

**Letters 1893-1902 Lesourd Mathiot New Orleans
Archive of 40 Handwritten Letters from Oregon Pioneer Family
Lesourd Mathiot, New Orleans 1893-02, involving a long family feud,
a terrible death, and incarceration in a mental hospital**

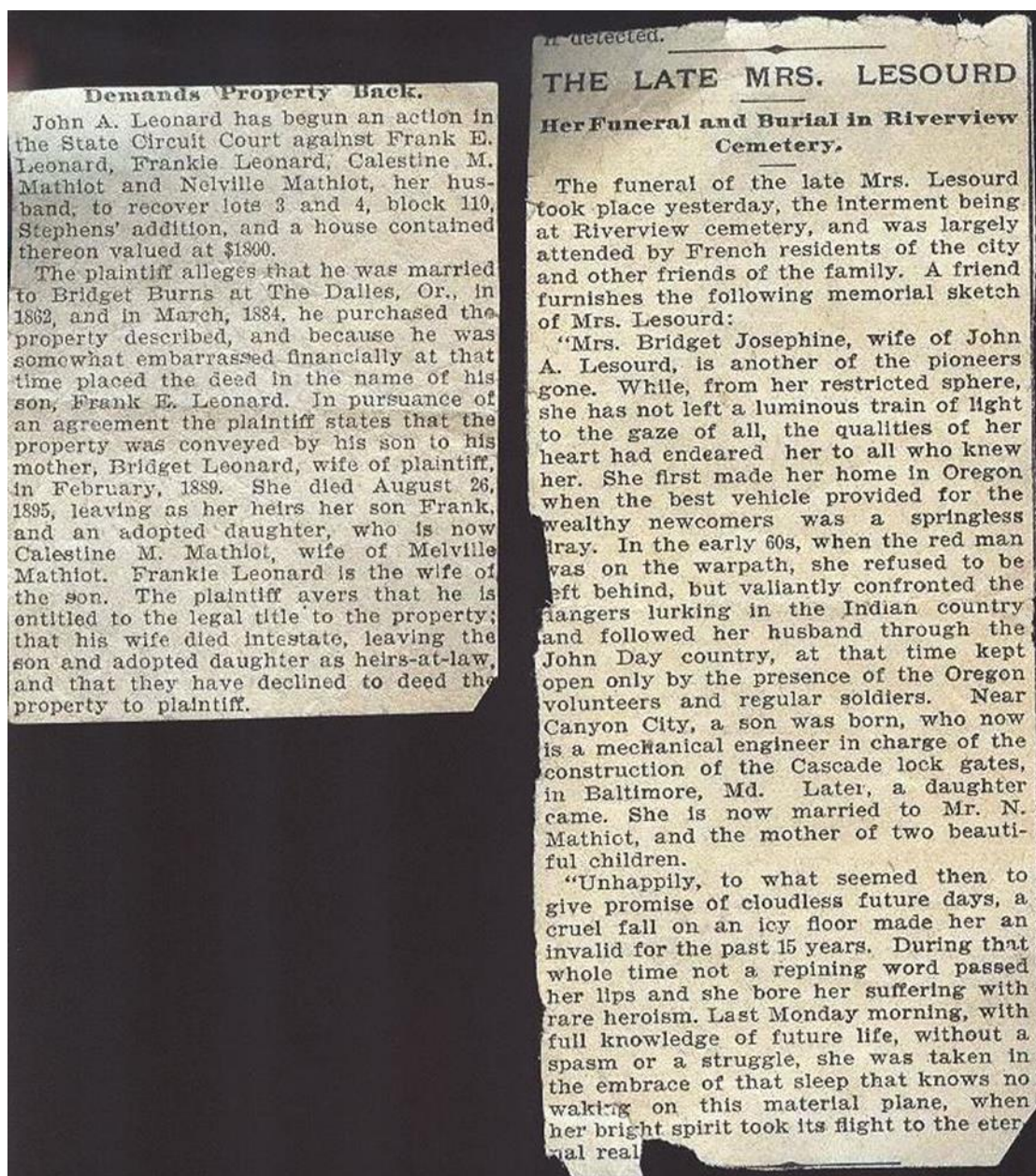
These 40 handwritten letters tell the sad story of two Oregon pioneer families, the Mathiots and the Lesourds. Most of the letters revolve around John A. Lesourd and his two children, Frank and Celestine. Celestine ended up marrying Neville A. Mathiot. The letters are mainly between brother and sister and have to do with a family quarrel that began when Frank and Celestine's mother (Bridget Burns Lesourd) passed away in 1894 and their father remarried to a woman by the name of Livonia Arietta Drake two years later. Livonia was 17 years younger than John.

Sadly nothing was settled and there is a sad ending to these letters. First, some background. Both John and his son Frank were mechanical engineers. In fact the census lists John also as a draughtsman and pattern maker. John was born in France in 1832. Not much was found out about the Lesourd family but we do know that John married his first wife, Bridget Josephine Burns, in a place called The Dalles, Oregon. Included with this group of letters is the original newspaper obituary of Mrs. Bridget Lesourd:

“1894-THE LATE MRS. LESOURD; HER FUNERAL AND BURIAL IN RIVERVIEW CEMETERY.

The funeral of the late Mrs. Lesourd took place yesterday, the interment being at Riverview cemetery and was largely attended by French residents of the city and other friends and family. A friend furnishes the following memorial sketch of Mrs. Lesourd: “Mrs. Bridget Josephine, wife of John A. Lesourd, is another pioneer gone. While, from her restricted sphere, she has not left a luminous train of light to the gaze of all. The qualities of her heart had endeared her to all who knew her. She first made her home in Oregon when the best vehicle provide for the wealthy newcomers was a springless dray (wagon). In the early 60's when the red man was on the warpath, she refused to be left behind, but valiantly confronted the dangers lurking in the Indian Country and followed her husband through the John Day Country, at that time kept open only by the presence of the Oregon volunteers and regular soldiers. Near Canyon City, a son was born, who now is a mechanical engineer in charge of the construction of the

Cascade Lock Gates in Baltimore, Md. Later a daughter came. She is now married to Mr. N. Mathiot, and the mother of two beautiful children..."



There is more to the obit but that gives you a good idea and some good background on this family. Frank Edward was born about 1864 and Celestine was born in 1870. As stated, their mother died in 1894 which is when all the trouble seem to start. Frank ended up marrying Frances Monetta Lontz in 1897 and at one point the two moved to New Orleans Louisiana. They called each other "the two Franks." Celestine married Neville in 1889.

The Mathiot family seemed to have a more extensive biography.

Celestine's husband Nelville was from Butteville, Oregon. His father's family came with a wagon train to Oregon from Ohio in 1852 and settled in Butteville and eventually the family moved to where Woodburn, Oregon, now stands and became the first settlers at that point. They lived in Woodburn for many years, during which time Mr. Mathiot was justice of the peace and postmaster, and was a man of considerable prominence and influence. Leaving Woodburn, Mr. And Mrs. Mathiot moved to Portland, where they have lived ever since, except a few years spent at Walla Walla.

Here's the saddest part of the story. The earliest letter is from 1893 and the last letter is from 1902 and between the 40 letters there are 82 handwritten pages. There was a huge dispute, which went to court, between the two children, Frank and Celestine, and their father and step-mother Livonia. The dispute was never settled. Frank's dying words show that he never reconciled with his father. The last part of the archive is six-page letter written to Celestine from her sister-in-law telling all about Frank's death, of "Paralysis of the brain". Frank's earlier letters to Celestine in the beginning are so full of life. As time goes by his writing shows a deterioration of thought, a loss of clarity, and both his handwriting and the quality of his thinking change, until by the end there is very little sense in his letters, as he was losing his mind and was at one point kept in in mental hospital. The letters describing his sickness and death are graphic and unhappy reading.

Here is a newspaper article that came with these letters. It is about the law suit between John and his two children, and it should give some idea of what the family was going through. Note their thorough dislike, or hatred, of their step mother, and their feeling that she was the evil cause of their family's turmoil

"DEMANDS PROPERTY BACK

John A. Lesourd has begun an action in the State Circuit Court against Frank E. Lesourd, Frankie Lesourd, Celestine M. Mathiot and Nelville Mathiot, her husband, to recover lots 3 and 4, block 110, Stephens addition, and a house contained thereon valued at \$1800. The plaintiff alleges that he was married to Bridget Burns at The Dalles, Or. in 1862, and in March, 1884, he purchased the property described, and because he was somewhat embarrassed financially at that time placed the deed in the name of his son, Frank E. Lesourd. In pursuance of an agreement the plaintiff state that the property was conveyed by his son to his mother, Bridget Lesourd, wife of plaintiff in February, 1889. She

died August 26th, 1895, leaving as her heirs her son Frank, Celestine M. Mathiot, wife of Melville Mathiot. Frankie Lesourd is the wife of the son. The plaintiff avers that he is entitled to the legal title to the property; that his wife died intestate, leaving the son and adopted daughter as heirs-at-law, and that they have declined to deed the property to plaintiff.”

A number of details stand out in the article. The spelling of the family's last name was wrong (but corrected here) which makes one wonder if they got the date of the mother right as they put 1895. All the web sites and even the obit state it as 1894. And then they mention Celestine as being adopted? Here is part of the major problem between the father, his new wife and the two children. Interesting to note that (Frank died in December of 1902), Frank's father died less than a year after his son's death. These letters are full of unhappiness.

The first three letters are from a young woman by the name of Kitty Rutter based in Astoria, Oregon. Kitty is getting married and says it's a very private affair and even Celestine is not invited which seems to hurt Celestine...

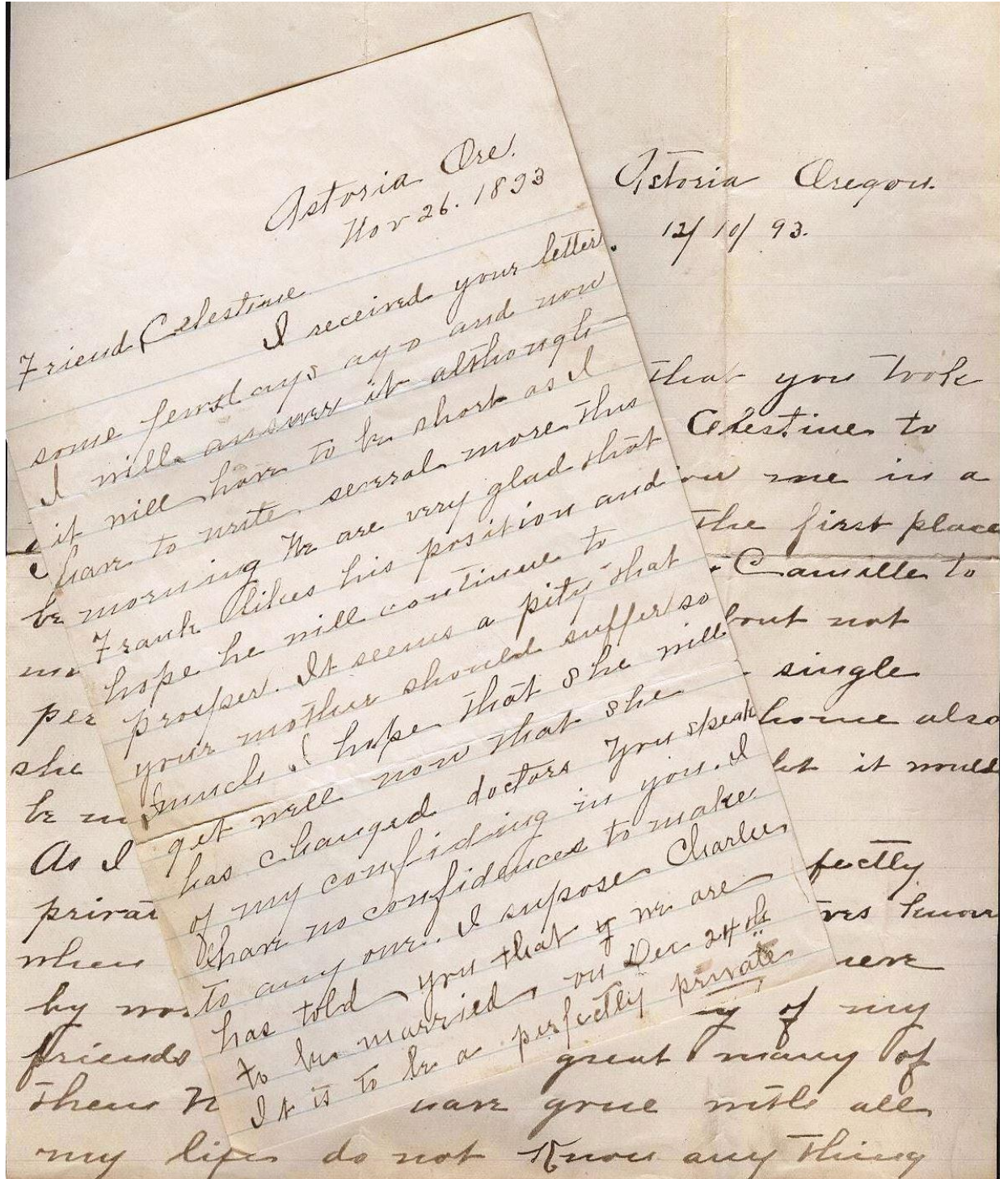
“Astoria Or. December 17th, 1893

Celestine,

You say you feel very much hurt at what you are pleased to call my coldness toward you. I do not know that I have changed very much toward you or anyone else. Probably the greatest change is within myself. Although I must say that you have said and done things that might just as well have been left unsaid. I have said should you write to find out what these things are I would tell you. But when considered, I think that it would be better not to write. These as words written are very often misrepresented but I will most likely have an opportunity to explain a few facts to you. Yet perhaps these things have done me a good turn as it has learned me to keep my private affairs to myself. And I hope to continue to do so the rest of my life. You seem to think that to be good friends we have to be very intimate friends or none at all. Now I have never had to be on non speaking terms to keep anyone in their place. And I do not care to begin now. But one thing I can tell you, if Kitty Rutter ever gets a home of her own she interests to run it. You certainly cannot feel very much put out at not being invited to our wedding for as I said before, it is too perfectly private for not even

my relatives are invited and some of my near relations do not know anything about it.

Yours respectfully,
Kitty Rutter."



“New Orleans, La. September 30th, 1896 (From Frankie her sister-in-law and by the date their mother has already passed away and I don't believe the father has remarried yet)

My Dear Sister,

Can you forgive me for being so very naughty as not to acknowledge the receipt of your lovely gift?....Dear Celeste, I am so happy and proud of my dear boy and you are certainly a fortunate woman to be able to call such a man, brother. Dear Frank is so good to me and so thoughtful of me that I feel as if I could never love him half enough. We had a letter from Dear father a few days ago telling us you were getting along so nicely and that our darling little nephew was so good.....Frank tells me you objected to his marrying a “dark eyed” Southern girl and that if he did you were going to put her eyes out. My dear sister, I hope no such fate awaits me, and I assure you the “dark eyed” Southern girl can love as devotedly as her “fairer sisters” of the North and I hope I may be able to prove as much to you. I like New Orleans very much indeed but were it the worst place in the world and Frank was there and doing well and was happy, that would be sufficient for me.....Your Sister Frankie.”

“New Orleans La. Sept. 24th, 1899

Dear Sister Celestine,

I herewith enclose a copy of part of a letter written to our dear father today. It is in answer to his request that I make some suggestions and I have put it off for a long time but from the tone of his letters he is very anxious to get my opinion. I think the “Madame” is pushing him. Now I do not know just what you will think about it as there set forth, but I do not think you will object but be perfectly free. There will be no need of signing anything except about the use of the house and the 1/2 of the income. No signing of deeds. I have reserved #468 from Livonia in order to sometime deed it to you complete. Keep this mum; let them talk if they went to just listen. Will send some pictures of Frank and write more in a day or two. Kiss the kids for Frankie and me. Your brother, Frank. P.S. I would be afraid to let the property to go to father in any way that Livonia might be entitled to get it and will not do it.” (Then he sends a handwritten copy of the letter he sent to his father for Celestine to see.)

“New Orleans La. Oct. 26th, 1899

My Dear Sister,

Yours of the 20th came in yesterday and while I was glad to hear from you and that you were well, I am sorry you are being worried by that mess that is being raised by father. I do not take any stock in his idea of conditions deed. If it gets into her hands, and she needs the money she would sell it and we could whistle. One thing certain, I have made up my mind to, and that is if by any hook or crook the home property ever gets into her hands, I renounce it forever and will never accept one iota from her ... Now Dear sister, I want you to use your best judgment and act accordingly. If you think I am wrong, do not follow me. I would rather a great deal agree with father, but I think here I am doing what is best for his interests and I will not now turn my head to do one thing for the “Earth’s Wanderer.” I offered what was fair and if we are to be robbed to benefit her, then I will call quits with it all. Today I am sick, worried and distressed about many things of which I will write you later. But if the worst comes to the worst, it will be done without my say so ...

I remain,

Your brother,

Frank.”

“New Orleans, La. Oct. 30th, 1899

My Dear Sister,

Your kind and welcome letter came in last week when I was much disturbed and I fear I was not very sociable in my answer sent off Saturday. We have went through a siege of Yellow Fever and were touched pretty hard. Up to now there have been 5 cases in our home. First Frankie and I had it and recovered. I wrote out there that is now Malaria. One case were mild indeed. In the last two weeks her father and mother have been down with more or less severe cases. One young man boarding here had a very severe case. I nursed them all at night and so you see I am immune. Frankies mother is still in bed but is improving now. There is a young lady staying here who has not had it yet and we are living in great fear lest she will take it. If she escapes I think the end of the week will see us out of the woods. It is a very severe fever indeed and while the cases generally are not very severe it is to be dreaded. I have a fine doctor, “Homeopathic” and he has a large practice. He is readjusting my liver and blood and so I bid fair to be well again.....your affectionate brother, Frank.”

“New Orleans, La. Nov. 23rd, 1899

My Dear Sister,

Your very welcome letter received yesterday and the news was disappointing, as I had been thinking that after two or three second thoughts our dear father would change his mind and conclude to let well enough alone. And some time I think yet he will hesitate to plunge us all in strife.....I am sorry that such a course is the only one open but I will never do anything to allow the second wife anything because I have no faith in her; I think her evil and I am satisfied that she will in course of time come up to my expectations. Of course the law will give to father the right of possession as long as he lives on this point. I hope it will be very explicit and binding for the Lord knows that I do not want it or anything of it while he lives and I have fully made up my mind that I will never receive anything from her ...

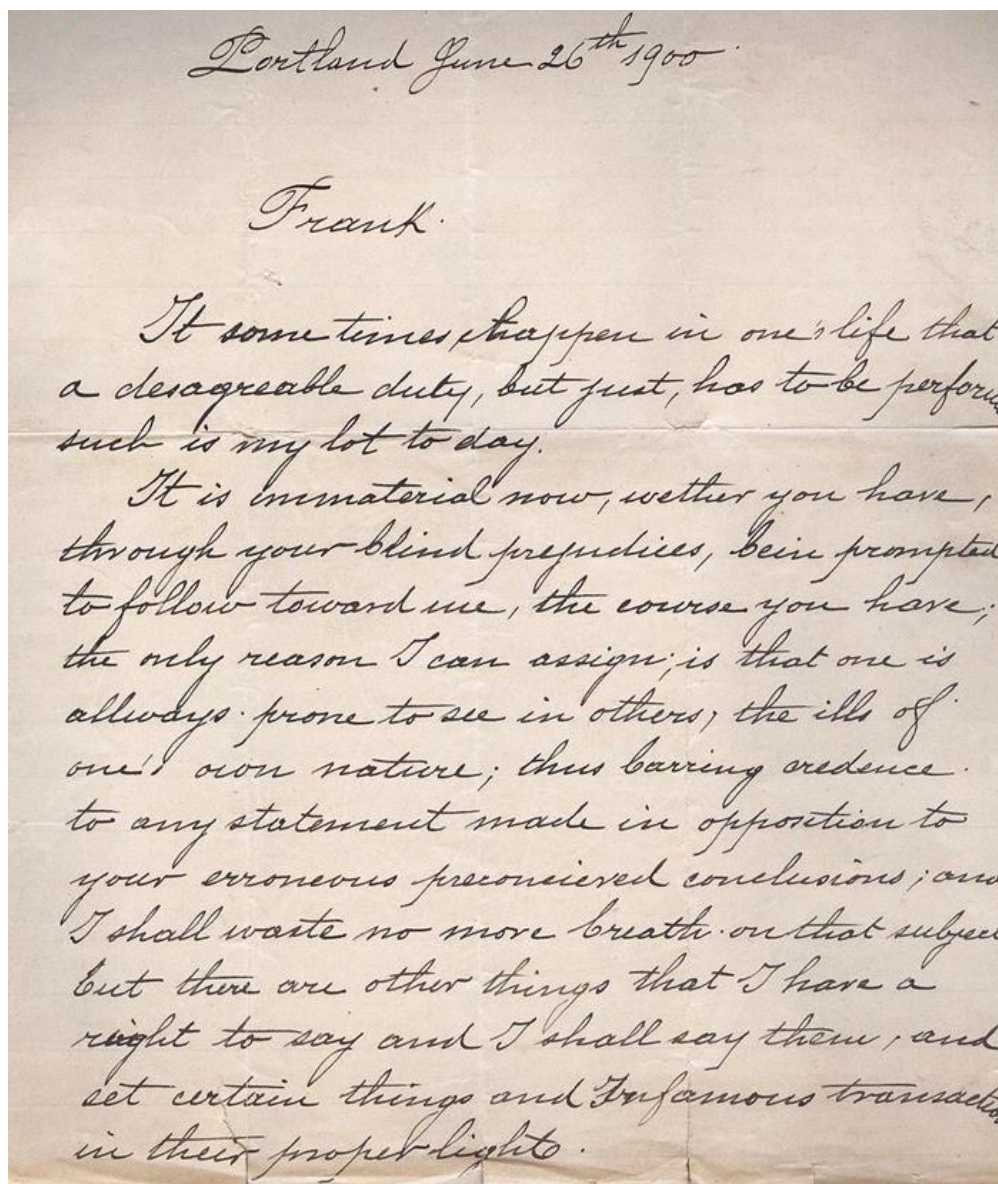
Your brother,
Frank.”

“434 Cass Ave. Detroit Mich. Feb. 17, 1900

Dear Celestine,

Well here I am up here and I am right in the snow ... There is one other thing. I do not know what you know about it but mother often told me that when she married father, that she had quite a sum of money, nearly or maybe more than \$1,000. She often said that when we got a home, she wanted it in her name as a recompense for that money which she had given father ... I do not care to fight the case as I have not the money nor time nor do I care to give the whole thing to the public. But I am determined on one thing, I will not sign any kind of a deed that gives Mrs. “Bicycle Face” any claim on that property.....Well I am working for uncle Sam, designing steamships and machinery for dredgers, etc. This is a nice place, clean, well built and lots of paved streets. I am going to have my bicycle sent up when it gets warm ...

Your old,
Frank.”



Portland June 26th, 1900

[From their father, John Lesourd]

Frank,

It sometimes happens in one's life that a disagreeable duty, but just has to be performed such is my lot today. It is immaterial now, whether you have, through you blind prejudices, been prompted to follow toward me, the course you have. The only reason I can assign is that one is always prone to see the others, the ills of one's own nature. Thus barring credence to any statement made in opposition to your erroneous preconceived conclusions. And I shall waste no more breath on that subject but there are other things that I have a right to say and I shall say them and set certain things and for famous transactions in their proper light.

If you think that I am pleased and satisfied by what you may call your concessions you are greatly in error. Admitting that your mother had financial interest in the way you have put it and spreaded outside, to what extent did that interest go? ... You have several times volunteered the advice to be good to Celestine. Up to the time Celestine ceased to come to the house and when she refused to come when asked to do so. She never had a better friend than Livonia ... Your absolute want of confidence in me in relation to your affairs is another proof of your sentiment toward me.

Your father,
J. A. Lesourd.”

“Detroit, Mich. April 14, 1900

Dear Celeste,

.....Old Mud Face certainly had her face with her to ask you to come down there. She only wanted to insult you in some way. You did just right not to go and I could hug you for it. Keep your head up and be independent, don't ever go near the house again. If the old hag don't get punished in this world for her meanness, she will get a good hot birth in the next. The good God will not allow such as she to go unpunished....Your sister, Frankie.” (This letter is actually three long pages)

“Portland, June 26th, 1900 (Copy of father's 4 page letter sent to Frank. He copied it off to send one to Celestine)

Frank,

(date unclear)

... In one of your last letters you pompously informed me that you are ready to place a monument in my lot where your mother rests. This is rather late for such an expression of feeble love; and I want you to know that no monument will ever be erected in that ground than by myself alone and have given orders to that effect. You may put a small slab at the foot of the grave with the word, “Mother” and no more and if I find it objectionable it shall be removed. Your absolute want of confidence in me in relation to your affairs is another proof of your sentiment towards me,

Your father,
J. A. Lesourd.”



THE PHELPS
MEDICAL
AND
SURGICAL
SANATORIUM

BATTLE CREEK, MICH. May 27, 1901

Dear Celest.

You will see by letter head that we are a long way from N. O. We arrived here this noon and Sweetheart is now settled in the Sanatorium, and I have a very good room just across the street. I am in hopes he will improve very rapidly under the treatment he will now have. He seems to be almost himself again mentally, but he is very nervous and excitable, and looks badly - very thin. He is to have baths, massage, and electrical treatment, and he dieted.

The Sanatorium is a beautiful place, any one should get well who lives there, everything is so lovely - is more like a swell summer resort, if one did not see the sick nurses and the poor people who have to be wheeled around in chairs. I will send you a catalogue and you ^{can} get some idea of how the place looks. I am well, but very tired and feel as if I could sleep a month. It is now late and I want to go over and see that Sweetheart is O. K. for the night then I'm off for a good sleep myself.

Love to all the kids and yourself.
We hope to be able to leave here in 3 weeks at onget.
Frankie
Address 202 N. Washington Ave. Battle Creek, Mich.

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Frankie.”

[His handwriting begins to change around this point].

“New Orleans, Feb. 14, 02

Dear Celeste,

I have waited to see if I could send you any good news but it seems that there is no hope. I have had a specialist with Sweetheart for the last 10 days, a fine physician, he has charge of “The Retreat” a private asylum for the insane. He is going to do all he can but gives me no hope of his ever being any better. Be sure and write him every week and as cheerful as possible. Please tell his father that when he writes not to mention business in any way, shape or form by order of the Dr.’s. His mind must be gotten off that line if there is to be any help. I have very little to write as it is only sadness and the less you know of that the better. Our Mardi Gras is over and it was grander this year than ever before ... Frankie.”

“New Orleans, Feb. 24, 02’ (Because of his sickness his wording and spelling is a bit confusing but this shows the way he writes, and how he has changed. There are numerous alterations and crossings-out of words)

My Dear Sister,

Yours of 16 arrived today also one from father a part of which I will enclose to you in my next letter. I suppose you have inquired as to the cost of a ticket and best route to come on. I think you should go to Chicago take ~~get~~ directions as where the Illinois Central depot is. I can tell you how we came back from Portland to Oakland California which is the way from or river from San

Francisco. Don't go to the Palace Hotel, we staid 1 night and it cost us \$8.00. If you anytime be sure get a few somewhere not too many then go to and Denver and take a ride in the street electric chair known as seeing Denver and stay there 2 days. On second thought I think you better not anywhere. If you want to cross the Rocky Mts. take the Denver and Rio-Grand out of out of Denver and you will see some very fine scenery. Take the broad gauge. There is a narrow but goes too high. The broad gauge goes over 10,000. I think you had better wait until time to get here next Mardi Gras when there will be cheap fare from all over the country. And that will be so early next year. It would be cool enough to come by the Southern Pacific ... I leave it all to you as the time to come but just we absolutely busted and until I get thoroughly well there nothing coming. I am under the care of a new doctor who says he will cure right at home ~~on~~ this rented home. When I get well I want to get a good job right here. Frankie joins me in love to yourself and interesting little family. Your affectionate brother, Frank."

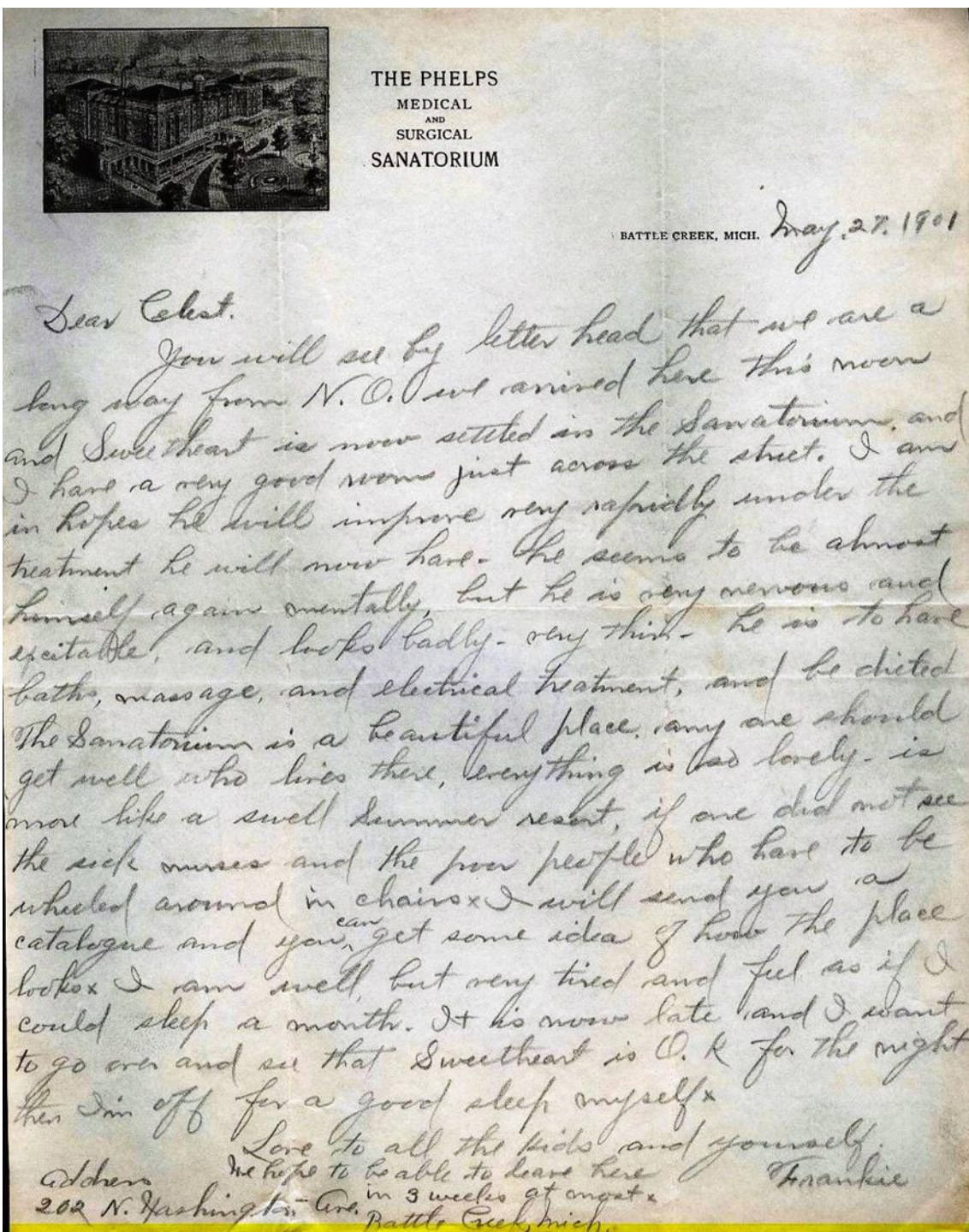
"New Orleans Feb 24, 02'

My Dear Celeste,

Sweetheart has just gone out for a short walk and to post a letter to you he has been 2 days writing it and I don't believe you can make much out of it now. Pay no attention to his directions as to your coming for they are so dreadfully mixed that it would be impossible to follow them. He does not know I had a letter from you or anything about you expecting to come anyways soon. I will do all I can to make your visit as pleasant as possible but I regret very much that I can not do for you what we have always planned should be done whenever you came to N.O. If you come before it gets too warm the S. P. will be a nice route to come on ... Sweetheart seems to be growing slowly worse instead of better and I am beginning to think the 1st Dr.'s opinion was correct, that is "Paresis" or paralysis of the brain for which there is no cure ... Come when you can and write to Sweetheart every week without fail, to me as often as you can. Love to each and all, Frankie."

"New Orleans, March 3, 02'

Dear Celeste ... Mrs. Jefferson Davis is now the guest of the city and they are making a great deal over her.... The two Franks."



“New Orleans, March 12, 02

Dear Celeste, Your note received the same day I mailed one to you so I have waited for a few days to reply. No, I do not think it will do Sweetheart any harm for you to come, on the contrary I think it will do both of you good but I wish

you could come at once. I am afraid if you wait until June or later he may not even know you. He is steadily growing worse and the specialist that has been treating him told me Monday that he could do nothing for him that he would never be any better but would slowly grow worse. He is full of all sorts of unreasonable ideas and imagines everything. Last night he got an idea that his father had been discharged and was very ill. In the night he awoke and said he had a telegram saying he was dead. He has gone out for a few minutes and I am trying to get this off before he gets back. Do not want him to know I am writing. Love to all, Frankie.”

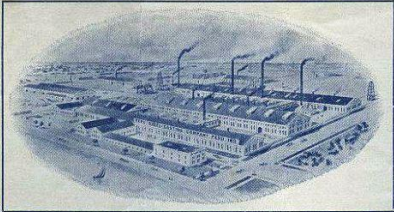
[The letter after this from Frankie maintains that Frank is still getting delusional and still thinks his father is dead. He also thinks he himself had been arrested for forgery. The doctors tell her that they are fearful of him becoming uncontrollable and dangerous. Frankie says that Frank’s father keeps writing and complaining about not hearing from Frank and she also says that if any letters come in from Livonia she will not read them and just destroy them right away].

“New Orleans Nov. 28, 1902

My Dear Celeste,

I have no letter from you two weeks and naturally feel very anxious to know the cause ... He will not last more than 3 weeks, perhaps not so long and perhaps a little longer but I will have him with me anyway and can know that I did all for him at the last. When I went in this morning you should have seen how his dear face brightened up. “My Darling” he said. I asked him how he was and he said he was not well and that he was going away. I asked him where he was going and he said, “Home with you.” I told him yes, I would come for him and bring him home and he seemed so happy. I could not get the release from the coroner in time to get him home today. The sister says he talks of me continually and has my picture with him always. That seems to be all he knows or thinks of. His darling and coming home to her. I don’t know how I am going to manage to get along, but we will do all we can and I will be with him all the time ... Dear Celeste try and be ready for the worst, It may be before you get this and it may be same time ... Your sister Frankie.”

PHILIP MATTER, Pres. and Treas. GEORGE A. SWARTWOUT, General Manager C. G. ROBINSON, General Sales Agent JOHN W. GALVIN, Superintendent



PERU STEEL CASTING COMPANY
HIGH GRADE
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CABLE ADDRESS "CAST STEEL"
Western Union Code Used

CASTINGS 100 TO 60,000 POUNDS

PERU, INDIANA Jan 13/1902.

My Dear Sister,
I write to tell you for reasons best known to my self I have left the Allentown Rolling Mills and have a nice position with the American Locomotive and Car Co. of Allegheny, Pennsylvania. My address is care American Locomotive and Car Co. Allegheny Pa. With Love yourself and a Best Wishes, to all your interesting Little family. Remember me to Mrs M. & Cassie. I took this position for \$100.00 per month. but get ~~\$150.00~~ in 6 months or less.

Your Loving Brother
Frank,

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO THE COMPANY

"New Orleans, Dec. 1st, 02

Dear Celeste,

Monday morning and raining, not at all cold. Have the windows open but a little fire on account of dampness. Am compelled to keep the windows open for air otherwise could not stay in the room. The sores on Sweetheart are very offensive and with the other smells makes it very bad. He has no use of his lower limbs and yesterday had a very bad day. I felt very uneasy about him last night. Am

nearly dead myself this morning. It is so hard to lift him around to wash and change his clothes and bed. Expect I will have to get a man to help me. Heard of a good old nigger [sic] man this morning. Celeste if you will help me all you possibly can now, some day I will try and repay you. Dr. Mayer was up to see Sweetheart yesterday and says I did well to bring him home. For the end can not be so very far away. At times he does not know me. Talked of you yesterday, said you were a good girl and that Nelville A. Mathiot was fine man. Talks of his mother a great deal, and said yesterday that J. A. Lesourd was a bad man and he did not like him. Last night he said, "Bless you Darling, you are so good." He has a very mild starry look out of the eye and follows every move I make. Doesn't want me out of his sight ... don't know how I'm going to get clothes dry if it don't stop raining. It is impossible to get the smell all out and we can't stand to dry them in the kitchen where we have to cook. Dr. Mayer says that we can never get the odor out and will just have to throw them away, all things used about him, bed and all ... Your sister, Frankie."

New Orleans, Mar. 23^d 1902,

My Dear Sister,

Your letter also the pretty drawing book submitted your daughter Marguerite, Mathiot in that book. Sister shows great a great talent, ^{and} after graduation from the St. He High School, Marguerite should be given a chance to study music and art, under some good Masters in both music ~~and~~ oil painting she has as a great career before her. I always predicted that would get ahead of the others.

I am glad Josie broke all previous records. Did she pass two classes?

I am not very well, ~~of~~ but am taking a new medicine known as Patnes' Biliary compound. I am going take 6 bottles ~~before~~ and then will a good ~~low~~ good position on the in Board and off State engineer.

This final letter is written the day after he dies. This letter is 6 very long pages and describes everything in detail. I'm only going to quote the first 1 1/2 pages and will leave the rest for the winning bidder. It's truly amazing including the part where they discover a terrible bruise on Frank and it was from one of the hospital attendants kicking him in the back.

“New Orleans, Dec. 8, 1902

My Dear Celeste, At last the blow has fallen and the dear boy we love so well has been taken from us. God called him to his rest Saturday night, at 11 o'clock. He passed away very peacefully. Sat. morning he tried to speak to me, about 6 o'clock he could not. His tongue was paralyzed. He was conscious up to 3:30 P.M. but from that time on he seemed to know nothing or if he did was not able to make any sign. All day when I would ask him anything he would smile and reach his dear lips up for me to kiss him. He talked of his mother all day Thursday and spoke of her several times Friday. Wanted me to bring her to him. Friday he talked of you, said you was a good sister and told me to tell you. He wanted to see you right away. I got your picture and showed it to him but he did not know it. I told him I would tell you. That was all I could do. He spoke of his father but once and this is what he said. “My father used to be a good man, but he's not now and I don't like him.” Is that not a truth. I would like him to know his son's parting words to him. It perhaps adds a little gall to his cup of happiness or seeming happiness. I think Sweetheart knew he was going to die for he said so many things to make me think so. Friday night he said, “Darling I am going away.” I asked him where, his reply was “So far away you can't come.” I asked him what I was going to do if he went away and left me and again he replied, “Darling you must stay here and teach 4 years then you can come too.” Again he said, “Darling Bridget, you and I will meet again.” (Remember Bridget is his mother). He also asked me to get his bible. The last words he spoke were, “My little bride, I love you.” I was forced to put him away yesterday at 3:30 P.M. He died of blood poison and although I had his body embalmed the undertaker said I could not keep him until today. His poor dear face and head had begun to grow dark, before 3:30 yesterday. Now comes a tale that will make your blood boil and it makes me most crazy.....”

These are only the first one-and-a-half pages, with another four-and-a-half pages to this last letter, and far more than is quoted here.

The Lesourd Mathiot letters tell a difficult, dramatically unhappy story. Frank and his father never made up their differences, or did they? What happened to Livonia? Did she gain the property when John died only a few months later? For the curious student of other people's lives, this set of letters provides a deeply interesting set of mysteries.