

CIVIL WAR LETTERS OF LUKE-CHARLES OSTRYE

1st letter from Luke Ostrye
15 Sept 1864 no location given.

Dear Father and Mother:

We take up my pen to let you know we are all well and all of the French Creek boys and I hope that these few lines will find you the same. Me and Charles sent \$33.00 and paid the express.\$1.00. I will send more but I had \$10.00 stolen, but I don't feel so hurt as hurt as Henry Mina as he had all of his money stolen, but we are at Baltimore now. I don't want to have you write till you get another letter from me. We don't know where we are a going nor care where we go.We got---to eat here. We sent our clothes home from ---(Elmira??). We don't know when I shall get a gun. Good bye for now give my best to all of the folks.

Luke Ostrye(evidently written by Luke-very poor spelling and phonetic. He had someone write all the rest of the letters. This was common during the war and volunteers did this. Many soldiers could not read or write.)

CAMP CITY POINT VA 21 SEPT 1864

My dear Father:

I and Charles are well and we keep together yet and all the rest of the French creek boys. I lost \$10.00, my overcoat and shirt on my way here. Andrew Mina lost \$31.00. We did not drill any until we got here, but we are drilling now and have enough of it for this hot weather. For it is very warm here as warm as it is in July in Chautauqua Co. I sent\$33.00 more at Baltimore directed to you in French Creek.

Please send me some postage stamps when you write to me.

We are not very far from Petersburg. We hear the cannon roar. We have most every day and night. We have no particular news at present.

From your son Luke Ostrye. Address Luke Ostrye: Camp City Point, Va. Co A 50th Reg NYV

CAMP CITY POINT VA 29 Sept 1864

Dear Friends:

I seat myself to writ a few lines to you to let you know that we are well. I have sent five letters since I left home and have no answers. I have lost some money and have

sent some home and I am now all out. I would be very thankful for you to send me five or six dollars and send a dozen postage stamps and what money you send send it in greenbacks for they won't take any other here.

I send my best respects to you and all the folks around. I don't have much time to write, so goodbye. Write as soon as you get this.

Luke Ostrye.

Direct to Co a 50th Regiment, New York Volunteers Engineers Corp, Washington DC in care of Lieut Burdin(Burton?)

CAMP CITY POINT V A 20 Nov 1864

Dear Sister:

I take my pen in hand to let you know that I am well at present hoping these few lines will find you the same. I got a letter from you the 18th and was glad to hear you was all well. Luke is not very well, but I guess he will get along. Virginia is a pretty cold place. It has rained here for the last tow or three days. Luke and myself was on guard night before last to keep the rebels away from the camp. The rebs came and took a lot of our cattle. It rained all night and we go all wet. We haven't got dry yet and was awful cold this morning. We have built a stove this morning in our house out of brick and the chimney out of wood. John Wagner

he told me to not go to war this I thought I would do better if I would go, but I would be glad if I was this now-----??. We get pretty poor eating and living here. We get whiskey 2 in a day when we work. am glad that you did not send some. Tell me where is John and tell me how he gets along. We though we would die before we got here, but we have not been in a fight yet and don't expect to. we have to fight wish a dish(disk)> We haven't got the box yet --is to and let me know when you sent it. Write as soon as you get this.

Charles and Luke to Kate and John Wagner. Tell Tillie Hammon that we are well and going to send you a likeness to her as soon as we get our pay.

Direct to Charles Ostrye Co G 11th NY Vol Eng. Washington DC

CAMP CITY POINT VA OCTOBER 16, 1864

Dear Father and Mother:

I take the present opportunity to write a few lines to you to let you know we are well at present and hope you are the same. I received your letter the 13th of October

and was glad to hear from you and hear that you was well. I am glad that you got our likenesses. You did not understand what it meant that none of mine was taken with gun in my hand and Charles was. We both tent together and sleep in the same bed. The gun that I had in my hand was a borrowed one. We haint got no guns yet, all the guns we got are a pick and shovel. We are to work building forts and breastworks now. The weather is pleasant this morning. It looks as beautiful as summer here. We have had some cold nights here and some frost too, but the weather is warmer now and more pleasant. There is not much Sunday here., but I can't help that, but there is meeting here Sundays. I like to be soldier boy and fight for Uncle Sam. There is new recruits coming in all the time. This is a very real place here. I wished you would write longer letters. They are too short. I hope you will write long letters. I have expressed home 22 dollars in an express package, when I was to Baltimore, but you don't say you got it yet. They are fighting all the time somewhere and we hear the cannons roar. They was firing last night in Butlers division. When I first came here I could not sleep when they was firing the cannons, but I can now. They don't trouble me now. I to hear them roar. Sometimes they make the ground shake here.

Milton Sullivan is Sick and has gone to the hospital this morning. all the rest of the boys from French creek are well at present. I have wrote one letter to my sister, but have not received no answer. I want you to write and let me know where she is and send all how times is there. They picked in 25 rebels last night and they said that the rebels couldn't stand long they don't get much to eat in the rebel army. They say that if old Abraham is elected that they will have to go down the stream.

I have not got no more to write now. I hope you will send my best respects to all-- from Luke ostrye. (written by W H Hodge)

PS Director your letters to Luke Ostrye Co G 15th NY Vol Eng Corps Washing DC.. Butter 80cents, Cheese 50 cents Onions 20 cents, potatoes 10 cents a pound , apples 5 cents apiece and everything else in proportion..good by

CAMP CITY POINT VA OCT 23 1864

My dear father and Mother;

I take this present to write a few lines to you and to tell you now that I am well at present and hope these few lines will find you the same. I wrote one letter to you last Sunday and have not got any answer from you. I don't know what the matter is you don't write to me for you have a better chance to write than I have. You tell me to write and don't write yourself. I would be glad to have you write often. It has been quite dry here and we have not had much rain here yet, but we have cold nights and the winds is cold. there is a good deal of firing last night. There is men going both ways now, recruits go to front every day and rebels prisoners goes the other way. We

have heard that Charles Morgan and Gareth Newhouse. I hope they will keep a stiff upper lip when they leave home. These fellows that enlisted and now are drafted haint sorry they enlisted. I want you to write often for you have more of a chance to write than what I have for I have to work from seven o'clock till dark and I don't have much time to write you. If you don't sell the old stage I want you to draw me what logs you can. there is four oak logs draw them in and have them sawed into floor boards and all the hemlock sawed into scantling. ??I want you to get all the hemlock logs you can.

Garet Newhouse has been sick. He has not been out tow work last week. He is a little better now. He was excused by the Doctor.

He is a little better now. He has not got homesick yet . He has He was excused ll Hiram Newhouse not to direct anymore letters in Dutch to Gareth Newhouse for it takes forever. Well though I want you to answer this as soon as you get it and let me know how all things get along at home. Tell the rest of my friends that I would be glad to have them write to me. That is all for this time so good by. Send my love and best wished to all. This from Luke Ostre to Father and family. Direct you letters to Mr Luke Ostrye, Company G 145gth NYV Engineer Corps, Washington, DC

CAMP CITY POINT VA 5 NOV 1864

Dear Father:

I take this opportunity to let you know how I get along. Charles and I are both of us very well and hope these few lines will find you the same. We had quite a hard rain the other day here it is pleasant now and cold nights here and not very warm days. There was some firing last night but all is quiet this morning. We are keeping busy to work all the time. today we had to drill a little and then go out on inspection. We have been to work to build us a log shanty. We haint got it done. We can't tell but next spring where we winter. Thursday night we was called out and thought that we would have to go to the front, but we didn't. We went down to the point and hardtack. It was all night and we was out in it and did not get back to camp till morning. We have learned a little what it is to be a soldier and I expect to do my duty and be a good soldier. there is a good deal of ---all over the north about the election, but we can't say how it will come out yet. I was down to the hospital last Friday to see Gareth Newhouse. He is feeling better. He will be back to his company in a few days again. we are drawed us some clothes. I got a dress coat and an overcoat and niger rubber blanket and Charles got dress coat, woolen blankets and rubber blanket, 2 pair of socks and I got two pair of socks. We are well prepared for winter now. I have got all the money you sent to me. I want you to send me some more for I haint got any. I am almost ashamed to send for any more, but I don't expect to draw pay this two months and have got to buy so many things to live on for one thing another that 5 dollars don't last long. Send me \$5 when you answer this letter. I write for you to send me a box of things, you can send it as soon as y ouget it ready if you haint sent the box off you needn't send me any shirts for I can get

these here cheaper. The thing that was in my red shirt pocket, I forgot it when I changed my clothes in Elmira and I want you to send it to me if the box is gone then send it in a piece of paper do it up. Garret Newhouse got a letter today, but I don't know what was in it. John Mina and Henry Cady went to the hospital today and took the letter to Garrett Newhouse. all the boys are as well a common and enjoy themselves well. I want y ou to write often and long letters. You have a better chance to write than what I do. The last letter I got done very well if y ou will keep a doing so. I want you to write wheter John has come home or not. If he has come home to have him see about the land and have it paid for and all straight. This is all that I have to write now so goodbye for this time. This from Luke Ostrye to his father Paul Ostrye. (written by wm Hodge)

CAMP CITY POINT VA NOV 20 1864

Dear Father:

I take this present time to write a few lines to you to let you know how we get along. We are both of us well at present and hope this letter will find you the same. It has rained all day today and last night too. We have had good weather and not much rain, but it looks as if we will have some rain now. We haint seen no snow yet. Here the weather has been dry for this time of year. I have wrote to you every few days, but I don't get no letters from you now what the reasons is whether you get my letters or not. I should like to have you write and let me know what the matter is. we had a gay old time Friday night. We was called out and they said the rebels was near us. They wanted us to be ready at a moments warning if the rebels should attack us, but they were more scared. Then heard the rebels was not anywhere near us we had to lay on our arms all night so if we was called out to be ready. I want you to send me \$5 in every letter you send to me for I am out of money and have borrowed some of the boys. I don't expect to get my pay till next year. They think we will go from here this week. I think that we shall go to Washington to winter. We shall not stay here. We shall go somewhere but that don't make no odds to me for I am gay and happy. Still if you don't send me no money I can't write for I haint got no stamp nor no money to get any paper. I would be glad to hear from you often. It does me us much good to hear from you.

I got a letter from Katie. She wrote that she had not been very well. I got the letter Friday night. There is a good many sick

in the company. It has been a hard time for us. We have had to get used to the climate and the living that we have. I can get along when I am well, but it is a hard place for anyone to be sick. If I should be sick then I had rather be home. I have learned what it is to soldier. In one year I shall learn enough for to last me. There is a good deal of stir in the army and some fighting. The rebels are hard fellows to conquer. they will some of them fight the last inch, but I guess they will have to give

up at last. There is rebels deserters coming into our lines everyday. They say the rebel soldiers are scared to find them in the----- . They have got most all they can get. You must seal y our letters very good and tight. Hope you write and let us know how they all are getting along at home. Send my love and best to all. answer for this time from Luke Ostrye to Father and family.--Directions to write Luke Ostrye 15th NYV Engineer Corps, Washington, DC

CAMP CITY POINT VA 15 DEC 1864

My dear father:

I take this present time to write a few lines to you. We are well today and hope you are well too and hope you are the same. Received y our letter last Friday and have not had time to write to you till today. We have had some cold weather here. We had one little snow storm here. It freezes here so the ground will hold up a horse. I and all the rest of the boys had to go to the front last Saturday night. we had a devil of a time Sat night. I t rained like shit and we had to march in mud up to our knees. It rained and we had to carry four days rations and our nap sack full of things and our tent cloth and our guns and everything--it made a big load.

We had to march--we went up near Petersburg. I was within 1 1/2 miles of Petersburg so that I could see some of the buildings and see the rebels picket lines. Sunday night was a cold windy night and we had to tent right out on the ground. It made our teeth chatter. We could not have any fire much for the rebels would see us and could throw shells into us. we did not stay there but two days and then we came back to the old camp again. That is the soldiering goes and I like it the best that I can. You know that I can stand it for I am tough. They have had a battle in the same ground where we were since we got back to our old camp again. The cigars went bully. I can just get enough time to smoke and that is about all. that little dog you must learn him to respect soldiers so when I come home he won't bit me. I should like a slice of pork of of that pig or----is the same.

Tell john Newhouse I would advise no one to enlist without they was afraid they would be drafted. Our fair is rather hard and we have to go on some devil of a tramp sometimes. He can as he is a mind to but soldiering is a hard life the best of it.

Father , I wish you to send me five dollars and Charles five. send it in two letters five in each for we are out of money and we have got to have our boots taped and other things we have to have. I don't know when we all draw pay. I want you to send some as soon as you get this letter.

I am well and tough and hardy as a buck and are ready for another trip, for I expect we shall have another before long. I want you to be sure and answer this letter as

soon as you get it and send the money.

goodbye give my love and best respects to all this is all for this time from Luke and Charles Ostrye to Paul Ostrye.

CITY POINT DEC 1864

Dear Father and Mother:

I sit down this evening to write a few lines to you to let you know that we are well at present and hope these will find you the same. We got the box last Saturday night. We have been to work all day and when we came back the box was in the camp. We had a-----a going to sister box a Sunday, but in the forenoon we had to go on inspection and in the afternoon we went as far as our tent or else we have have to lay over the ground. It ain't done now but it better than it was our===was pretty poor to home but I wish I had it here to live in. The roof of our shanty is cloth like the sheets at home and as small as this paper. It takes two days to write it . I would like to know----those was a paper on that said that in here over us all the things I got all right or---came and help out it or we have. I got to run about half a mile. We had a little rain today so we did not go out to work so we have got a little time to write. We fixed up our tent. The army is a making a move we feel a heavy good-- file here in a few days. You help us when you can and we will help y ou when we can. Well, I guess I can't think of anymore to write so goodbye for this time. Write as soon as you get this letter. I am very anxious to hear from home. direct the same as before: signed Charles Ostrye, Luke Ostrye.

CAMP CITY POINT VA 24 dEC 1864 Christmas Eve

Dear Father:

I take this present time to write a few lines to you. I am well at present and I hope y ou are the same. The weather is quite cold but we have not had any snow here yet.but the ground is froze hard. We have seen some rather hard times. We have been out on two marches once we went up near Petersburg and had a cold time of it. We went up to Bermuda Hundred a week ago last night. We started about 11 o'clock and they marched us like the devil for 4 or 5 hours hard. We had a hard time of it and a cold one too. We came-----was yesterday, we was a hard dirty looking set of men when we came back to our old camp again, but you know that all of these soldiers had to see but it don't harm me any for I am tough and I can stand it. we have got our Captain now and two Lieut. I wrote a good while ago to home y ou sent us \$5. apiece. If you haven't sent any I want you to right off for we are most barefooted. The soles are all wearing out of our boots and we haint got no money to get them taped. I wrote in my last letter for y ou to send me some money if you haint I hope you will send me \$5 and Charles \$5. there is nothing like a soldiers life for when we move we take house, bed, and everything we have with us. the most we have to fret

ourself about is to get enough to eat. We don't fret about our work. Our health is good and we stand the pressure very well. Times goes on quite fast. I hope we shall see better times then what we have. We don't have very good house to live in I don't know whether we shall stay here this winter or not. You must write to me often. I don't get a letter once in two or three weeks from you. You must write often for I am glad to hear from you often. I want you to give my love and best respects to all. You must write all about the time and home and how y ou get along. This from Luke Ostrye to Paul Ostrye-goodbye

CAMP CITY POINT JAN 11 1865

Dear Father and Mother:

It is with pleasure I sit down to write a few lines to you to let you know that we are all well at present hoping these few lines will find you the same. We got a letter from you the 8th and was glad to hear you was well and we got the \$10.00 in the letter. If y ou answer every letter I write I have lost 3 letters the war will soon be over. We don't expect to stay our time out. we was called out that very morning with our guns and belts that ----was taken. You must excuse me this time for not writing any sooner for just a week ago today we was ordered to fall in heavy marching order and we went up to Petersburg. we could see the city very plain and we was there one day and night and from there we went to Hancock Station to the left of Petersburg. We got there about 6 o'clock in the evening and camped out all night that night was not allowed to build a fire because the rebels could shell us. The next evening we was called up at 3 o'clock in the evening and at five o'clock they go us in line of battle, but we did not have to fight for the Johnny's did not come. I am sorry you sent that money for you did not have any to home. I though you had some to home. We have been expecting some money all the time and we will get some in March and then I will send some home. tell John Newhouse I think he would like it better going to school. I think I would too. If you want to write y ou can write all you a mind to and direct them to the same place and I will get them. garret and Charles and I give our love to you so goodbye. Write soon. Luke Ostrye

CAMP CITY POINT VA 1 Jan 1865

Dear Father

I take this present time to write a few lines to you. I am well at present and hope these few lines will find you the same. I received your letter Friday night the 20th of Dec and I was glad to hear from you that you was well and all alive and was glad to get the \$10 for it came good to us both for we was out to money and had not any. The weather is cold here today. It snowed here a little yesterday and it froze hard last night and it is cold raw wind today. We had inspection today. Yesterday we was

mustered for pay and we probably will get paid by the middle of the month. times goes on quite fast. I enjoy myself very well. My health is good and so I can stand it very well. We have got our Captain and have got 3 Lieuts. two first and one second. We have got a bully Captain and nice lieutenants. We had got rid OT them Irish Devils and I guess we will have a better time now. I want you to send me and Luke a box of things for I think they will taste good. You can send some bread and some cakes. I want a big loaf of Buckwheat bread and some biscuits and some dried beef if you have ot it and some sausages and send a few dried apples and 4 or 5 pounds of maples sugar. Send ox the same size the other and pack it full of stuff. You can send it the same as you did the other box. I will send a ring in this letter to my brother Joe and I am making two for Nicholas and will send it to him in the next letter. It is the talk now that we shall move north to fortify a line along Lake Erie and other places, but we can't tell. I had rather stay here till spring for it is warmer here than up north of us. you have lots of snow north but we don't have but about an inch of snow in all. I didn't hear nothing from garret Newhouse and I dont know where to write. I want y ou to find ou the directions and send to me so I can write to him. We have hard time y ou may know for I went on guard last year and come off this year so I though they was pretty cold when they joined together. You many want to know how I like soldiering, well I like it better every day. I don't I know but I will like it so well I will want to go again. Here is a good place to learn. I learn a little everyday. There is nothing like being an engineer.

I am learning to do most all kinds of work and the greatest thing is to be in the Army is we clear of a draft. We can't make our living without---and steal a little, but we must look out and not get caught for we would have to be punished for it. There is lots of fun here for the boys will sing and make lots of music and no one can get lonesome or homesick. this all for this time so goodbye this from your two sons Luke and Charles Ostrye to their Father and family.

PS-note at bottom in pencil and very poor penmanship probably Luke writing phonetically--I am copying it as written

I ant you to send me that hat I sent home from Elmira. As soon as this was written I saw 80 Jonneys that come over in our line.

CAMP city Point VA 27 Jan 1865

Dear Father:

I take this present time to let you know we are all get along. We are all well today and hope you are the same. I received a letter from you the 25th and was glad to hear from you. We had thought that we would never hear from you again, but here was a letter came the other night which said on the envelope Charles Ostrye. We don't have any snow here now, but the ground is froze hard as a rock. We have just built us a new house, but we haint got a door yet. We have got a blanket up to the door and have a stone in it, and we enjoy ourselves. Well now we have been a drilling today.

There was a man hung today for deserting. He deserted first from the 143rd Pa and then he enlisted in the first Connecticut heavy artillery then he deserted and went over among the rebels and he was caught and tired and found guilty and was hung today and I, Charles Ostrye saw the man hang by the neck. Mr Garet Newhouse has got back to his company and he was gladly received by his friends. If you haint sent our box yet, Garrett Newhouse wants his father to send him something in it. He wants his father to send him a two pounds of Tobacco fine cut, a pair of socks , and some darning yarn and a pair of buckskin gloves and what else you are in a mind to.

I want you to send me some darning yarn and a good woolen double hairtwist pair of sox and Charles wants you to send him a good pair of socks and a pair of shirt to if you haint sent the box. If y ou have sent the box you will have to send them in another box.

Tell John Newhouse that us raw Dutch boys like soldiering very well, but I am afraid you raw Yankee might not like it----you can't come in company nor in this regiment---not come no where near but if you a think you will be drafted you had better enlist and take the bounty, but to be a soldier is a hard life the best of it and it takes all of a mans bounty to live down here.

We did not come down here to fight but to get clear of the draft and to take the bounty. we came here to work and they want some more to fight. We haint afraid of no draft.

This is all of the present, Write soon and often. give my love to all my friends. So goodbye this from Charles and Luke Ostrye to their Father and family.. (written by Wm Hodge)

CAMP CITY POINT VA 6 April 1865

I take this present time to let you know that I am well and enjoy good health and I hope this letter will find you the same. It is nice weather here. Now we have been drilling---drill today. We are enjoying soldiering well. Now and we are having good times. I ;have seen the inside of Petersburg. We were up to the front (Sunday). We staid till Wednesday. We staid in Petersburg. The rebs----bridges and factories and cares? they burned when they could they didn't have time to set fire and destroy for they had to hustle out of the city as fast as they could. They left Richmond the same time. I don't think they can hold out much longer. They left Richmond the same time. I don't think they can hold out much longer. They have lost their capitol and they will have to fly for refugee now and where will they live? We built two bridges in Petersburg and we went in the city about 9 o'clock Monday morning. We was cheered by the Negroes. They say they be glad to see us. We was the best looking soldiers

they ever saw. The inhabitants that was left hadn't nothing much to eat. We took lots of prisoners as our boys did more there they knew what to do with if our Army keeps on taking p[ri]soners we will surely have all the rebs prisoners of ours. I am glad that I came now, we got some good wine to drink and all the tobacco that we could fetch to camp. We confiscated in all Petersburg. We think the war will play out soon. I think it will play out before the first of July. the boys are all in good spirits and enjoy good health. You must write soon and often. This is all for the present. This is all goodbye. Write soon this from Luke and Charles Ostrye to Paul Ostrye. I send \$20 of reb money in this letter. I sent some pictures the other day. (written by Wm. Hodge.)

CAMP CITY POINT VA 13 APRIL 1865

Dear Father and Mother: I will take the opportunity to answer your kind letter which I received this evening. ----to hear from you and that y au was well and tell you that Charles and us are all well and hope that you are too. We have been on a four days march and we are but fifty two miles from Petersburg well and we had a good time of it while the hardest time for us we had to camp right in the wheat field and-- --they had of it and old Lee had---and his men are all a going home. Many or most all paroled and they are very glad to go home for they are all tired of fighting and I think that we will get home in time to plant corn and if not I think we will get home in time to help.-get it and we are in the woods and that is a good place to camp---and our tent---well my coat with some of the boys. What we are a coming home when paroled and we hope so and we can't think of much in the news. So I will come to say for this time. respects to garret Newhouse, Father and tell him this from his sons Luke and Charles Ostrye Co G 15th NYEng. Washington, d.C. (letter ink very faint.)