

Grand Rapids, Jan. 6, 1839

My Dear Mother,

I received your kind letter five weeks ago, And want of time alone has prevented my not answering it sooner. I should be glad to coment (sic) upon every line of it now for it was all interesting to me. I perfectly agree with you in regard to the alteration of the house, I hope you are in some measure compensated for your hard summer's work. I believe I have got a tolerable idea of how it looks; it would be a greater satisfaction to see it with my bodily eyes which I intend to do if I can make my plans work.

I grow more and more disgusted with Michigan the more I see of it. I believe I should "give up the ship" if I did not indulge a hope that I shall get away. I don't much care where I go, whether to Ohio or York State..anywhere on the face of Creation, but Michigan.

The times here are growing worse instead of better. All provision kind is on the rise; butter is fifty cents a pound, cheese twenty five cents. We have not bought any of either. I have not even seen any cheese since that was gone before we brought it with us.

We have had the pleasure of moving again since I wrote to Ann. We are now living six miles up the river at a saw mill. Mr. Hinsdill wanted a large quantity of lumber for his own use and thought it would be better to take a mill and saw it himself than to buy it out and out. And as he wanted to superintend the work himself all the time, we should move here; that he could board with us and likewise board his men. I did not want to come here, but I could not help myself and so here we are; and a more uncomfortable situation I could not be placed in. We have fifteen men besides Aaron and Hollis. Turner agreed to board them for two dollars and a half a week apiece. You would be astonished to see the havoc there is made of provision.

We used a barrel of pork in three weeks and over a barrel of beef; and as to bread, it is no more than a marsh fog. They eat all before them. I never began to bake in a tavern, our flour comes in sacks, some fifty and a hundred pounds. A fifty pound sack will not last over four days. The flour is good, we pay equal to ten dollars barrel for it.

The Deacon furnishes all the provisions and is expecting to make a great fortune in sending his overplus lumber to Chicago. I don't know anything about it; and, in fact, I don't care; but those that do know say

that he can't make a single cent as he only has one half. The other half goes to the owner of the premises.

I don't expect to have any less in the family till March and perhaps not then. I am so sick and tired of such a gang of offers that I am out of all patience. I could stand it better if there was any object, but there is none.

I have a girl that answers a very good purpose for this place. She is twenty four years old and has lived four years in Michigan. She understands gettin' along with kitchen work as well as any one I ever saw. She is good natured, talks a great deal; pretty much all in praise of herself. I sometimes get weary with hearing it, particularly as she is not over "valeant (sic) for the trying," She is as good as anybody I could get. I have learnt long ago there is no perception to be found in any body. I pay her twelve shillings a week which is considered by her as almost nothing, twenty being her regular price, The owner of this place is a bachelor and she kept house for him before we moved in and formed an attachment to one of the aforesaid offers, and as he was going to continue in the service, she has too.

I have but little time to sew or knit. It takes pretty much all the time to fill so many holarts (?) and wash the dishes after them. I read a little occasionally when I can find any thing to read. We got a fine lot of papers from Aaron and Lucretia last week. It's very cheering to us to be remembered in that way by our Bennington f friends. The judge (?) though not highly priced in its native place, is received here with the credibility of an old friend.

Aunt Lucretia was here. When they arrived, she came up monday (sic) and staid till thursday (sic). We had a good visit. Jeanette came up here yesterday and spent the day. She and Caroline had fine sport riding down the hill on a hand sled. Jenette told me they had got a letter from Lucretia and that you were all well. That is good news at all times but not enough. I want to hear more; what you are doing and what all the rest of the good folks are about?

I got a letter from sister Caroline six weeks ago, have not answered it yet but shall as soon as I can get time. And last week I got a Ben(nington) paper from Betsy; she contrived to smugle (sic) a line on the inside of the envelope to tell me that Catharine had been to Derby and spent a week. She was under much consequence less the line should be discovered, but it was not. It came as safe as a thief in the mill; nobody was any wiser and

it done me some good. Though I could have cried to think every one of the sisters has some comfort except me.

To be deprived of the society of all my friends is harder than all the rest put together. If I have got to be poor, I'd rather be with my kindred; or if I was rich, I should not want to be with my own relations! Finally, under all circumstances, there is nothing can make up the loss of one's own kin and kind. The fact is, I don't care but precious little for any body else. I think of you all the time, day and night.

We have neighbours scattered around us in all directions, but they are all miserable poor and dirty. All the land, this side of the river, is public and all the settlers squatters. They take it in high dudgeon to be called squatters. They call themselves preemptioners. They all expect to pay for their land, but how they are to do it is a mystery to me. I never saw poverty till I came here. If you could see the hovels they live in, you would wonder what they wanted to live at all for.

The logs are rudely piled up about six (feet?) high then cut poles, and lay the across sometimes the have the roof highness in the middle and sometimes it only slants one way shanty fashion. The floors are split logs with the flat side up, the roof covered with bark. They have no window, cellar or chamber and oftentimes no door. The fireplace is made of sticks plastered over with mud. The furniture is in exact accordance with the house.

And the inmates correspond with their houses. They will live on food that Hector would starve on. They are lost to all pride and perhaps it's well they are for if they felt about it as I do, they would be glad to have their pilgrimage draw to a close as soon as possible. Yet, they are looking forward to better days with faith and patience expecting to be rich bye and bye. If they are so well off, I should need have any desire to go and see them so I don't regret it on that account. I have enough to do at home, more than I want to do.

I have seen but two apples since I left Buffalo last spring. Those Aaron bought. They are three shillings a dozen. I don't care about apples to eat myself, but I miss them for pies as they are my favorite pies. I like them better than any others. Cranberries are a very good substitute for apples if one could afford to buy them and sugar to sweeten them with, but they are fourteen cents a quart and sugar eighteen pence a pound. I used some for dumplings (sic) in place of apples and found they done (sic) well.

We liked them very much. They are good in dried apple pies with plenty of sugar.

Dried apples are four dollars a bushel this winter. The pieces of meat-pork and beef is so indecently exorbiant (sic) I am ashamed to mention it. It exceeds everything else. I get so nervous and fidgety in dwelling on high prices without money (?) and ague and some other things, that I don't know what to do with myself. There will be one of the greatest difficulties in our getting away the bad money. We could not sell any thing and get any thing for it. There is not here that would take us to Detroit. It is the Wildest of the Wildcat money in circulation. Besides, the people are so poor they can't even get that. There is no inducement to stay here any longer than we can get away.

I have all the talk to myself,. Turner says not a word either in favor or against the place. He had never committed himself on the subject, however, if he is not enlightened on the subject, it's no fault of mine. There's no mistake about that. Charles, and of course, the other children think as I do. That any place is better than this. There is (sic) great many other annoyances that I have as yet made no mention of. I can't begin to tell him all in writing. If I could but see you, I could tell you things you never thought of as much as you have laid awake nights.

You have doubtless thought of many things, but not everything. However, if I can live to get away and not make too great a sacrifice, I shall not regret coming. I have learned many a useful lesson such as will be an advantage as long as I live.

We are all well and have been so far this winter. But there is (sic) but few families can say so. Fever and ague are in almost every house except that it is tolerable healthy. April and May are more unhealthy than any other months in the year, but this last year October was the most unhealthy of any month. I try to reconcile myself all I can to every thing. I know that sickness and death is the lot of us all and go where we will. We can not escape it and live where we will (?) expect some trouble.

I do not expect to be perfectly happy even if I get out of Michigan but I think it will be one step towards, if you will see how my mind is in regard to this place if I don't say any more about it.

I don't hear any thing from Dewey and Oliver except that by the way of Bennington. I have heard indirectly that Mr. Miacm (?) Henry and his wife are going there on a visit this winter. If I know when they go, I shall write a few lines to them as I take an interest in their concerns. I have heard by

somebody that Ruth is expected to Ben(nington) this winter. I hope her mother will not be disappointed (sic) again in not seeing her and her little grandson. Give my love to her and Elizabeth and all the family.

How is sister Betsy, Jenette and the children? Remember me to them all. Tell sister Betsy, her cup will never be full till she gets into a new Hintry (?).

Lucinda will think Caroline is great while in writing to her, but she has actually got a letter begun. And I will take the responsibility upon myself and see that it is finished and forwarded within a fortnight. I am in hopes of getting a letter from Ann soon, if she has not written, tell her to do so without delay and if she has heard anything from Matilda to let me know.

Charles has frozen his toes and heels this winter so they are very tender and troublesome. His eyes too are weak from being out in the cold so much. He is drawing logs to the mill with oxen; likes the business well enough. If he could only have the comfort of reading evenings, but his eyes will not admit of his reading more than a half an hour at a time; he now got the Pickwick club reading it.

I suppose I need not say I am as much entertained with it as he is. And I do, by some means or other find time to read all he brings home.

Bub drives the Gray mares in drawing lumber from the mill to the river. The mill is built on a creek that runs into the river and is about a half a mile from it.

I don't know what to say about Caroline, she grows fat, is healthy and strong and is a first rate pot wrestler. I never saw one of her years that could wield a dishcloth with such dexterity. Besides, she has worked me two lace caps with inserting that are very pretty. She is now making shirts for a young man that lives here. I think she will be one of them sort that will be able to look out for themselves. She had got a little drop of her Grandpa Hills blood...'tis well she has.

Hollis is well and rosy this winter as if anything more flashy than ever, he has got his friends among the company; one nice young man, a sawyer, he is with him all most all the time, sleeps with him or stays with him in the mill.

In the margins

My maid is sewing for herself this week. Caroline and me (sic) are doing the work alone. We have twenty in the family. I have been three days writing this letter. I began sunday (sic), today is wednesday (sic), I

wrote all the time I could get besides doing the work. I am afraid that you will wish before you get through that you did not get as much time as I do.

Do write me as soon as you can. Don't so (say?) again your letters aren't good. I don't want any.

I have not told you as much as I want to, but I shall write to Harriet in Caroline's letter when she writes to Lucinda. My love to sister Maria and all her family and write me how Sam Scott gets along and all the rest.

I must tell you of a narrow escape I had a fortnight ago. I was taking a salve (silver?) of dishes (sic) from the setting room to the kitchen to wash and as I sat them at the table, I turned to go back, I stepped (sic) backwards down the trap door into the cellar. The cellar is very deep and I was stunned and bruised by the fall, but fortunately, no bones were broken. Turner was in the cellar when I fell. I had on the black shawl which prevented my seeing the door up.

Turner got a letter from Aaron the same time we did yours. I rather think he won't cancel the job of settling another account with the Wadsworth's. We feel deeply and indebted to him for his unwearied perseverance, on our behalf we know the man.

I don't know when Turner will write, I suppose (sic) he is waiting to write pleasant news. Jo(in wi)th me in sending love to him and Lucretia, Father yourself and all ....friends.

Most affectionately yours,

Adelia

This letter was in poor condition. I added a few punctuation marks and guessed as to the real words. Of those questioned, I added question marks. All the underlinings are from the original. JAC