
379 5/1/1852

From: O.O. Howard

To: Mr Rowland B Howard

OOH-0357

West Point N. York

South Leeds
Maine

Source: Bowdoin

West Point N. York May 1st, 52

Dear Brother

I owe six letters. What shall I do? We began general review a day or two since, and I find that we have got to go over eleven hundred pages of pure mathematics in twenty six lessons, half of it was got before January, and has faded in consequence from my memory to an alarming extent. What shall I do? Would you not rehearse to me the fable of the speaking clock; reminding me that I shall have to tick but once in a second? I am not so very tired at the prospect as from the actual ticking that I have accomplished. But with a little more than a month between me & furlough, how can I be discouraged?

To tell you the truth, however, I do really feel a little chagrined to think. I can't go home and tell you that I am at the head of my class. Yet I console myself by the consciousness that it is no easy matter to preserve that standing, especially when we take into consideration my want of talent in the fine arts. At January I made up my mind to rise in Drawing. We began to paint. I descended to 56 the first month. We began etching the human figure & landscapes with the pen. By dint of unwearied application, working at my room & in the Academy I rose up to 45th the second month. I am still improving but I have to pull up hill. Oh this Drawing! I like it. I take pleasure in it, but cannot excel. I think I shall practice sketching somewhat on furlough. Speaking of furlough reminds me that I must have permission of father to go home, written after the following form.

Capt Henry Brewerton
Corps of Engineers
Superintendent Mil. Academy
West Point N.Y.

Leeds Me. May-, 1852

Sir

I request that my son (or ward) Cadet Oliver O. Howard be allowed a leave of absence during the period of the ensuing encampment of the Corps of Cadets.

I am Sir
very respectfully
Yr obedt servant
(Signature)

Since so many of these permits or requests are to be obtained from so many different persons, it is desirable, so thinks Capt. Brewerton, that there be a uniformity in the documents, though it may not be strictly essential. I shall write for \$25.00. I think now; but I hope to be able to make out with much less. I am out of debt now, but cannot tell how much till our books are settled. We have a muster of cadets & of all belonging to the army on the post every two months, which period is called a settlement. Then, or after this muster the account of each cadet is balanced, and if he finds no error, he signs the payroll, testifying to the receipt of an amount of money which he never sees, but which he realizes in the food that he eats the clothes that he wears, the rooms that he occupies with its accompanying furniture, the books & drawing utensils that he makes use of &c &c. The charges here are made just in conformity to the pay, reserving the equipment fund which is ninety-six dollars for the whole time - they manage just fairly to exhaust the remainder. This equipment fund the cadet has in cash if he wishes it upon his graduation or he can have the amount due, if he is found deficient, dismissed or sent away on any plea.

We have had quite an exciting time amongst us of late. The Comndt or Superintendent, wished to try some experiment about putting men at a table in the mess hall, plotting probably some new arrangement. They took a table, at which certain cadets of bad reput in the Corps were sitting, added to it others to make the original table a very long one, and then ordered a Cadet Captain to keep it full at all meals. He thereupon undertook to fill it with plebes but a person can fallout of rank after the roll-call if he chooses & not go to meals. Upon this

privilege, at the command "Fall out" all the plebes fell out. Well! At the mess, the Cadet Capt before mentioned, ordered third class men individually to go to the table. The hall has two parts called respectively the upper & lower mess-hall in the lower mess-hall several refused to go to the table, & were put in "arrest" some left the mess-hall by permission & were reported for that. When the same Captain came to the upper hall, where I sit, several of us who knew nothing of the excitement below went to the table. Those who are in arrest will probably be deprived of their furlough.

The class after this, that is all but one or two, determined not to sit at the table at any rate. I tell you I trembled when I went to the mess hall the next day for I had the whole class watching me - the hopes of my furlough began to grow dim. But as good luck would have it, the order was changed & certain men were detained from the fourth class by Capt Alden himself to sit there permanently, and my heart was relieved.

You don't know - can scarcely understand the <nature> of a disobedience of orders in the army - or of its punishment untill you have been there.

Give my love to all
Yr affectionate brother
O.O. Howard

I had a long letter from Charlie a few days ago. He seems to be doing very well at Readfield. I shall write him a letter some time today (May 2d).

[Envelope]
[Postmark] WEST POINT NY MAY 3
[To] Mr Rowland B Howard
South Leeds
Maine

380 5/14/1852 *From:* R B Howard

To: O. O. Howard

OOH-0359

South Leeds

Source: Bowdoin

South Leeds May 14th 1852

Dear Brother

You can't think how everything has altered within ten days. The snow banks have all disappeared and in their places the grass has sprung up fresh and green. The trees are in leaf. Oat Wheat &c are up and looking finely. In short the work of a whole season has been done by a few warm, bright days. I have worked considerably in the garden mostly in mother's corner, among her plants and flower beds. Yesterday I have planted about two hundred strawberry plants. I suppose they will not bear much before another season.

The men are preparing the ground now for planting corn. All, horses oxen &c busily at work, hurried by the lateness of the season and the beautiful weather. Father, as usual giving the general orders at breakfast and dinner tables. Mother spent yesterday afternoon with Aunt Lucretia and I after tea, went for her. Lucia is the same slim, fragile looking thing that she was, perhaps a little taller and more womanly than when you knew her.

I should like to have you here now first rate, for the fun of fishing, if nothing else. I am just waking up to the beauties of sucker spearing. I know that you would be delighted with it. I don't forget the time that you kept me fishing in the Sail Boats, after I was pukingly sick, hauling in the lake wonderfully. That sickened me of salt water fishing when there is much of a breeze or swell, but down by a little brook on a dry shore, with rubbers on, it is vastly different.

We heard from Charley this week, through Mr Barrows, that Gent saw him at Fayette when on an exchange last sabbath. Charles appeared very glad to see him. I think some of us will go up for him next week. Since I wrote you, I have been down at Brunswick Portland &c. I settled my bills at the former place, disposed of my furniture and did other things preparatory to leaving College. I enjoyed myself very much the few days that I spent there. My classmates appeared very anxious for me to return to my class. <Ponies> of all sorts and kinds were offered to assist my making up and it was with much difficulty that I resisted their importunities, but I had made up my mind that it was best for me to leave and I have left.

At Portland I met all of your friends. Lizzie looks and appears as charming as ever. Mrs W is the same frank open hearted confiding lady that you I suppose know better than I do. Perley as usual was alternately sad and gay. I believe he is very popular as a school teacher.

The day before I went in Perley & Lizzie went a Maying with a party of friends. The latter was pretty well tired out and rather unfit for the long walk that we had the next evening. Going down to Unkle Henry's to make a short call. We found ourselves among quite a party that unknown to us had been invited for the evening. But however I enjoyed it very much and passed a very pleasant evening, although wholly unaquainted with any except our relatives and Lizzie. I believe she did not enjoy herself as much as I did. About ten o.cl. we had a fine oyster supper, served up in good style for you know when Henry tries he is decidedly <some>. I found Aunt Ann, a blooming, healthy, happy, looking Aunt, and quite polite, affable, &c, greeting her hopeful nephew with showers of kisses and et ceteras. The next day I took dinner with them and came as far as Yarmouth when I was set down by mistake. I found old Jewett, the same good looking, self satisfied slow spoken, unsocial good fellow as ever. By the way, you having a very delightful gossiping correspondent, must have heard (of course) that Friend J has abandoned his Brunswick speculation. The B. old women stick up their noses and talk mysteriously about broken pledges, dishonor &c. The engagement was one in which the whole town and Topsham too, were intensely interested. And Jewett is very unpopular in that region at present, but I'll bet on his upright honorable conduct in any matter, wont you?

I cant write without ruling and so I will stop, assuring you that your return is the most interesting topic of the season among relatives, friends and acquaintances. I hope that my time will be so disposed of that I shall have abundant opportunity to enjoy your society. I remain as ever

Your affectionate brother
Roland

You have been an unfortunate youth from your childhood. I suppose you remember running against ports, spraining knees, getting into ponds, now getting caught. All the fulfillment of your dark destiny.

Your aff Brother
R B Howard

381 5/14/1852 *From:* Rodelphus Gilmore *To:* Brother [OO Howard]

OOH-0360

South Leeds

Source: Bowdoin

South Leeds May 14th 52

Dear brother

I have not writen to you this great while. I just finished a litter for Charly. RB is writing to you. We got to working on the farm the last day in April. We sowed. We have got the great farm to take care of and this one to. I want you to com home now for I want to see you. Our old Rail Road must go now. Thay have money enough. It is not but a short time before you will be at home. When I see you I shal be pleased as you are when you see me.

and so good by from your affectionate
brother Rodelphus

382 5/16/1852 *From:* Otis [O O Howard]

To: Mother [Eliza Gilmore]

OOH-0361

West Point N.Y.

Source: Bowdoin

West Point N.Y. May 16th 1852

Dear Mother,

It is now a long time since I have written in fact much longer than I intended that it should be, but I find it impossible to write week days while we are on general review. But I will forego excuses, for it is time that I should write some thing else. It is Sunday as you may see by my date. Sunday morning & a beautiful morning it is at West Point. The trees are all leaved - and those which blow are in blossom. The grass is quite high, giving the plain a rich dark green covering, in fine, West Point now has on her finest dress. Nature thus decked, the clear morning sun with its genial warmth, and the quiet of a sabbath day, only disturbed by a few little songsters, give to the soul a sort of subdued pensive happiness.

Tis just the time to think of home, of one's early boyhood, of one's mother & those that are dear. Dream-like the fancy wanders from spot to spot, from person to person, far away. But stop or your mathematical boy will ape the poet, or your aspiring soldier forget his methodical calling & wander in the airy castles of the sentimental dreamer.

Everything proceeds with me as it is wont. The monotony is relieved by the prospect of furlough drawing nearer & nearer. In a few short weeks I will shake off the shackles of military rule, and steer my course free as the bird that sits on the tree before my window, towards my old home. I spoke in my last letter to Rowland of some young men, who had been put in arrest for refusing to go to a certain table in the mess-Hall. They have been tried by a Garrison Court Martial & their punishment was published last evening. They are to be confined to their rooms from June 1st till the battalion goes into camp. & walk Post equipped as sentinels from this till the 30th of June, & somewhat more during that period. Then they can go home. It is rather a hard punishment, but no more than they expected.

I went to see Warren yesterday. He has a very pretty neat little room all by himself. I have found a very private path by which I can get there without being seen off limits. I had not seen him to converse with him for several months before. He was in very good spirits & in excellent health. Give my love to his mother & tell her I shall visit him before I leave for home & get anything that he may wish to send.

Charles Harville has been reduced to ranks as a private soldier, for some violation of their military regulations. He has now a miserable wife. He is pitted horridly with the small pox, and has been deprived of his corporalcy & become a Common Soldier - rather an unenviable, hopeless position for a young man.

Now I will come to the subject of money matters. I did not gain so much on my last settlement as I expected, and if I do not receive anything from home, I shall not be able to leave with my class. I went to the Superintendent yesterday and got permission to write for money to make a deposit. I wish father to send me twenty five dollars if he can conveniently. I shall try to make out with as much less as possible, both for the sake of having money while on furlough; and also for my return. All who came with me in September have been obliged to write for money; graduating the amount according to the distance they will have to travel in order to reach their homes. The most of those who came in June are forty dollars in advance. You may direct it to me & I will deposit it to be restored to me when I leave. The most of those who came in June made a deposit of 70 or 80 dollars. This then will readily account for the amount that they now exceed me.

I received a long letter from Charlie not long ago, descriptive in detail of his school. He seems to be very content & happy at Kent's Hill. How is Rowland now? Is he at work with father on his farm? And Roland A? Ask him if it is three or four years since we have seen each other. But I have the time of his leaving recorded in my Journal. Perhaps would be amusing to him to read my reflections at that time. Here they are.

"March 15th 1849. Roland G has gone! Really gone! I have been so much engaged of late that I have scarcely thought of him. Now memory returns. Much time have we spent together in perfect harmony. Many pleasant recollections rise up before me of the times when we have made a hard task easy by our merry & joyous pratings, recollections of our boyish discussions & philosophy. These by our separation must become

the endeared memorials which we hold of each other. The future always looked brighter to me than to Roland. The natural bias of his mind seemed to incline him to view the dark side of the picture. His reading of fiction, or rather that class of novels which give a man false impressions, erroneous conceptions of human things, has had an injurious effect upon him (At least so I fancy). There is an undue excitement in such reading. To a person of his temperament comparatively inexperienced & very sensitive - and this excitement, when it abates naturally produces a depression and induces a gloomy spirit. I, on the other hand, ever having some object ahead have pursued it cheerfully. Life has looked bright & pleasant, and my bosom has ever thrilled with glowing anticipations of future good. So different were we in disposition. Yet for some reason we have enjoyed each other's society & many a pleasant time we have passed together. I humored his conceits perchance, and he was frequently kind like a brother. I am in College & he is gone to California. May he do well & return! It seems uncertain. But he is perhaps no more uncertain than the fate of those who remain at home. We can enumerate many dangers to which he will be exposed; yet there are many, many dangers to which we are constantly subject, but we think not of them. By change of place we may modify our dangers but we do not escape them."

Such were my reflections then. It may amuse him to hear them even if they are not all just.

Give my love to all. Ask Laura H when you see her if I did not write the last letter. Give her my love. & remember me to all uncle Ensign's family. My health is quite good; my hair not quite so grey as father's. Does Lizzie write you? Write as soon as convenient.

Your affectionate son
Otis

383 5/23/1852 *From:* Eliza Gilmore

To: O O Howard

OOH-0362

Leeds

Source: Bowdoin

Leeds May 23d 1852

My dear son

Your's of the 16th inst came safe to hand last eve. We were all of us very happy to hear from you. Charlie made one of us last evening R.B.H. went for him Friday. His mother thought 9 weeks was as long as she wanted to be without seeing him. He will return tomorrow. I did not read R.B.s letter to you. I never read his letters unless I take them up when he does not know of it. I read his answer from you. I think he has imbibed some false notions which neither contribute to his comfort now nor his best friends who love him dearly. I think he studies to be peculiar. In this daily manner of conduct does trouble me, although in itself it amounts to mere nothing. If I judge rightly from words I occasionally hear him let fall, he thinks himself not duly appreciated, and with that idea puts on those airs which he often does. I am truly disappointed in R.B. But stop mother if nothing befalls any of us. We shall be together again in one month or a little more.

R.B. needs a real friend, such a one as his mother can be if he would admit her, but I am a stranger to him only as I watch his movements. How wrong it is in him to hold himself at such a distance from me. I perceive plainly that the cause of his ill health is not removed, and know he does not want I should know when he coughs, and gets as far from me as possible. I have great hopes when you arrive, and are with him you will get the whole truth of his bodily sufferings, and his secret discontent, while actually his mother does not know as he has any. I have just reread a part of your last letter in answer to my last one to you my suggestions in that letter were not merely to lay open a sense of poverty, but to have a perfect understanding between us. It does not seem to me, that a smart young man with your endowments would feel poor, but still cash in pocket is perfectly convenient at all times. and people who are the most capable do not always find opportunity of turning their tallants to advantage. Your father will inclose the twenty five dollars you require, and more if you say so.

I have seen but little of Laura, the winter and spring that are past. Uncle Ensigns family are in health. Mother has returned to Hallowell. I presume R.B. wrote all the news about Portland, Brunswick, Hallowell & Leeds in his last letter. I will not repeat the same. Mrs. Davie is very sick, and I am very anxious about her, she has been sick about ten days. Arza is so run down that he cannot do any business. That sore in his side that drove him from Brooklyn, has doubled its force upon him. It discharges a great quantity of matter daily. What with a bad cough and no appetite has reduced him very much. R.B. and C.H. called at Wayne Friday eve to see him. R.B. says he is strangely changed, since I saw him, so emaciated and purely white with a hiatic flush on each cheek, I have not seen him since Sleighing. Mr Berry called lately to see him, and speaks of him in the same way. There must be a closing scene to us all some day and some where.

Your father rec. a letter from one of the directors last eve. requesting him to be in Boston tomorrow afternoon. He will leave home at four tomorrow morning to be in time for the cars at Greene. I intend to write to Lizzie today to give her an express invitation to spend all the time with us that she can this Summer. I saw Mrs Lothrop a few days since. Her health is good. Mary Jane was with her. She is a great big girl with red cheeks. Maria Otis I understand is coming to Leeds this summer. She has not been here since you went to West Point. I suppose you knew William Otis was in Boston, in Mr Pear's Office preparing to be a collector of Newspaper accounts. If R.B. had not written so many letters this spring I would write some of the news of the day, but it would to incipid to read a second time. Leeds is just the same place it ever was, watching each other to make sure that they have as many faults as I have, and of a course no better. Charlie is indeed a lovely boy. He sings well, he has just now been singing with R.B. I believe I wrote you your Aunt Lucretia lives on the farm where Mr Been formerly lived. Her husband has hired it for two years. Your Uncle Frank and his two boys live together without any housekeeper having their bread baked out of the house and their washing done in the same way. Freedom Gould is married to Adelia Perley. I thought Lizzie and you would have to ride up there and make a call. I think I heard that Mr G had taken her house. His father died very soon after <Ternny> did. It is now about the time of the year I used to be looking for you home from College. Where think you are all of your College Class mates at this time? I expect your Aunt Lee is at brother Ensign's and will be here soon to make her farewell visit, and then for New York. I have not seen her since Sarah's marriage. I expect her visit with me will be short, as my conveniences are so meagre.

I expect soft beds & family tables will be unnatural to you at first. You will feel the change some time before you reach home. I have done expecting even to have much acquaintance with Mrs Waite. I think I have made sufficient advance, on my part. You must let us know of all your movements as often as possible untill you reach home. Charlie was quite punctual to write for a number of weeks while at Readfield. I wrote him one letter and he concluded not to write until I wrote him, but mother expects her sons to let her know what their situation is and pen a few thoughts for her perusal whether she can always write to them or not.

The forests are completely covered with their wonted verdure. The country from my window looks beautiful. Last evening I read your letter to Roland Alger. He was melted to tears, and after I got through he left the house for a short time.

Evening.

Since I wrote the other three pages I have rode to Mr Joseph Turners, to see Mrs T who is a great sufferer. She has a large abscess on her side, which is a dark purple. How long she is to suffer is known only to him who overrules all things for the best good of such of his children as love him but O! the misteries of God. They are inscrutable, Mrs T seems to desire to have patience to bear all that is allotted her. Seeing her changed my train of thought very much. How much we need a higher power than human to guide our stumbling footsteps through this world of suffering. Your father said when he read your last letter directed to me containing two sheets he should write a part of my next and I gave him an opportunity but the suddenness of his journey gives him so little time for preparation, that he could not say any thing this time. One thing he says the theory of keeping boys short for money is not his. It belongs to some other person. I regret his being Called away from home as this time as we are doing our farming well this year. Your has helped three weeks constantly. Jane Bates has been on visit to Massachusetts, for a month past and returned a few days since full of spirit delighted with every thing she saw but happy to return to her old home. I think my pens are the worst I ever used. I have tryed a number and all seem to go in the same way. R B is in heaving and keeps a constant clearing or haming, which sounds bad to me. You will perceive two hands writing. I had nearly two pages written when I spilled a lot of ink on my sheet. It was then about time to get my dinner and Charley offered to copy what I had written and did. I hope I shall have a better pen before I attempt writing again.

From your affectionate Mother
Eliza Gilmore

[To] O O Howard

384 5/27/1852 *From:* W.L.L [Warren
Lothrop]
[West Point]

To: [O O Howard]

OOH-0363

Source: Bowdoin

May 27, 52

My Dear Howard

I was sorry to learn the other day that you & Brown had had some difficulty. I have heard several different reports of the affair none of which I could believe. Will you please give me the truth of the affair - send down a note by Beny. Are either you or Brown in arrest. I am certainly very sorry that you have had difficulty.

I received a letter from my brother in California the other day. He was well & doing well at the time; have also heard from our friends in Leeds lately - they were all well.

Truly yours.

W.L.L. [Warren Lane Lothrop]