Wonderland" in French to them.

Did you know that Wyatt & Art are in France now in the Engineers Corps? I haven't heard from them yet, but they sailed about Christmas time. I had a letter from Alfred a day or so ago, which I answered at once. It would be fine if some of us could meet over here, but that isn't very likely to

happen.

I have had no word from Aunt J. but cards for nearly two months. I know she is having a good time and I'm so glad. Can you forward this letter to her sometime? From a letter I had from Nellie & Edith Z. from Guelph not long ago. I get some idea of how my letters travel around after they get home. If I had known you were going to publish them I might have been more careful about them. I suppose the things I am telling about sound good to people in America. I have had a similar story about some letters I sent to Washington.

At present I expect to return to America some time next summer. What I shall do after that will depend upon how things have developed in the world by that time. In case the war still continues and more workers are needed. I may return to France, but not alone.

My love to you all. I am looking forward to a visit at home some day, but when no one knows. One cannot reckon on what one can do these days.

Yours as ever

Edwin

P.S. Your box never reached me (yet)

Monday. March 4. 1918.

Dear Home Folks. –

I remember a year ago today was Inauguration Day in Washington and we had a busy time. I was in a party of a dozen or more people who spent the whole day watching a procession pass, seated on a cold

row of seats with sand and wind blowing in our eyes until we were nearly blind. It is only a year ago but it seems longer than that, so much has happened since and the people who were in that group have been scattered to many corners of the world. I have not been at an Inauguration Parade today. I have thought many times of the comparison.

Le Glandier and the many, many children have been conducting themselves in much the same fashion as usual. I find I haven't written you since Feb. 18th which is about two weeks ago. Time goes fast. Six months today we sailed from New York. I had information just yesterday that we were due for ~~in~~ three weeks vacation now that we had been in service for six months. I don't feel like taking advantage of it just now. (What a disconnected paragraph). (If you ever publish this letter cut out the above.)

Did I tell you about my classes in English?? ~~illegible~~ All but one of us four have classes in English. My students are the oldest and there are some very bright ones among them. I talk English to them all the time in the class and I can explain so much of it by gesture and action that they can understand a great deal and at the same time learn the sounds and the words at the same time. Today we went for a walk during our class time and talked about the things we saw. I am not expecting any of the children to learn to talk English in a short time, but I do hope to give them some ideas of what the language sounds like.

We find that we are learning new things about these children all the time. Our first impression was that they were nearly all little unfortunate angels or at least angelically [sic] inclined but we're becoming

disillusioned. A little incident occurred Sunday morning that opened our eyes somewhat. The four of us here have two little houses with boys in them as dormitories. There are ten boys & two of us in each house. We chose our boys from the group and were given whom we wanted. We picked out what fellows we thought would make the best leaders among the boys, and the most honest and reliable. We had only had them one week, but things had gone fine until Sunday morning when four of those we thought the best boys got up at five o'clock and under the pretext of going to the kitchen for water they broke in a window and were about to help themselves to some bread. The cook came in and caught them and when I went over to breakfast there I saw my four boys, guilty culprits lined up against the wall. I was surprised to see them caught at such a game and when I had finished my breakfast I brought them over to my room and planned the punishment. First of all I cross questioned each one of them and learned a lot more than I had expected to find out. Fully admitted stealing bread and other things to eat on different occasions, giving for their excuse that they were hungry. They thought that was a licence. Three years of war life have not given them the best ideas of morals and we have a job to reestablish in them the ideas of social justice. As punishment I made them sit the whole day in my room quietly with a diet of bread which I brought and shared with them for dinner. From time to time. I reasoned with them and showed them they had to find out that it payed to do right. I was quite proud of my French and of my ability to put before them moral obligations for which I

had them in tears of repentance many times during the day. Finally I let them go at four, but I'm sure they will remember the session and will think once or twice before they go on such an affair again. Among all the boys in the school there are some bad heads. They are polite and smooth in your presence but you cannot trust them too far out of sight.

Last week we had a 'Teachers' Meeting of all the teachers and masters. The chief question for discussion was whether or not to adopt Military Training as a policy of the school. Everybody except us four and a few French women teachers were Belgians, members of the army, most of whom had been in the army and at the front since 1914. I have been in Quaker meetings. I have been in committee meetings of the U.S. Senate where the same question has been discussed pro and con, but I do not believe I ever heard the idea more thoroughly squelched and more unanimously knocked out than it was by the company in this meeting. Every one of the men was opposed to military training so much so that they said there was no argument to it. Logic is impossible in the army, it kills initiative. Since we are trying to develop the children's minds here, the adoption of such a plan would defeat our own purpose. After the war there is to be a campaign against armies and their existence. We must not talk of war to these children. If an army is made for the future a war will result. We must develop a discipline and a physical perfection in the school entirely separate and above the discipline of the military sort.

All these and many other thoughts were brought out by the various men. It was one

of the strongest peace meetings I have ever attended. I made a speech myself too. I couldn't sit silent when such a vital point was before the house without stating my opinion and our position. Everything I said was received very heartily by the whole group and many of them have since said that they are so glad we hold the same views that they do on the matter of military training. It was I who had to tell them how glad I was that we agreed too. What a strange and comforting experience to find so many Pacifists among these men who are nominally soldiers, but who have never carried guns. They were all stretcher bearers at the front.

Love to you all. I hear some packages are sent from Paris. Perhaps one is from your Xmas at last.

Edwin

Wednesday. 3/12/18.

Dear Clara & Charlie. —

I hope you realize that when I write to the "folks at home", I mean you also, and I'm sure you always read the letters. However it isn't always fun to have someone else lick your candy first, so I'm going to write you this time, and let you pass it on.

Probably you have all given up hope of ever hearing from the box you sent me. I had, but last Monday, sure as you are alive it came. Ever since Nov 19 it had been on the way, nearly four months. One would never have known it from the condition it was in. Everything was intact. The cloth covering did good service. It was packed remarkably good well.

And the contents! You haven't the least

idea what you put in. You probably know what it contained when it left Canada, but those same things assumed an entirely different value over here in France. One cannot buy chocolate in the country since Feb 25, and it was poor stuff we got. Cake and cookies are really unknown especially what we called cakes & cookies at home. And the same with all the rest of the things. I could name each one and expand on its virtues, but I'm afraid you wouldn't understand my attitude and would think I was just talking to hear my pen scratch. But it's true. Never have I been more of a little boy than when I sat on my bed last Monday and unpacked each package, reading between each morsel the love that prompted you all to send it. It was worth waiting for, especially since it was in such good shape illegible it received

Monday surely was a big day, because in the same sack sent down from Paris, were two other bundles, one from Ironwood. Nick and one from the girls at Macdonald Hall in Guelph. Uncle George & Aunt Mary sent candy, dates, sugar, chocolate and a fine pair of socks. The home made candy that Aunt Mary enclosed was fudge the equal of which has never been made. It is marvelous [sic]. That was an entire surprise for I had had no letter announcing it.

The box from Guelph was a treasure of equal value. Oatmeal cookies! Mother, does thee know how I like them? Candy, chocolate, walnut something, and various little bits of things that made the box a delight. Well, with those three boxes. I have a supply of delicacies that is unheard of in France. It is some thing that no money could buy. Maybe I don't appreciate it!!! Some evening I'm going to have a party and

show a few of the people around here what is good cooking!

The last letter I have had from home was received over two and a half weeks ago. There should be one due now very soon. Aunt Jennie has written several times – one of her letters arrived today, sent Feb. 18. She seems to be having the same good time. She doesn't say when she expects to come home. In case this letter goes to her she can consider it a reply. I haven't received the sweater from Anna Richardson yet, but after being successful in the end with a three month's wait for my box from home. I haven't given up hope yet. I am sorry boxes and letters do not travel very regularly.

Oh! by the way. Marion has spoken of getting a letter from Mother and a couple from Aunt Jennie. She says she is sorry not to have replied, but an abscessed finger on her right hand has made her correspondence difficult. ~~illegible~~ not the only ones who have suffered. (Probably by this time she has answered them all. She may have been doing them recently at my expense for Feb. 11 was my last letter. Don't you agree that two months is a long time to wait for an answer to such a letter.

We are having Spring days all the time. The nights are usually cold but during the daytime it surely does warm up splendidly. Gardens have been made for some time and spring flowers are already out. It is delightful to be in such a pretty country just at springtime.

Do you know I hardly know what news to write you. I can't remember what I have told you all in previous letters. I do keep a list of letters I write and receive, but I cannot tabulate their contents and it is so

long between letters that I forget what has gone before. When I used to write every week it was easier to keep you informed of how things were going about me.

Since Sunday is a day when most of the boys and girls are free to play, we have planned to be on duty then. But we each take a day off during the week. My day is Thursday. That means tomorrow. I don't know how I will spend it. Last Thursday I went for a long walk, setting out right after breakfast before eight o'clock. This is wonderful country to promenade. There are many hills but the scenery is all the more beautiful because of them.

I followed the road some of the time, while at the curves I cut across the fields. Most all the woods here is chestnut. The trees are all trimmed and cared for very carefully. Even last week I found some good chestnuts on the ground which I ate as I went along. They are big nuts about the size of walnuts and are mighty good. We often have them on the table at meals.

I struck south in my tramp and in another valley I found the climate about a couple of weeks further advanced than here. There is a region called the "warm lands" of the Corrèze, and the difference is very marked. There are fig trees and fruits of all sorts grown not so far from here.

I had a fine time rambling along, talking to the farmers in the fields as I passed. They were nearly all ploughing in potatoes with oxen and a queer wooden plough. Others were hauling manure in huge high two ~~illegible~~ wheeled carts. I didn't see a horse all day long. Farming in these hills is a different thing from what we are used to in Lobo. The farmers were all much interested in me. I was indeed an unusual sight. An

American, really! One old fellow put out his hand and said “Tiens! C’est le première fois que j’ai jamais parlé avec un American.”

Before I came home I had gone about 45 kilometers. It was a good long walk – but I was much fresher in my head after the outing. I saw quite a good deal of French life and a lot of beautiful country.

We are able to talk French now without much difficulty. That is to make ourselves understood no matter where we go. We have a chance all day long to talk it and besides I am studying it too. One could not imagine an occasion more favorable for learning French.

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Le Glandier par Pompadour
4/14/18.

Dear Home Folks. –

It is Sunday morning at Le Glandier – a rainy wet Sunday morning, but if you could look, with me out of my window you would realize that it takes more than a little mud and clouded skies to make children sad. For three weeks we haven’t had more than three days without rain, and poor Le Glandier is plastered with mud. (But since breakfast some of the boys from our dormitory took a cleaning streak and began a thorough house cleaning campaign on a corridor which runs all around the cour and which has been mud and sticks altho it is really a cement floor. They have shovels and rakes and big brush brooms and a wheelbarrow and they are cleaning house in earnest. The state of mind is contagious for they have been joined by others illegible a regular gang is busy. The Belgian children are all as

busy and as industrious as they can be. Strange, but they nearly all are more happy when they are at work and many actually prefer work to play. There is not enough work for all of them to do, perhaps, fortunately.

But they have developed a wonderful liking to play since we have teaching them games, and they seem much more like real children. They are much more healthy and vigorous than when they came.

For the last few weeks we have been teaching Baseball. They had no idea of it before, could not even catch nor throw a ball, but I have been surprised at the progress they have made so far. In some ways they play better for not having “grown up” on the game as American boys do, for at last they do not have the bad habits formed. Yesterday at one time we had three games of baseball illegible games with nine on a side. - going on in the cour at the same time. I was on duty alone for awhile, but I kept making the rounds of the three games and umpiring just long enough to settle all disputes and set the game on its feet again. They are fond of baseball, and I have never been more impressed by the advantages of the game, in developing quick thinking and alertness. Baseball is well adapted to the Educational advantages of sport. It affords a good all round amount of Physical exercise. It demands skill, and it develops alertness, quick thinking, and attention. A boy playing the game has a new problem to solve every minute.

So it goes. One day at Le Glandier is very much like every other one. There is a monotony and we do get tired, but a good night’s sleep puts us in a better state of mind. It is enervating work, being in the

midst of a big group of children constantly, when they are never quiet. The evenings we do need recreation, but there isn't very much chance for that for us. I have read quite a lot and have written volumes of letters, but one soon becomes unable to compose a decent letter. Even sometimes I find myself too tired and too fagged to write even to Phila. One needs a change from such a high strung nervous life. The other evening I struck out after supper all alone, to go up on the hills where I could see out of the valley where Le Glandier is situated. Out on the road I met quite by chance, a French girl, the stenographer in the office who was apparently searching the same thing I was. I asked her to go for a walk with me and we spent a very recreative and enjoyable evening. It was a new experience and it rested me and I imagine both of us. But in talking I realized that she is worse off than I am here. She says she knows practically no one and goes out from the walls scarcely ever. She is a girl of 20 and naturally just wants company and life. Her home was up in St. Quentin, not far from where we were in the Somme, but she has not been there since 1914. Her family is scattered, her friends lost. Think what a pitiable youth for a girl to spend. Can you see how she could be happy and contented, passing these years of life thusly? She was a civil prisoner in Germany for awhile, then came back to France where she has lived sort of a wandering life since. It was pathetic to hear her tell how she longed to have again her home life and her friends. Nevertheless she enjoyed the privilege of passing an evening walking with a young man and he had a good time too.

A letter from mother came yesterday. It

was written 3/17 and told about the trip some of you had to Union & Sparta. Mother also mentioned the current prices of butter eggs & pork etc. Just the mention of those things made my mouth water. Some butter like you are eating would surely taste good over here once. We do not have any at all. For breakfast there is a bit of Olea margarine, but it is tasteless or rather unpleasant, and if it were not that we need more fat in our diet. I wouldn't make myself eat it. But you spoke of butter so casually as tho it were taken for granted. Pork at \$19.75. Isn't that a price! And maple sugar & maple syrup. Please don't mention them. I have been realizing that this is the season, but could not see how we could scare up any maple trees around here. If you do send another box and can't help putting in some maple sugar, don't call it sugar but call it maple taffy. The French customs authorities may not understand that name so well and may not exact a toll of half the goods.

I'm so glad to notice that your letters are all of such good tone. They do not make me believe that you are downcast or oppressed about the condition of the world and that makes me feel good. Your life seems to be pretty much the same as it always has been and you can't realize how much that means. Here in this community of people some haven't lived normal lives for 4 years and my seven months makes me realize what that must mean. How we will all act when we can come back is more than I can imagine.

Did you get the *Intelligencer* in which there was such a lot of stuff about Le Glandier? I never was more surprised than when I saw some of my personal letters in

print. Somebody sent us a copy. I'm afraid some people will think I have turned poetic from my description of my morning walk. Henry Strater wrote another account after the ones that were published in March 16 issue. Probably you have seen that before now.

Have I ever told you about the letters I have had exchanged between American children and my various friends in France. When I came here I posted a list of names of children in Friends Schools in Wash Belgian children illegible. About two months or more ago I sent about 40 or 50 letters to Wash. and a week ago I got a package of about as many answers. You should have seen these kiddies when I gave them a letter from America written to them personally with name and all. Miss Burwell had also sent me names of all the present children in our school. I copied the addresses and gave them out to children. Yesterday I wrapped 85 letters and sent them back to the American children. That's quite a correspondence. I shall be glad to hear how the concert illegible was made for Reconstruction work. It's a pleasure to hear of your activities in support of work we are doing. Probably you realize that now the Germans are holding all the country where our men were working in the Somme. The advance made in the last few weeks has been just in that region. Our men are all evacuated and are said to have done good work in getting civilians safely away. It's discouraging to think that all the material relief we tried to give the people in that region, has probably been destroyed now, but we are not disheartened because of the encouragement and influence we tried to exert. I have had a letter from one of my

little Grunty Friends. He said they had evacuated but didn't say where they had gone, so I can't write to him. As yet we haven't heard details of how things happened, but probably the Germans came through quite quickly and without much warning.

Well, Give my love to all the family. I can hardly keep track of who is home now. Aunt J. will probably be there by the time this reaches you. I had a letter from her recently. Don't think I'm not in good spirits! I am. Some day I'm coming back home and then I'll be in better humour yet. I'm glad you heard from Marion. Poor girl she has been sick a lot this winter.

Love to all
Edwin

Le Glandier. 29-5-18.

Chère Madame Van Dooren,

J'ai bien reçu hier votre letter de la 22^{me} du 22 courant hier. C'est vraiment etonnant que toutes les deux de vos premières lettres l'une à Madame Danterre et l'autre à moi ne sont jamais arrivee, mais enfin j'ai été content de recevoir de vos nouvelles.

M. Strater est revenu. qui me remplace, il y a huit jours. Cela fait que je suis libre de vous joindre à Mauléon illegible bientôt. Le Capitaine Graux n'est pas encore venu au Glandier, mais je lui ai écrit que je partirai pour Mauléon si je ne reçois aucune nouvelle avant Lundi soir le 3. Mai. J'arriverai donc Mardi a 13.14 et je serai content de voir Max à la gare.

Je chercherai les renseignements du système des douches au Glandier et de la

boiserie des petits lits, comme vous m'avez demandé.

Veuillez agréer Madame mes sentiments respectueuses.

Edwin

This morning I gave my last lesson to my class in English. They read me a very touching speech of goodbye & of appreciation which made every one of us cry. Then I kissed them all around. boys as well as boys sic. The dear youngsters, They do hate to see me leave. One little girl with whom I had had a dreadful session of discipline, some month or so ago. gave me a beautiful boquet sic of roses & forgetmenots and just collapsed as I kissed her.

Love to you all.

Edwin

Back of letter missing 5/31/18

Le Glandier. May 19. 1918.

Dear Home Folks -

It was just two weeks ago that I wrote to you last. The days go too rapidly. The day after I sent my letter one came from Mother, which had been written April 4th. It takes a long time for mail to go back & forth doesn't it?

Mother wrote about making maple sugar and syrup. I don't think I will ever fail to have the thrill of springtime when news comes to me about maple sugar. It made my mouth water. In my English class. I explained to the children how they make maple syrup. I talked in English all the time and by the aid of drawings and signs as well as words which they understand they caught

on so well that they said "Oh. Monsieur vous nous faites mal au coeur" which means "you make ~~me~~ us ill" The boys were asking me if there weren't some maple trees around here that we could tap, but I had to tell him there were none.

You are probably as much surprised as I am to see this letter still written from Le Glandier, when three weeks ago I wrote in such a manner that would make you think I was going to leave the next day. Really I've been waiting for news ever since then and no definite word has come. I'm expecting to go this coming week surely to Mauléon.

Last January when I came to Le Glandier I thought I had surely come to Spring all of a sudden, but really real Spring has been very slow in getting here. But now it the middle of May and the woods are green and wheat and meadows are shooting up so that one is satisfied. Last Thursday, which is my whole day off, I went out into the country with some bread & eggs in my pocket to spend a good vacation in the woods all alone. It is perfectly beautiful country in all directions from Le Glandier so I was sure to find it agreeable no matter where I went. The day was a June day with all nature alive and humming and I surely did enjoy myself. In my wandering I ran across several farms of the Government that were interesting. In one they raised steers and in a couple of others horses. The cattle were not the same kinds as we have, but were longer legged and more rangy. They are used in this country exclusively for farm work and the best ones looked as tho they would be strong enough. They work cows here too a great deal, but horses never. Even before the war they didn't use horses. The stables where the steers were

kept are splendidly built. altho old. Stone floors and wooden mangers. Each one had the name of the steer on a board nailed over his manger. Just as I was there, about 10:30 the morning, they were bringing them all up from an early pasture and were tying them in place. One old maw was having a busy time with a pitch fork trying to put them in place, but the others were handling the cattle very well & carefully. That's one thing that I have noticed. The farmers driving the illegible and cows are never rough on them. They jabber away to them constantly and get results. It isn't French they talk. I can't understand a word of it. There are actually peasants around here who can't talk French – nothing but their patois which is far from resembling French closely.

At the horse farms, there were so illegible mares with colts. They were in the meadows and looked pretty. It is a strange sight to see a horse in the Corrèze. I talked a little with the men around the stables. They seemed to be surprised to see an American and commented on the reputation the Canadian horses had made in the war.

About noon I picked out a nice Chestnut grove where there was thick soft moss on the ground for cushions, and had my lunch. Then I took a nap, wrote a letter and had a wonderful restful afternoon. It does one good to get away from the constant hum & excitement of a mass of children. A day like last Thursday does me an endless amount of good. Toward four I wandered back, stopping to talk to farmers in their fields. I didn't follow the roads but cut across lots in the general direction of Le Glandier and inquired my way as I went. Women do most of the work in the fields, and mostly by

hand. They plow with a one handled plow and cattle, but often that they work the land by hand with forks and hoes. People are 300 years behind times in their farming. The buildings and all show no advancement for centuries. In one field there were several women and a whole drove of children all sizes. Thursday is the school holiday in France instead of Saturday. One of the women, just a young woman, put down her hoe & took up her baby less than a year old to stop his crying. She began talking to him about his daddy whom she was expecting home on leave any day. It had been 8 mos. since he had been back, and she was plainly proud of the boy which she would show him. They were all consumed with curiosity just to see me and to hear me tell about people in America and how they lived, people who did the same work that they were doing. There wasn't another man around. They were preparing the land for some "black wheat" which is some kind of fall wheat I gathered. They make bread out of the wheat they grow & have ground at the mill and consequently are not rationed to 300 grams a day like the rest of us in France.

Further along I stopped in a little tumble down pig sty of a stone house to ask the direction. A hump backed old woman & her husband almost quarreled in deciding which way I should be directed, but both agreed to asking me to have a glass of cider. I was thirsty so it sounded good, better than it finally tasted but I accepted their hospitality. They wanted me to eat some bread too but I insisently declined that. How people can live in such places I don't understand. I am proud to be a farmer's son, but I am proud too to have lived in a

decent farmer's home and not in such a dirty hovel as all farmers inhabit around here.

I had a letter from Ellwood not long ago, telling about his experience in the Somme at the time of the offensive. He as well as all the boys at Gruny & other places, lived busy lives for the week of the evacuation. Ellwood wrote an exceedingly good account of it. I'd send it to you only I have already sent it to Marion. Now Ellwood is in the East of France doing some building for refugees after having spent a month in Paris running a canteen for refugees at one of the railroad stations.

Our work with the children is going on very well Nowadays since it is dry & also warm, we have our classes in a meadow just near, across a creek. The children play for awhile. Then we let them go wading. They enjoy that ever so much. It's a sight to see a hundred of them all in the creek at once, girls & boys. There is a little footbridge across the creek where they have to come over. It's only about 8" wide and the water runs swiftly under it. Altho it's only about 20 feet long and flat & solid, there are always or have usually been some who fall in every day. It's not deep so there's no danger of harm. It's a good way to teach them to balance themselves.

Is Aunt Jo home yet? I'm glad she stayed an extra month in Calif. What a fine winter! I had a letter from Aunt J. about two weeks ago.

How are you all? I think of you much oftener than I write, and am wondering when we can see each other again. I have no idea when I will come back now. We must be patient & wait. It's hard, but seems necessary.

Love to you all.

Edwin.

§

Château Chéraute
par Mauléon
Basses-Pyrénées
6/9/18.

Dear Folks at Home –

This is Sunday morning and there is nothing I want to do more just now than write you a good long letter. I know how much you like to get my letters because getting letters is a game that works both ways and I'm sure I appreciate yours when they come. And I ought to be able to write such interesting letters, because the experiences I am having are surely far from ordinary. There are so many many letters I ought to write. I'd like to tell all my friends about the things that are happening, but it's an impossibility, and there are so many many things that you no doubt would like to know about that I don't realize are interesting to you. I know myself some things that I noticed when I first came to France as very strange have now become so common as not to excite any comment. But this morning I ought to have a good hour now and I want to talk to you in a good old fashioned way. You seem a long long way off these days, especially when I think of you at home where conditions are not so very abnormal. Where you don't have to weigh out just so many ounces [sic] of bread per person per day, where you are not rationed in sugar by the government, where you know what butter tastes like, where you don't have to go without meat on Thursdays Fridays and Saturdays unless you

please to do so yourselves, where you don't have to have a certificate from the mayor to buy a half sack of meal for some ducks or chickens, where you have a right to live a little free. Those times have become memories and it makes me almost homesick even to think of you eating cream and sugar on your oatmeal for breakfast. We don't even have oatmeal to eat and if we did wouldn't have sugar on it and could scarcely feel we could afford even thin milk on it. But I mustn't talk too much like that or you will think that I am doing nothing but worrying about what I am going to eat from one day to the next.

I have to begin again to ask you to pardon my mistakes in English for really it's getting difficult to write any more without putting in a lot of French. These days when I don't hear a word of English from morning till night except my own voice when I talk to myself sometimes from sheer desperation, I really get pretty well soaked in French and it pops out very naturally. It used to seem a wonderful thing to hear people talk French when I first got here about nine months ago, but now here I am living in French, eating, talking, working, sleeping, even dreaming in French. Je ne l'aurais pas cru si on m'avait dit l'été passée que je serais un français en moins qu'un an! Well, at any rate there's all the more reason why I should write letters in English so as not to forget it. There is no one around here now with whom I can talk it.

Here! Do you know where 'here' is? Château Chéraute! Sounds rather portentous doesn't it? 'Basses Pyrennées'. I never knew where that was myself until I came to look for it when I heard I was going there. It's a department in the very

south west corner of France and the Château is really an old French Château perhaps 200 or 300 years old owned now by a Madame D' something, the D meaning that the family was once of the royalty. The Madame is a queer old one. She is in the town now and we are having some funny sessions arranging the renting of the place.

Do you know why I'm here? I forgot how much or how little I have ever told you about the system of school colonies under the ~~system~~ control of the Belgian Queens for repatriated Belgian children. Well Capt Graux, her representative, has asked a Madame Van Dooren (I must have told you all this before) a Belgian woman with the name "van" which means the same thing as the D' in French, and me to come down here to Mauléon to arrange the château for a school of about 100 children. We have come, she about a month ago and I last Tuesday, and here we are, a little family of 3. (She has a son of 12 yrs) in the old Château, living in state with a couple of servants, but no potatoes in the house. The servants are not for show. They are really needed to do cleaning etc of the whole establishment.

The château itself is a 3 story building about 60' x 30' with a illegible-cottage roof (I guess I coined that word. but maybe you will know what I mean) From "Excusez-moi Diner est servi" ---- Now dinner is over and I'm seated again under a tree in the big yard ready to continue this letter. - From the outside, I was about to say, the building is not very attractive. It isn't even pretty, but inside the age shows. The rooms are large, ceilings & windows high, floors hard oak and smooth except for the natural sagging of age. There are big mirrors in

nearly all the rooms and what furniture that remains such as bookcases, curtains etc show what Chéraute was once upon a time. As a site for a school it is not so bad, considering the fact that seventeenth century châteaux were not intended when built to serve as temporary school for Belgian children chased out of their homes and habits by war.

Along with the house there is a barn and garden and about an acre of land besides in front and back yards. From the road toward the house one passed between two double rows of oaks, the oldest biggest, gnarliest old oaks I have ever seen. There's another alley of them behind the house leading into the woods. Big trees, about four or four and a half feet thru, wonderful old fellows. Besides there are pines and spruces in clusters about the grounds making ample shade from the sun, almost tropical down here not so very far from Africa. We're nearer Africa than Paris.

We want to run a farm in connection with the affair here. There's a barn, which can be adapted to stables for cows and pens for chickens and ducks or pigs. There is one cow and a 4 mos. old calf which we will buy for about 1100 francs (\$220) also a small stock of pigs and ducks & chicks which we can have to start our farm. Yesterday I was in the process of making some wire netting pens for little ducks when the woman who keeps charge of the barn came in and said astonished. "What? Do you know how to work?" You see being raised on a farm never ceases to be a positive asset. The garden is planted, and we can buy the things just as they are. There are a few potatoes, some corn peas beans etc. but I think we could have produced more had we been on hand

early in the spring. A fig tree in the garden is quite a curiosity to me. I hope it will have some fruit. Fruit trees and grape vines there are some which we hope will prove their right to exist when fall comes. We have made some hay already. There was some cut when I came last Tuesday. It's lovely hay and smelled so good. You would have laughed had you seen how the hay was made. Let me tell you. Five women came every day and turned it, shook it out and at evening cocked it up. It was a very picturesque sight to see them with their broad hats & bare feet, except for sandals, working with long handled wooden rakes or else by hand. They shook it out from the piles in the morning & scattered it all with their hands and then turned it with rakes. (You are saying to yourself 'There couldn't have been any thistles in it' No. Canadian thistles are not always confined to Canada but they are not found all over the world fortunately.) When it was dry ready to be taken in, a Sixth woman came with a two wheeled cart and a yoke of cows, creamy, jersey colored cows, but built rather for work than for giving milk. When they began loading the hay on the cart I couldn't stand it any longer. I put on a pair of overalls and in a little while was out in the midst of the women doing it myself very much to the amusement & astonishment of the whole neighborhood for really more than the people from Chéraute saw me. We loaded and hauled and unloaded three charette loads in about an hour and a half of excellent hay. There had been some taken in before and is more to be cut so, in place of trying to buy hay, something almost impossible to do, we will have some of our own.

The country round about is well worth while a line or two. Basses Pyrennées really means what it says. There are only hills to the west and to the north of us but at the south and to the East, there are really mountains and mountainous country just next door. The other afternoon. Max, the young son, and I went for a little walk up on one of the hills nearby. It was a good sized hill all right and on the top, the trees were all blown and twisted out of shape. Heather, some of it in bloom, and a kind of prickly green bush were all that was growing toward the top. When we got up, we could see to the east, real mountains covered with snow, all indistinct in the distance, scarcely discernable from the clouds. I had never seen snow capped mountains before but there they were apparently just across the valley but really forty or fifty miles away. There are other hills near here, much taller than the one we climbed, which are easily accessible and which ought to be well worth going up. From the windows of one can see smaller ranges of mountains to the south which are visible more or less according to the humor of the mists. It's a clear aired country and very pretty.

Really, it was hard to leave Le Glandier, where during four months and a half I had been making friends. The last class in English that I gave was indeed a session. The children were crying all the time and broke down completely when I kissed them goodbye. The professeurs had a tea in my honor one evening where I had to respond to a speech in French. There were refreshments and music and a very social time. My embarrassment at making a speech in French entirely unexpected, I

mean the speech was soon forgotten in the enjoyment of the conversation and good spirit shown by all. To top the climax of my departure, Madame Dardenne & her daughters went with me to the station, near which we had supper together before I took a train at 7.30. I just had a letter from Madame Dardenne.

I trust that soon some of your letters will reach here for it seems a long way from home and friends away over here. Remember me to the people around home. I wish I had time to write at least to some of them. And, to the family, which is such a changeable quantity, let me send all the love this letter will carry to each and every one of you. Yours as ever. Edwin.

§

Château de Chéraute
par Mauléon
(Basses-Pyrennées)
6/30/18.

Dear Home Folks. –

I never meant that three weeks should pass ~~before~~ without my being able to send you a letter. It was 6/9 when I wrote you last and a card to Aunt Jennie a week later. It's so much harder to write when so many things have happened for I can't remember half the interesting news, but it's harder yet to find time to write while so many things occur. 6/19 I received a letter from Mother and Helen also one from Clara 5/20. Mother's was written 5/22. I also had a good letter from the Haight family a few weeks ago. I'd like to have more time to write letters, but it is a hard job, especially when one is well tired out from work.

The past few weeks I have become a real farmer again. We are haying now, and since it is impossible almost to find any men to do the work I am helping the women myself. Yesterday I had a neighbor woman come over with her mower and cut for us. She had two pairs of cows as motive power. I wish I could have had a photograph of the procession as they went around the field. A little girl leading the first pair. a woman at the second pair and another woman on the seat of the mower. Naturally with that outfit they didn't get in the corners very closely and left a great part to be mowed by hand. I was at it last night until 9.30 with a scythe far from the style I used to swing – a straight handle and a blade 5" broad. – and again at 5.30 this morning. I cut all the forenoon, but I guess I was punished for breaking the Sabbath for it rained all the afternoon. It promises to be clear tomorrow, so we will have to dry it out.

For our chicken and duck raising we are preparing a big room of the barn. I whitewashed it all over at the expense of most of the skin of my hands and now we are in the process of putting in wire netting compartments. It will be fine when finished with six pens, about 3 1/2 metres by two, also a place for laying nests and setting hens. We have 33 ducks, 10 hens, 22 little chicks, & four hens setting on chicken & duck eggs. There are 3 pigs in our pen now and with the cow & calf that makes up our present stock. By keeping pigs, chickens, and cows we can in a way supply some food to ourselves, which will be a great saving, since meat is very scarce here.

Another proposition that we have to carry out as soon as we can is the digging

of a well for a water supply. A few floors will have to be cemented, and some new drains built. When there are practically no workmen to be found, these problems are difficult, but they must be solved before our children come. Yesterday I was able to get a couple of men to help move about 200 yards of wire fence that must be changed to enclose our ground. They are miners from the north of France, refugees here since the advance a couple of months ago. They worked well yesterday so I hope I can keep them. I pay them 5 francs a day and dinner that is a little less than \$1. There are women around here who work in the gardens or in the hay, just as well as a man could and they only ask 4 francs.

What a varied life we are having here in France. Three months a carpenter, three months a teacher. Now, for the time being, farmer and a little bit of everything. When the children come and we get our organization running well, who knows what I will find to do? I suppose we should feel thankful that we are able to fit in, in so many places. That's what we came over here to do, to serve wherever we could help, and we should naturally expect some variety. My share has been pretty well varied from Northern France to the Spanish border almost.

I have found an old man in town who can talk English yes even American. He was for 40 years butler in a family in New York. I had a little chat one evening. To be sure it seemed good to be able to talk English once again. You can't imagine how I miss it. I really won't be able to talk well when I get into English speaking communities again. It's a good thing for the French. That's evident, and I feel like a regular Frenchman.

The other evening we went to a little play given in the village by local talent and I was just as much at home as tho it were English that was being spoken instead of French. I was surprised how easily I could follow. My pronunciation isn't parisienne, but having to talk French all the time should help me more than living where French was an exception instead of the rule. Madame Van Dooren has a good accent, and since it is she whom I hear most, I ought to imitate it.

I have written Chas Evans, who is ~~our~~ the Chef of the Friends Unit of the Red Cross, asking for a furlough to come to America this fall. I want to do some publicity work among Friends, especially among Friends in Canada, and I want to see if I can't arrange to have Canadian Friends included in our work in France, that is those who are drafted and who are conscientious objectors. There are no doubt some in our very circle at home who are affected by the draft law and I would like to get our branch of work recognized by the Canadian military authorities, as it is recognized by the English and by the American now. I haven't heard yet what chance there is of getting over. I am waiting for the reply now. I do not mean to give up my connections with the F.W.V.R.C., but just to come over on furlough. I have saved my vacation time. Have over 3 weeks coming to me.

By now, no doubt Aunt Jennie is with you again in Lobo, after her pleasant winter in California. I would enjoy a chance to visit a little with you all. When will that time come? I hope Aunt Ettie is better and Aunt Tamer, how is thee. From the tone of mother's letter. I take it for granted that things are going very well at home. Certainly there is not the same effect in

Canada as in France. Your 35 pounds of butter a week make my mouth water. What wouldn't I give for some home made bread and butter. It's been over 3 months since I have tasted butter. Once in a while we had Margarine at Le Glandier. When the time comes for us to return for good to America we won't think about things to eat. We will be too glad to get back to our friends & our families, those we love. Life will then be doubly worth living on account of the year or years of work in France.

My love to you all, Letters are always welcome, from all of you. Aunt Jennie thy plans for the future will be very interesting to me. How I would love a visit as we used to have in Phila. Just about a year ago now. it was all over.

Your boy as ever,
Edwin.

§
Château de Chéraute
July 4, 1918.

My dear Mother, -

This is the fourth of July and during the day I have been thinking about thee so often that I'm going to write thee a letter. To whom should one write on a birthday but to one's mother? It is with thee especially that I should celebrate this day. Twenty six years ago! Doesn't that seem a long time ago. Does thee realize that thee has a son as old as that? To look back it probably does not seem that long. Time passes! The years roll by one by one and in the end count up.

Today, on my birthday, (I don't usually think about it much when it rolls around each year, but this year I have had an ardent

desire to celebrate) – today I have felt like congratulating myself upon having such a mother as I have upon such parents as it has been my right and privilege to enjoy. Thee doesn't know how wonderful a mother thee has been to me. We are so far apart and have been for nearly twelve years now, that thee may sometimes think that thy influence has ceased to be much of a factor in my life. Far from that! Ever since I have been old enough to realize it. I have been seeing more and more each year, how fortunate a heritage I have in my parentage my youth and my training. And during this last year of such varied demands and experiences I have more than a few times had to thank my parents and my boyhood for this force or that force that has carried me over some trial or test successfully. When I see so many people, so many children who have not had the privileges which we at home took for granted as commonplace, such as food, clothing, health, opportunity to play, to work to learn from nature, when I realize how much those things really mean. I am prouder than ever of my father and mother, and I want you both to know it. If my life has been successful or if it is going to be successful in the future, it is going to be due to a large extent to my parents. You have given me a priceless boyhood, a base for a life of usefulness. I hope.

Today since it's the 4th of July and everybody in France is celebrating the American fête I am not working, but am taking advantage of the occasion to write some letters. I have written to Marion. Letters are worth a great deal, but to be torn away from the one whom you love most, just when you would most be

together and to be held for a whole year apart so far. It isn't the easiest thing in the world to bear. A year is a long time for lovers to be separated. Here's hoping the time will come again when we can live and work together.

This is only a little letter, but it will let you know that I am thinking of you today, and that I am conscious of the fact that I have two of the best parents in the world, my father and my mother. My deepest love to you both always.

Your son. Edwin.

§

Château de Chéraute

Mauléon

(Basses-Pyrénées)

7/21/18.

Dear Folks at Home,
Mother's letter, written June 16th got here a couple of days ago. They still have their charm, and the news from home is still devoured with the same eagerness and interest. I only wish the letters came more frequently and in a shorter time.

I am anxious to know what will be the results of the court martial of George Mabley and the outcome of the decisions of the other boys who are being called upon to make decisions. I regret that some connections could not have been made sooner, with the Friends Service Com. so that more of our young men could have come to France to be with us. Pearson, you say has prospect of coming. Good! I wish there were more. That's one reason why I have been planning to come home this fall,

to try to establish some means for our boys to join the Friends Work in France. Whether or not I can come, remains to be seen. I have some hopes, and as soon as definite news arrives, naturally I will let you know. Yes you are feeling the war more and more closely. The story of Ada & Gordon Stoner, makes a concrete and striking case. These snatches at happiness while it can be had, have in them, just the same more of sorrow than of joy. Changes, changes, everywhere. How much older we are getting these days and how rapidly.

A little over a week ago I had a brief letter from Mary Pancourt saying that Marion was in a hospital with appendicitis, but that she wasn't strong enough to have an operation. Imagine what comforting news for me, when the letter had been nearly a month coming. Five days later a second letter from Mary P. written 6/24 said Marion was some better, but still flat in bed. They said she was suffering from a nervous break down and not as at first from appendicitis, but that she needed rest and recuperation in the purest form. You can realize that it is hard for me to be calm & industrious when I know, at home, my sweetheart is lying sick in body & mind, a nervous breakdown from over work and heavy responsibility. The load she has been carrying has at last told on her and God only knows how she will recover. My helplessness away over here is pathetic, and I can't find much good humor these days.

Mother's report of the Picnic was interesting. How Helen & Russell have become people of public importance. Fine. I'm glad of it. Why shouldn't they. They have in them the right sort of stuff. I would surely enjoy letters from them occasionally.

Russell, how long has it been since thee wrote?

Please don't write such fairy tales of butter & sugar as were in the last letter. 20 lbs of butter every 3 days. 10 lbs of sugar at a time! Goodness. I can just remember what butter tastes like. The last I had was in Paris I think, in January, and sugar I have learned to get along without now. We only get a pound a month and I have given all mine for the manufacture of a little currant jam and have learned to drink coffee and eat boiled rice without any sugar. When the days come again when we can have a few of those delicacies, they will mean all the more to us. But there are much worse things than being deprived of food. We are not suffering and there are millions of men & women worse off than we are.

We are digging a well this last week. There are two men, former miners from Northern France, evacuated down here, whom we have employed. We are lucky because they know so well how to do the work and are doing it in such a fine manner. There is already about 20 feet of depth about 4 ft 6" in diameter. Water is liable to appear now in a yard or two more. It will be a good job done, this building of the well and will be so much accomplished toward our preparation.

Our haying is done, and I finished day before yesterday putting up 200 yds of fence. At odd times I keep whitewashing a room at a time, but one has to run from one job to another and slip in to Mauléon 1 ½ miles on business, so often, that the days pass without leaving much accomplished. Last night we counted all our fowls in our new "poulalier". There are 50 ducks of all ages and 60 chickens. We get blood and

some intestines etc from the abattoir nearby which Mary cooks for the ducks and pigs. There is a limited amount of bran to go with it for food. Mary feeds the ducks a mixture of chopped nettles, cooked blood & bran. They thrive on it.

I enjoyed a letter from Aunt J a few days ago written from Ironwood. You must be enjoying the account of her trip & winter now.

Love to you all. Write often.
Edwin

Please don't hesitate about sending along that maple sugar & Co. Use the above address

§

Cie Gle
Transatlantique

Dear Home Folks. –

What do you know about your "poor boy"? I am just wondering what you have made out of my recent letters, that is the ones I have written during the past two months. But even now I am not in any place nor state of mind to write you at length. But be it known that oh I am on the boat for New York and if you get this I will have landed safely.

(2) I have come from France on Publicity work for our Mission and hope to be able to do some travelling in U.S.A. and Canada where I can tell of our work and raise more money.

(3) I have my passport visaed to go to Canada, and hope to be able to do it without any hold up or delay. When I will get there I don't know.

(4) I will go to Phila on arriving in New York where I will make more definite plans with the Friends Service Com.

(5) You can address me at
Friends Service Com.
205 12th St.
Philadelphia.

(6) I will write to you again soon and will tell you some real news.

(7) It does seem good to be approaching America again. I am hoping to find everybody in good health and better spirits, but on account of my various travelling I haven't had any news for over a month.

With the warmest message of love that paper can carry.

Yours. Edwin.

§

Château de Chéraute
par Mauléon
(Basses-Pyrénées)
Aug. 9. 1918.

Dear Folks at Home. –

Helen's letter written July 15th came yesterday. One from Auntie sent about July 4th came a week or so ago. They are always very welcome and they form for me now the one link between my life over here in France and my previous existence. Isolated as I am, completely from English speaking people, surrounded daily by experiences entirely foreign and new in this setting, you can imagine the value I attach to letters from my family and friends. They do not come any too often. In the last two weeks my mail has been very slim. I don't understand it. The Canadian letters have

come alright but none from U.S.A. I had one from Vincent, one from Esther and two from you at Sunnyside. But from Phila not a word, and you can guess how anxiously I am waiting when the last news I had was from Mary Pancoast and she said Marion was still in bed in the hospital not yet able to write herself. I am far from being contented and happy away over here when Marion is sick and goodness knows how sick. But all I can do is wait and trust for good news in every mail.

Mary Pancoast is probably on the ocean now enroute for France where she is going to join our unit. She and Jess Packer are to be married over here and both are going to be in the Germaize Hospital where Jess has been for some time. These plans are the result of slow developments and much thinking on their part. I want to go to Bordeaux to meet Mary if I can find out when her boat comes in. I'd like to see Jess there too but I don't know whether he can get papers to come down from Paris. Travel in France is not unrestricted. One has to have a paper to go to the other end of your own town almost.

I had dreamed of being able to manipulate a scheme for ourselves similar to what Jess & Mary are doing, but it's out of the question now with Marion sick. But even before her illness she couldn't see her way clear to leave her brothers. There is some talk of Harry, her second brother, coming over in the Reconstruction work. If so, she may feel able to come too.

As far as my chances are concerned for coming to America this fall, I can see very little hope now. I cannot get a definite answer to my questions from the Paris office and I'm so far away I can't get thru to

talk things over. It is evident that the Committee is not very keen about sending workers back to America. I can see why. I would be selfish in pressing my request, but even so I think I have a pretty good excuse, having taken no conge (leave) at all and having so many things to do in America. Financially I don't know how long I can afford to stay here without earning anything. Down here especially I am obliged to spend more money than I would were I in the war zone, or somewhere like Grunzy. I haven't a great deal of money left out of the sum I brought over to last me nine months. Fortunately the Service Com have granted us 30 francs per month for ordinary expenses, but I have been so far away from every one that I had been forgotten. After asking for my allowance twice I got it a few days ago so I am a little happier. But one doesn't save much on 30 francs per month, especially when one must buy so many stamps.

It was sad news to hear of the fate of the box that you had sent me. Did you address it F.W.V.R.C. A.P.O. – or was it addressed to Château de Chéraute? I didn't believe any paper was necessary unless boxes were sent by [A.R.O]. But even then I can't understand for a little over two weeks ago I got a box of cookies & cakes from Nellie Haight sent [A.R.S.] since May 18. They tasted so good. You have no idea how wonderful the most common things taste when one hasn't had any for so long. I don't know whether it's worth while to send a “bon” for the shipment of a box or not. Why didn't you tell me what was in the box that came back? Were you afraid it would make me homesick? I may enclose a “bon” in this letter for a few things such as a little

maple sugar, some oatmeal cookies, or some jam or “conserve” of some sort. If it were possible I’d love to have some butter, but it is too fragile. I haven’t had anything to eat on bread for over two months. It’s quite a habit this eating butter and using cream. Yes. I remember correctly don’t I? You do use cream? It has been so long I had almost forgotten. But one can get along without either one very well, after a few months training.

Thursday. Aug. 15. This letter has been so sadly neglected for almost a week! I must try to get it off today.

Hot weather! Oh the last week has literally burned. But it’s not the same sort of heat that we had for instance, last summer in Phila. The nights are always cool and the early morning even chilly but it scorches during the daytime and everything is as dry as a bone. Corn is curling up like paper, and the grass, which up to now has been so green is losing its color. I don’t wonder at it for it hasn’t rained a drop for a long time.

The hot dry weather is not conducive to real hard work. Last Saturday I was in the sun all day and working hard stretching wire on a fence around a little potato garden. In the evening we had a dinner party, or rather were guests at a dinner party in Mauléon at the hotel. A Belgian officer was here visiting Madame Van Dooren during the previous week and he had us all go to the hotel for dinner Sat. night. It was a big dinner and late after we had spent the evening at the house of a family friends of ours, listening to music. All in all, (the celebration was such a change.) the result was that Monday I spent all the day in bed, except long enough in the morning & evening to do my

milking. Summer Complaint, with headache and some fever, are the symptoms, but I’m feeling better by now and as soon as we have a change in weather it will be all over.

We have such nice cool jobs as unloading and hauling coal these days.

To illustrate how the people here try to wring every possible cent out of a stranger, no matter what sort of work he may be doing let me tell you about a little incident that illustrates. About 3 weeks ago a car load of ten tons of coal arrived at the station and Madame, who happened to be at the station, engaged a drayman, who had been recommended to her, to unload and haul the ten tons to the château. Last Sunday another carload of 20 tons arrived and I set out Sunday afternoon to find some means of unloading on Monday because the cars have to be emptied right away, and 20 tons of coal to be hauled 2 miles is no little job. I got a woman to promise a pair of cows, real early in the morning, but she had no wagon. I borrowed a couple of carts from another farmer who couldn’t spare time to haul our coal, but who would loan his carts. The cows & carts made just the desired combination. Then I found another man in Mauléon who does draying, and succeeded in making some good conditions with him. He had a pair of cows & two charettes, but he himself could only work a half a day. That was soon fixed up by suggesting that his wife finish the day for him. Fine. That was all fixed, and I ~~sent~~ told one of my workmen to go to the station and help load all day and the other to be at the château to help unload and keep the coal well piled. The road is flat & good and ~~the~~ one pair could pull two carts of coal so with two

double carts, the first to begin work at six with an extra man to load & one to unload. I had it all fixed. Fortunately too, for Monday I was sick and couldn't do anything. But it all went fine and by night it was all here but one cart load and that was loaded ready to bring first thing Tuesday morning. And the cost. For the two workmen 5 francs each, for the man & woman with cows & carts 25 francs, for ~~she~~ the one with cows only 20 f. and the carts were a free loan. So in all I got my 20 tons in the barn in good shape for 55 francs. (\$10 just now = 57 francs)

The next day I went to the first Drayman, the one Madame Van Dooren engaged, to get his bill. He charged 60 francs for unloading 10 tons and it took him a week before it was all here. You can be assured I gave him a good expression of my opinion when he gave me his bill. I told him he ought to be ashamed not to be able to get work done, he who was, of the country, at less than double, what a stranger could accomplish.

We bought some pigs a few days ago. ~~some~~ They were 2 mos. old and not so bad looking, thin of course and small, what else could one find here. What do you suppose we had to pay for them? 50 francs each. It seems like a lot, but perhaps they will bring it back.

I had a letter from Marion day before yesterday, after a wait of 17 days without any news. She was some better and had just gone out of the hospital after 3 weeks in bed. She went to the Jackson's in Germantown where she has been convalescing I hope. The Jacksons have been so exceedingly friendly to her this winter and especially kind during her illness.

I know she will be well cared for with them in their home.

Miss Bertie Wilson who is at Guelph for the summer sent a letter which arrived just a day or so ago. She writes such good newsy letters. She has been mighty good to me since I've been in France. in looking after my business affairs in Wash. and in keeping me posted about the way things are going at school.

Don't count too much on my coming home this fall. I cannot decide yet, one way or another. If I come I will be there and you will recognize me, but don't waste time looking for me. You know well enough I want to come more than any words can tell, but things don't work out these days like one wants them to always.

Did Pearson Brown finally sail for France? I have had no news from him over here yet, but then I am so far away from ~~illegible~~ Paris that I can't hear much that is going on in the center. What news from James Stanton? Where is he? and George Mabley? What is his address? Did he try to come to France to join our work? Did James ever say anything about getting a letter from me telling how he could get in touch with the Friends Service Committee?

Yes, Aunt Jennie I had thy good long letter of July 2 and thy card of July 11 Helen's letter of 7/15 came 8/8. When ever anyone feels the inspiration let them write. It has been a long time since Russell has written. I know how busy he is.

Today is some sort of a church holiday. Jour D'Assomption, and nobody in the country thinks of working. They go to church four or five times and spend the time in between "messes" in the cafés drinking wine. A Jour de Fête means for the

people of this region, church and lots of wine. The bells have been ringing all day and the singing or chanting (it's going on now) in the church in our front yard has been tremendous.

Well, it's nearly milking time. (I'm a regular farmer now just like I used to be during the summer five or six years ago. I must go.) My cow gives from 3 to 4 quarts of milk according to her humor. She is a French cow and very nervous and excitable, bawls all night for no good reason.

Love to you all, Edwin.

§

~~illegible~~ Sept. 14. 1918.

Dear Folks at Home. —

It has been a whole month since I have written to any of you and I am ashamed of myself, but rather than make excuses I will begin to tell you some of the many things that have happened since I wrote last.

I'm sending this letter to you Clara, because I want you to know first of all that the box you sent me came through safely and in excellent shape, arriving here about three or four days ago. Thank you all so much for it and thanks to the rest of you who sent another box which wasn't as fortunate as that of the Willsons. When ever a box arrives from over there it seems as though the contents are always just what a fellow wanted most. It surely does hit the spot. The sugar, which was very tactfully labelled sweets, was much appreciated for we have not been able to get our ration for this month and there are so many big black

berries going to waste that it hurts not to be able to preserve them. I gathered about eight quarts yesterday afternoon and am going to have some jelly made with (some) of your sugar. The coffee is delicious and the cocoa too. Dates and chocolate were awfully good. You can't imagine how good they tasted. The soap and paper etc are practical and appreciated I assure you. The message of love that such concrete things bring is very real and I can't thank you all enough for them. Madame Van Dooren and her little boy Max with whom I am sharing my spoils want to thank you all too for they are as much charmed as I am. The coffee we had a cup of it yesterday and it is wonderful.

Since I wrote last we have nearly finished our task of "preparing our mansion" In fact two weeks ago we would have been able to receive the children, but they haven't come yet and it now seems that there is very little hope of getting any children for an indefinite time. The Germans are not allowing any more of them to be repatriated and now we have our schools ready for them and they can't come. Isn't that discouraging and pitiful. There are at least four schools, our two here, and two over near Lyon which are ready to receive children but which are vacant and will probably remain so.

About two weeks ago, when our work began to be shaped up. I made up my mind I needed to go to Paris. I knew Mary & Jess Packer were there. I wanted to talk to the people in the central office about my chances of going to America. I wanted to see what new schemes were going on in the F.W.V.R.C. to see whether or not I wanted to try to leave the Belgian children's work

and do something else or not. I needed a chance to see some of my friends for I was very sad and ragged. So the last of August I packed my bag one morning and took a train for Paris. I had had a letter from Jess saying he was in Paris, that Mary had just arrived and that as soon as they could get her papers they were going to Germaize where Jess is located and be married. They had been told that it would be impossible for them to be married in Paris because they hadn't lived a month there. When I arrived I found that they had been married a couple of days ago and were then having a honeymoon in a quiet little place about an hour out of Paris. It was Saturday morning when I arrived in Paris and I had so much to attend to that I couldn't go out to see them that day. But on Sunday I went out, found them at lunch, surprised them soundly and spent the day with them and had such a good time that I stayed all night and went on a picnic into the 11000 acre forest of St. Germaine with them on Monday. They ~~are~~ were the only guests at a quiet little French tavern just on the edge of the forest of St. Germaine. – an ideal place to spend a honeymoon. and near Paris and reasonably cheap. 14 francs per day for everything – About five Monday afternoon I went back to Paris and whom do you suppose I found in town. Elwood and Art Smith and Walter Smith. Art's brother. Art was in Paris on leave and Ellwood had come up on business. What a strange coincidence! The next day in spite of the fact that I should have stayed in Paris to do errands for myself, we all went out and had lunch with Mary & Jess. What a jolly reunion it was! And what a coincidence that we should all be in Paris at the same time by

chance. Art was in the city when Mary & Jess were married but he didn't know they were anywhere around nor were they aware of his proximity. Strange things happen these days in France.

Jess and Mary had been married in Paris because they found out some way to satisfy the legal requirements of residence. The Mayor of Paris married them, they said in very impressive style. Then in the afternoon they had a regular Friends wedding at 93 Boulevard St Michel, where the American Friends who come over for our work have headquarters. There were about 20 boys there at the time and they fixed the place up for the wedding on a half day's notice and it went off fine. Someone had a big French wedding cake made and Mary reported that all the thrills she had expected to have, had they been married at home, were there just the same. They are happy at any rate and by this time are returned to Germaize I suppose to the hospital where Mary is to be nurses aid and where Jess resumes his duties.

Ellwood and Art are fine. Art isn't the happiest fellow in the world, but he feels he is doing his duty. It is hard for him as for all the rest. Wyatt and he are no longer together. They have been in different companies for some time. Ellwood is doing wonderfully fine work for Friends this year but he looks tired and thin, just as some of the rest of us.

In Paris I talked over the prospects for getting into other lines of work with the F.W.V.R.C. but I found nothing that I thought I would be more useful doing than the work I am in. It is school work and I can't forget how thankful I was when I first went to Le Glandier to be able to do school

work in France which is really my profession. So I have made up my mind not to leave the schools of the Belgian Repatriate children even tho I had written to the Captain that he should not count on me after the first of October and had myself made up my mind to change. I guess I must have been too tired and unable to see thru little troubles and grasp the importance of the work as a whole.

And about coming to America for my vacation. I had a good long talk with Mary about Marion and her condition. The poor girl had not been able to write much, (since coming from Paris I have had good long letters, which lead me to make the same decision I would have made without them) Mary said that Marion was not at all contented and happy and that she should have some change of some sort or other in order to prevent a second complete collapse during the coming winter. Chas. Evans, our representative of the Red Cross and a man whose advice I have appreciated very much, was very kind in trying to help me see my way clear. I told him just how things stood and why I felt an obligation to return to America in order to do all I could to help Marion regain her feet and her health. After going into details very plainly & frankly he said he would leave me to decide and in case I felt I should go to America he would try to arrange it. So I have decided to ~~come~~ go to America sometime the last of Sept. or first of October, and since coming from Paris I have had letters from Marion that make it clear to me that at present my duty is to go to her. There may be complications in getting permits etc. which I do not now foresee, but as I see things now I do not anticipate any delay. But no matter I am

convinced I ought to go to Phila to see Marion soon so I am making my arrangements accordingly. When I will sail I do not know. How long I will stay I do not know. I can't tell whether or not I will be able to get to Canada to see you all. That will have to be settled when the time comes. I will write you as soon as I have any more definite plans.

I came back from Paris by way of Limoges and Le Glandier. The Paris office wanted me to see Capt. Graux about getting some more men placed at Le Glandier and other colonies. Of course I was very glad to go that way as I would have a chance to see my many friends, little and big. I got to Pompadour about eight o'clock Thursday night and had to walk to Le Glandier about 9 kilometers. It had been three months since I had picked my way through those chestnut woods of Correze that are a veritable maze of by paths up and down hill, but rather than go around the main road which was almost double the distance I took a chance and dove thru the forest. It was dark, but I had a great lot of fun all by myself rediscovering the way, and recognizing old landmarks. When I got to Le Glandier I found everybody, that is, all our people away on a picnic. I waited for them to return but they were too late so I went to bed and saw them all in the morning.

There was a mob when I saw or rather when the children saw me. Imagine to what a test my memory was put when I began greeting youngsters by the dozens and trying to recall all their names. Three months of tan and growth, especially of hair among the girls, added to the rapid process of forgetting foreign names since I

last used them, made me seem a little colder to them than I would have been had I been able to call off their names as readily as I could have done when I said goodbye. But they were awfully glad to see me and I was awfully glad to see them and to find them such good brown healthy looking boys & girls, such a contrast to their appearance seven months before.

And to see our playground was a joy. The development in the ability of the children to play, the way they swam, all was such a wonderful and satisfying sight. When we first got 100 bathing suits and let them go in wading in May there were only five or six who said they could swim and now there are 150 or 200 ducks among them, boys and girls both. It did me good to see the progress that they have made and makes me feel all the more certain that such work is well worth while. I can't speak too highly of the quality of work of the members of our equipe whom I left at Le Glandier when I left. They have done wonders, and they mean wonders to those children. There are four men and two women there at present, but Strater is leaving. He has had to stop because he cannot stand the nervous strain. Dorothy Quimby, who came just before I left in June, has done splendid things for the girls. Hilda Holme was there for about a month, but now has gone up in the war zone. She made a very good start and was loved by everyone. It was a shame she could not stay. By hazard I saw her in Paris as she was passing thru. I couldn't have had any better luck about seeing people whom I wanted to see in Paris than I had.

At Le Glandier I had a talk with Captain Graux. He told me that there were no children available for the present for our

schools at Chéraute and at Tardetz. He said he was sorry but he couldn't do anything about it, since there are no more coming out of Belgium. He has an idea for Chéraute that is to make of it a sort of a domestic science school for older Belgian girls who are in Switzerland. He has written about it to Madame Van Dooren and she is rather pleased with the idea. She wants to place here, real young children and older girls so that each older girl will have a youngster to care for. There is no place for me and my work in such a scheme at Chéraute and the Captain asked me if I would take the direction of a school at Val Brian, an old convent in the "Provence" not far from Valence, a city between Lyon & Marsailles. He asked me furthermore if I wouldn't go back to Mauléon via Val Brian to see the school and then I could make up my mind whether or not I would take it. Imagine the journey I had. If you can find a map of France you can see something of the trip I've had in the past two weeks. From Limoges I went to Lyon and then to Valence. from which town I visited the school. Then I returned via Avignon. Cette, on the Mediterranean where I stopped a few hours and climbed up high where I got a wonderful view of the sea and the country and harbor, Toulouse, Lourdes, Tarbes, Pau, Puyas and finally Mauléon. Since I was on business for the Capt. my expenses were paid and I assure you I had a great trip. It was an opportunity that comes rarely to a fellow like me, but I have learned to take advantage of such opportunities when they come.

The school at Val Brian is an old convent in the mountains. It has been rearranged and put in shape to receive children, much

the same as Chéraute. The Captain thinks it can be filled by some children who are already in France and says if I will assume the responsibility of it he will try to get the children. As far as I could judge by the short visit I made, it will be a very interesting proposition to undertake and I am going to count on working it out as soon as I come back from America. There will be difficulties, many of them, but that only adds to the interest.

If I could make my dreams come true, I would bring Marion back with me to help me run the new school. It would be a change of environment for her, which is what she needs and imagine how happy we would be working together. Whether or not this will be possible remains to be seen. When I get there I can tell much more about it.

In case I actually succeed in reaching Phila, of course I want to see as many of my home folks as I can. If it seems unwise for me to go to Canada. I want some of you, and the more the merrier, to come to see me. Just keep that idea in the back of your minds and we will develop it later when letters don't take so many days.

These days there isn't the same rush of work as there was a month ago, as you can probably judge by the length of this letter, but just the same we are busy. I have been buying wood and hay, over the country. Prices are discouragingly high, wood 20 francs the meter cube, and hay 26 francs for a Quintal, or 200 lbs. Let your mathematicians figure out comparative prices.

Mother and father I appreciate so much your answers to my letter written July 4, and I have enjoyed the two letters from Aunt J.

and mother which have come since. You have done better than I have in writing letters, but figure this one in on my account and give me full credit.

I am following with great interest the developments in Canada regarding draft etc. Please keep me posted.

§

53 rue de Rivoli. Paris
Oct. 5. 1918.

Dear Home Folks.

You will have been wondering a long, long time what is happening to me over here. One thing is evident. I have not written to you for a long while, mostly due to the fact that I expected to be able to use American postage before long.

I came up from Mauléon last Saturday and expected then to sail for America the following Monday but since I have been in Paris I have been delayed a little. I am really coming later, but before leaving [illegible] am being sent up to the War Zone and down to Ornans and Dôle to see all the equips so as to be able to tell more definitely about the work when I get home. I start on that trip this evening and will be travelling for a couple of weeks. Then I will be ready to arrange my passage home. I am going to try to get to Canada sometime during the fall and winter.

As soon as I land in America I will hope to write you much more clearly and fully. But I'm coming on a publicity tour to America and can't tell how long I will be busy. As soon as I have finished I am coming back to France.

Excuse the haste. I only have a few minutes

now but I want to get this off today.

Love to you all Edwin.

§

Philadelphia
Sat. Nov 9.1918.

Dear Home Folks –

I have been waiting to hear from you all week. Perhaps I'll find a letter this morning when I go down to the office at 208 12th St.

This has been a week full of pleasure at home coming and of purest joy meeting so many friends who have been so hospitable and glad to see someone returned from France. And besides we have had an added reason for warm greetings for Marion has announced her engagement, and we are receiving the heartiest congratulations from all sides.

The week has been full of plans and planning too. I have found that Isaac Sharpless was planning a campaign for Reconstruction work thru the West and when I appeared and offered my services he seemed very glad to be able to have me go with him. He starts next Second day but I felt like having just a little while in Phila to visit and to talk very informally to some small groups of people.

So I have arranged to join him in Richmond Ind. ~~next~~ two weeks from today and tour the state with him, possibly going further west for a period of from two to three weeks. Then I am planning to come to Canada where I will spend as much time as I can afford to visiting and talking. I want to go to Toronto and perhaps to some other Friends centers besides the Lobo and

Sparta meetings. Dates and arrangements for them will have to be made later.

Rumor has it around Phila that thee, Aunt Jennie, is coming down here this winter. No one knows when. I am waiting for news any day. If thee is coming I hope thee gets here before the 20th. If thee is leaving home later I hope it will not be before I arrive, which as near as I can say will be about the second week of December. I will try to keep you in touch with my plans as soon as new ones are made or old ones changed.

The work I am going to do the next month or two seems to me to be a wonderful privilege. People are eager to hear anything about our work and experiences in France and I am eager to tell about it. I'm having a set of slides made which will be ready in a few days. Then I'm going to begin giving talks. There are already eight or ten places where I have been asked to speak informally. It will be a good chance to get my hand in and profit by a little experience. For example. Arthur Jackson wants me to talk to the workmen at his factory *cut off* Monday noon at their *cut off* hour. Then there are Swarthmore George School, Phila. Y.F.A. Girard Ave. FrdS. Torresdale – etc. You can see I will not be idle, but I'm glad of the chance.

I have seen already many of my Phila friends, and Marion and I have visited and called at several places. My pleasure is double because she is along.

I am overjoyed to find her in better health than I had dared to hope. She is not very strong, but is not thin and looks well, and has the same life *cut off* vigor of mind and spirit *cut off* I had feared would be somewhat dulled. But I find her dearer than ever, and my joy at returning to her is

almost unbounded. When the occasion presents itself for you all to know her I will have one more story added to my happiness. I had thought perhaps I could bring her to Canada with me. but it doesn't seem practical just the way things are working out and the condition of her health & strength must be considered.

Just these days we are on the verge of final Peace. What a time for real rejoicing. What colossal days we are living in the importance of history. Altho we have yet no assurance of the actual acceptance of Peace by Germany. I believe it is only a matter of a short time. In the past two weeks things have been running down hill with amazing rapidity and Peace is almost sure to come now. What joy and thankfulness the world must feel, heightened for some and embittered for others according to their particular share of losses that ~~that~~ they have experienced. We cannot realize that Peace has finally come. There are so many people that have suffered more than they feel and are paralyzed [sic] in their minds, unable to grasp all of a sudden the significance of the events of today.

But when I come home to you all we can talk so many things. Until then we will impatiently wait.

Love to you all. Edwin.

P.S. You can tell anybody you want to about our engagement now. The more the better. Address me at 208 12th St. Friends Service Com.

Signature

§

HOTEL SEVERIN
HOTEL MIAMI
INDIANAPOLIS
DAYTON

HOTEL SEVERIN

A. BENNETT GATES PRESIDENT
B. RICHARD H. MCCLELLAN MANAGER
ILLINOIS, GEORGIA AND MCCREA STS.
400 ROOMS 400 BATHS

Nov. 29. - 18

Dear Home Folks. -

I am ashamed of myself. But goodness I have been busy, and haven't had a second to write letters until today. Have you give me up for lost? Let's see the last I wrote was when? Before I left Phila.

Well, the two weeks and a half that I was in Phila were busy days. Of course there were a great many things to talk about and Marion and I did some visiting you may be sure. What did I tell you about Marion? Did I tell you that I found her a lot better than I had really expected. She is really much recovered but not yet well. Before she will be back to absolutely normal health and strength, it will take a change and some time. Her breakdown of last year was a general collapse all right, and it will take some while for her to get back. But she is a strong girl physically and has gone thru what would have discouraged many a weaker person. Her family, that is her 3 brothers who live with her, have been a great strain on her for she has had the whole responsibility of them for the past 5 years.

But things are brightening up for her and for them. Harry & Bert, the oldest, are going to Ann Arbor in January. They have always wanted to go to College and now a

chance has been presented.

While I was in Phila. I gave several lectures. One Sat. night Marion and I were at George School and I showed my slides and told about our work in France. Mr. Nutt had postponed a regular lecturer for the evening and had made quite an event of the affair

Marion had just announced our engagement a few days before and of course it was rather exciting going back there together. We got to the school in the afternoon during a soccer game and saw lots and lots of people we knew. Ross came up to speak to me. Hardly knew him. but we soon got acquainted. He is a fine fellow and Mr. Walton said he was a sincere hard worker. He was just as nice as he could be to us while there and I was proud of him as a cousin.

After dinner Miss Atkinson had a reception in her rooms for us where we met the teachers and a few of our friends who came down from Newtown, among whom were the Packers. Mr. & Mrs. Packer seemed so glad to see me. They sent their love to you all at home.

Sunday night I went to Salem N.J. and gave a talk at the Friends Meeting house, and thought how glad Wyatt would have been to be in my place. Another day I gave my pictures at Friends Central school. The children seemed to be pretty well interested. I had a good talk with Mr. Rex. Of course so many people wanted to know about Aunt Jennie. Mr. Rex introduced me as nephew of Miss Jennie Cornell. The day we went to G.S. Marion and I stayed at the Millers home. I had lunch with Richardson at their home. We only could stay a little while, but it was good to be there and see

them. I was glad to have them meet Marion.

Mrs. Coffin was not very well when I was there. One morning I had breakfast with her, and she had asked Marion and me to come to dinner, but she was sick on the date and we didn't go. I saw Miss Baker and Miss illegible who is no longer Miss. but a Mrs. illegible I forget the name.

Well, a week ago tonight I took the train for Richmond Ind. where I was to meet Isaac Sharpless. I stayed at Carolyn's Carolyn Hutton. Edith Winders home and went out to various places for meetings. I can't tell you all the experiences I have had out here in these Friends Churches. It's amusing. For the past week I have been making one or two speeches a day, and have had some rare times. I'll tell you all about them and many other things when I get home. Now we are in Indianapolis for a few days. There is a ban on in many places on account of the flu, but we are able to get some meetings of one sort or another. Tonight I am going to set up and have my pictures in a private home. Tomorrow morning I leave again for a trip to the country and will be back here in a day or so

Our itinerary lasts until about Dec. 17, when we will be in Wichetaw Kansas. As soon as that is over I am coming home, and will do all I can to get there by Xmas. I can't give any dates yet, but hope I can make it. After a visit with you which I know will be all too short, I will be in Toronto, and NewMarket, and centers in Canada, then to Cleveland Salem Ohio and back to Phila. Whether or not my work will then take me to Wash and Balto I don't know. It may.

Now just as a bit of news, which may be subject to change. I will tell you that Marion and I are going to try to be married

sometime in January or early Feb. Then I will either go to Wash[ington] and resume teaching or will be in Phila with the Friends' Service Com. Those plans aren't made yet. But we are decided that we will be married. If Marion had a home of her own and her parents, we would probably wait for a while, but she is all alone, and needs a happy life which she is not getting by herself. We both know what it is to live, and we are going to do it together.

Now I have scribbled this in a hurry. I haven't any more time, but I must get this off. Write to me via Friends' Service Com. 208 12th Phila. I will try to write again soon.

Love to you all Edwin

§

MARY B. SUTTON

1906 H STREET

WASHINGTON D.C.

First day Afternoon 2nd – 1919

My dear Friend

I told thy son I would write thee of his wedding. It was the most beautiful one I ever attended. The meeting house was just the most fitting place for it. Between the facing seats a fire place with log fire burning brightly, and on the mantle above a long basket of lovely flowers mostly white at each side of fire place stood large beautiful palms. 6 old fashioned chairs and two smaller ones of more recent date stood in front of fire place, as the Grand Fathers clock in Hall chimed eight o'clock, the bridal party came down the stairs and entered the meeting room taking their places in the chairs in front of fire place. After a few moments of silence they

repeated the simple beautiful ceremony. Two present made fitting remarks, Arthur Jackson read the certificate.

The bridal party consisted of eight illegible Two ushers, Two maids, Two little flower girls with baskets of spring flowers, looking so dainty in simple white dresses and pink sashes

The bridal party passed to the Social room across the hall, standing in a large bay window receiving their congratulations there.

A table on each side of bay window had flowers on and an open fire place with its cheerful blaze added to the happy scene. After the young folks were entertained at the Jackson home dancing & refreshments served, The bride looked lovely in her bridal robes – white silk dress and bridal veil - carried pink roses - The two maids wore deep pink silk dresses and carried pink roses - Everything passed off beautifully, even to their going away in a shower of confetti – almost like a snow storm. They repeated the ceremony beautifully.

Please excuse all mistakes

Very sincerely thy friend

Mary B. Sutton

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SUPPLEMENT L'EQUIPE REVISED LIST OF THE UNIT

Amick, V.D., Havelin, Kansas. 5.
Balderson, Caleb C., Kennett Square,
Pa. 69.

S Betts, F. Furman, 24 Carpenter St.,
Germantown, Pa. 38.

- Binder, A. Carroll, 745 E. Philadelphia St., York Pa. 16.
- Bowerman, Arthur Lindley, 112 Oney St., Charlestown, W. Va. 19.
- Brown, Charles F., 59 Addington Road, Brookline, Mass. 13.
- Brown, S.F., 333 N. Irvington Ave., Indianapolis, Indiana. 72.
- Brumer, Ralph P., Greenfield, Indiana. 59.
- Burdsall, Elwood, Port Chester, N.Y. 41.
- Burdsall, Richard, Port Chester, N.Y. 22.
- Buzby, John Howard, Hotel Dennis, Atlantic City, N.J. 33.
- Carcy, G. Cheston, 1004 Cathedral St., Baltimore, Md. 1.
- Carter, Leland K., 3839 Carrolton Ave., Indianapolis, Indiana. 20.
- Carter, O.W., 511 South Glen Ave., Wichita, Kan. 68.
- Chambers, Elliott Penrose, 570 Madison Ave., Pasadena, Cal. 8.
- Chambers, William C., Audubon, Pa. 22.
- Chawner, Lowell J., 765 Summit Ave., Pasadena, Cal. 51.
- S Cholerton, Frank Edward, Montrose, Pa. 17.
- Collins, Arthur, Jr., 513 Ogden Ave., Swarthmore, Pa. 11.
- F Collins, Byron C., Moorestown, N.J. – Cooper, J. Arthur, 1316 E. Lincoln Highway, Coatesville, Pa. 58.
- F Cope, Thomas P., Saunderstown, R.I. – Crowder, William S., 205 W. Upsal St., Germantown, Pa. 2.
- Darling, B.A., Everett, Washington. 15.
- Davis, Horace Bancroft, 44 Edge Hill Road, Brookline, Mass. 50.
- Edwards, William L., 2054 N. Jersey St., Indianapolis, Indiana. – Elliott, Meade G., Newburg, Oregon. 18.
- Gannett, Lewis Stiles, c.o. The World, New York City. 5.
- Garrigues, Albert, Haverford, Pa. 13.
- Goff, Clifton D., Manhasset, Long Island, N.Y. 13.
- Griest, Elwood, Lititz, Pa. 21.
- Griffith, Jesse N., 234 S.W. 2d St., Richmond, Ind. 4.
- Hadley, Leland T., 327 W. Main St., Richmond, Ind. 34.
- Sa Haines, Joseph H., 1136 Ridge ave., Phila., Pa. 60.
- a Hayes, William W., 436 Church St., West Chester, Pa. 42.
- Heath, Leslie O., 71 High St., Pittsfield, Mass. 53.
- Hinshaw, D. Hainer, 824 Commercial St., Emporia, Kan. 62.
- S Hobbs, R.J.M., Greensboro, N.C. 36.
- Hood, Harold Dutton, Box 147, West Chester, Pa. 63.
- Hornbrooke, Frank L., 511 E. 22d St., Indianapolis, Ind. 63.
- Sa Howland, Weston, 79 Borden St., New Bedford, Mass. 64.
- Hussey, Philip, North Berwick, Me. 61.
- S Jenkins, Alfred W., 321 College Ave., Richmond, Ind. 5.
- a Johnson, Given C., Le Grand, Iowa. 61.
- Kellum, Donald R., Camby, Indiana. 14.
- a Laity, Harold Sanford, Chappaqua, West Chester Co., N.Y. 59.
- Lamb, E. Wandell, Amboy, Indiana. 15.
- Lippincott, Howard A., 243 W. Main St., Moorestown, N.J. 50.
- S McClure, Abbott, 304 S. 16th St., Philadelphia, Pa. 29.
- McFadden, Arthur H., 128 W. Miner St., West Chester, Pa. 7.

- McKinstry, Hugh E., 140 Dean St., West Chester, Pa. 39.
- MacDowell, Carleton, Cold Spring Harbor, N.Y. 22.
- Marshall, D.H., Union, Iowa. 61
- Macy, Ronald E., New Providence, Iowa. 68.
- Marshall, E. Howard, Union, Iowa. 51.
- a Marshall, Lewis H., Kennett Square, Pa. 24.
- Mesner, Raymond D., Central City, Neb. 6.
- a Metcalfe, Robert D., 9 Wayne St., Worcester, Mass. 67.
- Moon, Charles W., 2001 Maple St., Wichita, Kan. 8.
- Morrison, Louis A., 80 S.W. 7th St., Richmond, Ind. 66.
- b Murray, Francis, Los Angeles, Cal.
- b Murray, Frederic, Los Angeles, Cal.
- Myers, Harold, Central City, Neb. 14.
- Packer, Jesse E., Newtown, Pa. 12.
- F Parker, J. Hollowell, 1923 St. Paul St., Baltimore, Md.
- Parnell, Charles T., Marlyn Apts., 40th and Walnut Sts., Phila., Pa. 10.
- Preston, Edmund C., 1220 Master St., Philadelphia, Pa. 35.
- F Price, William W., Rose Valley, Moylan, Pa.
- Quigg, Eugene K., 111 S. 12th St., Richmond, Ind. 23.
- Reynolds, A.N., Mooresville, Ind. 53.
- Russell, Parvin M., The Knoll, Lansdowne, Pa. 24.
- Sharpless, Francis P., Supplee & Biddle Co., Philadelphia, Pa. 37.
- F Shoemaker, Lester B., Tullytown, Pa.
- Smith, A. Clark, Central City, Neb. 16.
- a Smith, Alan G., 6490 Woodbine Ave., Philadelphia, Pa. 21.
- Smith, Ralph P., New Garden, Pa. 36.
- Smith, Walter E., Eureka, N.Y. 32.
- Summer, Charles Edward, 3705 Walnut St., Philadelphia, Pa. 7.
- Southworth, William H., 44 Edge Hill Rd., Brookline, Mass. 32.
- Speer, John H., 308 Price St., West Chester, Pa. 32.
- a Stephens, D. Owen, Moylan, Pa. 6.
- Strater, Henry H., 1037 Third Ave., Louisville, Ky. 26.
- Sa Taggart, Lester, Charlevoix, Mich. 23.
- S Titcomb, William C., 66 Stone St., Augusta, Me. 9.
- Traviss, J. Coleman, 5 Holmes St., Poughkeepsie, N.Y. 30.
- Vail, Alfred C., Park Place, Chester, Pa. 58.
- Vlaskamp, Arend M., 1530 W. 7th St. Muncie, Ind. 66.
- Warren, Luther E., Wilmington, Ohio, 28.
- Webb, William, State Library, Albany, N.Y. 3.
- a Webster, Edward L., 4830 Penn St., Frankford, Pa. 69.
- Wetherald, Alfred E., Bryantown, Md. 40.
- a Whittall, W.H.B., 512 Church Lane, Germantown, Pa. 60.
- White, Headley S., Langhorne, Pa. 38.
- S Zavitz, Edwin C., 1811 1 St., Washington, D.C. 71.
- Zook, John D., Mechanicsburg, Pa. 31.
- C Thomas, L. Ralston, 401 Garfield Square, Pottsville, Pa. 52.
- C Brown, Robert G., Woolman House, Swarthmore, Pa. 52.
- C Gummere, Richard M., Haverford, Pa.
- C Wood, L., Hollingsworth, Mt. Kisco, N.Y.

- F Now in France
- a To sail for France soon
- b Not yet at Haverford
- S Squad leader
- C Councilman

Numbers following names indicate room number in Barclay Hall.

Schedule and Rules

5:45 Gong rings.

5:55 Setting up drill on campus (shirt, trousers, sneakers)

6:05 Drill closes

6:30 Breakfast

7:00 – 7:30 Straighten up room – room inspection by Squad Leaders.

Reports on health to Registration Office.

7:30 – 8:30 Talks by members of Unit on special topics.

Chase Hall – west side of campus.

8:35 – 9:35 Lectures by outside specialists – Chase Hall.

9:45 – 11:45 French – Chase Hall.

Five squads of ten each for one hour each, alternating study and lecture.

12:00 Lunch.

12:30 – 2:00 Recess – dish washing and fatigue duties of all kinds by squads.

2:00 – 5:30 Practical demonstrations in groups in all branches of work, especially carpentry, automobiles, agriculture, road building, etc.

6:00 Supper

7:00 Devotional Meeting.

7:30 Evening lectures on special subjects two or three times a week.

9:15 Retiring Bell.

9:30 (After reports from Squad Leaders)

Lights out.

Register immediately on arrival in Barclay Hall, first floor, north-west corner. Each member will receive on registration, a note book for French classes, a pencil, a towel, and a complete uniform. Rooms are all in Barclay Hall.

Wednesday, July 18th, - there will be an afternoon hike instead of scientific work.

There will be a shelf reserved in the gymnasium reading room for French, Physical Training, and other books. This room will also be used as a smoking room.

For special notices see bulletin board on door of Registration Office.

Saturdays will be devoted to informal study and organized sports.

On Sundays members will be free to do as they choose and go where they choose after 8:30 A.M., provided they are in their rooms and report to the squad leaders by 9:30, Sunday evening. Permission must be obtained from the council at the Registration Office before leaving.

Clothing other than that work by members of the Unit on duty must be laundered at the members' own expense.

A minimum of letter paper and postage may be had at the Registration Office on application, free of charge.

The swimming pool in the gymnasium will be open for members of the Unit.

It is important that all cases of illness, however mild, should be reported at once to the council.

All petitions and suggestions should be handed to the council in writing. The council will meet daily in the Registration Office, Barclay Hall, at 10:00 A.M.

Robert Brown.

Council: Richard M. Gummere.

L. Ralston Thomas.
Friends Reconstruction Unit
Haverford. Pa.

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HOUSING THE REFUGEES

The refugees are apportioned among the cities that have not been affected by the enemy's guns and the temporary houses were erected in villages in the suburbs by the Friends. In one instance the land was donated by a vintner with the proviso that the town on the other side on the hill should supply water with a pipe line and electric light. As a result the houses in this little village are supplied with light and hydrants are located at convenient points. In other places wells have been dug and pumps installed. Schools are established and the children are given attention in every possible way.

TO BUILD FORTY-FOUR VILLAGES

The great work of the committee is about to begin. This will be the reconstruction of 44 villages in an area of about 12 square miles adjoining Verdun. This land has been marked off by the French authorities and handed over to the American Friends Service Committee. Near by will be established centres where the families that are coming back will be gathered. The men will be permitted to help on their temporary homes and there will be employment for the women so that all will be made self supporting. In these centres there will be recreation centres for the children as well as hospitals. In these 44 villages provision will be made for about 3000 families. The houses are put up at a cost of \$200 each and for this entire work a

fund of \$2,000,000 will be required, which Mr. Zavitz says will be raised among those interested in this work in America.

There are at present 517 men and women among the workers of the American Friends' Service Committee in Europe. There are a few in Russia, some in Serbia and the most in France.

It was not only a matter of housing the remnants of the stricken families that occupied the thought and energy of the Society. The women had to be given employment for they are not accustomed to idleness, and the children had to be trained in hygiene and healthful entertainment. In the employment of the women a picture was shown of embroidery work that was done by them. In this work Miss Alice T. Miller, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Josiah Miller is engaged. Miss Miller has now been in France some time.