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Letters to Annie : Ordinary Women in Late Nineteenth Century Maine

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Introduction

The late nineteenth century in the United States was a time of great change. New industries were emerging, morphing the American landscape away from its agrarian roots and toward urban industries. Factories, the expansion of educational opportunities, and a stronger central government following the Civil War, among other developments, drastically altered long-standing patterns of American life. For women, these transformations opened up a new world. No longer confined to the role of republican motherhood,¹ women began to see new opportunities in professions, education, and the home. These new opportunities made the climate of the female experience in late nineteenth-century America so dramatically different from that of the beginning of the century that, as historian Tiffany K. Wayne explains “an American woman’s life in 1900 would have been hardly recognizable to a woman in 1800.”²

Women coming of age in the last quarter of the nineteenth century nurtured expectations that went far beyond the norms of the world of their grandmothers, or even the world of their mothers. Nancy Theriot, author of *Mothers and Daughters in Nineteenth Century America*, stated that “As mid-century daughters grew to womanhood, their life experience, including their sex-specific physical experience,

¹ An ideal of educated motherhood where the woman is the heart of the home, the educator of her children, and the spiritual center of the family.

² Tiffany Wayne, *Women’s Roles in Nineteenth Century America* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), xxxiv.

challenged the maternal message ... of childhood.”³ As they matured into adulthood, women born in the mid-nineteenth century began to challenge -- and to change -- the roles and expectations held dear by previous generations.

As I began this project I hoped to write about the typical life of an ordinary late nineteenth-century woman. I soon realized that, as Tiffany K. Wayne put it, “there was no ‘typical’ American women in the nineteenth century....”⁴ Because of this shift in roles and opportunities, womanhood in the late nineteenth century cannot be discussed in the same way as womanhood during the Early Republic and Antebellum periods. Unlike the century before, there was no overarching ideal such as “Republican Motherhood” that could describe the experiences of women generally.

Because of expanded opportunities in the late nineteenth century, women, for the first time, could approach varied and exciting opportunities for their futures. So, if women could in fact follow their own desires for their futures, who were these women? Is there a way to depict the lives of ordinary nineteenth century women as a whole? Possibly not. Because of the diversity of experiences, portraying the daily life of a woman, without a specific woman in mind, is nearly impossible. Despite the diversity of roles, however, there were commonly held beliefs about women and what their roles and options in life should be. These ideals can be approached

³ Nancy M. Theriot, *Mothers and Daughters in Nineteenth Century America: The Biosocial Construction of Femininity* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 2.

⁴ Wayne, *Women’s Roles in Nineteenth Century America*, xxv. Wayne argues that women’s experiences were so varied in the late nineteenth century that it is implausible to find any single shared “female experience.”

through a close look at advice literature. This popular genre of literature from the nineteenth century is comprised of manuals, sermons, and other how-to literature that proscribed to women their duties and roles in society. Indeed, the most common approach among scholars has been to view these women through the lens of advice literature and period novels.⁵

Without a doubt these are valuable sources for studying women. Advice literature and novels are interesting, easy to read, and accessible. Yet, they leave much to be desired. While advice literature and novels were widely circulated among the female population, their use to explain the experience of women, even with an understanding of their limitations, negates the agency of the individual. Using advice literature or novels to understand the major themes and commonly held beliefs of women has value, but using advice literature in an attempt to divulge the actual life experiences of nineteenth century women is futile. That would be the equivalent of taking “Better Homes and Gardens” or “Martha Stewart Living” and assuming that the glossy domestic photos between their covers reflect the average modern day woman’s home. Even with the acknowledgement that advice literature and novels represent the ideal, the major themes they present cannot be accepted as

⁵ This has been a common approach to women’s history throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. Few historians have approached it from the words of women themselves, I will be taking the later approach. See the works of previously mentioned authors Wayne and Theriot, as well as Kristin Hoganson’s “Cosmopolitan Domesticity: Importing the American Dream, 1865-1920,” *Journal of American History* 107:1 (February 2002), 55-83. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich also discusses this issue in her book: Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Well Behaved Women Seldom Make History* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2007).

typical unless they are paired with evidence of their practical application in the lives of women. The history culled from advice literature must, therefore, be tempered with the private words and records left by nineteenth-century women to find the true extension of its use.

This thesis attempts to fill a gap in the understanding of nineteenth century women's history. If indeed the advice literature was as widely used and accepted as historians suggest, we could expect to see references to it, or its main teachings, in the letters, diaries, house books, store accounts and other records left behind by women. We would also encounter evidence of women adhering to the rules and suggestions set forth by proscriptive literature. Did nineteenth-century women actually adhere to the standards set forth in contemporary advice literature? Did they discuss the ideas and fashions published within these works? Or were these merely fanciful, unattainable ideals for the ordinary woman? This thesis will explore these possibilities.

The Pease Family Papers

The Pease Family Papers that are the focus of this work are a collection of letters from the 1870s, written to Annie Pease by her friends and family. It is significant to note that the majority of the letters are written to Annie by her friends while they are attending Bangor High School and preparing for college. As the letters come from a broad selection of Annie's friends and relatives, they tell us about a much larger sample of Annie's contemporaries than we would garner from a collection solely from one individual's viewpoint. Thus we may get a broader view

of the history of young women from Maine at this time. The conclusions drawn from such a wide variety of individuals will be more useful for approaching Maine women of Annie's social and economic class than if we had the letters of Annie alone. Instead of the words of one woman, we have the correspondence of about twenty, with many differing viewpoints.

Most of the letters contain subject matter one would expect to see from high school girls. In their letters, the girls speak of school, romance, religion, books, community happenings, each other, and their day-to-day lives. Put simply, they gossip. The Pease Family Papers provide a fine launching pad for an examination of the words of women in relation to the proscriptive literature that supposedly shaped their lives.

Their words provide the perfect test for the prevalence of advice literature in women's lives for many reasons. These correspondents were exactly the demographic that advice literature authors hoped to reach. They were middle class, young, educated, white, and sought to act well within the accepted sphere of female behaviors. Advice literature could, at least in theory, help them to identify these behavioral boundaries. None of Annie's correspondents rejected the broad social construction of gender set forth by their society, yet they all held different individual perspectives which illustrate the range of socially acceptable behaviors for women of their time.

Although at first glance the Pease Family Papers seem mundane and gossipy letters, rather than newsworthy historical documents, it is important to remember that their value does not arise from astute commentary on topics like national politics or the international economy. Instead, these letters provide intimate knowledge of the details of women's daily lives, and the commonly held beliefs of their society. An ordinary life has much to offer historical study such as a view of common values and beliefs, and understanding of a typical day, details for food history and other intricate details of women's history. Historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich proved in her book *Good Wives*, that even the simplest records, left by ordinary women, can shed light on their time, circumstances, and home economy.⁶

The Pease Family Papers are a series of letters received by one family. As such they have an interesting format, and have both strengths and limitations. The begin, the historian must take into account the intended recipient of the letter. For the most part, these women were writing to entertain and inform their peers. Their letters to friends seem open and honest, written without fear of reprimand or censure. Yet they are sometimes guarded, for the young girls who composed them did not wish to earn the disdain of their friends. Spelling and grammatical errors were embarrassments, yet among friends, loose spelling and grammar connoted a close, carefree relationship. The few letters sent by those in positions of authority over the young women must to be seen in a different light. They were written to instruct, to guide, and even to lecture their recipients. Though the letters may appear to be

⁶ Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1991).

friendly, the language employed was more formal and intended to maintain proper distance between the author and recipient.

Finally, a particularly difficult limitation of this collection is their one-sided nature. Without Annie's replies, we cannot know her thoughts, and are left only with what thoughts her friends expressed to her.

The Pease Family and their World

The Pease Family lived in Cornish, Maine in the late nineteenth century. Annie's family consisted of herself, parents Benjamin and Rebecca, her oldest brother Roscoe and his wife Fannie, older sister Sarah, and two younger siblings John and Nell (or Nellie). Annie was the middle child, born in March of 1855.⁷ Nell was 13 years younger and Roscoe was 5 years older. The Pease family all lived together in a large house in Cornish, which, during the years covered in this thesis, was under renovation. Benjamin Pease was a farmer; his sons assisted him in the farm work. Their farm was apparently successful as the Pease family was able to send Annie and her sisters away for an education and pay for expensive renovations on their house.⁸

⁷ *Census of Population and Housing, 1880: Summary Population and Housing Characteristics: Maine*, <http://persi.heritagequestonline.com/hqoweb/library/do/census/results/image?surname=Pease&series=10&state=28&countyid=706&hitcount=35&p=1&urn=urn%3Aproquest%3AUS%3Bcensus%3B13049395%3B223038783%3B10%3B28&searchtype=1&offset=2> (accessed February 20, 2012).

⁸ Rebecca Pease to Annie, October 17, 1875, Pease Family Papers.

The Pease family was very much situated in Maine's middle class of farmers and business men. They had the resources to provide for their needs, but much of their money was tied up in non-fluid assets. Many times, Annie's parents wrote to her, apologizing that they are not able to send their daughter what she had requested. On March 15, 1876, Annie's mother, wrote to her saying, "We should have sent you some money before vacation, but your Father has yet to make out some money for Mr Foster so he wont be able to send but a little now, and when you need more send us, and how much you want."⁹ The family had what they needed to get by, and to purchase supplies for day to day life, but most of their assets were not fluid, extra cash was hard to come by. For the most part the Peases could eventually get money to take care of their needs, but sometimes it involved shifting assets, calling in debts, or selling material goods.

The Pease family had a long history in their community, and family members were active in many social circles. As Benjamin and Rebecca were both from Maine families, they were established in society. Money was not so tight that they could not enjoy extra luxuries in life, nor was life so filled with labor that the family had no time for leisure activities, as evidenced by their membership in of the Cornish Library Association.¹⁰ Their participation in a library association that both necessitated the payment of yearly fees and dues and provided materials for leisure reading confirms this fact. It also shows the family's dedication to the improvement

⁹ Rebecca Pease to Annie, March 15, 1876, Pease Family Papers.

¹⁰ Sherman Grant Bonney, *Calvin Fairbanks Bonney, Harriott Cheney Bonney: A Tribute* (Concord, NH: Rumford Press, 1930), 273.

of the mind for both men and women as Benjamin and Sarah both appeared on membership rosters.

The family attended religious services in the community. A letter written to Annie by her friend, Nellie, indicated that members of the Pease family were Baptist.¹¹ Cornish, Maine had a Baptist Church in the early nineteenth century, but by the time the Pease family lived there, the Baptist church had become a Congregational church under the leadership of a Reverend Albert Cole. Cole was an impressive man, one local history described him as “the church personified in Cornish and surrounding towns. He had great intelligence and was a trained scholar. He gave his life to those he loved almost without compensation.”¹² The Pease Family Papers contain a references to the Cole family and the declining health of this beloved reverend, they were acquainted with the reverend and his family, suggesting their membership in his congregation.

The Pease family was settled in Maine, and Maine was, at that time, very different from much of the country. Much of the state was still wild and untamed even in the late nineteenth century, yet at the same time Maine had acquired an industrial landscape. ““She reminds me more of the Western States than of the rest of New England in her condition and needs,’ Gov. Joshua L. Chamberlain,” one of the Union heroes at the 1863 Battle of Gettysburg, “told the Maine legislature in

¹¹ Nellie to Annie, July 2, 1876, Pease Family Papers.

¹² Bonney, *A Tribute*, 258.

1870, ‘a virgin soil, undeveloped powers, vast forests, and vigorous men, but no money.’”¹³

Yet, it is important to note that even in the midst of this vast wilderness, Maine was developing industry and education. “By 1860 Maine had 6,800 of the 81,000 cotton mill workers in New England, ranking fifth in the region.”¹⁴ These mills provided opportunities for women to work and for the state to make money. The development of railroads in Maine also assisted in its growth as a state. “In 1874, [Maine railroad] lines had been extended to nine hundred and five miles.”¹⁵ These lines provided opportunity for travel¹⁶ and for business as they supported the industry of the state.

Perhaps the most essential difference in Maine was the state’s approach to education. The Pease Family Papers have a very obvious focus on education, and this reflects a general trend in Maine towards recognizing the importance of education. One of Annie’s contemporaries, local historian John Abbott, wrote that “There is probably no State in the Union where more attention is paid to the education of the masses of the people or where better schools are maintained, than in Maine.”¹⁷ Education was readily available beyond the primary schools according to

¹³ Charles E. Clark, *Maine: A Bicentennial History* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1977), 94.

¹⁴ Clark, *Maine: A Bicentennial History*, 135.

¹⁵ John S. C. Abbott, *The History of Maine from the Earliest Discovery of the Region by the Northmen Until the Present Time* (Boston: B.B. Russell, 1875), 504.

¹⁶ Annie and her correspondents used them frequently to move between school, home, work, and various travel destinations.

¹⁷ Abbott, *The History of Maine*, 518.

Abbott. He claimed that, “In all the leading towns there [was] a high school for advanced pupils.”¹⁸ Even considering the possible exaggeration of a proud Mainer, the evidence he presented of schools and institutes available in Maine shows the importance of the educational establishment in the state. This emphasis provided many educational opportunities for the young correspondents. The women were actively involved in education as students and teachers, and had dreams of college and further education.

Meet Annie

Annie Pease¹⁹ certainly took advantage of the educational advantages provided for her in Maine. Annie²⁰ was extraordinary in many ways. Annie was a scholar, had goals of higher education, and had rejected a personal faith in Christianity. These three things made her stand out among her peers. She wrote voraciously, traveled to an extent that made her friends jealous, and came from a family that was comfortably prosperous. Annie was a sister, friend, scholar, and eventually, a teacher. She was focused on her education, her goals, and came from a family that pressed her to succeed in all of her pursuits.

Annie and her friends reproduce the world of women in Maine through their letters in a way that opens new avenues to historians. Their everyday letters - on

¹⁸ Abbott, *The History of Maine*, 528.

¹⁹ Since we cannot know a great deal about Annie Pease’s correspondents, biographical knowledge of Annie is useful to this study, as the women who wrote to Annie shared much of the same background and experiences.

²⁰ Annie Pease shall be referred to as Annie throughout this work for ease of understanding, as there are many other Pease family members who are to be mentioned in this work.

subjects ranging from education to romance, religion to housekeeping - provide a point of comparison for studies of advice literature. They are especially useful for discussions of religion, education, and romance. These topics, which dominated the lives of the young Mainers, were commonly addressed in advice literature. The young women of Cornish and Bangor, Maine who wrote these letters shared their perspective on all of these topics. Their diverse stories will prove that advice literature cannot be properly used to produce historical works without the words of actual women to support it.

Religion: “I wonder if I am a Baptist because you are?”

In her own estimation, Annie Pease was not a Christian woman. The letters in the Pease Family Papers give evidence that her parents and siblings attended church meetings, and on occasion Annie even heard a sermon preached, yet, she did not consider herself a Christian. Annie did not have the personal relationship with Jesus Christ that her friends and family believed that she should have. Many of the letters written to Annie questioned her faith. Although she occasionally wrote of attending a service, her reply to the question of loving Jesus was always negative. Annie’s friend, Carrie Johnson, appeared to be especially distressed by Annie’s lack of faith. In a letter, dated August 19, 1875, she pled with her friend, saying, “Do you love him [Jesus], Annie, are you trying to be a Christian? I have thought so, and I pray every day that you may soon be [led] to Him.”²¹ Annie apparently replied to the negative, for in another letter from Carrie, sent less than a week later, Carrie

²¹ August 19, 1875, Carrie to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

declared to Annie that she was “sorry that you don’t love Jesus,” and implored her to “try won’t you, dear?”²² It seems that Annie may have been showing some inclination toward a personal faith from the pleading of her friends as Carrie was encouraged that Annie would at least try to live as a Christian.

Annie’s friend, Carrie, and Annie’s Aunt Gertie, both tried very hard to convert Annie. Both sent letters encouraging her to “love Jesus.” Carrie expressed a keen desire to see Annie embrace the faith she herself had recently found. “Oh, Annie Darling,” Carrie wrote, “I love you so dearly and I so want you to love Jesus! just think how good he is to overlook our sins, and if we only repent we can turn unto him and live! Oh my Annie I am so much happier now I love Jesus, and it is so sweet to have Jesus for a friend and to know that he loves and cares for you.”^{23 24} Carrie was willing to risk losing a friendship she held very near and dear for the salvation of her friend’s soul. This is an example of the religious fervor of the period that often played a major role in the formation of women’s temperance societies, missionary societies, and other religious-based reform groups.

Annie’s Aunt Gertie took on a much different tone in her efforts to convert Annie. She spent more time warning Annie against the dangers of living without salvation than writing emotional entreaties, like Carrie. She was supported by her familial authority as an older relative, a shaming voice hurrying Annie towards God.

²² August 25, 1875, Carrie to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

²³ August 19, 1875, Carrie to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

²⁴ The reader will note spelling and grammatical errors in the quotes from the Pease Family Papers. These are true to the original documents and will only be noted if they are particularly misleading.

My interest dear Annie for you to be a christian has not lessened, and I am only waiting for you to tell me that you have given your heart to the Saviour. I pray that I may be faithful in urging you to delay no longer. You know without the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ, you cannot be saved. It would be much more consistent for you to delay your education till a more convenient season, till you were old, than to delay for a day the salvation of your never dying soul. Think of these things in their true light my dear child, and be wise for yourself. Do not be timid to speak of these things but talk and pray till you shall know the joy there is in believing in Jesus.²⁵

Aunt Gertie expressed her own interest in seeing her niece saved, not that Annie should have the desire for salvation herself. She also had a tone of dread and warning, that the time was fast approaching that Annie would no longer be able to make a choice for salvation. These two different styles of conversion efforts relate two different relationships with Annie, and two different relationships with God. Carrie wrote as a friend and equal, and her relationship with God was one with a loving redeemer. Aunt Gertie wrote as an elder and a superior, who cared for her niece very much. Her relationship with God was one of a lowly sinner with an exalted savior.

The religious lives of Annie's friends were varied. Some were as reticent as Annie, while others were as devout as Carrie. Nellie, another friend and school mate, joked in a 1876 letter to Annie that her "Father told [another man] that I am a Methodist because Aggie²⁶ is, (in fun you know) but I wonder if I am a Baptist because you are but I forgot you are no Baptist, but never mind it is all the same."²⁷

²⁵ September 20, 1875, Aunt Gertie to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

²⁶ Aggie or Agnes Brand was another friend and schoolmate. She too wrote frequently to Annie, and is mentioned by many of the girls in their letters.

²⁷ July 2, 1876, Nellie to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

In this circumstance, Nellie's father took religious affiliation as a laughable matter. His daughter did whatever her friends did, not out of religious zeal, but simply to follow her friends' lead. Nellie acknowledged that Annie was not affiliated with any specific denomination, but saw this as no real cause for alarm. In this case, it is plausible that the religious plurality that existed in the late nineteenth century in Maine explains these girls lack of devotion to one specific denomination. Denominational affiliation had lost its importance to these girls, and their society. They simply did as they pleased and believed what they would, following whatever church was popular.

Yet, other friends of Annie's, such as the devout Carrie we met above, had very strong religious ties. Carrie wrote of her conversion and her reticence to discuss religious matters before her conversion experience. She begged Annie to reply to her letter, but also explained that she understood if Annie did not want to discuss religion "for I know how I used to dread having any body talk to me, and how shy I was of talking of such things [before I "loved Jesus"]²⁸ Her choice to follow the Christian religion came at a latter point in her life, when she was cognizant of the decision and her feelings before and after her conversion. The Christian faith was not a given state of religion for these women as it might have been if she had been a seventeenth or early eighteenth century woman living in the same area. It was a personal decision, not dictated by family religion, but by her own choice. She was highly aware of her own sinful nature, saying to Annie "you mustn't say a word

²⁸ August 19, 1875, Carrie to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

about my being good for it makes me ashamed, for I know how very very sinful I am. I wish I was as good, and I try, oh, so hard, but somehow I don't have very good success. Remember that Jesus says 'Come unto me all ye who labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'"²⁹ ³⁰ Carrie was definitely a "saved by grace" Christian since, like others from her time, she did not believe that she could do anything to affect her fate except to believe in Jesus Christ. Works were not her saving grace, but a necessary fruit of her religious beliefs. She felt keenly her lowliness and dependence on God for salvation, and feared for the salvation of her friend.

The Pease Family Papers also give evidence that Annie's friends did not always attend religious meetings. They came up with many excuses, and often did not attend when their families did. Annie's friends give reasons such as headaches, wanting to have time to respond to letters, and bad weather as their excuses for not attending church services.³¹ Anything could prevent them from making the trip. The mere fact that these women had a choice in whether or not they attended church, and what church they attended when they chose to go, reveals the expanding religious freedom of their era. Even Annie's devout Aunt Gertie, who tried to convert Annie, admitted that she did not "find as much time to read [her] Bible as [she] did last

²⁹ August 25, 1875, Carrie to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

³⁰ Carrie is quoting Matthew 11:28.

³¹ See April 27, 1873 Hattie to Annie; July 18, 1875, Georgie M.C. to Annie; October 10, 1875, Hattie B Rand to Annie; July 2, 1876, Agnes to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

winter.”³² For these later nineteenth century women, the business of life took precedence over her spiritual life.

The young women’s independence from family in matters of religion is readily evident in their letters. Annie’s mother writes of the family going to church often, but we know that Annie was reticent to attend. On October 17, 1875, Rebecca apologized to Annie for taking so long to return her letter, stating that they had run out of paper and “didn’t get it until after meeting.”³³ Hattie often wrote of going to meeting, but also declared that at times she remained at home while the rest of the family went, in order to write letters. The women were not controlled by their parents, husbands, or families in religious concerns.

Women who did attend church services, felt free to disagree with, and sometimes disapprove of, what they heard. Aggie Brand wrote to Annie once saying,

I went to church this forenoon but feel better prepared to give you a description of a hat which was before me, than of the sermon all I remember of the latter is this, the minister said he thought he usually made a good appearance in the world. If my pastor is as conceited as that who wonders that I possess a little.³⁴

Aggie was frustrated with the lack of humility shown by the pastor, and was willing to excuse her own sins after seeing his blatantly displayed. Church was as much a time to see and be seen as a time to learn about God.

³² September 20, 1875, Aunt Gertie to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

³³ October 17, 1875, Mother to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

³⁴ June 27, 1875, Aggie Brand to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

Meetings were also a source of entertainment, providing a chance for the women to get out of the house and see others. One letter to Annie from her mother had little more to mention of their attendance at church that day but to note that “it is very good sleighing and a very pleasant day.”³⁵ Her concern was not of the religious matters associated with church, but that their transportation to and from was enjoyable. Attending church services was, for many, simply a social event, not a religious obligation, and more of a mundane occurrence than a spiritual discipline.

The religious experiences of Annie and her friends both support and contradict the commonly held beliefs about women’s religion in the latter half of the nineteenth century. According to historian Harvey Green, the “joining of home and church suggested by the phrase ‘domestic altar’ reflects the complementary movements towards secularization of the church and sanctification of the home that occurred in the latter half of the nineteenth century.”³⁶ Women gained power in religion as, suddenly, home life was as much a part of the religious experience as church involvement itself. This secularization is seen in the fact that denominational differences meant so little to the women in Maine. As Nellie said, “it’s all the same.”³⁷

³⁵ February 13, 1876, Mother to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

³⁶ Harvey Green, *The Light of the Home: An intimate View of the Lives of Women in Victorian America* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 180.

³⁷ July 2, 1876, Nellie to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

In the late nineteenth century women were eager to create homes that would be a vision of heaven on earth, historian Harvey Green has argued.³⁸ Heaven was an ideal home, not a place in the clouds, but a reality that could be achieved by the work of women. Many pieces of advice literature reflect this ideal. The women writing to Annie, however, did not reflect these beliefs about the home and heaven. Annie's Aunt Gertie believed in a very tangible heaven and a very real hell, as reflected in her warnings to Annie about embracing salvation. Although women may indeed have attempted to create heaven on earth in their homes, the belief in an actual, physical heaven had not disappeared, and many women retained this focus in their religious lives.

The focus on women in religious discourse in these letters does reflect the idea of the feminization of religion in the late nineteenth century. "Across the denominations women have usually made up the majority of churchgoers, and, as the nineteenth century began, their presence and participation in both, established and new religious sects in the United States was of such great significance that some scholars have identified a 'feminization of religion' during this era."³⁹ The women in Annie's life, no matter the strength of their faith, were active in religious circles. Even if they simply attended church and commented on it as a social event, they were involved in religious services.

³⁸ Green, *The Light of the Home*, 167.

³⁹ Wayne, *Women's Roles in Nineteenth-Century America*, 50.

Carrie and Aunt Gertie were women living to fulfill their mission as Christian women. Carrie especially fit the ideals of Christianity presented in popular religious fiction. “The basic plot structure of the popular religious novel turned around an individual (or group) whose life was transformed by religion.”⁴⁰ Carrie’s own transformation from one who “dreaded to talk about it” to one who “loves Jesus” reflects how she was transformed by her turn to Christian religion. Through their letters to Annie, both women, Carrie and Gertie, acted the part of Christian women spreading the religion in the world.⁴¹ Carrie and Gertie were actively involved in the spread of the Christian gospel; their letters to Annie were probably only one part of their fight for the gospel.

Historical beliefs about women’s religion in this period are not always supported by the letters in the Pease Family Papers. Historian Horace Green claims that the idea of a “homey heaven” intrigued women as they believed that heaven was their eternal domain, a comfort for women who had no say in earthly problems like politics.⁴² But, by the last quarter of the nineteenth century this idea no longer applied to the extent it had earlier in the century. Although the domestication of religion would have been a boon for women who intended to remain in the home, the variety of opportunities women’s work had expanded their sphere so that “the earthly life of commerce and politics” was no longer out of their grasp. For women like

⁴⁰ Green, *The Light of the Home*, 176.

⁴¹ Wayne, *Women’s Roles in Nineteenth-Century America*, 51. Their letters were a written form of the same action described by Wayne who explained that “Christian women might go door-to-door on weekday mornings to talk with other women about either their own conversion, or to give advice to other Christian women on converting their husbands.”

⁴² Green, *The Light of the Home*, 177.

Annie who intended to have careers as teachers or scholars, the idea that they might create a heaven on earth in their home did not hold the same value. They had other options for improving their lot in life and making a change in the world.

The turn to the home as a spiritual space was already starting to disappear, in Maine at least, by the 1870s. Perhaps this was because women had options outside of motherhood. In the Victorian era, “Piety and motherhood gradually evolved into a neatly interchangeable relationship ... the nurturing role of motherhood and the propensity towards religious feelings were presented as identical.”⁴³ Yet, in the late nineteenth century, with the expanding opportunities for women, women who were reaching out for new things, like Annie, may not have identified so deeply with the ideals of piety and motherhood.

Finally, advice literature suggested an amazing amount of piety and devotion in Christian women.⁴⁴ A true Christian woman would have centered her life on her faith, and because every woman was expected to uphold Christian values, one would expect to see extreme piety and faith in the Pease letters. Yet, this intense devotion and focus on spiritual matters is not evident in the letters written to Annie except in those from Carrie and Gertie. Even the letters written by Gertie she reflected regret that she does not have more time for her religious life. In fact, many of the women writing the letters in this collection treated religion and religious practices as a

⁴³ Green, *The Light of the Home*, 174.

⁴⁴ Ellen M. Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America: A Social History* (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1997), 5. Plante argues that “the home was considered the ideal center of worship among those of the Protestant faith. Prayer and devotion attained an honored place in the Victorian household.”

triviality. Annie and her friends did not take religion seriously. They joked about church attendance and their lives did not center around God, but on worldly things. The religious sentiments of Annie and her correspondents suggest that advice literature presented an ideal of religion that was not practically upheld in everyday life.

Education: “I will see my dear niece an accomplished woman.”

Annie and her friends were educated women. The majority of the correspondents in the Pease Family Papers were schoolmates at Bangor High School. They spoke of their teachers, discipline, school work, dreaded recitations, and fun times with peers. Annie seems to have had more drive towards furthering her education than her friends, and many of the letters referred to the fact that Annie was considering attending college. The educational experiences of the women in this collection display the diversity of opportunities in the late nineteenth century.

These women had a wonderfully beneficial access to education, and their beliefs about education were in accord with the commonly held beliefs at the time. Their drive towards advancing their minds reflected the teachings of advice literature of the time as trends moved away from a fear of educating women, towards appreciating the value of it. “As the century progressed,” Ellen Plante claims, “a college education was considered an asset for the young women who would go on to raise the future children of America, as well as a way to provide the required training

for those who sought employment in teaching, nursing and other professions before they entered into marriage.”⁴⁵

Annie was an excellent student, a scholar even. We see in the letters she received, that her friends and relatives admired her mind and her intellectual abilities. From compliments about her letter writing, to jokes about her reading Latin for amusement, the correspondence makes it clear that Annie was intelligent and driven as a student. She had a clear desire to learn and embraced every opportunity to expand her mind.

One of Annie’s strengths was writing. In a letter dated April 27, 1873, Hattie mentioned an essay competition that Annie was working on, saying “I should think you might write lively pages about Further On, one idea is that when you get further on you would have to read about what comes put that in will you? Further still, wiggle those fingers, write further than you want too, do the best you can [to] bring back the prize.” Then she teased, “I am glad I am not there for I should get the prize away from you.”⁴⁶ This essay competition was a chance for Annie to further her study and experience, and possibly win a prize. It was not something required of her classmates, and Annie seems to have been the only one who attended.

Clearly, Annie was driven to intellectual pursuits above and beyond those expected for women of her status. Yet at the same time, none of Annie’s

⁴⁵ Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America*, 7.

⁴⁶ April 27, 1873, Hattie to Annie, Pease Family Papers. Hattie also shows off her wit in her puns about the “further on,” she is obviously educated and accomplished too, though possibly jealous of her friend’s accomplishments.

correspondents were shocked by her scholarly behavior. Although it went beyond the realm of a typical education, it was still a behavior deemed acceptable for females.

Annie was being courted by a few colleges. She received a postcard from Westbrook Seminary on August 18, 1874, urging her to “put in an application just as soon as you can for rooms are fast filling up.”⁴⁷ Westbrook was a coeducational seminary that offered an education beyond the high school level. In the late nineteenth century, Clark, a contemporary chronicler of Maine history, wrote that Westbrook Seminary was “well patronized, and sends out yearly into the community many well-educated pupils prepared to be useful in all walks of common life.”⁴⁸

Annie did not attend Westbrook during the following year. Instead, she returned to Bangor for another year of schooling with her friends. Annie also showed interest in the new female institute, Wellesley College. Her interest in college put many of Annie’s friends in a panic as they dreaded losing her as a classmate. On July 25, 1875, Nellie wrote that she had “heard that you are talking of going either to Wellesley or Colby to school, next fall, now Annie Pease if you don’t come back here I don’t know what I shall do to you.”⁴⁹ Annie’s friends were not shocked at their friend’s desire to further her education; but were grieved at the thought that she would leave them. She was not crossing gender boundaries by looking into institutes of higher education. In fact “by the end of the century, women

⁴⁷ August 18, 1874, Westbrook Seminary to Annie Pease, Pease Family Papers.

⁴⁸ Clark, *Maine: A Bicentennial History*, 523.

⁴⁹ July 25, 1875, Nellie to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

made up 40 percent of the total college graduates in the United States.”⁵⁰ Annie’s only “crime” in desiring to attend college was that she would abandon her friends.

Annie’s Aunt Gertie heartily supported her dreams of higher education. Gerite sent Annie information about Wellesley and encouraged her to apply. Gertie was comfortable with Annie’s pursuit of higher education, within reason. Gertie wrote:

I am glad that you are back to school and hope you will be just as happy with the new arrangements as you were last year and will have as good a record, I have no fears in this direction. I hope the two years which you are designing to give to study will be fruitful with great success and I will see my dear niece an accomplished woman, prepared to find a useful and important place in society. Let me encourage you to aim high and attain if possible. If you should teach for a time strive to be the best if you should marry strive to make the best wife in the world and a bright ornament to society in which you move. May God bless you in your effort for an education and help you to concentrate it to His service.⁵¹

Aunt Gertie accepted the fact that her niece wanted to further her education, but only considered it as a precursor to two positions, teaching or marrying.

It was not expected that Annie would become an academic or professional, but that she would teach or marry; perhaps teaching for a short while before starting a family. This was a common concept as it was typically held that women would choose either marriage or a career.⁵² Many women would choose one or the other, not both. Annie chose a career and became a teacher in the summer of 1877 in Bangor. There are no records to indicate that she ever married.

⁵⁰ Wayne, *Women’s Roles in Nineteenth-Century America*, 84.

⁵¹ September 20, 1875, Aunt Gertie to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

⁵² Wayne, *Women’s Roles in Nineteenth-Century America*, 9.

Annie's aunt was willing to support her completely, so far as she stayed within the acceptable gender roles laid out by their time.⁵³ Yet Annie had options outside of the areas deemed acceptable by her aunt. According to Wayne, "As more women received an education, however, they were subsequently more likely to reach outside their 'sphere' of influence, to marry later, or to forego marriage and motherhood altogether in favor of public careers as teachers or reformers."⁵⁴ This certainly proved true in Annie's case. However, the idea that Annie would continue her entire life as a teacher did not concern her friends and family - teaching was now a respectable option for women.

Annie was especially astute in the fields of Latin and botany. This is not surprising as "by the late 1840s it became fashionable for female students to pursue studies in logic, mathematics, geography, history, the Scriptures and ancient languages."⁵⁵ In fact, in Maine it was commonly understood that a course of education for either sex would include "Latin and Greek, French and German ... taught with the higher branches of mathematics, geology, astronomy, mental philosophy, and moral science."⁵⁶

Annie filled every spare minute with learning. On one eventful, yet slow, trip home, Annie read all of Caesar, in Latin. This drive towards education and filling one's mind is evident in the advice literature from the period. According to Plante:

⁵³ It would be interesting to discover whether or not Annie would have such support had she chosen to move into a male centered field.

⁵⁴ Wayne, *Women's Roles in Nineteenth-Century America*, 74.

⁵⁵ Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America*, 7.

⁵⁶ Clark, *Maine: A Bicentennial History*, 521.

To be accomplished in the Victorian era included the ability to create handiwork: to sew, to needlepoint, and make ornamental crafts that decorated the home. Mastering a musical instrument, singing with a melodic voice and speaking foreign languages were desirable skills, but not nearly so important as continuing serious self-education and performing good deeds. Spare time was spent reading or performing charitable works, provided that did not interfere with duties at home.⁵⁷

Annie was certainly expanding her mind constantly by reading, studying, taking every opportunity to expand her understanding and academic mind.

One teacher and friend wrote in mocking reproach of Annie's studies

However could you make up your mind to read Caesar for recreation? I expected better things of you. But disappointments will come and I suppose it is the part of wisdom to accept them... Now I can understand that there might have been real bliss in those three chapters of French, notwithstanding the equivocal tone in your account of them. Tastes differ I have heard.⁵⁸

It appears that another teacher had recommended Caesar to Annie and her classmates for summer reading. Yet, Annie appears to have been the only one to grapple with the task. The fact that Annie would have taken on such a deep and difficult work to fill time during her vacation amazed and surprised her teacher and friends, and proved her dedication to her studies and mental advancement.

The story of Annie's intellect further advances in a letter written by Eliza B. Eddy. In this we hear again of the reading of Caesar, but also discover that Annie's eventful trip home, in which her train was delayed overnight and she was left stranded in a strange town without a chaperone, came after an examination. It is not clear what type of examination it was, it could have been a college entrance

⁵⁷ Plant, *Women at Home in Victorian American*, xi-xii.

⁵⁸ July 8, 1875, Fannie E. L. to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

examination, a teaching certification exam, or some other such exam, but we do know that Annie was traveling without her classmates, to an outside location to take it. Annie pushed her educational experience above and beyond that of a normal course of work.

Annie's skill in Latin was also one of the reasons her classmates were horrified that Annie was considering moving on to college. Carrie wrote to Annie frantic that she should return for the next school year saying, "only think what miserable Latin lessons we shall have without you, and everything will be perfectly horrid!"⁵⁹ Yes, some of this is the dramatic exaggeration of a young woman dreading the loss of a cherished friend from school. However, the references to Annie's academic skill were grounded in fact. Her classmates appear to have depended upon Annie for assistance with lessons as well as in the classroom. She was a driving force of the school through her intelligence and friendships. Annie's travels, leisure material, and life goals, were all centered on scholarship and education.

The botany project assigned by Miss Wilson of Bangor High School was the overarching theme of the summer of 1875 for these friends. Almost every letter written during this time referred to flower picking and analyzing. The girls competed to have the most "specimens," yet all was in a spirit of fun as they were eager to assist their friends in gathering. On June 30th, 1875, Hattie wrote, "By the way, have you worked on your flowers any? Yesterday afternoon I commenced on

⁵⁹ August 9, 1875, Carrie to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

mine... I wish you could see my *Raminculus bulbosus*.⁶⁰ When I took it out of the 'press' the petals all dropped off, so I stick them on, but the flow looks far from being complete, perfect or regular. I set out to stick the flowers of a *Ranunculus acris*⁶¹ on, but thought that would be cheating."⁶² This was the first of many references over the course of the summer to the girls' botany project. They were serious about naming and perfectly preserving each specimen they found, treating the project, not as a simple pastime, but as a serious scientific exercise.

However the botany experiment was also a competition between the girls. They all wanted to have more specimens than their friends, and rare or especially beautiful flowers were greatly treasured. It is interesting to see how Annie and her friends competed in their botany assignment. It is not clear how many flowers Annie had, or how actively she participated in this competition.⁶³ Her friends constantly inquired as to how many flowers she had gathered, and seem to believe that she must have had far more than they, for she had been traveling during the school break.

Many of Annie's friends had considerable trouble with the botany project. They struggled both with finding specimens and with the analysis and naming of the flowers. Yet, they believed that Annie should be having more success than they had, and that she would be able to do more to analyze the flowers. Georgie wrote of this dilemma to Annie, begging for her help and offering flowers in exchange. "Do you

⁶⁰ Bulbous Buttercup.

⁶¹ The tall variety Common Buttercup.

⁶² June 30, 1875, Hattie to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

⁶³ Another inconvenience the state of our collection.

know Annie I can not tell the name of a flower I have picked, and I can not analyse a flower right through to save my life and I do not know what I am going to do. I pick two or three of a kind and when we both get back to Bangor if I have got anything that you have not you may have what I have with pleasure if you can find out the names.”⁶⁴ She trusted that Annie would have more success in the more scientific side of analyzing flowers, showing that she had faith in Annie’s superior abilities as a scholar.

Gardening and similar activities like botany were common and acceptable pastimes for women in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. For Victorian women, Plante wrote, “Gardening, both indoors and out, was another morally uplifting leisure activity”⁶⁵ It is not surprising that Miss Wilson would have assigned a project related to outdoor pursuits and flowers.

When her classmates were afraid that Annie would not return to school, leaving them for college, they used their “valuable” specimens to try to draw her back. Annie was promised flowers from all of her friends collections, and was told by Katie that, “Miss Wilson gave me a handsome Shorny Ladies Slipper. Just lovely. She sends love and says if you will come back, you may have one. It is worth coming for I think.”⁶⁶ The botany project had become one of their most treasured pastimes and excellence in it was coveted, yet all of the girls were willing to sacrifice their own advantages in the competition to entice their friend to return to their little

⁶⁴ July 18, 1875, Georgie M.C. to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

⁶⁵ Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America*, 171.

⁶⁶ July 20, 1875, Katie to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

school. Whatever that offer of the flowers meant, it is interesting to note that the flowers were so valuable in the eyes of these girls that they would be enough to tempt their academically minded friend away from her dreams of college, at least for another year.

Annie's friends, Hattie, Carrie, Katie, Aggie, Nellie, and the rest, were students just like Annie, but often their desire for education, and abilities in academic work, did not match up to Annie's. They worried about their schoolwork and frequently asked Annie for help. In considering their next year, Carrie wrote in dread of a new exercise. "[Just] think, Annie, we shall have to read next year! I tremble to think of it, you, blessed darling, you will go up there and read so quick; but I can't read and Mr. Dame will say Miss Johnson! speak louder!!!"⁶⁷ Carrie was not the best student, and showed her fears of failing in school and being reprimanded. However she also, once again, speaks to Annie's superior scholastic ability, hinting that her friend should have no problem with the new reading exercise. Annie's scholastic abilities were respected and coveted by her friends.

Did you hear?

One of the most interesting aspects of these letters is the gossip they contain. These girls spent their time not only discussing their hopes and dreams, but analyzing the world around them. One of the most common points of interest for these girls was gossip about their teachers. The women and men who taught Annie and her peers were not simply instructors for the girls. They were active participants

⁶⁷ August 19, 1875, Carrie to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

in their lives, in attendance at many of the same social gatherings as the girls. Put simply, they were friends. Evidence of this is found in the multiple letters sent to Annie from her teachers. These letters are friendly, familiar, and lack the professional distance one might expect from a teacher writing to her student. Because of this familiarity, it is understandable why the teachers would have been such a point of interest in gossip among their students.

A prime example of this familiarity between students and teachers is shown in the July 8, 1875 letter to Annie from one of her teachers Fannie E. L. The very fact that the teacher wrote a personal letter to a student reveals their friendly relationship, and the fact that she signed the letter using her first name, and not a title of authority seconds that revelation. Fannie and Annie were friends. Fannie wrote to Annie in a very jovial tone about her personal life and struggles.

Fannie was filling her time during a school break keeping house for a cousin, and what an adventure it was! She declared herself inept at housekeeping, poking fun at the disaster she made of washing windows saying “If stripes were only in fashion I should consider myself successful.”⁶⁸ This she followed up with a delightful story of her adventures in the kitchen.

Today I tried the experiment of roasting a chicken. I wait in breathless expectation the result. It is now in the oven. I look at it every minute as tenderly as a lover does at his beloved (I have found out how that is by observation only, not at all by experience) Wait a minute I must look again. The string that tied the legs has given way, in other respects all right. It gives out a right savory odor of onions... Another peep at the chicken. A little browner than before the stuffing

⁶⁸ July 8, 1875, Fannie E.L. to Annie Pease, Pease Family Papers.

is pouring out of his throat And the neck is drawn back as if in pain it looks like Cerebro spinal meningitis.... My chicken! The disease is increasing to an alarming extent. I hope it will not die.⁶⁹

Fannie jokes about her deficient cooking abilities and her lack of a love life. This familiar letter breaks the boundaries of a student teacher relationship. Annie and Fannie were friends, and had probably spent time together outside of the classroom, getting to know each other on a personal level.

Annie and her schoolmates had friendly and close relationships with their teachers. Their ages were perhaps not so distant as one would expect. Annie was 21 in 1876, and was still a student at Bangor High School. The next year, at 22, she became a teacher herself. This common pattern resulted in many of the teachers being around the same age as their pupils, and quite possibly having been their classmates at some point. Yet, the teachers were adults, authority figures, just beyond the reach of the young girls writing to each other.

Because of this divide, the teachers were fascinating to the girls. They were mysterious and their actions were something to be discussed and emulated by the girls. This was especially true with the young, female teachers. The girls watched their every action, repeated their words to each other, learning from their every movement. This included an analysis of anything that looked like romance in the teacher's lives, which I will discuss in the next section.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

Annie and her schoolmates were especially concerned with changes to the staffing at their school. Because they formed such close relationships with their teachers, losing a beloved teacher was a crisis for the girls, just as losing a particularly disliked teacher was a reason for celebration. In August of 1875, Annie's friend Georgie wrote to tell her of the loss of a beloved teacher. "There is quite a change in school ... Miss Daggett has resigned on account of ill health and her place is supplied by a graduate from some seminary You do not know how sorry I am for I liked Miss Daggett...."⁷⁰ Saddened at the loss of a particularly liked teacher, Georgie quickly, reassured her friend that they still had one ally to their education at the school. "Miss Powers remains and she has Latin, I am real glad for I like her vey [sic] much and if I recite to her I mean to get my lessons and give her vey little trouble."⁷¹

The next summer, more changes in the school filled the schoolmates' letters. On July 2, 1876, Agnes wrote to Annie, "The other day I was told that Mr. Dame is not coming back."⁷² The same day Nellie wrote her a letter exclaiming, "I heard that Mr. Dame is not going to keep our school anymore of course I was delighted and immediately told Aggie of it."⁷³ Mr. Dame, a teacher who had intimidated the girls, was rumored to be leaving, and, in the words of Agnes, "it was too good to be true."⁷⁴ The girls were overjoyed at the prospect of Mr. Dame's leaving the school.

⁷⁰ August 22, 1875, Georgie M Clark to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

⁷¹ August 22, 1875, Georgie M Clark to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

⁷² July 2, 1876, Agnes to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

⁷³ July 2, 1876, Nellie to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

⁷⁴ July 2, 1876, Agnes to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

It is not surprising that a male teacher would be leaving the school as more women joined the ranks. By the late nineteenth century it was equally probable that a teacher would be a woman as it was that they would be male.⁷⁵ However, Mr. Dame's dismissal was not to be. Agnes, overjoyed by the news, ran to their beloved Miss Wilson "and asked her if it was so, and (now let your hopes fall, for fall they must) she said that she had [not] heard anything about it and that Mr. Dame did not know of it, but had been around trying to make arrangements so that his salary will not be cut-down."⁷⁶ The girls were very disappointed.

Despite their dislike for some of their teachers, Annie and her schoolmates generally enjoyed school and looked forward to each academic year. They spoke fondly of their time at school, and were sad to leave it. In 1874, Ella Stanley wrote to Annie that "at noontime ... I went up to the school house and it did look lonesome enough. And darling it made me think of the happy hours we had spent in that house together. I never enjoyed myself in my life any better than I did what few weeks I went to that school. Those were happy hours were they not Annie?"⁷⁷ They had a fondness and nostalgia for school years past, and times spent studying were part of the sweet years of their childhood. Leaving that behind was very difficult.

Hattie told Annie that on the last day of school she "shed [her] muffers full of tears and then put my head out of the window and whaled sufficiently enough."⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Wayne, *Women's Roles in Nineteenth-Century America*, 78.

⁷⁶ July 2, 1876, Nellie to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

⁷⁷ June 12, 1874, Ella Stanley to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

⁷⁸ March 9, 1873, Hattie Rand to Annie, Pease Family Papers.

For Hattie however, the pain she felt was not only for the end of the school year, but because she had to say goodbye to friends, and especially one young gentleman who had caught her eye. Hattie was not to be gone from the school environment too long as she eventually returned and taught in the schools in Cornish in the primary grades.

School offered a chance for socialization that the girls were eager to embrace. Thus, the end of school meant the loss of those friendships they had come to treasure. Even summer vacations were difficult for these friends, for they seldom saw each other during the break. Often times, because the girls dispersed back to their families during breaks, their only means of communications during the long summer was through their letters. They were lonesome for company, and thrilled at every chance that they got to spend together. Time spent with friends was one of the themes that filled their letters back and forth - a boating expedition here, a museum trip there - the girls longed to spend time together.

The fact that education was available to these young women, beyond the primary grades and in to high school and even college, is a prime example of the changes that came about in this time period. "In the nineteenth century," Wayne wrote, "women took on new educational roles as students themselves...."⁷⁹ Annie and her peers were typical middle class students. These were not privileged upper class families, sending their daughters to school, but average households who had access to higher education for daughters. In Maine this was not at all unusual. One contemporary historian wrote that in Maine, "In all the leading towns there [was] a high school for

⁷⁹ Wayne, *Women's Roles in Nineteenth-Century America*, 71.

advanced pupils.”⁸⁰ Annie was sent from Cornish to the larger town of Bangor where she had increased access to education.

Year after year, the young women would return, learning as much as they could. They did appreciate their breaks, but were eager to continue on. Georgie put it nicely in a letter to Anne, “it seems real nice not to have to go to school for a few weeks, just to think if you come back next year we shall be one class higher, I think it is real nice to think that every year we are one step higher.”⁸¹

Finally, these letters reveal the availability of a college education for women. In the late nineteenth century, “As more girls entered school, the demand for women’s continued education beyond the lower grades sparked the formation of the first all-female seminaries and then colleges.”⁸² Women’s colleges such as Wellesley, where classes began in 1875, and Bryn Mawr College, which opened in 1885, were popping up all over the country. Some new colleges, especially in the West, such as the University of Puget Sound begun in 1888 in Tacoma, Washington, opened as coeducational institutes beginning with their first class of students. A college education was becoming more of a possibility for Americans in general as new institutions were opened yearly.⁸³

⁸⁰ Clark, *Maine: A Bicentennial History*, 528.

⁸¹ Georgie M. Clark to Annie, July 1, 1875, Pease Family Papers.

⁸² Wayne, *Women’s Roles in Nineteenth-Century America*, 71.

⁸³ Wayne, *Women’s Roles in Nineteenth-Century America*, 75. According to Wayne, “Early female academies and colleges created the first generation of formally educated young women, women with expanded expectations about their duties not only to their families, but to society at large.”

Women now had chances that they never would have had in the decade previous. Annie attending Wellesley was not a farfetched idea by any stretch of the imagination. Just the mention of the school sent her friend Georgie into a fit, fearful that her friend would be leaving her. As she explained her fear to Annie, “when I opened your letter the very first word that my eyes set upon was Wellesley and I felt real faint and I told my sister, I can’t read Annie’s letter for I know that she is going to Wellesley and I am so sorry.”⁸⁴ Annie did not go to Wellesley that year, but the mere idea that college was so attainable at this time is essential in understanding the ever widening world of the ordinary woman in the late nineteenth century.

In the late nineteenth century, as Wayne reminds us, “woman’s expanded access to higher education meant that middle-class women entered the professions for the first time as professors, nurses, doctors, social workers, and lawyers.”⁸⁵ Annie’s generation was moving past the ideals of housewifery and republican motherhood. They could use their education for careers and professions outside the home.

The previous generation embraced education too, but within the realm of the household. Feminist Elizabeth Cady “Stanton embraced the idea that motherhood was a profession, for which women should be adequately trained and knowledgeable.”⁸⁶ She believed that education was a right that women should have, but that it should be used to further their roles as mothers. But Annie and her friends

⁸⁴ Georgie M. Clark to Annie, July 18, 1875, Pease Family Papers.

⁸⁵ Wayne, *Women’s Roles in Nineteenth-Century America*, 37.

⁸⁶ Wayne, *Women’s Roles in Nineteenth-Century America*, 19. According to Wayne, “by the end of the century, female college graduates were the most likely to avoid women’s traditional roles in marriage and motherhood.”

were exploring their educational opportunities for different objectives. Far from the Victorian woman who “sacrificed hopes and dreams, ambitions, talents and desires to devote herself fully – as expected – to home, family and ultimately the good of the world at large,” Annie and the young women of her generation were looking for something more.⁸⁷

In a major transition from the generations before, women of Annie’s generation were not headed into lives dominated by marriage and motherhood.⁸⁸ Annie certainly rejected this life. She never married and taught school in Bangor for her entire life. Hattie, Fannie, and Nellie also taught. Although Annie did not attend college right out of high school as she had hoped, her opportunities had expanded to include teaching, self-support, instead of dependence on a man.

Romance and Insanity: “he cast ‘those eyes’ on me and they spoke volumes...”

In an essay about the correspondence of juvenile girls, a section on romance should come as no surprise. These young Mainers were boy crazy; they saw love everywhere and searched for romance in every situation. As typical teenage girls and young women, they were concerned with finding love, and with making the man of their dreams fall in love with them. Yet, they also had a healthy respect for love, and its supposed power over their sanity. Novels like *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre* gave examples of star crossed lovers losing control when faced with true love.

⁸⁷ Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America*, xiii.

⁸⁸ Wayne, *Women’s Roles in Nineteenth-Century America*, 89.

These girls own experiences convinced them that romance could be a very dangerous thing. Everywhere they looked they saw secret romances, women driven mad by love, men who could become their passionate Heathcliffs. Romance filled the pages of their letters back and forth as their lives were consumed with searching for the right someone.

This fresh focus on romantic love was a result of many of the changing tides of the time period. “The new ideal of companionate marriage meant that women were discouraged from seeking marriage purely for economic or social status reasons, and women’s increased access to formal education meant that the pursuit of a vocation was increasingly an alternative path to marriage and motherhood,” wrote Wayne.⁸⁹ Thus, a romantic or companionate marriage became more desirable. Indeed, if women could now provide for their own needs in many ways, marriage necessarily must have a higher purpose. Late nineteenth-century journalist Gertrude Stuart Baille wrote that “women now possessing the education necessary to make themselves intellectually equal to men and able to economically support themselves, as well as traditionally understood as morally superior to men, simply did not need men anymore as they did in earlier generations.”⁹⁰ Now, with the possibility of women living independent from men, romance provided a renewed purpose for marriage. It is not surprising then, that the educated young women who wrote to Annie would be afflicted with a dreaded disease - lovesickness.

⁸⁹ Wayne, *Women’s Roles in Nineteenth-Century America*, 6.

⁹⁰ Wayne, *Women’s Roles in Nineteenth-Century America*, 9.

Annie was not immune to this affliction. Romance was just as much a part of her life as education. Her options were not limited to one or the other, although in the long run, education became more prominent in her life. Annie was as interested in the opposite sex as any of her friends, and her friends hint at Annie attracting the interest of young men. Hattie teased Annie about her boy watching proclivities saying “I bet that you have looked all the boys over by this time, who can tell all the great deeds you have done. O Annie the scene will be very afflicting [and] I wish Vanang could see you taking a view – Ah.”⁹¹ Annie was expected to be on the alert for any attractive and eligible young men, yet at the same time, she had a young man, the mysterious Vanang, wishing that she would focus her energies on him.

Romance and educational goals were not incompatible goals. If we remember the words of Annie’s Aunt Gertie, she might choose either marriage or education and be respected; as long as she did her best with whatever hand life dealt her. Yet, her reasons for marrying had changed.⁹² No longer focused on marriage as a means of provision, Annie and other of her generation could look for marriage as a source of comfort and love.

Annie was not the only one of her generation looking at boys. Her friends were focused on every male they met. Agnes wrote to Annie of meeting some college boys who stole her heart. She was excited to meet an older man who was

⁹¹ Hattie Rand to Annie, March 9, 1873, Pease Family Papers.

⁹² Wayne, *Women’s Roles in Nineteenth-Century America*, 1. as “In the nineteenth century,” Wayne tells us, “the ideal of companionate marriage, or a partnership based on love and mutual respect, replaces an earlier economic model of marriage.”

attentive; however she was concerned with propriety. Even though she thrilled at the fact that the young man had “helped us into the carriage. Just think a seniors hands touched me....” she was careful to assure Annie that “his breath did not.”⁹³ Even though the idea of romance intrigued Agnes, she would be careful to maintain a proper distance and made sure that she did not appear forward in any way. These young women would have heeded the cautions learned by their mothers’ generation that “true love was based upon mutual esteem and affection and not on the silly notions of love often presented in then popular works of fiction.”⁹⁴ Although tempted by physical affection, they would resist protecting themselves from untoward advances by young men.

Nellie gossips about love between the teachers at Bangor High School. She was appalled by the idea of the detested Mr. Dame pressing his attentions on the unwilling female teachers at their school. She wrote to Annie of one occasion during the school’s graduation where

Miss W[ilson and] Miss P. were standing together just before going home and Mr. D[ame] asked them if he might have the pleasure of seeing them home they told him they guessed not, but he said, “Hadn’t I better see you home?” and received the same answer as before. he persisted and Miss Wilson told him that they had friends in the hall, who were going home with her; so they went out and met their friends, but as good (?) luck would have it they met Mr. D[ame] just as they passed onto the sidewalk, and he insisted on going home with her – Miss Wilson – for the rest left her Miss P. and Miss Hallowell going ahead and her sister and Miss Belle Allen behind so she had

⁹³ Agnes to Annie, July 2, 1876, Pease Family Papers. Breathe and exchanging breathe appears in multiple sections where the women are discussing romance, it seems to be the young women’s way of speaking about kissing.

⁹⁴ Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America*, 13.

to walk all the way home with him alone, I asked Aggie if she said any thing about catching his breath with her mouth. I would not have let him go with me if I had been her, she didn't want him and why should she let him, as for the protection I would as soon have a child two years old.⁹⁵

What is particularly striking about this occurrence is that the women were trying to avoid the attentions of Mr. Dame, who rudely persisted. Miss Wilson, caught in a lie about having another to escort her home, was forced to accept Mr. Dame's unwanted attentions. Nellie's assertion that she "would not have let him go" with her shows the power of choice for women in romantic situations. Nellie expected to have a choice in her suitors. As "the culture had shifted to an emphasis on compatibility and romantic love,"⁹⁶ it is evident that Mr. Dame was not considered a desirable or compatible match for either of the young teachers. Again, there is the concern with propriety in physical intimacy as Nellie asked Aggie about "catching his breath with her mouth" and would have been quite scandalized to find out that her teachers had behaved that way.

Even docile Carrie wrote often of romance. However, Carrie's focus was on romantic intentions between the adults of the community, and the romance she saw was most often a figment of her imagination. One day Carries saw a local judge, who also taught at the school, walk past her house reading a letter. She wrote to a friend, "suppose it was a love-letter? ... I shouted at him – you know how deaf he is – and asked him when school would commence, and he said 'the 6th.' and then he added, smiling so sweetly 'now are you satisfied?' and then went on reading his

⁹⁵ Nellie to Annie, July 2, 1876, Pease Family Papers.

⁹⁶ Wayne, *Women's Roles in Nineteenth-Century America*, 5.

letter.”⁹⁷ This was a rather mundane occurrence, with little evidence to suggest that the Judge was actually reading a love letter. What is essential in this piece is the fact that Carrie was searching for romance in even this simple moment. In her eyes, only love could bring such a sweet smile and demeanor to the judge. Carrie, Annie, and their peers were quick to attribute daily occurrences and anything out of the ordinary to romantic affliction.

Hattie was the most taken with romantic ideals of the bunch. Nearly every letter she wrote to Annie contained some hint of romance, either some man showing special attention to one of their friends, or one of her own crushes. Her letters were filled with romantic moments and mentions such as “Howard Brackett was very attentive”⁹⁸ and “Wonder if Eliza has set eyes on that nice looking young gentleman?”⁹⁹ Yet, it is Hattie’s own romances and crushes that are the most revealing.

Hattie’s romances show the commonly held idea that love could drive one mad. In the late nineteenth century, “[the] connection between mind and body was recognized as being important to a general well-being, and joy, hope and love were seen as positive influences while fear, grief and anger could be debilitating.”¹⁰⁰ It might logically follow that the lack of love, or unrequited love would lead to mental illness as it led to sorrow and fear.

⁹⁷ Carrie to Annie, August 25, 1875, Pease Family Papers.

⁹⁸ Hattie to Annie, December 12, 1875, Pease Family Papers.

⁹⁹ Hattie to Annie, June 3, 1875, Pease Family Papers.

¹⁰⁰ Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America*, 180-181.

Hattie was very concerned with the possibility that a certain young gentleman named Bradford might show her attentions. She wrote of her hopes of his affection to Annie saying that on the last day of classes “he said “goodbye” to Sa[rah] Parker but he cast ‘those eyes’ on me and they spoke volumes. I have grown thin [and] nervous since then, my heart is nigh upon broken I sit all day and pick my hair out of my head. I suspect to be a raving maniac [and] have to be carried to the “insane lyceum,” but enough of this nonsense.”¹⁰¹ In Hattie’s eyes, romance causing insanity was a very real possibility. Yet this type of insanity did not have the social stigma attached that many other types would. It was not a hushed insanity, but instead showed the delicate nature of a woman’s heart.

Hattie was being a dramatic, fashionable, young woman by showing how fragile she was and how passionate her emotions were. In fact, historian Ellen Plante informs us that “hysteria, with its emotional outbursts, tearful scenes and fits of anger, was the most common ‘mental disease’ plaguing Victorian women.”¹⁰² When her romance did not come to fruition, Hattie continued her dramatic reaction to the love affair, “Bradford has ceased to smile on me my heart is smashed all the peices [sic], it was a great disappointment, it is doubtful if I ever get over it.”¹⁰³ Yet, despite the dramatic way she spoke about her heartache, there is no evidence of Hattie ever being committed to an asylum or losing her mind. These brief mentions of romantic disappointment come in the middle of letters that describe her moving on

¹⁰¹ Hattie Rand to Annie, March 9, 1873, Pease Family Papers.

¹⁰² Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America*, 185.

¹⁰³ Hattie Rand to Annie, March 9, 1873, Pease Family Papers.

with her daily life. She acted the part of the heartbroken and shattered heroine, but in actuality was strong, and hardly touched by the jilt.

Love was certainly an affliction. The young women who wrote to Annie desperately wanted romantic attachments, but also attached a sense of danger to them, holding to the belief that a woman, rejected in love, could become a shell of her former self, and lose her mind. It is not unexpected that these girls would have such a fear and understanding of insanity. They were surrounded with many examples of women who had lost their mental capacities.

Hattie wrote to Annie of a former teacher who was behaving in a very peculiar manner.

I must tell you about Fannie Hatch. She has been sick for two months no one has seen any thing of her until last Friday she was heard screaming. She raised the window and leaned out and screamed. Mrs. Cole could not do any thing with her but Calista and Sarah Page took her in by force. Mrs. Cole said she had not eaten any thing for two days and Fannie said they were trying to poison her. The neighbors have carried her in food since and she will eat real hearty. She had three spells that day but has not had any since that I know of. They have not had a Dr. yet but Fannie wanted Sweet of Brownfield so they have sent for him. It is very pitiful to think that our old teacher – one who was so kind and ready to help others – is crazy. I have heard it was hereditary in that family.¹⁰⁴

Fannie's insane behavior was shocking, and Hattie wrote of it in a conspiratorial manner, although she did not seem ashamed to be writing of it. Fannie's insanity was the juiciest piece of gossip Hattie could get her hands on. It was exciting and terrifying all at once. Someone they knew was insane, and it was not the type of

¹⁰⁴ Hattie Rand to Annie, October 10, 1875, Pease Family Papers.

romantic insanity cause by love, but a hereditary issue. Fannie's paranoid behavior was strange and frightening, just like something out of a gothic novel.

Fannie's saga continued a few months later when Hattie reported that:

Fannie Hatch has been boarding with Jennie Pike (of course you know all about her scrape). She has been up to Brownfield consulting Dr. Seveil. He says she is not crazy but I should think it would be a credit to her to be insane. Jennie Pike said she would lie on the lounge with her feet on the window [and] kick. There was about three days she did that Now Annie if you should do so would you not want people to think you crazy? or something worse?¹⁰⁵

Hattie's comment that "it would be a credit for her to be insane" is a commentary on the fashionable and romantic nature of true insanity. Simply behaving in a strange manner and being thought of as an eccentric was not enough for the girls, who held a chilling and fearful respect for their afflicted teacher. They were fascinated by the idea that she might truly be insane.

Insanity was clearly visible in the world of these young women. True insanity was something to be feared and spoken of in hushed tones. Yet, at the same time, insanity that was born out of an excess of romantic passion or disappointed hopes was somehow glamorous and romantic. The girls of Annie's world were happy to be crossed in love, for it made them appear as romantic characters. Yet, they feared total loss of control, opting for the ladylike affliction of one jilted in romance and set into a melancholy state. Their beliefs reflected the common themes of romantic novels, not the sage advice given in advice literature. They were excited

¹⁰⁵ Hattie Rand to Annie, December 12, 1875, Pease Family Papers.

by passion and love, not focused on the companionate and respectful marriage advised by their elders.

A Question of Legacy

Who deserves to be remembered? What story has value? Why do some lives hold more meaning than others? These are all difficult questions to ask. Yet, every time a historian decides to tell one individual's story over another's, they are making a judgment call about the value of that individual's life and story. Often it is easy to pick up some exciting tale of an outlier, to study the life of someone who went above and beyond the others of their era, but it does not tell the entire story. When history focuses on the outstanding characters and ignores those who led more typical lives, scholars of history lose an essential piece to the puzzle. In order to understand greatness or power, or diverse values exhibited by some, one must understand the lives of their average contemporaries. Every day interactions and decisions are part of the grand scheme of how things move and work in this world.

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich showed the value of an ordinary woman's life when she described the life of Martha Ballard in her book *The Midwife's Tale*.¹⁰⁶ Martha Ballard was an ordinary woman, who lived in Maine a half-century before Annie Pease. Yes, she was a midwife, a distinction which set her apart from some others of her gender, yet she lived within the boundaries of women's roles set by her society. Her midwifery had an enormous impact on her community. Because of her work,

¹⁰⁶ Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *The Midwives Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990).

hundreds of children were brought into the world healthy. Because of her words, historians understand the complicated social web of women in the late eighteenth century, and the place and importance of women in the wider world. Even greater still, when the reader understands that Martha Ballard was the aunt of Clara Barton, Martha's story reaches past her daily life to the influence she had on a family member who then went on to found the American Red Cross, impacting the lives of millions around the world. The influence of a seemingly ordinary woman can change the world.

Historians not only decided whose story to tell, but how to tell it. Many historians have chosen to approach the lives of ordinary women through what was written about them. Instead of approaching the world of women in the nineteenth century through their own words or even historical sources such as court and church records, they look to a genre of literature that told women how to behave. Advice literature, even though it may show the ideal, cannot be simply used on its own to tell the stories of women. However, when advice literature is paired with the records left behind by women, we garner a more complete and complicated picture of history. We understand that women were not made from one mold; they had diverse experiences and understandings.

Even the frivolous letters of high school girls can provide insight into the world that surrounds them. Annie and her friends reveal the true influence of advice literature, and the strength of individual conviction. Their decisions about religion, education, love, and even their perceptions of insanity, reveal that they thought for

themselves. These women did not blindly follow the advice of others. More than any previous generation, they used their education to form their own ideas and make their own decisions. The Annie Pease and her friends grew up in an era of opportunity for women, and they embraced it wholeheartedly.

Pease Family Papers – Transcriptions

1869-1876

*October 23, 1869 L W Small to Unknown*¹⁰⁷

New York Oct 23 1869

And so you want the picture Books do you? I wonder how long it would have been before you would have thought to write me if you had not wanted them. Now tell me that. Well, if you will write again and tell me how old you are and how old Sarah, Roscoe, John, and the Baby is, and the Babys name, you can have the book

I think it is Harpers Weekly that you want. Mr Guptill bound them for me. I am living in N.Y. now and shall be here until this week. Write to me in care of Hewe + Van. 88 Wall St and see that you dont forget it. I expect you will though.

You are to write a sheet full or the trade goes for nothing.

Someday I may write you all about New York.

L W Small

March 9, 1873 Hattie Rand to Annie

Cornish March 9 /73

Dear Annie,

I rec'd your welcome letter a few days ago, and was glad you got to Paris safe at last.

¹⁰⁷ Lauriston Ward Small

I hope you have got over your cold, for I can feel for you if I cant feel as you do, when a cold is on the string.

I bet that you have looked all the boys over by this time, who can tell all the great deeds you have done. O Annie the scene will be very afflicting + I wish Vanang could see you taking a view – Ah.

A week ago yesterday I went to Kesar Falls, I rode backwards on a brink, they had an old bobsled for a sleigh, I went to meeting Sunday there + see a lot of my old friends. Monday night I went to the hall expecting to dance but they had no music so I had to go to bed.

Cornish is very lively, we had a dance last Friday night. I went and never enjoyed myself [~~crossed out- very~~] any better in the world. I went in and stayed with Laura, we slept with Fannie. I laid in the middle and slept sounder than a log.

Last Friday I took tea at Jennie Ayer, was there in the evening.

Yesterday I made me some of those things what you put in the waist of your dresses they are boosteve I tell you. But I have not told you about the last day of school I shed my muffers full of tears and then put my head out of the window and whaled sufficiently enough, as he dismissed the classes he would tell how very sorrow he was that they would not finish the book he wanted to know if they all see it + as this was his last opportunity he would show it to them in five minutes so they never would forget it. he said “goodbye” to Sa Parker but he cast “those eyes” on me and they spoke volumes. I have grown thin + nervous since then, my heart is

nigh upon broken I sit all day and pick my hair out of my head. I suspect to be a raving maniac + have to be carried to the "insane lyceum," but enough of this nonsense. I must close for I am very weary, tell Nan I shall ans her letter directly
Write soon, get your lessons, behave yourself, go to bed early,

With love,

Hattie Rand

P.S. Do excuse this writing. I can hardly read it myself. I have got kerosene oil all over this paper full. I would do it again. H.

April 27, 1873, Hattie Rand to Annie

Cornish Apr. 27" 1873

Dear Annie,

I rec'd your's some time since and will try to write a few words in reply.

I am not going to meeting if it is Mr. Wright's last day. I don't care. my head ached a little this morning but I have eaten half a pie + feel better

I am a relived tailoress having left the shop yesterday

I want a ride so I don't know what to do

I wish I was a fish, then I could swim

I should think you might write lively pages about Further On, one idea is that when you get further on you would have to read about what comes put that in will you?

Further still, wiggle those fingers, write further than you want too, do the best you can a bring back the prize. I am glad I am not there for I should get the prize away from you

Bradford has ceased to smile on me my heart is smashed all the peices [sp], it was a great disappointment, it is doubtful if I ever get over it

He has sold his team and gone home, his sister Jennie is sick

Have you got over your mad fit yet? If that essay sticks in your throat, why take some pills + physic it out, soak your feet in gruel +c.

The people are very well in section if the country considering. Laziness is prevalent, try to write to me before you come if you can I must close for I have exhausted my ideas

Goodbye

Hattie

December 6, 1873 Mother to Daughter

Cornish Dec 6, 1873

Dear Daughter

We received your letter Thursday, and as our folks have gone to church I will devote a little time answering your questions

Your Aunt wanted to know about Gerry and Ann. they are not at Mr Shorers John Millerkins father and mother are there. He boards them for their work We have quite a thanksgiving Hattie¹⁰⁸ wasn't here because she was not invited her father and mother was invited but did not come. Your Uncle James and Aunt was not here because they were laying an Aqueduct from the back of our hill to their house they was so busy they couldn't come till evening. Your Aunt Hettie Lewis didn't come all the rest came John Duley has laid a pipe in the same ditch his comes to his house and barn Your Uncle James got his running to his barn last night at six oclock, and came over here to a club meeting Tick and Mathe are boarding to Charles Douglan Dick took the job of laying the Aqueduct for his father, John school is done, ours has not commenced dont know who will teach, I havent heard anything about the donation yet. They are having temperance meetings at the village every week. Mr Huley and wife and Jess made us a visit last Tuesday. Our men folks are hunting logs from little river swamp to the village, and getting stuff to fix the house with next spring I have been to see Raymond about my teeth I am going tomorrow to be measured I couldnt make up my mind to go to Portland Ann Doughton havnt got hers yet

I havent heard anything about your Uncle Wm picture they didnt say anything about it thanksgiving day I am going to get Nellie a dress tomorrow, Wine

¹⁰⁸ Hattie Rand

colored [sp] cashmere she will wear her old hat trimmed I wear my bonnet the same

I have got my black pint up, two folds around the bottom headed with velvet and a polonaise I have a new neck tie black and white and a linen collar, Your Father will send you 10 dollars in this letter and when you want more let us know dont go without anything need or want, your Father is perfectly willing for you to have everything you need. When you want money let us know before you get out because it takes so long before you get it. Just as I commenced this letter Mr Small and Ike came in and they have kept talking and I have kept writing I guess it is quear writing, there is such a noise I dont hardly know which way my head is. It just commenced to snow if it storms tomorrow we are going to kill 2 boares¹⁰⁹ if it is pleasant I am going to the village. Nellie is learning to play on the organ she can play 2 pieces very nicely one is I want to be an angel she is very proud of it

Sarah and Roscoe have each received a letter from this Aunt Cal I hope they will answer it but you know they are not much used to writing. Write us often as you can and when you want anything let us know

Mother

August 18, 1874 GMB Westbrook Seminary to Annie Pease Postcard

To Miss Annie M Pease

Cornish Me.

Fall term begins Aug 18 1874

¹⁰⁹ boars

1 room rent \$1.00 in extra. I hope you will put in application just as soon as you can as the rooms are fast filling up. G.M.B

[printing on postcard explains term expenses.]

June 12, 1874 Ella Stanley to Annie

Porter, June 12th, 1874

Dear Friend Annie:

Your kind letter was rec'd with the greatest pleasure. I intended to wrote you last-Sunday but I went to meeting and was tired, I did not feel like writing. I trust you will forgive me, and I will try and be more prompt.

One thing I know it was not because I have forgotten you, Dear Annie for I think of you very often, and wish I could see you. It does seem so long to me since school finished. It seems to me if I could see you all once in a while I would try and not be lonesome.

Last- Sunday I went to meeting down in the Field. And at noontime Marcia and I went up to the school house and it did look lonesome enough. And darling it made me think of the happy hours we had spent in that house together. I never enjoyed myself in my life any better than I did what few weeks I went to that school. Those were happy hours were they not Annie?

And darling do you think we realized how much we loved each other till we had to part? If it were not for that for that word part how happy we should be. But

soon we shall meet to part no more if we are only good.¹¹⁰ And I think that is a happy thought. Annie it is almost dark and I guess you will think so when you come to read it for I can hardly see where to write. I will finish it in the morning

Good night Darling

Wednesday evening.

Dear Annie how I would like to see you this morning I could talk to you better than I can write. You asked me if Mr Hawker wrote to me and I will tell you he does not write me. And I did not ask him to. Marcia told me that Mr Hawker wrote Stillman that he should be up in about three or four weeks. The boys where he is teaching are going up to the mountains. I hope he will come dont you Annie? For I would like to see him. I have written to Nellie and Hannah but they have not answered it yet! And I guess Ella thinks I am not going to write her but I am. How I would like to see her sweet face and all the rest.

I do not go to school this summer I did commence to go but gave it up I should think you would be tired I was. I went nineteen weeks without much vacations. Annie as it is almost time for the page to come I must close. Give my love to all my friends and keep a good share your self.

And you will all be remembered by one that loves

¹¹⁰ Reference to heaven.

Ella Stanley – Write Soon. Please ask Nellie and Hannah if they have forgotten to write me. Excuse all mistakes and poor writing for I wrote this in a hurry. Please let no one see this

March 22, 1875 Nellie Pease to Annie

Cornish Me, March 22, 1875

Dear Annie,

You said if I would write you a long letter, you would sent me something. Mother and I went up to the village Wed, bought me a print dress, and Sarah one I am going to have mine trimmed with turkey red. I have at last got the polinase [sp] pattern for my doll and I made her one the other day out of my drab basque. I had a knickerbocker the first of the winter. I had it trimmed with red, cut the polinase, the polinase blocked on the bottom and bound with red (I had practiced on the skirt) When you come home I want you to bring your white sack, and you can have the hamburg. I want it to make over to wear with my grey skirt Walter will be ten months old next Mon, and climbs up anywhere by the side of the house. He went away up stairs twice the other day. today he climbed from his cradle to a chair and he stood alone as much as a minute. he is afraid of the cat, when he goes to pull her tail she will lift up her head and he will turn and go away as fast as he can go. the men folks are hauling out manure they have got the wood all cut up. We have got lots of syrup this year. They made 25 gal in two days. They went to grange meeting last night and did not get home until ten o'clock. John has got his jig-saw and lathe

done. the roads are all bare so they have to go in wagons. I have got my wooling stockings done and got quite a piece done on my cotton ones they are seal brown and drat. I knit 6 times of drat and 11 of brown. Mother and Sarah are making Seth some shirts of striped stuff. Mother saw Hattie Rand and she told her to ask you if you had forgot since you became a school mate an Boyguard that you owed her a letter.

Goodbye. Write soon, Nellie.

I will send you a piece of each of my new dresses and a piece of Sarahs.

April 20, 1875 Sarah S Pease to Annie

Cornish April 20, 1875

Dear Annie

Fannie has been here today she has not been home before for three weeks. the roads are very bad and we have a snow storm every week so there is not much prospect of there being any better at present. The may party is to be at Mr. Thompsons the third day of may Tamsie wanted to wate till you and the other girls got home but the boys thought they should be busy then we have finished that ring at last we were three weeks doing it and done nothing els. I have been making patchwork I have most enough for a quilt. Nellie has two little kittens she has new names for them every day. we have twenty little chickens and two more hens sitting Mr Cole is better and

hopes to get out soon. Father says find out how much monney you will need and write so that he can send it.

Munday

Father has been to schoolmeeting Mr Thompson is agent Mary Marv teacher if he can get her. they have raised five hundred dollars for a free high school this fall.

I have not much to write about as I have not been any where and nobody has been here for a month.

Sarah S Pease

June 27, 1875 Agg Brand to Annie

Bangor June 27th '75

My Dear Annie,

Perhaps you think that on account of the excessive heat today that I shall neglect my duty but a "promise is a promise" in warm weather as in cold. I have had the tooth ache all day, am cutting a wisdom tooth so my friends are feeling some encouraged about me after all, I went to church this forenoon but feel better prepared to give you a description of a hat which was before me, than of the sermon all I remember of the latter is this, the minister said he thought he usually made a good appearance in the world. If my pastor is as conceited as that who wonders that I posses a little.

Katie, Nellie + I went down to the boat to see Miss Wilson off, we planned a lot of botany excursions on her return. We met Mr. Dame at the boat and told him if he would go on the evening train, we would go down and see him off also but he declined out kind invitation. strange was it not? I am going away tomorrow morning so you need feel so big, I am going in a carriage so that I shall plenty of time to serve Caesar Arivistus and the Roman People I think now of finishing that this summer . I am glad I am going in the morning on one account that is Mother said yesterday that she thought I could employ tomorrow morning to good advantage by arranging my bureau closet boxes &c but I must stop this nonsense else you will throw it away unread, “which thing indeed would wound my feelings much, besides I have just written one letter and have another to write.

Yours sincerely,

Agg Brand

P.S. Saefe scribe, ad M. Agnes Brand¹¹¹

13 Thomas St.

Bangor Maine

June 30, 1875 Kattie to Annie

Cornish c/o Frank Pease

Bangor June 30th 1875

Dearest Annie:

¹¹¹ Agnes Brand also goes by Aggie in many of the letters.

It isn't very pelite [sic] to write with a lead pencil, but mother is fishing ideas out of the ink bottle so I will write school-girl fashion. You wanted me to write as soon as you had gone, and I did intend to but I found that Aggie was going to write Sunday and I thought I would wait until Wednesday. I suppose you have received one by this time. Did she say any thing about that "shirt bussum" [sic]? Ha, ha, didn't we have the fun over that – last Friday night? I suppose you have heard about Aggie, Nellie and I going to the boat Saturday after you left. Mr Dame was down to the boat and he laughed, and was as good natured as could be, you would hardly think that he had ever got cross in school and slat his books, and say; "Miss Pease, take a seat under the clock." He asked us if we were going away this vacation, how we liked the exercise the night before +c. Aggie told him what we were going to do when we graduatid [sic], and I don't think I ever knew him to laugh so hard before. Miss W. says, after she gets home, perhaps we can go on some botanizing expedition, won't that be splendid? Now don't you wish you were in Bangor? By the way, have you worked on your flowers any? Yesterday afternoon I commenced on mine, but before I had half finished callers came. I wish you could see my *Raminculus bulbosus*.¹¹² When I took it out of the "press" the petals all dropped off, so I stick them on, but the flow looks far from being complete, perfect or regular. I set out to stick the flowers of a *Ranumculus acris*¹¹³ on, but thought that would be cheating. Do you recollect a week ago today? It doesn't look much like it outdoors though, for it is very cloudy and this forenoon was awfully cold really, I thought I

¹¹² Common name: Bulbous buttercup.

¹¹³ Common name: Meadow or Tall buttercup.

should have to put on my flannels. Wonder if Eliza has set eyes on that nice looking young gentleman. Oh Annie, did you see Caesar your way, and the “swamp,” the “Calvary” the “path, narrow and difficult,” and above all, his wife and children?

Do you want me to tell you what I’ve been doing this vacation? Well, you know what I did Sunday, Monday I changed the program and made music on the wash board, Tuesday I ironed, and today I’ve been sewing. Then I’ve worked in the garden some, watched my fish and ferns, made lots of boquets [sic] for the house and such like. Miss W. has let me keep her gold fish this summer. My ferns are growing nicely. do you remember the fern you drew on the board, behind the blind? They look just like that exactly, (only not quite so stiff) when the first come up I wish I could send some of my pretty roses to you in this letter, they are looking their best now, but soon fall off, and fade. Did you get home without any trouble, and were you not tired? I thought of you ever so many times Annie, and when you were waiting those three hours in P.I. wondered what you were doing. Didn’t the three hours seem like six to you? Did you find some company? Perhaps you were as fortunate as Eliza was. I wish you were going to prayer meeting tonight Annie. Can’t you go at home? I guess mother and I will go tonight that is if it does not rain. I shall always think of you dear Annie when I go to prayer meeting and i hope that sometime you will love the place of prayer as I do. Write soon.

Your loving,

Kattie

Care of H.B.S.

July 1, 1875, Georgie M. Clark to Annie

Bangor July 1st 1875

Dear Annie

I guess you will think I am answering your letter soon but I am afraid if I do not you will not write me for a long time and I want to hear from you very often. Annie I was delighted and surprised to hear from you because I thought you were in Cornish, and besides I did not think you would write to me almost the first one for I asked you, first before you started, but you can not tell how glad I was to hear from you. How mean it was that you made a mistake and could not get home, I feel real bad for you and I did say "Poor Annie, and I said a great many time how I wished I was in Portland and could take you out to my Grandmothers and we would have had such a nice time, but that could not be, I am real glad the Landlady treated you so well, and I hope you arrived home all safe Monday. I have not seen any of the girls since school closed, for I have not been out of the house except on Sunday, I suppose you will want to know how we spent the rest of last Saturday, if Nellie Cates or some of the other girls have not told you before me. After you had started, we all went over to the E+N.A. Railroad depot that is Carrie Johnson, Alice Norton and myself, and after that she went up to the School house and I was going down to the boat but I had company and could not go, Katie S. – Aggie B. – and Nellie C. – all went down to the boat and I wanted to go so much, but I put as good a face on it as possible and

I did not go. I have not been out after flowers yet, I suppose you have added a good many to your number, I have been so busy that I have not had any time, it seems real nice not to have to go to school for a few weeks, just to think if you come back next year we shall be one class higher, I think it is real nice to think that every year we are one step higher, I shall not be able to write much more for it is getting toward breakfast time, I got up this morning about 4 and wrote one letter and though I could get your ready for the mail but I was not soon enough, but it is just as well for father says it will go to Portland tonight and go to Cornish in the morning, Annie to think that I am writing up there. I never thought I should, but we do not know what will happen to us or what we will be doing. Now Annie you write me just as often as you can I should like a letter every week and I will answer them just as soon as I can after I get them I expect to go to Portland a week from to day, but I expect to lead a roaming life for a few weeks so you may direct all of my letters as you did the last and Mother will send them to me, and I will write you as I get them. I will close now by sending you lots of love and I hope you are having a splendid time and will come back next fall already for a hard work.

From your ever loving schoolmate Georgie M. Clark

July 4, 1875 Nellie to Annie

Bangor July 4th, 1875

My Dear Friend Annie,

Don't you think I am doing you a great honor to answer your letter on the "4th of July"? Well to tell the truth I have hardly thought of it until I dated this letter, but what a day it is for the Fourth cold and dark and rainy. I used to think that the Fourth of July meant a blistering, boiling, hot day but I have changed my mind now. I hope you got home all safe, it was quite a joke on you having to stay in Portland over Sunday. I received your letter last Wednesday morning, when I got up mother said Nell, there is a letter for you on the machine father forgot to give it to you last night, it came all cut open, but it did not although she opened before I got up, there was no post mark on it and she thought that it was from my cousin in Cal. and so opened it to look at the name and finding that it was from a stranger she put it back. We have not heard from my cousin for a long time and are afraid something has happened. Have you got any new flowers? I have got a few. I went down to Birds hill the other day and instead of going by the road I wend [sic] down to the stream and went along the bank till I came to the hill and by this means I found some of that Oxalis I wanted so badly, I had intended to go over to Herseys farm (about two miles from here) for it, so I was saved quite a walk. Have you got any? if not I will send you some the next time I write, I would now but it is not pressed yet. Did your flowers spoil? I hope not for we want you to come back to school next fall ever! and ever so much. How do you get along analyzing your flowers alone? I don't get along at all. I have counted up all that I know the names and I make out a hundred. I suppose that Aggie told you about our going down to see Miss Wilson off, we had real fun, won't it be nice if we can go to lake Como (I guess that is the way to spell it) with her? but I am

getting ready to go down in the Country, I expected to go the first of next week, and if I do I shall loose it I would wait if it were only myself my sister is going too.

Aggie told Mr Dame that she was going to deliver the Latin thing, she said that she was either going to have May Bartlett's or take a piece of Caesar he laughed heartily, but it is getting so dark that I cannot see how I write and I know well enough that you will not be able to read this so I may as well close hoping that you will excuse the untidy appearance of this sheet.

With much love

Nellie

I helped Aggie mount her flowers the other day she has not nearly as many as I have
Write soon I eagerly await your letter Isn't that poetical? Nellie

July 8, 1875, Fannie E. L[incoln] to Annie

Bangor July 8, 1875

My Dear Annie

I was so glad to get your letter yesterday it went to the right spot it was raining hard and I was alone keeping house shall hold Old Maid's hall and the carnival thereof for two weeks having company only at night. My mind has been stretched at full tension, ask what I shall cook, a problem indeed, the question how sin came into the world is nothing in comparison. I could decide very soon for myself. But oh!! that cousin of the enormous appetite which, I mean the appetite,

must be satisfied every morning at breakfast. Today I tried the experiment of roasting a chicken. I wait in breathless expectation the result. It is now in the oven. I look at it every minute as tenderly as a lover does at his beloved (I have found out how that is by observation only, not at all by experience) Wait a minute I must look again. The string that tied the legs has given way, in other respects all right. It gives out a right savory odor of onions I consulted my cousins taste and found that we both agreed in regard to the delights of that fragrant fruit, drupe, berry, bulb or whatever the Botany chooses to call it. When I marry a Count I shall have onions on my coat of arms And love of [onions] for my motto. Another peep at the chicken. A little browner than before the stuffing is pouring out of his throat And the neck is drawn back as if in pain it looks like Cerebro spinal meningitis It is raining again today. What can be Dame Nature's grief. She does nothing but weep interrupted by an occasional hystericky [sic] giggle. It is impossible to make any plans without fear of interruptions. I order a carriage then countermand the order. To be sure it gives variety to my otherwise monotonous existence. My chicken! The disease is increasing to an alarming extent. I hope it will not die. I cleaned windows a day or two since. I do wish you could see them. I have to pull the curtains down low to cover them up. If stripes were only in fashion I should consider myself successful. I have been down the river on an excursion and was sufficiently plebian to enjoy it heartily. Shall probably go again next week. I catch occasional glympsies [sic] of the girls. have seen none near enough to be able to state positively the color of eyes and hair O the roses! I wish I could give you the large bunch that was given to me this

morning to put beside your scenery. Which would you look at last I wonder. I made two bunches of them and carried them to some sick neighbors. One a young man of twenty one in consumption, very low, living only from hour to hour. The other a young lady member of the first class I assisted to graduate. She was always lame, but apparently quite well otherwise. About two years ago she was getting ready to be married, and feeling the need of close economy, she ran the sewing machine too steadily and this brought on some aggravation of the lameness this spring she had an operation performed and has since been sinking. Both of them so young. Didn't you have a hard time getting home? I could fully appreciate the freight train, it is the nature of that ferocious beast to stop in the woods for no earthly reason but to torment passengers. It is a pleasant little way it has of saying, Why didn't you go on the regular train and not force your company on me? However could you make up your mind to read Caesar for recreation? I expected better things of you. But disappointments will come and I suppose it is the part of wisdom to accept them. What can Miss Bower's life have been to think Caesar entertaining as a novel! It must have been very barren of enjoyment, bleak and dreary. It is a matter of some curiosity as well to know what novels she may have read. Now I can understand that there might have been real bliss in those three chapters of French, notwithstanding the equivocal tone in your account of them. Tastes differ I have heard. My chicken is done. I insist upon the word chicken, though a friend just passing stopped for a moment at the open window to chat and condescendingly informed me that all the chickens were hens now. I look with supreme contempt on such ignorance and pity

it from my heart. Don't I know? Didn't I pick out the biggest one the butcher had? And haven't I cooked it by new and improved methods? And can't I smell? This last clause settles the anticlimax and all dispute, and proves my question, too. Pretty world this is when a teacher in the high school can't buy a **Chicken** without having some one declare it is a hen. I have a great mind to resign. I had a note from Miss Wilson a few days ago. She is having a delightful time in her trip. Swallowing lovely scenery in great gulps – this is the poetical for the plain expression – drinking in nature. I can't tell you how lovely the shadows on the grass are today. what a pity it is that they are only shadows. If we could only catch them and hold them just for one minute. I think even that would be a joy, but they are so fleeting and evanescent, My very delight in them is a great pain and a vague unrest. I always think of a passage in Martin Chuzzlewit. "The most beautiful things in life are Shadows" Only shadows I think it is.

Five hours later- I have had my ride made eight calls besides going to several places where I didn't call, returned home and ate my supper, had chicken for supper and such bread! I bought it of the baker and the worst wish I can frame if that he had to eat just one slice of it. If I could get hold of him I would make life a burden to him for one while. I shall put an instant tabor upon your promise to write a short gentle letter. I never read such. I want another just like the first. My best wishes for your success in translating this scrawl.

With much love

Fannie E. L.

July 11th, 1875 Eliza B Eddy to Annie

Bangor July 11th, 1875

Dear Friend,

I hope you do not think that I have forgotten to write you, as I have promised, but believe one thing and another I have not found very much time to write letters since school closed.

I hear you had to remain in Portland till monday, I fell very sorry for you when I first heard of it, but Lurie says you write you did not find it very bad so I believe I shall change my mind, though perhaps I had better wait until you write me the particulars and how did it happen do you remember that was what Mr Dame said to up once on a time, when I was a naughty girl and whispered to you?

Have you got nicely rested from the examination (and Caesar)(?) seen all the girls, I know you must be enjoying yourself after being gone so long, and don't your Father and Mother think you have improved so much that you ought to return next fall? I hope they do I am sure.

I have not seen hardly any of the girls except Luniette this vacation, and she expects to go away this week on a visit and I don't know but what all the rest may as well be in Cornish, I think I should see as much of them though I guess a great many have gone away, and if nothing happens I shall start tomorrow for Boston to be gone

two weeks and then I am going to the Salt water (for my health of course) for two or three more. Don't you think I intend to have a good time? I don't know as it will be as good as when we went to Hermon (delightful place wasn't it? I think I shall always detest railway tracks especially when I think of that one we walked on so far, by the way I have not seen Isa or her red headed boy since, too bad isn't it! but there! I won't feel too bad for I freckled up so when I went to row with him I believe his red hair drew the sun for I never freckled so before when I went rowing and what is still worse they won't come off.

Do you hear from Miss Wilson? I wonder if she is still pressing flowers, have you collected any since you went home? I will not weary you with a longer letter besides I have a couple more to write but I hope you will find time to answer this soon for I want to hear from you very much.

From Your Schoolmate

Eliza

P.S. If you direct to

Eliza B. Eddy Bangor No. 131 Pine St. the letter will be sent to me wherever I may be Aurevoir mon ami

Please excuse mistakes

July 18, 1875 Georgie M.C. to Annie

Deering July 18th, 1875

Dear Annie,

I sit down this afternoon to answer your ever welcome letter that I received the latter part of last week. You cannot tell how pleased I was when I opened it and found it was from you for I had been gone from home, nearly a week. But Father said he would send all my letters to me as soon as he could after they came. I left home the 8th of July, and I was so busy before I left that I did not see any of the girls except Alice Norton, and she looked the same as ever, I am stopping no ten miles out of Portland and I am having a splendid time and I hope you are having the same. Annie I am so sorry that your eyes trouble you, don't use them any more than you can help, do every thing you can for them, they say that cold tea is good to bathe them in, if you have not tried it I would, I have known some who have tried it and it done them good. I want you to be well and ready for school next fall for I can not spare you out of our class Any way do you know Annie when I opened you letter the very first word that my eyes set upon was Wellesly and I felt real faint and I told my sister, I can't read Annie's letter for I know that she is going to Wellesly and I am so sorry. but after a while I managed to read it and found I was mistaken much to my pleasure. You wanted to know if I had found many flowers yet? I have not been out yet on purpose but I have been blueberrying 3 or 4 times and I carry an oblong tin (you will know how that looks by eudiing Geom¹¹⁴) tied on my back and when I find a flower that I have not had I pick it and I put it in this tin, but do you know Annie I can not tell the name of a flower I have picked, and I can not analyse a flower right

¹¹⁴ Euclidian Geometry

through to save my life and I do not know what I am going to do. I pick two or three of a kind and when we both get back to Bangor if I have got anything that you have not you may have what I have with pleasure if you can find out the names. Some of them are very pretty. I found a scarlet lily it is very pretty and a white flower it looks some like the cultivated lily of the valey [sic], only the leaves look like apple leaves and grow from the root like the hood leaved violet. the leaves look very much like them. It is raining quite hard here today I have not been to church, I have been to Portland a number of times I only wish your cousins lived there now and you could come and see them, just think of the nice times that we would have. You said in your letter that I should get tired of answering your letters if you wrote every week It is no such a thing, for I should never get tired of writing to you for it is a pleasure to write you and to get letters from you, and I shall never tire of writing to you. but I am afraid you will get tired of writing me. I have been blueberrying 3 times last week and a cousin of mine, my sister, + myself picked 15 quarts, I love to pick them. I am sorry I did not get your letter sooner so I could answer it but you must answer this one just as soon and I hope I shall get your next one sooner I will not write any more this time but will hope to hear from you soon.

From your loving friend

Georgie M.C.

Don't forget to come back to school!

July 20, 1875 Katie to Annie Pease

Bangor July 20th, 1875

My darling Annie,

I am almost sick today. Have not had any thing to eat but gruel, and am consequently almost starved. Thank you for your nice long letter, but don't put in so many apologies for "big paper and envelope" again for the "bigger" the paper and envelope the better to me. Carrie came to see me week ago last Monday. She and I went to Bird Hill last Thursday, got 14 new varieties. I have pressed some for you of each kind. Suppose she is in Brownville now. Miss Wilson gave me a handsome Shorny Ladies Slipper. Just lovely. She sends love and says if you will come back, you may have one. It is worth coming for I think. Annie, are you going to college? Do you really mean to say you are not coming back next term? I will write you a long letter next week, but shall not have time this week. Yours lovingly, Katie

[Postcard]

To Miss Annie Pease Cornish Maine

July 28, 1875 Eliza B. E. to Annie

Bangor July 28th, 1875

Dear Friend,

I received your letter yesterday, not that it has been all this while coming, but because it took me the time to come to it, or in other words I didn't get home from my trip to Mass. until yesterday. I am very sorry you are suffering with your eyes

and I just hope your mother will make you take care of them so you can come back to school in the Fall, though I think you know what the girls are doing better than I do, for you have letters from them and I don't except Lurrie, I had a letter from her yesterday too, I suppose you know that she is at Orland having a splendid time, she writes that she has got twenty new specimens analyzed and presses have you done better than that? I have got one new one) but perhaps you would like to know what I have been doing. I left home two weeks ago and remained in Boston a week and all I did was to go around. I visited the Natural History Rooms and Museum where I saw more wonderful things than I ever did before. In the Natural History Rooms was the skeleton of a whale of an elephant, forest man and everything else I should think, many many stones and various minerals, coral, hundreds of stuffed birds and quantities of snakes and reptiles, idols, wax figures and egyptian mummies but there! what is the use for me to try to tell what I saw there and again perhaps you have been there have you? and then I went to the Public Library and Public Gardens to the Common and State house, to Dorchester Heights and Forest Hills In fact Annie I managed to spend the week very pleasantly and then we were to Methuin and Lawrence where there are so many mills and then home by the way of Portland. I enjoyed myself very, very much but was not sorry to get home again although if nothing happens I intend to go to the Salt water for a week or ten days (for my health you know and freckles.); but Annie tea is ready so I will have to stop writing for you know I always say business before pleasure, and then again I think your eyes must ache by this time. I know mine would if I had to read it, but write soon wont you

and I will answer sooner for I shall remain your old friend and schoolmate with
much love

Yours Eliza B.E.

Address

Pine St No. 131

Please excuse mistakes

P.S. If nothing happens I mean to see Lunelle this week do you think there will be
some wandering (as we used to say when we studied together) done? Oh! Annie if
you have time can find any and your mother will let you and you had just as soon
press a flower for your friend

E.B.E

July 25, 1875 Nellie to Annie

Bangor July 25th, 1875

Mon chere amie

I meant to have written to you some days ago but I have been so very busy
this week that I have not had a bit of time to spare. I went down to Northport on an
excursion Tuesday, with Aggie I had a splendid time, Miss Wilson & her sister and
Miss Daggett were there; by the way, I heard that you are talking of going either to
Welesley or Colby to school, next fall, now Annie Pease if you don't come back here

I don't know what I shall do to you. Miss Wilson seems real sorry she said she thought of course that you were coming back here and that she shall be very sorry to lose you. Now you will come wont you? I want to know all about it the next time you write.

Minnie and I went down to Winterport week before last we drove down with our own horse and carriage and staid three days we had a real nice time and found quite a number of flowers but when we went for flowers & we found the strawberries so thick that we could not help picking them and so wasted a good deal of valuable time, my cousin went out with us and Minnie told him that if he would go back to the house and get a dish we would pick some for tea but he said that he had a dish with him that he had just as [well] fill as not so we eat until I nearly made myself sick, in fact I had a head ache all the time I was gone and that is what I have had most all the and I hardly know what to do I begin to think that my brain must have been adulterated so that, although it fills my head so full that it is nearly bursting, still is not capable of much exertion, don't you think that this is logic? and I can't find any thing else that could cause it. Miss Wilson has got another kind of ladies slipper and she has promised me one, my oxalis did not press very well but I will send you a piece and you can use it or not just as you choose I would like a piece of that Pyrola ever so much and will be ever so much obliged if you will send me a piece Aggie was up here to see my Wednesday Well Annie I don't know as I can think of any thing more to write and if I can I don't think that I had better write it, this is written

so dreadfully but it is very warm today and my hand trembles and good deal, so I will close with ever so much love

Your friend,

Nellie

Please write soon for I do like to receive your letters though mine must be dreadfully stupid.

August 9, 1875 Carrie to Annie

Bangor Aug 9th 1875

My darling Annie,

I have got so worried that I don't know what to do, and I have come to the conclusion that either you are mad with me, or you have'nt [sic] got my last letter, or you would have written long ago. I wrote to you several weeks ago, when I was at my Grandma's and I have expected a letter every day since.

I did'nt [sic] stay up to Grandma's but two weeks and then Papa and Mama wrote that we were expecting company and I have to go right home! I felt terribly about it, for though I had enjoyed every minute of my visit, I had'nt [sic] staid half long enough, nor done half what I wanted to, and all the excursions were to come: we were going to Moosehead Lake and Lebec Lake and the Drou Works and then there were lots and lots of picnics and rides, and the worst of it was, that I had'nt [sic] been botanizing hardly any, and had got only about a dozen flowers and was

obliged to leave those “in press” but I had to go right home and now the “company” is here – my auntie and two cousins from Boston, whom we have’nt seen for about six years! I am having a nice time with them but I feel so tired all the time, and I have lost all the strength I got up to Grandma’s.

How many new flowers have you got this vacation? I have not got but a few; it is so hot and it makes me sick to go off anywhere, so I don’t go out as often as I ought, and so my conscience troubles me sometimes. Our vacation is almost gone isn’t it? are you coming back? Oh! Annie you must! why, just think what could we girls do without you? Katie will leave and if you do there’ll be no body left so you must be sure and come back, won’t you? only think what miserable Latin lessons we shall have without you, and everything will be perfectly horrid! I want to see you so much, my darling, pretty girl. I know just how you look, as well as if I had your picture (I wish I had it). I want you to write me one of your splendid, long letters, just as soon as you get this, for in this whole long vacation I have only had one and I have read that over and over again, and I am “homesick” for another, for they sound just like you – sweet and lovely – and as I can’t have you I want the letters, and please send Pansies if you have had time to copy it. I must stop now for my head aches, so good bye.

From your ever loving

Carrie

Write as soon as you get this, Annie, dear, won’t you? for truly I feel real worried.

August 11, 1875 Georgie Clark to Annie

Bangor Aug 11th, 1875

Dear Annie,

I received your letter last Monday night; Mother did not send it to me for she knew I was coming home Monday and that it would do very well. Annie you do not know how glad I was to hear from you. I thought you did not get my last letter. How sorry I am that your eyes trouble you so! What makes them? did you study to hard last year? I came home Monday night. I have been gone from here most 5 weeks, and I have had a splendid time. I thought I would come home before school commences for I like to be at home part of my vacation. Oh! Annie how glad I am that you are coming back here to school I keep saying to myself Well Annie is coming back. I am so glad you did not go to Wellesly, it does not seem as if I could go back to school and not see you there it is a beautiful day, warm out in the sun I was going down river on an excursion today but I did not come home from Portland soon enough. I should admire a sail very much. You asked me if that flower you call Pale Wintergreen pressed good? No, it all turned black. Annie, have you a flower you call Indian pipe, if you have not I found two only, they look just like a pipe, are perfectly white, have no leaves, are very rare, and they turn black as a crab when pressed, if you have no flower answering this description I will give you one of the two I found. do you think Annie I brought a little kitten from Portland when I came, and it is just as cunning as it can be and I think a great deal of it. I have I have

not paid much attention to Botany in the first place I cannot analyze flowers and in the second place I was going all the time and when I got any flowers I would hurry them into a book and never look at them again. Got about 73 while I was gone but I do not know the names of 114 of them and, besides they do not look well enough to put in paper We have got a pretty flower garden [sic] and I will send you two or three flowers. Perhaps you would like them Annie I do not believe you dread going back to school this fall so much as you did last and more than I. I have not seen any of the school girls for I have not been out any yet. But I may in a few days. I hope you are having a nice time as I know you are getting real fat up among the mountains so you will do until [sic] next summer Your Uncle had a hard time up there. I remember your Aunt very well. I think that is a morning that will ever find a place in my memory. Annie I will try and write you once more before you come back to us school girls and teachers. I suppose you see in the papers that Miss Hallowell has been made professor, I am so glad and the next one I want made on is Miss Wilson. I guess my letter is growing pretty long and you have a good many letters to read and so better save your eyes for some one else. I shall expect to hear from you soon.

From your loving schoolmate

Georgie Clark

August 19, 1875, Carrie to Annie

Bangor Aug. 19th 1875

My precious Annie,

I was so very glad to get your letter, I was ready to jump up and down for joy, and so glad too that you are coming back what should I do if you didn't!! We have been having lots and lots of company; they are all gone now but we are likely to have more any time. P.S. We have got more company.

I went botanizing the other day down to Judge Godfrey's and got fifteen new flowers; but I go so seldom that I don't get many, and I can't analyze [sic] hardly any. How many have you got on paper? I have got ninety four. I suppose that school will commence the first Monday in September; I suppose that you have heard about the teachers. I haven't seen Katie for a long time, but as soon as I can walk so far without getting tired to death I shall go over.

Do you hear from Georgie Clark? and where is she and is she getting many flowers? it seems queer to ask you perhaps but I don't know how else to find out.

I don't see why you should think it strange that I should want Pansies, for Pansies are my favorite flower and "Pansies" my favorite com[position] exercise. I wonder what will be the subject of our next composition; and just think, Annie, we shall have to read next year! I tremble to think of it, you, blessed darling, you will go up there and read so quick; but I can't read and Mr. Dame will say Miss Johnson! speak louder!!!

Thursday PM Four o'clock

It is Thursday afternoon, the hour for our little prayer meeting. Oh, Annie Darling, I love you so dearly and I so want you to love Jesus! just think how good he is to

overlook our sins, and if we only repent we can turn unto him and live! Oh my Annie I am so much happier now I love Jesus, and it is so sweet to have Jesus for a friend and to know that he loves and cares for you. Do you love him, Annie, are you trying to be a Christian? I have thought so, and I pray every day that you may soon be lead to Him.

Now Annie dear I hope you will not be offended at this, for I talk so because I love you so, and I want you to be so happy. Just a few months ago I found a letter in one of my books from Katie, and at first, I am sorry to say, I was thoroughly mad but I soon got over that and since I have felt very thankful for it. I hope you will answer this letter, just as soon as if I had not added this last part. I shall feel very badly, darling, if you do not. but you needn't say a word about the last, if you don't want to, for I know how I used to dread having any body talk to me, and how shy I was of talking of such things, but Annie dear, write very soon and remember how very, very glad I shall be to hear such glad news of you. You say you could be vain if you believed all I way to you, but it is all true and you are just the sweetest dearest, splendidest [sic] girl in the world so there! and I am about dieing [sic] to see you! You must let us know when you are coming back.

Now Annie if I don't hear from you by the first of next week I shall think that I have offended you and it would make me feel very badly for I would not do it for the whole world. God Bless and keep you! Your most loving

Carrie

I send you a relic of Hermon Pond.

August 22, 1875 Georgie M Clark to Annie

Bangor Aug 22nd, 1875

Dear Annie,

I sit down this afternoon to answer your letter I received last Tuesday morning. How glad I was to get it for I did not expect one so soon. You do not know how much pleasure I take in reading your letter some times I almost think I see you. Oh! Annie do you think how soon we shall meet again that is if you come back and I almost think you will. School commences the 6th of Sept. and that is two weeks from tomorrow and when you come if you come on the boat I will go down and meet you, and I would meet you at the cars if they did not get in in the evening but you write me the day you start and if it is possible I will be there to welcome you back. You ask me if I saw Miss Wilson often? No. I have not seen her this vacation, you know she went away the first of her vacation and I was gone most five weeks so I have not had any chance to see her she told me, that she intended to be gone the last of her vacation so I think she is away. I was going over to her house last week and to Miss Hallowell's to see if she was at home, so I could write you about it, but I have had one of my bad head aches for three days and that took up most of my week. I do not know what I shall do if I have those head aches when I go to school. I was over to Addie Cobb's the other night she has been up to Gifford for 5 weeks, she is looking nicely, waiting for school to commence. There is quite a change in school, I

do not know whether the other girls have written you about it or not. Miss Daggett has resigned on account of ill health and her place is supplied by a graduate from some seminary so I am told. You do not know how sorry I am for I liked Miss Daggett and I lolted so much on reciting History to her. Miss Powers remains and she has Latin, I am real glad for I like her vey [sic] much and if I recite to her I mean to get my lessons and give her vey little trouble. It is a beautiful day and I suppose you are enjoying every minute you are among the mountains for it will be some time before you see them again. But I know you are glad to come back, and this next year will not seem half so long as last year. Annie do you wand [sic] a bit of advice. Well if you do hunt up all the old pieces and prepare yourself for reading for it falls upon our class to read this next year, I do not fancy it much but it can't be helped I do not know as you will want to know what I have been doing lately but I am going to tell you for I cannot think of anything else. I have been working a rug on burlap, I do not know but what you have seen them, they are very pretty. There are excursions down river every day I have not been down this year. Camp meeting commences this week and I suppose a good many of our class will go down then. I suppose you hear from the other girls as often as you do from me. I guess I have written as much as you will want to read, and especially as it contains no news so I will close by saying write vey soon. from your ever loving school mate

Georgie M. Clark.

August 22, 1875 Eliza B. Eddy to Annie

Bangor Aug, 22nd, 1875

Dear Annie,

Your kind letter of the fifteenth was received in just the right time, when I was wishing for a letter, but I am very glad that you will not have a chance to write any more letters to Bangor for I had a great deal rather you be here, than to write, and I think I shall be all ready to go to school again for I am getting rather tired of being lazy, you think I can truly say lazy, though I am at the present time occupying the position of hostler, cook, chambermaid housekeeper beside being mistress of the house for you see last Thursday the hired girl went away for a rest, and on the same day Father, Mother, and baby went to the salt water (Eddie was already there) and left Ella and I to keep house we get along splendidly during the day time, but at night is rather lonesome for you four unprotected females, for Lurrie comes to stay with me every night and Ella has company. Lunette is at home she came last Wednesday, she went down river with me for a week but it rained nearly every day we was there and when it didn't rained [sic] it was foggy, so we had rather a wet time but we had a pretty good time, going fishing, rowing and sailing, we were on the water every day except one and then we were sick because we eat too much before going to bed. Oh! you don't know how we have falled up. We are just as full of plans as ever the one on the docket right now is a trip to Northport to tent out for three days, but it all depends whether Father gets home in time and will let me go. Oh dear I hope he will I want to go so much.

I rode down past the school house the other day they are painting it over, I suppose you have heard that Miss Daggett has resigned and that we are to have a new teacher. I have not see any the teachers since school closed and but very few of the girls. I saw May Stuart last night Have you heard that we are to have water brought into the city? but you don't know what a time they are having a digging up the streets but there I must close for and go and give the horse some dinner and get some for myself. I hope you will find some time to answer this before you come back and Annie dont hurt your eyes trying to Analyze flowers

With much love I remain your friend

Eliza Eddy

P.S. You misdirected my last letter though I got it afterward, you wrote Lime St instead of Pine, the post boy rushed up and down Lime to find an Eddy I heard about it and sent word to him where I lived, I suppose it was only a mistake.

E.B.E

don't want to study Latin next term

August 25, 1875 Carrie to Annie

Bangor Aug 25, 1875

My darling Annie,

I expected a letter from you Tuesday, and when it was about time for the Postman to come I was as anxious as could be and could'nt [sic] do anything but

wait, and when it did come, I was all of a tremble, and Annie darling, you don't know how very glad I was to get it, for I was very much afraid that I shouldn't. I am sorry that you don't love Jesus, but you will try won't you, dear? and, Annie, you mustn't say a word about my being good for it makes me ashamed, for I know how very very sinful I am. I wish I was as good, and I try, oh, so hard, but somehow I don't have very good success. Remember that Jesus says "Come unto me all ye who labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."¹¹⁵ and Annie darling, you will promise me that you will try, won't you?

School will commence the 6th of Sept. last night Judge Godfrey was going by, reading a letter – (suppose it was a love-letter?) – and I shouted at him – you know how deaf he is – and asked him when school would commence, and he said "the 6th." and then he added, smiling so sweetly "now are you satisfied?" and then went on reading his letter I, or rather Mama, caught a very ferocious looking Natural History specimen, the other day, and I guess I will send you its picture [spider drawing] There he is, life size – isn't he a beauty? and a face right on his back just as plain!

I am glad that you liked that fern, these that I got by the roots are growing splendidly, and lots and lots of new ones have come up. It must have been a great disappointment not to have your flowers named after all, and I am so sorry for you. how nice it must be to know the names of all the flowers you see; do you suppose that we shall ever be able to? how many new flowers have you got this summer? I have about eighty new ones and I am all discouraged. Now we have a week more

¹¹⁵ Mathew 11:28.

vacation I shall expect another letter, for just think, I have only three, and you have lots of mine, and so you must write to me – be sure – before you come back. I wonder if you have served the other girls as you have me, but I'll forgive you darling if you will write one more of your previous letters you don't know how I like to get them Annie.

I could write pages this afternoon if my eyes didn't ache so but I don't dare.

September 20, 1875 Aunt(?) Gertie to Annie

Boston Sept 20

My dear Annie

At this late hour of tired Monday night, I may not expect to hook up many interesting things from my ink bottle; but I would hope to write you a good letter and long also. (I love long letters) I received your kind sheet and read it with pleasure not withstanding the bad ink which I hope had been displaced for better. I was truly glad you had the opportunity of going through "The Notch," and of hearing Beecher preach, I hope you were benefitted thereby. Did you go Saturday. I could hardly tell the figures. uncle W. + James go or anyone of our people. I want you to write as soon as you get in too and tell me the rest of the story. I am glad that you are back to school and hope you will be just as happy with the new arrangements as you were last year and will have as good a record, I have no fears in this direction. I hope the two years which you are designing to give to study will be fruitful with great success and I will see my dear niece an accomplished woman, prepared to find a useful and

important place in society. Let me encourage you to aim high and attain if possible. If you should teach for a time strive to be the best if you should marry strive to make the best wife in the world and a bright ornament to society in which you move. May God bless you in your effort for an education and help you to concentrate it to His service. My interest dear Annie for you to be a christian [sic] has not lessened, and I am only waiting for you to tell me that you have given your heart to the Saviour. [sic] I pray that I may be faithful in urging you to delay no longer. You know without the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ, you cannot be saved. It would be much more consistent for you to delay your education till a more convenient season, till you were old. than to delay for a day the salvation of your never dying soul. Think of these things in their true light my dear child, and be wise for yourself. Do not be timid to speak of these things but talk and pray till you shall know the joy there is in believing in Jesus.

I do not find as much time to read my Bible as I did last winter or anything else. We have a good library belonging to the house and I see many books that I must read. I may have more time after I get a little more acquainted and the house filled crowded which we hope for have 100 to feed now. Did you get the Wellesley College I sent you

I am so sleepy so goodnight

Your aunt Gertie

October 10, 1875 Hattie B Rand to Annie

Cornish Oct 10th 1875

Dear Annie,

You wanted me to write to you very soon but I guess you have begun to think I'm not going to take any notice at all of your letters but I have excuses. Mother is not well and I have the work to do than I recite every day to Miss Gary. I am studying Physiology + Philosophy. It comes very hard for me to study this fall I have not for so long I get my lessons in the evening and keep busy most of the time.

I must tell you about Fannie Hatch. She has been sick for two months no one has seen any thing of her until last Friday she was heard screaming. She raised the window and leaned out and screamed. Mrs. Cole could not do any thing with her but Calista and Sarah Page took her in by force. Mrs. Cole¹¹⁶ said she had not eaten any thing for two days and Fannie said they were trying to poison her. The neighbors have carried her in food since and she will eat real hearty. She had three spells that day but has not had any since that I know of. They have not had a Dr. yet but Fannie wanted Sweet of Brownfield so they have sent for him It is very pitiful to think that our old teacher – one who was so kind and ready to help others – is crazy. I have heard it was hereditary in that family. Mrs. Towle starts for California tomorrow.

Liz was down on Wednesday to recite. We went in the entry and listened and found they had company and were having an examination so we went back to the carriage and had a gay ride only we liked to froze to death. My ears tingled good

¹¹⁶ The Cole's are the local Baptist pastor and his wife.

Do you like your Principal as well as you did Maiston? John Piper Maiston I mean of course. Does he stick a Latin position as gracefully as J.P. did, and does he have to lean over the table any? I suppose to suppress a pain. “His pedem” with piazzas around there.

But I’m upstairs freezing to death and will have to close this letter. You must forgive for I staid at home from Church to write soon and I wont be so long next time

With much love

Hattie

October 17, 1875, Mother to Annie

Cornish Oct 17, 1975

Dear Daughter,

We received yours of the 10 in due time, We are all up in arms worse than ever. we have got the new chambers plastered, tomorrow they are going to plaster Fannies kitchen and mine We have moved the cook stove into the sitting room and it smokes awfully we have got to keep it there untill [sic] the plastering is about dry because the heat from stove will make it crack. Every room in the house is torn to pieces except Sarahs. Everything in the house is moved out except what we want to use, we are all dirt and ashes all over the house. both flight of chamber stairs are taken down we have to go into the new part and up Fannies stair We shall have our

new buck front stairs put in as soon as soon as they are done plastering then they are going to tear the dining room to pieces. I have had a very cold time cooking we havent had any outside door since the new windows were put in and some of the windows are out now in the new part, no outside door cellar way taken away and windows out on the other side the wind had a fair rake right through Roscoe Fannie and I went down to Uncle Thompson

Your father had to stay at home to look after the workmen and Sarah had to stay and wait on them had a first rate time. (Fannie has been to the village and got some frieze for you a dress, send us back what you want and we will do the best we can for you) Be careful of your cold for it is a bad time of year to have a cold it is opt to hang on. I have cut a piece out of a paper about Uncle Thompson, to send you We got out of writing paper and didn't get it until after meeting today, and they keep talking all the time so I know hardly what I am writing Sarah is fixing your old brown dress for Nellie

Mother

[Enclosed: newspaper clipping about the hundredth birthday of William Thompson of Limington]

October 27th, 1875 Mother to Annie

Cornish Oct 27th, 1875

Dear Annie,

We received your letter last night I can't advise you what to do about your dress, we haven't much time to sew any way.

If you would rather have it from this piece here we will make it. If not you must do the best you can Sarah is making Nellie a polonaise of your old brown dress. Lena Richardson fitted it for her Your Aunt Nancy is about the same she has her ups and downs she is better than she was when aunt Mercy was here, We are all up in arms yet to day has been about as loud as any day that we have had. They are plastering the dining room to day. They took down the partition by the cellar way then they thought it would look better to take down the ceiling on the on the other side and have it plastered then it looked bad overhead so they tore that down and plastered the room all new I have put my bed in the parlour [sic] it is the only room in the house that we can shut up and where we took the closet out is only lather. There are just five doors in the house four of them opens into the front entry and the parlour doors in the dining room. Our doors have come we shall soon be hanging them up. We have cut two new doors in the sitting and lathed up the old ones we hung up a hay cup at one the other one we couldnt because we had to go through it so much. Our stove is in the sitting room now, but we are in hopes to get it out next week it dont smoke so bad as it did they fired the funnel and it does very well. We are awful dirty all the time and no where to put a thing every cupboard in the house has been moved the parlour closet we have put in the dining room. the one in the dining room in the kitchen the one in the little kitchen in the pantry so we shall have lots of room when it is done

Your Father has gone to Sleep Gully to day to get some boards for the floors. It is very cold today the girls have been washing we have to wash just when we can one week we didnt wash till Saturday. Abbie Warren has been here and staid two nights she slept with Fannie and Roscoe went into the cornchamber. I guess it is about time to go about supper I will leave a place I may want to write some more after your Father comes

Mother

Your Father says he will send you ten dollars and if that is not enough you can borrow some of your Uncle he would send more but he is a little short just now

December 12, 1875 Hattie Rand to Annie

Cornish Maine

Dec 12th 1875

My dear Friend,

I received your letter nearly three weeks ago should have answered it before but I have been nursing. Jennie King has been quite sick. She was teaching in the New Settlement in Hiram. A week ago last night she sent for me. I went, of course, and found her as I said. I have been there the most of the week. There were two nights and two days that I slept but very little, only a few hours. I got to be pretty sleepy after a while, but have about got it made up now. She is down to Mrs.

Merill's now come Friday and I have staid with her both nights since she has been there. I believe you went to school with her in Paris.¹¹⁷

I am not going to school this winter but shall study at home. Fannie Hatch has been boarding with Jennie Pike (of course you know all about her scrape). She has been up to Brownfield consulting Dr. Seveil. He says she is not crazy but I should think it would be a credit to her to be insane. Jennie Pike said she would lie on the lounge with her feet on the window + kick. There was about three days she did that Now Annie if you should do so would you not want people to think you crazy? or something worse? A week ago last Tuesday I in company with my brother and his wife Fan Lincoln + a few others went up to Lizzie Boyntons + spent the evening. It was the coldest day + night on record I think but with only a few frozen limbs we arrived there safely, spent the evening very pleasantly and got home about midnight. There is to be a singing school here this winter. Alvin Trifis teacher If I thought I ever could sing sublimely and make a name in the world I would go but as that is an impossibility I think I shall not attend. There has been a Flora Ripley here from Paris visiting Ella Ayer. Howard Brackett was very attentive. Lea + Ella + Howard are going to visit her about New Years I understand. Your dress is very pretty indeed I like those plaids very much. I have got me a cheap one Your paper was very interesting but you didn't mark any of your contributions I must close now for the want of ideas so write very soon

Yours with much love,

¹¹⁷ References to Paris refer to Paris, Maine, not France.

Hattie

January 4th, 1876 Katie to Annie

Waterville Jan 4th 1876

My darling Annie I have not received a line from you yet have I? Never mind I shall see you Sunday. Oh dear! I am tired and sick of so much company and visiting. I have been out every evening since I came excepting Monday evening and I should have been out this afternoon and evening but for the storm. I am so glad it stormed for I did not want to go one bit. Last night I was so tired that I was home sick almost. Father sent me a letter from Carrie Johnson and Ida Parson How sorry I am for Mr Houzlemood. He though so much of that little one. Yes I have decided to come home tomorrow night Now I am going to go put this in the P.O. and perhaps I shall find something there from Annie

Good Bye,

Katie

Postcard to Miss Annie Pease

Bangor

Care of H Chase Comer Garland French st. Maine

February 13, 1876 Mother to Annie

Cornish Feb 13th 1876

Dear Daughter,

We received your letter and the pattern in due time. We have been to church to day, it is very good sleighing and a very pleasant day. Your Father will send you money, Your Father has been to Vermont bought 5 head of cattle paid very high for some of them, he will write to your Uncle about them sometime. Our Grange numbers 58 some more are coming we have had two picknic suppers and had the best time I ever had we have lectures and speeches and the next evening we are to have select reading and other things to make the meetings interesting. Lewellen has been here two weeks he got out of work and is round visiting he will stay here a few weeks longer. We shall go to work on the house as soon the day are a little longer Your Aunt Nancy is quite smart she has been down to Dicks and is coming over here the first day she feels real st smart

and good sleighing Sarah and Fannie have been making over dresses all winter Sarah took her blue and black alpache and fixed it up with black Then took your old drab and fixed it with black for herself and it looks first rate. It is growing dark I shall have to stop Tell you Uncle and Aunt we shall expect a good long visit from them next summer.

Write often

Mother

September 29, 1876 Hattie to Annie

Cornish Sept 29th, 1876

Dear Annie,

About a week after I got your letter I thought I would ans. it but happened to think I would wait untill I got back from Allie Warrens. Well I staid there a week and had a splendid time and the same day I came home from there I went over to Parsonsfield to visit my aunt staid three weeks and got home last Sunday. So you see I had good intentions for I thought I would try once and ans. your letter promptly But the best of folks fail once in a while you know. I am not a Granger and guess I will not be till you come home then if we want to join we'll talk about it. While I was away Lizzie came here three times now I've got home I don't expect to see her for three months. It is a lovely day. I have been working too and am all tired out I am a fragile flower you know. Mrs. Geo Adams died very suddenly last Saturday night was buried today. Of course you've heard of the marriages. I have one of George Adams Cards They still have singing school should have gone last night but it stormed. There is a dance Thursday. There Annie I don't know anything more to write for I've been away you know. Next time I'll write a better letter or try to.

With Love

Hattie

March 15th, 1876 Mother to Annie

Cornish March 15th

Dear Annie,

We received your letter Monday. Our folks are over on the mountain getting wood and we have had no opportunity of mailing a letter. Sarah and I are going to the village this afternoon, it is very bad traveling the snow is most gone. We should have sent you some money before vacation, but your Father has yet to make out some money for Mr Foster so he wont be able to send but a little now, and when you need more send us, and how much you want. We shall look for your gloves to day and if we dont find any you will have to get them yourself.

Roscoe & Fannie are not keeping house nor wont be for some time There is no part of the house that is finished, the men will come next week or week after Roscoe and Fannie have been sick with colds and sore throat they were pretty sick for a while but they are both out now We had a letter from your Aunt Cal she is going to the centennial We haven't heard from Daniel

Roscoe, lately Dr, Swary told your Father some time ago that Carrie had had the lung fever and he thought one spell she would not live but she was better and he thought she would get over it. I can't stop to write any more for I have got some work to do at the barn and go to the village

Mother

If I get the gloves I will send them tomorrow if not I will send some money as soon as I can.

March 17, 1876 Mother to Annie

Dear Annie,

We looked for those gloves yesterday. We looked first at NG Obrion they had a very few pairs at one dollar a pair none of the number you wear Jameson dont keep gloves Woodbig had quite an assortment The black ones a dollar and the colored ones a dollar and a quarter D W had some at one dollar and half the number you wear but they hard and not very clartic. I don't think you will like any of them so I will [send] you what money I have and you can buy what you like. Mother Dick has got an engine and is round sawing the neighbors wood by steam.

*American Farmers' Centennial Cornish Grange letter head, April 16, 1876, JM
Pease to Annie*

Cornish, York County, Maine,

April 16, 1876

Dear Sister Annie,

I have not thought of anything very funny about the Centennial and I guess that Other J.M. Pease has not I have not heard from him any Way. You Need not worry about the grangers they don't meet only once a fortnight now I think as likely as not I shall be a Granger When you get home. Father told me to tell you that he and mother are going to the Centennial don't you wish you Was a granger so you could go. We have not begun on the house yet. expect get it all finished up and painted

before you get home. Mother Wrote last Sunday I went off Monday morning and forgot it so Mother gave it to Mr. George bean to mail and we suspect it is in his coat pocket now. You have not received it I suppose if you had you would not make such a fuss about nothing and grangers. It is the most horrid traveling you ever saw.
Yours Once little J.M. Pease

On the back of above Mother to Annie

Dear Annie,

I send you ten dollars and your father will send more as soon as he can possibly get it money is a little sparse just now but you shall some very soon, We are all provoked because the carpenters don't come. We all well except Nellie she has been above half sick for a few days, We are counting the weeks you have got to stay at Bangor. Your Father is ready to go to the village so I must stop

Mother

June 18, 1876 Evy Nasan to Annie

Hiram June 18, 1876

Dear Friend Annie

I received your letter and was very glad to hear from you. I am up to my Aunts now she lives up to Freedom . I am having a nice time I tell you. I went a gumming yesterday and I Shabberging. And I have all of the maple sugar I want and Syrup to I tell you it is splendid. I am going to stay a fortnight. I heard that you and Emmy

and Ellie was up to Mary Smiths the other day, but you couldn't come and see me I felt real Shilted. never mind I am cumming [sic] to see you this summer if nothing happens. O Annie you dont [k]now how I want to see you and all of the others that went up near to school. I miss you all very much. give my love to all of them and tell them to write to me. you dont [k]now how lonesome I was after school closed I went home that night. you wanted to [k]no[w] if I went to school this summer. I do not. I have not seen Mary Norton since school closed have you. I want you to be sure and come up this summer and see me if you dont I shall be mad. I have not seen Mr. Hawks since school closed nor Ellen Stanley. I have seen Dora Fat and Isa Parker and Cally Stacey and Marcia Ridlon. it rains very hard hear to day. I am getting up a quilt only with only too kinds Calico and gingham will you please send me some and if you are getting up one I will send you some mine are half squares. I should like to see our hawks very much. I should like to be down their with you to day we would have a nice time. I never shall forget that night we parted on them Ships how bad we felt. if Mr. Hawks kept another school over to the falls I think I should go dont you Annie. do you clean your teeth 3 times a day Annie. and eat raw meat and Eggs. I dont. I havent seen Mr. Chet Nileam since that night of writing school. but I guess that haint spelt right but if it dont dont let any one sea it I guess I must do now draw to a close by asking you to write soon and bidding you good bye I remian your trew friend Evy Nasan

Please excuse this poor writing and bad Spelling. I guess I shall I have to let you put the periods and commas in the right place. but I never new any thing about

putting periods or commas in a letter till I went to Mr. Hawks school one teachers never told us any thing About it so good bye I am ashamed to send this letter it looks so.

Evy Nasan

Freedom Newhampsher

June 15, 1876 Father to Annie

Cornish June 15, 1876

Dear Annie,

You can come to Cornish in a day by the cars but you must stop at the B. +M. transport station when you get to Portland and get and get on the P. +C. cars and get your ticket at station to Baldwin and I will meet you at the depot Better come on Saturday Mark your Trunk "Baldwin Station by the S+C. R.R." have it checked to Baldwin if you can Recollect when you get to Portland that you stop at the Boston and Maine transfer station write when you will come find \$10.00 inclosed the conductor will name the station when they stop the same as he does others you had better leave your book and also all your straps that you can, you will go back for another year of course.

Father

P.S. Your Mother says she think you had not better not come home this vacation and save to experience

Father

June 29, 1876 Hooper Chase to Brother Frank

Hampton Nh June 29th, 1876

Brother Frank,

We have been stopping here one Week start for home tomorrow Providence permitting We have had a very fine time here some cheaper than in NY at the St Nicholas \$12.60 for one day \$3.00 buck pair 75 cents Portuguese is call \$16.35 here \$20.00 per week I saw your Grange Building 2 miles from the Centennial ground. the signers on the Door says One Dollar for Lodging two persons must occupy the same Bed and 50 cents for each meal no Dead Heads allowed here it is thought that they will not be crowded much for people can live as cheap as that any Where as this place is 8 miles out from Philla it is thought the crowd will fall in Debt Centennial and all And still no one may think of going out without a good pile of money after we get home and next we are thinking of taking a trip to Cornish if we are able.

Yours Truly Hooper Chase

June 29, 1876 M.P. Chase to Niece

Hampton June 29th 1876

My dear Niece,

We now anticipate leaving here tomorrow morning on the through train to Boston to Bangor our place of destination. We shall then have been here one week, a nice enjoyable place for rest and recuperation. We stop at the Union house, a very good Hotel, few rods from the depot and about 2 ½ miles from the celebrated Hampton Beach N.H. and two miles from the house to which General Washington was not only invited but did actually stay all night. Our Landlord to day took your Uncle in to see it. I hope you are well and safely landed at home happy as a kitten Love and good wishes to your self and all the dear ones Were in Camden just one week went to the Centennial only three times will tell some thing about it when I see you Had I felt as well as I do now I could have seen and enjoyed a great deal more. your Aunt C. appeared to enjoy herself but was very tired.

Your Uncle is going to write your father so good bye

Yours in love

M.P. Chase

July 2, 1876 Agnes to Annie

Bangor July 2nd, '76.

My Dear Annie,

I really do not remember whether I promised to write first or not but I think not. I suppose of course that you got home safely at least I have not seen your name noticed in the paper. Among the first things I must tell you about yesterday. Just

after dinner Nellie came to invite me to go to Osono with her it is quite unnecessary to say that I accepted the invitation. It did not rain and we had the most lovely drive out there for the sun was not hot enough to make it uncomfortable. we got there about half past four. went up to the big farm for an hour. before reaching it I remarked that it was not half as large as I expected but after I went in I concluded not to repeat that. I don't wonder that you thought it a lovely view. But the big barn is nothing in comparison with the college buildings which you did not see. Miss Allen went with us and visited all the principle scenes among the most interesting were the Natural History and where they had the mineral specimens. Miss Allen said the Natural History scene was where Miss Wilson always went so we tried to follow in her footsteps as nearly as possible which, by the way was not very near as my feet are much longer than hers. Besides these things we were introduced to two students one of whom was a senior and what is more he helped us into the carriage. Just think a seniors hands touched me. but his breath did not.

Coming home we found the loveliest flower and Miss Wilson said it was quite rare. so now you cant turn round in school and say in a hateful way "I went to the tip top of the new barn and you did not." I have not been to church to day but have staid at home and packed my throat. the wind blowing through the carriage last night together with the dampness caused those bunches to expand until I can't turn my head at all. The other day I was told that Mr. Dame is not coming back. I knew it was too good to be true but thought I would find out, so Friday I went round to Miss Wilson's and said in the coolest manner I could. Do you know who we are to have

in Mr. Dame's place. But she knew nothing about so I did not surprise [sic] her into any confession as I had hoped to. But she surprised [sic] me into a confession. She began by asking how I like Miss Hillbrook and how much the Cates girls thought of her. by degrees she went on until she asked me why I did not go that day at first I gave the old reason but that was to thin she said I never was so industrious before and she knew that some thing was back the next morning from my manner. so finally after making her promise never never never to tell and not to laugh I told her. she does not blame any I did just as she would have done but in fact don't mind me much but wonders what my father + mother think of her after all their kindness to her. what that kindness is I can't divine unless it is sending me to school to her. However it is all right on both sides now.

I have not been any where it was so warm and so have not seen any one hardly. I miss Eliza ever so much when I go over there wonder when she is coming home. I am going down river on Thursday on an excursion wish you were going too. You ought to be here the Fourth they are going to have a great time. Mr. Wilson wants to know if I shan't go down to the city that day. But Annie I never thought how I am tiring you, but there is a consolation, you need not read any more than you wish at one time but like salts frequently in small portions, but fortunately for you I have some callers not "widowere" though so

Goodnight

Agnes

July 2, 1876 Nellie to Annie

Bangor July 2nd, 1876

My Dear Friend Annie

I thought that today I would try to fulfill my promise to you, but I warn you before hand that it will all be silly trash for I don't know enough to write a real solid, nice letter, as you are very well aware. You ought to have gone over to the Grammar School exhibition, we had a real nice time. We sat with Miss Wilson and Miss Philbrook. Miss P. and I sat on the window seat. Miss W had on her new suit it is grey trimmed with silk a good deal like Aggie's, and what do you think she did right there in the crowd? she sat & measured the width of the silk folds on her dress with those on Aggie's, she got all the people around us to laughing, she kept telling us funny stories. O Annie! I heard that Mr. Dame is not going to keep our school anymore of course I was delighted and immediately told Aggie of it, she wanted to be sure of the matter so she went to see Miss Wilson and asked her if it was so, and (now let your hopes fall, for fall they must) she said that she had heard anything about it and that Mr. Dame did not know of it, but had been around trying to make arrangements so that his salary will not be cut-down and now he has gone to the Centennial. now don't you think it mean I do if you don't but "Such is life" and I suppose that I shall get over the disappointment. Talking of Mr. D makes me think of Agnes' pretty speech in the library of Mr. Giddings house, I suppose that you remember it, if not please think it up for you must throw it at Aggie a few times

more, she told me another day not to come near her again till I forget it but I did not mind her. Aggie was telling me a story about Mr. D the other day. Miss W. told her, “here goes.” The night of the graduation Miss W. + Miss P. were standing together just before going home and Mr. D asked them if he might have the pleasure of seeing them home they told him they guessed not, but he said, “Hadn’t I better see you home?” and received the same answer as before. he persisted and Miss Wilson told him that they had friends in the hall, who were going home with her; so they went out and met their friends, but as good (?) luck would have it they met Mr. D just as they passed onto the sidewalk, and he insisted on going home with her – Miss Wilson – for the rest left her Miss P. and Miss Hallowell going ahead and her sister and Miss Belle Allen behind so she had to walk all the way home with him alone, I asked Aggie if she said any thing about catching his breath with her mouth. I would not have let him go with me if I had been her, she didn’t want him and why should she let him, as for the protection I would as soon have a child two years old. There I guess that I had better not say anything more about him. I went to a strawberry festival Friday evening, and was introduced to Mr. Hoffman the elocutionist and Miss Powers reported Fiancée, but I guess that he is no more engaged to her than he is to me. he is real nice and just as funny as can be he sat at the table with us and kept us laughing all the time. Father told him that I am a Methodist because Aggie is, (in fun you know) but I wonder if I am a Baptist because you are but I forgot you are no Baptist, but never mind it is all the same. But now I guess that I have go to Saturday or yesterday and then I went on another trip to Onono it was a lovely day

(different from that other day when we went) Aggie went with us and we took a lunch to eat on the way home so we were coming down the Stillwater way and it is woods nearly all the way. We started earlier this time and went out very slowly we went up in the barn and then Miss Allen went over to the college with us, of course it was all right as she went with us. We went into the room where they draw, the engineering room laboratory [sic] which is splendid, the Natural History room where there are a good many birds, animals butterflies, bugs and such, Library, the room where they keep the Philosophy instruments and the room of geologic specimens, and some others that I have forgotten the names of, then we started for home we got over nigh the woods and ate lunch and had a good deal of fun over it. we drove along pretty fast most of the way, but we kept getting out to pick flowers. we found some that we knew were Orchids and different from any that we had seen so we gathered quite a large bunch and stopped at Miss Wilson's and asked her what it was, she said that it was grass pink and very rare so we gave about half of them and started for home we had two or three more stops to make before we got home but it was bright moonlight and we enjoyed it ever so much, but I kept wishing that you were with us, and it had been as pleasant the day we went, but perhaps we shall have another chance to go and then we will hope that the weather will be more obliging. I have seen very few of the school girls this week though I have been out a good deal, but the week has passed very quickly and I begin to have some hopes that the vacation wont seem to be so very long. I have not asked how you got home but I hope safely and in good health write and tell me all about your journey.

There I guess you will be discouraged about ever getting through disciphering [sic] my hieroglyphics, and besides I have just been looking over your last letter of last summers vacation & you thought that one sheet scarcely full was as much as I would care to read so thinking that you judge others by yourself I ought not to send the whole of this letter but I guess next shall not be more than half a page if you desire it so but please remember that I like long letters especially nice interesting ones like yours, so please write soon for I shall wait impatiently to hear from you; and now,

Good by my dear friend

From your schoolmate

Nellie

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