

Emma C Larson to Julian Burroughs
correspondence

In addition to Emma's housekeeping duties, she acted as an unofficial administrative assistant to Oliver H Payne. These letters were retrieved from the Burroughs Collection at the New York State Archives. Since they were submitted by the Burroughs family, one may suspect they were culled to place Julian in the best possible light. They are informative to show how a Swedish immigrant managed to learn to write so clearly and to gain the confidence of Oliver H Payne.

The letters are sent from Payne's house in New York City and his hunting lodge called Greenwood Plantation in Thomasville, Georgia

Letters

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from 852 Fifth Avenue, NYC:

[Nov 17, 1914](#)

from Greenwood Plantation, Thomasville, GA:

[December 29, 1914](#)

[January 14, 1915](#)

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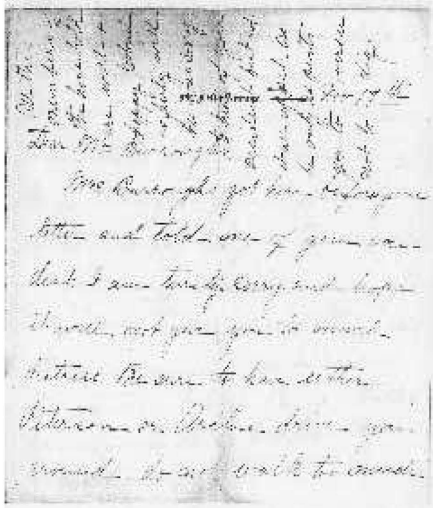
[February 10, 1915](#)

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852 Fifth Avenue
Dec Nov 17 (1914)

Dear Mr Burroughs,

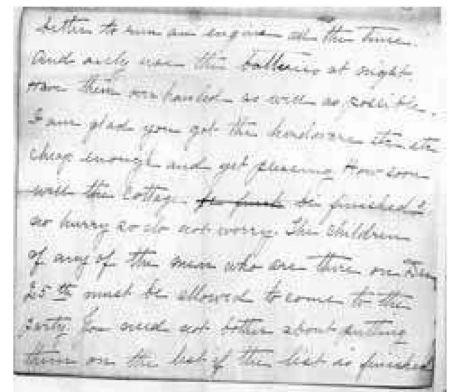
Mrs. Burroughs got here before your letter and told me of your accident. I am truly sorry and hope it will not give you too much distress. Be sure to have either Petersen or Archie drive



you around. Do not walk too much or take cold if you can help it. Your accident is a mean one but not so bad as it might have been. There is always something to be thankful for. At all events, Sister Laura has you tied up and at her mercy, which Mrs. Burroughs tells me is very tender, so everything has its recompenses.

Now as regards the batteries, Colonel Payne thinks you should do as Mr Van Bauer suggests. Colonel thinks it is much better to run an engine all the time. And only use the batteries at night. Have them overhauled as well as possible. I am glad you got the hardware etc. etc. cheap enough and yet pleasing. How soon will the cottage be finished? No hurry, so do not worry.

The children of any of the men who are there on Dec 25th must be allowed to come to the party. You need not bother about putting them on the list if the list is finished. But put the men on the list. There are always a few extra things which may be used for the children, but nothing for the men. But you must see to it that none are disappointed on Christmas day.



If there is anything Robert can do up there, he may stay on indefinitely if he has nowhere better to go. But he must not be idle. I will be up some time the first part of December. Write me when you have the time and feel able. Do not worry and get well was quick as possible. Always with best wishes.

Faithfully yours

Emma C Larson

Postscript written at 90 degrees across top of page one:

All the members of the household here are well and happy. Colonel is fairly well. He was sorry to hear of your accident, but not at all upset. As he only expects you to oversee, not to dig.

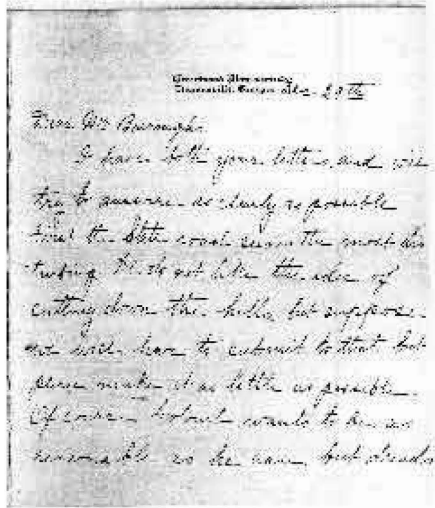
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Greenwood Plantation
Thomasville, GA
December 29th (1914)

Dear Mr. Burroughs,

I have both your letters and will try to answer as clearly as possible.

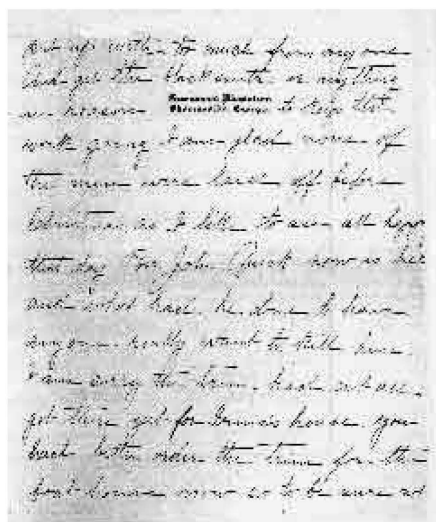
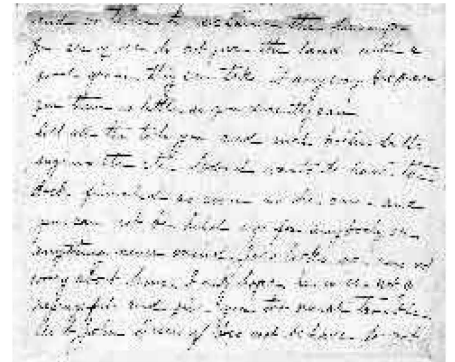
First the State road seems the most disturbing. We do not like the idea of cutting down the hills, but suppose we will have to submit to that. But please make it as little as possible. Of course Colonel wants to be as reasonable as he can, but dreads anything likely to disturb his trees. he wants you to fight that as hard as you can. Colonel is quite willing and thinks it a good suggestion to have the retaining wall. You will use your own best judgment about that and most other things as we can not see or



und3rstand from here. After we have seen the prints will write again if there is anything say. The land of course we will have to give, though I hate to. We have not very much as it is and no time to reclaim the swamp. You see if we do not give the land with a good grace they can take it anyway. But please give them as little as you decently can. Get all the tools you need such boilers, drills, engines, etc etc. Colonel wants to have the dock finished as soon as he can and you can not be held up for anybody or anything. Never mind Joe's looks. We can not worry

about him. I only hope he will not get revengeful and give you too much trouble.

As to John Green if he does not behave do not even keep him a minute send him away. After you have sent one or two away the others will give you less trouble. Still it is nice to have it a little warm in the bedrooms. I suppose it is awfully cold without any fire. I have never liked John Green or Travers and would be glad to see both of them gone off the place. I am sure there are many good men would like to have their places too. But the millennium would not come even so. Connors and Joe I always rather liked but do not put up with too much from anyone. And get the blacksmith or anything in reason to keep the work going. I am glad none of the men were laid off before Christmas. As I like to see all happy that day. Poor John Quick how is he and what had he done to have anyone really want to kill him? I am sorry the trims had not all got there yet for Irma's house. You had better order the trim for the boathouse now so to be sure not to be held up on that. I am picturing the brooder house after the glass is up and to my eyes it looks fine. Will be mighty glad to see it finished. And I hope the job will seem quite correct to those who do not know any better. Your mason work looked so fine, I would hate to have it spoiled.



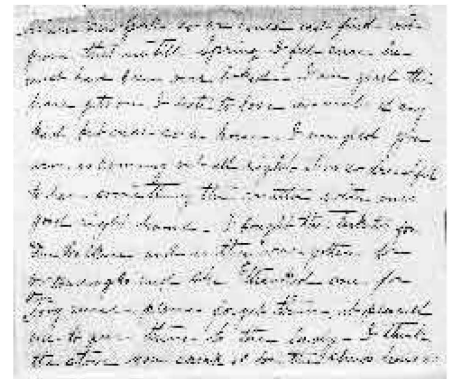
I am sure we must have missed Charles Osberg, and I do not remember what he got last year. But you can ask him and give him whatever he says it was. I think it 35 dollars but am not sure. The cheque book is in New York so we could not find out from that until Spring. I feel sure he must have been overlooked. I am glad the horse gets on. I hate to lose animals of any kind, but more so a horse. I am glad

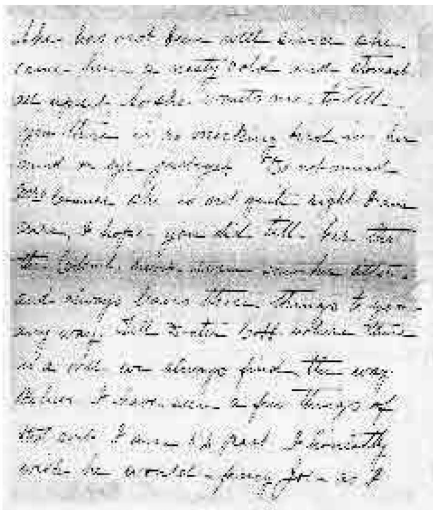
your arm is coming out - all right it is so dreadful to have something the matter with one's good right hand. I bought the tickets for Dr. Walkure and as they were gotten for Mrs. Burroughs and she thanked me for them long since, please forget them, it pleased me to give them to the lady. I think the stove you speak of for the sheep house will be just the thing so sell it to Colonel. Warm water is needed in all out houses really. We had to carry it to the barn from the kitchen when I was a child, but we had to have it.

I am delighted the children had a good time. I hope the grown ups did too. We had a nice party here, with very good weather for that one day. All the other days we have been here are unusually unpleasant for Thomasville. The rain is coming down in torrents now. Dorothy sends love to you. Mrs. Burroughs and the children. She has not been well since she came here, a nasty cold and stomach all upset. So she wants me to tell you there is no mocking bird in her mind or eye just yet. Do not mind Mrs. Conner she is not quite right, I am sure. I hope you did tell her that the Colonel never even saw her letter and always leaves those things to you any way. Tell Doctor Goff where there is a will we always find the way. Believe I have seen a few things of that sort. I am 52 past. I honestly wish he would fancy Joe as I know she would make a good unselfish wife for any man. She is well educated and can do anything.

With best wishes to you all for the New year and all coming years.

I got the children's greeting Christmas. Please thank them. I received Mrs Burrough's card and letter please thank her also. I hope your Father & Mother are quite well, and having a pleasant time. Colonel wanted me to ask about them and send his greetings.





Love to all from yours faithfully

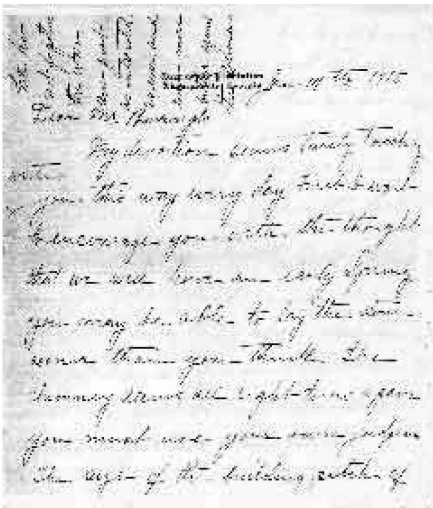
Emma C Larson

p.s. *I plead guilty to sending this ??*

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Greenwood Plantation
Thomasville, GA
January 14th, 1915

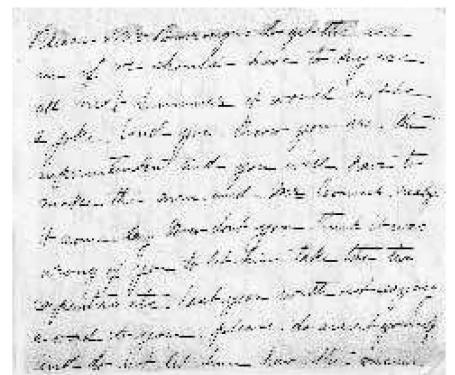
Dear Mr. Burroughs,



My devotion seems truly touching writing you this way every day. First I want to encourage you with the thought that we will have an early Spring. you may be able to lay the stone sooner than you think. The chimney seems all right to us. Again you must use your own judgment. The size of the building pitch of roof etc etc must be left to you. I think the grey green malt tiles for wainscoting will be the most attractive. Will the fact remains and still is

that you will have to do in everything about the dock house as you think best. We can not help you because we do not know anything about architecture. You got Irma's house very nice and very good looking so no doubt you will get this even better.

Please Mr Burroughs do get the ice in. If we should have to buy ice all next Summer it would not be a joke. And you know you are the Superintendent and you will have to make the men and Mr. Conner realize it some day. Now don't you think it was wrong of you to let him take the two carpenters etc last year without saying a



word to you. Please do assert yourself. And do not let him have the men and teams when you need them more. If he is not pleased tell him to appeal to the Colonel. In February there should be ice and I hope there may be. But whenever it comes take the law in your own hands and get it in. The weather here is fair and we are all well and happy. My best regards and wishes to you and yours.

Always faithfully

Emma Larson

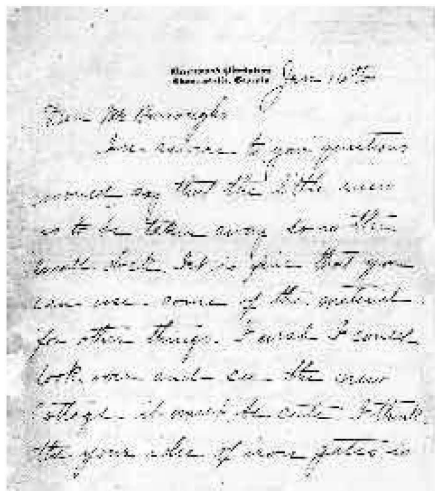
PostScript across top of first page:

We have not forgotten the war am just as interested as ever. And ever more bitter against the Germans.

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Greenwood Plantation
Thomasville, GA
January 16th (1915)

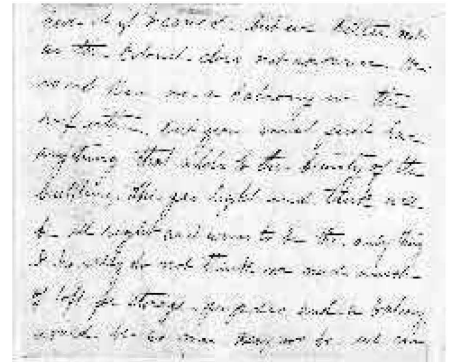
Dear Mr. Burroughs,



In answer to your questions would say that the little {ruin ?} is to be taken away. So is the small dock. It is fine that you can use some of the material for other things. I wish I could look over and see the new cottage. It must be cute. I think the your idea of iron gates is great. You better order them soon so they will be finished in time. You see Colonel feels he has no time to wait for anything. Gates that could be

raised or lowered would in my opinion be the most attractive but either will do. Colonel does not think he wants a balcony on the inside as he does not think people will ever see it much. I like the idea very much and would have it if I could. But we

better not, as the Colonel does not approve. He is not keen on a balcony in the roof either. But you must just have anything that adds to the beauty of the building. The gas light and tank will be all right as it seems to be the only thing. I honestly do not think we need much of loft for storage purposes. And a balcony would be so nice. Maybe we can decide later if we can bring the Colonel around to our way of thinking. Our colds are cured now. Colonel has had an attack of digestive vertigo. It frightened me very much but he is now as well as usual. Dr. McIntosh says he is in perfect condition for his age which is a comfort. With best wishes as always yours in haste.

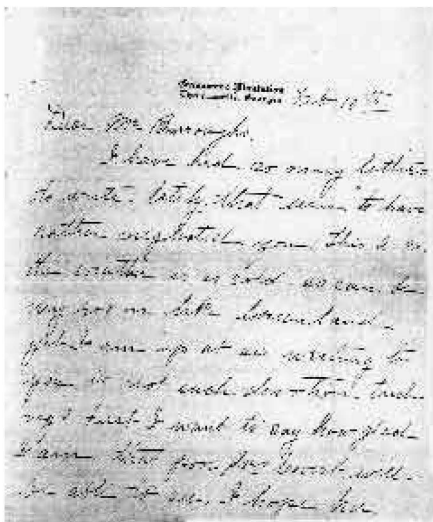


Emma C Larson

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Greenwood Plantation
Thomasville, GA
February 10th (1915)

Dear Mr Burroughs

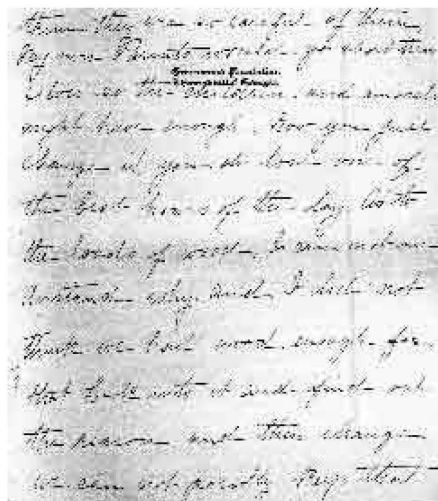
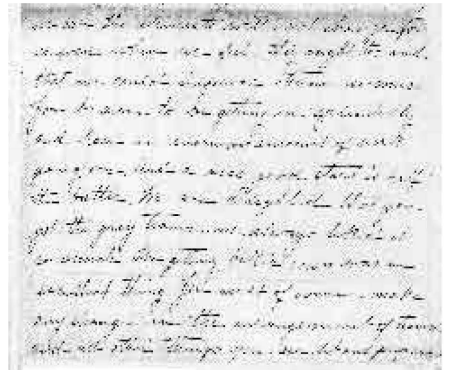


I have had so many letters to write lately that seem to have rather neglected you. This a.m. the weather is so cold as it can be my room like Greenland and yet I am up at six writing to you. Is not such devotion touching? First I want to say how glad I am that poor Mrs. Coverl will be able to see. I hope her eyes turn out much better than hoped for or expected.

You were quite right to get the steel beams etc. Always use your own judgment when you know what is best and some times letters are slow in coming and so

time lost in that way. And by all means make things as fireproof and permanent as you can.

I am sure bucking the elements is hard slow and irritating work, but I repeat we can only do the best we can. The elements will not change for us when we feel they ought to and that we could improve them so much. You do seem to be getting on splendidly and have an enormous amount of work going on. And a real good start is half the battle. We were delighted that you got the gray team. We always liked it so much. The getting better cow was an excellent thing. You must of course make ...

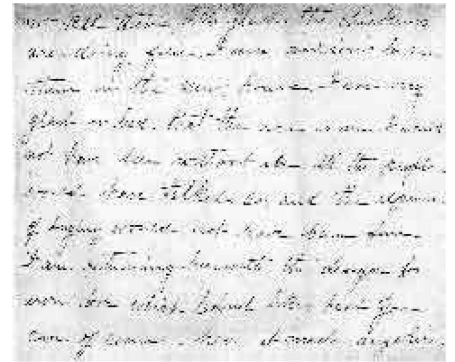


You have full control there as you know and must have to make things a success. The reason Mason started system of letting our teams have an hour and a half was that it is always done in England and all over Europe of the North. Now we work an hour less every day than we did in Andrews time so it can not be needed. You know in Europe they work longer hours than we do here and also the Northern part of of Europe almost take the animals

to bed with them. They are so careful of them. My own Parents would go short themselves so the children and animals might have enough. Now you just change if you do lose one of the best hours of the day. As to the loads of wood, I can not understand why. And I did not think we had wood enough for that. Look into it and find out the reason and then change. We can not possibly keep that up. When Mr. Mason started those things we probably had very few extra teams and more wood than we know what to do with, and as a rule we never sell. So I

suppose he thought they might as well have it. I repeat do just as you think best and right in all and everything.

I am glad the lambs seem nice and strong. I hope the bad weather will not kill them. Also glad the chickens are doing fine. I am anxious to see them in the new house. I am very glad indeed that the ice is in. I would not have been without ice. All the people would have talked so, and the expense of buying would not have been fun.



I am returning herewith the design for the door which Colonel likes best. You can of course have it made anywhere or by whom you ~~ease~~ ~~schouse~~. I can't spell that word for anyone but I mean have them made where you please. I have been so hurried trying to finish this if it is worse then usual please do not mind.

The mail leaves at seven. Do be careful and do not let people known when you go for money. Have you taken any precautions? If there is a way be sure to do it.

With kindest regards to all

Yours sincerely

Emma C. Larson

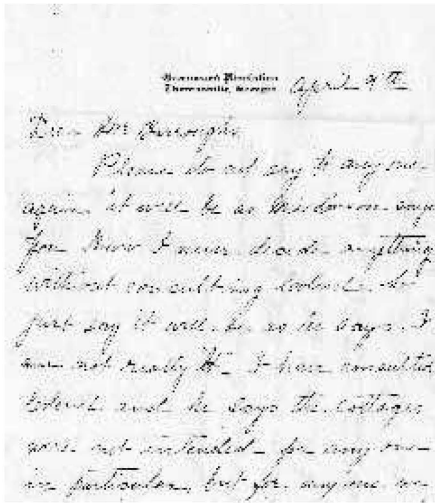
Envelope addressed as:

John Burroughs Esq
West Park
Ulster County
New York

postmarked Thomasville GA Feb 10-15, 9-10 am

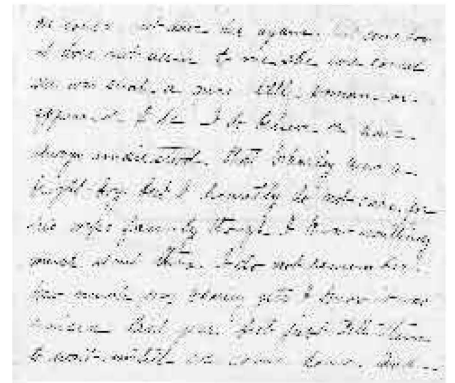
Greenwood Plantation
Thomasville, GA
April 9th (1915)

Dear Mr. Burroughs,

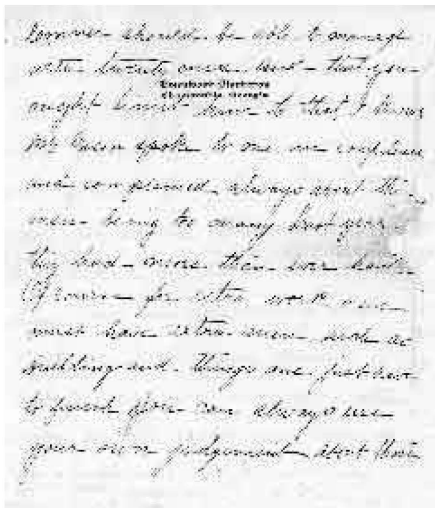


Please do not say to any one again it will be as Miss Larson says. You know I never decide anything without consulting Colonel. So just say it will be as he says. I am not really "it" I have consulted Colonel and he says the cottages were not intended for any one in particular, but for any one we all decide shall have one. And he does not know how Mr. Mauer got the notion that they were intended for the Power house of course some one has got

to have them. Now Colonel thinks you had better let the cottage remain empty until we return when we can talk things over. And see if Mrs. Guinness comes back. If she only went to her Mother, if she went with another man of course we could not have her again. But somehow it does not seem to me she ever could. She was such a nice little woman or appeared to be. I do believe or have always understood that Charley was a bright boy, but I honestly do not care for his wife's family though I know nothing much about them. I do not remember how much pay Charley gets. I know it was raised last year, but just tell them to wait until we come home.



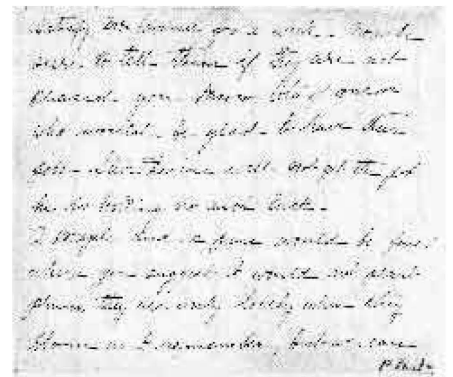
And Colonel wants me to impress upon you that you have the absolute power to discharge any one who does not behave. And he does not want any one who is dissatisfied and just tell them

A snippet of a handwritten letter in cursive script. The text is partially obscured by a stamp that reads "Enclosure 1/2" and "2/2". The visible text includes phrases like "Conner should be able to manage", "ought limit him to that", "Mr Mason spoke to me in confidence", "and complained always about the men being too many", "last year they had more than ever had", "Of course for extra work we must have extra men", "such as building and things one just have to finish", "You can always use your own judgment about those".

so. As to Mr. Conner and the men Colonel is very much opposed to having too many men. he wants to give as many as he can steady work all the year and not have to let too many go. He thinks Mr. Conner should be able to manage with twenty men. And that you ought limit him to that. I know Mr. Mason spoke to me in confidence and complained always about the men being too many. Last year they had more than ever had. Of course for

extra work we must have extra men such as building and things one just have to finish. You can always use your own judgment about those and not worry.

Do not let people walk over you. I told you in the beginning you would have to hold your own or they would walk over you. You know Mr. Mason had hired all those men himself which made it easier for him but they all surely did talk about the poor soul. Colonel says you may get a steam roller for the roads any time so go ahead and get one it may satisfy Mr. Conner for a week. Now be sure to tell them if they are not pleased you know lots of men who would be glad to have their jobs. Steve Devine will not get the job he is looking. no such luck.

A snippet of a handwritten letter in cursive script. The text includes phrases like "I thought that a pine would be fine", "where you suggest it would not plant", "plums they are lovely lovely when they bloom as I remember but not care".

A maple and a pine would be fine where you suggest. I would not plant plums. They are only lovely when them bloom as I remember, but we can plant more later on if we find it good. I am wild over silver birch. Could we not have one or two of them? It has turned very cold here over night, so I suppose it is zero with you.

I have written this letter in much hurry so I hope it will be clear enough to see though I am not sure.

With kindest regards to all the family

Faithfully yours

Emma C Larson

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Documents retrieved from the New York State Library in Albany New York
by Paul Contarino Spring 2010

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This works for Internet Explorer 7 and Mozilla Firefox