

your visit profitable and interesting to you. It will cost
you something but it need not much. Here comes tattoo -
This will make fourteen pages of letter paper, covered with
my scrawl that I will send out by tomorrow's mail.

Perhaps you may think that I write very slowly from
what I say. Ah, no my pen glides on pretty rapidly
unless I take pains, as I sometimes do, though seldom
in my letters to you. I am not going to take pains
till you do. If you will sit down & write me the best
letter you can, I will give you a more careful reply &
perhaps a letter. I like, however to read your free &
easy style, when I do not have to stop too long on a
queer character, & by so doing lose the thread of the story.

Mr Williams says - Mel Fuller is doing great things
at Augusta as Editor. He thinks him a smart man.
says he will always be called a smart man he thinks,
but never, probably a distinguished man. I like to see
our old Alma Mater turn out worthy sons. I hope
you will do honor to her name, by doing full justice
to yourself. Is your health good? I hope it is.

I am not going to write about my little ill-tunes any
more. When I get right decently sick I am going to
write home about it or get somebody to write for me.

It only gives mother useless anxieties to tell all my
little ailments I can well now. May God bless you
& prosper you in all things right. My brother -

Yrs affectionately C. P. Howard.

West Point, Mar 13. 1858.

My dear Brother,

I am very sorry
that I did not keep my promise to you so that you might
have a letter on your return to Thompston. I intended to have
written it last week, but instead I wrote a very long one
to Mother & Sellie, intending to have written yours, as soon as
I had finished that, but I cannot write fast enough
'Tattoo' comes now before I think of it. Corrie wrote me that
you were in Portland on your way back. I wish you to
tell me how she seemed, if she looked as well as when I was on
far enough. I suspect she does not. Is it as pleasant calling there
now that they have a big family as before? She said you told
her that Uncle Henry talked of going to Australia, but you did
not think he had the courage to go. Is Old Bowdoin very
highly elated at the elevation of one of her sons? President Pierce
made a fine inaugural address. I think I will like him
pretty well. He has given us a Secretary of war, who will not
spare so much Jeff. Davis. Already he has given orders that
no more Cadets who are found deficient shall be turned back
but ^{all such} must leave. - The secret of his severity ^{is} ~~is~~ that he is a
Graduate of this Institution himself. C. M. Conrad was a splendid
man for Cadets. Yesterday afternoon I called on a Graduate of
Bowdoin & an Athenaeum I believe, Horace Williams Capt

I have not time to read this over - correct errors for me

Seth Williams brother, the latter is the adjutant of this Post as I may have written you & my particular friend - a very fine man indeed. Horace Williams has been to California & returned wealthy. He seems about 25. He may be older. He was in the class that threw acid in Professor Goodwin's eyes. He was at the celebrated bon-fire. I never met a more thorough gentleman, or a more amiable man in my life. How did every body seem at home? Is mother well - Charlie & Delle growing out of my knowledge?

It is wicked to shut me up here, so that I cannot run home and make a short visit, like you - but then I had my time -

This month of March is an awful month at West Point. I believe it is about as bad at Brunswick, though ~~the~~ Topsham must be a nicer place. Since the melted snow & ice will flow down from its steep hills to the old Androsoggin - but here we have a deep snow one day - a fair & warm day the next which generates liquifaction & evaporation a little too rapidly for comfort, and the next a nice rain, so that we tramp about in mud & water & snow the whole time. Why I have not had dry feet after ten o'clock each day for a fortnight, but it does not seem to hurt me. You passed your examination did you not before you went home? My diploma is of no great consequence anyhow? You need not trouble yourself to inquire about it. When I need it I will easily get it.

What did you find of interest at Leeds besides our own family? Mrs. Anilla there -? I presume you had plenty of music did you not? Don't father think we have a

set of Loew's in the Main Legislature now? They have some good times to see. The Advertiser & Argus seem to continue their political feuds. But I perceive the Maine girls are getting brave - especially in the town of Stillwater. If all young ladies would be as prompt at defending their honor I presume the country would not be as full as it is of dishonorable, contemptible, cowardly rakes. No, I go to for the country is not full of them - but she contains a number sufficient to change our terrestrial angels into fiends, to people our cities with prostitutes than which nothing in human nature is more pitifully vile. I like the honor of cadets & officers - they always respect female virtue - and they discard with contempt the man who does not respect it, and I believe many Southerners would put a bullet through his heart, though I regret to admit that vice in other forms is allowed & even popular, still this principle, and the deep & habitual regard for truth in an officer, cannot help impressing you with respect for him. This as I once imagined is not the worst school in the world. There are many virtues acquired & cherished here, a peculiar dignity, manliness & high sense of honor characterizes almost every graduate. I hope indeed you will come to see me next summer. A visit will do you much good besides the pleasure of meeting your brother. You can gain much information that will be of use to you, and will probably enjoy visiting places & scenes that are already familiar on the page of history. I will leave nothing untried to make

91 3/13/1853 *From:* O.O. Howard

To: Dear Brother [RB
Howard]

RBH-055

West Point

Source: Bowdoin

West Point Mar. 13, 1853

My dear Brother,

I am very sorry that I did not keep my promise to you so that you might have a letter on your return to Topsham. I intended to have written it last week, but instead I wrote a very long one to mother & Dellie, intending to have written yours, as soon as I finished that, but I cannot write fast enough "tattoo" comes now before I think of it.

Lizzie wrote me that you were in Portland on your way back. I wish you to tell me how she seemed, if she looked as well as when I was on furlough. I suspect she does not. Is it as pleasant calling there now that they have a big family as before? She said you told her that Uncle Henry talked of going to Australia, but you did not think he had the courage to go.

Is old Bowdoin very highly elated at the elevation of one of her sons? President Pierce made a fine inaugural address. I think I will like him pretty well. He has given us a Secretary of War, who will not spare as much Jeff Davis. Already he has given orders that no more Cadets who are found deficient shall be turned back but all such must leave. The secret of his severity to be is that he is a Graduate of this Institution himself. CM Conrad was a splendid man for Cadets. Yesterday afternoon I called on a Graduate of Bowdoin & an Athenaeon I believe, Horace Williams, Capt. Seth Williams brother, the latter is the adjutant of this Post as I may have written you & my particular friend, a very fine man indeed. Horace Williams has been to California & returned wealthy. He seems about 25. He may be older. He was in the class that threw acid in Professor Goodwin's eyes. He was at the celebrated bon-fire. I never met a more thorough gentleman, or a more amiable man in my life.

How did everybody seem at home? Is mother well - Charlie & Dellie growing out of my knowledge? It is wicked to shut me up here, so that I can not run home and make a short visit, like you, but then I had my time.

This month of March is an awful month at West Point. I believe it is about as bad at Brunswick, though Topsham must be a nicer place, since the melted snow & ice will flow down from its steep hills to the old Androscoggin, but here we have a deep snow one day, a fair & warm day the next which generates liquifaction & evaporation a little too rapidly for comfort, and the next a nice rain, so that we tramp about in mud & water & snow the whole time. Why I have not had dry feet after ten o'clock each day for a fortnight, but it does not seem to hurt me.

You passed your examination did you not before you went home? My diploma is of no great consequence anyhow? You need not trouble yourself to inquire about it. When I need it I will easily get it.

What did you find of interest at Leeds besides our own family? Was Aurilla there? I presume you had plenty of music did you not? Don't father think we have a set of Sows in the Maine legislature now? They have some queer times to see. The Advertiser & Argus seemed to continue their political feuds. But I perceive the Maine girls are getting brave, especially in the town of Stillwater. If all young ladies would be as prompt at defending their honor I presume the country would not be as full as it is of dishonorable, contemptible, cowardly rakes.

No, I go too far the country is not full of them, but she contains a number sufficient to change our terrestrial angels into fiends, to people our cities with prostitutes than which nothing in human nature is more pitiably vile. I like the honor of cadets & officers. They always respect female virtue, and they discard with contempt the man who does not respect it, and I believe many Southerners would put a bullet through his heart, though I regret to admit that vice in other forms is allowed & even popular, still this principle, and the deep & habitual regard for truth in an officer, cannot help impressing you with respect for him. This as I once imagined is not the worst school in the world. There are many virtues acquired & cherished here, a peculiar dignity manliness & high sense of honor characterizes almost every graduate.

I hope indeed you will come to see me next summer. A visit will do you much good besides the pleasure of

meeting your brother. You can gain much information that will be of use to you, and will probably enjoy visiting places & scenes that are already familiar on the pages of history. I will leave nothing untried to make your visit profitable and interesting to you. It will cost you something but it need not much.

Here comes tattoo. This will make fourteen pages of letter paper, covered with my scrawl that I will send out by tomorrow's mail. Perhaps you may think that I write very slowly from what I say. Oh, no my pen glides on pretty rapidly unless I take pains, as I sometimes do, though seldom in my letters to you. I am not going to take pains till you do. If you will sit down & write me the best letter you can, I will give you a more careful reply & perhaps a better. I like, however to read your free & easy style, when I do not have to stop too long on a queer character & by so doing lose the thread of the story.

Mr. Williams says, Mel Fuller is doing great things at Augusta as Editor. He thinks him a smart man., Says he will always be called a smart man methinks, but never, probably a distinguished man. I like to see our old Alma Mater turnout worthy sons. I hope you will do honor to her name, by doing full justice to yourself. Is your health good? I hope it is. I am not going to write about my little ill-turns any more, when I get right decently sick I'm going to write home about it or get somebody to not before. It only gives mother useless anxieties to tell all my little ailments. I am well now. May God bless you & prosper you in all things right, my brother.

Yrs affectionately
O.O. Howard

I have not time to read this over. Correct errors for me.

that we may be posted up on such subjects, so that we may not be silenced by a scoffer or the truth. For want of knowledge, and a second is that it gives interest to the perusal of Bible history, leaving out of account the solution of many doubts & perplexities, which fill the soul, at times.

Our new Commandant is making a complete revolution in the process of drilling. It is almost impossible to go to drill or parade without getting reported. Major Gerroth (the Commandant) himself does not report badly, though he makes no 'tree the line'. But the Infantry instructors under him often report to cover their own ignorance. i.e. they fancy they can make men learn to drill well by telling them that every mistake will be reported. but do not know how or do not take the trouble like the Major to explain each motion in detail. I have got reported twice within a few days for not "creeping properly". You think perhaps that refers to clothing - far from it, I was very neatly dressed as I always am - but it refers to a want of accuracy in aligning ones self on the men on your right or left at some company formation. Give my love to Charlie, tell him I will write him soon. He wrote me a very good letter. I want him to try hard to do well. Tell him there is not the least danger of his falling behind me in scholarship, if he will but half try. Remember me to Adams. Tell him I would like to take a walk out home with him again - as I come this. You have a very good sized school it seems. Do not work too hard. Yr affectionate brother

O. P. Howard

West Point N.Y. Mar. 30. 53

My dear brother.

The reason I have found time to write you in the middle of the week is - between you & me - that I am afflicted with one of Job's comforts I am in consequence excused from drill & dress parade. I meant to take a bath after returning from the Drawing Academy at four, and am now enjoying myself as well as possible under the circumstances. I received your good long letter & in a day or so afterwards one from Charlie. I was particularly gratified with the good news that you will visit me next summer. I have not been doing so well in my studies as I could wish, especially in Chemistry. When we come to review, taking four lessons at a time I cannot stow away in my memory everything in detail and consequently get 'bumped' now & then. But it does not matter much I am not going to study myself out of the world for a file or two in standing. I am glad you got my Diploma. President Woods was always disposed to flatter me somewhat. but he remembered me on my return to Brunswick rather better than the majority of my old friends and teachers, and seemed very glad to see me. You will like him when you come to visit to him, for he is a pleasant as well as superior instructor. Did I tell you the reception My old Griffin gave me when I visited Brunswick on furlough?

He thought I must be one of the Portland Band of Music because I had bright buttons. He told me he believed he had seen my face before somewhere, but he could not tell who I might be. McKean the College Treasurer made the same flattering mistake, and rather than rise any higher in the Aristocratic Scale, I wished that I had been more modestly attired. I intend to put by the military insignia on my next furlough - that is, if I can get a citizen's coat that will button all the way up to my throat. Each class before graduating - some four or five months before - is ~~it~~ allowed the privilege of enjoying both uniform & citizen clothing - Mr Earl of Boston, or Myran of New York, usually comes on here & takes the measure of all who want clothing & has them ready made for the members of the class some weeks before they leave. It costs nearly every man between three and four hundred dollars to fit them himself out, by his uniform, his sword, his trunk - &c. - The Military Trunk costs twenty five dollars - Great coat forty. Now I am not going to submit to such prices for myself.

I will buy just what I am obliged to have and when I get in Maine I can get the rest for half the money.

I wrote a letter to mother last Sunday - I presume you & Charles find time to write ^{her} oftener than I can. I received a letter from mother & Jellie last week which I answered Sunday evening. She is talking of visiting Portland, and perhaps she is already there. I hope father's business will

take him as far as N. York. For I believe it would do me a "heap" of good as the Southerners say to see him. I see by the papers that the Maine Law has undergone revision, and that the reins are in no way loosened, but are rather drawn a little tighter. I do not know what will be the final issue of all these measures, but I hope ~~that~~ they will not by reaction generate any retrograde movement in the cause which they assume to advance. Professor Sprole has made me as a member of his Bible class a present of a book entitled Nelson on Infidelity. Nelson was originally an Infidel himself - and he did so much evil by spreading his doctrines, that after his ^{conversion} ~~conversion~~ he resolved to spend the remainder of his life in turning aside men from infidelity. He was a very powerful & vigorous speaker, and went from one part of the country to the other - stopping & speaking wherever he found Skepticalism in vogue - He is as vigorous a writer as he is said to be a speaker - He picked up the Geological infidel, and the learned infidel, admirably. I have gained a great deal of information from reading the book, particularly with regard to the prophecies of our Savior, in Revelation which I did not understand. He shows how to the letter these as well as numerous prophecies of the Old Testament have been fulfilled - For the sake of ^{avoiding} ~~avoiding~~ Christian partiality, he takes for his authority, infidel & Heathen writers in the majority of cases. I think you would like the book if you could manage to get it. There are two objects in reading a book of this character, one

92 3/30/1853 *From:* O.O. Howard

To: Dear Brother [RB
Howard]

RBH-056

West Point N.Y.

Source: Bowdoin

West Point N.Y. March 30 '53

My dear brother

The reason I have found time to write you in the middle of the week is between you & me, that I am afflicted with one of Job's comforters & and in consequence excused from drill & dress parade. I went & took a bath after returning from the Drawing Academy at four, and am now enjoying myself as well as possible under the circumstances. I received your good long letter & in a day or so afterwards one from Charlie. I was particularly gratified with the good news that you will visit me next summer.

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I am glad you got my Diploma. President Woods was always disposed to flatter me somewhat, but he remembered me on my return to Brunswick rather better than the majority of my old friends and teachers, and seemed very glad to see me. You will like him when you come to recite to him, for he is a pleasant as well as superior instructor. Did I tell you the reception my old Griffin gave me when I visited Brunswick on furlough? He thought I must be one of the Portland Band of Music because I had bright buttons. He told me he believed he had seen my face before somewhere, but he could not tell who I might be. McKeen the College treasurer made the same flattering mistake and rather than rise any higher in the Aristocratic Scale, I wished that I had been more modestly attired. I intend to put by the military insignia on my next furlough, that is, if I can get a citizens coat that will button all the way up to my throat.

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I wrote a letter to mother last Sunday. I presume you & Charlie find time to write her oftener than I can. I received a letter from mother & Dellie last week which I answered Sunday evening. She is talking of visiting Portland, and perhaps she is already there. I hope father's business will take him as far as N. York, for I believe it would do me a "heap" of good as the southerners say to see him. I see by the papers that the Maine Law has under gone revision, and that the reins are in no way loosened, but are rather drawn a little tighter. I do not know what will be the final issue of all these measures, but I hope they will not by reaction generate any retrograde movement in the cause which they assumed to advance.

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There are two objects in reading a book of this character - one that we may be posted up on such subjects, so that we may not be silenced by a scoffer at the truth for want of knowledge, and a second is that it gives interest

to the perusal of Bible history, leaving out of account the solution of many doubts & perplexities, which fill the soul, at times.

Our new Commandant is making a complete revolution in the process of drilling. It is almost impossible to go to drill or parade without getting reported. Major Garrett (the Commandant) himself does not report badly, though he makes us "toe the line", but the Infantry instructors under him often report to cover their own ignorance i.e. they fancy they can make men learn to drill well by telling them that every mistake will be reported, but do not know how or do not take the trouble like the Major to explain each motion in detail. I have got reported twice within a few days for not "dressing properly". You think perhaps that refers to clothing - far from it. I was very neatly dressed as I always am, but it refers to a want of accuracy in aligning one's self on the men on his right or left at some company formation.

Give my love to Charlie. Tell him I will write him soon. He wrote me a very good letter. I want him to try hard to do well. Tell him there is not the least danger of his falling behind me in scholarship, if he will but half try. Remember me to Adams. Tell him I would like to take a walk out home with him again, as I once did. You have a very good sized school it seems. Do not work too hard.

Your affectionate brother
O.O. Howard

West Point N.Y. Apr 17. 1853.

My dear Brother

I noticed many things in your last interesting letter, in the one I wrote to Charlie immediately on the reception of yours - I cannot realize that George is really gone to his eternal home; that I never will again behold his mild & pleasant countenance again, while I live - And is it really so? How little one thinks when he is mingling in a little friendly social circle, that that is the last time he is to see some one of those bright faces, beaming with intelligence, and bespeaking an active spirit within. Yet every body dies - and nobody thinks of the matter after a few tears, a few words of regret, and a single thought that I too may be the next victim to the fell-destroyer's clasp. Not so there are even here in this forgetful, care less world, those who are more deeply impressed. There are affectionate hearts, left ~~for~~ pierced and bleeding - whose wounds are not so readily healed by the busy things of active life. Those who are taught valuable lessons by these afflictions, who learn not to put their trust in earthly hopes - Still did you ever think of it in your hours of gladness, when every man seemed kind & friendly - did you ever think that these same smiling faces would smile on when you were taken from them. A word of praise, one shadow of regret if you are gone from their remembrance! It is not a pleasant theme for reflection

and I will change to another - hoping that George is in a better & brighter world than this, and leaving it to a merciful God to assuage the wounded spirits of his parents & friends. We will pass to think of other things. Since I wrote you my military relations have undergone a wondrous change. From being a private in ranks I have come to be the second officer in my class. At Parade last evening we heard the following order. "The following appointments are made to take effect from this date - Q. C. Howard is hereby appointed Quartermaster Sergeant vice Colquist resigned." And so it is. Now you have a curiosity to know something of the duties & responsibilities of my office. You have had some idea of the hardships I have had to undergo at times and the continual routine of innumerable & inevitable little duties that I have had to perform which in the aggregate consume much time and often prove demerit. All these things are "rid of". My duties are as follows - inspect $\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{2}$ barracks every Friday night for damages - open the store rooms every other Sunday morning - go to Sunday morning inspections when it is fair - so that we can have it on the plains. I have a

pair of chevrons - one on each arm just below the shoulder of the form of which you may judge by the accompanying figure or better - the dark part is black broad cloth & the yellow stripes are gold lace. The vertex is just uppermost and just touching the lip of the shoulder and the lower part reaches over in front from seam to seam. I do not have to attend any roll calls, any drills, or parades. I can sleep over my sash, have a light after taps. Besides my academic



duties, riding and Artillery I have nothing to do I have the best office for "eternum cum dignitate" in the Corps. It is odd, I have been a private and now I rank above all the 46 Sergeants in my class but one. I did not expect this honor and it makes me right joyful. Perhaps you can get a reply to your letters more readily than you have for some time past. Monday evening the battalion is at drill and I am very strange to day enjoying the dignity of my office. I will be Quartermaster next year if I be true myself. I will have no guard-duty to perform while I am here - I have no musket but a sword & sash. I got a new pair of chevrons to day. They cost three dollars - and a sash will cost 17 or 18 dollars. This is bad, but I should have to get one as soon as I graduate. When you come to see me I can now go where I choose, drop sentinels post & be saluted, instead of saluting - Capt Williams says he was never gladder of anything in his life. He thinks I never have had half a chance and thinks I will now show a brighter side. It seems odd not to be obliged to jump into bed at the three taps, not to start up & hurry on my clothes or scuffle not to go to drill while the others are being put through. I can tell you, I thought from certain favorable rumors that I would be made an officer next year but I did not dream of this sudden & high promotion. I never knew the Corps of Cadets to manifest so much pleasure at anything of the kind before. Give my love to Charles. I presume he thought his letter was never coming. It has reached him though before this. Good night I will write you soon your affectionate
Remember me to Anilla & Mr Adams.
Brother,
C. S.

93 4/17/1853 *From:* Otis [OO Howard]

To: Dear Brother [RB Howard]

RBH-057

West Point N.Y.

Source: Bowdoin

West Point N.Y. April 17, 1853

My dear Brother

I noticed many things in your last interesting letter, in the one I wrote to Charlie immediately on the reception of yours. I cannot realize that George is really gone to his Eternal home; that I never will again behold his mild & pleasant countenance again, while I live. And is it really so?

How little one thinks when he is mingling in a little friendly social circle, that that is the last time he is to see some one of those bright faces, beaming with intelligence and bespeaking an active spirit within. Yet every body dies and nobody thinks of the matter after a few tears, a few words of regret, and the single thought that I too may be the next victim to the fell-destroyers dart. Not so there are even here in this forgetful, careless world those who are more deeply impressed. There are affectionate hearts left pierced and bleeding, whose wounds are not so readily healed by the busy things of active life. Those who are taught valuable lessons by these afflictions, who learn not to put their trust in earthly hopes. Still did you ever think of it in your hours of gladness, when every man seemed kind & friendly. Did you ever think that these same smiling faces would smile on when you were taken from them. A word of praise, one shadow of regret & you are gone from their remembrance? It is not a pleasant theme for reflection and I will change to another, hoping that George is in a better & brighter world than this, and leaving it to a merciful God to assuage the wounded spirits of his parents & friends, we will pass to think of other things.

Since I wrote you my military relations have undergone a wondrous change, from being a private in ranks I have come to be the second officer in my class. At Parade last evening we heard the following order. "The following appointments are made to take effect from this date - O. O. Howard is hereby appointed Quartermaster Sergeant, vice Colquit resigned". And so it is. Now you have a curiosity to know something of the duties & responsibilities of my office. You have had some idea of the hardships I have had to undergo at times and the continual routine of innumerable & inevitable little duties that I have had to perform which in the aggregate consume much time and often procure demerit. All these things are got rid of. My duties are as follows: inspect one half barracks every Friday night for damages, open the storerooms every other Sunday morning, go to Sunday morning inspection when it is fair, so that we can have it on the plain.

I have a pair of Chevron's one on each arm just below the shoulder of the form of which you may judge by the accompanying figure or better. The dark part is black broadcloth & the yellow stripes are gold lace. The vertex is put uppermost and just touching the lip of the shoulder and the lower part reaches over in front from seam to seam. I do not have to attend any roll-calls, any drills, or parades. I can sleep over reveille, have a light after taps. Besides my academic duties, riding and Artillery I have nothing to do. I have the best office for "otium cum dignitate" in the Corps. It is odd, I have been a private and now I rank above all the 16 sergeants in my class but one. I did not expect this honor and it makes me right joyous. Perhaps you can get a reply to your letters more readily than you have for some time past.

Monday evening

The battalion is at drill and I am here strange to say enjoying the dignity of my Office. I will be Quartermaster next year if I behave myself, will have no guard-duty to perform while I am here. I have no musket but a sword & sash. I got a new pair of Chevrons today. They cost three dollars, and a sash will cost 17 or 18 dollars. This is bad, but I should have to get one as soon as I graduate. When you come to see me I can now go where I choose, cross sentinel's post & be saluted, instead of saluting. Capt. Williams says he was never gladder of anything in his life. He thinks I never have had half a chance and thinks I will now show a brighter side. It seems odd not to be obliged to jump into bed at the three taps, not to start up & hurry on my clothes at reveille, not to go to drill while the others are being put through, I can tell you. I thought from certain favorable rumors that I would be made an officer next year but I did not dream of this sudden & high promotion. I never knew the Corps of Cadets to manifest so much pleasure at anything of the kind before.

Give my love to Charlie. I presume he thought his letter was never coming. It has reached him though before

this. Good night. I will write you soon. Remember me to Aurilla & Mr. Adams.

Your affectionate brother
Otis

a man be his nature what it may into a military
character of some kind. I believe my tastes & habits will
always verge this way whatever I may hereafter do -
Whatever field I may attempt to cultivate. Since I
wrote the last sentence I have been to church, returned, had
a theological discussion, an earnest one if not a learned
one, have been to dinner returned & lighted my salu-
-it has got a red for a handle and a merchant's bowl -
Did you ever see such a one? We are having a smart rain
now. Cadets prefer that it should rain on such days - they
think they do not gain very much if it rains on Sunday.
We had a very good sermon to day. a part of it touched
upon profane swearing, a vice which you may know is
rather prevalent here. This very thing tends to prejudice
visitors & strangers more against this institution
than any other one thing. Yet cadets never use an oath in the
presence of ladies or of their officers. ^{of few} ~~Very many~~ in my class
are trying to break themselves of the ungentlemanly habit
I am glad to see even an attempt, for it is certainly
more inexcusable than any other form of depravity. Give
my love to Charlie, tell him he shall have a letter soon -
Remember me to Adeline - write soon - tell me
all that's new - I shall expect to hear from you
all this week and I hope indeed to find that mother
is well again, entirely. May God bless you - supplying
you with health, strength & a goodly portion of happiness.

Your affectionate brother
O. D. Howard.

West Point N.Y. May 8 1853
My dear Brother,

I have expected a letter from
you this past week, I have been anxious to get a letter
either from you or from home, since mother was sick &
still far from being well when she wrote me; but I did
not get a letter from a living soul for the whole week
something so unusual for me that my anxiety is
increased. I told you I had been made an officer in
my last letter, and anticipated having an abundance
of time for corresponding with you. The first week &
a half I did have to myself during battalion drills
but since I have been obliged to go to Artillery drill
every evening between four & six. The time I had I
spent in painting, reading & writing, but now as the
examination draws near I have to be preparing for
it as usual. I am very poorly prepared for this examination
not because I have been idle but because we have
such an extensive course to be examined on. Two thousand
pages of Philosophy & Chemistry are not easily retained
in the mind at once - You may it is true run a
great many ideas about them - many subjects may
be as familiar as your alphabet, but it is hard to
retain an accurate knowledge of everything in detail.
Will I not rejoice when this ordeal is past - Two
more such and another course is completed. I wish

years was as near its termination. I am counting very strongly on seeing you next summer. I may go to Maine myself if Prof. Cleaveland will write for me to come and take my Diploma, I mean my second degree. Otherwise it would be useless to try to get a leave. How is Charles' health now - and Mother's. I fear too Lizzie may be sick for she did not write me all last week. I usually get a letter Saturday, but I was disappointed yesterday in finding none for me. My health is pretty good - I have not much flesh, but I am getting a better complexion by bathing in cold water every morning. We have two small bathing apartments with a bathing tub in each, into which we can let cold water or warm at will. When I commenced lying down in pure cold spring water - I would jump out as quick as a flash - but now it does not chill me more than it does to wash my face - It is worth while to take a cold bath you feel so finely all the day after. You think it requires nerve & courage, but it does not - I used to cry & wail when father would wash his little boys face & comb his head, but it was not long before it became a pleasure to wash. I believe I have not told you I was elected vice-president of the Dialectic Society - three weeks ago. I have had to act as president for two meetings. It is quite a dignified position here - but it is rather irksome with its responsibilities. I suppose they will elect me president, but I do not care whether they do or not. If they do I also elect an orator for the fourth of July - the honors

will be put on rather too thick. I would accept the latter - for it would make me read, write and prepare myself to do partial justice at least to the occasion. You asked me sometime since what coffee Uncle Ward was. I do not know I have not heard from him for a very long time, nor have I been fortunate enough to meet with his name in any paper. Yesterday our class was taken out to measure the height of Fort Put by using the barometer. You may be aware there is a long list of observations and subsequent calculations to be made. I make it 322 feet above the level of the plain, it is about five hundred feet above the level of the river at high water. It is alternately cold and warm here, the weather changing suddenly and going to extremes, but vegetation has advanced rapidly. Already the cherry trees have blossomed & dropped their white covering the trees are leaving - the foliage of the ground look fresh and green. I think you would be delighted with West Point for a time at least. I will give you some fine trumps & show you some beautiful scenery. I presume Charles sighs & wishes to come to - I would that he could. Some time he shall go to West Point. I may live here - perhaps I shall come back here as an instructor, if so when I get a woman - a little wife &c. - he shall come and live with me; since he probably with his peaceful turn will never be a cadet. I do not wish him to be one either. It is sure to transform

94 5/8/1853 *From:* O. O. Howard

To: Dear Brother [RB
Howard]

RBH-058

West Point N.Y.

Source: Bowdoin

West Point N.Y. May 8, 1853

My dear brother,

I have expected a letter from you this past week. I have been anxious to get a letter either from you or from home, since mother was sick & still far from being well when she wrote me; but I did not get a letter from a living soul for the whole week, something so unusual for me that my anxiety is increased.

I told you I had been made in officer in my last letter, and anticipated having an abundance of time for corresponding with you. The first week & a half I did have to myself during the battalion drills but since I have been obliged to go to Artillery drill every evening between four & six. The time I had I spent in painting, reading & writing but now as the examination draws near I have to be preparing for it as usual. I am very poorly prepared for this examination not because I have been idle but because we have such an extensive course to be examined on. Two thousand pages of philosophy & chemistry are not easily retained in the mind at once. You may it is true have a great many ideas about them, many subjects may be as familiar as your alphabet, but it is hard to retain an accurate knowledge of everything in detail. Will I not rejoice when this ordeal is passed. Two more such and another course is completed.

I wish yours was as near its termination. I am counting very strongly on seeing you next summer. I may go to Maine myself if Prof. Cleaveland will write for me to come and take my diploma, I mean my second degree. Otherwise it would be useless to try to get a leave.

How is Charlie's health now and mother's. I fear too Lizzie may be sick for she did not write me all last week. I usually get a letter Saturday, but I was disappointed yesterday in finding none for me. My health is pretty good. I have not much flesh, but I am getting a better complexion by bathing in cold water every morning. We have ten small bathing apartments with a bathing tub in each, into which we can let cold water or warm at will. When I commenced lying down in pure cold spring water, I would jump out as quick as a flash, but now it does not chill me more than it does to wash my face. It is worthwhile to take a cold bath, you feel so finely all the day after. You think it requires nerve & courage, but it does not. I used to cry & writhe when father would wash his little boy's face & comb his head, but it was not long before it became a pleasure to wash.

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You asked me some time since what office Uncle Ward has. I do not know. I have not heard from him for a very long time, nor have I been fortunate enough to meet with his name in any paper. Yesterday our class was taken out to measure the height of Fort Put by using the barometer. You may be aware there is a long list of observations and subsequent calculations to be made. I make it 322 feet above the level of the plane. It is about five hundred feet above the level of the river at high water.

It is alternately cold and warm here. The weather changing suddenly and going to extremes, but vegetation has advanced rapidly. Already the cherry trees have blossomed & dropped their white covering. The trees are leaving. The foliage & the ground look fresh and green. I think you would be delighted with West Point for a time at least. I will give you some fine tramps & show you some beautiful scenery. I presume Charlie sighs & wishes to come too. I would that he could. Sometime he shall go to West Point. I may live here. Perhaps I shall come back here as an instructor. If so when I get a home, a little wife & c. he shall come and live with me; since he probably with his peaceful turn will never be a Cadet. I do not wish him to be one either. It is sure to transform a man be his nature what it may into a military character of some kind. I believe my tastes & habits will always verge this way whatever I may hereafter do, whatever field I may attempt to cultivate.

Since I wrote the last sentence I have been to church, returned, had a theological discussion, an earnest if not a learned one, have been to dinner, returned & lighted my calumet - it has got a reed for a handle and a meerschaum bowl. Did you ever see such a one?

We are having a smart rain now. Cadets prefer that it should rain on week-days. They think they do not gain very much if it rains on Sunday. We had a very good sermon to day - a part of it touched upon profane swearing, a vice which you may know is rather prevalent here. This very thing tends to prejudice visitors & strangers more against this institution than any other one thing. Yet Cadets never use an oath in the presence of ladies or of their officers. A few in my class are trying to break themselves of the ungentlemanly habit. I am very glad to see even an attempt, for it is certainly more inexcusable than any other form of depravity.

Give my love to Charlie, tell him he shall have a letter soon. Remember me to Adams. Write soon, tell me all that's new. I shall expect to hear from you all this week and I hope indeed to find that mother is well again, entirely. May God bless you, supplying you with health, strength & a goodly portion of happiness.

Your affectionate brother
O. O. Howard

Examination; When he came on the floor a sick rep came over him & he was sent to the Hospital. Ever since, he has been growing worse & now lies there near the point of death. I sat up with him last week one night. I found the robust man a weak, helpless, imbecil child. He has no sense & no energy. His disease is a Congestion of the brain. He has a large body & well developed. He is muscular. No man could find a man better suited to manual labor, & here with an energy worthy of a better success, he studied himself into this grave. Will men never learn better than to send such young men here. They cannot get through & and if they could they are not fit for American Officers. My Oration such as it is is completed & committed, & waiting to stir up the patriotism of West Pointers. I shall have to speak to a crowd. There is chance for much credit if I acquit myself well. I for much shame if I should fail to do so. My speech is not good & I am going to make up for deficiencies by speaking it well. I shall not get the credit that I obtained from Mr Barrows a year ago, but I would rather speak here than to a Ladies audience. Mr. Howe had two Grand speeches here during the Examination one from Maj Ward of Florida, a splendid extempore & vigorous effort & a second written oration by Mr Ryzner of N. Carolina. Maj Ward took much notice of me. after my Examination in Philosophy. He came to see me in Camp twice. & I walked & talked with him many times. He is one of the most popular men in Florida, though he got beaten when asp for U.S. Senator. He fought for Scott's election. Oh! what a speaker! I did have no idea of what was meant by an eloquent & strong speaker before I heard him - Good night. I must indulge in the luxury of a few hours sleep on a soft plank floor - My affectionate brother O. H. Woodard.

I cannot read it over it is so late all been written since 10 to 11 o'clock

Remember me
to my friends.
I speak my
pleasure
moments with
John H. Woodard
It is pleasant
to meet a familiar
face

West Point N.Y. June 26. '53

My dear brother

I am almost ashamed to write you, it is so long since I have done so. I forgot that vacations have an end until reminded of it by a letter from Charlie which told me of your return. Our Examination closed with the close of last week. We moved into Camp last Saturday, but as southerners say or in our tongue a week ago last Saturday, and are now making the most of Camp life, under Bob Garnett as Commandant. He is a tyrant. One by one he is cutting off our privileges, and the encampment instead of being as it has been intended a time of recreation, is to be a period of imprisonment. I shall not be able to visit Maine this summer. Perhaps I might, had Joe McKim written for me to come & take my degree, but as he only signified that I could have A.M. by enclosing three dollars, which amount I have not in the wide world, or at least at West Point, I do not think, I can go. So if you think you cannot pay me a visit, I must bear the unhappy thought of not seeing any of my friends for another year and perhaps not then. But I will not be low spirited. I do wish to see Lizzie for many reasons, and I am yet in hopes that some of you may come to New York & bring her. Perhaps you are wishing to know the result of the Examination. I came out 2^d in Phil. 5th in Chemistry & 9th in Drawing, which would have made me 2^d in Gen. Standing if I had had, no demerit as it was I came out third in General Standing. I was not made

Cadet Quartermaster has a Lieutenant, First Lieut. of "C" Comp.
I have to drill platoons at the manual of arms an hour before breakfast
- Post, and an hour & a half in the afternoon. I have to go on as
Officer of the day once in 8 days. His duties are now made very
irksome, since he has to be on the roll watch all day & all night.
I has to report every violation of the thousand & one regulations. He
has to certify to the Commandant that he has reported every
violation of the regulations that he has observed & discharged his
duty faithfully during his tour. This he has to give in writing
^{above} ~~under~~ his signature. He has to be present at all roll-calls, to
turn out & inspect the Guard by day & by night, to inspect
every relief of sentinels after they have been posted. &c. &c.
The most disagreeable of all duties is to report Cadets for swearing.
This he must do, or refuse to sign the certificate, in which case
he would be reduced to ranks & have 12 demerit recorded
against him. Fortunately, Cadets avoided me while I was
on as Officer of the day, and they seldom swear very much in
my society - anyhow, so I did not get a report of that kind. I
only handed in four reports, one a platoon for attempting to pump
water from the Sundial, two for Caps-bilsons out of uniform
and one for an absence from Reveille roll-call. I shall have to
exercise my military talents every day now for the whole year. I
believe new Cadets like me, since I treat them as gentlemen &
do not put them in the Guard tent, they have to move through
when I am drilling them, & those whose tents I inspect have to have
things in order. We who are officers have some privileges which
we can appreciate better than you. We have a good large tent,
can have a light after supper as I have now, have a table & a desk.
&c. Army officers treat us with much deference. We can crop the

posts of sentinels & be saluted between Reveille & Retreat, that is
from 6 O'clock A.M. till Sun-set. No citizen are allowed to come
into our company grounds or tents. They have built a reception
tent, at which any lady or gentleman who wishes to see a cadet is
sent, while a member of the Guard goes for the Cadet in question.
Every cadet except Collet officers, have to report at the Guard tent
when they leave camp & when they return - where they are going &c.
They can only go to the library & the Sink. Now if this is not
tyranny what is? I cut across the post of sentinels & go
where I please & shall till the order comes that first
class officers will report at the Guard tent their departure,
purpose & return. Judge Goodnow, the father of John H. &
"the little old man", was here & brought John with him.
The Old gent introduced me to all the members of the board,
many of them took all the notice of me I could wish & more
too. I heard their daughters & nieces, that they were wise
enough to bring with them, did not study, but had good
luck & did well on the examination; This June made
sad havoc in our class, they cut off 9% of our fellows - all
of whom are good fine young men, these are now waiting for
orders from Washington to get out for home. We have to part
with them. One young man from Philadelphia has been my
particular friend. They found him I think unjustly. He knew
almost as much about Chemistry as I did & yet they
found him in that. They have been here so long it will ruin
many of them. Another very amiable, good principled young man
from Vermont Mr Hyde was found deficient, one in the fourth
class from Maine, Mr Frank, who has ever been remarkable for
imbecility - of mind, studied himself almost to death to pass the law

95 6/26/1853 *From:* O. O. Howard

To: Dear Brother [RB
Howard]

RBH-059

West Point N.Y.

Source: Bowdoin

West Point N.Y. June 26,'53

My dear brother

I am almost ashamed to write you, it is so long since I have done so. I forgot that vacations have an end until reminded of it by a letter from Charlie which told me of your return.

Our examination closed with the close of last week. We moved into Camp last "Saturday-muk" as Southerners say or in our tongue a week ago last Saturday, and are now making the most of Camp life under Bob Garnet as Commandant. He is a tyrant. One by one he is cutting off our privileges, and the encampment instead of being as it has been intended, a time of recreation, is to be a period of imprisonment.

I shall not be able to visit Maine this summer. Perhaps I might, had Joe McKeen written for me to come & take my degree, but as he only signified that I would have A.M. by enclosing three dollars, which amount I have not in the wide world, or at least at West Point, I do not think I can go. So, if you think you cannot pay me a visit, I must bear the unhappy thought of not seeing any of my friends for another year and perhaps not then. But I will not be low spirited. I do wish to see Lizzie for many reasons, and I am yet in hopes that some of you may come to New York & bring her.

Perhaps you are wishing to know the result of examination. I came out 2nd in Phil. 5th in Chemistry & 9th in Drawing, which would have made me 2nd in Gen. standing if I had had no demerit. As it was I came out third in general standing.

I was not made Cadet Quartermaster but a Lieutenant, first Lieut. of "C" Camp. I have to drill plebes at the manual of arms an hour before breakfast, and an hour & a half in the afternoon. I have to go on as officer of the day once in 8 days. His duties are now made very irksome, since he has to be on the watch all day & all night & has to report every violation of the thousand & one regulations. He has to certify to the Commandant that he has reported every violation of the regulations that he has observed & discharged his duty faithfully during his tour. This he has to give in writing above his signature. He has to be present at all roll calls, to turn out & inspect the guard by day & by night, to inspect every relief of sentinels after they have been posted &c. &c.

The most disagreeable of all duties is to report Cadets for swearing; this he must do, or refuse to sign the certificate, in which case he would be reduced to ranks & have 12 demerit recorded against him. Fortunately, cadets avoided me while I was on as officer of the day, and they seldom swear very much in my society anyhow, so I did not get a report of that kind. I only handed in four reports, One a plebe for attempting to pump water from the Sundial, two for cap visors out of uniform and one for an absence from Reveille roll-call. I shall have to exercise my military talents every day now for the whole year. I believe new cadets like me, since I treat them as gentlemen & do not put them in the guard tent. They have to move though when I am drilling them, & those whose tents I inspect have to have things in order.

We who are officers have some privileges which we can appreciate better than you. We have a good large tent, can have a light after taps as I have now, have a table & a desk, &c. Army officers treat us with much deference. We can cross the posts of sentinels & be saluted between Reveille & retreat, that is from 5 o'clock A.M. till sun-set. No citizens are allowed to come into our company grounds or tents. They have built a reception tent, at which any lady or gentleman who wishes to see a Cadet is sent, while a member of the guard goes for the Cadet in question, Every cadet except Cadet officers, have to report at the guard tent when they leave camp & when they return, where they are going &c. They can only go to the library & the <Rink>. Now if this is not tyranny what is? I cut across the post of sentinels & go where I please & shall till the order comes that first-class officers will report at the guard tent their departure, purpose & return.

Judge Goodenow, the father of John H & "the little old man" was here & brought John with him. The Old gent introduced me to all the members of the board, many of them took all the notice of me I could wish & more too. I <fenn'd> their daughters & nieces, that they were wise enough to bring with them, did not study, but had good

luck & did well on the Examination.

This June made sad havoc in our class, they cut off 8 of our fellows, all of whom are good fine young men. These are now waiting for orders from Washington to set out for home. We hate to part with them. One young man from Philadelphia has been my particular friend. They found him I think unjustly. He knew almost as much about chemistry as I did & yet they found him in that. They have been here so long it will ruin many of them. Another very amiable, good principled young man from Vermont, Mr. Hyde was found deficient.

One in the fourth class from Maine, Mr. Frank, who has ever been remarkable for imbecility of mind, studied himself almost to death to pass the June Examination. When he came on this floor a sickness came over him & he was sent to the Hospital. Ever since, he has been growing worse & now lies there near the point of death. I sat up with him last week one night. I found the robust man a weak, helpless, imbecil child. He has no sense & no energy. His disease is a Congestion of the brain. He has a large body & well-developed. He is muscular. No man could find a man better suited to manual labor, & here with an energy worthy of better success, he studied himself into his grave. Will men never learn better than to send such young men here. They cannot get through and if they could, they are not fit for American officers.

My Oration, such as it is, is completed & committed, & waiting to stir up the patriotism of West Pointers. I shall have to speak to a crowd. There is chance for much credit if I acquit myself well, & for much shame if I should fail to do so. My speech is not good & I am going to make up for deficiencies by speaking it well. I shall not get the credit that I obtained from Mr. Barrows a year ago, but I would rather speak here than to a Leed's audience. We have had two grand speeches here during the Examination; one from Maj. Ward of Florida, a splendid extemporaneous effort & a second, written oration by Mr. Raymer of N. Carolina. Maj. Ward took much notice of me, after my examination in Philosophy. He came to see me in Camp twice, & I walked & talked with him many times. He is one of the most popular men in Florida, though he got beaten when up for U.S. Senator. He fought for Scott's election. Oh! What a speaker! I did have no idea of what was meant by an eloquent stump speaker before I heard him.

Good night. I must indulge in the luxury of a few hours sleep on a soft plank floor.

Yr affectionate brother
O.O. Howard

I cannot read it over - it is so late. All been written since taps ten o'clock.

Remember me to my friends. I spent very pleasant memories with John H. Goodenow. It is pleasant to meet a familiar face.