
304 6/1/1851

From: Frank Sargent

To: Otis [O O Howard]

OOH-0284A

Brooklyn

Source: Bowdoin

New York May or rather Brooklyn June 1st 1851

Dear Otis

I suppose you have given up hearing from me again, but I think I will disappoint you if you have. I have hardly an apology to offer for not having written before, for to tell the truth I cant recollect when I have had an opportunity and should'nt now were it not Sunday. I have been to Church twice today and now I am going to make a few "crow tracks" for your edification for doubtless you will be highly edified - think I should if I knew what I were going to say, but my brain is unusually dry tonight, and I think 'twill be something remarkable if I succeed in filling this sheet with anything more interesting, or entertaining.

The reason why I have not had time to write is that for the least two weeks I have been alone in the office and expect to be for two weeks to come. Our Bookkeeper having gone to Halifax to see some of his friends, and for two weeks prior to his leaving I was very much engaged part of the time at the office and one week of the time on my private account, in my room, and on my back, or as <Macaube> would have it "in point of fact" sick and for three or four days I was quite unwell. Had a sort of spring attack, chills fever, headache &c &c, but I weathered it, with good treatment, and came out bright again, thanks to a kind Providence. I did'nt feel very mighty for a week or so after I got out, but am now as we have it in our Bills of Lading - "in grand order and well conditioned".

Now it is the first of June. My! How time flies, but I suppose it goes rather heavily with you, for I suppose you are expecting to see your mother and somebody else soon. What a happy boy you will be, only think of poor me got to wait ever so long, and you will soon have your Waite with you. Well if I cant be happy myself, I like to see others so, and hope soon to have the pleasure of seeing for the first time your lady.

Sarah says she is quite pretty, and Sarah ought to be a judge. I will not make up my mind however until I see her, and then shall be seen and not be disappointed. Don't pretend to be much of a connoisseur but shall be able to make up my mind, - "handsome is as handsome does".

Henry Strickland was here a few days ago, but I did not see him, called at his Hotel, and his place where he does his business a number of times. Sarah has had a letter from Perry [Sarah Lee's younger brother]. He was at Sydney N.S.W. Jany 16th and coming home; will probably be here in the course of a couple or three months. I am glad they heard from him for they were very anxious. Silas is getting along very well. His father has been here for more than a week, has not called to see me yet and I question very much if he does it don't disturb me much and wont if he don't. I do not feel that I can with any degree of sincerity show him any attention more than to a Stranger, and I detest hypocrisy. He is the father of one that is dear to me, but he never has been what he ought to have been, his protection and <support>, but all this I do not wish repeated, and you will oblige me by considering it confidential. Sarah and her mother both know my sentiments on the subject, and were it not that I have seen the unhappiness that his course has caused them, I could feel more cordial towards him.

When Sarah last wrote, she said that your uncle Johns wife was very sick, dangerously so. I fear she will not live, for she has been so long ill, that she must be quite low. It would be a severe loss to him, and I truly hope she may recover.

Your mother was preparing to come on this month. Sarah was out there for a day or two the first of May. <Suppose> you lay aside your studies this month and go into camp. Twill no doubt be an agreeable change for you. I shall try and drop down upon you some of these days, for a little while, have promised to go to Newburgh once or twice this summer, and expect what few excursions on the North Rim I get will be all the recreation I shall have until fall when I shall most assuredly turn my head to the East, and get under the lee of some fine young lady in that quarter.

[This letter from Frank T. Sargent continues on Sept 30 1851.]

305 6/1/1851 *From:* O.O. Howard

To: Mother [Eliza Gilmore]

OOH-0285

West Point N.Y.

Col John Gilmore
South Leeds
Maine

Source: Bowdoin

West Point N.Y. June 1st 1851

Dear Mother

I received your letter of the 25th a day or two ago and am glad to find that you are still resolved to come to West Point, although not so soon as I expected. When you do come, we shall probably be in Camp a few steps from the Hotel. Wherever you land ask to be carried to the West Point Hotel. After getting there father will find me very easily. He can come right to the camp & enquire for me, i.e. Mr Howard, if you please, or he can send a boy or anybody to seek me.

Warren says that I must let him know as soon as you get here, & he will dress in citizen's clothes & go about with you & show every thing to be seen at West Point. I see him occasionally. I met him a fortnight ago yesterday at the cemetery, & saw him a moment yesterday as he was going to the Superintendents. Be sure & never mention in his presence any thing I may have written about our respective rank or about his receiving a commission, for this he requested me not to mention but I believe I had written something about it before his request.

Uncle Ward has particularly requested me if possible to bring my friends to visit him. perhaps I can get leave. If I can, we will take a trip down to Peekskill.

Lizzie writes me that she is all ready when the rest are, said that she saw Maria & William in Portland at Uncle Henry's. They told her that their mother was very low. I hope that she will recover. No blow could be more severe to Uncle in the present, scattered condition of his family than her death, but it is not for us to decide what is for the best.

I think my dear mother that you are wrong to regret anything that has been the result of the course you have taken. Whatever may be my expressions, which are often & perhaps too often the result of impulse, or of a momentary feeling, arising from an occasional longing for the seeming quiet & happiness of my distant home, be assured that I believe that you have always done not only what you thought would be for my advantage, but what I am confident, will eventually prove to be for my highest good.

In reasoning with Charlie, I only wished, if possible, to root out the false impression which he seemed to have imbibed thus early: viz: that there was anything degrading in the circumstances of an honest farmer, or that he would be a happier man with a College education than he could be without. I wished if I could to make him look upon things in the proper light & see that a College course did not necessarily add to a man's happiness. But after all a young man must learn by personal experience: for my part I have no objections to Charlie's pursuing the same course as I have pursued, but I am afraid that his constitution is not solid enough to bear a heavy tax upon it. I am certain that a sedentary life requires even more native strength than the active life of a laboring man.

I fear that I have already said too much upon the subject for Charlie's good; for the damper which a few words unseasonably & unwisely spoken will put upon the youthful aspiring spirits is often felt for a long time. As I believe that more than half the man consists in his education, I would not willingly check any feelings incentive to industry in my brother. When he gets to be a little older he must make choice for himself. Scarcely any position can really honor us, unless we conduct so as to honor the position. We may seem to be great because we occupy a high place, but we know that "pigmies are pigmies still though perched on Alps".

You will of course do what you think best about taking him to New York. I would like much to see him. The expense must be considerable, as I am not situated so as to receive you as if I had a house & home here, instead of a soldier's room, & one seat at a soldier's table, where, provided you could go, you would scarcely eat any thing for a week at least.

Give my love to all.

The examination commences tomorrow. Tomorrow will be a lively day. We are to give the Board of Visitors a Military reception. This is not very agreeable to us Cadets who have to be in ranks so long carrying our muskets in the same position a greater part of the time, but it is fun to the lookers on. A few plebes (candidates for admission) are here, and their awkwardness & uncomfortable drills excite many a wicked smile, which is so torturing to the homesick heart.

Tell Rowland Bailey that I have received all the papers which he has sent. I cannot find the notice he asked for; one of the papers has been torn up - it may have been in that.

Write soon, Your affectionate son
O.O. Howard

Silas Lee's boarding house is at the Battery Hotel. I presume you will go to see Arza in Brooklyn.

[Envelope]
[Postmark] West Point NY 2 June
Col John Gilmore
South Leeds
Maine

306 6/3/1851

From: Eliza Gilmore

To: Son [O O Howard]

OOH-0286

Leeds

Source: Bowdoin

Leeds, June, 3th, 1851

My dear Son,

Since the arrival of R.B.H. C.H.H's letters I have felt particularly anxious to say a word of encouragement to you before the examination, an I feared your having trouble with those who are so nearly associated with you might confuse you or injure your recitations, knowing as I do your sensitive nature. Although you may strive to overcome your weak side, or bar against it, still it will haunt you when you would say begone, try hard to have a full mind. You are not responsible for any ones injustice my son, however galling the scandal you have suffered. You must remember no one in this world, that have any mark of consequence ever escape'd the voice of scandal. Let them alone and they often build a gallows to hang themselves.

Even our savior had enemies, in whom there was no guile, and can we who every day are obliged (when looking into our own hearts) to acknowledge our own faults, expect to move along so smooth or not to make enemies, and particularly at West Point, where all are striving to get as high a mark as possible. You have mentioned getting angry in your two last letters. I know you think well of governing your temper, for it gives your enemies the advantage over you when you lose command of your own spirit. Your mother thinks you have not so strong nerves, since your sickness although you may not be sensible of it. I know strength of nerve, or any other, does not return immediately.

I feel very anxious for you to have all the advantage that belongs to you because I think it is quite a privation in many respects to you to be at West Point, and you are spending some of the best part of your life, and I desire you should have that integrity which alone can give us peace of mind.

R.B.H. and C.H.H. return at the usual time. R.B. will return on Thursday. Charley's health is better than when he came home. Mr Gilbert's daughter Ann's remains were brought here to be interred last Saturday. She was married about six months.

We have received the report from the War department for April. You stand at that time 2 in Mathematics, 3 in English and fourth in French. Perhaps you have given more especial attention to M---ics than any other study. I hope our Visit at W— P— will not make any trouble for you, for I am of an opinion it is a peculiar place to see ones friends. We will have our Visit conducted as quietly as possible. Our visit will necessarily be short, but happy I hope. Self possession and a free mind are necessary ingredients for my son.

We are all about as usual moving on grand. I hope your father will fill up your letter as I always like to have everything said in my letters that can be. It is near the time of mailing. Your father would have filled out the sheet but the collector has called and must be attended to. I am sorry he could not say something to cheer you along. He takes great interest in situation at West Point.

Yours ever
Eliza Gilmore

307 6/17/1851 *From:* Peleg S. Perley

To: [O O] Howard

OOH-0287

Portland

Source: Bowdoin

Portland, June 17th '51

Dear Howard.

I have but a few moments to write and therefore can write but a few words. I have but just got back here from home where I spent vacation. Everything here looks blue as the devil and I feel so and everybody else I believe, but "Liz".

It is cussed cold here and has been and always will be I guess. What in thunder did you let Jewett know anything about those cussed verses for? He has been giving me particular on them and "Liz" too confound her. Old Jack is in a Doctor's office, ie studying mediine.

Perry's eyes are about the same.

As for myself I am all right and hope you are or at least will be ere you read this but if you don't read this within a fortnight you will get well.

As ever

Yours in haste
Peleg S. Perley

308 6/19/1851 *From:* R B Howard

To: Brother [O O Howard]

OOH-0288

Boston

Source: Bowdoin

Boston June 10th 1851

Dear Brother

As our friends leave for New York this morning I have taken a sheet of paper and am standing up in the bar room writing with men walking and talking all around me. When our folks came to Portland, I finally concluded that I would come as far as here with them. I should like to go the whole distance and would, were it not that I cannot leave my Books long enough.

I heard her last night, that is Jenny [Lind]. She is the nightingale Canary Bird and every other warbler combined. Her power is beyond all conception and a human voice of such strength and sweetness should be received as one of 7 wonders of the world. But the beauty of her singing did not strike me. I was altogether lost in wonder at the perfection of her modulation and I could not appreciate her effect, or rather feel it, as I expected to feel the music of the worlds greatest singer.

My health is not very excelent nor very poor.

Lizzie of course attended the Concert with me and I am afraid unfavorable impressions were made upon some of her acquaintances by the looks of the person whom they supposed to be her Cadet 'Engaged'.

Write me by mother on her return. I must go to Breakfast now. So good by

Your aff Brother
R B Howard