

Baltimore, May 5, 1847

Sir:

You will immediately on receipt of this break up your rendezvous at Washington and Alexandria and bring your recruits and recruiting party to Fort McHenry with all the clothing you took out with you

To

2d Lt. R.H. Archer

U.S. Volunteers

Yours

J. J Archer

Capt. U.S. Volunteers

Baltimore, May 5, 1847

Dear Bob:

Major Barnum has directed me to break up my rendezvous at Baltimore and to order all lieutenants to close theirs and proceed to Fort McHenry--allowing that you have recruited 14 I have forty six men; a draft is to be made on the recruiting officers of the old regiments in Philadelphia to make out our compliment of eighty men and a vessel has already been chartered to carry us on Wednesday next to Vera Cruz where we will meet Col. Andrews and the rest of the regiment.

I would not spend any more private funds in the recruiting service if you have been doing so since you left Port De ? Point. The government is now \$150 in my debt according to my account and vouchers over and above my pay which I have not yet drawn nor received the blanks for. Please get them for me and send them on immediately. I am in want of the funds and my accounts will not be returned to me nor the money I have

as ?? for perhaps a month but my pay will be furnished as proper requisition.

J.J. Archer

(Next letter..no introduction)

we returned to camp perfectly satisfied that the men will not be again deprived of their sleep. No opposition is expected until we reach the National bridge. There the enemy is said to have assembled in considerable force.

No news of General Scott has come to us nor of any part of the army in advance. A rumor, which no one believes was obtained somewhere in Vera Cruz that General Pillow's command, including Col. Andrews six companies of volunteers, had been surprised in a gorge of the mountain and cut to pieces or captured. Our baggage was sent in care of Picket Perkins, New Orleans. Give my love to all.

Yours affectionately

J.J. Archer

City of Mexico
Dec. 8, 1847

Direction de Colegio nacional de Minería (printed)

My dear Bob :

The doctors either deceived us or were very much mistaken with regard to the time of my recovery. This evening makes six weeks that I have been lying here on my back but thank God I shall be entirely well in a couple of days now.

My time has passed as pleasantly as could be expected under the circumstances. My friends have been coming often to see me. Col. Bonhan, Gen. ~~Lee~~ Pillow, Capt. Ridgley, Jetty, Hardcastle, Ker, indeed all my acquaintances have been very often.

Gen Pillow and Worth were placed under arrest a short time after you left. I don't know on what account. I believe though it is because some

of their friends have been writing some foolish letters descriptive of the late battles and awarding all the merit of the victories to them-- and Scott believes that they procured the letters to be written intended to have them tried for violation of the regulation which forbids the publication of all accounts of military operations by officers of the army. Capt. Dobbins has been court martialed and cashiered.

Dr. Clark came up yesterday. He seemed as glad to get amongst us again as you were to meet them all at home. Indeed, my dear fellow, I envy you your welcome at Rock Run.

there is some talk of either our's or the mounted rifles being sent out to Querataro (pronounced Ka-ra-ta-bo) when the Mexican congress is in session. You have, I supposed, already heard of the death of Henderson Ridgely. He was killed in an attack on the lancers after having given proof of the greatest gallantry in several skirmishes. I ^{had} ~~been~~ looked forward with much pleasure to meeting him here. Winder, Walker and Ridgely the only officers below whom I knew have been killed. Homphrey ? who lost his leg at Chapulitepec died the next day after you left. This makes my loss at Chapultepec out of 32 men 1 killed 2 mortally wounded since died and three slightly wounded.

You had scarcely gone before an order came from headquarters, ~~we~~ ordering me to take command of my company as soon as able. This superseding the orders to recruit is transferred to Capt. Biddle and his company with some of Capt. Edwards turned over to me. Gardner has got his discharge and Long has his place. My company is decidedly the best regiment. All the officers of the regt. desire to be remembered to you. Give my love to all at home. Tell John Finley and Oliver Thomas to write to me.

You thought of resigning. If you do I hope you will go into business with John Finley but if your health permits remain in the regt. Vernon has left it. Smyth, Blake and Woolford will certainly resign with probably others who have never joined the regt. My chance of promotion is very fair. Walker of Arkansas is appointed in Bowen's place. He ranks below all the

other captains. Bob Forsythe, who is writing to you, will give all the news that I have not given. Good b e. Yours affectionately J.J. Archer.

City of Mexico

Dec. 8, 1847

Dear Brother

Fearing that some of the busy letter writers might have mentioned that I was ??? did??? I directed bob to write as... he reached New Orleans... exactly how ~~Q00~~ I was.

Bob will be surprised to learn that I have not been able to leave my bed yet . When he left I expected to be up in another ten days. But my wound, although never at all dangerous , is not entirely well yet. I shall be quite well in a couple of days more...

There have b en so many erroneous accounts of the part the different regiments took in the battle of Chapultepec and the volunteers not taken any pains to write themselves into the notice as many others have done claiming for themselves that they never ??? and leaving out all mention of us that if I do not tell you now I am afraid I will be persuaded that we were not in the battle at all. I will therefore give an outline of our share in the business.

On the morning of the 13th the volunteers opened the fight , the right wing under Col. Andrews, Major Caldwell entering the wood on the left and the left wing of which my company was one ?? ??? the enclosure by a breach in the wall on the right were ordered to clear the wood of the enemy, deploy as skirmishers , laht at the edge of the wood until the storming party

came up--we were to let them pass us and assault the castle whilst we remained in this position keeping up a constant fire upon the castle in front of the breach by which our left wing extended was a mud fort. -- In occupying this which we did by running in to it as soon as they commenced

firing and without firing a shot ourselves. I had three men shot down following through the breach we ~~extended~~ entered the wood and immediately

deploying, united with the right wing which entered by a different way at the same time, drove the enemy out of the wood into the little forts on the side of the field and took our positions in the last line of trees which according to orders we were not to leave during the fight. In a few minutes after we cleared the wood the storming party came on, passed through our extended files and advanced one half way up the hill and halted, confused under the storm of grape and musketry which met them, our regiment then rushed forward, took the lead, became the storming party and the volunteers ~~plxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ flag was the first that waved over the walls of Chapultepec.

Captain Howard was the first over the walls. I carried 32 men into this engagement. Of them I lost in killed and wounded eight.

Give my love to mother and all at

home. Yours, J.J. Archer.

Toluca, Mexico March 2, 1847

Dear Mother:

I have just recovered from a severe attack of ear ache ~~wound~~ and sore throat which has kept me in my room ever since the date of my letter to ~~Bob~~ during the month of March mainly everybody in Toluca suffered more or less from swollen tonsils--every officer of the regiment has had a swollen face or sore throat. Since I have got well I have found Toluca a very pleasant place. I have a very good suite of rooms which Dr. Clarke occupies with me instead of taking his own quarters at the hospital. We have been living together ever since we left Fort McHenry except during the time he was left at Pecote ?? to be cured of a wound. Our mess is the same number consisting of Lts. Cross and Dr. Clarke and myself. My quarters are equal to those I left at Gen. Tornil's house?

These rooms are entirely unfurnished with naked brick floors but I have bought some chairs, had some fine tables made, covered the floor with mats so that it is beginning to have quite an elegant appearance.

I have nothing in the world to do with housekeeping. Sidney makes out his estimates and money for the expenses of each month and gives us much better dinners and at as little cost as any other men in the regiment-- I never have to ask for anything or give him any directions but always find everything just as I want it, indeed he does just credit to your bringing up. Swan, with some of the good luck he is born to has been invited to live with a Mexican gentleman in the most luxurious style. He extended the invitation to me also but his daughters are not pretty and I preferred living as I do.

Do you recollect Col. Manning ??oom we met at the White Sulphur springs who was at college with me and afterwards married Wade Hamilton's daughter? He has been nominated for governor of South Carolina and is about to put an end to his widowerhood by marrying Dr. Clarke's sister.

Tell Bob that Major Hunter is about to be tried for suspected acts of ungentlemanly and unofficerlike conduct which if proved will be very apt to break him.

Major Burns Parmaster will certainly be dismissed. I have just heard of the resignation of Woolford--the adjutant told me this morning that he has received the acceptance and Vernon's resignations--Vernon has been fool enough to make his disgrace more public by sending to the Louisville Journal a flimsy letter to vindicate himself. Fitzhugh has not yet received and I am afraid will not receive the ? for which he was recommended. He is very anxious to go home and I made application this morning for his discharge.

The mail came in yesterday from Vera Cruz bringing letters for most of the officers but none for me.

Sidney is always very much pleased with any messages from home ; he says to remember him very affectionately.

I think there is no possibility of our going home before the Ball, even should the treaty, now on foot, be ratified. The army would

only go to Ialaps ? and then wait for the disappearance of the ?
before it would return to Vera Cruz.

Affectionately yours
J.J. Archer

Mrs. Ann Archer
Rock Run

--
Toluca, Mexico , Friday May 5, 1848

Dear Bob:

I must insist on your writing. I want you to tell me what you are doing , where you are and how you like the life of an officer in a home garrison. I am anxious to know of your health. Lt. Frost said you were quite unwell when he left.

A duel was fought on Wednesday between Lts. Lee and Harley both of the 11th Infty. Harley had given Lee the lie. I was suggested by the portiers? to be present on the occasion as a disinterested spectator. They fought at sundown near Lima with volunteer rifles at thirty paces standing with their rifles standing downwards at an angle of 45 degrees and firing between the words " fire, one, two, three, stop--" neither hit. After the first fire Lee's friend Lt. Jackson expressed himself satisfied. and the portiers left the ground without any apology or retraction from Harley who was very anxious for another shot. This he had no right to ask, having gone out to give, not to receive, satisfaction and when a man says he is satisfied you can not well insist that he is not satisfied enough, especially when satisfying him more might injure his health.

Both parties came up to Toluca yesterday . Jackson and Lee had been invited to dine with me when they came, Harley who had arrived several hours before them and who had been all the morning in my room was asleep on my bed and never waked up until late in the evening after my company had gone. I believe they spent the day as pleasantly together as if they

had been the best friends in the world. My object in going on the ground was to prevent the fight from proceeding any further than was necessary.

Heard that Lt. Frost says that you told him that Col. Grahm of the 11th just before he was killed cursed his regiment for a pack of d----d cowards. I am sure he made use of no such expressions. The 11th always behaved very handsomely on that occasion.

It would be well for you not to forget who you heard say so if you told him.

We live very well in Toluca, the markets are always supplied with every kind of fruit and vegetable which the tropical or temperate...will produce, apricots, cantelopes, cherries, fine apples and for those fond of such luxuries there are also frogs, water lizzards and tadpoles from the marshes about .???

Smyth still remains in the regiment although no one speaks to him except Frost. His turn of suspension is out and he has reported to Capt. Jones (in temporary com and of the rgt.) for duty but everybody is so much opposed to having him in their company that Jones will not assign him until Col. Johnston returns from the city--you will be sorry to learn that Lt Taplen, ~~who~~ who we were introduced to by Charley Finley, has turned out very badly--he got to gambling and drinking after he entered the city and besides borrowing fifteen hundred dollars from the officers of his regiment has drawn pay five times on his March pay account. He was obliged to resign before it became generally known and leave the country to avoid prosecution from its men who had discounted the pay accounts

Major Polk has taken the house vacated by Gen. Pillow and invites me to live with him whenever I am in the city. I shall certainly accept whenever I have a chance.

May 7

The mail arrived last night bringing me letters from Mary and a package of newspapers from Henry. There is a quorum in both houses of the

Mexican congress and peace stock has risen. Cross came home this morning. He said that everybody in the city is sure of an immediate peace.

Your affectionate brother

J.J. Archer

Toluca, Mexico, May 27, 1848

Dear Bob:

As you will probably come in contact with Smythe I must tell you exactly the position in which he stands.

After his trial was over...gave us a full account of his behaviour on the 11th, 12 and 13th of September. It was most conclusive as to his cowardice and to make it more so Smythe had full information that Marvin denounced him as a coward without taking any notice whatever of the charge. Marvin and Blair both disclosed their belief that he had stolen money from at the Minería and since then Dr. Deo Bayarly whom you know informed one of our officers that Smythe was sent away from school for stealing money.

He has resigned because he could not remain in the regiment and gone home, his resignation to take effect three months from the time of application which was somewhere about the first of May. He would be none too good to wear the uniform of the regiment after his resignation takes effect--cut his bottoms off himself if he attempts to do it in Baltimore.

I am dear brother, very affectionately
J.J. Archer

Smythe ceases to be an officer of the army on the 30th of July.

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Toluca, Mexico

May 27, 1848

Dear Mother: I expected to be with ?? sometime next August. Today's mail brought in the news of the ratification of the treaty of peace and orders from Gen. Butler for our recall to the city of Mexico. It is said also that Gen. Patterson's divisions had already left Mexico for Vera Cruz and that Gen. Lane's will follow tomorrow. Ours is the third division and I su-

suppose our stay in the city will be of the shortest.

We will remain on the ? of Jalapa until sufficient transportation is provided and embark ~~from~~ from our tents on the shore, where we will be stationed for ~~and~~ not more than one or two nights without entering Vera Cruz. We will probably be shipped direct to Baton Rouge in Louisiana where the soldiers who have enlisted for the period of the war will be mustered out of the service and then as soon as my company is discharged I will strike a bee-line for old Rock Run, about as poor and as happy as the Scotch soldier in Mammy Jenny's old song. There is however one quite damper to our joy at the thought of going home. Lt. Fay, one of the best fellows in the regiment will die before we start. He was adjutant of the regiment until after the battles of Contreras and Churubusco? ~~when~~ when he resigned on account of his dislike ~~of~~ to Col. Andrews. He has been suffering from chills ever since his arrival in the country and will not consent to leave until he has seen some battles. I think he would have applied for leave of absence since our arrival in Toluca but for a letter he received from his mother which mortified him very much. She spoke of the prospect of peace, of course she was glad of it but sorry on his account since he ~~and~~ would thereby lose the appointment of distinguishing himself as Lt. Blakley had done. No man behaved more handsomely than Fry (Fry CQ) in all the actions .."to think" he said? that my mother ~~be~~ should believe that d---d fellow Blakey (Blakey cq) deserved more of his country than I did to hold him up as an example for me." He was determined to stay and pray for another fight when he would endeavor to satisfy her.

The order of march on Tuesday night has knocked in the head our proposed expedition to the Volcano de Toluca; we shall all be too busy preparing our companies to think of such a thing. Sydney is perfectly delighted at the idea of going home. Instead of directing to Mexico just say "Quartermaster at New Orleans will please forward."

Most affectionately Yours

J.J. Archer

(Letters skip to Rock Run..letters to sister Nanny..1849)

Letters from Baltimore to Sister Mary and Brother Bob, 1852

(no reference to military ...balls..mutual friends, rather poetic letters.)

Baltimore, 23 March, 1855

My dear friend:

It was like you to congratulate me at the first news of my appointment; your friendship has lasted long without interruption and I cannot well express how deeply I am gratified by the pleasure you take in every fresh opportunity of showing it. With the kindest wishes for your welfare, I remain

Yours truly

J.J. Archer

George L.L. Davis esq.

Annapolis.

(Letters here change address to Miss Nannie Archer) Nannie instead of Nanny)

Fort Monroe

Old Point Comfort, Va

Monday Morning, July, 1855 My dear mother:

I had some little expectation when I left you that I would be allowed to transfer my company to Captain Winder's and return to Baltimore and commence anew to recruit another for myself but I find that it cannot be done. My company is already organized and I will have to remain ~~00~~ here, unless there should be something urgent to call me away, I don't know how long as I am the only commanding officer of

my company present. Except for the great desire I feel to be with you all for the time that is to elapse before our departure for the west I would be well content at Old Point --the artillery officers here and the officers of our own regiment are very pleasant companions as good I think as those of the old Volunteers although from former observations the old regiment would have been far the present a little more agreeable to me

At the first day that I can decently ask for a leave of absence I will go up to Baltimore.

Please have two pair of sheets and a mattress sent by the first boat. They are articles which I cannot be obtained here or I would not trouble you about them.

I have not been here long enough to obtain any information about that which I am most anxious to know, viz: The amount of quarters and the expense of living here in case you would be willing to come down and stay during the summer.

With much love to you

all . J.J. Archer

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Fort Monroe, Va 29th July
1855

My dear Nannie:

I think you had better not put off your visit too long but while you are coming down to see me you might just as well arrange it so that you will be absent from the city during the intensely warm weather and while the sea bathing will be a luxury

The last and first day or two of the month will not be so good a time as any other but any time after the 2nd of August you will find me with leisure to enjoy your company, although the greater part of the days by that time my company will be fully uniformed, armed, equipped.

with love to all your affection.
brother J.J. Archer

My dear Nannie:

Fort Monroe, 4th Aug, '55

Why are you so silent about coming down. I think it would have been a good thing for you to have been here last month as there were many agreeable ladies you would have been pleased to know. I had made many pleasant acquaintances amongs them and know you would have liked them. Besides those I think you would have liked there have been very many pretty Virginia girls here ready for any amount of flirtation and amply indulged in their tastes. Miss Alexander from Baltimore is here but I did not know of her pointing more than once. You are doubtless afraid of the yellow fever at home. We feel no apprehension here. The guests at the hotel do not show the slight symptoms of alarm although a few have left under panic orders from their homes. I ~~do~~ would not be at all afraid for you to come down at any time.

This is hardly considered a letter. I had seated myself to write this morning but heard that the board from Norfolk would not be permitted to come in consequence of the yellow fever at Gosport and supposed there would be no mail to Baltimore but find that a boat will be sent out to meet the steamer and put the mail on board

Fort Monroe, Va

August 8 (Wednesday)

Dear Nannie:

I will leave Old Point Saturday evening and arrive at Baltimore ~~Saturday~~ Sunday morning on a short visit of less than two days as I must leave Baltimore Monday evening so as to arrive in Old Point on Tuesday morning. If you think of returning with me you need not be distressed ~~with~~ by any fears of the yellow fever for I think this place is safer than Baltimore where the Norfolk boats are allowed to land while here there is a strict quarantine against all persons coming from Norfolk.

No one at the Point is under any apprehensions. We have a number of Norfolk people here who are afraid to go home and persons from

Baltimore and Washington have in some instances left under orders from home and the amounts have very much decreased.

When I first came down there were between four and five hundred visitors. Now there are not more than sixty. I wish it could have suited you to come then but I thought when you first talked of your visit, not anticipating Yellow Jack, that you would still have found a large company.

Affectionately J.J. Archer.

Fort Monroe, Sept 4, 1855

~~Dear~~ My dear Nannie:

For the last week I have been quite busy....., the yellow fever is still raging at Norfolk and at the last account without abatement but it has not in a single instance as far as I have heard, extended beyond the city except in the cases of a few persons residents of Norfolk who had remained there too long... Whenever you are ready let me know. I hope mother will consent to come with you. With much love to all, J.G. Archer.

Fort Monroe, Va 11th Sept 1855

My dear sister:

It is settled as I understand that we are not to leave Fort Monroe for the accommodations of the citizens of Norfolk and Portsmouth. I never entertained the expectation that such would be the case. And even had the president assented to the request of the committee the effect would have been only to inconvenience us without any advantage to the citizens who would not have been able to come. There have been a number of tents pitched a few miles from this place for any refugees from Norfolk but it is not thought they will be occupied. I do not think there is any reason for you to discontinue your preparations to come down.

Fort Monroe, Sept 28, 55

...Capt. Dent insists that you shall go to his cottage when you come. His wife's sister, Miss Lyndi, now in Baltimore, is coming down with us when we come to make a short visit. Besides Dent's and

Doubleday's rooms which they have offered I have at my disposal a full set of quarters in the same house with Col. Taylor's family so you will find plenty of accommodations. .

Fort Monroe, Va, 1st Oct. 1855

My dear Nannie:

As safe as I thought Old Point was from the visitation of the Yellow fever It has come at last. Miss Alice Taney was taken sick on Thursday as was first supposed from a cold....I was surprised on Saturday morning to hear the decision of the army surgeons that it was a case of yellow fever. Mrs. Taney died on Saturday morning(not of yellow fever but

(pages missing)

Fort Monroe, Va 8 Dec, 1855

My dear mother: In consequence of further orders received by Col. Wright this morning and which impose additional duties on Company commanders ...turn over our accounts.. my leave even for the short absence I requested---

The steamer which is conveying us to Panama will arrive on the 11th or 12th on order to embark on the 13th or 14th.

If Bob or Henry should happen to come down I would like them to ~~one~~ take charge of anything I may have left behind.

Nannie if she can find time will please send my ..buttons. I do not want to wear out my plain gold ones which I am afraid will not last a long time if I wear them every day.

I do not know what to say at such a time. I cannot begin to express the deep sorrow I feel at leaving behind me all I love .

I think of you always and the best things I shall ever look forward to will be to meet you again. Ever affectionately your J.J. Archer

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U.S. Mail steamer St. Louis

23rd December, 1855

Dear Nannie:

We are putting our baggage aboard today but will not embark until Saturday. Bob, Dallam and Roger are with me. I was in hope you would have come down and was again at the wharf looking for you this morning.

Yours affectionately

J.J. Archer

Rock Run June 25, 1849

Sear nannie

write

I wish expeessly to congratulate on the delightful walk you have just been taken on this most beautiful of bright days. I have such a habit of associating you and the sun with bright and pleasant---, that if the sky had been overcast and the weather dull and gloomy I should probably never have thought of writing to you.

We all dined on Tuesday at Cedar Hill. McQuain (Lain?) and I spent the evening at Rockland when we met Miss Doyle of Philadelphia and Miss BHO Physyck. Miss Doyle who appears to keep herself generally informed in such matters says also that the adorable Miss Lizzie Randolph is expecting to be married early in the spring

I received the other day an invitation from Swan for you and John Ann to a ball to be given by the B C and R R Engineers at Cumberland. Swan is one of the engineers and insisted very strongly on the acceptance of the invitation.

(rest of letter undecipherable.)