

# *DEAR FRIEND*



*Harvey S. Gander*



*Iona (Branch) Phelps*

*Love  
Letters  
of  
Iona (Branch) Phelps  
and  
Harvey S. Gander*



*DEAR FRIEND*

*Love Letters  
of  
Iona (Branch) Phelps  
and  
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*Compilation of book entries and photos  
by  
Elizabeth (Ketsenburg) Gander  
April 2003*



## Introduction

This collection of Love Letters belonged to Iona Phelps and Harvey S. Gander. They were saved by their daughter Jackie Gander Coon Deets. The first note an invitation to a picnic was written to Iona from Harvey in 1901. The letters were written in 1908 and 1909, while Harvey was living near Cherry Box, Missouri and Iona in Monroe City, Missouri

After Aunt Jackie's death November 26, 2002 they were given to Donald & Elizabeth Gander by Aunt Jackie's daughters Carol Goetken and Robin Coon to preserve and share with family members.

With electronic e-mail this type of hand written letters are a thing of the past. How sad that future generation will not have the joy of reading and preserving hand written letters.

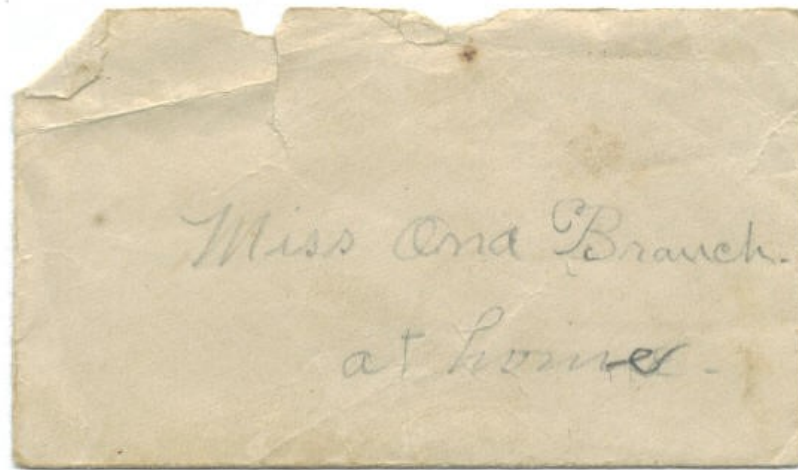
It is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity to compile these letters in book form for everyone to enjoy. The letters are filled with real affection and show how life was 95 years ago. It is my hope that each of you who read these letters will find them as treasures of a past generation.

Iona Hope Branch Phelps and Harvey Smithton Gander were married February 21, 1909 in Monroe City, Missouri. Iona brought to this union a son, Herbert Phelps born April 4, 1902. They took a train from Monroe City to Shelby County, Missouri where they began their new life on a 40 acre farm, owned by a free slave, Amanda Henderson. There were two houses connected by a short board walk. Sometime probably in early 1911 they moved to the Perry place a couple of miles from Leonard. In November of 1912 they moved to Happy Hollow, in Marion County, Missouri.

Iona and Harvey had five children, Elsie Maude "Jackie", Harvey Joe, Clifford Robert, Edith Virginia, and Bruce Eldon. Harvey S. died January 4, 1968 and Iona died November 12, 1976. They lived most of their married life in Happy Hollow, Marion County, Missouri, where Harvey built their home in 1918.

Elizabeth Ketsenburg Gander  
Palmyra, Missouri  
April 2003





Miss Iona Branch.  
at Homer.

*This is the first note written by Harvey S. Gander to Iona Branch.*

*It is an invitation asking Iona to go with him to a picnic at Philadelphia, Missouri in August of 1901.*

Monroe City -  
August 1901

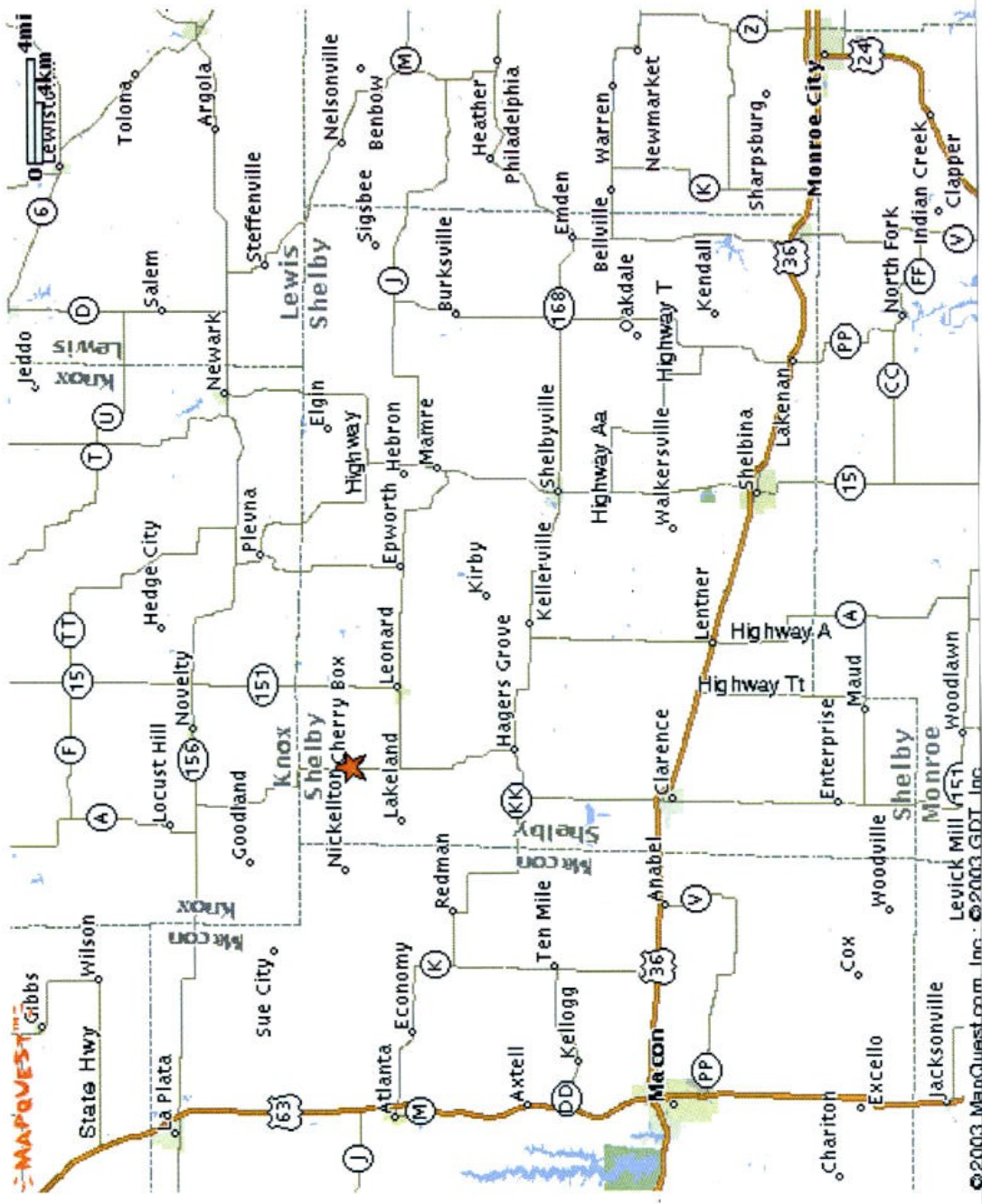
Miss Oma Branch

Kind Friend, I  
will write you a few lines  
to let you know there is going  
to be a picnic at Philadelphia  
Thursday week and thought you  
like to go, and if you have no  
other company would my company

Be expected and if so you can  
answer this note this evening  
and I will be there there at  
8 o'clock.

Good by  
Yours Truly,  
Harris Gauder





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I know a heart  
in lady land  
So innocent and  
bright  
I know a dear and  
dainty hand  
So warm and wee  
and white.  
And lightly to the wind  
I'd cast  
All else the world doth  
hold,  
If I could bind them  
close and fast  
Within a hoop  
of gold.

It is sweet, beloved to have thee night  
In pleasant converse thus with me  
For while those social moments fly  
I feel my heart still clings to thee.

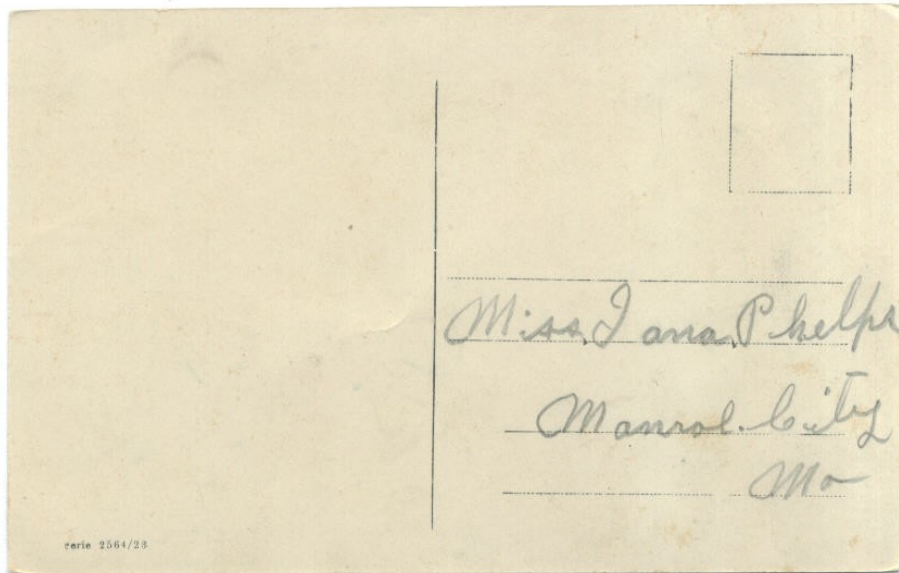
yet clings to thee with stronger ties  
Than e'er I felt or knew before  
As Day by Day some charm supplies  
That makes me bless thee more and more.

Let cypress trees and willows wave  
To mark the lonely spot -  
But all I ask to deck my grave  
Is that you will forget me not.

Forget me forget me not  
When you are far from me  
And whatsoever my lot shall be  
I will remember thee.

your affectionate Ida

This note is signed Ida, and is most probably from Iona's Mother  
Ida Frances Branch







5317

WINTER

# Post Card

CHEERY B.C.  
 JAN  
 8  
 A.M.  
 1909  
 FOR ADDRESS ONLY  
 M.J.

THIS SPACE MAY BE USED FOR  
 CORRESPONDENCE

How low kind how are  
 you and fine an  
 dandy I got home  
 all write how  
 you fine I hate  
 any more I thank  
 the I will do  
 wash just I  
 was here to I  
 will I will  
 from H.C.

Miss. Iona Phelps

Maurice L. City

Mo





CHERRY BOW  
SEP  
2  
A.M.  
1908  
MO

Miss. Jona. Branch

Manuel City

Mo

Cherry Box  
Mo. August 30. 98

Dear Friend Miss. I and

I will write you  
a few lines to K night as  
I have a few spare minutes  
well I got home Satard.  
and Ike wanted to give  
me a anhippen. But I made  
grate excuses and he was  
all write them.

well kid there is a Big  
meeting going on at  
Cherry Box.

I wish you was up here  
to go with me I know that  
you would in Joye the  
meeting very much.  
I went last K night  
there was a real good

Note: Ike is Harvey's brother

around there.

well I am going to I believe  
 salad to take my sister  
 back they are going to  
 meet her there and I  
 wanted to go any way but I  
 wash your blood be there.  
 well I will send you some  
 of my beauties and you  
 send me some of yours  
 when you write

well I will be lost for  
 this time so write soon  
 and tell me all of the news  
 so Good Boy from Hawaii  
 Please excuse this short  
 letter and poor writing

I will try and be better  
 next time so B M B M



Mr Harvey Gander.

Cherry Box.

Missouri.

Mr Harvey Gander.

Cherry Box. Mo.

Dear friend:-

I finished my music lesson a little earlier than usual this evening. So I am going to spend the rest of my time in a social chat with you. I received your letter lat Thursday but I wasint the first one to read it. Fairy and I went to the post office together, and she caled for Branches

*Note: Fairy is Iona's sister*

mail first and while I was asking for my mail she was reading my letter. I didn't notice who the letter she got was addressed to till after I had examined the post marks on the letters I got to see which was the letter I was looking for and when I looked up Fairy was grinning so I knew she was up to some-kind of mischief by the time I got it away from her she had devoured the

most of it. She thot it  
was from cousin Junie Davis  
your writeing looks a greatdeal  
like her writeing.

I told her I was going to  
tell you and she said she knew  
you would bee mad.

I can imagine how Ike looked  
the day you got home. He  
had his coat off and his  
sleeves rolled up ready for  
business. just so he didnt  
whip you I dont care. I suppose  
your mother was the most pleased

to see you. was she not?  
If I was in Cherry Box I know  
I would enjoy attending the  
meeting where there are so  
manny nice people.

I hope you had a nice  
time in Shelbyville. Myrtie  
and Mrs Bush was there  
did you see them?

Your picture is just fine  
I wouldnt mind to have  
my pictures made if I thot  
they would be as good of me



as your picture is of you.  
I am sending you a picture  
of someone I dont know  
who it is. The photographer  
said it was me but I believe  
she made a mistake  
and gave me the wrong  
pictures. I had them made  
about three years ago. I would  
be afraid to send you one  
of the last ones I had made  
they might scare you to  
death and then we would all  
have somewhere to go.

Will was in town yesterday  
he said Mamma and Samil  
was actually going to Virginia  
the first week in October so  
I guess I will be going home  
about two weeks from now.

I expect you are about as tired  
trying to read this scribbling,  
as I am from ironing all  
day. It is nearly ten o'clock  
so I think I had better take  
a trip to slumberland.

Hoping to hear from you  
(over)

Note: Sam is Iona's brother  
Mamma is Iona's mother, Ida Frances Branch

7

real soon I remain very  
sincerely.

Mrs Iona Phelps.

Monroe City Mo.

Sept. 9. 1908.

"Good night."

11

LEONARD.  
SEP  
17  
A.M.  
1900  
M.O.

Miss. Jona Phelps

Marion City

Mo

1  
Leonard

Mo Sep 15 1908

Miss. J. and P. helps

Dear Friend

I will take the pleasure  
in writing you a few lines  
to let you know that  
I received your letter last  
week and was glad to  
learn that you <sup>was</sup> still a  
live. I thought that  
picture that I sent might  
scare you to death. ~~and~~  
you tell my that I  
am old at her and  
when I come down there  
that I am going to give  
her a ribbon

I love your mother and

I am going on there trip  
next month.

you want know how  
to act when you get  
out in the country  
to stay so long.

you said you could see  
I'll see when I get home.

no he had on his  
coat. and he met me  
with a smile he thought  
it better late than never.

My mother is going down  
there Saturday to stay  
a while. and we will  
be glad to tell her  
for there is no body

like mother is there.  
That meeting is still  
going on and this is my  
first Knight to miss  
But I would write you  
a few words then  
to go. I haven't time  
to write in the day  
time so you see that  
I had to write at  
Knight. I am working  
for Mr Perry now so  
you know when you  
are so on Body etc  
Mgza how that goes.  
But this I had is like  
home to me

4

well Kid that Picture  
you sent me was  
fine of you.

you let me know when  
you are going home  
I will tell down next  
month and we will  
go to anson to be here  
and we can talk  
much better then I  
can write.

so I will half to be here  
as it is best time  
~~at~~ my Boss has going  
to be a long time  
so if I dont be  
careful he will



85

sleep on me But that  
won't heat me  
as I am in the habit  
of pulling up at Knight  
well I will be late  
so I resign your  
true Friend

so good Boy Boy  
send your mail to  
Leonard. Mo  
so write soon and  
tell me all of the news  
from Barney by order  
to Mrs & ana Phelps



Mr Harvey Gander.

Leonard.

Missouri.

1  
Mr Harvey Gander.  
Leonard Mo.

Dear friend:

As I have a few minutes  
spare time, I will devote it  
in answering your kind  
letter which I received a few  
days ago.

I am going out home tomor-  
row I think I will know how  
to behave myself altho It  
has been nearly five years  
since I spent seven weeks  
at home but I think I know

how if I dont Mamma will soon teach me. Yes, Mamma and Saml is planing to go on their trip the first week in October if I get her sewing <sup>done</sup> by then. I am going to try awful hard because our relatives are looking for them, and I would hate for them to be dissapointed.

I sen your Mother uptown last Saturday she said she was going to be down three or four weeks said she may go back

with you as she doesn't like to be away from you all so long. I told her just to stay <sup>you</sup> could manage some way.

Mother is really the best friend we have she is always thinking of our comfort. I know your mother will be just as glad to get back home as you will be to have her with you.

Hope you are still attending the meeting. We are having a meeting here. I am not, but the members of the Christian

are. brother Bailey and bro White  
of New Mexico Mo are conducting  
the meeting. Fairy and I wanted  
to go Sunday night but, Myrtle  
didn't get back from the endeavor  
soon enough for us to go. we  
managed to get to the Baptist  
church as they were ending  
the song service I have  
been keeping little Joe's so Myrtle  
can go Mrs Bush isn't here  
so you see I have had my  
hands full. To-day was Myrtle's  
Birthday we have had a house full

of company all day. I think I will celebrate my birthday with the needle I will be twenty three Friday the 25 so you see I am getting old and cranky.

Write and let me know when you are coming down so I can be at home I am going to make use of my spare time and visit a few friends while I am out there

Fairy is planing to keep me busy during the week time

P.S. Fairy  
said a  
whipping  
was just  
she expected

but I dont know whether I am  
going to work or not. I think  
I will be just a little bit to  
lazy. wouldn't you?

Little Joe wants to go to bed  
so I guess I had better close  
for this time hoping to hear  
from you real soon. I remain  
yours very sincerely.

Iona Phelps

Monroe City Mo

Sept. 21. 1908.

"Night. Night."



CHERRY BOX  
SEP  
29  
A.M.  
1908  
V.J.

Miss. Iana Phelps  
Manrol City  
Mo

Miss Jona Phelps

Manuel City Mo

Dear friend

as I am all a lone today  
I will spend my time in  
a chat with you.

and anser of our most  
welcom letter which I recd  
last Thursday and was  
glad to hear that you  
was still a live

and in aying good health.  
I have Bin among lomsen  
this week send I he left.

he was married last  
Thursday. he went down  
to that country to  
spend a few days.

and it leaves me Boy  
my self so you see.

that I half to stay Boy  
my self.

and you know that I am  
geting old and feable.  
you said that you hope I  
was still at tending the  
meeting. No it close last  
sunday

so you see that I half to  
stay at home like a  
good little feldow now.  
you said that you saw my  
mother in town last Satard  
and I old her to stay down  
there.

I thank you will teach her

Bad habit Talking to her  
that a way.

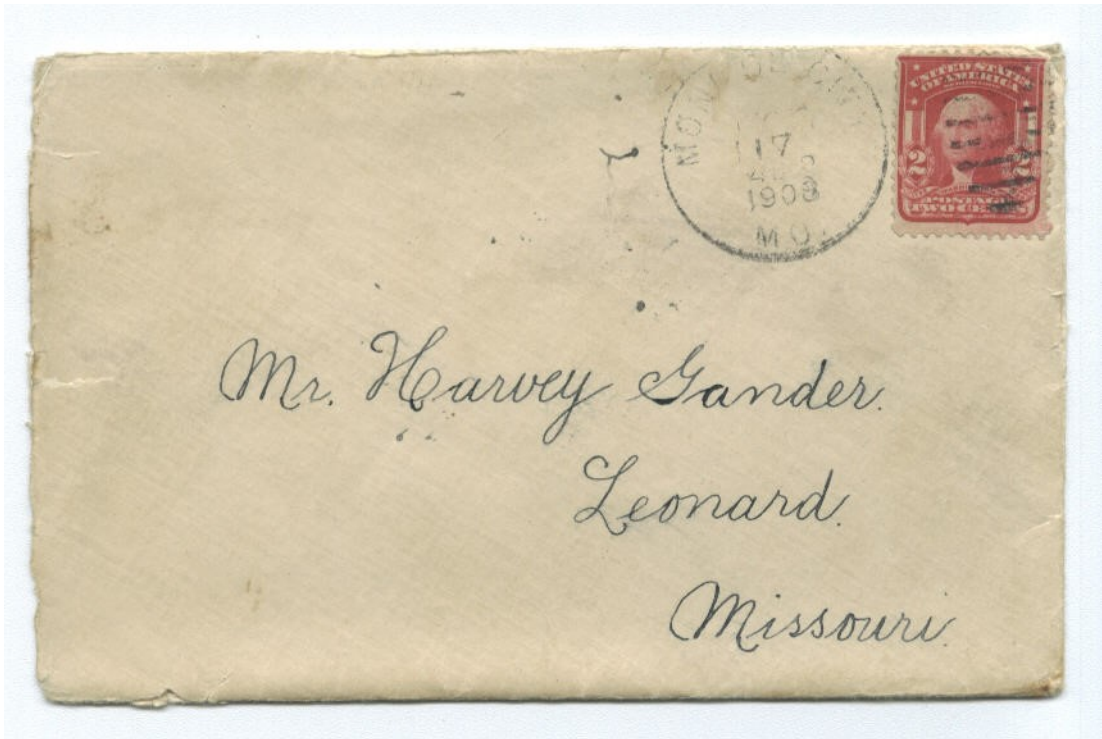
I would care how long  
she stayed if I was  
down there too and  
I Ke and his wife was  
hear to take care of  
things.

well Dana I will Be down  
there next friday a week  
oct the 9. if nothen happen  
and I will come By and  
be hat you a little while  
if it is not to late  
when I get there and  
let you know that I will  
Be there for shore  
is there any Precher at

answer the second Sunday  
 or any Place else.  
 well this day makes me thank  
 on the skater Party and  
 may gain to have Christmas  
 I gess you had for gotten all  
 a Bout it By this time.  
 well as news is scarce I will  
 close so write soon and tell  
 me all of the good news.

so I remain your truly  
 Henry Gander to J and Phelps  
 so By By

Thank of the People that you love  
 Thank of the People that you see  
 Thank of the man that loves you  
 and you will certainly thank of  
 me



Mr. Harvey Gander.  
Leonard.  
Missouri.

Mr. Harvey Gander.

Leonard Mo.

Dear friend:

I have been writing  
to Mamma and cousin Leola  
Feathers; and when I finished  
the children thought I was  
going to write to you. I did  
nt tell them that I was  
or was not But simply  
pretended like I was going  
to bed so ofcourse they had

2  
to go to bed too, and as soon  
as I seen that they were  
safe in bed, I came back  
in here to do what I had  
intended to do. You know  
what that is, scribble.

I hope you got home all  
right monday and without  
being very tired. Mamma  
is haveing a fine time  
we got a letter from her  
yesterday I would send it  
to you so you could read it



yourself if it had been  
written to me personally,  
but it was written to all  
of us and everybody claims  
it. I have been visiting  
this week Tuesday Fairy  
and I went up to Mrs Ryan  
and stayed all morning and  
in the afternoon she went  
with us up to Mr Edd  
Brocksmiths I think Mrs  
Brocksmith is such a sweet  
little woman. Yesterday we

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spent the day with Mrs  
Vinton Lilly, you know we  
had a jolly time.

I suppose you will be look-  
ing for your Mother next  
week I am sorry she didnt  
get to visit any in our neigh-  
borhood tell her not to  
forget us next time.

We are looking for Mamma  
home Tuesday Oct. 27. I  
guess I will go back to town  
about the 31. you have no idea

how I dread going back I know I will be homesick for a week I wont mind it after the first week. It wouldnt do for me to stay in the country very long if I did I would never go back to town.

Are you still going to church the meeting hasnt closed here yet. I havent gone since Sunday night. I believe I was there and if I'm

not mistaken I saw you there.  
were you?

I guess you are getting tired  
of so much nonsense so I  
had better close with a pro-  
mise to <sup>try to</sup> do better next time

Hoping to hear from you  
real soon I remain yours very  
sincerely. Louie Phelps

Monroe City Mo. Oct. 23. 18.

Bright as the summer sky, when  
nearer a shadow marks it, be thy  
path,  
And as the flow'rs of summer rare  
Be every joy thy future hath.

is my wish for you: gma



Miss Jane Phelps  
Manrol City  
Mo

Miss Dana Phelps

Manuel City Mo

Dear friend

I will try and answer your  
kind and welcome letter  
that I received last  
Tuesday.

I went down to Leonard  
this afternoon to hear  
Mr. Falk speak and I  
thought I would spend the  
rest of my time in a  
letter with you.

2

you wanted to know if  
I was at Milling last  
Sunday a week ~~at~~  
yes I was there I thought  
that I saw you there  
it was you or your son  
that favors you a grate  
deal.

yes I got home all  
write that Monday But  
I cant say that I was  
not tired after that long  
ride,

well I guess you was  
glad to see your mother  
when she got home

and then to see you all  
I gess she had a lots  
to tell did she prot.  
well I can tell how Bad  
you dread gain Back to  
town after spending four  
or five weeks in the  
country and having  
a fine time with friends  
My mother thasent got  
home yet But hope  
she will Be ll have soon  
time this week if the  
weather isent to ~~Be~~  
Bad. what did Mrs.  
Rayns say about us



not coming up there that  
K night.

well I haven't Bin to meet  
much send I got have  
the meeting haven't begun  
yet at the method to hurry  
and I hope it won't  
for a while until after  
corn shucking is

over any way I don't  
feel much like going  
after shucking corn all  
day I have Bin visit  
the corn field every  
day this week so you  
K now how I feel at

8  
K night. More like you  
to B each then any other  
died.  
well I guess I had B each  
slot this on send and  
kept to do up the feed  
so write soon and tell  
me all of the good news.  
I will tell you about when

I can come down in  
the next letter it will

B Three or four weeks

B all of one I can come

B at once soon to

by odd B of B of from

your truly of army

by order to Miss and  
Oct 22 08 P. hex

CHERRY BOX,  
NOV  
9  
1908

Miss. J. ana. Phelps  
Manrol. bity.  
Mo

Miss J and P helps

Manuel City

Dear friend

I will try to answer your  
Kind and welcome letter  
received. Thursday was  
glad to hear from you.  
This day isn't like  
last Sunday was is it  
But I guess you want  
in I am your self as  
well as you did at  
home with your mother  
and the rest of the folks.  
Tell Jan that he must  
of found a new girl  
out there as he wants  
to go back to finish

his visit.

guess I had my gun load ready to  
hunt. I went out a little.

while last Tuesday after noon  
and killed 14 Quails. But I  
haven't had the time to hunt

But you know that I had  
to go to work so I spent the  
most of the day in hunting.  
guess my mother stayed  
a little over five weeks

I don't think I will let  
her to come down any more  
without I go with her for  
you might teach her a few  
more lessons and she  
would stay for every the  
next time.

well I will ~~be~~ be down  
 the 28 of this month if  
 nothing hapens if you will  
 be at home then

I will be at an enrol. party  
 that day so if you are in  
 town maybe I will see  
 you before you start home.

I cant well get of be fare  
 then any way as I want to  
 shuck come every day

that is fit to shuck as  
 I like it so well you know  
 how that is. it is what I  
 can make at it

not the work but the  
 money. as you are about  
 working at Mr Langairs

you write and tell me  
 for . . . . . where I can't ask  
 you are going out home  
 and I will write a line  
 B L fare I to one I am.  
 I end your next mail to  
 to Henry B of  
 far I will B e at home  
 so write soon  
 From your true friend

H. Army Gardner  
 to Henry B of  
 Mo

when in the grave I am sleeping  
 and my friends goes walking by  
 will you scatter a hand full of  
 violets over my grave and  
 and thank of me. H. Army Gardner



Mr Harvey Gander.  
Leonard.  
Missouri.



Mr Harvey Gander.  
Leonard Mo.

Dear friend:-

To night findes me trying  
to answer your kind, and  
most welcome letter, recid the  
27<sup>th</sup>. How do you like this  
for a rainy day?

It has been gloomy enough  
for me. cousin Pearl and  
Ruby Branch came over and  
helped us to pass away  
the time. Did I tell you

that Mamma and Samil  
was comeing home the 21<sup>st</sup>  
if I did I didnt mean to.  
they didnt get home till the  
27<sup>th</sup>. They had a fine time  
Mamma was glad to get  
home but Samil was not  
he said he guessed he  
would have to go back and  
finish his visit when Fairy  
and I go.

I know about how much fun  
you are haveing shucking

corn I have had a little experience in the corn field myself. I told Mrs. Ryan how it happened that we didn't get there that Sun. and she said she was a little bit dissapointed but, she thot maybe some one came to spend the evening with us and kept us from going.

I suppose you have your gun loaded ready to hunt

Quail? every-body down here is talking about hunting and voteing.

I guess you will get this letter about Tuesday and you will have so much to think about you will forget to read it.

I am going back to town to-morrow if it isnt to muddy.

I will be comeing back out home about the 28th of this month so if you come down ~~fe~~ before then you will be very

likely to find me at Mr Long-  
mires: let me know just when  
you are coming.

Your mother stayed down here  
five weeks didn't she?

I thot she would mind me  
I guess you will be afraid to  
let her come down again I  
might teach her a few more  
bad habits.

I guess I had better close  
as news is scarce.

I hope you will not wait

6

as long as I have to answer.  
I remain as ever, your true friend.

Jona Phelps.

Monroe City Mo.,

Nov. 1, 1908.

NOV  
14  
430P  
1908  
MO. CITY



Mr. Harvey Gander

Cherry Box.

Missouri.

Mr Harvey Gander.

Cherry Box.

Dear friend:

As Fairy and I didn't  
get to go to church tonight  
I will just make the best  
of my time and write to  
you. Is your skates sharp?  
I believe the ice will  
be thick enough to go  
skateing by morning.  
I hope it will stay this  
cold till after Christmas



dont you?

Yes I think Sam has  
a girl in Va. if he hasnt  
he is loosing his mind.

I think Mr Longmires  
was glad to see <sup>me</sup> back but  
I wasint glad to get back  
I have been homesick  
ever since I came back but  
I am better now. gues I  
will soon get settled down  
to hard work.

I am sorry to dissapoint

you but I'd <sup>rather</sup> you would  
wait and come down Christ-  
mas. I am afraid I wont  
get to go home the 28 and  
it isnt suitable for me  
to have company here for  
two reasons, I never know  
just when I will be at  
leisure and Myrtie is alw-  
ays using the parlor.  
I will try to be good if  
you come with your Mother  
next time she comes down

4

The election went just fine  
didn't it? I wish you could  
have heard Fairy and Mr  
Joe Ryan talking Politics  
Sunday afternoon I know  
you would have laughed  
at them. I guess I had  
better close as I am most  
too tired to write much and  
this is the meanest old  
pen it doesn't half write.  
Hoping to hear from you  
real soon I remain your  
lover

sincere friend.

Iona Phelps.

Monroe City Mo.

Nov. 13, 1908.