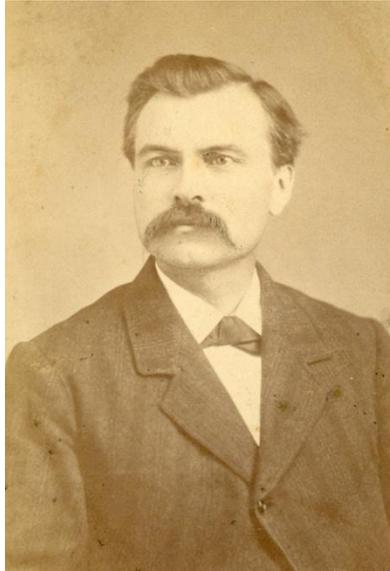


Selected Civil War letters of Floyd T. Ruscoe



Floyd T. Ruscoe, son of James Ruscoe and Selecta Brown, was born in the Vista section of Lewisboro, Westchester County, New York in 1843 which is near the Connecticut state line. He enlisted at New Canaan, CT in Company H in 1862 and served throughout the war. Ruscoe was captured at Chancellorsville, Virginia in May 1863. He was promoted to Corporal in 1865 and was mustered out with the regiment later the same year. The 1870 census shows him living with his parents in Lewisboro, New York and working as a school teacher. He later moved to Norwalk, CT working in various businesses as a bookkeeper. Floyd died in 1914 and is buried in a family plot in Riverside Cemetery, Norwalk, CT.

p. 33-34

Brookes Station, VA Sunday April 12th 1863

My Dear Sister,

I have just come in from our regular Sunday morning inspection and I thought I would sit down and answer your letter. I had been looking for a letter from you a long time and had begun to think you had given up writing. I want you to write me oftener. Gertrude writes to DeWitt almost every week. You may be sure I will answer all that I get from you although I don't have as much time as you do. I wish you could be down here to see how warm and pleasant it is here today. Perhaps it is also warm and pleasant up there too but I can't believe it is as much so as it is here. I do not say though that I would not be willing to exchange places. For the last few days it has been as warm as summer but I expect it will be warmer before long. I don't hear anything

now days about our moving from here and we may stay here some weeks. And now I must tell you what I saw day before yesterday. If you had seen the sights I saw your eyes would have stuck out. Our Corps was reviewed by President Lincoln and I tell you it was the grandest sight I ever saw. I don't mean Uncle Abe was anything very grand for I don't think he was. He is full as homely as he has been represented but that don't make him less capable of being president and I think he is the right man in the right place. He rode along in front of our lines hat off and I had a good fair view of him. His wife and son were with him. Mrs. Lincoln sat in a carriage close by and saw the whole proceedings. I had a good look at her too and I think she is as good looking as the president is homely. There were twenty six regiments out together and I do wish you could have seen what a fine appearance we all made. Gen. Hooker who was also present said the marching could not be beat. I want my daddy to send me a paper that tells about the review if he can get one. I mean the review of the 11th Army Corps. Do you remember that large chapel we had to Bridgeport. We have got it here and are going to have a meeting in it this afternoon and our chaplain says Major General Howard our corps commander is going to be present. But I will stop now for the present. Write and let me know what you all think about those likenesses. My love to all. Tell Mrs. Slauson she must write again and not wait so long. Good bye

From your brother, Floyd

p. 35-36

Convalescent Camp Alexandria VA Friday May 29, 1863

Dear Father,

Your letter was received Tuesday and as I can find nothing else to busy myself about just now I thought I would answer it to day. Yours was some time longer in coming than it would have been if it had been directed to this place but it finally arrived safe money postage stamps and all. I was very glad to hear from you for you know it had been some time since I had had a letter from that part of the country. I had heard from the regiment before I received your letter by the way of the Norwalk Gazette. I was very sorry to hear De Witt was wounded even though it was a slight wound. You did not say anything about Sergt. Crissey but the paper said he was wounded slightly too. I was very sorry to hear of the death of Ed Richards and I can hardly realize that he is dead yet. He was as clever and good hearted a fellow as we had in our company. But such are the fortunes of war and we can not tell who will go next. I believe I promised you in my last letter I would tell you how I liked this place. I have been here now over a week and I can say I like it very well so far though there are not as many here that I am acquainted with as there was in the Regt. We are staying in barracks as perhaps I told you before. Each ward or barrack will hold 100 men and there is about that number in the one I stay in. The largest part of them belong to the 17th but some belong to the 20th and some to the 27th Conn. We have good straw beds to sleep in and our grub is also very good. Since I received that money I have had milk almost

every meal and I tell you it goes good. I haven't had any before since I left Fort Marshall. There is a branch of the Christian Commission established here and they have built a rough kind of church in which they hold meetings every day and night. They also have a good library of books and as I have plenty of spare time I visit that very often. Taking everything into consideration I think I am very nicely situated. You wished to know if they could send me to my regiment. They cannot until I am lawfully exchanged. I am just as much a prisoner now as I was when I was first taken only the Confederate government was delivered one over to our government to be taken care of. Exchanges are made once a quarter so probably I shall stay here 2 or 3 months. I want you to write often and tell all the rest to do the same. My love to all interested in my welfare.

From your son,

Floyd

P.S. Here is a little present for you. Floyd

p. 39-41

Convalescent Camp Alexandria VA Monday July 20th, 1863

Dear father,

After many disappointments I at last received a letter from your last Thursday. I could not account for your long silence in any way so it made me kindy spunky and I determined I would not write until I had heard from you. But it seems you had written to me but I had not received it yet and don't expect I ever shall. It is the only letter you ever wrote me but what I have got I suppose it has gone on to the regiment where perhaps I shall find it before many days for I hear arrangements are being made to exchange all of our paroled prisoners before long. Homer Byington was here yesterday and he said he thought we would be exchanged in a few days. He says he was so near our Regt. in the Gettysburg fight that when the smoke of the firing rose up he could see the men. He also said they occupied a very warm place and I should judge by the loss that they did. I hope that there will be no more such battles as that but I am afraid there will. What do the folks thinks about it up that way. The soldiers a good many of them think there will be no fighting after this summer. All I have to say is I wish I knew that would be the case. There is no mistaking it though that things appear brighter than they have before in a long long time. Out troops are at work again at Charleston and I hope they will succeed in taking that cradle of rebellion. I will not ask what the loyal and sensible men up that way thought of the riot in New York City for I know what they thought. I would like to know what the copperheads thought and what they said. Upheld them in it I suppose. I heard one spell they were going to send the paroled prisoners up to quell the riots and I was in hope that was the case but it seems they did not need us. That will always be remembered against New York as long as the world stands and so it ought. You say you heard that I had been exchanged and was in that battle and was killed. I

would like to know who promulgated (as John Searles used to say) such a report as that. I saw a list of the killed in a Bridgeport paper in the Norwalk Gazette and in the Tribune and I saw no such name as Rusco. It seems to me you are always too willing to believe bad news. I was glad to hear George was safe and hope De Witt will turn up all right and I believe he will. If he went to Richmond I suppose he will be paroled a great while. There was a lot of happy men left here last night. The 27th Conn. nine months men and their time is out and so they started for home. They go to New Haven to be discharged and I suppose Doc will see them when they arrive home. Well now I will soon stop for this time. I want you to write and I hope to have better success in getting your letter than I did that other one. My love to mother and Harriet. Tell Harriet I will answer her letter and Billy Jerman's the next mail. Harriet said that Gertrude wrote the same time she did but I received no letter neither have I received any from Mary. You can tell her if she don't write pretty soon she will miss it for I have got something I have been keeping to send her this long time. If she don't write to me I shall send it to someone else that does. I suppose you know who so I wont take the trouble to mention any names. Tell Aaron I hope he will be drafted if he dont write to me. Now for the money and then I am done. I shall not send but 10 dollars home for the very good reason that I have not got but that sum. I hear we are going to get paid off again and I will endeavor to send more next time and so I should this, if I had received your other letter. Dont fail to write. From your son

Floyd

pg. 41-42

Parole Camp Alexandria VA Sunday August 2nd 1863

Dear father,

Your letter was received last thursday and as I have a plenty of spare time to day I will endeavor to answer you if the warm weather does not interfere too much with me. Such weather as we are having now is very bad for marching although I do not have much of that to do now days. I am well as usual and I hope this will find the folks around there all enjoying good health. We have not been exchanged yet and I dont know as we are going to be very soon for I think by the way the rebels are using our negro soldiers that they will get into a muss and not exchange any very soon. I see in this morning's paper that the president is determined to protect his soldiers of every color and that is the way to talk. I think we have got pretty near as many of their men prisoners as they have of ours. Well I dont know what to think about our being exchanged. I have heard we would be next week and I have heard we would not be exchanged at all so you can see we can not depend on anything we hear about it. The next time you hear from me I may be in the Regt. The 17th Regt. I suppose will soon be larger than it is now for I suppose it with the other regiments now in the field will be filled up with drafted men. Capt. Wilcoxson of Co. I of our Regt. has gone home to take charge of those that join us. I dont much like the idea of being

mixed up with a lot of conscripts but it is the best thing the government can do with them for they will make better soldiers. I would like to see some of those Vista conscripts down here if they are lucky enough to be drafted but I suppose that will have to join New York regiments. I saw in the papers a few days ago that the 11th Army Corps was to be broken up and consolidated with other Corps but it is contradicted in this morning's paper, Our camp has been moved from where it was when I wrote to you last. The reason for this is the boys hooted at the Colonel of the camp every time he was in sight of them and threatened to tear down the sutter's? shop so he just moved us but not very far but the paroled prisoners are not allowed to associate with the convalescents. When you write now you must direct to the Parole Camp near Alexandria. Please to tell the rest of the folks around there. Next time you write send me some stamps for I dont know when we shall get paid off. Give my love to all the folks and tell all to write. No more this time.

From your son,

Floyd

Pg. 49-50

Parole Camp Alexandria, VA Sunday Sept. 27, 1863

Dear Brother,

Your letter has been received and perhaps you think should have been answered before this but I could not on account of stamps. I am bothered very often for the want of them. Letter writing in the army is not quite what it is at home you know that as well as I do. However I received a supply from home day before yesterday so I am all right until they are gone. I was glad to hear from you now as you are where you can be quiet if you choose. No doubt Cy is with you by this time or rather where he can see you very often. When you next write let me know whether he will go in the Invalid Corps or not. I hear George is and if Cy does I think I had better for I shall be the only one of the family left in active service. Perhaps you think I am not in very active service but that is no sign I am not going to be. I think I shall start for Charleston in a very short time for we are exchanged and part of the paroled prisoners have already left to join Meade's army. The men of our division will be the last to leave I think and we may not go away from here in three or four weeks. But I must stop and get my dinner for the bugle has just blowed and I am hungry. Now as I have had my dinner I will finish my letter. They are having gay times in Vista that's a fact. I have heard you was not much behind hand when you was there. You see I take the papers too but they may not be the same that you take so you may let me know what news there is in your papers. I had a letter written on three sheets of paper from Harriet Hanford giving a detailed account of matters and things in Vista. Among other girls she mentioned one by the name of Christine Smith* Are you acquainted with her? I am not but perhaps I shall be one of

these days. I had not heard of Hiram Rusco's death until you wrote to me about it and I was very sorry to hear it and I think Uncle Stephen and Aunt Anna must have been for notwithstanding all his faults they loved him as well as any child they have got. He is the first of the six Ruscos that has fallen in the services of his country and I may be the last. But I must stop for this time. If you will hurry up and write I shall get it before I leave and I should finally get it anyway so write and direct same as before.

Your brother,

Floyd

*Christine Smith would later marry Floyd's brother Andrew Rusco.

The above letters were selected from Ruscoe's 130 p. copybook in which he copied letters he sent home while in the U.S. armed services during the Civil War. It is shelved as JO 42a, located in Stack 3-b