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Title: Letters from Charles Collins to Harriet Collins (Jul. - Aug. 1853)

Date: July - August 1853

Location: I-EwigC-1990-1

Contact:

Archives & Special Collections
Waidner-Spahr Library
Dickinson College
P.O. Box 1773
Carlisle, PA 17013

717-245-1399

archives@dickinson.edu

Berwick July 24 1853.

My Dear Wife, I cannot permit
the day to pass without enjoying
the best substitute for your usual
Sabbath Company that the case
permits. I will think about you
& talk at you, trusting the post
to bear the message. I wish in-
deed that you were here. Among
then old friends & the scenes of
your Childhood you could hard-
ly fail to be happy. Yesterday
as I rode in the Stage by Boies
Creek, I was on the look out to
see if I could recognise the
home & surrounding scenery of
your Childhood. Bowman's Mill &
John Bowman's house, & the Creek
were all there just, I suppose
as when you saw them last.
Mr Jno Bowman tells me that
the house where you lived is
about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile farther up
the Creek. Of course I failed
to see it. The country all along

is very beautiful - hill, valley
mountain & river - just that
delightful combination which
always produces charming
pictorial effects.

As you had not the privilege
of accompanying me in person
I will endeavor to take you ideally
through my trip, up to this point.
From C. to Harrisburg nothing
in particular except conver-
sation with Mr. Cornman, one of the
editors (of the Democrat) of C. on
the Maine Law. From him I learned
that the two parties will proba-
bly put one Temperance man on
each of their tickets. If this is done
we shall probably be able to elect
both the temperance men. But
you will not take so much in-
terest in these things, as father
this, therefore you may give to
him. - At 10 o'clock, started
in the Western train - I forgot to
say that I went up town & saw

on Rev Alfred Cookman the sta-
tioned preacher & dined with him
making the acquaintance of
a fine lady in his wife - & went
up to "the junction", 18 miles up
the river where the Juniata
comes into the Susquehanna &
where the Canal begins. There
we took packet for Northham-
bura - distance about 42 ms.
The packet not so nice as the
James River Packets. Travel
very pleasant - few passengers
- charming landscapes - a
Mr McCray, wife & son on board
with whom I made a very pleas-
ant acquaintance. But when it
came to the sleeping - horrors!
such dirty sheets & beds. They
were about as old as the boat &
scores of Irish Canal laborers
I should think had slept on them
since they had seen the wash-
tub. Of course I lay down in
all my clothes - thinking of

contagium, Small Pox &c. At
about 10 o'clock at night we reached
Northumberland. Got a few hours
sleep at the "Washington Hotel" &
a good breakfast. Thence in
stage 14 miles to Danville where
bro Lawrence lives. Did not see him.
Here my friends, Mr & Mrs Gray left
me. Thence on to Bloomington
Catawissa, Gonyton, Lime
Ridge &c to Berwick - beauti-
ful country - fertile - fine
prospect of crops - had copious
rares - corn looks very good
- a wonderful contrast as
compared with Carlisle.

Well, here I am with old
bro Jesse Bowman - in his parlor
chamber with every thing nice
& comfortable about me. They
would all have been so glad
if you had come with me. Mrs
Young & her husband (Sarah Bowman)
with their 4 children have
been here to dine to day. Mrs
Y. had many inquiries to make
respecting you & your mother

— referred to your school (days) when she & her sister Mrs Hirst & yourself all attended the same school. I told her it struck me as rather singular that three little girls in the same little County School should all get Methodist preachers for husbands. Mr Young is a Supernumerary preacher — not traveled for 9 or 10 yrs & is now in very poor health. They have an interesting family of children, 1 son & 3 daughters. Shadrach B. will take me in private conveyance tomorrow up to Wilkesbarre where I shall spend the night. Caleb Boman, his brother lives at W. Wesley is at home — he & his wife have been here to day.

Mr Burnham from Manchester sent me a despatch last night to inquire if I would be in W. Monday night, from 5 o'clock &

infer that he will meet me
there. Wish thy note could reach
you in time. I should ask you
to send me a despatch at that
place to let me know of your
wellfare. If opportunity
serves you may expect to
hear from ~~you~~ me at that place.
I preached here, to day, for bro
Carnes one of the Circuit preachers
as I expect to preach again
at night tomorrow morning
Start on W.

Now my dear Harriet, be of
good heart during my absence.
I feel very sorry to be separa-
ted from you so long just at this
critical time with you. I trust
though that all will be well.
To the care of our Heavenly Fa-
ther whose care is worth more
than that of all husbands, aunts
or friends, I commend you
with confidence that he will
bring us together again in

safety. I hope the children
will all behave well so as to
give you little trouble. I
would suggest as a means of in-
fluencing them that you keep
a sort of register or diary dur-
ing my absence in which
note down every act of gross
disobedience or misconduct
for me to see when I come home.
explain it all to them before
hand, & perhaps read it to them
every night so as to remind them
of what they are doing. If they
are good I shall remember
them & love them. If naughty
I shall be much displeas'd.
Tell Narcissa, Mary & Charley
this especially. I am think-
ing about you all very much.
My plan will be to get away
from Camp on Monday. Perhaps
I shall conclude not to go to Mid-
dletown. If I go I shall try to get
there by Tuesday. If any thing

Should happen send me a des-
patch to Middletown to the care
of "Prof John Johnston" - also to Port
Land. If I go on to C. direct from
Camp. very likely I shall get
back as far as N. Y. by the
following Sunday & to Carlisle
by Wednes. or Thurs. An ans. to
this by return mail might
reach me at Conference
which is at Brooklyn, Susque-
hanna Co. Pa. I am anxious
to hear from you if it is
only a word.

God bless you my dear

Affec^t Yrs C. Collins

Ms Dr. Collins

Carlisle

Pa.



Berwick July 24 /53

My Dear Wife,

I cannot permit the day to pass without enjoying the best substitute for your usual Sabbath company that the [call?] permits. I will think about you and talk at you, trusting the post to bear the message. I wish indeed that you were here. Among these old friends, and the scenes of your childhood you could hardly fail to be happy. Yesterday as I rode in the stage by [Brias?] Creek, I was on the look out to see if I could recognize the home & surrounding scenery of your childhood. Bowmans Mill & John Bowmans house, the Creek were all there just, I suppose as when you saw them last. Mr. Joseph Bowman tells me that the house where you lived is about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile farther up the creek. Of course I failed to see it. The country all along

[page break]

is very beautiful – hill, valley mountain & vale just that delightful combination which always produces charming pictorial effect.

As you had not the privilege of accompanying me in person, I will endeavor to take you ideally through my trip, up to this point. From C. to Harrisburg nothing in particular except conversation with Mr. Cornman, one of the editors (of the Democrat) of C. in the Maine Law. From him I learned that the two parties will probably put one temperance man on each of their tickets. If this is done we shall probably be able to elect both the temperance men. But you will not take so much interest in these things as father. This therefore you may give to him. – At 10' before 1 o'clock, started in the Western train – I forgot to say that I went uptown and called

[page break]

on Rev Alfred Cookman the [stationed?] preacher & dined with him making the acquaintance of a fine lady in his wife - & went up to "the junction," 18 miles up at the river where the Juniata comes with the Susquehanna & where the [Canal?] begins. There we took packet for [Northumberland?] – distance about 42 miles. The packet not so nice as the James River Packets. Travel very pleasant – few happenings – charming landscapes – a Mr. McElroy, wife and son on board with whom I made a very pleasant acquaintance. But when it came to the sleeping – horrors! Such dirty sheets and beds. They were about as old as the boat & scores of Irish canal laborers I should think had slept in them since they had seen the wash tub. Of course I lay down in all my clothes – thinking of

[page break]

contagion, Small Pox etc. At about 1 o'clock at night we reached [Northumberland?]. Got a few hours sleep at the "Washington Hotel" & a good breakfast. Thence in stage 14 miles to Danville where bro Lawrence lives. Did not see him. Here my friends McElroy left me. Thence on to Bloomsburg Catawissa, [illegible] town, Lewis Ridge etc. to Berwick – beautiful country – fertile – fine prospect of crops – had copious views – corn looks very good – a wonderful contrast as compared with Carlisle.

Well, here I am with old mister Bowman – in his parlor chamber with every thing nice & comfortable about me. They would all have been so glad if you had come with me. Mrs. Young & her husband (Sarah Bowman) with their 4 children have been here to dine to day. Mrs. Y. had many inquires to make us [illegible] you & your mother

[page break]

– referred to your school days, when she and her sister Mrs. Hirst & yourself all at tended the same school. I told her it struck me as rather singular that three little girls in same little county school should all get Methodist preachers for husbands. Mr Young is a superannuated preacher – not traveled for 9 or 10 years & is now in very poor health. They have an interesting family of Children, 1 son & 3 daughters. Shadrack B. will take me in private conveyance tomorrow up to Wilkes-barre where I shall spend the night. Caleb Bowman, his brother live, at W. Wesley is at home – he and his wife have been here today.

Mr. Burnham from Mauch Chunk sent me a dispatch last night to inquire if I would be in W. Monday night, from which I

[page break]

infer that he will meet me there. Wish this note could reach you in time. I should ask you to send me a dispatch at that place to let me know of your welfare. If opportunity allows me you may expect to hear from me at that place. I preached here, to day, for two [carnes?] one of the Circuit preachers & expect to preach again at night – tomorrow morning start for W.

Now my dear Harriet, be in good heart during my absence I feel very sorry to be separate from you to long just at this critical time with you. I trust though that all will be well. To the care of our Heavenly Father whose care is worth more than that of all husbands [illegible] friends I command you with confidence that he will bring us together again in

[page break]

safety. I hope the children will all behave well to as to give you little trouble. I would suggest as a means of influencing them that you keep a sort of register or diary during my absence in which note down every act of gross disobedience or hinderance for me to see when I come home. Explain it all to them before hand, & perhaps read it to them every night to as to remind them of what they are doing. If they are good I shall remember them & love them. If naughty I shall be much displeased. Tell Narcissa, Mary & Charles this specially. I am thinking about you all very much.

My plan will be to get away from Conf. on Monday. Perhaps I shall conclude not to go to Middletown. If I go I shall try to get there by Tuesday. If any thing

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should happen send me a dispatch to Middletown to the care of "Prof. John Johnston" – also to [Portland?]. If I go on to P. direct from Conf. very likely I shall get back as far as N.Y. by the following Sunday & to Carlisle by Wednesday or Thurs. An ans. to this by return mail might reach me at Conference which is at Brooklyn, Susquehanna Co, Pa. I am anxious to hear from you if it is only a word.

God bless you my dear
Affec yours C. Collins

Wilkesbarre July 25

My dear wife

I wrote to you from Berwick. You will get it tomorrow. I am here in my chamber at the Phoenix Hotel 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ o'clock, but cannot go to bed without a short talk with you. Bro Bowman sent me on by one of his sons, Shadrach, who is a fine young man - a preacher who will be a student at Carlisle next Sept. We had a delightful ride. Soon after my arrival Mr Burnham & his little son Prof John S. Hart & Isaac Jackson & wife drove up to my hotel! Quite a family meeting. Don't you wish

you were here too? John is going on with Mr B. & Carburdale tomorrow. As I have plenty of time & it is so near I have concluded to run up there also. I can do this & still get to Camp. by Wednesday. It is John's plan to return here Wednesday P. M. - take packet for down river Thursday Morning & be in Carlisle by the 4 o'clock train on Friday P. M. Perhaps he will stay over Sunday.

I have made Sunday calls - on Dr Peck - Judge Bennett, Mr Cyldenstead & over the river to visit the Seminary & make the acquaintance of Bro Nelson the Principal - have made the acquaintance also of Col. Hendrick B. Wright

who told me that he is
a graduate of Dickinson
College.

The country up this
way looks very beauti-
ful - plentiful rains
- a fine shower this af-
ternoon. I thought of Car-
lisle & our poor burnt up gar-
den. Perhaps however the
gracious showers have
extended to you.

But good night. Peaceful
sleep & happy dreams be yours.
Would that I could be with
you. I pray that God may
bless & keep you & give the con-
solation of his grace. I think
a great deal of you & the
children

Yr affectionate
husband C. Collins

Wilkes-Barre July 25

My Dear Wife,

I wrote to you from Berwick. You will get it tomorrow. I am here in my chambers at the Phenix Hotel 10 ½ o'clock, but cannot go to bed without a short talk with you. Bro Bowman sent me on by one of his sons, Shadrach, who is a fine young man - a preacher who will be a student at Carlisle next Sept. We had a delightful ride. Soon after my arrival Mr. Bernham & his little son Prof John S. Hart & Isaac Jackson & wife drove up to my hotel! Quite a family meeting. Don't you wish

[page break]

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I have made sundry calls - on Dr. Peck - judge Bennett, Mr. Gildersleeve & over this river to visit the Seminary & make the acquaintance of Bro Nelson the Principal - have made the acquaintance also of Col. Hendrick B. Wright

[page break]

who told me that he is a graduate of Dickinson College.

The country up this way looks very beautiful - plentiful rains - a fine shower this afternoon. I thought of Carlisle & our poor burnt up garden. Perhaps however the gracious showers have extended to you.

But good night. Peaceful sleep & happy dreams be yours. Would that I could be with you. I pray that God may bless & keep you & give the consolations of his grace. I think a great deal of you & the children.

Yr affectionate
husband C. Collins

Brooklyn July 28/53.

My dear Wife, Here I am at last. Reached B. yesterday about 1 o'clock P.M. at the beginning of a powerful rain which continued nearly all the afternoon very much à la Virginia. To day is pleasant. This is a very hilly Country - very productive - very beautiful. Brooklyn is a small Country village, about twice the size of Cedarville! A small place to accommodate a Conference of about 70 preachers. But the reason assigned for bringing the Conf. here is a very good one, viz "that the Conf. can be better accommodated now than hereafter when it has become more numerous."

I am very pleasantly located at the house of Bro. Ashley who has a nice house & things very convenient around him. It is very good fortune also to be

here with the Bishop (Waugh) & Rev. R. Nelson, the worthy Principal of the Seminary at Kingston & a Rev. Mr. Clark. To day I attended & was introduced to the Conf. In numbers it is about the size of the Holston Conf. My business, I hope to finish this week so as to get off on Monday - if possible I shall be glad to get off on Saturday. There is nothing especially attractive here. I want to do up my work & be off. I shall get accip to the Educational Com. to night & whatever is done by them can probably be got through the Conf. on Friday or Sat.

In my letter from Carderdale I did not mention that Dr. Robert A. Peary has written to Rowena twice from Sacramento! Rowena told me she wrote him back that "He had not the least recollection of her in the world!" Cold comfort that

for an ardent lover! How
cruel not to remember him, And
then, more cruel, to tell him so.
She was so much of a child when
she left Va that she retains but
little interest in affairs there.

Friday morning. My letter
was left last night unfinished
but I must mail it this morn-
ing. Nothing new. Still in
good health. Wish I could
hear from you & be assured
that all is well. I am get-
ting quite impatient
here - wish to be off. Bro
Slicer came last night
to attend to his Metropol-
itan Church business

Shall I hear from you
at Middletown? Peace
be with you love. God bless
you.

Yrs truly C. Collins

Brooklyn
Aug 5



Mrs Dr Collins
Carlisle
Pa.

Brooklyn July 28/53.

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Here I am at last. Reached B. yesterday about 1 o'clock P.M. at the beginning of a powerful rain which continued nearly all the afternoon very much a la Virginia. To day is pleasant. This is a very hilly country – very productive – very beautiful. Brooklyn is a small country village, about twice the size of Cedarville! A small place to accommodate a Conference of about 70 preachers. But the reason assigned for bringing the Conf. here is a very good one, viz. “that the Conf. can be better accommodated now than hereafter when it has become more numerous.”

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[page break]

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Friday Morning. My letter was left last night unfinished but I must mail in this morning. Nothing new. Still in good health. Wish I could hear from you & be assured that all is well. I am getting quite impatient here – wish to be off. Bro Slicer came last night to attend to his Metropolitan Church business.

Shall I hear from you at Middletown? Peace be with you love. God bless you.

Yr truly C. Collins

Brooklyn July 31/53

My Dear Wife

It is time to go to bed & I am tired, but I shall sleep better if I write a few lines first to you.

To day has been a great day in B. At 8 o'clock this morning, a sermon by Dr Geo Peck on the occasion of the death of two members during the year. I had never heard the Dr before & I must say that it was a feast of fat things - I enjoyed it much. At 10 o'clock, meeting was held in a grove - sermon by Bro Slicer after which the ordination of the deacons. In the P.M. at 2 o'clock it was put on me to preach

after which the ordination of
the Elders. God blest me with
a good degree of liberty. To
night preaching in the Church
by Rev Silas Comfort of the One
da Conf.

Contrary to expectation
when I first came, I have
enjoyed myself very much.
There has been an extraordi-
nary stir among the people
& the preaching has been
attended with great power. On
Friday night there were
more than 20 conversing &
when I left the Church to night
mourners were coming for-
wards in crowds. The people
of B. will long remember this
Conf.

Yesterday, I secured
in Conference the object for

which I came. The Wyoming
Conf. has wheeled into the ranks
& made itself one of the patron-
izing Conferences of Beckin-
sion Col. They have treated
me very handsomely & of course
I am bound to think highly
of them. In appreciating me
they have shown their good sense!

Last night I had the pleas-
ure of hearing Dr Durbin in
a Preliminary Speech. As I
had never heard him, this
of course was a great grati-
fication. It was a happy, bril-
liant Speech. I now see the
secret of the Dr's reputation
& power.

Tomorrow morning I ex-
pect to start for N. Y. in Com-
pany with Dr D. Bro Slices &
others. My plan now is for

Middletown where I hope
to hear from you. I think
a great deal about you &
am impatient to turn my
face homeward. Be of good
cheer & the blessing of God
be with you. Love to the
children - Good night

Affectionately
Wm C. Collins

Brooklyn July 31/53

My Dear Wife

It is time to go to bed & I am tired, but I shall sleep better if I write a few lines first to you.

To day has been a great day in B. At 8 o'clock this morning, a sermon by Dr. Geo Peck on the occasion of the death of two members during the year. I had never heard the Dr. before & I must say that it was a feast of fat things – I enjoyed it much. At 10 o'clock, meeting was held in a grove – sermon by Bro Slicer after which the ordination of the deacons. In the P.M. at 2 o'clock it was put on me to preach

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after which the ordination of the Elders. God blest me with a good degree of liberty. To night preaching in the Church by Rev Silas Comfort of the Oneida Conf.

Contrary to expectation when I first came, I have enjoyed myself very much. There has been an extraordinary stir among the people & the preaching has been attended with great power. On Friday night there were more than 20 conversions & when I left the church to night mourners were coming forwards in crowds. The people of B. will long remeber this Conf.

Yesterday I secured in Conference the object for

[page break]

which I came. The Wyomissing Conf. has wheeled into the ranking & made itself one of the patronizing Conferences of Dickinson Col. They have treated me very handsomely & of course I am bound to think highly of them. In appreciating me they have thrown their good sense!

Last night I had the pleasure of hearing Dr Durbin in a missionary speech. As I had never heard him, this of course was a great gratification. It was a happy, brilliant speech. I now see the secret of the Dr's reputation & power.

Tomorrow morning I expect to start for N.Y. in company with Dr. D. bro Slicer & others. My plan now is for

[page break]

Middletown where I hope to hear from you. I think a great deal about you & am impatient to turn my face heavenward. Be of good cheer & the blessing of God be with you. Love to the children. Good night

Affectionately

Yr. C. Collins

Portland Aug 5/53

My Dear Wife

From Brooklyn on Monday to Great Bend, from G. B. to N. York 200. miles on the N. Y. & Erie with lightning speed - from N. Y. to Middletown by 10 o'clock P.M. Tuesday. Heard Prof. Haven of Michigan University address the "Eclectics" at night - staid with Dr. True - Wednesday morning, joined the procession & attended Commencement. No speeches except from graduates & these were not of a high order of merit & exceedingly dull. But one superior performance & that the valedictory. Mr. Dickinson's Commencement was decidedly superior both in the merit of composition & eloquence of delivery.

Middletown is a lovely place. No spot in the world combines so many things to please the taste - such landscape beauties & such intermingling of works of art. I wish we could transplant it to Carlisle. I was delighted to see many old friends. President Smith had a levee at night but "the King's business"

You know, "requiring haste". At 6^{1/2} took
Cars for Boston & arrived about 10 o'clock
Thursday Morning - got a few hours
of sleep & at 7 was off for Portland -
arrived in time for dinner. And
here I am - the family all well.
Your letter of July 31st was duly got
yesterday - thank you. It gave me
much relief - glad to hear that John
fulfilled his purpose of visiting you
& that you enjoyed it so much.

I now have Friday, Sat. & Sunday to
spend here. To-day will be sufficient for
my business - tomorrow, visiting - Sun-
day, preaching & Monday, for home.
Excuse my brevity - take the principal
facts - the comments & filling
up when I get home. I love you very
dear - want to see you very much -
shall probably make no stop except
a day in N. Y. to see the Crystal
Palace & be at home by Wednesday -
Thursday.

Yrs as ever C. Colting



Miss [unclear]
Mrs Dr Collins
Carlisle
Pa

Portland Aug 5/53

My Dear Wife

From Brooklyn on Monday to Great Bend, from G.B. to N. York 200 miles on the N.Y. & Erie with lightning speed – from N.Y. to Middletown by 10 o'clock P.M. Tuesday. Heard Prof. [Harris?] of Michigan University address the "Eclectics" at night – staid with Dr True – Wednesday morning, joined the procession & attended Commencement. No speeches except from graduates & these were not of a high order of merit & exceedingly dull. But one superior performance & that the valedictorians. Our Dickinson Commencement was decidedly superior both in the merit of Competence & eloquence of delivery.

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you know "requires haste." At 6 1/2 took cars for Boston & arrived about 1 o'clock Thursday morning – got a few hours of sleep & at 7 was off for Portland – arrival in time for dinner. And here I am - the family all well. Your letter of July 31st was duly got yesterday – thank you. It gave me much relief – glad to hear that Joshua fulfilled his purpose of visiting you & that you enjoyed it so much.

I now have Friday, Sat. & Sunday to spend here. To day will be sufficient for my business – tomorrow, visiting - Sunday, preaching & Monday for home. Excuse my brevity – take the principal facts – the comments & filling up when I got home. I love you my dear – want to see you very much – shall probably make no stop except a day in N.Y. to see the Chrystal Palace & be at home by Wednesday or Thursday.

Yrs as ever C. Collins