

Samuel Roberts Owens

to

Frances Owens

January 28, 1942

Hunter Library MS 16.05-1-3-004

Transcribed and Edited by Kellie Smith

For ENGL 618: Research Methods in English

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14 December 2017

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.

Samuel Roberts Owens to Mrs. S.J. Owens

Introduction:

This letter was written by Samuel Roberts Owens to his mother, Mrs. S.J. Owens. He sends greetings to his family, especially his father, to whom he wishes a happy birthday. Owens tells his mother not to write for a while, and assures her he will write her as often as he can. He tells her not to worry, that “no news is good news” since she would hear if anything bad happened to him. He tells her he expects to get leave soon to come home, and sends his love.

The letter shows how much Owens misses his family, and how much he wants to reassure his mother. He may have been in a hurry with the inconsistency in some of his script, as well as the short length and the emphasis he put on his safety. He seemed to care about his family a great deal, as he called Mrs. Owen “Dearest Mother,” called his father “Dad,” and sent “Lots and Lots of Love,” which is one of the easiest lines to read in the letter’s text.

Editorial Statement:

The letter is written in ink, in a fairly legible hand that fluctuates the directions that the letters lean and the spacing between words and lines. The letter entirely fills the paper’s front, and fills half of the paper’s back. It was folded in half to fit into its small envelope. Owens informally signed the letter “Sam” on one half of the back, and clearly puts his professional signature of “Samuel Roberts Owens” on the other half, probably for the benefit of naval censors. Proof of censorship is indicated by signed seals on the front of the letter and on the back, where the letter had been opened and taped up, as was common.

The front of the envelope also had a torn top right corner where there were three additional scripts in different hands with different ink: the top one indicating there was “No Stamp available,” the middle one was “Sailor’s Ma-” (presumably “Sailor’s Mark”), and the third was an illegible signature. Immediately to the left of these scripts was a U.S. Navy seal containing the date 01/28/1942. The envelope was addressed to “Mrs. S.J. Owens” in “Webster, NC, USA” without a street address.

This transcription is a diplomatic edition, as its contents are kept as close to the document as possible. No changes were made to any of the letter’s grammatical errors, and nothing legible in the original document has been omitted in this transcription. Additional context is provided by annotated footnotes.

[Front Page]

Dearest Mother and all,

I guess you are worried but theres no use to be. I'm in no danger whatsoever and dont expect to be. Sure would like to see you all. I hope youre well and happy and Dad had a happy Birthday.¹

There no use writing me for a while. I'll write every chance I have and you would be notified if any thing happened so no news is good news.

Tell everybody hello for me and tell 'em² I'm well

¹ Owens' father, Stephen John Owens, was born on 01/17/1875; his birthday was nearly two weeks before this letter was sent (Ancestry.com).

² them

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I expect to get some leave after this so I can do lots of things I'm missing out on now so you'll be seeing me.¹

Lots and Lots of Love

Sam

Samuel Roberts Owens [signature]

¹ Owens did not make it home as soon as he expected, since the date of this letter is four months before he was captured, and he was a prisoner of war for the next three years, until 1945 (Sterner).

Works Cited

- Ancestry.com. "Steven John Owens in the U.S., Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current." *Ancestry Library Edition*, ProQuest, 2017, <https://search.ancestrylibrary.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?viewrecord=1&r=5542&db=FindAGraveUS&indiv=try&h=72308784>.
- Sterner, Doug. "Valor awards for Samuel Robert Owens." *Military Times Hall of Valor Database*, <http://valor.militarytimes.com/recipient.php?recipientid=304006>.