
338 11/9/1851 *From:* Eliza Gilmore

To: O. O. Howard

OOH-0319

Leeds

Source: Bowdoin

Leeds Nov 9th 51

My Dear Son,

Yours of the 26 ult was duly received on Tuesday. I was truly happy to hear from you, and still more also, to find you in such good spirits. I feel as though you had, had quite a share of pleasant friends to call on you, of late, which were no doubt real gratifications. You must almost feel as though you had been home. I thought of you a good many times yesterday it being your 21 birth day. I should have liked to have spent the day with you and made some account of the day, but you seem to be far away, and I hope you are going forward cheerfully in that way, which will be for your future benefit, in the package I sent by Warren Lothrop. I sent a slice of cake, cut through the middle of a loaf, about two inches thick, with sugar frosting on the outside of it. W. attended the wedding. Perhaps he brought wedding cake with him to W.P. I had a Visit from Clark Leadbetter last week. He brought his good little Mary Ann with him. It gladdens me to see two kindred souls happy together. Clark says Aunt Eliza with the same happy smile he did when he was five years old. He is recovering from a severe illness. Your Uncle Frank's oldest boy is sick at your Aunt Lucretia's it seems as though your Aunt Aurelia had arrived at the Crowning point, of trouble, but there are troubles in this world that hers is a mere shaddow, in comparison, but I think it will be the means of carrying her to eternity. Certainly Everet has not shown himself much of a man in any respect.

Charles had a letter from RB Howard or his Brother Rowland he did not mention having received a letter from you he says he goes on smoothly in College. Has a bad cold and dreadful cough which I am sorry to hear.

The railroad is not so far gone but it brings some labor for your Mother yet. We are to have a directors meeting at our house next Wednesday, tomorrow a town meeting is held to take measures for repairing the bridges, swept away by the late heavy rains. The two northern ones are gone <Dead River>.

Little John has gone home. William came after him last Thursday. He was happy enough to be one amongst them once more. John has left a <host> of kind friends behind him in Leeds.

I had a small letter from Lizzie A. Waite, one week ago. In it she mentioned receiving a letter from you. I enquired of William how the levee at Uncle Henrys passed off very well. W said he never saw Uncle H. exert himself so much to be agreeable. I enquired after our friend P..y how he carried himself. William thought P did not hold up the end of his yoke, or was rather absent minded or modest or diffident, said uncle Henry asked him to draw him out and he did endeavor to, but he soon relapsed into his usual cold state. I wish he could be more interested in what is going on around him, if he has talents why not show them, and have them some benefit to him. My interest for him makes me enquire after him and speak of him, we have had a snow storm, and had four or five inches of snow which laid on the ground three days and then a tremendous rain to take off the snow. The great rise of the Androscoggin caused the loss of our bridges. Everything in our neighborhood is about as usual. I believe I have not written you since the wedding. It went off very well. R.B. went down the river with them and in the cars to B. and stopt at his uncle Johns one night in company with Silas Lee. He thinks S real disagreeable. I saw but little of him, but R.B. thinks I saw enough of him. He is rather handsome, which will be a disadvantage if he is vain. How I wish he might do well. Ann thinks she shall go to Newyork next year she sees nothing worth remaining here for.

I have just read your letter, of Oct 10th. I am glad you are so good about writing. I often think what I should do if you should neglect writing to me, and indeed the interest I take in my sons keeps me from being a stupid thing. Charles is teaching Dellie to sing by note. Mr Davie is teaching a singing school preparatory to our dedication, as the Methodist are building a house near Mr Salmon Wing's. Charles attends the singing school.

It is now evening. Charles is bringing in our milk, your father is bringing water to work &c &c. We live after the sort. Jane Bates just called in to say somethings about work. And Huldah is here to make us a visit, your father has been out to meeting and says Nelson Rose is published to a lady in Canton. Charles was at Wayne yesterday and called to Mr Sampsons. All well there. I suppose you knew Addison Martin had return from California. He says the greatest reason for returning is to see to his sister Martha and put her in the way to

have a suitable education I understand she is already with Mrs Hazzard in Cambridge, when I returned from West Point. Mrs Hazzard said she would like to have her live with her, and thought she could do well by her and I really hope it will prove so for Martha needs such a friend. Addison has promised to come to Leeds, and I very much hope he will for I want to see him. I heard in Hallowell that he had returned here to get him a wife to carry to California. He says he shall go to West Point this winter as he intends stoping in New York some of the winter.

Your father received the report from Washington for Sept. showing your standing. It was, first in Math, fourth in French, and twenty fifth in drawing, demerits 27, I think. I believe I have not mentioned this to you before as I think I have not written to you since, Mr Bates is in the other room telling the news of the neighborhood and your father is reading law to him on the occasion but I do not hear enough to make any thing of it. I look forward full of hope to next June when you will return, if nothing in Providence prevents. We have not lost all hope about our railroad we think it will go forward next June perhaps in other hands, from what it now is. Capt. Turner's family heard from Charles not long ago. He is hired in a tavern in Sacramento City. His wages are one hundred dollars per month. His father thinks he changes business to often to do well.

I shall put into my letter some more letter stamps. I purchased some at Hallowel when I was there. Charles keeps coughing in the other room which keeps me in jeopardy all the time. I hope you will take care of your health through this cold winter that is approaching. Mr Peres Jennings was here last week. He said Orville had sent them his Wifes miniature. It is not long since he was married. Mrs Jenning talked as though he was pleased with Orville's prospects. He is so far from them he is nearly lost to them.

I see I have nearly covered my paper, and hope it will be acceptable to you. From your Affectionate
Mother Eliza Gilmore

O. O. Howard

339 11/10/1851 *From:* W. Augustus

To: Cousin [O O Howard]

Howard

OOH-0320

Peekskill

Source: Bowdoin

Peekskill Nov 10th 1851

My dear Cousin

Your most welcome letter came duly to hand and filled as I found it to be, "with thought rich as gems, sweet as eastern flowers" you can imagine it proved exceptible, especially, to one who has hard work to relieve the dull monotony of the passing hour. And not very often by a letter from a respected friend and Cousin and also of the same name and family.

Not satisfied with once perusing your welcome letter, I have taken it in hand for a second reading, when the thought occurred to me that this would be the proper time to answer, it being Sunday and nothing whatever to disturb the equilibrium of my passing thoughts, but the crackling of the old back-log on the Fireplace. So here goes for a letter, with my feet higher than my head, ensconced in an old arm chair, with my fundament most comfortably seated on a soft cushion.

So much for preface, and now, like the old preacher, I would beg leave to say a few words "before I begin". We have had considerable excitement for the last few weeks about political matters, and getting ready for election, thinking this would afford some fun I went in, as the boys say, and as the Lord would have it proved successful, so you see I feel rather elated over my victory, and the overthrow of the Whigs! "Poor deluded souls to dream of heaven" to make an empty boast of victory, as they did and then get defeated as they did, you can imagine it came rather hard, but "Sic transit gloria innudi".

Real every day life as for instance yours, is often replete with all and sometimes more than the fancy can conceive or the mind realize. For my own part, I have not seen the roses shed their leaves very many times, and the stars in my youths sky are almost as radiant as ever. But when I look back over the short stream over whose bosom my bark has glided, here and there its course is all ready darkened by mists and gloom.

Many of these clouds have been, as I passed through them, big, with events, which if narrated would be likely to earn a quiet shake of the head which expresses so plainly the secret conviction "he is indebted to his imagination for his facts." But it not being my intention to tax your credulity by the relation of these events in which I have been personally interested, for fear that in perusing them "your hair might stand on end like the quills of the fretful porcupine". I was what is rather inclined to be, in my youth a pretty hard customer, ready at any time for a good spree and being at that time, clerk, in the Bank in this place with a salary of \$500 which you know is first rate for the country you can imagine I flourished, after being in this two years, I was taken sick, and had to leave, this came rather hard as the President having just died, I had been promised the office of Cashier, provided I could get well enough by spring to except the office and perform the many duties, with a salary of \$1200 so I went to New York and consulted some of the first physicians the city could boast off, but found my self after staying there some month or so worse than when I first went so disheartened, and dissapointed, I came back, instead of a well man with (as the saying is) a flea in my ear, and since had then have not done anything in the shape of business. My brother Lucius was sent for, to tend store, out in a place by a man who formerly lived in this place somewhere on the Erie RR at a village call Port Jervis.

Lib sends her compliments and is much obliged for your kind message. Whenever I can get the opportunity I will come up to the point and make you a few hours visit. Write as soon as possible and trusting you will excuse all errors, and pass my youthful imperfect bye.

I have the honor to remain

Yours faithfully

W Augustus Howard

340 11/19/1851 *From:* O.O. Howard

To: Col John Gilmore
(Mother)

OOH-0321

West Point N.Y.

South Leeds
Maine

Source: Bowdoin

West Point N.Y. Nov 19th 1851

Dear Mother,

It is Wednesday afternoon, and I have just returned from riding and if I can hold my hand steady I will try to write you a few lines; for you may be sure that riding as we do without stirrups is rather violent exercise for the nerves. Speaking of riding, I may as well tell you something the manner we are taught to ride. Immediately after coming out of camp, we had to furnish ourselves with a riding dress, ie, very thick pants with buckskin-like bottoms & straps, a snug jacket called shell-jacket and a pair of leathern gloves, this with our forage cap which I had on when you were here completes our attire.

We ride one hour at a time, three afternoons of one week & two of the next alternating with the drawing section. To wit. The first section goes to drawing Monday, Wednesday, & Friday. The remainder of the class is divided into two riding squads, the first going at two o'clock, the second at three o'clock during those three days. The other two days, Tuesday & Thursday, my section takes its turn at riding, the rest going to drawing. This is the manner of the 1st week. The second week, my section goes to drawing the two days & to riding the three.

When we began we were allowed only to walk our horses, put into a "uniform" position & made to keep it holding ourselves firm by means of the knees & legs, without any stirrups & on rather slippery saddles. I thought I could ride admirably but found I knew nothing about the science of riding. In a little while after a few drills conducted by the "Frenchman", who could scarcely speak English, we were allowed to trot & still later to gallop. Whew! How we go round that riding hall now, some let go the reins, forgetful of their discipline, and grasp the pommel with all their might; some can't make their horses gallop; others have the side ache and ride into the ring. This was the fashion of our riding under the Frenchman. Very lately however the Frenchman has gone, & we have had some splendid rides under Lieut Sacket. He makes every man keep his place & his very voice seems to move the horses. The Horse I rode today at the head of the squad, would obey his commands to trot, walk, gallop, turn to the right or left as the case might be, as quick as a flash with scarcely any guidance.

I received your last letter, containing the stamps. I received a letter from Rowland to day. He says he has a cough, but is otherwise well. He writes in very good spirits - thinks he is doing very well in Latin, but not very well in Greek.

He mentions Professor Stowe. He does not seem to like him very much - thinks him all head & no heart - a very intellectual man & sound reasoner, but carrying no sympathy & scarcely engaging any of the sympathy of others. It was not so when he first came to Brunswick. He drew a crowded house then; everybody seemed to listen to him with eagerness & wonderment. I couldn't comprehend how a man in the short space of thirty years could lay in such an immense store of knowledge. He lectured on the old Testament, reconciling the apparent geological inconsistencies of some of the events recorded, with the true science of geology & showing these very passages were strengthened by the science. He seemed to possess a fund of humor, mingled with a bluntness of speech, which was for me almost irresistible. I could but listen & was sorry when he closed.

The reason I did not write you a letter last Sunday was that I got out of paper & had to wait till I could get some by order. It is almost parade & I must now close, wishing you all the best of health & comfort.

I suppose you have good sleighing already, as Rowland says they have in Brunswick. We have seen no snow yet; nor any remarkably cold weather. I am not getting on quite so well as I anticipated in my studies, but I don't neglect anything, shall stand as well as possible and put up with it. Give my love to all. Rowland says you tell him, he had better go home & spend the winter than keep school. He says he has had several offers of a school, but has not decided yet which to take, if he takes any. Remember particularly to Charlie & Dellie as I suppose they are listening to hear their names mentioned. In haste.

Your affectionate Son
O.O. Howard

[Envelope]

Col John Gilmore

South Leeds

Maine

[Postmark] WEST POINT

[3-cent stamp of George Washington]

341 11/26/1851 *From:* W Augustus Howard *To:* O.O. Howard

OOH-0322

Peekskill

West Point

Source: Bowdoin

Peekskill Nov 26 1851

Dear Cousin

Although, most worthy correspondent! You are my debtor as regards letters, still, to while away the dull monotony of a few passing hours, I have come to the conclusion to pen you a few lines.

Perhaps you have never like me, been waylaid in the midst of your business avocations; thy heels tripped up, by a treacherous malady, and you left to count the tedious minutes as they passed, in the solitude of your sitting-room for two years in succession? If you have, my dear fellow, you can pity me with all your heart. But if not, just behold me? Seated in an old arm chair, the cushion of which occupied, day after day, and day after day, has got so used to my fundamental principles, that should I be absent for one day, would cry out for its old companion. I have in fact worn out every source of amusement. I know the sound of every clock that strikes, and bell that rings in the place. I know to a second when to listen for the whistle of the Locomotive, bearing the New York morning papers, the reading of which occupys an hour or so. But all these have grown wearisome to me! And even the well known step of my Doctor, as he enters in the morning, with healing in his countenance, as he slowly walks up the hall, no longer affords an agreeable interruption to the monotony of my apartment.

I then took upon myself to beguile the weary hours by studying music on a Banjo not for the purpose of joining a Niger-Band, but as I said before, amusement! I soon found even this had no charms for a languid ear, however sweet the sounds that issued. I tried to read, got among others Samartines history of the Girondists; which you are aware has attained quite a celebrity, as a historical work. But alas, my mind would not fix itself. I turned over leaf after leaf, but threw it by finally in despair; says I at length as a "dernier-resort" if I cannot read a book, I will go to work and write a letter to Otis,

So here you have it, and will undoubtedly find it to be, as Shakespeare says of the Justice in his fifth age of man full of, "wise saws and modern instances." We were honoured on Sunday last, with a visit from your companion Rundle; who in his suite of gray, and military cape, cut quite a dash in our quiet little church, even the ladies, when Charley was walking up isle would turn to one another and whisper, "what a proper man." Should you see him in at any time remember me, in the shape of my best respects.

We can boast among other things, of a visit from one of the Hungarian Exiles, who being a graduate of one of the Miliary Schools of his native place, was pretty well posted up as regards matters and things; and had also served as Captn under Kossuth, during the last war. He having been with my Brother-in-Law for a year past as engineer out west, of course met with a welcome reception, and left with a promise to come again soon.

But perhaps my letter, has proved tiresome to you? If so I have but one observation to make, my brain has become chuck full of odds and ends, and after a long time, these matters become shaken up in my mind, and find this an admirable way to relieve it.

So fall too, to what I have <set> before you most worthy friend. You <[hole in paper]> find it very long, and as some <[hole in paper]> "Variety is charming." So good bye, <Father> and Lib wish to be remembered to you. Write soon for your letters always prove, a welcome visitant.

Respectfully Yours
W Augustus Howard

To O.O. Howard
West Point

342 11/30/1851 *From:* O. O. Howard

To: Col John Gilmore
[Mother]

OOH-0323

West Point N.Y.

South Leeds
Maine

Source: Bowdoin

West Point N.Y. Nov 30th 1851

Dear Mother

I was thinking last evening, it being Saturday that you might be expecting a couple of letters from your two boys. Then I wished I had written one in the middle of the week. I would write every week if I could and do it well: but if I should try I would soon begin to hurry over my letters, and they would very soon be hardly worth the reading. I cannot write so easily nor so rapidly as I could when in College. It is partly because my mind is comparatively excluded from literature, not having the emulation continually stimulating me to study different authors & reproduce the thoughts which my readings used to suggest, and perhaps I am more considerate about writing whatever comes into my head. At any rate the fact is true that my intellect moves slowly now in everything; but if it goes right, if the results of thought, of meditation are correct, we will not complain.

The only thing to be regretted is that my friends have often to wait so long for an answer to their letters that they think I wish to put a stop upon the correspondence. I have received two letters from Augustus Howard since I have written him one. But I believe mine doubled his in length; so we are 'at quits.' He says "Perhaps you have never like me been waylaid in the midst of your business avocations, your heels tripped up by a treacherous malady, and you left to count the tedious minutes as they pass in the solitude of your sitting room for two long years in succession(?) If you have my dear fellow, you can pity me with your whole heart, but if not just behold me, &c". He describes his privations, & fallen self, but does it in a sort of cheerful humorous manner, which almost makes you laugh while you pity the poor fellow with all your heart. I want to make him a visit on Christmas if I can do it. I shall try to get a leave.

Time glides on pretty fast, tis almost January, one month more, and then comes another examination, which is to dethrone me from the head. I have been a little unfortunate lately in drawing. I was printing 'topographical signs' over the top of my piece, after I had finished the drawing, having worked on it ever since we commenced in September & got a blot on it, where a letter was to come. I scratched it out & scratched a hole through my paper. I should have cried, had I not remembered, that I was twenty one. A little care would have saved that; but 'tis no use reflecting. I have injured my standing very much. The instructor in drawing has not seen it yet. I am bracing my nerves for a "trimming". You know I always fear a scolding more than a whipping. The future must mend the past as usual, so good bye to the subject.

Lizzie writes me that she has not received an answer to her letter from you; says Peleg has received a letter from Rowland about taking the school at Cape Elizabeth. It is close by Portland as you know, & Lizzie thinks she shall see Rowland very often, if he will take the school. It being so near the city, I fear it is a large, hard school. Has he written you much about it? If he keeps it is not very far from the time to begin.

Uncle Ward has not been to the Point since last encampment. He thinks his visits put me to a good deal of trouble, because I have to run about after a permit every time he comes.

Thanksgiving day has come & gone with you. The day was just like any other to us. We had some bony salt fish with bread & molasses for dinner & our usual supper. We are generally better provided for now than when I first came here. A graduate of this institution has the oversight & direction of our supplies, and gives very good satisfaction. For breakfast & supper we have what are called 'rolls.' They are each equal to about two common biscuits. We have one apiece, with coffee in the morning & tea at evening. These rolls are made of flour & would be good if fresh, but there is a regulation in the army prohibiting the use of bread till it is a couple of days old I believe. At any rate our rolls are always dry. At dinner we have a regular routine - beginning Monday and ending Saturday. I have not paid attention enough to the subject, to tell what we have on each day, excepting that we always have fish on Friday.

Laura & I believe you spoke of Melvin Howard - his sickness. How does he do? Is Charlie going to school on the ridge this winter? Tell him he must write me without waiting my slow motions. He shall have a letter soon. I want him to tell me what he is going to study - about his singing school & anything in which he is interested.

And Dellie - ask him for <[hole in paper]> he is going to study this winter. Tell him he must study real <hard> for he must not be outdone by his other brothers in scholarship. I would like to race over the hill this winter with them, but such good times as they will have will not be mine. Tell Roland I think he cuts me rather cold. If he finds anything in any paper which he thinks will be of interest to me tell him he must send it to me.

Give my love to each & all & write me as often as is consistent with your many duties & your state of health. Do write Lizzie a few words if you can; she thinks so much of my mother & my mother's good will. Good Night.

Your affectionate son
O. O. Howard

[Envelope]
Col John Gilmore
South Leeds
Maine
[Postmark] WEST POINT N.Y.