
202 9/3/1850

From: Warren Lothrop

To: Cadet Otis Howard

OOH-0194

Camp Snife N.Y.

Room No 14 North Barracks
U.S. Mil. Academy
West Point, N.Y.

Source: Bowdoin

Camp Snife N.Y.
Sept 3rd 50

My dear Otis,

Being absent from camp Saturday afternoon I did not receive your note until Sunday morning. Therefore could not call to see you. Was pleased to hear you were a little settled & that the cadets are friendly. You must keep a stiff upper lip & not allow a homesick feeling to disturb your peace of mind, remember you are now engaged in a military life, consequently have a glorious object in view, which a strict adherence your Motto, "(never back out)" will certainly cause you to reach. Your motto was also Genl Taylors by which means the battle of Buenavista was won. May it also achieve for you a like victory.

I wrote home the next day after I saw you, told the folks of your arrival, our social interview &c. Will be careful what I say in my letters about you & not give an unfavorable impression. Shall call & see you the first opportunity, & you must do likewise.

Truly yours,
Warren [Lothrop]

[Envelope]
Room No 14 North Barracks
Cadet Otis Howard
U.S. Mil. Academy
West Point, N.Y.

203 9/7/1850

From: P. S. Perley

To: [O O] Howard

OOH-0195

Portland

Source: Bowdoin

Portland, Sept. 7th Sat Eve, 1850

Dear Howard,

Here I am this rainy evening in Mrs Waite's kitchen with Lizzie in the corner and her mother beside the table, writing to you an answer to your last. I know how you would enjoy being where I am and I would willingly resign it to you for a short time to gratify you but many a hill and valley lies between us and many a thing we both may wish can never be.

Lizzie and her mother were down to Commencement and I did my best to entertain them though you know I am never very successful in entertaining the ladies. I accompanied Lizzie to Com. Ball and remained in attendance till 12 o'clock when it being her wish I left her in charge of Wm Otis and retired. She told me she liked much, and that the Ball was much better than it was last year. We had a first rate Commencement at least such is the opinion I hear everywhere expressed. Poindexter had a grand poem of course. The oration before the Pen & Ath Socs. By Rutten of Vt. Was the richest thing I ever heard. The Poem by Upton (an old graduate) was poor. Snell did not get an election to the "Phi Beta Kappa". The two first parts were all elected. My Father and Mother were both down and were quite surprised to see me do decently.

Old Butler has made it all right with his woman and is going out South with Pain & Bell. By the way I will tell you one of these days of a scrape into which I got with the women since I saw you. Jewett goes to Yarmouth together with Robinson of the last class. Harding goes to Limerick where I talked of going. I have had another offer of Limerick since you left but preferred the chance I have got here - that of Assistant in the Public High School at \$500 per year. I commence tomorrow. Townsend has got an office in Washington of some kind at \$1400 a year. Success to him he needs it as much as any one.

It rains here to day drearily, drizzly and my feelings are about in unison with the weather. Would you were here chum with your cheerful face to drive away some of the gloom that rests on all things. But then I must dispel it myself and not wait for you or any body else and I fancy me you have about enough of the blues to chase away without attending to those of your friends, however much you might like to. I doubt not you have got a hard unpleasant place but I feel sure you will do honor to yourself there. I paid for you on your Bill at McKenna's 4.20 or father did for me. Your last term Bill was 30.08. Peterson did not pay that note. Your Diploma cannot be obtained till next Commencement. All of our Class who were there received their Diplomas with the exception of Townsend. Bell and Poin. leave Brunswick in about a fortnight. Old Wilson was there at Com. And also Perry. 29 have already entered the Freshman class at Bowd. And about 40 in all are expected. I hope Bowdoin is coming up really.

Mrs Waite and Lizzie seem quite cheerful as much so at least as usual but I suppose I shall not have the pleasure of boarding with them a great while for they talk some I think of going to Lewiston. I hope they will not. I tell you what Howard I begin to feel as though I had indeed turned my back on College - as though the world was all before me and I with hardly a friend in it - no chum I will not say that for I have many an old college friend true ones too I believe but this will not atone for the loss of one and I declare I feel sometimes almost tempted to become a villain merely to justify the opinion of some concerning me. But as you would say this would not be hardly politic. We have all of us to be talked about some time or other and unfortunate must be the man who has no enemies. I guess about the best way for me to do after all is to change my habits a little and so live that their predictions may not be verified.

Mrs Waite and I have been talking about you and Lizzie &c nearly all day (Sunday) would you not like to know what we had to say? Eh? Well I reckon perhaps you would. Nothing bad though.

I do not wonder that you feel "Home Sick" for I come very near to it here but a short distance from home among friends while you are far away subjected to severe discipline but Chum an honorable course lies sure though distant before you and you have one behind you whom you may think of and dream of as your own fair girl and thus be happy despite discipline, duty, drill while I love one who ... But I have said enough about this heretofore and am forever boring you with the details of my ill storied passion.

One of these days I will bore you with an account of the way the Br. Girls used me &c. I am bound to have to take it. Of course you will not mention any such hints if you should write to Jewett in the meantime. I got introduce to Jackson's girl. She appears first rate.

Chum it is getting late and I must bid you good bye. Write again. If Lizzie were here I should make her send her love but she is out and you will have to take up with mine.

P.S. Perley

204 9/8/1850 *From:* O. O. Howard

To: Mother [Eliza Gilmore]

OOH-0196

West Point N.Y.

Source: Bowdoin

West Point N.Y. Sept 8th 1850

Dear Mother,

When I last wrote we were in the Camp, and therefore I wrote a very short & poor letter. To comply with father's request & give a fair & true account of this place, I fear is rather difficult, for I have been very much confined by my duties, & have not been able to gain more than a partial view of things. First, I will try to give you a concise account of the Academy & its discipline.

There are here as instructors in this institution, about 20 I should think. Some of them are old professors & some recent graduates. All the Cadets are under military discipline & military regulations, as you know, hence all are here rewarded according to their merits. Those that behave the most soldierlike and get the fewest reports, usually get promoted to a "corporalcy" the second year, a sergeant's or orderly sergeant's rank the third year & a Captain's position &c the fourth year. The whole No. of Cadets "called Corps of Cadets" is divided into 4 Companies, called Co. A, B, C, & D. These Companies are formed without regard to Classes. Excepting the Officers, who wear Badges ("Chevrons"). I cannot tell to which Class an individual belongs, excepting however, also those who appear "green" in tactics & those with whom I am acquainted. Well then, our whole government is carried on by Cadet officers, the government of Cadet officers, by Army Officers. But it does not moderate the severity of our discipline, because we are governed, as it were, by ourselves but rather increases it. For this reason, the young men who are officers are ambitious of high promotion hereafter and hence are very precise in the performance of every duty.

Our Class consists of 95. For recitations it is divided into 7 Sections, 14 individuals in a section. We were first divided alphabetically, but at the end of three weeks the 1st division will contain the best scholars, the second division or "section", the next in rank & so on down. The manner of the recitation is such that the best scholar is obliged to study. Some who have graduated from Colleges have been found deficient here, because they depended too much at first on former knowledge.

The instructor calls upon a young man to deduce the rule. He cannot give the rule & work from it, but must make up an example & give a reason for every step until he finds the rule. Much judgment & a great deal of study is required, even for a scholar, to make a perfect recitation. Thus you may easily see how it happens that so many are found deficient, for 1/3 at least of our Class came here with hardly more than a common school education. As many as therby at the smallest calculation must leave at the next January examination.

West Point is a plame 200 or 300 feet above the river. Around this plane Hills of as much as a thousand feet in height on every side skirt us in. The plane is perhaps as much as 3 or 4 miles square. There is nothing in the world to attract us beyond the limits supposing we could have our liberty. Warren's Corps was situated when I came here about a mile north of this place. Now they have struck their tents & gone into "Barracks" (the building in which they winter) about 1/2 mile or less from this place. Warren is orderly sergeant of the highest company in the U.S. Army, but as he enlisted he cannot rise higher, expect by having an especial commission given him by Congress. His pay is 30 dollars per month clear of all expense for clothing or board. He has the respect of his company, not "over much to do" & pretty good pay.

I got reported before the Battalion the other day for stopping after my Section was dismissed and talking with him. I did not know that I was obliged immediately to return to my room. The plea of ignorance will excuse me for perhaps three weeks when my demerit will commence. The hours of recreation are, week days, 1/2 hour after every meal, & on Saturday from 1/2 past 1 o'clock P.M. till 6 o'clock. During recreation hours we can go where we please on the public lands, not being allowed to go, then or at any other time except by especial permission into the Hotel or Store. No money can be expended here by Cadets very well, excepting by those who send to New York city, secretly. Not very often done, for detection is dangerous

I went to Church this fore-noon with my Company (which is B Co.). My Uniform is not yet done, so I have been obliged to wear the suit, which I brought all the time to drill, parade, recitation & every thing. I have managed to keep very neat as yet, but wish I had taken some thin pants for a change. There is no danger of any thing

being stolen in this place for a guard is kept the whole time, and the guard itself is at every moment liable to inspection. At five o'clock in the morning after the gun is fired the beating of drums & the sound of fifes wake us & all immediately run out and fall into ranks, and each individual of each company answers to his name as it is called by the orderly sergeant. Then we return to our rooms, fold up our bed clothes in a manner specified, put our shoes, hats & caps & clothes in just such a place, and then study till breakfast. At 10 minutes before 7 o'clock the roll is called again & we are marched into the "Mess Hall" for Breakfast, stand around the table near our place & when the command, "take seats", is given, we sit and eat. One half hour is allowed to each meal after we are seated. In the same manner we form for recitation as for breakfast - only the Battalion is divided into sections & to every section, a "squad-marcher". Each squad marcher marches his section to its respective reciting room. The roll is again called at 1 o'clock for dinner, those who do not want any <being> allowed to fall out after the roll is called. Recitations in the afternoon as in the fore-noon. At 4 o'clock is drill. The whole Battalion drills at that time on the open plane. But the "Septs" or the "10 of us" who came here in September drill by ourselves, having over us a Corporal. He puts us in a soldier like position, chests on a line & thrown out, toes out, chins drawn in & heads drawn back. The eyes must look straight ahead & never change, unless by command &c &c.

I enjoy myself pretty well now that I can read & write & study. There are three or four graduates of other institutions here in my class. Perhaps I shall not be first as a scholar but shall pretty near it, by & by, when we get where it is hard.

If you get this before Rowland leaves, tell him to go early enough if you please, to go to Portland & get acquainted with Lizzie, for it will be pleasanter for him & her both to be acquainted. While he is there, write me as soon as you can for at best I do not like here well enough to do without letters from you & my brothers. In fact I have not yet formed any very congenial spirits. Very few with whom I am free to associate have the taste, the feelings or the education which I have. I get neither real friendships nor sympathy. The few with whom I am acquainted most intimately wonder why with my education & my dislike for the coarse & profane, why I should come here. But I do not regret it yet. Here is a field open for a man who has ability a chance for the severest mental discipline. To get into the engineer Corps is what but very few do. Only once in two or three years do they graduate scholars sufficiently good to enter this Corps. These same are very often made instructors in this institution, which position (I do not wish this repeated) I hope to gain. I may not realize my wish but there is nothing like trying.

Yesterday I was called upon to deduce a rule in Algebra, which it required considerable fore thought & study to prepare. After I got through I was closely questioned & answered readily & correctly after which Prof Church asked me if I had not studied Algebra considerably before. He complimented me somewhat &c. I rather think, as a scholar, I can maintain a good position. But to hope to stand first among a hundred young men brought together here from every part of the Union, & the most of them great men's sons is looking rather high - here's try.

You wished to know something in relation to Cadets who are taken sick. There is a large Hospital to which those who are sick are taken & provided with every thing to render them comfortable, & put them in condition to recover. I have three roommates in a very large room, viz Brown of Oxford Maine, Treadwell of N. Hampshire, & Lazelle of Mass. They study all the time, nearly, & so give me plenty of time to read & study. Our tables are iron & Bedsteads also of iron, as you know. The latter are quite narrow and have iron bars instead of bed-cords. A mattress is fitted to it. It makes a hard bed, but after our drill there is no danger of lying awake even on the floor.

I have not yet written to Uncle Ward. I do not care much about seeing any friend here till I have got a little better acquainted with my duties & have got to be a little more military. I feel rather odd "round in broad cloth" while others are dressed in uniform, especially while in the Battalion, I am taken too much notice of "for me".

Give my love to Charles, Rowland & Rodolphus & to Uncle's little boys & remember me to father & Phebe, George & Silas. I have seen some times when I should have rejoiced to have been in your midst. But every body must have "the bitter with the sweet." I hope you are all well. I think of you all more than ever before. The influences here are not of the healthiest kind as far as concerns moral character. The instruction is not quite so good in its tendency as in a College where all the influence which is exerted by the education itself is on the side of morality & religion.

Write soon to me, your affectionate Son.
O.O. Howard

205 9/10/1850 *From:* Francis T Sargent

To: Otis [Howard]

OOH-0197

New York

Source: Bowdoin

New York Sept 10 1850

Dear Otis

I was very glad to receive your letter on Wednesday last and ought to have answered it ere this but have been prevented in one way and another. The morning I received your letter I was fortunate enough to realize a wish that I made as I was crossing the ferry, that I might receive three letters, and they were all from the ones I wished them from, of course one was from Sarah.

I felt quite happy, and saw them all with a great deal of pleasure, was happy to learn that you had passed through with your examination, not that I had any fears, but that it is so disagreeable an ordeal I wanted to hear that you was through with it. I have no doubt that you felt lonely, and perhaps homesick. No! Not homesick. 'Tis too tame; but rather heart sick or love sick. Yes now I have it. I've smashed the right chord now, - listen to its vibrations to the smart notes of pleasurable emotion that spring from a heart, which at the mention or thought of a dear one thrills with unspeakable happiness - would that it were lasting; but alas! - these thoughts cannot always make us happy, there are times when our fancy paints a picture of another colour, when instead of the bright sunshine of happiness the dark gloom of uncertainty, and restless anxiety haunts our mind, and makes us for a while miserable. But 'tis wrong, 'tis wicked to entertain such thoughts, 'tis distrusting the wisdom of Providence.

I suppose you have had some blue times, or rather thoughts since you have been in West Point, but you will feel at home by & by, and I hope you will find e'er long some congenial spirit with whom you may feel that you can associate as a companion. I suppose the majority of the young men there are a wild unfeeling, and careless set of fellows, under no moral restraints, and susceptible of none of the softer and more tender feelings which are so requisite in a companion and associate for one so used to good society as you are. I hope you will find one soon such as you may wish for.

I anticipate a great deal of pleasure in my trip "down east". I think of leaving the last of this or first of next week. Shall go direct to Hallowell, (stopping perhaps one day in Boston). Shall remain there from two to three weeks, and then if Sarah will go with me I shall go to Machias and visit my brothers for a week or so, and expect to have a grand time, for I mean to go into the woods for a few days if I can get anybody to go with me. I can hardly content myself until the time of departure arrives. Mr & Mrs Benson have been at home about a week. Mr <Buck> & Mr Adams, so I think they will remain at home for a while at least.

I rec'd a letter from Sarah last week, and she is impatient for me to come. She has been enjoying herself nicely. The Party at the Hallowell House was a grand affair. I wish I could have been there. Don't you wish you were going down?

One word Otis before I close. The very flattering terms in which you were pleased to address me, I feel are altogether undeserved, although I do not doubt your sincerity. If I made a favorable impression upon you I will in all candor say that I am gratified, but that I treated you differently on account of your relation to Sarah I am sure I did not. You saw me as I was, and if you never have occasion to change your opinion of me, I shall be still more gratified. One of my greatest faults I sometimes think is that I am often too frank and candid, but I strive to keep to the truth whatever it may be. I shall be very glad to correspond with you, and will try with punctuality but if I am not always you must make allowances for business matters.

To speak of my wedding and that you fear you will not be able to attend it. I hardly allow myself to think of that yet, but I dare say you will hear of it as soon as it takes place. I will try and not forget you.

Write me when you have leisure and my letters will be forwarded. I have written this by piece meals, and dare I say you will find it quite disconcerting but such as it is. So give it yours and am very truly your friend

F. T. Sargent
39 South Street

207 9/16/1850 *From:* Rowland B Howard *To:* Mr Oliver O Howard

OOH-0199

Yarmouth

Source: Bowdoin

Yarmouth Sep 16th 1850

Dear Brother

Do you remember when you began a letter dated at the above place. How did you feel? Was it not something like this. The class is ahead of me, but I must enter college next fall or never, and I must go, consequently I will bend every energy to the task and not only be equal to but excell any of my competitors. If those were your feelings, that is the point in our lives, that we were similar. And why should we not be, we had the same object in view with nearly the same means of accomplishing it. It was accomplished in your case, and in mine, time only can tell. I have got No. 8 on the north side of the building for a room and am at present and expect to continue alone. I have been here three days and just got fairly settled.

I suppose you are acquainted with both of our teachers Mssrs Jewett & Robinson - John N Jewett and Geo A Robinson. Mr Jewett says he shall write you in a few days. He is principal of the English and Mr Robinson of Classical department. Mr Jewett rooms just opposite me and boards in commons. I like Mr Robinson very well what little I have seen of him. He appears to be a thorough practical scholar and excelent teacher.

Our school is very small numbering some 35 scholars, but I hope for Mr Jewett's sake that may increase. The principle reason for its being so small is that Mr Woods the former principal of the English department here has started an opposition school, in a hall just adjoining the seminary buildings, which numbers about 70 scholars. The reason for his doing so was because the trustees expelled him from his office here.

I suppose it seems to you as though you had been gone an age from home on account of the distance. When I left our folks were well and had Vaughan & John with them. I hear now that William was going to Leeds after Commencement. I saw Unkle Henry wife & all his children and Sarah Lee the morning I came here. They were out visiting at Leeds Wilton &c and I came down with Unkle Ensign so you see you hear from all your relatives through me. Betsey Gilmore's youngest child, little Laura, I expect is dead as it was not expected to live a day when I left. Her disease is dropsy on the brain.

I suppose you have heard all about Commencement through your College friends and corespondents. I have an order of exercises before me and see the name of OOH marked excused. I suppose that Perley has written you that he has a school in Portland. It is reported to be a fine situation. I want you should write me all about the examination and your exercises and disapline. Do you room in the old Barracks? Do you like any better than you did at first. I find almost every body I see, seem almost to envy you your situation.

I was over to Wayne just before I left and took tea with Mrs Sampson. Mr Sampson said he was swearing mad because they ordered him off from the camp meeting ground the night before and hadn't got over it. Mrs S was as kind and talkative as ever and all very much interested in your welfare. I have not been into Portland yet and think I shall not till the last of the term, at which time I suppose Unkle Henry and his family will be there. So I have not seen Miss W but shall as soon as I can. I shall be very happy to form her acquaintance and have no doubt it will yield me a great deal of pleasure. As soon as you have an opportunity I wish you to write me a good long letter. I am reading the Bucolics of Virgil which I find rather hard at first, but hope it grow easier by and by.

Your affectionate Brother
Rowland

Mr Oliver O Howard

P.S. I saw Mr Hawkins here on Thursday. He sends his respects to you. RBH

208 9/17/1850 *From:* J N Jewett

To: Friend Howard [Oliver
Otis]

OOH-0200

Yarmouth Me

Source: Bowdoin

Yarmouth Me. Tue Sept 17th 1850

Friend Howard

It is now some 6 weeks since I left you at the "United States" in the city of Portland. Within this short space of time our positions have undergone some changes. You are at West Point the far famed seat of Military proficiency & war like preparations, whilst I <fain> a quiet <inoffensive> unpretending College Student have been advanced (or I should rather say degraded) to the humble office of Principal of the Eng. Department in "old North Yarmouth Academy". However, as our positions were neither for our own selection, I presume, it is far from manly for us to complain of them, though I sincerely wish that there was to become pedagogy for me to do or rather that I was not obliged to Engage in the business longer. It is hard, it is vexing for a young man who is desirous of doing some in the open field to be cooped up in the Block house, with no opportunity to display his prowess or signalize himself by acts of heroic self devotion. I am not hinting by this that I wish to become a martyr to any cause, or that I apprehend any danger of such an event, if I was free to pursue the course most agreeable to my inclinations, but still I would like to seek a little star in the world beyond the brick walls of an academy, where I can meet the enemy face to face & on even grounds. This skulking mind behind old buildings to fire a random shot now & then is not what I have been looking forward to with any very great interest & if it must be done (& I acknowledge it must) I am perfectly willing to leave it to other horses to do & other herds to manage. My respects however to those who are placed to enter upon this desultory warfare & surely I wish them much success in their efforts to regenerate the world, though I must admit they have a hard task before them.

But how goes the "West Point System" in its own "habitat" (as Prof Cleve used to say)? I hope it is better in the hour of its birth than when transplanted & like an exotic plant left to wither & fade away in the ungenial soil of old Bowdoin! I imagine that the straight jacket & the strict orders of your young military despots will sit badly on your shoulders, though necessity is the mother of accommodation as well as of inventions. Doubtless you cast many a wishful look towards the pleasant scenes & friends of this North Eastern home of yours. How would you enjoy one of our familiar chats in No 26 N.H. with Perley, Jacks myself &c &c such as we used to h... I presume it would not be altogether unacceptable even though we should occasionally refer to your connection with the "beautiful" Portland "Ladies". Those were, indeed, "great times" worthy of remembrance & will probably long dwell in your mind as they will in mine.

But again I am reminded that they are past never to return & perhaps we shall never enjoy similar ones again. You are still a Student, climbing "sciences rugged hill", & fitting yourself for the business of life, but I feel as though I was plodding in a circular path with no opportunity for progress. In fact regarding teaching in one light I can but consider it as a belittling occupation, cramping the mental power & compelling it to keep pace with the snail-like progress of a creeping multitude. However it must be submitted to at least for a time & I shall content myself as much as possible relieving myself by a ride to Brunswick when I get homesick & weary. After all I I am not so badly situated, am I? Don't you wish you were as near P...?

Robinson & I get along first rate so far & as I am not ambitious of distinction in the department of Instruction I presume we shall have no difficulty whatever. It is far very far from my intention to signalize myself at his expense I assure you & he seems to be & is really conciliatory & accommodating always ready to consult & to be consulted. In short he is a "good fellow", to one whom he has any respect for & very pleasant with all. He has now been here one week & so far have found our situation rather agreeable than otherwise. Our School numbers only 40 at present. You are probably aware of the opposition got up by Mr Woods the former Teacher. This now reduces our School considerably smaller & will doubtless continue to keep it smaller than usual though I think we shall gain upon him rather than he upon us. 60 scholars will give us good pay & is all we want which I think we shall obtain if nothing unfavorable occurs.

Our class is now scattered abroad or will soon be, through out the length & breadth of our country. Adams is still in B. I believe. Butler says his is going south. Bell & Poin. will go soon. Perley is in Portland. I in Yarmouth (not North Yarmouth) & you in West Point. The others are scattered to different points of the State & of New

England. I got our Commencement Dinner out of the many I have paid for, & been to <> another next year if nothing prevents. By the way it was said that our commencement was the best for many years & really it did go off well. No hesitation in any of the performances except Harding. He made a bad piece of work I understood (I was out at the time). But I am almost to the End of my Sheet & you have probably heard of all this before. Mrs. W & Daughter came there & stopped at Mrs K's so that I saw them a number of times.

Your Bro. Is here with us & is doing well. I room in the old Academy & he has just stopped in to the room opposite mine. Now as I have opened communication just follow on & give me an account of yourself as soon as may be.

Direct to Yarmouth & remember me as Yr. Friend truly
J. N. Jewett

209 9/20/1850 *From:* Eliza Gilmore

To: Son [Eliza Gilmore]

OOH-0201

Leeds

Source: Bowdoin

Leeds Sept. 20th, 1850

My dear son,

It is now Five weeks since you left home and we have received three letters from you for which I am greatly obliged. I don't know what I should do if you were negligent about writing. I have always felt that you were a good son,. There were many subjects about which I should have liked to have conversed with you, but you know the state of my family at that time. I calculated on our way to Portland we should have had an opportunity for converse but I was so delighted with the idea of being with you that the many things I intended to say never occurred to me, until I had recovered from my exciting feeling after parting with you. Perhaps it is better as it is, but my heart is ever with you, and my constant prayer is that you may be kept from the heinous sins which so easily beset us sinful creatures. I was glad to hear such good news from New York City for you must know my interest is very great in Sarah and Silas. The time that you passed in New York City must have gone much happier for having acquaintances there. I seem to realize all your feelings since your arrival in West Point and enter into them fully, but I believe I have wholly made up my mind not to look on the dark side of your situation, but always try to cultivate a bright view of the subject.

You said in your first letter from West Point "Write to Lizzie &c". I thought I should for a number of days, but Laura was sick and every day required some of my immediate attention to her. After eighteen days of intense suffering she died. Her disease was water on the brain, so you see the family circle has been broken only in the short space of one month.

You have probably written and received news from Portland ere this. Your father has received a letter from Perley. He is boarding at Mrs Waites, teaching school in Portland and an order of exercise of the commencement. William has been here. I saw him but very little. He was here the day of the funeral. He said Maria enjoyed commencement very much. You have probably had all the news about commencement from Lizzie as I understand she was there. I am glad they had a good time but there is something painful to me in thinking of the vacant place you left there. I have just perused P... letter. He says you cannot have your diploma until next year. He gives no reason, and I know none. I have had so much company since you left, I could hardly attend to our immediate family duties.

Rowland left home Wednesday the 11 at noon, for North Yarmouth with the same old trunks you carried there four years ago last March. He has not written home yet. I hope he will not give way to the love of ease so much as not to write me at all. I am anxious to hear how he is situated. I hope he has written to you ere this.

Your aunt Lucretia wrote a few lines for you to take with you to your Uncle Ward, but did not have an opportunity to give it to you. After you was gone she put it in the mail and he answered it, enquiring why you was there and the like and said he had a son at West Point in a store, and his oldest son has fits of a very malignant kind and wrote as though he was in great trouble about him. This I received from Mother, while visiting in that Neighborhood, and that he (your Uncle) goes past West Point often to a quarry he owns at Hoboken. I have not seen anyone from that way for a long while. If Lucius Howard is at your place you will know it in time.

Friday evening.

Henry Wingate was here to day. Said Mr Sargent was expected in Hallowell last evening. He had not heard whether he had arrived yet. Sarah Lee was here with H. Strickland's family last week. She then said she should come to Leeds with Mr. Sargent. I shall have an opportunity of expressing my thanks in person for his politeness to my son. I have just returned to my writing after waiting on our workmen four wall layers. Beside my husband, George and Silas, Rodelphus and John made my table full seated. I have just heard that Maj Herrick's youngest daughter, Harriet died this morning at two o'clock. Sick only a few days. Marilah Howard, still remains in a very low state [Marilla Howard died 21 Sept 1850]. Doct Lord attended Betseys little girl. I met with him several times. He said give my respects to Otis when you write.

I received a letter from your Uncle John date Sept 2 in which he mentioned you and said he should expect a

letter from you when you get settled. You have probably written to him before now. I think your Uncle would be heartily glad to return to his home once more and see his family together. Your Uncle Ensign is just as much engaged as ever in his railroad. He has obtained his loan from Portland that he was trying to bring about when you left. Your father was there until ten o'clock on Tuesday evening assisting in making out the papers. We shall have a railroad through Leeds I think. Mrs Lothrop came down and watched with Laura one night and came and took care of her another day. She laid in a dying state nearly a week there being no help to be had. It was a kindness to have any one come and offer a days help. Warren wrote his mother in very high terms of you. It made him almost enthusiastic to see one of his old townsman at West Point. We have no news from California whatever from our folks since.

The first letter you wrote from West Point was mailed and reached here Saturday evening and the second to last was mailed on Monday and arrived on Saturday evening, so you see we have our mail brought here Tuesdays and sat no days, and if our letters arrive at Green after Tuesday, they must lay there untill Saturday before we get them. But if you prefer writing them on the sabbath they read just as well when they get here. Do write as <often> as possible. Martha Jane is going to Portland in October. I think R.B.H. will go there and get acquainted.

I miss R.B.H. very much. The house is very lonesome <without> him. George is now playing some of the tunes in <> chamber that he and R. played and sung when he was at home. R.B. attended Camp meeting two days the first week in Sept. I really am in hopes his health hold out for him to accomplish his studies, according to his wishes.

We have had a very pleasant Sept, which is very favorable to the corn crop. I think corn you planted at the expense of so much pain will yield us a favorable crop. We have not had a frost yet here. It is nearly nine o'clock and your father has come into the room prepared for bed and I must stop for the night hoping to finish in the morning. Phebe says give my love to <Otis>. Phebe shed a good many tears when you left. She said she should never see you again. I think good hearted. Your father says he don't know he has anything in particular to write this time although he seems to take a great deal of interest in your letters. Your father is not well has a cold. Give my respects to Warren Lothrop. All of his <>. <> well within a few days. I never think of you at <> without associating ideas of your own father. He went to New York when he was nineteen the age you are <now> and lived several years in the same vicinity.

Good night, your Mother E. Gilmore

210 9/22/1850 *From:* Otis [O O Howard]

To: Mother [Eliza Gilmore]

OOH-0202

West Point, N.Y.

Source: Bowdoin

West Point, N.Y. Sept 22, 1850

Dear Mother,

I thought last evening that you might be expecting a letter from me; and when Mr Leonard came without one I feared you might feel disappointed. But the reason that I have not written sooner is not because I have not the inclination. It is not here as it was in College. For when there I could sit up an hour later to write home, but here if I do not write during the day, I don't write at all. I have found time, however, during the past week to write three letters of four pages each, one to Rowland, one to Mr Jewett & one to Peleg.

I have now got my uniform on & begin to feel quite important. The Coat is grey; the binding round the neck is stiff & <houcks> up close round the throat, over which the linnen collar turns; it is large round the chest & tapers toward the waist. There are three rows of buttons in front, 7 or 8 in a row (the buttons are quite large, perfectly round, and gilded). There are also 12 of the same kind of buttons upon the skirts & three about halfway between the two seams upon the upper part of the arm. The buttons across the chest are connected by black cord (or braid (?)) and there are two sprigs of the same branching out from each button upon the arm. Such is the coat. This must be buttoned at all times, while the wearer is out of his room. The winter pants (a pair of which I am now wearing) are grey, like the coat, and have a stripe of black broadcloth an inch or more in width, extending from top to bottom upon the outside of the leg. Such is the uniform in which I am now dressed. It does not look so finely as the same coat with white pants, which all the cadets, except those who came when I did in September, now wear. We who came in September, I believe I told you, are called "Septs".

We are drilled by a couple of Corporals, each Corporal taking five of us in a squad. The C...I has got us straightened & drilled into the different movements. He is now drilling us with muskets. The musket weighs about fifteen lbs, and it gives some pretty stout men a lame back & chest to be drilled an hour & a half at a stretch. This is easier for me however, than marching, for I am stout and the musket feels light, whilst in marching, I am obliged to break up a life long habit for I have been accustomed to touch my heels first, whereas I am now obliged to point my toes & touch the ball of the foot first. The may not seem to you very hard, but imagine that a thousand other unnatural & new things must be observed at the same time and you can easily see how quite a smart boy may appear awkward; and worst of all the Corporal makes no allowance for the backache or the neckache. I have got so now that I feel as well after drill as before & even better. Nothing can be purchased by any Cadet except by first getting an order from the Superintendent. This makes it inconvenient, but it prevents the foolish expenditures. It would have been much better for me, had I known it, to have got before coming some two or three pairs of drilling pants. There is nothing about them in any way different from citizen's drilling pants, and I could have got them much cheaper.

Warren is liked very much by his company, & is really the highest noncommissioned officer in the service. He has many privileges, but, if I were he, I never would enlist again. The position of a man who enlists, is not, at best, a very enviable one. His prospects for advancement are very slight. Warren is a noble looking soldier, and it is a pity that he could not have had the advantage of an education at this place and taken his rank among the commissioned officers. I can do as I please, when I have sufficient reasons for it. I can resign now & after I graduate, any time I please. Such is not the position of an enlisted man.

The training here, both physical & mental, is just what I need. The only disadvantage to be feared is in a moral point of view. Every thing around me is military. I have to be military in my walk, my talk, my manners &c. My tastes will be likely to change. What is right & what is wrong, however, will remain unchanged. I have some principles from which it will take more than the influence of military men & military discipline to make me swerve. There is a kind of licentious spirit that seems to pervade the most of young men here, and the voice of ridicule is often raised against those who are not thus and profanity too is very common. These vices I regret the existence of, for they tend to deaden the better feelings of the heart, and render one insensible to moral excellence.

I joined the Bible class last sabbath. It is composed of about twenty of the most independent spirits. The Chaplain is Professor in Ethics, & hence all those who join the Bible Class are said to do it, in order to get the

Chaplain's favor & thus get high ranks in the branch which he teaches. Any one who knows me will never attribute such motives to me, except in sport. The Chaplain appears to be a man of a good solid education, but I think fruitless efforts have rendered him rather cold-hearted. Preaching to the majority of soldiers is not very encouraging business.

Uncle Ward came to see me, but I was out of my room & he could not find me. From some cause he could not stop more than ten minutes & therefore went away, leaving word that he would come again in a few days. I was disappointed, when I found him gone.

I write so many letters, that I forget, whether I have told you about some things, which you charged me to tell. If I have omitted anything you must write me. Give my love to Charlie, & when he comes home set him to writing me & also to "Dellie", Vaughn, & John, & William, if he is with you. Give my love to father, and ask him if curiosity will not prompt him to write something in your letters. Remember me to Phebe. I heard from Rowland that little Laura was very sick. I hope Betsey will not lose her little girl. My respects to all the friends who inquire for me and forget not to write me everything.

Your affectionate Son
Otis.

211 9/23/1850 *From:* W.B. Howard

To: Nephew [O O Howard

OOH-0203

Peekskill NY

Source: Bowdoin

Peekskill 23 Sept 1850

My Dear Nephew

Your letter to me dated at West Point was duly recd, for which you will please accept my warmest thanks.

So much was I pleased to hear from you and so anxious to see you, that I took the first train after the receipt of your letter (<Wd'y>) 3 <> freight trains Crossed over from Garrisons. Both arrived at the Point the moment a funeral procession was forming to bury Majr Bainbridge. I saw several of the Cadets that I knew, they directed me to the Barracks. There I inquired for you. One young Gentleman from Washington, as he informed me, went to your room but could not find you.

My time being limited I was compelled to take a Carriage & go to <Cagen> where I was to meet two Gentleman & return in the ½ past 4 train. Thus failed the first attempt to meet you.

I am arriving the third <> of the <[is there a missing line at the bottom]>station and cannot expect you to visit myself and family immediately. But the moment you can obtain a furlow we shall expect you. I will not therefore at this time enter into details in relation to them. Permit me to assure you that I was very happy to hear from you & through you our friends at the Eastward.

I recd a letter from sister Lucretia a few days since intended to have been sent by you. On the receipt of her letter, I was still in hopes you would stop on your way to the Point. You must however avail yourself of the Earliest opportunity of visiting your uncle & cousins.

I will call on you myself in a few days. Until then Believe me your affectionate Uncle.

W.B. Howard [Ward Bailey Howard]