

# Research Project Instructions

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Part of an in-archives exercise at <http://www.teacharchives.org/exercises/research-annotations/>

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Brooklyn Historical Society (BHS) has a wonderful collection of letters written during the Civil War from Alfred Cranston to his fiancée Elizabeth Petford. Imagine that BHS wants to make these letters available to students—like yourselves—who are interested in researching the Civil War, particularly as it was experienced by Brooklynites.

Now, think about your audience. They're college students writing papers. How much do they know about the Civil War? Probably not a whole lot. Have they ever heard of Alfred Cranston? Definitely not.

Your task, then, is to make these letters accessible to your fellow students by writing an introduction which analyzes the letter(s), researching and writing at least 12 annotations, and compiling a bibliography.

## You are responsible for:

1. **Transcriptions of assigned letter(s).** During our required visit to BHS, you will work in a group to transcribe 1 - 3 letter(s). The group transcription will be due two class sessions after our visit to the archives.
2. **Library instruction session.** You are required to attend both library instruction sessions.
3. **Final annotated transcript.** This will include:
  - a. **An introduction.** One page providing historical context, a brief summary, and a short analysis of what you can learn about Alfred and Lizzie's relationship. Consider:
    - i. What was their relationship like, and what does that tell us about 19th century courtship?
    - ii. Why did Alfred include some details and not others?
    - iii. What kinds of things seemed to concern Lizzie, and how did he respond to them?
    - iv. What kinds of historical details can we learn from correspondence that we could not otherwise? What are the limits of using correspondence as primary sources?
    - v. Is there anything of visual or physical interest in your letter(s)?
  - b. **Twelve annotations** formatted as footnotes. These should provide more information about places, names, events, and other unfamiliar terms. Each footnote should be as long as it needs to be, usually 1 - 3 sentences.
  - c. **Bibliography** in MLA format.