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Miss Augusta  
Richmond B. Howard, Esq.  
Kent Hill  
Newfield - Maine



R. C. Howard  
June 11 1849

Brunswick June 11. 1849.

Dear Brother

I am much obliged to you for the piece, which you sent; for I shall be obliged to declaim for the prize soon, and, if this suits, shall take it. I shall not send you the 'Dead Christ'. It is too hard a piece for you, and any one who speaks it - will need two or three months to practice it. So you must excuse me to your friend who wanted it. - I might copy it - to day & send it; but - I could not - get - it - before. My health is quite good. You must write me how you succeed <sup>at</sup> ~~at~~ exhibition. The best advice I can give you is "keep perfectly cool", If <sup>persons</sup> any ~~one~~ tells you strong drink, will help throw off all diffidence, do not believe them: Stimulants are more apt - to make a man appear like a fool on the stage. I have had good opportunities for observation, on that subject.

I have made preparations to keep school at Wayne village next fall. You may do as you like about - going to school to me; Perhaps, if I have a large school, I shall want - you to assist me some. People might



think, if my brother would not go to school  
to me, that I could not be much of a  
teacher. If you will go, we can room together  
and have some very good times. I shall be  
obliged to study considerably. It may be the  
last opportunity we shall have of studying  
and perhaps of living together: yet - as I said  
act - your pleasure, and do what you think  
will be most - for your own advantage.

I presume I can keep a better school now  
than I did on the "ridge". I am older &  
have more experience. Write me how many  
speaks for the prize and if mother comes to  
your exhibition.

I must get my lesson now, I  
will try and write more very soon.

From your brother  
W. Howard



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66 6/11/1849 *From:* OO Howard

*To:* Rowland B. Howard, Esq.

RBH-030

Brunswick

Kents Hill  
Readfield Maine

*Source:* Bowdoin

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Brunswick June 11, 1849

Dear Brother

I am much obliged to you for the piece, which you sent for I shall be obliged to declaim for the prize soon, and, if this suits, shall take it. I shall not send you the "Dead Christ." It is too hard a piece for you, and any one who speaks it will need two or three months to practice it. So you must excuse me to your friend who wanted it. I might enjoy it to day & send it; but I could not get it before.

My health is quite good. You must write me how you succeed at exhibition after it. The best advice I can give you is "keep perfectly cool". If any persons tell you strong drink will help throw off all diffidence, do not believe them. Stimulants are more apt to make a man appear like a fool on the stage. I have had great opportunities for observation on that subject.

I've made preparations to keep school at Wayne Village next fall. You may do as you like about going to school to me. Perhaps, if I have a large school, I shall want you to assist me some. People might think, if my brother would not go to school to me, that I could not be much of a teacher. If you will go we can room together and have some very good times. I shall be obliged to study considerably. It may be the last opportunity we shall have of studying and perhaps of living together. Yet as I said act your pleasure, and do what you think will be most for your own advantage.

I presume I can keep a better school now than I did on the "Ridge". I am older & have more experience. Write me how many speak for the prize and if mother comes to your exhibition.

I must get my lesson now. I will try and write more very soon.

From your brother  
OO Howard

[Envelope]  
Rowland B. Howard, Esq.  
Kents Hill  
Readfield Maine  
(via Augusta)  
[Postmark] BRUNSWICK ME JUN 11  
[Paid] 5



evening the sentinel puts his head into the room  
twice & sings, "all right" to which we reply "all right!"  
All these officers of different grades are sworn, & thus  
bound to report any absence or delinquency in the  
performance of any duty. Every absence or nonperformance  
of duty, or violation of the smallest regulation, is  
reported before the Battalion, and if no good, substantial  
credible excuse is rendered, the offender gets, marks  
of demerit - (200 of which, send him) - There is a great  
variety of talent in our Class, running from absolute  
stupidity, up to the highest grade of intellect. About  
20 will be found (deficient) in January next. While  
we know you are getting on, as often as you can find time,  
never rest satisfied with a partial knowledge of things.  
Here, the most <sup>of the cadets</sup> study all the time from daylight till  
10 o'clock at night, and it is necessary for those so to  
do, who have misimproved their former advantages.

I was glad to hear from home through you, for I  
had not yet heard a word from ~~them~~ since I started.  
You may give my respects to Lettett, & tell him I will  
not try to write him to night, for that I should fail  
or write a very poor letter from sheer fatigue.  
I am really glad Peleg has got a situation to  
suit him. I have been in good health all the  
time since I left Maine, and am now in good spirits.

My greatest enjoyments consist in receiving letters  
from my friends. [My physical examination was nothing - I  
stripped myself, & went in before three  
Surgeons. They looked at me, measured my height, size round  
the chest (34 in this). One Surgeon looked at the other & said "He is a stout man", and said that was sufficient. I looked them  
in the eye without trembling or blushing -  
Have you got your shirt from Portland yet?]  
Yr affectionate  
brother  
Olio

Uncle Ward came here the other day to see me, but  
could not find me; for some cause or other, he was obliged  
to leave immediately, but sent me word that he would  
come again in a few days.

West Point, N. B. Sept 15<sup>th</sup> 1830

Dear Brother,

I received your letter yesterday,  
and was glad to find that you had really arrived at Yarmouth  
and got settled. Robinson is a good fellow & a good teacher.  
I presume he has told you that he <sup>is</sup> well acquainted  
with me, we having been together in College ~~three~~  
years. Give him my respects, & best wishes. I should be  
pleasanter for you at Yarmouth, than it was for  
me, when I went there: for there is Mr Jewett, my friend,  
classmate & companion, to keep you company & make  
you less homesick. I shall reserve all my respects  
for him, to fill a letter which I shall write him as  
soon as I finish this. To give you any <sup>intelligible</sup> account of my  
discipline, & of the "West Point system" is pretty difficult. You  
should be subjected to the same to have a correct & well-  
defined idea of the independent Cadet. I will give you the  
history of a day, or that part of it, <sup>in</sup> which I take a part, & that  
will suffice, for the same things are done, the same order,  
observed day after day, & week after week, except occasionally  
on funeral days, when the regular exercises are suspended.  
(Two officers have died since I have been here, whose funeral  
exercises have been held in this place). Suppose you can  
see me in bed, warm & comfortable, sleeping soundly, or toying  
about, in the vain belief that I am taking part in some, <sup>lively</sup> scene  
surrounded by friends; from some such state of "Somnolency"  
at just the peak of day, am I suddenly aroused by the morning gun.



Drums & fifes, immediately give forth a very inviting "Call",  
I jump from my hard bed, put on my clothes & run down  
three pairs of stairs, as quickly as possible, & fall into ranks.  
The roll is then called, after which we return to our rooms,  
wash & study till 7 o'clock. At 7, the drums & fifes call us  
again to ranks, roll is called, & we march to the mess hall.  
We stand around the tables near our respective places,  
and at the command "take seats" down we drop, we  
stay there 1/2 hour & at command "rise", all get up, & take  
places in ranks as soon as possible, and are marched  
back to the parade ground & dismissed. One half hour  
after breakfast is allowed for recreation. At 8 o'clock  
all are called to "quarters" - i.e. rooms. A part, however, of  
the cadets recite at this time. Each class is divided into sections.  
The first sections contain the 1st scholars, the 2d sections, the  
next in rank & so on. At half past 9 o'clock I recite - then  
all the sections that recite at that time are called by the  
bugle to the parade ground, where they all <sup>fall</sup> into ranks, having  
each a "Section Marcher", who calls the roll of his section, &  
marches it to a "section room", <sup>on arriving at the section room</sup> where he takes our seats  
in alphabetical order. The instructor calls upon an  
individual; he must move quickly to the middle of  
the floor, stand "attention", (without moving) until he is  
told what to do: then he goes to the board, & performs  
what he is told, (which is, usually, to deduce some rule).  
The highest mark given for a recitation is 8, called  
a "maximum" or "max". No individual gets this mark, unless  
he believes in just such a manner, uses no word incorrectly

in his demonstration, and does every thing with the precision  
& brevity of the text. This mark I have got twice, & come within  
one or two, <sup>or five</sup> tenths of it almost every time. I am gaining in  
confidence & hence in rank. I am bound to be among  
the first soon. After we finish reciting (at the end of 1/2 hour)  
we are marched back to the Barracks: Called to dinner  
as to breakfast at 1 o'clock, - recite at 3 - at four o'clock, comes  
"drill". The Battalion, (all the Cadets except the "septs")  
have the band to play for them, sometimes, & sometimes  
not. The (septs) are taken, five in a "squad", and  
marched away into some private place, and there are  
drilled to our satisfaction. This <sup>is</sup> was the second afternoon  
that we have drilled with muskets, and my back  
and shoulders ache more than they ever did after moving  
all the fore noon: for we are obliged to put our shoulders in  
such a constrained position, that, that of itself without  
the heavy gun is tiresome enough. After drilling about  
an hour & a half, without speaking or moving unless  
ordered, we are dismissed. Again, at 6 o'clock is parade  
when the arms are inspected, delinquencies read to the  
battalion; after this we are marched to supper - then  
back - have recreation 1/2 an hour; then comes "Call" to  
quarters: At half past 9 o'clock the drums & fifes tell  
us to prepare for bed. At 10, when there are three toses  
on the drum, all lights must be out & every individ-  
ual in bed. During the day, the room is inspected  
twice by an Army officer, to see if every thing is in  
its exact place, & twice a day by a cadet officer. In the



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67 9/19/1850 *From:* Otis [O O Howard]

*To:* Dear Brother [R B Howard]

RBH-031

West Point N.Y.

*Source:* Bowdoin

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West Point N.Y. September 19, 1850

Dear brother,

I received your letter yesterday and was glad to find that you had really arrived at Yarmouth and got settled. Robinson is a good fellow & a good teacher. I presume he has told you that he is well acquainted with me, we having been together in College three years. Give him my respects, & best wishes. It must be pleasanter for you at Yarmouth than it was for me, when I went there, for there is Mr. Jewett my friend, classmate & companion to keep you company & make you less homesick. I shall reserve all my respects for him, to fill a letter which I shall write him as soon as I finish this.

To give you any intelligible account of my discipline, & of the "West Point System" is pretty difficult. You should be subjected to the same to have a correct & well-defined idea of the independent Cadet. I will give you the history of a day, or that part of it in which I take a part & that will suffice for the same things are done, the same order, observed day after day, & week after week, except occasionally on funeral days, when the regular exercises are suspended. (Two officers have died since I have been here, whose funeral exercises have been held in this place.) Suppose you can see me in bed, warm & comfortable, sleeping soundly, or tossing about, in the vain belief that I am taking part in some lively scene surrounded by friends. From some such state of "somnolency" at just the peak of day, am I suddenly aroused by the morning gun. Drums and fifes, immediately give forth a very inviting "call." I jump from my hard bed, put on my clothes & run down three pairs of stairs, as quickly as possible, & fall into ranks. The role is then called, after which we return to our rooms, wash & study till 7 o'clock.

At 7, the drums & fifes call us again to ranks, roll is called, & we march to the Mess Hall. We stand around the tables near our respective places, and at the command "take seats", down we drop. We stay there ½ hour & at command "rise", all get up, & take places in ranks as soon as possible, and are marched back to the parade ground & dismissed. One half hour after breakfast is allowed for recreation. At 8 o'clock all are called to "Quarters", i.e. rooms.

A part, however, of the cadets recite at this time. Each class is divided into sections. The first sections contain the 1st scholars, the 2d sections the next in rank & so on. At half past 9 o'clock I recite. Then all the sections that recite at that time are called by the bugle to the parade ground, where they all fall into ranks having each a "Section Marcher", who calls the roll of his section & marches it to a "Section room". On arriving at the section room we take our seats in alphabetical order. The instructor calls upon an individual. He must move quickly to the middle of the floor, stand "attention", (without moving) until he is told what to do. Then he goes to the board and performs what he is told, (which is, usually, to deduce some rule). The highest mark given for a recitation is 3, called a "maximum" or "max". No individual gets this Mark, unless he behaves in just such a manner, uses no word incorrectly in his demonstration, and does everything with the precision & brevity of the text. This mark I have got twice & come within one, two or five tenths of it every time. I am gaining in confidence & hence in rank. I am bound to be among the first soon. After we finish reciting (at the end of 1 & ½ hours) we are marched back to the Barracks. Called to dinner as to Breakfast at 1 o'clock, recite at 3. At four o'clock comes "drill". The battalion, (all the Cadets except the "Septs") have the band to play for them sometimes & sometimes not.

We (Septs) are taken, five in a "squad", and marched away into some private place, and there are drilled to our satisfaction. This is the second afternoon that we have drilled with muskets, and my back and shoulders ache more than they ever did after mowing all the forenoon, for we are obliged to put our shoulders in such a constrained position, that, that of itself without the heavy gun is tiresome enough. After drilling about an hour & a half, without speaking or moving unless ordered, we are dismissed. Again, at 6 o'clock is parade, when the arms are inspected, delinquencies read to the Battalion. After this we are marched to supper then back, have recreation ½ an hour. Then comes "call to quarters". At half past 9 o'clock the drums & fifes tell us to prepare for bed. At 10, when there are three taps on the drum, all lights must be out & every individual in bed. During the day, the room is inspected twice by an Army officer, to see if everything is in its exact place, & twice a day by a Cadet officer. In the evening the Sentinel puts his head into the room twice & sings, "all right" to which we reply,

“all right.”

All these officers of different grades are sworn, & thus bound to report any absence or delinquency in the performance of any duty. Every absence or nonperformance of duty, or violation of the smallest regulation, is reported before the Battalion, and if no good, substantial, credible excuse is rendered, the offender gets marks of demerit (200 of which “send him”). There is a great variety of talent in our Class, running from absolute stupidity, up to the highest grade of intellect. About 20 will be “found” (deficient) in January next.

Write me how you are getting on, as often as you can find time. Never rest satisfied with a partial knowledge of things. Here the most of the Cadets study all the time from daylight till 10 o'clock at night, and it is necessary for those so to do, who have misimproved their former advantages.

I was glad to hear from home through you, for I had not heard a word since I started. You may give my respects to Jewett, & tell him I will not try to write him tonight, for fear that I should fail or write a very poor letter from sheer fatigue. I'm really glad Peleg has got a situation to suit him. I have been in good health all the time since I left Maine, and I am now in good spirits. My greatest enjoyments consist in receiving letters from my friends.

My physical examination was nothing. I stripped myself & went in before three Surgeons. They looked at me, measured my height, size round the chest (34 inches). One Surgeon looked at another & said “he is a stout man”. And said that was sufficient. I looked them in the eye without trembling or blushing.

Have you got your shirt from Portland yet?

Yr affectionate brother  
Otis

Uncle Ward came here the other day to see me, but could not find me, for some cause or other. He was obliged to leave immediately, but sent me word that he would come again in a few days.



O. C. Howard  
Oct. 26<sup>th</sup> 1850.

Mr. Charles B. Howard

Wormworth

Maine

West Point N. B. Oct 26<sup>th</sup> 1850.

Dear Brother,

I received your last letter with much pleasure. I am glad that you were thoughtful enough to open my eyes to the folly I committed, in writing home about all my little perplexities & difficulties. I really enjoy myself here, now. I have to study very hard, it is true, but I know that this is what I came here for. Had I not come to this place, I could not have enjoyed all sunshine. On the whole then I am very well contented. I hear you have been into Portland (from Seleg). How did Miss Lizzie treat you? How did you like her? In fact you need not give me your opinion unless it is favorable. Tell me all about your visit, your studies, your class, &c. &c. — Has Uncle Henry Strickland moved to Portland yet? I made out to get permission last Saturday to visit Uncle David at Duckskill. The way I got permission was as follows: — Uncle came to see me, while here he told me that his oldest son was very sick & wished me to come & make him a visit. I told Uncle that, if he would write me on his return stating that my cousin was very low, & desired me to make him a visit, I might, perhaps, get a short leave of absence. He did so, and so, with his letter, & with much soliciting of my own, I made out to get permission



to be absent from Saturday noon till 1/2 past 9 o'clock, in  
the evening of the same day. I went over the river to  
Stony Point, & from thence in the Cars to Kukskill.  
I soon found Uncle's family, which in all consists  
of three or rather four individuals, himself inclusive.  
His oldest daughter, a lady between twenty five &  
thirty, remains at home with him, as yet unmarried. His  
oldest son, Augustus, is one year older than I, a little  
taller, with my hair, eyes & forehead. I rather think  
that he & I resemble each other more than you & I.  
His complaint is of a peculiar kind - something <sup>similar to</sup> Laura  
Fisher's, only. He never makes a noise when the spasms  
come upon him. He is very intelligent & before this  
attack was called, as fine, promising a young man  
as you may seldom find. He can get no help, but  
he says he hopes to get well. He is deprived entirely  
of the pleasures of society, of reading, writing, & in fact  
of every thing, almost that makes a part of our  
~~the~~ enjoyments. Tell Jewett that I received a letter  
from Townsend this week, who finds himself prospering  
finely. Townsend is really doing well for a young  
man of his energy, or rather want of energy, but as  
he is a good hearted boy I wish him well.  
I have lately been put into the Battalion, & hence  
feel a little more like a man, a little more  
independent. I remain pretty nearly at the head  
of my class. How is it: have you found any of

Virgil's (~~celebrated~~) so celebrated beauties (as  
yet)? You cannot enjoy Virgil much when you are  
obliged to study your eyes out almost & then get  
but a faint idea of his meaning. When you get  
so familiar with Latin that you can translate  
with ease & rapidity, then you may take some  
pleasure in reading Virgil's writings, but all the  
pleasure you can derive from them while fitting for  
College, you will earn. I saw while at Kukskill  
the place where our father once traded & was in  
the very same store. A lady came to Uncle's just  
before I left in the evening, to whom I was  
presented as her cousin's son i.e. she is cousin to  
father. Uncle says that I have many relations at  
Newbury. Thus you see I am surrounded by  
relatives in any part of the world, even at the  
Military Academy of West Point. My respects to Jewett  
tell him I shall write him soon. I have had to  
study tremendously lately, but I expect to have  
an easy time when I get to studying Geometry &  
French, instead of committing five or six pages of  
Blair's Rhetoric every day, & of preparing myself to  
explain the hardest thing in all mathematics, viz:  
the Binomial Theorem, & its consequences. My head is full of m's  
n's & q's. I have now got <sup>the greater part of</sup> Algebra beaten into me so that  
I could not forget it if I would. Now good bye, if you  
do not write a better letter than this of mine is, I shall  
say you don't know much. Affectionate brother & sis



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68 10/26/1850 *From:* Otis [O O Howard]

*To:* Mr. Rowland B. Howard

RBH-032

West Point N.Y.

Yarmouth Maine

*Source:* Bowdoin

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West Point N.Y. Oct. 26, 1850

Dear brother,

I received your last letter with much pleasure. I'm glad that you were thoughtful enough to open my eyes to the folly I committed in writing home about all my little perplexities & difficulties. I really enjoy myself here, now. I have to study very hard, it is true, but I know that this is what I came here for. Had I not come to this place, I could not have enjoyed all sunshine. On the whole then I am very well contented. I hear you have been into Portland (from Peleg). How did Miss Lizzie treat you? How did you like her? In fact you need not give me your opinion unless it is favorable. Tell me all about your visit, your studies, your class &c. &c.

Has Uncle Henry Strickland moved to Portland yet?

I made out to get permission last Saturday to visit Uncle Ward at Peekskill. The way I got permission was as follows. Uncle came to see me & while here he told me that his oldest son was very sick & wished me to come & make him a visit. I told Uncle that, if he would write me on his return stating that my cousin was very low, & desired me to make him a visit, I might, perhaps, get a short leave of absence. He did so, and so, with his letter & with much soliciting of my own, I made out to get permission to be absent from Saturday noon till 1/2 past nine o'clock in the evening of the same day. I went over the river to Stony Point and from thence in the Cars to Peekskill.

I soon found Uncle's family, which in all consisted of three or rather four individuals, himself inclusive. His oldest daughter, a Lady between 25 & 30, remains at home with him as yet unmarried. His oldest son, Augustus, is one year older than I, a little taller, with my hair, eyes & four head. I rather think that he & I resemble each other more than you & I. His complaint is of a peculiar kind. Something similar to Laura Fisher's, only he never makes a noise when the spasms come upon him. He is very intelligent & before this attack was called as fine, promising a young man as you may seldom find. He can get no help, but he says he hopes to get well. He is deprived entirely of the pleasures of society, of reading, writing, and in fact of everything almost that makes a part of our enjoyments.

Tell Jewett that I received a letter from Townsend this week, who finds himself prospering finely. Townsend is really doing well for a young man of his energy, or rather want of energy, but as he is a good hearted boy I wish him well.

I have lately been put into the Battalion & hence feel a little more like a man, a little more independent. I remain pretty nearly at the head of my class.

How is it? Have you found any of Virgils so celebrated beauties as yet? You cannot enjoy Virgil much when you are obliged to study your eyes out almost & then get but a faint idea of his meaning. When you get so familiar with Latin that you can translate with ease & rapidity, then you may take some pleasure in reading Virgil's writings, but all the pleasure you can derive from them while fitting for College, you will earn.

I saw while at Peekskill the place where our father once traded & was in the very same store. A lady came to Uncles just before I left in the evening, to whom I was presented as her cousins son i.e. she is cousin to father. Uncle says that I have many relations at Newburg. Thus you see I am surrounded by relatives in any part of the world, even at the Military Academy of West Point.

My respects to Jewett, tell him I shall write him soon. I have had to study tremendously lately, but I expect to have an easy time when I get to studying Geometry & French, instead of committing five or six pages of Blair's rhetoric every day & of preparing myself to explain the hardest thing in all mathematics, viz.: the Binomial Theorem & its consequences. My head is full of m's, n's, & q's. I have now got the greater part of Algebra beaten into me so that I could not forget it if I would.

Now Good Bye. If you do not write a better letter than this of mine is, I shall say you don't know much.



Yr affectionate brother  
Otis

[Envelope]  
Mr Rowland B Howard  
Yarmouth  
Maine



Cliffowace  
Nov. 50

Mr Rowland B. Howard

Yamovith

Alcove

West Point N. Y. 1850. Nov 19<sup>th</sup>

Dear Brother,

Considerable time has passed since I have received a letter from you. Perhaps you think me rather negligent in answering your letters. You must not stop writing to me. I count much upon receiving letters from you, and shall write myself as often as I can. Seldom does any thing new transpire in West Point. So I have no news to tell you. West Point with all its beauty is a dull, monotonous place during the greater part of the year: the same routine day after day & month after month. All that keeps us alive is the excitement of study, or rather the emulation that must exist in an institution like this, where every thing depends on rank. It often looks rather discouraging to me, to look forward to four long weary years of confinement: but I am by no means cast down. I have come here with the determination of staying, if possible, & of taking the very best stand possible. I have got some very hard cases to compete with, but I probably shall come out bright. Now as enough has been said about self. I wish to know what your prospects are, what kind of young men you have got in your class & how you are making out with your studies. Make the most of your time Rowland. You must do better, take a higher stand in college than your brother has done. I feel



now that my education is superficial. I might have accomplished more than twice as much as I have done during the last four years, & this with ease. I am expecting much of you. You are virtually older than I was four years ago. You must have more <sup>than I had,</sup> judgment, & with my experience before you, you may take every advantage of time & circumstances. I fear, however, you will be lazy in moving your body about. If a man is going to study to any advantage, he must have exercise of body as well as mind. You must learn to pick up your feet & walk off briskly, or, as a soldier, I shall have to explain of you, when I come to walk with you "on furlow." Let us see; you will graduate (if we live & are so fortunate) you will graduate only a year behind me. Supposing you had spent four years in college, how would you like the idea of entering the Military Academy of West Point? To spend four years more? No matter how much knowledge a man may have, if he is not a natural mathematician he cannot do any thing here. I have not the least doubt that many of my classmates who took a good stand in college as scholars, would have been "found deficient" in mathematics, should they enter here & try the course. I was considered a good mathematician: so much so that the Sophs would come to me for assistance after I got to be a

Senior. But here in "Davies' Boarding" amid roots radicals & theorems I have to exert all my ability & all my persevering powers. I then I often fall short of the highest mark. Next January comes the examination, which is to try our strength. Every man who cannot pass that ordeal, will have the privilege of visiting his mother as long as he chooses. I am not sure but I shall envy some of the poor fellows after all. Those who are to be "found" are called "Immortals". The whole seventh section bear this name. I happen to be at the other end of the class & therefore have no fears & but very little hope. Our next examination will be in June next, when Congress-men will examine us. By that time our class <sup>which</sup> ~~which~~ now contains over 90, will be reduced at least one half. Have you heard from home since Francis Lottrop arrived from California? He thinks Roland will return soon. When he gets home, if he has made his thousands I shall put in for him to visit me. Every thing you learn from home, you must write me. I wrote a letter as I promised to our friend Mr Samson. If Joe & Bill Carey are at Yarmouth, give them my best respects. My respects to Robinson, my love to John N. --- Good night - Yr affectionate  
brother  
Otis



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69 11/19/1850 *From:* Otis [O O Howard]

*To:* Mr. Rowland B. Howard

RBH-033

West Point N.Y.

Yarmouth Maine

*Source:* Bowdoin

---

West Point N.Y. 1850 Nov 19

Dear Brother,

Considerable time has passed since I have received a letter from you. Perhaps you think me rather negligent in answering your letters. You must not stop writing to me. I count much upon receiving letters from you and shall write myself as often as I can. Seldom does anything new transpire in West Point. So I have no news to tell you. West Point with all its beauty is a dull, monotonous place during the greater part of the year. The same routine, day after day & month after month. All that keeps us alive is the excitement of study, or rather the emulation that must exist in an institution like this, when everything depends on rank. It often looks rather discouraging to me, to look forward to four long weary years of confinement, but I am by no means cast down. I have come here with the determination of staying if possible, & of taking the very best stand possible. I have got some very hard cases to compete with, but I probably shall come out right.

Now as enough has been said about self, I wish to know what your prospects are. What kind of young men you have got in your Class & how you are making out with your studies. Make the most of your time Rowland. You must do better, take a higher stand in College than your brother has done. I feel now that my education is superficial. I might have accomplished more than twice as much as I have done during the last four years, & this with ease. I am expecting much of you. You are virtually older than I was four years ago. You must have more judgment than I had & with my experience before you, you may take every advantage of time & circumstances. I fear, however, you will be lazy in moving your body about. If a man is going to study to any advantage, he must have exercise of body as well as mind. You must learn to pick up your feet & walk off briskly, or, as a soldier, I shall have to complain of you when I come to walk with you "on furlow."

Let us see, you will graduate (if we live & are so fortunate) you will graduate only a year behind me. Supposing you had spent four years in College, how would you like the idea of entering the Military Academy of West Point to spend four years more? No matter how much knowledge a man may have, if he is not a natural mathematician he cannot do anything here. I have not the least doubt that many of my classmates who took a good stand in College as scholars, would be "found deficient" in mathematics, should they enter here & try the course. I was considered a good mathematician. So much so that the Sophs would come to me for assistance after I got to be a Senior. But here in "Davies Bourdon" amid roots, radicals & theorems I have to exert all my ability & all my persevering power & then I often fall short of the highest mark.

Next January comes the examination, which is to try our strength. Every man who cannot pass that ordeal will have the privilege of visiting his mother as long as he chooses. I am not sure but I shall envy some of the poor fellows after all. Those who are to be "found" are called "Immortals." The whole seventh section bear this name. I happen to be at the other end of the Class & therefore have no fears & but very little hope. Our next examination will be in June next, when Congressmen will examine us. By that time our class which now contains over 90, will be reduced at least one half.

Have you heard from home since Francis Lothrop arrived from California? He thinks Roland will return soon. When he gets home if he has made his thousands I shall put in for him to visit me. Every thing you learn from home, you must write me. I wrote a letter as I promised to our friend Mr. Sampson. If Jae & Bill Carey are at Yarmouth give them my best respects. My respects to Robinson, my love to John N.--

Good night. Yr affectionate brother  
Otis

[Envelope]  
Mr. Rowland B. Howard  
Yarmouth Maine



I should have stopped at the end of three pages, but as three pages of my writing is hardly worth 10 cts., I will try & fill up another after Church. The mournful Bugle is now sending forth its enticing call. I must go to Church & listen to a very dry sermon. This is poor soil for ministers. Military piety is on the whole rather dry. In the first place there is but precious little encouragement to a minister. He never gets any converts; & no sympathy ever warms his soul; but plenty of criticism keeps him stirred up. But you know criticism seldom awakens the benevolent dispositions; but and almost always makes a man a little bit vexed, & perhaps I may say, a little bitter in his forthcoming homethroats. Good luck to you till after Church. I now think of a subject that may interest or disgust you. "The habits & principles of Cadets."

The fore said Church is over. There is scarcely ever any studying here Saturday nights, and seldom if ever any sleep. Cadets keep sober, & study steadily the whole week till Saturday night, and then they make up for lost time. The Sentinels are always taken off Post at 10, In about 1/2 half an hour after inspection at 10, the wild ones are up & "round". A set of miserable boatmen skulk into some cove or corner with their boats full of liquor. At first every thing seemed to go straight; but I find that nearly every Saturday night over two thirds of the corps are essentially drunk. Every Officer on the Point drinks, and therefore they are not disposed to be over watchful. If an officer of the Army should discover a Cadet intoxicated, he would most certainly, be obliged to ~~leave the Point~~ to report him. The cadets have been laying in stores for Christmas for three or four weeks. There is now liquor enough stored away under the floors & in other impenetrable places, to get three Corps like

West Point N. Y. Dec 22. 1850.

Dear Brother,

I have received two letters or rather one & a half, since I wrote my last to you; and therefore I think it becomes me by this time to answer you. Friday brought me a letter from home, from which I learned that Ireland Alger had got safely & fairly home. On the evening of the same day I wrote a letter home of 6 pages, which so exhausted my epistolary treasury that you must not expect much of me. Perhaps I can do as many Cadets do in Rhetoric: take some one idea & that a pretty good one; and turn it over & over, & present with all its different shades. What interests me particularly is the prospect of having a good time on Christmas, i. e. on Wednesday next. I made our white-headed Captain & Superintendent a call the other day, bearing him a note from Uncle Ward. He did not make any objection to my going to Peckskill, provided that I did not wish to be gone more than one day. He said that he would let me know, time enough before hand. Uncle John C. wrote me a letter, that I received the other day. He said that I had as yet no demerit recorded; that our Adjutant, Brevet Capt Williams, of Augusta Maine, said that I stood very well in my class; and that he expected to find my name among "the five" at or after the next January examination. I hope he will too; and he probably will if I do not make a failure on the next examination. How are you & your letter class making it in Virgil? I never have heard



you say anything about Frank. I presume you must have studied it somewhat before this. I hope you will love Frank more than I ever was disposed to do. I made Warren L. Throp a call yesterday afternoon. He said that he had just received a letter from his brother Elias. Elias does not expect to return to Maine before Spring. He said that his health was somewhat improved. Speaking of Elias, made me think of Addison. Mother sent me a letter which he wrote to her. In it he spoke of Charles Turner; said that the letter was with him, but had not as yet engaged in business: And also that Levi Foss of Wayne was there & very sick, or rather had been very sick; and that it was doubtful whether he would be able to do any work very soon. Poor Levi, he is the man you know, who drove us on the "Huckling" & Grasse expedition; wherein I lost my character for morality & sobriety. Did not we have some precious good times in that little village? This makes me think of Jo: & Josephine, of ropes, of Lycium & of the queer little, curly headed Russel Nelson. Laura too, fat, jolly & exquisite, you remember her, occupies no small place in my recollection, but a precious small place in my affections. She was a strange child, but not more bewitching than the over-effeminate Ellen, H. - But Macomber, where is he? that man so soft, so smooth, such a prepossessing "Bore"? But speaking above of Elias L. made me think of Addison; Addison of his letter; his letter of Levi Foss; Levi Foss of Wayne, & Wayne of our mutual interest in the place & also of the thousand "souvenirs" clustering around the same. But at first there

was another branch to my reflections. Thinking of Addison ~~suggested~~ suggested to my mind our cousin Martha Ome, his sister. What kind of a thing is she: large & homely & agreeable? or beautiful, retiring & disagreeable? Is she fat, lazy, & generous; or meager, active & selfish? I wish to know what kind of a combination of qualities serves to render our redoubtable cousin, so particularly interesting. - I used to have some high times with Lydia, her sister, before she was so fortunate as to get married. Once or twice the pious girl would ~~take~~ take me for a bean, & carry me to a Methodist inquiring meeting. I wonder if Elder Fuller ever thought, while I was at Wayne, that I was the very child, who once gave him such indefinite answers respecting the welfare of my soul. How many times the wicked Harriet B. & I would torment the poor girl, about things, that acquired delicacy & modesty would now forbid me to mention. How association will lead a man by the nose. Without being aware of it, I have I perceive upon looking back, touched upon, events in California in Wayne, Leeds & Hallowell. Either of which places, would furnish a train of reflections, sufficient to fill a common letter. But thought is a privileged character, he is at liberty to run over the world at pleasure, & return to give a man the "blues", because he cannot be thus free & speedy. Have you been in Portland lately? What has become of Selig? I have not heard from him for a long, long time! Mr. Jewett writes me that you are doing well: & that Mary Ellen is with you. Give my love to him & tell him he must try, if he is good a scholar as he is a sweet boy.



occurs, drunk three times over. I am in no great measure  
pleased with this state of things, but it is no more  
than any one could expect of the wildest set of rogues in the  
country. Things are carried on here mostly in secret. I never  
have said anything in my letters home of this interesting  
feature in the life & character of our embryo officers.

The fact is nevertheless true, that I never have found a  
more licentious, dissolute set of young men in my life.

I do not wish mother or father to know of the exact state  
of things. I wrote my first impressions & honest  
convictions, and shall not correct them.

Give my respects to John A. tell him I shall write him after  
Christmas. Give him my best wishes, for his school &  
for his comfort. Does he go into society any in Yarmouth?

Give my respects, too, to the Carey boys, if they are in  
Yarmouth. Also remember me to the Dr & his wife if  
they are there too. Everything goes on here as far as I can



concerned, about right. Uncle Ensign wrote me a good long  
letter, one of the best I have received since I have been here.  
He spoke of you: Said that you were growing taller, but  
that you stooped a little. Be careful & keep those shoulders  
of yours straight: for nothing disfigures a man more  
than round humping shoulders. And again you very  
well know that it is very essential to the health of the  
student to keep straight in every respect. I shall be  
glad when you get once fairly entered upon your  
Collegiate course. Be just as well prepared as you can.  
I experienced some considerable inconvenience from  
a poor preparation. Give my respects to Mr  
Robinson. Good by for this time,

Your affectionate brother

Oliver C. Howard



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70 12/22/1850 *From:* Oliver O Howard

*To:* Dear Brother [RB  
Howard]

RBH-034

West Point N.Y.

*Source:* Bowdoin

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West Point N.Y. Dec. 22, 1850.

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Your affectionate brother  
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