

DR. HENRY VAN AERNAM.

(Courtesy of J. Richardson Lippert, II,
Franklinville, N.Y.)

Franklinville, N.Y.

December 21st 1891

Lieut E. L. Phillips

My dear Lieutenant

Your kind favor of ever so long ago was duly received; and I was very glad indeed, to hear from you—and glad to know that you^{are} pleased with the service, and with your surroundings. I owe you an apology for this long delay in acknowledging the receipt of yours—and all I can say in excuse^{is} that in my slow, semi-palmed way of doing business, I found my time fully occupied for some one waiting for some little thing, until the days, and weeks, have gone by until now! Should you live to be as old as I am (73) perhaps you may be as slow as I am! Did you know Lieut Hiram M Chittenden of the Engineer Corps U.S.A.—now in charge of the improvements of the National Park, Montana? His home was on "Blue Hill" Machine—Graduated here—was a year at Cornell. When I ~~was~~ ^{was in} Congress I sent him to West Point, ^{standing} no 4, in a graduating class of 37— which started out with 139—102 falling out by the way, during the four years at West Point!

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After Graduating at West Point, Lt Chittenden as well as all the other Cadets, graduating No 1 to 5, both inclusive (Engineer corps) had a Post Graduate course at Willett ^{Park} N. Y. Harbor, of one year studying Projectiles, and Offensive and Defensive Military Engineering. He is a very capable, bright fellow, and doubtless will make an able Soldier in his place, if, or when opportunity presents — I don't think he has the instincts of a Soldier of the line in the field, in time of war. — but he is a very capable, scholarly, pleasant man — writes some for the magazines — and was the best Soldier material at my command when I named him for West Point. It has made a great change in his life certainly — from milking cows on his father's poor farm on "Blue Hill", to his present position in charge of improving and embellishing the greatest Park in the world is indeed a change! The Government must think there is ^{in him} something for he was sent to Europe, to inspect Parks and some Fortifications where he spent nearly a year on the mission. I beg you to take some pains to meet him, for I am ^{sure} your acquaintance with each other

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will prove mutually pleasant and satisfactory.

I am somewhat, and I think justly, proud of my naval and
and Military family - of which I am glad to count you
one - though born out of due season - after my official
right of paternity had expired!

I hear from you occasionally, through your father
and am always pleased to learn that you are
pleased with your surroundings, and like the military
service - As a class, the Officers of the Army and Navy, are the
best educated, gentlemanly men, we have in the U.S., not
excepting the Pres, and Professors of ~~to~~ our universities and
Colleges - and high-up, Preachers!

I know you will thru the temptations that are the ruin of
so many worthy soldiers - don't rely on your Will-Power, to save
you from either, if you once yield! Strong as Grant and Sheridan
were, they were not strong enough to stand up against them, to save
himself Grant had to resign - if the war had held off a year or
over

two, Sheridan would be compelled to follow him.

Sherman's ^{pride} perhaps ~~of his~~ family name (Roger Sherman) and the great name his wife bore (Ewing) kept him from falling.

Never allow yourself to drift into the idle, shilly-shally ways of the Camp! I was in the army at the front, about 2 years and a half - went to the front immediately after Pope's defeat back of Centerville and Chantilly Va, and McClellan's Victory of Antietam Md was through 18 big battles, including Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville Va. Gettysburg Pa - the night battle of Wauhatchie that broke Bragg's six weeks siege of Chattanooga - saw the battle (above the clouds) of Lookout Mountain - was in the battle of Missionary Ridge - went from that battle field, to the relief of Burnside besieged in Knoxville Tenn by Longstreet. - was in that unique 120 days Atlanta Ga Campaign, where Johnson's army was pushed back 138 miles at the point of the payonot, and one hundred days of absolute battle! While with the Command I was in Va. Ma. Pa Ohio. Ken. Tenn. Ala + Ga - and still found the time to hang heavily on my hands, and in some when remaining for awhile in Camp

Be true to yourself - and with you I am sure all will turn out well! We have had no sleighing - nor real winter yet. I am about as I was when you saw me - write me please as often as convenient I shall be glad to hear from you always - don't stand on the courtesy of a reply from me - With best wishes, I am truly yours, H. Van Arman

Franklinville, N. Y.,

March 21st 1892

Lt E. I. Phillips

My dear Lieut,

I send you to day a Harper's Weekly containing an article relative to the preservation of the Yellowstone Park written by Lieut H. M. Chittenden of the Engineer Corps. You will find the article on the 258 page. As you are both serving in the same military Dept, I hope chance may bring you together ere long, for I know your acquaintance would prove mutually pleasant and satisfactory. There is much in common in your past lives. Both natives of Cattaraugus, both graduates from Ten Broeck Academy, at the head of your classes—both won a state scholarship in Cornell from which Institution I nominated Chittenden as a cadet to West Point, from which he graduates into the Engineer Corps—and you from Cornell with honors—and afterward easily winning your Commission through a prolonged examination by a Board of Army Officers; both are apt scholars, with great perseverance and assiduous industrious. Here, in my opinion the similarity ceases: you have an aptitude and a taste for the duties of a Soldier in the field; he has

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neither—unless he may learn to love the duties of a topographical Engineer — or an Engineer for the construction of Field Works

He is assigned to duty in Yellowstone Park in charge of the improvements under the Supt. His position is very different now from what it was when living in Machias on "Blue Hill"!

A few months ago he published in some literary paper printed in Omaha a description of the Park—a better article I think than the present one—Earlier he published in this same Omaha paper a very readable review of Ballamy's "Looking Backwards"

And earlier still—with a broader sweep—in the Magazine of American History "An account of an Expedition to Fort Benton, and the head waters of Missouri". Well; I have made rather a long introductory letter where the parties are not likely to meet soon!

But we always follow the fortunes of the boys who go out from here with a very deep interest and solicitude. I am slowly getting more and more decrepit and useless—Write me your impressions

of Amy Life please—Others will tell you the local news, I remain truly yours
H. Van Aernam