desire it my counsel is at your service. I would like to have you lay open your heart to me and tell me what you would like to do most of all and how you propose to accomplish your ends. I may assist you somewhat. My own studies generally have been too desultory and the want of a fixed purpose is now my greatest source of annoyance. Rowland is in very much the same way. Circumstances are left to guide us and ~~not~~ it is not in our power to press steadily and strongly on to prosperity. I hope you will write soon. Charlie was well when we last heard from him. Remember me to all friends when you write and

Believe me your affectionate
Brother O. O. Howard

O. O. Howard
Nov 7/1856

480

Watervliet Arsenal West Troy N.Y.
Nov 7th 1856

My dear Brother

I have set apart this morning to write you. My time has all been taken up lately with drawing and other duties and I have been forced to neglect my correspondence. Rowland received a letter from Mother yesterday. The first we have got from her since she returned from Massachusetts. Our dear Uncle has passed from the stage of action since I wrote you. His death came very suddenly and unexpectedly to us as well as to his family. Aunt Ellen is now a widow with a large family to look after and complicated affairs to arrange. God has truly visited her & hers with severe affliction and I trust she will make His Arm her protection and His merciful forbearance & Love her consolation.

So it is, we surround ourselves with all the comforts & conveniences that human foresight can provide, when one single blow dashes our most cherished hopes to the ground. When will we learn where to place our confidence and on whom to lean at all times for

safe guidance. We are all very well. Guy has got to be a great boy. He can walk very well by holding on to one finger of your hand or holding on to a chair or the bedstead. He plays hard all of the time. Has his drawer india rubber balls, silver mug, knife, fork and spoon. He affords me a great deal of amusement. comes to meet me on all fours. He has taken one side on Malie and enjoyed it wonderfully, but it is getting so cold that he won't be able to have any more rides for the winter. Rowland has probably written you that Sr. & Mrs Se board with us, so that we have a pretty good sized family. Now that I have given you a slight account of our family I want to inquire after yourself. How are you getting on? Boys & young men at school sometimes forget there is such a thing as subsequent life - or if they think of the future they gloss it over completely with all sorts of air castles - but you have read a good many books understandingly and I trust you have a little unvarnished common sense. Now it dont matter so much in all cases what one studies, whether Latin, Greek, or Mathematics. But it is well to have clearly before you at every moment some well defined object as the ultimatum, towards the attainment of which all your efforts should be directed. As soon as you are old enough to understand your own tastes. You can form some notion of what business would suit you best, provided you could be assured of success. Would you like to be a lawyer, Doctor, Minister or business man? Would you like to confine your attention wholly to literature, or to science? Think it over and fix upon something and then with the permission of Providence you can go on to accomplish something. I dont mean to urge my dear brother that you neglect any study if it does not seem to bear upon the result you desire, but you can shape your course generally by your final goal.

If you would like to be a business man, carry on large operations - iron works, factories, or attach yourself to any extensive business firm ~~of~~ you would want to study the economy of trade, Mathematics and practical philosophy - You would not want a college education, but get as good an english education as you could in three or four years, close application and then enter at once upon your profession as a clerk and your after success depends on your diligence. I believe that the surest & quickest road to an independent fortune for a young man of ability lies in this direction. It needs steadiness of purpose, self-denial and continued earnest effort to attain any position worth having. I want prolong these remarks further now. But Sellie, at any time you

in the meantime. You spoke of the death of Mr. Zebulon Millet. I can remember seeing him at Church as long ago as I can remember anything. One after another of the aged drops away & we grow older. Soon the children will think our hair was always gray and wonder why we are not active & gleesome as they. Yet they too are pledging on to manhood, age and the Grave. Yes it will seem queer to you to have Uncle Enseign, Aunt Martha & Laura at Lewiston. What are they going there for? Give my love to them when you see them. Tell Father Rowland's letters are strong for 1860. "Bide your time, truth must triumph in the end." I send another Dollar lately. My love to Father – Remember me to the neighbors who inquire – Affectionately yr. son

O. O. Howard

My dear Mother,

I have not written you since I came to Troy, and now this brought me into brother Rowland's room without telling me what he wanted of me. If he should do so every time he writes I presume I would write as often as he but when I say I would like to write to you, and not go directly about it, I am very apt to think of some household matter that need my attention, and therefore that opportunity passes without my having written. We are very glad to hear of you often, and hear of your health. I hope you do not have your work on cases increased, but are as healthy as it is possible for you to be. Be it as it may be assured of the kind love &

460

Watervliet Arsenal West Troy N.Y.
November 16th 1859.

My dear Mother,

You must not think, because I have written so little of late, that I am growing careless or remiss, or that I have forgotten that I have dear friends elsewhere than here. I have trusted to Howland's letters to tell you of our good health and of the news. I have been waiting for a favorable opportunity to write you a long letter. Of late I have been very busy in the line of my duty. Have been making drawings every day till I get tired of confinement and so think it a duty I owe myself to spend as much of the rest of the day as I can in the open air and every night when I think I will write, I feel too weary to write a readable letter. This is Sunday and as it is a cold, rainy day I think I will not go to Church but spend the time in writing and reading.

I have already written to Aunt Ellen as good a letter as I could. I have not been able to make it seem as if Uncle was really gone to another world, no more than I could realize that Grandmother had been taken away. I do feel for his family and appreciate the

the trying circumstances that Aunt finds herself in. But as you said we must believe that there is the hand of Providence in all things and that He will overrule even affliction to our advantage, and most probably the Divine direction is intended for our spiritual good. I feel and acknowledge that we should all labor for the Glory of our Benificent Father and that all our efforts and strivings should be subservient to His will, that we should have something above a selfish purpose in life, but I never have taken a single step in the path of duty. In fact if you were to ask me to tell you exactly what things I ought to do what practical course I ought to pursue I could not answer you. Say to me, 'Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and thy neighbor as thyself.' I cannot do it. and probably shall not till some terrible stroke has awakened my sensibilities and prostrated my soul with its pride and yearnings earthward in the dust. You may think I am not happy. But I am. I enjoy life and its blessings: I appreciate the love and affection of my wife. I enjoy the regard that my position affords me. I love my little boy. Neither do I tremble in view of the future or of death: but still I am in that state of mind where every man is, who feels that God has made him for a purpose, and he doubts whether or not he is fulfilling it. There would be no use in any outward demonstration, I will not join a Church or make any open profession of faith, till I am sure I possess that faith, and am prepared to devote myself to the service of my Maker without reserve. Saint Lee is a very young man, just graduated, and has married a mere child. But he is steady, with excellent principles, a perfect gentleman, without making any pretensions. His wife seems to be really good hearted, perfectly ingenuous, but full of whims, quite privatum and inconsiderate. She loves her husband, her mother, her kitten, her oranges & her candy. There were no quarters on the Post unoccupied and Lee had to go somewhere. I thought of the advantages and of the disadvantages of boarding. His quantum of food is of advantage to me, prevents my longing. In a money point of view he does not benefit me; excepting that when he is here we can keep two girls. Lizzie does not work more than she did before. I have not yet sold either of my horses, have a cow, two pigs and fifteen chickens; quite a domestic establishment. St. Clair & his father spend as a short visit Thursday & friday nights. The former has been in California, New Mexico & Texas ever since he graduated. He got a leave of absence at Baton Rouge to go home; has spent a week there and is now on his way back. He has already got promoted to a 1st Lieutenancy. My turn will come next July, or sooner if somebody resigns

O O Howard
Nov 16/56