

This partial page shown above is an example of a "crossed letter." To save money on postage, nineteenth-century correspondents would sometimes write over a page they had previously covered with text. The second time the handwriting would go up and down instead of left to right.

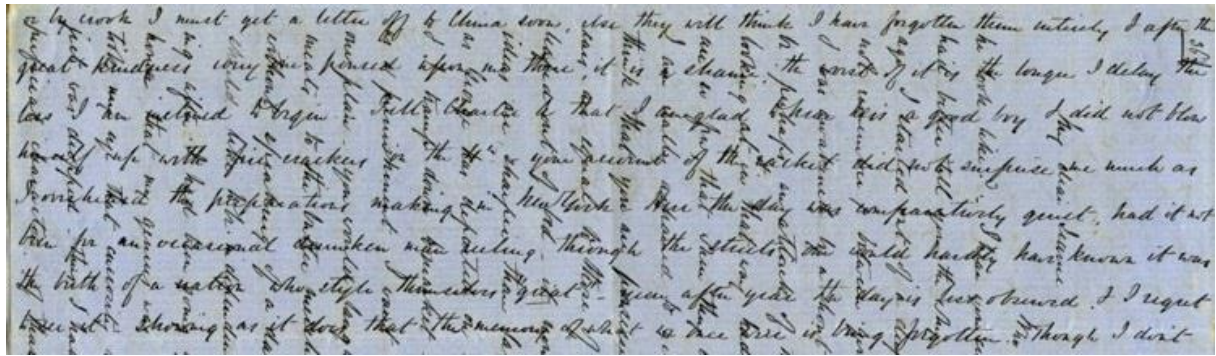
The first seven lines of Jack's letter to Jeanie are shown in the image above. Below is a transcription of them:

*Washington July 8th 1853*

*My dear Jeanie,*

*Who is Martin do you know such a man? What does he look like? I hear you cry out "You are crazy Jack!" so before going further had better tell you the why and wherefore of those queries – about ten minutes ago I started out of a deep sleep aroused by something occurring (what I can not remember) between you & said Martin. I heard both names distinctly & was awakened by a shout from you calling for me. More crazy yet!! So it may be perhaps an attack of the nightmares caused by Mrs. Bremley's champagne.*

The handwriting running up and down the page is actually a continuation of page four of the letter! Jack covered two sheets front and back before going back to page one and writing across the lines already there. Here is an image of the same page as above, but turned on its side to make the long lines easier to read. Underneath is a transcription of the first eight lines:



or by crook I must get a letter off to China soon, else they will think I have forgotten them entirely & after the great kindness every one poured upon me there, it is a shame the worst of it is the longer I delay the less I am inclined to begin. Tell Charlie A that I am glad to hear his is a good boy & did not blow himself up with fire crackers on the 4th. Your account of the racket did not surprise me much as I overheard the preparation making in New York. Here the day was comparatively quiet had it not been for an occasional drunken man reeling through the streets, one could hardly have known it was the birth of a nation who style themselves "great" year after year, the day is less observed & I regret to see it showing as it does that the memory of what it once was is being forgotten.