

Lamson Collection Letters

Guide to the Louis J. Lamson Archival Collection(served from January 1, 1863 to December 31, 1863), Corporal, Company A, 30th Wisconsin Infantry Volunteers

DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY

Repository

Civil War Museum, Resource Center, Kenosha, Wisconsin

Language of Material

Material in English

Abstract

This collection consists of 238 documents (personal correspondences to and from family members of Corporal Lamson written between January 1, 1863 and concluding on December 19, 1863. The majority of them were written from or addressed to Corporal Lamson in care of Camp Randall, Wisconsin with a few addressed to Milwaukee, Wisconsin during the entire period. It should be noted that the collection is written in note and abridged form from the original letters and in many cases addresses routine personal and family issues like ex., “monies received”, “chores done today”, etc.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Use Restrictions

No photocopying please

Preferred Citation

(Identification of item), Corporal Louis J. Lamson Collection (Company A, 30th Wisconsin Regiment Infantry Volunteers), Letters Collection, The Civil War Museum, Kenosha, Wisconsin

Provenance

The Corporal Louis J. Lamson Collection was donated to the Kenosha Civil War Museum through the efforts of letters and other family history compiled by direct descendent, Mr. Richard N. Larsen of Oregon, Wisconsin. Mr. Larsen spent one week in 1990 copying his diary research at the St. Croix County Branch of the Wisconsin Historical Society at Hudson, Wisconsin, that comprises the body of the following written family narratives.

Processing Information

Processed by Frederick J. (Rick) Holtz, 2012

Biographical note:

Louis Lamson farmed in the Town of Warren, Wisconsin, St. Croix County, for much of his life. For three years he served with the 30th Wisconsin Infantry Regiment Volunteers, Company A, doing draft duty and riot control

primarily in Wisconsin, though his unit did serve in Nashville, Tennessee at the end of the Civil War.

A Note to the Reader/Researcher:

In processing the following documents, I will not list every entry and date, but will instead post what I think are more significant historical events by the dates in which they were recorded, and not including documents of describing daily repetitive routines. The entire collection covers much of Pvt. Lamson's encampment at the Camp Randall, Wisconsin for much of 1863.

Thursday, January 1, 1863, 1st correspondence to family from Louis Williamson
Camp Randall, Wisconsin

- Celebrated the New Year with a welcome dinner to Camp Randall.
- Had our first bayonet practice led by Lt. Henry Wilson (Co. A.).

Saturday, January 3th

- Named supernumerary "corporal of the guard"
- Received first letters from family (Mary Lamson, Beach Sanford, and Oliver Sanford).

Monday, January 5th

- Went down to the city of Madison to get some blanks to send Mattie Lamson.
- Heard that a sentinel shot at prisoner in the Guard House for insulting him.
- Two men died in the hospital.
- Sent blanks to Mattie for \$15 a month.

Tuesday, January 6th

- Drilled today in the forenoon with knapsacks.
- Two men died last night at the hospital and were removed from camp.
- David S. Chambers (Co. A.) is considered very sick.
- Weather pretty cold.
- Received 2 letters from Mattie Lamson.

Wednesday, January 7th

- First skirmish drill this afternoon for non-commissioned officers.
- Sent a pair of drawers away to have them washed

Thursday, January 8th

- Considerable sickness in camp. Considerably cold, no snow but ground is frozen.
- Commenced letter to Mary Lamson
- Costs: Billiards-.25, Envelopes-.15, Cigars-.15, and Paper-.05

Friday, January 9th

- David Chambers died at 1:30 A.M. this morning from Typhoid from Hudson, Wisconsin

Sunday, January 11th

-Attended the funeral for David S. Chambers. Presentation of flags on dress parade and escorted by Co. A.

Tuesday, January 13th

-After getting a wretched cold on Monday, 42 men left Camp Randall in the rain bound for Darlington, Wisconsin.
-Started out before daylight marching in the rain and sleet. After leaving Madison at 8 A.M. by train we reached Arena, Wisconsin at 10:30 A.M.
-Got our dinners and started for the Ruggles Farm (15 miles on foot), arriving there before dusk and slept in the barn.

Wednesday, January 14th

-Had potatoes for breakfast and left Ruggles Farm for Mineral Point, Wisconsin, arriving at Dodgeville, Wisconsin shortly after noon.
-Left Dodgeville after three P.M. arriving at Mineral Point a little after dark. Had a poor day of it.

Thursday, January 15th

-Left Mineral Point at 1 P.M. bound for Darlington. The country we traveled was rolling and better mining country than farming. The face of the country was entirely dug over for minerals.

Saturday, January 17th

-Visited with the good people of Shullsburg who treated us to good meals, good beds and kind talk.

Sunday, January 18th

-A splendid day. Went to church in the forenoon. People in this place are very kind to the soldiers.
-Mr. Townshend sent a lot of good things for the boys.

Wednesday, January 21st

-Spent a good day of pleasure eating off the fat of the land.
-After a worthy dinner 12 of us including our officers found ourselves in our host's office smoking cigars.
-We also enjoyed music of the piano, and after that, another smoke.

Thursday, January 22nd

-After packing our knapsacks our orders were to march to Darlington.
-Two who were sick were left behind (Edward Harmer of Hudson and Israel Childs of River Falls, Wisconsin).
-Received news of the death of Sargent George Martin of River Falls who died in Madison on 1/15/63.
-Left on the train from Darlington at half past eight arriving at Mineral Point at half past nine.
-Wrote letter to Mary Lamson.

Friday, January 25th

-A rainy day spent in idleness about the town.

Sunday, January 27th

-Finally left Mineral Point at half past seven o'clock A.M. and bound for Ruggles Farm.

-Passed through Dodgeville arriving at Ruggles Farm at half past 1 PM

-Lost our guns by putting them in a little wagon. Moses (Goodnoe or Warren) and 2 others went back on horseback and got them.

Monday, January 26th

-Traveled today from Ruggles to Arena (about 12 miles) and I walked about 4 miles, then rode the balance of the way.

-Arrived in Arena around half past 10. The town is situated on the Wisconsin River on bad sandy soil.

-Got 3 letters from Mary (Lamson)

-Also got a letter from brother Alvin written from Covington, Kentucky and dated, September 27, 1862.

Tuesday, January 27th

-Started from Arena on the 9 o'clock AM train for Camp Randall arriving there at 12 noon.

-Ate the best dinner that our boys ever got up.

-Found Oliver (Sanford or Warren) down with the measles and as red as he could be.

-William Hammond and I went down to Madison tonight and played 2 and one half strings of billiards. I paid the bill....52 cents.

Wednesday, January 28th

-Took a general good wash all over and changed my clothes

-Got a letter from Mary and sent a letter to Sanford.

-Skirmish drill in the afternoon.

Thursday, January 29th

-A long battalion drill in the forenoon

-A skirmish drill in the afternoon and sat from one to three with Oliver Sanford.

Friday, January 30th

-Sat up in the hospital from 12 midnight to 6 AM as Aaron

Phillips (from New Richmond) is pretty sick but appears to be

gaining slowly. I laid and slept until 11 o'clock AM and in the afternoon

I was on skirmish drill.

Saturday, January 31st

- Extremely dull times here in Camp Randall.
- No news from anybody.
- The sick here are all getting well, and Oliver Sanford received a letter from home.

Sunday, February 1st

- A little colder than usual with inspection of company this morning.
- Bought 12 sheets of letter paper and some cakes....08cent

Tuesday, February 2nd

- Received a letter from Henry Farnam of Co. D., 4th Wisconsin Infantry/Cavalry from Hudson, dated at Camp Parapet, New Orleans, Louisiana.
- Sat up with sick in quarters until midnight.
- Received 2 letters from Mary today.

Thursday, February 5th

- Weather so cold here there was no drill.
- Dress parade. Five court martials announced.

Friday, February 6th

- Got my clean clothes from the washer woman today.
- We had battalion and company drill.
- Received Mary's letter explaining that Jesse was pretty sick.

Saturday, February 7th

- We drilled in the forenoon and then marched down to Madison.
- Both the 25th and 30th Regiments passed in review before Governor Salomon.
- Weather was delightful, much snow had melted as the ground is almost bare.

Sunday, February 8th

- Cold and windy, I was sergeant of the guard.
- Passed about 1000 men about to go to church.

Monday, February 9th

- A stormy day and laid abed and played chess.
- Sent a letter to Mary Lamson.

Tuesday, February 17th

- Received \$19 of government pay and one letter from Mary.

-Went down to Madison in the evening and bought a blue regulation vest.....\$3.50 Also purchased boot repair.....70cents oysters and cigars.....30cents played billiards.....20cents
 Total\$4.70

Wednesday, February 18th

-Very disagreeable weather. Received .60 cents of odd change from Captain Harriman as government pay.

Tuesday, February 24th

-Usual forenoon drill practice.
 -Went to Madison in evening to play billiards.
 -Letter from Mattie.

Wednesday, February 25th

-Battalion drill in forenoon.
 -Went to Madison in the evening and purchased the following items:
 played billiards.....40 cents
 cigars..... 10 cents
 handkerchiefs.....40cents

Thursday, February 26th

-A rainy and muddy day left us content to stay in the barracks.
 -I studied algebra in the forenoon.

Monday, March 2nd

-It snowed 5 inches today and I wrote to Mary.

Tuesday, March 3rd

-I went to Madison in the evening and played billiards, .10 cents, bought cigars, .10cents, and mailed a letter to Uncle Sanford enclosing \$40 of my pay for Oliver Sanford.

Thursday, March 5th

-Wrote a letter to wife and paid .05cents for milk.
 -Played chess with Corporal William Clark of Hammond.

Friday, March 6th

- I was corporal of the regular guard and put 2 boys in the guard house.
- Bought some apples and maple sugar for .20cents.

Saturday, March 7th

- While in Madison I had my beard shaven off and my photograph taken.
- Went back to Madison again in the evening to play billiards.
- I beat Corporal Abram Van Meter of Hudson for the first time.

Monday, March 9th

- I played chess nearly all day.

Tuesday, March 10th

- Sent to Madison and procured my photographs, four in number cost \$1.00.
- Sent a letter to sister Mary Savile enclosing a photograph.
- Battalion and bayonet drill in the afternoon.
- Saw Oliver Sanford at the Sutlers.

Saturday, March 14th

- Corporal of the special guard with 2 men to conduct prisoner Charles Burnett to Madison.
- Burnett was from Co. G., 30th Wisconsin, and was discharged as a minor.
- Went down to Madison three times for billiards, cigars, and nuts.
- Received letters from Beach Sanford and Mattie Lamson around noon.

Sunday, March 15th,

- Weather almost like summer.
- Inspection of men and arms at half past 8'o'clock A.M.
- Wrote letters the rest of the day to Mattie, Brother David, and Uncle Beach Sanford.

Monday, March 16th

- Had a good game at ball.
- Weather still summer like in appearance.
- Wrote a letter to Mary Lamson.

Wednesday, March 18th

- Had a battalion drill in the forenoon and the parade ground was awfully muddy.
- Wrote to Mary in the evening.

Thursday, March 19th

- I enclosed a \$5.00 greenback to Mary in a letter.
- Captain Sam Harriman is colonel pro-tem.
- Received letters from wife and Mary Savile.

Saturday, March 21, 1863

- Weather quite favorable today so I cleaned my gun and accoutrements for Sunday's coming inspection.

Friday, March 27, 1863

- Bought a revolver from Daniel Ellis of Pleasant Valley of Company I, 30th Regiment, paying him \$5 more when we are paid by the government.

Saturday, March 28, 1863

- Company drill in the forenoon and skirmish drill combined.
- Parade grounds getting in pretty good condition.

Monday, March 30th

- Received a letter from Mattie.
- Five of our company boys left camp in disguise to get in the country and look for deserters.

Tuesday, March 31st

- This is the last day for deserters for their return to service (without other than company punishment).

Wednesday, April 1st.

- Played chess all forenoon and in the afternoon sent an "April Fools" letter to Mattie with \$2.50 in it.

Saturday, April 4th, 1863

- Battalion drill this afternoon and a good long one.

Monday, April 6, 1863

-Went to Madison in the forenoon, got a deed and sent it to Mattie. Among my other purchases were:

Cost of mailing.....	\$1.00
Stripes for pantaloons.....	30cents
Box of pistol cartridges.....	\$1.50
Apples and cigars.....	20cents
Pie.....	10cents
	Total \$3.10

-Also received a letter from Mattie with the news of the downfall of Charleston, and Vicksburg.

Tuesday, April 7th

-Election in camp, no drill in the forenoon.
-Sent two papers to Mary and a letter to Mattie Lamson.
-Received a letter from brother David Lamson posted from Binery's Landing, Louisiana

Wednesday, April 22nd, 1863, from Camp Randall

-Played wicket all of the forenoon with battalion drill in the afternoon.

Tuesday, April 28th

-No company drill today. Battalion drill in the afternoon.
-Grass beginning to look fine.
-Received a letter from Mattie Lamson (Ohio).

Wednesday, April 29th

-Battalion drill in the afternoon.
-Letters from Mary Lamson and Beach Sanford.
-Letters to Mary Lamson and Beach Sanford.
-Bunk mate Pvt. Alonzo J. Hotchkiss (from River Falls) is on guard duty today.

Monday, May 4, 1863

-Rainy all day, and news of the capture of Fredericksburg, Virginia and Chancellorsville.

Wednesday, May 6th

-I mailed letters to Mary Lamson (Milfordton, Ohio) and Harry J. Farnum (Co. G, 4th Wis.), Carrollton, Louisiana.

Thursday, May 14th

-Company A went out into the country to try their hands at target shooting. The best shots were made at a distance of 50 rods (800 feet).

Saturday, May 16th

-Battalion drill in the afternoon by Major Clowney.
-Went down to Madison at night and bought a memorandum and .30cents worth of soap.

Wednesday, May 20th

-Battalion drill this afternoon and went to the depot to see Will Egbert leave for Milwaukee.
-The wife of Almon Patterson (Hammond) came into camp.
-William G. Smith (Emerald) first suspected of desertion, did have a pass to go to Madison.

Thursday, May 21st

-Charles Logan (Hartland) was discharged from the service for insanity.

Wednesday, May 27, 1863

-Went to what is called Dead Lake to catch fish with 5 others in company. Three of us caught 17 fish with a trolling line.

Thursday, May 28th

-Theodore Nichols got his great toe mashed rendering him unfit for duty. He got a furlough to go home.

Friday, May 29th

-Thirty three of our company went to Lake Mendota to bath and pitched cots half the day.

Sunday, May 31st

-This month I have written eight letters and received ten.
-went to a Baptist church in the evening in Madison, and wrote a letter to Beach Sanford.

Monday, June 1st

-I am a corporal of the regular guard of the third relief.
-Received a letter and likeness from Mary Lamson, and the likeness case was all broken to pieces.

Thursday, June 2, 1863

-Battalion drill today.
-The prospects of getting some pay soon are quite favorable.
-Rumor again says we are in possession of Vicksburg.

Wednesday, June 10th

-The prospect of having to leave is dying out.
-There is news again of the fall of Vicksburg.

Friday, June 12th

-Received a letter from W.J. Egbert (Milwaukee, Wisconsin).
-Four of us got a leave of absence and on this sultry day went to the lake to bathe in the evening.

Monday, June 15th

-Awful warm day here. Two drills today.
-The thermometer stood as high as 102.
-Went to Madison tonight and got me a soldier's knife, fork and spoon. Cost me \$1.00.

Saturday, June 20th

-Weather is very cool this morning. The boys put the stove up in their quarters
-I went to Madison in the afternoon but did not go to the circus.
-Received a letter form Mattie Lamson (Milfordton, Knox County, Ohio).

Thursday, June 25, 1863

- Went to the water levee to a Sunday school picnic. Pretty good attendance, especially the ladies.
- The weather is extremely dry and the crops are suffering greatly. Nights are pretty cool.

Saturday, June 27th

- Played chess nearly all day with William Clark (Hammond).

Sunday, June 28th

- Was corporal of the guard of the first relief.
- Lost my bayonet at the Sutlers.
- Had a beautiful rain that revived the vegetation wonderfully.

Tuesday, June 30th

- Received a furlough from this date up to the 12th of July.
- Started for Ohio at 10:20 P.M. and arrived at Chicago at 7AM on the 1st of July.

Thursday, July 2, 1863

- Started for Mt. Vernon (Ohio) at 10:40 (AM) and arrived at 12 noon.
- I went out on foot and found the folks at the well.
- Mary was absent and away at Fredericks(town).

Thursday, July 30th

- Lying at Shullsburg having easy times. The weather is quite warm.

Friday, July 31, from Shullsburg

- Received a letter from Mary Lamson and received \$2.50 from Moses Goodnoe for moving tent to him.
- The boys had a dance at the Shullsburg Court House at night and I slept on the ground, out of doors.

Thursday, August 6th from Shullsburg

- Went out of the village of Gratiot, a place 12 miles east of the village. We took our dinner at the hotel.
- At that place we bought a box of honey and on the way home we went bathing in the Pecatonica River.

Thursday, August 8th (Shullsburg)

-Uncle Beach Sanford came here on his return trip from Ohio and he was not very well.

Tuesday, August 11th (Shullsburg)

-Lying around doing nothing. Received a letter from A. Lamson.

-A squad of 11 of us went down to Benton and arrested Mr. Glicks, a deserter.

Monday, August 17th (Shullsburg)

-Left Shullsburg at 3 o'clock in the morning arriving at Scales Mound at 7 A.M.

-Left Scales Mound at 8:30 P.M. and arrived at Freeport, Illinois staying there on the 18th.

-I was detailed to take charge of the commissary stores.

Tuesday, August 18, 1863 (Freeport, Illinois)

-Left Freeport at 8:30 in the morning arriving at Clinton, Wisconsin at 1 P.M.

Silas Wells (River Falls) and I went out and got some good, nice apples to eat.

-We left Clinton at 5P.M. arriving at Janesville at 6 P.M.

-Went over the city of Janesville twice.

Wednesday, August 19th

-Left Janesville at 1 A.M. and arrived at Madison at 4 A.M. and I had the stores hauled into camp.

Thursday, August 20th

-Received a letter from Mary Lamson giving the sad intelligence of little sister Fanny's death.

Saturday, August 22nd (Camp Randall)

-Having easy times here. The weather is quite warm.

Thursday, August 27th (Camp Randall)

-Company drill twice a day and fatigue duty in the afternoon.

-Call 8 men to pick up weeds.

Thursday, September 3, 1863 (Camp Randall)

-Ino L. Dale brought deserter Charles Colbeth into camp and put him in the bull pen.

Wednesday, September 23rd

-Was corporal of the guard of the second relief.

Saturday, September 26, 1863 (Camp Randall)

-Received \$24 dollars from the government and a letter from Mary Lamson.

Tuesday, October 13th (Camp Randall)

-Was on guard duty 1st relief and wrote a letter to father in the evening.

Thursday, October 14th, 1863

-Sent a letter to father Lamson.

-Oliver Sanford started home for an 11 day furlough.

Friday, October 16, 1863 (Camp Randall)

-Corporal Myron Packard (River Falls, Co. A.) went out with me for a house to rent.

Saturday, October 17th (Camp Randall)

-Raining most of the day.

-Drawed (sic) clothing.

2shirts

2.....drawers

1.....rubber blanket

1.....cap

1.....canteen

(Note: No further entries in October. Corporal Lamson was transferred to Milwaukee before his next entry in November, 1863.)

Tuesday, November 17, 1863 (Milwaukee)

- A detachment of 74 men left this place for Green Bay. I was on guard with eight men at the Provost Marshall General's Office.
- A total of 18 men left Milwaukee.

Thursday, November 19th (Milwaukee)

- Bought a book at the Milwaukee Gift Book Store and the name of the book is "Leaves of Grass" (Walt Whitman). I paid \$1.25 for it.
- Drew a (SIC) ring for a proys/prize (?)
- Received a letter from Mary Lamson.

Saturday, November 21, 1863 (Milwaukee)

- Left Milwaukee at 9:30 A.M. and arrived at Madison at 2:30 P.M. with seventeen men.

Monday, November 23rd (Camp Randall)

- Corporal of the guard of the second relief.
- Father Lamson came here about 5 P.M. from St. Croix, County.

Tuesday, November 24th

- Wrote two letters to Mattie Lamson and sent them by father who left on the 1:30 P.M. train for Ohio. I sent a whole box to Mary by him.

Friday, December 5th

- News is dull but the weather is extremely delightful (appearing as though spring).

Saturday, December 6th

- Inspection out of doors by Captain Harriman.

Wednesday, December 9th (Camp Randall)

- Wrote letters to Mary Lamson, Beach Sanford, and I.B. Lyford.

Saturday, December 12th

-Cleaned my gun to be in readiness for Sunday inspection and played chess part of the day.

Monday, December 14, 1863 (Camp Randall)

-Mailed a letter of 14 pages to Mattie Lamson.
-Played chess nearly all day with Abram Van Meter.
-Cleaned my gun and fixed for the guard.

Tuesday, December 15th

-Corporal of the guard of the first relief.

Wednesday, December 16, 1863

-A stormy day, snow reached a depth of 5 or 6 inches

Thursday, December 17th

-More snow and drifting badly.
-Received a letter from Beach Sanford

Friday, December 18th (Camp Randall)

-Received a letter from S.D. Hastings stating the allotment for the months of September and October have been sent to my assignee.
-Enjoying easy times in camp.
-Weather is cold and the out of door business is quite dull.

Saturday, December 19, 1863 (LAST ENTRY)

-Received a letter from Mary A. Lamson.
-New arrivals to camp include Corporal Smith (New Richmond), Ezra Healey (River Falls), and William Ahl (Lincoln) all arrived in camp after dark including Archibald Crawford who returned from St. Croix County, Wisconsin.
