
590 11/4/1855 *From:* Otis [O. O. Howard] *To:* Mother [Eliza Gilmore]

OOH-0541

Watervliet Arsenal N.Y.

Source: Bowdoin

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Nov 4th 1855

Dear Mother

It seems a very long time since I have heard from any of you. I had a letter after Charlie had recovered from his illness but haven't had a word since. I don't know whether he has returned to College or not.

Maj Symington went on to inspect Augusta Arsenal a week ago tomorrow. I sent a package to Rowland by him. I had written him before, in hopes that he would meet the Major at the cars, but he did not and has not yet advised me of the receipt of either the letter or package. I trust you are all well and the boys at College.

Mr Boggs was away at the same time with Maj Symington, so that I was the only officer on the Post, and I had to be very busy, at least I had to have my mind on my business, being, like one new in command, anxious to do all things well. On this account I have put off writing any but business letters, till now.

You know I have had a horse & carriage I suppose for a month and upwards. Since Mrs Waite has been here the roads have been so muddy and the weather so inclement that we have not ridden much. Yet we have been to Cohoes falls on the Mohawk, to Troy Cemetery where we have a more extensive view than elsewhere in this vicinity. It was a little misty when we went there, but soon after I took Lizzie to the same place in a clear day. It is on the Troy side of the river & about two miles to the north & about one mile East of the Hudson.

The Cemetery comprises upwards of three hundred acres, has a large pond & pleasant groves included and is intersected in every direction by fine gravel roads & paths. The cemetery itself is comparatively new but as fine a one as I have been in. The grounds are not level but consist of hills & gentle slopes. Many of the vaults belonging to the wealthier people of Troy are extensive. On the highest point of these grounds & towards the river is a small observatory that overlooks an extensive & beautiful section of country, comprising the valleys of the Mohawk & the Hudson for miles & miles. The former makes its junction with the latter right in front of you with two or three mouths.

You can see the whole of Troy & west Troy & some little of Albany towards the south, the Catskills & the wavy country intervening, dotted with groves, forrests & houses at intervals to the south west & west, to the north west Cohoes & the Falls on the Mohawk, Waterford between the Mohawk & the Hudson & Lansingburg on the Eastern bank of the latter & nearer at hand. You can trace the rail-road lines to the north, south & west, & the great Canals to the north & west. It is a beautiful scene & particularly so at this season when the trees & fields have put on all the hues of the rainbow.

I went to Waterford the other day with our Military store keeper Mr Lansing. He is a gentleman quite advanced in years & a native of this country. He said he knew Mr Fisk of Waterford & would take me to the house where father stopped. The old public house has been burned to the ground & another built in its place. Mr Fisk is driving an express between Troy & that place and no longer keeps a public House.

Is Dellie still at Monmouth? I am very anxious to hear from you & hope I shall before this letter reaches you. How is Louisa? Lizzie says: "you didn't tell them, it is my birth day." & again: "I am 23 years old". She says my whiskers look like old pine bows - sort of brindle: true enough they have turned sort of reddish since my marriage, hair dye being too expensive for a married man.

The report is that we are soon to have another bride within the Arsenal walls. Lieut Boggs vs. (as the law term is) Miss Mary Symington as they haven't told me & made me promise not to tell, I have a right to gossip.

The Indian war seems slowly progressing. Some of my class mates were in the battle of Bluewater. I am reading Napiers history of the peninsular war of which father probably has some recollection, it being between 1808 & 1813. Reading it with maps particularly for military information. I am also reading Mansfield's history of

the Mexican Campaigns. I completed first before I began these the history of Charles the 5th who was king of Spain & Emperor of the German states, succeeding Ferdinand & Isabella in Spain. I think I shall spend all the time I can get in historical readings while here. I take a daily paper from N. York besides the Portland Advertiser weekly. I should like to have you visit us very much indeed - but would rather for your sake you should come in the summer or early in the fall. The prospect is that I shall be here two or three years more.

Lizzie & her mother send their love to you & all. I hope Father is well as well as yourself in the best of health & prosperity.

Affectionately your son
Otis

Lizzie promises to write soon, but she is a little lazy - I say.