

O. P. Lowell  
Apr 19<sup>th</sup>  
1851

West Point N. Y. Apr 15. 1851

Dear Brother,

I received yours & Charlie's letter some time ago and ought to have answered it before, but as I seldom find more than a part of a day out of each week in which I may write letters, I have to neglect my friends by turns. Many of my old friends must certainly think me very remiss. I did not lose but a fortnight from my studies and am now as vigorous as of old. You asked me if I could not get a furlow & visit Maine during my convalescence. During my convalescence I was obliged to study. Should I go to Maine I should lose my stand; this I would not think of unless I left for good. Now I am doing very well. I was told that I had averaged the best marks in the class in math. since January - there is, however, only a few tenths difference between the marks of Mr Lee, Mr Seward and myself. Mr Abbot has fallen far below us all. In English studies I am near the head, I believe second, and in French doing very well. If I continue to do as well, my General Stand in June will be first or second - which I can't determine - neither do I care - It depends much on luck: & the main object is to be registered at the June examination among "the five". I received a letter from Mother the other day - she says Stearn



King is dead and that Sarah Turner was engaged to him in all probability. Sarah is indeed unlucky.

I visited Warren Lathrop a week ago last Saturday afternoon. but fear that I shall not be able to do so again, for while at his barracks I met an Army officer, who was kind enough to report me for being off limits. I did not know that it was off limits till I heard I heard the report the next evening read out. "Howard off limits 3. & 4 P.M." - I gave ignorance as my excuse, but Old Bull (as we call the Commandant, Capt Alden) said I should have known; so I presume I shall have to take the demerit. I believe. They will not give me extra tours of guard duty or confinement for the first offense - though I laid myself liable to get both. So independent is a man at West Point.

Give my love to Charles. Tell him Mother feels the want of his presence & assistance at home very much, and is impatient for the time to come when he will return to her.

My hair begins to grow, though I am yet quite bald. I have got I assure <sup>you</sup> some pretty deep scars - enough I think, to secure me a pension, should I retire from service. Did you know Charles Harvill who used to live at Col Lathrop's - He is now here in the Sappers' corps - Some months ago he, all of a sudden, got married (privately), the next day he was taken down with the Small Pox - made out to just live through it & had hardly got well before his wife had

a child. He is an awful looking object. I would scarcely have known him, had I not known that he was there - I should say that he was very foolish and mighty unfortunate all at the same time. I am glad to hear that William is doing so well in College. but hope that you will soon do better. You must make up your mind to take a high stand, for you are capable of it; and get a good substantial education.

I received a letter from Sarah Lee a few days since from Hallwell. All our friends, she said, were well - I hope Grandmother will continue to be as smart as now - and live, so that I may see her again on furlow.

Mother & Lizzie both write me that Mother has made a visit to our father's - She said that she intended to stop & see you and Charlie, <sup>on her way home</sup> but for some reason or other could not then.

Remember me to Jewett & Robinson (I believe <sup>the latter</sup> is now your Latin & Greek instructor) Write me as soon as you can - tell me how you & Charlie are prospering in your studies, and I will soon have time to write you & him a better letter.

Yr affectionate brother  
C. C. Howard.



---

76 4/15/1851 *From:* O.O. Howard

*To:* Dear brother [RB  
Howard]

RBH-040

West Point N.Y.

*Source:* Bowdoin

---

West Point N.Y. Apr. 15, 1851

Dear brother,

I received yours & Charlie's letter some time ago and ought to have answered it before, but as I seldom find more than a part of the day out of each week in which I may write letters, I have to neglect my friends by turns. Many of my old friends certainly think me very remiss. I did not lose but a fortnight from my studies and I am now as rugged as of old. You asked me if I could not get a furlow & visit Maine during my convalescence. During my convalescence I was obliged to study. Should I go to Maine I should lose my stand; this I would not think of unless I left for good. Now I am doing very well. I was told that I had averaged the best mark in the class in math since January. There is, however, only a few tenths difference between the marks of Mr. Lee, Mr. Snead and myself. Mr. Abbot has fallen far below us all. In English studies I am near the head, I believe second, and in French doing very well. If I continue to do as well, my general stand in June will be first or second, which I can't determine - neither do I care. It depends much on luck, & the main object is to be registered at the June examination among "the five".

I received a letter from mother the other day. She says Stephen Wing is dead and that Sarah Turner was engaged to him in all probability. Sarah is indeed unlucky.

I visited Warren Lothrop a week ago last Saturday afternoon, but fear that I shall not be able to do so again, for while at his barracks I met an Army officer who was kind enough to report me for being off limits. I did not know that it was off-limits till I heard the report the next evening read out. "Howard off-limits 3 & 4 P.M." I gave ignorance as my excuse, but Old Bull (as we call the Commandant, Capt. Alden) said I should have known, so I presume I shall have to take the demerit, 8 I believe. They will not give me extra tours of guard duty or confinement for the first offense, though I laid myself liable to get both - so independent is a man at West Point.

Give my love to Charles. Tell him mother feels the want of his presence & assistance at home very much, and is impatient for the time to come when he will return to her.

My hair begins to grow, though I am yet quite bald. I have got, I assure you, some pretty deep scars. Enough I think, to secure me a pension should I retire from service. Did you know Charles Harville, who used to live at Col. Lothrop's. He is now here in the Sapper's Corps. Some months ago he, all of a sudden, got married (privately). The next day he was taken down with the Small Pox, made out to just live through it & had hardly got well before his wife had a child. He is an awful looking object. I would scarcely have known him, had I not known that he was there. I should say that he was very foolish and mighty unfortunate all at the same time.

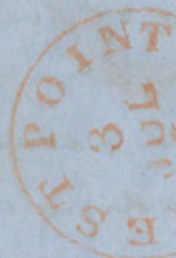
I'm glad to hear that William is doing so well in College, but hope that you will soon do better. You must make up your mind to take a high stand, for you are capable of it, and get a good substantial education.

I received a letter from Sarah Lee a few days since from Hallowell. All our friends, she said, were well. I hope Grandmother will continue as smart as now, and live so that I may see her again on furlow. Mother and Lizzie both write me that the latter has made a visit to our father's. She said that she intended to stop & see you and Charlie on her way home, but for some reason or other could not then.

Remember me to Jewitt & Robinson (I believe the latter is now your Latin & Greek instructor). Write me as soon as you can. Tell me how you & Charlie are prospering in your studies, and I will soon have time to write you & him a better letter.

Your affectionate brother  
O.O. Howard





Mr Rowland B. Howard

Warmouth

Maine

Rowland B. Howard  
July 5th  
1851

West Point N.Y. July 25 1851

Dear Brother,

My father, my mother & Lizzie  
 have been here & gone leaving me alone in my glory, but I have  
 not been left long enough to myself to feel their departure very  
 severely. You know my luck. I am now in hot water all  
 the time. The majority of my class hate me for my good fortune  
 or for my unlovable nature. They report me continually for the  
 slightest mistakes & often where there are no mistakes, giving me  
 some little thing that I cannot well deny. Oh! how very pleasant  
 ones life can be made by an over-affectionate set of friends. To  
 crown my vexations, the poor plebes hover round me & my  
 tent, as though I was the best fellow in the world. A tent is  
 a noisy, disagreeable place for a man out of humor with  
 himself & every body round him - no place for reflection, but  
 as usual never mind. There are better times coming boys!  
 I am now at the head of my class: a much coveted position: but  
 I would be a thousand times happier man, did I stand ten files  
 below the foot: for I would then be quietly secluded in  
 my mother's kitchen, surrounded with ~~sympathy~~ sympathizing  
 friends, with naught to regret & nothing to mourn for but  
 want of talent. Here I am & I must take the brunt  
 of the battle. I may be sent home on demerit. I shall unless  
 I speedily put a stop to the insidious designings of my bitter  
 enemies. I am very thankful to you for your miniature.  
 I did not know that you was half so good looking: &  
 I fear the artist has a little flattered you: but it is better  
 that he should err on the side he did (?). How do you



make it. Studying this warm weather! I wish you all success.  
Mother says Charlie's health is rather poor, Oh! I hope he  
will yet be a strong, hardy man. West Point is now  
a beautiful place; yet all the beauties of the place can hardly make  
amends for for the tediousness of a military life. We go on guard  
each twice a week, & walk 8 hours out of the 24 & sometimes  
more. In the heat of the day it is not pleasant task to walk,  
backwards & forwards, from sentry box to sentry box, the hot  
sun pouring unsparingly upon your head a little more  
of the blessed heat than you <sup>would</sup> relish: your heavy hat, & ten times  
heavier gun, growing all the time heavier; with no chance to  
rest your weary legs or ease your blistering feet. Such is  
the fun of walking 'post' by day, by night it is almost as  
bad. You cannot sleep during the night more than  
two hours & then it must be done with your big cartridge  
box upon your back & bayonet scabbard by your side, with  
the camp floor for your bed & your musket for a boon  
companion. In the night no live man must be allowed  
to cross your post: excepting the officers of the guards with  
the countersign. Day before yesterday I walked four hours  
by day & four by night, I was turned out several  
times besides for other duty - got reported for saluting the  
Officer in Charge after "retreat", that is, after the evening  
gun was fired. Thus weariness & vexation combine to  
irritate a foolish boy. I wish it was so that you could  
come to see me this summer: but I cannot receive  
my friends decently here, and perhaps it is better that  
they should left on struggle on with my small difficulties; I  
will come out bright yet, if I can keep my temper!

Let me know how you are getting on in your studies. I  
expect you to do very well after you get into College, where  
I shall be most likely to see you, one year from this  
date. Tell me if you have a good time on the fourth of  
this month & how & when you spend it. Perhaps you will  
go into Portland & hear Lizzie describe her journey  
to West Point; which I fear was not very pleasant  
on the whole: I myself was so full of ignorance &  
perplexity, joy & fear, mixed up with every other  
feeling you can imagine, that I scarce knew what  
I was doing. But then as she is a good girl, I  
am sure she will forgive me any amount of gallantry,  
whilst she censures the circumstances which rendered me  
foolish. Oh! how I did long to be perfectly free to do as I felt  
for one week at least! wouldn't I have capered with  
joy? Tell me what they say about their visit. —  
Give my very best regards to Jewett & tell him if he doesn't write  
to me I will flog him. While Mother was here I was  
reported for visiting an improper part of the Hotel. The  
truth is I was 'rather short' & went to the "sink" there.  
Lieut. Jones saw me & reported me for it: but my  
excuse took off the report I think. I was not reported  
for going up stairs as we thought. All right: I shall  
certainly lose the head of my class if I cannot stop this  
demerit: Write as soon as you can - I Remember me  
Your very fortunate & unfortunate brother.

O. C. Howard.



---

77 7/2/1851

*From:* O.O. Howard

*To:* Mr. Rowland B. Howard

RBH-041

West Point N.Y.

Yarmouth  
Maine

*Source:* Bowdoin

---

West Point N.Y. July 2d, 1851

Dear Brother,

My father, my mother & Lizzie have been here & gone leaving me alone in my glory, but I have not been left long enough to myself to feel their departure very severely. You know my luck. I am now in hot water all the time. The majority of my class hate me for my good fortune or for my "unlovable" nature. They report me continually for the slightest mistakes & often where there are no mistakes, giving me some little thing that I cannot well deny. Oh! how very pleasant, ones life can be made by an over-affectionate set of friends. To crown my vexations, poor plebes hover around me & my tent, as though I was the best fellow in the world. A tent is a noisy, disagreeable place for a man out of humor with himself & everybody round him - no place for reflection: but as usual never mind. There are better times coming boys!

I am now at the head of my class, a much coveted position. But I would be a thousand times happier man, did I stand ten files below the foot: for I would then be quietly ensconced in my mother's kitchen, surrounded with sympathizing friends with naught to regret & nothing to mourn for but want of talent. There I am & I must take the brunt of the battle. I may be sent home on demerit & shall unless I speedily put a stop to the insidious designings of my bitter enemies.

I am very thankful to you for your miniature. I did not know that you was half so good-looking, & I fear the artist has a little flattered you, but it is better that he should err on the side he did (?). How do you make it studying the warm weather? I wish you all success.

Mother says Charlie's health is rather poor. Oh! I hope he will yet be a strong, hardy man.

West Point is now a beautiful place, yet all the beauties of the place can hardly make amends for the tediousness of a military life. We go on guard each twice a week, & walk 8 hours out of the 24 & sometimes more. In the heat of the day it is no pleasant task to walk backwards & forwards from Sentry box to Sentry box, the hot sun pouring unsparingly upon your head a little more of the blessed heat than you would relish. Your heavy hat & 10 times heavier gun, growing all the time heavier, with no chance to rest your weary legs or ease your blistering feet. Such is the fun of walking "post" by day. By night it is almost as bad. You cannot sleep during the night more than two hours & then it must be done with your big cartridge box upon your back & bayonet scabbard by your side, with the camp floor for your bed, & your musket for a boon companion. In the night no live man must be allowed to cross your post, excepting the officers of the guard with the countersign. Day before yesterday I walked four hours by day & four by night, & was turned out several times besides for other duty, got reported for saluting the officer in charge after "retreat", that is, after the evening gun was fired. Thus weariness & vexation combine to irritate a foolish boy.

I wish it were so that you could come to see me this summer, but I cannot receive my friends decently here, and perhaps it is better that they should let me struggle on with my small difficulties. I will come out right yet, if I can keep my temper!

Let me know how you are getting on in your studies. I expect you to do very well after you get into College, where I shall be most likely to see you one year from this date. Tell me if you have a good time on the fourth of this month & how & where you spend it. Perhaps you will go into Portland & hear Lizzie describe her journey to West Point, which I fear was not very pleasant on the whole. I myself was so full of ignorance & perplexity, joy & fear, mixed up with every other feeling you can imagine, that I scarce knew what I was doing. But then as she is a good girl, I am sure she will forgive me any want of gallantry, whilst she censures the circumstances which rendered me foolish. Oh! How I did long to be perfectly free to do as I pleased for one week at least! Wouldn't I have capered with joy? Tell me what they say about their visit.

Give my very best regards to Jewett & tell him if he doesn't write to me I will flog him. While mother was here I was reported for visiting an improper part of the Hotel. The truth is I was "taken short" & went to the "sink" there. Lt. Jones saw me & reported me for it. But my excuse took off the report I think. I was not reported for going up

stairs as we thought. All right. I shall certainly lose the head of my class if I cannot stop this demerit. Write as soon as you can & remember me,

Your very fortunate unfortunate brother  
OO Howard

[Envelope]

Mr. Rowland B. Howard

Yarmouth

Maine

[Postmark] WEST POINT N.Y. 3 JUL 5



privates, and asked the sentinel 'his orders'. The same operation is gone through with at each post. If a sentinel is 'killed' asleep, being an old soldier he will probably be dismissed, or made to walk 20 hours of extra guard duty, which is equivalent to a dismissal in my mind. Our courtesans are usually the name of some beautiful lady, or I should say a pretty name, one night it was Ella. You must halt every body after taps, holding your bayonet so as to pierce them through, if they do not halt - which the plebs generally carry out to the letter. If you could be here two days, and notice all operations from 'Reveille' till 'Reveille' again, you would find many odd things to interest you.

We now have two company drills a day, one of an hour & a half before breakfast, and the other before evening parade at sunset - An Artillery drill from 10 till 12 past eleven. It is mighty hard work to drag those heavy pieces about in a hot day, I assure you. We have in camp a morning dress parade, just after breakfast, when the utmost neatness is required. These parades & drills keep us pretty constantly moving. Write me as soon as you can. Give my love to Jennett, tell him I got his letter & shall answer him immediately. Now with good luck to yourself. I bid you good bye.

Your affectionate Brother

O. C. Howard

O. C. Howard July 28  
1851

West Point S. G. July 28. '51.

Dear Brother,

I am rather out of humor this morning, so you must pardon any unusual crudeness, recollecting always the real motive, which makes me write, which is not so much to interest you, as to show that I am not unmindful of you, that I remember that we are brothers, and should always support & assist each other with mutual confidence and council. My situation has been for the last few months most deplorably disagreeable & degrading, but with friends at home and hope for a better state of things, I plod along. But never mind my troubles which have got to be an old story. I presume you have some considerable anxiety with regard to the coming examination, for such a feeling is natural. Yet there is not the least danger of a failure. My old course, from Garmouth through, seems now almost like a dream, and I really believe nobody would surmise that I had been College educated, unless I told them so, but notwithstanding my discipline and experience under the tutorage & direction of those good old professors may have done me much good which is now scarcely perceptible, because there is nothing to call my past knowledge & acquirements into exercise.



I have now been away from home long enough to feel that it would be something more than a common pleasure to go back. Ah! I would be delighted to peep in all unexpected. To see father sleeping over his paper, as though care was a stranger to him - to see ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~land~~ <sup>land</sup> ~~at~~ <sup>at</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~station~~ <sup>station</sup> ~~way~~ <sup>way</sup> some air, a true criterion of his inward self. sometimes mournful sometimes dark & disconsolate and has often cheerful - always modulated according to the ebb & flow of his spirits. Charlie with his abstracted looks, or his quiet laugh. Lellie more boisterous, and very little disposed to gratify father & mother by making less noise - All seems to possess a more kindly interest than ever before. I place them all in my conception in all the different positions, give them all the different employments that I have ever seen them engaged in - and dwell upon the scenes that I conjure up, now & then introducing myself in the midst - This is a part of my business. When I walk backwards & forwards on board, after the night has closed in, after the active beings crowding me have become hushed in sleep.

The Encampment is now over half over. You ought to come and live with us here in camp. Your face would grow blacker & blacker every day, until you would be surprised that people ever called you a white man: and methinks your bones would grow hard, or else you would not enjoy much rest. I believe I could not lie on a bed & sleep if it was anyways soft.

I believe I told you, when we were on guard, and not walking Post, we were obliged to remain at the Guard Tent all the time with our cartridge boxes - cap boxes - bayonet - scabbard, & ~~belts~~ <sup>belts</sup> on - we must sleep with them on, walk & sit - with the same uncomfortable appendages. The relief that I have been on, goes on post  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 10 & stays on till  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 12 - again at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 3 & stays till half past 5 - and a corresponding 4 hours by night. This breaks up the sleep into small portions. The Officer in Charge (an Army Officer) visits the Guard tent at least once during the night: and the Officer of the Day once - at these times the Guard must be turned out & inspected, and if the least thing is out of order, or any accoutrement wanting the delinquency is reported. The ~~encampment~~ <sup>ground</sup> is about 80 yds wide & 50 long - A path surrounds it - One sentinel walks across each end, and two meeting half way upon each side. When the Officer in Charge turns out the Guard, he takes a Sergeant & two privates, the Sergeant between the two privates, puts them ahead of him & goes what is called the "Grand rounds". When the Sentinel sees some one approaching, he must cry out - "Who comes there?" The answer is, "Grand rounds". He says, "Advance Sergeant with the countersign", whereupon the latter advances and gives the required word: then Sentinel says, "The countersign is right, Advance rounds". Then the Sergeant, resuming his place advances across his post: or waits till the Army Officer has passed between the two



---

78 7/28/1851 *From:* O.O. Howard

*To:* Dear brother [RB  
Howard]

RBH-042

West Point N.Y.

*Source:* Bowdoin

---

West Point N.Y. July 28,'51

Dear brother,

I am rather out of humour this morning, so you must pardon any unusual dullness recollecting always the real motive, which makes me write, which is not so much to interest you, as to show that I am not unmindful of you, that I remember that we are brothers and should always support & assist each other with mutual confidence and council. My situation has been for the last few months most deplorably disagreeable & degrading, but with friends at home and hope for a better state of things, I plod along. But never mind my trouble which have got to be an old story.

I presume you have some considerable anxiety with regard to the coming examination, for such a feeling is natural. Yet there is not the least danger of a failure. My old course from Yarmouth through seems now almost like a dream, and I really believe nobody would surmise that I had been College Educated unless I told them so but notwithstanding my discipline and experience under the tutor ship & direction of those good old professors may have done me much good which is now scarcely perceptible, because there is nothing to call my past knowledge & acquirements into exercise.

I have now been away from home long enough to feel that it would be something more than a common pleasure to go back. Oh! I would delighted to peep in all unexpected, to see father sleeping over his paper, as though care was a stranger to him, to see Roland A. singing or humming in the stair way some air, a true criterion of his inward-self, sometimes mournful sometimes dark & disconsolate and less often cheerful, always modulated according to the ebb & flow of his spirits. Charlie with his abstracted look, or his quiet laugh. Dellie more boisterous, and very little disposed to gratify father & mother by making less noise. All seems to possess a more lively interest than ever before. I place them all in my conception in all the different positions, give them all the different employments that I have ever seen them engaged in, and dwell upon the scenes that I conjure up now & then introducing myself in the midst.

This is a part of my business when I walk backwards & forwards on Post, after the night has closed in, after the active beings around me have become hushed in sleep. The encampment is now over half over. You ought to come and live with us here in camp. Your face would grow blacker & blacker every day, until you would be surprised that people ever called you a white man, and methinks your bones would grow hard, or else you would not enjoy much rest. I believe I could not lie on a bed and sleep if it was anyways soft.

I believe I told you, when we were on guard, and not walking Post, we were obliged to remain at the guard tent all the time with our cartridge boxes, cap boxes, bayonet scabbard & belts on. We must sleep with them on, walk & sit with the same uncomfortable appendages. The relief that I have been on, goes on Post 1/2 past 10 & stays on till 1/2 past 12, again at 1/2 past 3 and stays till half past 5, and a corresponding 4 hours by night. This breaks up the sleep into small portions. The Officer in Charge (an Army officer) visits the guard tent at least once during the night, and the Officer of the Day once. At these times the guard must be turned out & inspected, and if the least thing is out of order, or any accoutrement wanting, the delinquent is reported.

The Camp ground is about 80 yards wide & 50 long. A path surrounds it. One Sentinel walks across each end, and two meeting halfway upon each side. When the officer in charge turns out the guard, he takes a sergeant & two privates, the sergeant between the two privates puts them ahead of him & goes what is called the "Grand rounds". When the Sentinel sees someone approaching, he must sing out "Who comes there." The answer is "Grand rounds". He says "advance Sgt. With the countersign", whereupon the latter advances and gives the required word; then Sentinel says "the countersign is right, advance rounds". Then the sergeant, resuming his place advances across his post, or waits till the Army officer has passed between the two privates, and asked the Sentinel "his orders". The same operation is gone through with at each post. If a Sentinel is "hived" asleep, being an old cadet he will probably be dismissed, or made to walk 20 tours of extra guard duty, which is equivalent to a dismissal in my mind. Our countersigns are usually the name of some beautiful lady, or I should say a pretty name, one night it was Ella.



You must halt every body after "taps" - holding your bayonet so as to pierce them through if they do not halt, which the plebes generally carry out to the letter. If you could be here two days and notice all operations from "reveille till reveille" again, you would find many odd things to interest you.

We now have two company drills a day, one of an hour & a half before breakfast, and the other before evening parade at sunset. An Artillery drill from 10 till ½ past eleven. It is mighty hard work to drag those heavy pieces about in a hot day I assure you. We have in camp a morning dress parade, just after breakfast, when the utmost neatness is required. These parades & drills keep us pretty constantly moving.

Write me as soon as you can. Give my love to Jewett, tell him I got his letter & shall answer him immediately. Now with good luck to yourself, I bid you good bye.

Your affectionate brother  
O.O. Howard



perhaps will explain away all that strange mystery, which  
seemed to rack your brain. I very often write to you  
about things which I think I have previously explained  
to you. when in reality, the subjects have been treated of  
in letters to Mother. Now at this subject drop; Redburned  
I will leave out tonight. or if I should ever find the  
Army too hot; why; I know where to find friends,  
friends too, who will not be blown away by a breath of  
idle slang, who will not fear to give me their sympathy  
& their counsel, because my star of popularity is  
waning. You have got into College - good!  
When you return be sure I give my respects to Profes-  
sors, Goodwin, Packard, Uphaus & Boody; If the  
President should stop you, I ask about your brother, tell  
him he is well & doing well. They will be likely to inquire  
for me. in order to make themselves sociable with you,  
Professor Uphaus likes to talk with a young man about  
his father, mother & brothers if he knows them. He took  
me one day in the Senior Recitation room & talked with me  
about my coming here. He gave me much good counsel  
which I have not forgotten. I have a peculiar reverence for  
my old instructors, which seems to increase, as the time  
was with them grows more distant. Professor Cleveland  
in particular, with his age, his sprightliness, his natural  
dignity, combined with his clear ideas, will always dwell  
in my remembrance, as the model of a man; I care not for  
the oft repeated fish stories about him. Now, my dear brother,  
your case about to enter upon a life, a little different  
from your previous life as a student. You will be continually

West Point, N.Y. Sept 3<sup>rd</sup> 1851.

Dear Mother,

You perceive I have delayed  
answering your letter a much longer time than usual.  
and you may well ask why. The truth is I cannot find but  
precious little time to do anything beyond my ordinary  
routine of Academic & Military duties. We are in the recitation  
room, reciting in Mathematics and French from half past  
9 O'clock A.M. till noon; in the drawing room from 2 O'clock  
till 4 1/2 half of the week and at riding during the same  
length of time the other half. at 4. we go to drill, return  
with hardly enough time to prepare for parade, after which  
it is night. You must see that for a man who stands  
at the head of his class & who would remain in the vicinity  
of that slippery place; that the intermediate portions of time, i.e.  
the evening & the morning must be spent in pretty close study.  
In fact I do thus spend it. Saturday evenings & Sunday  
mornings I allot to writing letters. So you need not  
grumble at it. if your turn does not come so often as it  
used to do. I am Squad master of the first section in  
Mathematics, 1/4 of the class in drawing, and 1/4 of the class  
in riding. this too gives me responsibility of some additional  
trouble. But every thing now goes on smoothly. I don't get  
any reports, and have it in my power to give a great  
many. I never have given one yet, since I have been a  
cadet, not even as a corporal. But I have been a little out of  
fix this last campaign, but I mean to try my troubles &



now am ready to laugh at my own rejection. If the true state  
of my mind was known, there would have been found there  
but very little few thoughts in favor of resigning. It was  
a sort of expediency, a ruse if you please, to bring the  
officers to terms of necessity, that my father's written consent  
to a resignation, was to be obtained. I knew that the officers  
would never let me leave on the plea, if not having justice  
done me. I knew that if I should tender my resignation  
that the cause would be investigated; but this did  
not become necessary. You are right, I would not yield  
to difficulties, unless my reason showed me that those  
difficulties were insurmountable. — I will tell you of a  
young man in this corps. His name is Ellis; I forget where  
from. There is not one individual in the whole corps  
who ever speaks to him. He has no word of sympathy,  
is never admitted into the sports & recreations of others. Nobody  
dines with him nobody visits him. Solitary in the midst  
of two hundred social beings, he is never cheered by one  
friendly glance. excepting <sup>when</sup> he makes friends of some plebe  
who very soon meets him with a peculiarly cold & distant  
look. This is what is called, "being out," "out by the  
corps" &c. This young man two years ago is said to have  
been detected in "making an improper use of the vicinity  
of his neighbors tent" while in camp. I don't know that  
he has been guilty of an improper action since. "He is out" — None  
dare to risk themselves in the society of such notoriety; few ever  
ask why he is "out" — few care; the fact is enough. Several  
others are in much the same predicament. This state of things  
lasts, follows a man into the army, through life. It has

and must have of course a degrading effect upon the man,  
unless, he has more than ordinary force of character. If  
he has, he may hold up his head out his way, to the right  
and to the left, and retain the best reputation. Mr Ellis' character  
is gone. He says he denied the act attributed to him; that he  
lied in doing so; that he is mean spirited, as far as  
a man. He is over six feet tall, well made, with a good  
natured open countenance. He looks kind of forward,  
but not better as I should look. Do you wonder then that I  
should feel a little chagrined when I saw friend after friend  
drop off; when a young man ~~did~~ hardly dared to be seen  
in my society, for fear of his own reputation. When at the  
dinner, if I would go to it; I put a damper upon the sport,  
when young men of the highest families in the Union  
would not sit at the table with me. When I began to meet  
coldness in every look. Was I a criminal? No! but this  
treatment began to make me feel like one. Well, I set my  
soul to work. The question with me was; will it be for my  
ultimate good to remain? This I strong enough for all  
this? Yes; I ten times more could not make me swerve  
from a steady straight forward course. I bore every thing,  
every implied insult, every hint, every slander, with  
a little impatience sometimes, but generally, with a patient  
carelessness. — It began to take a turn. The furlough class  
came back. I rated me as a friend, a gentleman, an equal.  
Those from Maine, always have stood for me — pointed out  
the folly of the accusations preferred against me. In fact  
I now get along as pleasantly as any one of them being about  
twenty, whom I never speak to unless on duty. This perplex



Oliver

obliged to be on your guard. I don't mean to lecture you; or advise you to avoid drinking, gambling, rioting &c. &c., <sup>the</sup> peculiar bad habits of college life; for I know you have got wit & principle enough to preserve you from these extremes of vice. But while you are a freshman promise me, or promise yourself, not to get angry, at every little word, which is not intended for you, but against you, position. Bridle that little tongue, till you get to be 'cock of the roost': when you can say of do little impunity. I really want you to do well. Stand high. It is of course you must be industrious. You need not follow my example in regard to secret societies: (though I think it is best in the end to be a neutral). After you return and get fairly settled in your room, you must write me, telling me with whom you are rooming &c. &c. When you wish to know any thing about my experience there, so that you may act accordingly, avoiding my blunders, or patterning from my success, be sure to write me. Above all, conduct with a steady independent & upright course. Then you will not only have the respect of your classmates in the end, but the respect of your professors: and this hereafter if not in college will be of more advantage to you than you may imagine now. In money matters I know you are naturally more prudent than I. It is my opinion that I might be over one hundred dollars better off now, had I exercised a little more care. I am glad you part with Mr. Lovell with so high an opinion of him; for I believe him far above the medium of young men. His talents are superior but they do not



by any means equal his ~~strength~~ <sup>of</sup> character. This latter  
is the secret of his success in every position he is called to  
occupy; 'tis what gives people confidence in him. I have  
often envied <sup>that</sup> natural independent spirit - which guides him  
quietly & steadily on. But it is not in me. I shrink from  
boldly contending my rights, till I have nearly lost my  
footing. Then late I have to redouble my energies to gain  
the place, that I should have gained with little effort,  
had I been at first more independent & less timid.

The Bull-dozers say it is easy to place the heavy binders,  
if you go to work aright. I was ever known to go to work  
about it the hardest way - & by pure force make up for  
want of force & skill. So be it: Each <sup>man</sup> will have his peculiarities.  
Give my love to Willie. Let him write, never mind the looks  
or the spelling, accuracy comes with age. My love to Charlie  
too I have not received a letter from him for an age almost.

The Professors (à la West-Point) are now transferring & arranging  
the Plebe class - Mr Littlefield, was transferred to the  
lowest section. He has no education I fear is now too  
old to learn. I have helped him some, but I think it  
useless. he must be found. He is <sup>rather</sup> not so smart & energetic  
as Browne, with whom I am living in a new nice house -  
as pleasantly situated as a room could be. He <sup>letter</sup> studies very  
hard & is doing very well. I have made out pretty well  
but must do better. Write soon - Give my respects to ~~the~~  
Sundall. He always means well, of course material &  
is prepossessing, he has a good heart. Remember me to  
all the old friends who inquire for me at B.C.

Now wishing you good health & good courage I bid you good bye  
W.S.



---

79 9/13/1851 *From:* Otis [OO Howard]

*To:* Dear brother [RB Howard]

RBH-043

West Point N.Y.

*Source:* Bowdoin

---

West Point N.Y. Sept. 13, 1851

Dear brother

You perceive I have delayed answering your letter a much longer time than usual, and you may well ask why. The truth is I can find but precious little time to do anything beyond my ordinary routine of Academic & Military duties. We are in the recitation room reciting in mathematics and French from half past 9 o'clock A.M. till noon, in the drawing room from two o'clock till four, half of the week and at riding during the same length of time the other half. At four we go to drill, return with hardly enough time to prepare for parade, after which it is night. You must see that for a man who stands at the head of his class & who would remain in the vicinity of that slippery place, that the intermediate portions of time i.e. the evening & the morning must be spent in pretty close study. In fact I do thus spend it. Saturday evenings & Sunday mornings I allot to writing letters. So you need not grumble at it, if your turn does not come as often as it used to do.

I am squad marcher of the first section in mathematics,  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the class in drawing, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the class in riding. This too gives me responsibility & some additional trouble. But every thing now goes on smoothly. I don't get any reports, and have it in my power to give a great many. I never have given one yet, since I have been a cadet, not even as a Sentinel. Why I have been a little out of fix the last encampment but I magnified my troubles, & now am ready to laugh at my own dejection. If the true state of my mind was known, there would have been found there but very few thoughts in favor of resigning. It was a sort of expediency, a ruse, if you please, to bring the officers to terms if necessary, that my father's written consent to a resignation was to be obtained. I knew that the officers would never let me leave on the plea of not having justice done me. I knew that if I should tender my resignation that the causes would be investigated, but this did not become necessary. You are right, I would not yield to difficulties, unless my reason showed me that those difficulties were insurmountable.

I will tell you of a young man in this Corps. His name is Otis. I forgot where from. There is not one individual in the whole Corps who ever speaks to him. He has no word of sympathy, is never admitted into the sports & recreations of others. Nobody lives with him, nobody visits him. Solitary in the midst of 200 social beings, he is never cheered by one friendly glance, excepting when he makes friends of some plebe who very soon meets him with a peculiarly cold & distant look. This is what is called, "being cut." "Cut by the Corps". This young man two years ago is said to have been detected in "making an improper use of the vicinity of his neighbors tent" while in camp. I don't know that he has been guilty of an improper action since: "He is cut."

None dare to risk themselves in society of such notoriety. Few ever ask why he is "cut", few care. The fact is enough. Several others are in much the same predicament. The state of things lasts, follows a man into the Army through life. It has and must have of course a degrading effect upon the man, unless he has more than ordinary force of character. If he has, he may hold up his head cut his way to the right and to the left and redeem the lost reputation. Mr. Otis' character is gone. They say he denied the act attributed to him & that he lied in doing so. That he is mean-spirited, no particle of a man. He is over 6 feet tall, well-made, with a good natural open countenance. He looks kind of forsaken, but not bitter as I should look.

Do you wonder then that I would feel a little chagrined when I saw friend after friend drop off; when a young man hardly dared to be seen in my society, for fear of his own reputation. When at the dance, if I would go to it I put a damper upon the sport, when young men of the highest families in the Union would not sit at the table with me, when I began to meet coldness in every look. Was I a criminal? No! But this treatment began to make me feel like one. Well, I set my wits to work. The question with me was: will it be for my ultimate good to remain? Was I strong enough for all this? Yes! & ten times more could not make me swerve from a steady, straight forward course. I bore everything, every implied insult, every hint, every slander, with a little impatience sometimes, but generally with apparent carelessness. It began to take a turn, the furlough class came back treated me as a friend, a gentleman, an equal. Those from Maine, always have stood for me pointed out the folly of the accusations preferred against me. In fine I now get along as pleasantly as any one, there being about 20 whom I never speak to unless on duty. This perhaps will explain away all that strange mystery, which



seemed to rack your brain.

I very often write to you about things which I think I have previously explained to you when in reality, the subjects have been treated of in letters to mother. Now let the subject drop. Be assured I will come out right, or if I should ever find the Army too hot, why I know where to find friends, friends too, who will not be blown away by a breath of vile slang, who will not fear to give me their sympathy & their counsel, because my star of popularity is waning.

You have got into College - good! When you return be sure & give my respects to Professors Goodwin, Packard, Upham & Boody. If the President should stop you & ask about your brother, tell him he is well & doing well. They will be likely to inquire for me, in order to make themselves sociable with you. Prof. Upham likes to talk with a young man about his father, mother & brothers if he knows them. He took me one day in the senior recitation room & talked with me about my coming here. He gave me much good counsel which I have not forgotten. I have a peculiar reverence for my old instructors, which seems to increase as the time I was with them grows more distant. Prof. Cleveland in particular, with his age, his sprightliness, his natural dignity combined with his clear ideas, will always dwell in my remembrances as the model of a man; I care not for the often repeated fish stories about him.

Now, my dear brother. You are about to enter upon a life, a little different from your previous life as a student. You will be continually obliged to be on your guard. I don't mean to lecture you, or advise you to avoid drinking, gambling, rioting &c. &c. the peculiar bad habits of college life, for I know you have got wit & principle enough to preserve you from those extremes of vice. But while you are a freshman promise me or promise yourself not to get angry at every little word, which is not intended for you but against your position. Bridal that little tongue, till you get to be "cock of the roost" when you can say & do with impunity. I really want you to do well, to stand high. To do it of course you must be industrious. You need not follow my example in regard to secret societies, though I think it is best in the end to be a neutral. After you return and get easily settled in your room you must write me, telling me with whom you are rooming &c. &c.

When you wish to know any thing about my experience there, so that you may act accordingly, avoiding my blunders or patterning from my success be sure & write me. Above all Rowland take a steady independent & upright course then you will not only have the respect of your classmates in the end, but the respect of your professors and this hereafter if not in College will be of more advantage to you than you may imagine now. In money matters I know you are more naturally prudent than I. It is my opinion that I might be over one hundred dollars better off now, had I exercised a little more care.

I am glad you part with Mr. Jewett with as high an opinion of him; for I believe him far above the medium of young men. His talents are superior but they do not by any means equal his strength of character. This letter is the secret of his success in every position he is called to occupy &'tis what gives people confidence in him. I have often coveted that natural independent spirit which guides him quietly & steadily on. But it is not in me. I shrink from boldly contesting my rights, till I have nearly lost my footing, then late I have to redouble my energies to gain the place that I should have gained with little effort, had I been at first more independent & less timid.

The wall-layers say it is easy to place the heavy binders if you go to work aright. I was ere known to go to work about it the hardest way & by pure force make up for want of care & skill. So be it. Each man will have his peculiarities.

Give my love to Dellie. Let him write, never mind the looks or the spelling accuracy comes with age. My love to Charlie too. I have not received a letter from him for an age almost.

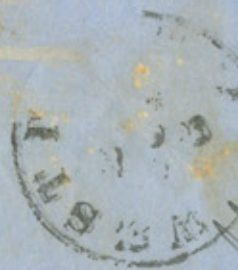
The Professors (a la West Point) are now transferring & arranging the plebe class. Mr. Littlefield was transferred to the lowest section. He has no education & I fear is now too old to learn. I have helped him some, but I think it useless - he must be found. He is not so smart & energetic as Browne with whom I am living in a new nice room, as pleasantly situated as a room could be. The latter studies very hard & is doing very well. I have made out pretty well but must do better. Write soon. Give my respects to Kendall. He always means well, of coarse material & unprepossessing & has a good heart. Remember me to all the old friends who inquire for me at B.C.

Now wishing you good health, good courage, I bid you good bye.

Otis



OO Howard  
Oct 26, 57



Mr R. B. Howard.

Good College  
Maine

West Point N.Y. Oct 26 1857

Dear Brother,

I have at last found time to write you, but I feel remarkably dull & fear my letter will partake of my spirit. I received your letter a day or two ago, and am glad to find from it that you are doing so well at Bowdoin. I am really anxious for you to take a high stand there. This last week I have had a visit from Mr & Mrs Sargent, & also from Dr Lord. They happened here the same day. Frank & his lady <sup>were</sup> on their way to N. York: & the Dr was bound for some town in this State towards Buffalo - I don't recollect the name. I was fortunate enough to get excused from recitations & military duty the most of the time that they were here. Warren returned from Maine the week before - brought me a piece of Lydia Green's. I should say perhaps Mrs Brown's wedding cake. If I could get a husband at her time of life what a young lady need despair. Charlie also sent me his miniature. It is either not well taken, or Charlie has grown old very fast. I can't make it look very natural. But you need not write so to him or mother. For he is sensitive you know. I can't conceive how you could get a better one than the one you sent me. I would judge that you dress a little neat, about the neck, or as mother used to say, have a little more ambition about your dress & your person, than when she used to be slovenly together. Sarah says you have grown taller. I am sorry to hear you speak in such style of your cousins.



William you know is reserved towards every body; but I never knew Maria to be so. I am sure they like you. Silas speaks very little of his exploits "about town" while here; probably for two reasons. one is that he knows that he would not find me much interested in such boasts & recitals - another that he was too much taken up with the place to think about his past high times. You are mistaken if you think Silas is possessed of bad principles. The truth is he has none at all; neither good nor bad. He is governed by <sup>his companions</sup> impulse entirely; and seems to be too susceptible of influences from all quarters. These good hearted men who have no strength of character, who are incapable of forming any resolutions by which they can abide, are like the ship at sea without any rudder. They may not run aground; but in all probability they will. Silas will never make much of a man of course. yet I am in hopes he will be kept in restraint check by his good friends & not become an unprincipled rascal like his father. You must not take up with all the tales they tell you about the professors, believing them implicitly. Now I don't believe half they say about Prof. Upham: that he jibs - tries to catch men by leading them off their guard - &c. &c. He has a peculiar way of talking with you on any subject: he would be very likely to introduce it by telling you that he knew your father & mother, or your brother. I never believed these introductory speeches had any particular object in view. You need not fear his pumping you. He is certainly the

most lenient man at heart of all the professors. He has interceded for many young men & procured their release from many a hard sentence. Taking his writings & what I can remember of his character from observation, in to the account, I conceive him to be an upright & liberal minded man.

Give my respects to Wendell, Joe Howard, &c. &c. Tell any who inquire for Stevens or Keble that they are in good health and spirits after a glorious journey of a high time. Lizzie wrote me that she was disappointed in not going to the wedding. Sarah says she looks in fine health & spirits now....

You must write me when you room; and with whom you are living. I believe you did not tell me about your avowal of independence to Wendell. How was it did you have difficulty? I am studying very hard. get no time to write letters. <sup>in</sup> doing well in every thing but drawing. I do pretty well in that branch. But others do infinitely better. They say Aunt Amelia has been spitting blood. Everett has brown William & Mary Ann on the town. The rail. road is rather up a stump. the overseers in rather hot water & the subscribers mighty stubborn. The Dr gone, & Lydia Turner married gives the climax to the important news from the place of our nativity. Study hard & write often. is the best piece of advice I have for you.

Your affectionate brother  
O. C. Howard



---

80 10/26/1851 *From:* Otis [OO Howard]

*To:* Mr. R.B. Howard

RBH-044

West Point N.Y.

Bowd. College  
Maine

*Source:* Bowdoin

---

West Point N.Y. Oct. 26, 1851

Dear brother,

I have at last found time to write you, but I feel remarkably dull & fear my letter will partake of my spirit. I received your letter a day or two ago, and I am glad to find from it that you are doing so well at Bowdoin. I am really anxious for you to take a high stand there. This last week I have had a visit from Mr. And Mrs. Sargent & also from Dr. Lord. They happened here the same day. Frank & his lady were on their way to N. York & the Dr. Was bound for some town in this state towards Buffalo - I don't recollect the name. I was fortunate enough to get excused from recitations & military duty the most of the time that they were here.

Warren returned from Maine the week before, brought me a piece of Lydia Turner's I should say perhaps Mrs. Brown's wedding cake. If she could get a husband at her time of life what young lady need despair.

Charlie sent me his miniature. It is either not well taken or Charlie has grown old very fast. I can't make it look very natural but you needn't write so to him or mother, for he is sensitive you know. I can't conceive how you could get a better one than the one you sent me. I would judge that you dress a little neater about the neck or as mother used to say have a little more ambition about your dress & your person than when we used to be slovens together.

Sarah says you have grown taller. I'm sorry to hear you speak in such style of your cousins. William you know is reserved towards everybody, but I never knew Maria to be so. I am sure they like you. Silas spoke very little of his exploits "about town" while here. Probably for two reasons one is that he knows that he would not find me much interested in such bostings & recitals, another that he was too much taken up with the place to think about his past high times. You're mistaken if you think Silas is possessed of bad principles. The truth is he has none at all, neither good nor bad. He is governed by his companions entirely, and seems to be too susceptible of influences from all quarters. These goodhearted men who have no strength of character, who are incapable of forming any resolutions by which they can abide are like the ship at sea without any rudder. They may not run aground, but in all probability they will. Silas will never make much of a man of course, yet I am in hopes he will be kept in check by his good friends & not become an unprincipled rake like his father.

You mustn't take up with all the tales they tell you about the professors, believing them implicitly. Now I don't believe half they say about Prof Upham, that he fibs, tries to catch men by leading them off their guard, &c. &c. He has a peculiar way of talking with you on any subject. He would be very likely to introduce it by telling you that he knew your father & mother, or your brother. I never believed these introductory speeches had any particular object in view. You need not fear his pumping you. He is certainly the most lenient man at heart of all the professors. He has interceded for many young men & procured their release from many a hard sentence. Taking his writings & what I can remember of his character from observation, into the account, I conceive him to be an upright & liberal minded man.

Give my respects to Kendall, Joe Howard, &c, &c. tell any who inquire for Stevens or Webb that they are in good health and spirits after a glorious furlough & a high time.

Lizzie wrote me that she was disappointed in not going to the wedding. Sarah says she looks in fine health & spirits now.

You must write me where you room, and with whom you are living. I believe you did not tell me about your avowal of independence to Thomas, how was it did you have difficulty? I am studying very hard, get no time to write letters, and doing well in every thing but drawing. I do pretty well in that branch, but others do infinitely better.

They say Aunt Aurelia has been spitting blood. Everett has thrown William and Mary Ann on the town. The railroad is rather up a stump, the overseers in rather hot water & the subscribers mighty stubborn. The doctor gone, & Lydia Turner married gives the climax to the important news from the place of our nativity. Study hard &



write often - is the best piece of advice I have for you.

Your affectionate brother  
O. O. Howard

[Envelope]  
Mr. R.B. Howard  
Bowd. College  
Maine  
[Postmark] WEST POINT N.Y. 26 OCT 3