

Adrian A. Parsons to Chet Parsons

April 17, 1918

Plainfield 4-17-18

Dear Chip –

It was a pleasure to see your familiar fist again but they had cut the date out and we had no clue to the time it takes a letter to come across.

But we were glad to hear from you all the same, and my opinion of the slow moving of our affairs is not elevated much by anything that is allowed to come to our knowledge. Our allies cannot form a correct opinion of us when measured by the actions of the party in control now, a party that has never carried this country through a crisis – a party that rigidly reviews the letters of our fighting men to their fighting fathers and lets spies and traitors go unhung. The hardship and losses they are enduring because of our slowness and inefficiency is a shame to us – But my faith is well grounded and the great Devas plans for a world reorganization are being carried out to the letter, regardless of what some of us think.

Well since you and Frank left we have had more schooling than several years of our quiet life would bring – the war spirit is in every one and has made great change in the entire thought of the country, I thought for a while that Mother would never yield to the change, it was easier for me on account of previous discipline, but we are getting used to it and are willing to go Hoover one better every time – I guess we are on corn bread till after harvest, but the wheat is looking fine and the spring work is well on. Bert has all the manure hauled and two days breaking in the west field – and I have some garden planted. We had a heavy rain last night and the work is stopped for several days.

We Mother & I are going to see Edith tomorrow for a few days. she is not well – all the rest are well May was out a few days & is coming again soon. We hear from Frank often but he says they are too busy for much writing he thinks he is with the finest lot of men the U.S. ever got together, We raised a Twp service flag last Sunday at the church with 16 stars. Mother was the only woman that put on two. write as often as you can. so long Dad.

[envelope:] Serg't Chester A. Parsons/ 482 Aero. Squadron/ US. Expeditionary Forces
[postmark:] Plainfield, Ind./ Apr 18/4PM

Historical Notes:

Chester "Chet" Adrian Parsons (1887 – 1977) served during WWI in the American Expeditionary Force in France from April 1918 – April 1919. He exchanged letters with his father, Adrian A Parsons (1846 – 1929), a disabled Civil War veteran. These letters provide insight into life on the home front and his political views.

"actions of the party in control" refers to Adrian's disdain for the Democratic party. As a Civil War veteran, Adrian considered the Democrat party the party of the Confederacy. He does not approve of correspondence being censored.

"great Devas plans" refers to Adrian's belief in Theosophy.

"Frank" is Chet's younger brother Frank Harrison Parsons (1889 – 1918) who entered the Marine Corp Mar. 28, 1918.

"more schooling" and "war spirit" refers to the sudden change in public opinion and overwhelming support of the war, after years of apathetic neutrality. President Wilson's policies reorganized the economy, controlled public opinion and suppressed dissent, and transformed the role of government itself.

"go Hoover one better" refers to Herbert Hoover, head of the Food Administration who encouraged voluntary food rationing to ensure a steady supply of food to the troops after Europe's food supplies had been decimated.

"on corn bread" refers to the rationing of wheat. Corn meal was the primary white flour substitute encouraged by the U.S. Food Administration.

"Bert" is Chet's brother Gilbert "Bert" Roland Parsons (1883 – 1959) who had been farming with Adrian.

"Edith" is Chet's sister Edith (Parsons) White (1880 – 1971) who lived with her family in rural Vermillion County, IN

"May" is Chet's sister Mary "May" Elizabeth (Parsons) White (1885 – 1958) who lives in Indianapolis.

"Service flag" is an official banner authorized by the Department of Defense for display by families who have members serving in the Armed Forces. Washington Township displayed a service flag for community.