

The Family Writes To Arthur, Deployed On Friend's Relief Unit (FRU) Service

Compiled and Published by Reva Standing Griffith

October 4-1918 – from Arthur, Rosedale, Pennsylvania.

The boys I have been working with say I am crazy. I just feel so good I can hardly carry myself straight. Yesterday and today I have been going out to Parker's (a farm where FRU boys worked). I did a lot more discing this morning than he thought I would get done. Say, we have a fine time riding to and from work—20 miles in a big car. Tonight the driver thought he would do a little speeding, so he put the car up to 55 miles an hour. I tell you, that is about as fast as I ever want to ride in a car.

October 20-1918 – from Arthur, Rosedale, Pennsylvania. (FRU rented a tumble-down farm house near Rosedale from a widow lady. Some of the FRU boys were given the job of fixing it up and caring for it.)

So you started picking corn... It will be fine to have Amy home again. I hope the flu will not get spread from Scattergood School. Everyone is well out here on our farm as far as I know. Some of the boys at Marion Hall have been sick. I guess it is those who work in the hospitals. One of the boys cut my hair last evening. It is getting about dinner time by the watch but we had such a late breakfast that I don't feel very hungry. I believe I eat about the most of anybody here. I am getting fat, even if we do work long hours. I weighed 147 at Parker's and the other day I stepped on the scale here and weighted 156!

November 21-1918 – from sister Alice

Marian has the flu. Poor James Gooden will worry his head off, won't he? Some think they wanted their intentions to go through the last meeting, but the meeting was put off because of the flu. It seems as though school is sure chopped up. We are having vacation again because of the flu.

November 21-1918 – from Arthur, Marion Hall, Haverford, Pennsylvania

I hope you will not expose yourselves to the flu. There does not seem to be much flu around here anymore. Several of the FRU boys who have had it still seem quite weak. Considering the number of us who have worked with the patients, it seems we have gotten off fine. At one of the hospitals where some of the boys worked, 25% of the patients died.

November 26-1918 – from Arthur, Marion Hall, Haverford, Pennsylvania

I don't see how you at home can get the flu when you don't go among other people. Most of the boys that worked in the hospital never took the flu when they were right in it.

November 29-1918 – from Arthur, New York City

A few lines this evening to let you know where I am. I guess we are getting everything in shape for our voyage.

December 3-1918 – from Arthur

Well here I am writing to you on the wide ocean. I have not lost a meal yet.

A package of letters sent December 8-1918

from father Charles Standing

It is nice to think the danger from submarines is nearly past ,it so removes our anxiety with regard to thee. We are having fine weather here now; it is so mild the snapdragons have started growing again. We hear through Edith Newlin that the flu is also bad in Japan. No country seems to be escaping.

from mother Mary Alice Standing

We are not having meeting again today. We do not know of any sickness amongst us at present, and it is getting better around us and in Earlham, but is quite bad in Redfield and also Adel. Uncle George's heard from Ethel yesterday that they have another outbreak in West Branch; her school has stopped again. (She was teaching at Scattergood School at the time.)

from sister Elsie

Yesterday we finished our pen for the chickens. I got most of the nails out of old boxes. I guess I had better leave the rest of it for Allie to tell because she did the most of it.

from sister Eva

Dear brother: One of my heels is sore. It is itching now. Jack(maybe a dog) is not well. I went up to get the mail and saw him. Uncle Georges' had him in the porch on a blanket. Eleanor and Gordon were up there, and we played Big Black Bear. Eleanor was the first "it" and then I was. Gordon was the last of all and he got Eleanor and Eleanor got me and I got Gordon. I close with love and kisses, Eva Sarah Standing

December 29-1918 – from father Charles

So this old year is almost finished and it is nice to know the fighting caused by this terrible war is also finished. We have had to depend on philanthropy for the past week to get our choring done. I think I could now go out all right but it is best to be on the safe side.

January 1-1919 – from Arthur, American Red Cross, Paris, France

We have been to work as usual. I understand that this factory turns out three or four houses a week. Something like forty houses are stacked in the storeroom now.

A package of letters sent January 5-1919

from sister Alice

We are all recovering fine from the flu, except mother. She never took it. She doesn't know what she missed, for nobody knows just how it feels until they have had it.

from brother Bernard

The main thing I have been doing of late is to loaf around. It is strange how this flu does a fellow up. I have ventured out to the barn twice now, so hope I can be around soon. I've been cooped up nearly two weeks now.

from father Charles

It was a pleasant surprise to receive another letter from thee so close on the others. It is nice thou likes the country so much. I expect it will look desolate when you get to your field service. The papers say reconstruction work in France is a great task. We feel sorry for the French people, also the people in the Near East. There is to be a statewide drive for them in a few days. How fortunate for us to be living in America. We ought to be willing to help out those who are less fortunate.

January 8-1919 – from sister Elsie

Tonight I went outdoors to help Allie up at the chicken house. I coasted a few times, then came in. I feel better now but mother won't let us go outdoors much yet.

A package of letters sent January 12-1919

from sister Amy – Scattergood School, West Branch, Iowa

Scattergood is going pretty good. I think we have been having some exciting times this year. I don't know whether thee heard about us making a dam so we have some skating now. We had one skating party. I did not get to go to that as I did not feel well. There were six other girls and three boys who did not go, so we went down into the kitchen and popped corn and made candy. Not many nights ago we kids had a sled ride. Three sleds came and took us for about a seven mile ride. We had more fun than a little bit.

from sister Elsie

We did not go to meeting today. Yesterday Allie and I went up to Gilberts' and to Charles Henrys'. We took a little goat meat for them. It was partly to pay them for husking fodder. It was the first ride we had taken since we had the flu.

The bird leaflet came from the Audubon Society. The birds were the Phoebe, the Chipping Sparrow, the Barn Swallow, the Slate Colored Junco, the Purple Martin, the Kingbird, the Scarlet Tanager and the Flicker.

from father Charles

This was another first day when we did not go to meeting though we do not think there would be any danger from us.

from mother Mary Alice

I hope thou keeps well, my very dear boy. The snow is going again, we are having it so warm.

Father killed a couple of those old goats the other day. We intend feeding a good deal of it to the chickens to try to make them lay eggs, which are 50 cents a dozen at present. That is not near so high, as we have heard through the paper that eggs were 25 cents each in Germany.

January 19-1919 – from sister Alice

We are having beautiful spring weather now. It's so warm that we'd 'most be looking for spring buds and flowers soon. School really starts again tomorrow. It has been closed since November 15, 1918.

A package of letters sent January 26-1919

from father Charles

I have been writing to Jay Newlin. He expects to start to France about the 1st, I think. We saw very little of him when at home on account of the flu.

from sister Alice

It is sad to think of Mabel Holloway's death. She caught the flu from her little brother. Thee knows Wilmer Young was engaged to her. It will surely be so hard for him clear over there. (He was with FRU in France.)

January 28-1919 – from sister Amy – Scattergood School

My but we are having nice spring weather now. The snow is almost all gone but when two girls came back from a walk, Teacher Florence and I got some snowballs ready to throw at them. We hid behind the meeting house, then as they had just got past a little way we washed their faces in snow.

Say, thee ought to see the mouse we have in the library. It is as round as a ball and only has a tail and ears—It is no longer than it is wide, I think.

We have gym class tonight. I think it will be fun for it is the first time this year.

A package of letters sent February 2-1919 –

from brother Albert

It seems hard to get much letter writing done in such a busy time as this is. The lambs are quite a care for me.

Maud, our horse, got choked tonight. Bernard and I had quite an exciting time rubbing her throat up and down. Finally it seemed to make an effect.

I am training that white and yellow kitten to do stunts. I am going to have him perform after thee comes home.

from sister Eva

Dear brother: Earl lost a sheep and she had two little lambs and so he will have to have them for pets.

It rained last night. They have been blasting today and it makes a big noise. I close with love and XXX.

P.S. The calves had their horns taken off.

March 2-1919 – from brother Bernard

One of our first jobs this week will be to saw if the weather is favorable. We haven't been able to get all the wood from across the creek because the ice has either been too weak or too slick. The pile of wood across the creek is a big beauty. We have one load of it sold already.

A package of letters sent July 3-1919

from sister Eva

Thee asked in one of thy last letters about the different stock. Well, I will write about the cows and calves. We have five summer calves and their mothers are Spot, the black Jersey, Kendall heifer, Benson heifer, roan heifer, and the brown cow. And eight older calves. The cows are Dinah, Violet, Primrose, Cherry, Molly, Pansy, Black Jersey and Gentle.

from sister Elsie

I guess we have twenty-eight little lambs. Two are pets and their names are Pedro and Springtime. Then there is the little lamb we call Little. I think its name is about right.

Father said we have about fifty-two of the youngest pigs and we have thirty-eight of the older ones.

July 26-1919 – from Arthur, Clermont en Argonne, France

We are putting up a Blocust house now, a brand made by the French government. No one in the group has put up this kind of house before. Some of the pieces fit together poorly. I believe that all or almost all the Dole houses (the main kind Arthur worked on) are up now. The building department is expecting to close about the middle of tenth month. I expect I will be quitting about this time.

A package of letters sent September 7-1919

from mother Mary Alice

We have lots of early apples so Amy made a dryer out of an old incubator. We use the trays for putting the apples in. She has glass on one side and wire netting on the other. I think we will try and sell some- they are quite scarce and high. And then with the money we thought we would get some peaches.

from sister Alice

We are very much pleased to have threshing done and to know the crop was worthwhile. For dinner on threshing day we had potatoes, peas, roast beef, gravy, beet pickles, scalloped oysters, cabbage slaw, sliced tomatoes, plum tomato sauce, peaches, cake, apple pie and lemon pie. There was cold tea, coffee, bread, butter and cream. Guess the men didn't go away empty anyway.