

Frances Elvira Alexander Owens

to

Samuel Owens

December 26, 1941

Hunter Library MS 16.05-1-02-002

**Transcribed, Annotated, and Edited by
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**For English 618: research Methods in English
Instructor and General Editor: Dr. Brian Gastle
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Introduction to the Series

This transcription and its attendant annotations, explanatory material, and bibliography were prepared by students in ENGL 618: Research Methods in English, the required gateway class for the MA in English at Western Carolina University. The learning outcomes for this class include the following:

1. Conduct appropriate, effective, and ethical scholarship
 - a. Effectively find and use advanced research tools (handbooks, databases, guides, bibliographies, etc.) appropriate to a subject.
 - Students will be able to use a wide variety of such tools and evaluate those tools.
 - b. Find appropriate advanced research (print and electronic scholarship) and apply that research to specific disciplinary questions or issues.
 - Students will be able to find a variety of scholarship, evaluate both the appropriateness and rigor of that scholarship, and incorporate that scholarship correctly and effectively.
 - c. Develop accurate bibliographies and reference citations.
 - Students will be able to annotate, abstract, and cite materials following standard MLA format.
2. Understand the process by which the texts we use are made available.
 - Students will be able to conduct basic editorial work and evaluate the editorial work of others.

All work is presented as submitted by the students. While these students take great care with their transcriptions and annotations, errors are always possible. As these students learn throughout this class, good scholarship requires checking of sources and corroboration by authoritative sources.

It is hoped that the transcription and annotation of WCU Special Collections materials will be useful to the institution, students, scholars, and other patrons and users of WCU's Special Collections materials.

Introduction

Within the Samuel Owens Collection, we have several letters to Samuel Owens, the ninth child of Mrs. Francgs Elvira Alexander Owens (Mar. 28, 1879- Jan. 7, 1965) while he is in active service during WWII. As with any mother, she has great concern for her son while he is actively serving in the military during wartime, and her mother's heart can almost be felt as we read her letters, as she begs for him to write her as soon as possible, as she expresses concern for his safety, and as she writes of her letters to him being unanswered.

In her December 26th letter to her son, Samuel, Mrs. Owens emotions are evident. It's just after the holidays, and she has two sons away at war. She begins this letter with elation over Samuel's telegram, but says that she has not received a letter from Samuel since September 1. Later in the letter, Mrs. Owens mentions the "lattment," which I discovered was allotment. She mentions how much that it was helping the family, but that she hated to think of what he was having to go through to get it. This interested me greatly, so I spent a bulk of time researching this topic. The envelopes have no personal notes on them, only the appropriate addresses and then a purple stamp that states, "Return To Sender By Order Of Navy Dept. No Postage Due." We can only imagine the emotions she felt when this letter was returned to her eight months after she sent it to her son.

In regards to document condition and format, the handwriting is angled and at times almost illegible, but the document itself seems well preserved and intact. There are not many spelling errors, and only one that interferes with reading comprehension. Where spelling or grammar errors exist, they are not revised. The document is transcribed in the same way that it was originally written; however, annotations of unfamiliar people and things are included at the bottom of each page. Paragraph breaks and paragraph indentions are maintained from the Sacket Canopus edited, but the line breaks are not.

Webster N.C Dec__26

My Dearest Son Sammie,

It was so nice to get your telegram and I thank you so much for sending it to let me know you was all right, and I hope you are still well and safe. I got a letter from Frank,¹ he said he had been with you and he sure was glad to see you, so Frank was ok when he wrote last. That was the 17th of Dec. I have not had a letter from you since Sept. 1. Please write more often if you possibly can. We are all well and we all hope you are and didn't have to bad a Christmas, but we have been hearing on the radio there was plenty going on Christmas there where you are at, but we are hearing our Boys are cleaning up the Japs² in a big way, and that victory will soon come our way. I hope you will all be home by next Christmas and that the war will be won, for our USA. I thank you for renewing the lattment³ it sure was good of you to do it for us. It will make life so much better for us—but I will feel bad to know what you have had to go through to earn it—hope to hear from you soon. And that you will not let nothing happen to you I am hoping that the war will soon be over and you will soon be coming back home. I am hoping and praying for you and all the Boys.

Your same loving Mother, Dad, and Nell.⁴

¹ Franklin Jordan Owens (aka Frank Jurdan Owens) (1907-1978) was Samuel Owens brother. According to the US Department of Veteran Affairs, he served from 1928-1947. His name appears on WWII Muster Rolls in 1940 for the Navy, but he was also present for Hindenburg disaster in 1937 as a Marine guard. As an older brother who had been in the military longer, it seems that he was making an effort to keep track of his younger brother and keep his mother informed, as she mentions him in several of her letters.

² Derogatory slang for people from Japan.

³ Allotment were given to soldiers according to the Soldiers and Sailors Relief Act of 1940 for soldiers to provide for spouses, children, parents, or for them to continue paying bills and not incur the cost of debt collection while away at war.

⁴ Mrs. Owens sent this letter on December 27 of 1941. The letter was marked “return to sender” and returned to Mrs. Owens on August 31 of 1942.

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