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Gilmore, Eliza OH (Mother), 04/16/1854

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This is a very fine document & I fear very unsatisfactory. of you have not an Army register giving the stations, rank I pay so much as the names of all the officers of the Army I will send you mine I think you have one — Out of it you can get a mass of explanation, & lists of any.

West Point, N.Y. April 16th 1854.

My dear Mother,

I received your last kind letter in good time, and, judging by its contents, I suppose you had not, when you wrote it, received my last letter which was a little more explicit upon my condition & wants than any of the preceding.

I forget often that your only means of learning anything about the Army is through me and that my letters are usually very indefinite upon matters connected with it. On the 38th pg. of the Army register (I believe you always have one sent you) you will find the pay of the Officers of the different Corps of the Army. It seems ^{for a second Lt. of the Staff.} there, ^{per month} rations, horse, servants & such, to amount to \$1 dollar & 50 cents. The bill for increasing the pay is now pending in the House of Representatives. It has passed the ^{Senate} House & will either pass or be rejected in the House before I can write you another letter. At the close of every settlement once in two months I will receive that amount in cash i.e. ~~66~~ 66 dollars as the regulations now are. This I will get & receive into my own hands as long as I am a Lieutenant. Warren is so situated that his expenses will be nothing compared with mine. Mine will depend on my station, the price of board, traveling expenses &c. It is said that those Officers who get good

stations & are married lay up more money than others. But the board at West Point is so high that it would be almost impossible for a 2^d Lt. without other means than his pay to meet the additional expense of a wife, the living apartments &c. It is a matter that depends on so many unpromised circumstances that officers of the Staff can scarcely form a rough estimate of all the wants incident to his situation.

His pay is by no means meager, and could be placed at some posts - some arsenals for instance he could lay up money, at others it would require an unusual amount of prudence to ~~be~~ keep within bounds or free from debt. My outfit will cost I fear as much as 100 dollars. I am not very much in arrears - and in fact will be about square - by using my equipments fund which has been held in reserve & amounts to 92 dollars. I shall as soon as possible get a list of all the indispensable articles - I do not wish to make a heavy draught on father at present. I shall get him to hire for me the necessary amount which I shall make as small as possible.

A little after the close of my furlough I will receive \$244.50 for four months pay. I shall give as much of this as practicable towards the payment of the debt incurred. Mrs Lee says it is not considered right to resign immediately upon graduation, and advised some of her Virginia friends not to do it, at least not for two years. I do not intend to leave the service till I am square in my fiscal concerns. You will notice

That a Second Lieutenant in the Staff is allowed a horse & pay for his keeping as well as a servant. These he can dispense with, at his option, and receive in lieu of the rations he would receive for their maintenance, the equivalent in cash. You seem to have entertained an erroneous idea with reference to the payment of Officers. They are not like Cadets under Guardianship, having their money husbanded for them & receiving all necessary articles through orders, which may be granted or not according to the will of a Superintendent. You must not suffer the slightest anxiety on my account. While I remain attached to the army, I shall always ~~remain~~ ^{be} well fed & clothed, and I am impressed with a little care against extravagance. Soon to be free & independent in money matters. The debts of Officers arise principally from their forgetting that their pay is limited, and that it will not secure to them every imaginable luxury. I wish to ask yours & father's advice about the best method for me to pursue. Cadets upon graduation have from time immemorial almost, contracted debts for clothing - often far beyond the immediate necessity - and these debts have often hung over them for years. This shall not be done in my case. If I am necessitated to contract a debt I want it to be at one place - & so soon as is possible it shall be liquidated. I shall be obliged to get one suit of citizen's dress - 1 suit of uniform - 1 sword

and its accompanying accoutrements - 1 pr. Epavelettes -
I have already engaged a class ring - which I did
think to dispense with, but as it is a sort of symbol
of good feeling between us as classmates - and as thro.
it is a medium Mr Abbot & myself brought
about a reconciliation I thought I would hesitate
no longer to get one. It is a Seal ring with an
appropriate motto - quite large - The cost is from 20 to
30 dollars according to the amount of Gold put in -
mine I have got as small as I could - and its cost will
be I believe 28 dollars. Then there is the Army trunk -
of sufficient capacity & strength - to contain the Soldiers
all of he pitched about by labourer for years without
being broken. This costs 28 dollars. Then the ~~Army~~ uniform
knapsack & forage cap - and if I get one a citizen's cap
or hat - vests - collars - gloves - shoes &c. &c. I will draw
up a list as soon as I know myself all I will be obliged
to get & transmit it to you. I cannot determine whether
I will go into the Engineers or Ordnance, so I cannot tell
what buttons or shoulder straps to put on my coats
I got my furlough coat altered over or rather
repaired, & the buttons will be changed. I presume I
do really have a more extensive knowledge of the
Army & its affairs than I give evidence of in my
correspondence. If anything puzzles you - ask of
me an explanation - It always seems when I am
writing that you all have the same knowledge
upon such matters as I. but I really know better
Give my love to all & write soon

My affectionate Son
C. H. Howard