

U.S.S. Charleston
March 16, 1899.

Dear Papa,

I was more than delighted to get your letter and to realize that whatever I did it would not change your feeling toward me. I felt of course that you would have me do what I thought best, for you did it such a way that I feel as if the constraints that may have been between us is reduced instead of increased and I am truly thankful for that. The passage of the promised bill has changed my plans somewhat, at least as regards the immediate future, we has not as yet gotten the details out here for if it passed the Senate in the same form as it did the House I think there is a fine opening in the Marine Corps. The original bill provided for a large increase in that branch and that the vacancies would first be filled by transfer from the Navy. If that went through it would have an opening to me to go in as a first lieutenant. I think the Marine Corps the most attractive and most efficient branch of the government service. There is a very foolish Naval Academy prejudice against it which is not to be found throughout the services. It is to a larger extent free from that bickering and internal scuffling to be found in the line. Another advantage is the comparatively large amount of shore duty, especially now as so many ships will be going into commission that the line officers will have mighty little shore duty. As far as pay is concerned it is as good and in the start better because I would start in higher. I don't know how you regard it for [I] don't remember having ever heard you express any views on the subject, but being around the academy so much you may have acquired some of that feeling. If I had asked success in transfer I think it very likely that I would be moved home, that is to Washington for instruction. As it is now I have practically to learn a new business if I stay in the line so might as well choose the one which would be more congenial. The bill says that those wishing to transfer since have to place in their requests with in ninety days of the passage of the bill so that I would not have time to get an answer from you, so if it passes through and I decide to do it I will have to go ahead. I hope that this will meet your approval and if you will look into the Marine Corps I think you will find that it is a pretty good thing. At any rate I won't resign without letting you know all about and my plans in full [sic]. I'm very glad to hear that Sid is doing so well. Where abouts [sic] is your lot at Annapolis and what are your plans about building. [sic] I'm very much interested in anything of the sort and should like to hear all about it. This fighting out here goes to about the same though in the last few days it has been a little more lively, but if we don't hurry up and do something decisive before the hot and rainy season comes I fear we might have a pretty mean time. We took a ten day's run around the islands a short time ago but it was uninteresting though some of the parts were very beautiful. We do not suffer from heat or bad grub out here, [sic] it is simply the stagnation that is so tiring. I have not been ashore a dozen of times in the last three months and you know how much there is to do on board a ship. The only relaxation we have is giving the mail which occurs about every two weeks.

mss1996_422_1899_Reginald_Henry_to_JBH



LancasterHistory

I[f] things since ever get quieted down I am going to spend most of my time shooting and riding about the country here on these native ponies. Of course that is out of the question now and in fact it is very hard to get off the ship, I have been trying for over a month to get over to Manila to have my teeth fixed but haven't been able to do it yet, you see we are supposed to be doing some sort of guard duty along the shore. How is Anne Dawes, have you heard from her lately. [sic] I should like to see Anne again she was very patient with a pretty noisy lot of youngsters at 777. Of course the Navy should be very glad to see the Philippines sold or anything done with them but wholly for disinterested reasons for it spoil [sic] what used to be a good station. We hope to get out to Hong Kong for a week or so sometime next month and are looking forward to that. I think Dewey will be going home in the spring or summer and though he certainly is a very able man and firm in war times, he is a little too severe to have in times of peace and especially in a hot country. I have letters occasionally from the boys and different men of my friends in the States but, of course we [are] hopelessly behind in news for we receive practically none by cable and everything is a month to month and a half old before it gets out here. One of our cadets Seaton left today for Annapolis to take his exams and I think is going to stay at the hotel, he is a very nice fellow indeed and will be able to give you a good idea of life in the Philippines. I will write oftener after this and keep you posted as to my moves and intentions and are very glad to get your letters whenever they come. Wouldn't it be fine if I went into the Corps and get back to the States next fall. [sic] Don't be too critical of the letter for it is very hard to write with a lot of people chattering in the room. Your letters go all o. k. addressed to Navy Pay office. Guess I must close for the present with lots of love,

Your most affectionate son

James

