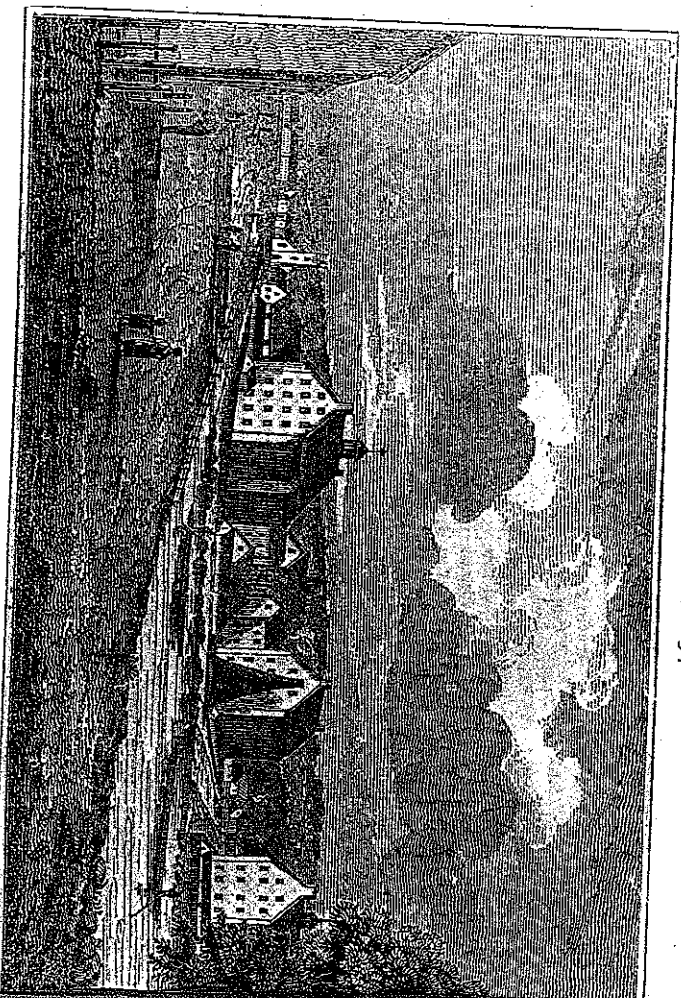


Saturday, March 8th, 1834



View of Lowell, Massachusetts.

Courtesy of Lowell Museum

FARM to FACTORY

Women's Letters, 1830–1860

Second Edition

Edited by Thomas Dublin



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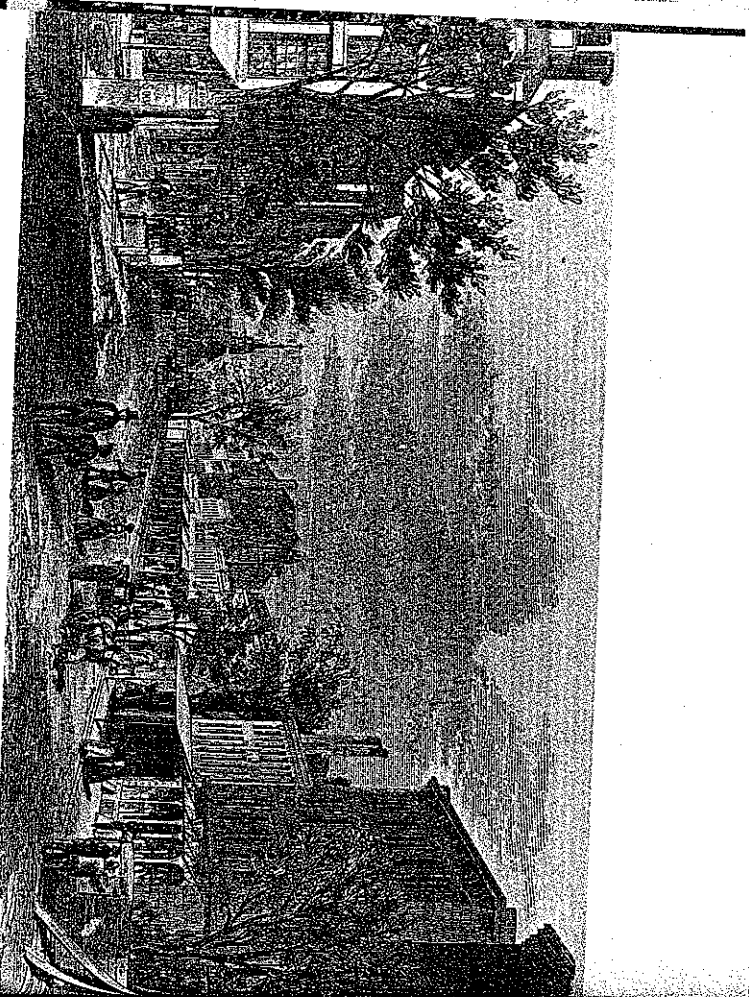
To Mildred Tunis, whose efforts preserved the Deia Page Letters and the Trussell House, and whose interest and support have contributed to the editing of this volume.

FOUR

Mary Paul Letters

Mary Pavu, the daughter of Bela and Mary Briggs Paul, grew up in Woodstock and Barnard, in northern Vermont. The third of four children, Mary led a migratory life from the age of fifteen until her marriage at twenty-seven. We have a clear record of these years because Mary proved a steady correspondent and her father saved twenty-five of her letters that cover the seventeen-year period between her departure from home in 1845 and the last letter in this collection, dated April 1862. The correspondence offers a rare view into the work and family experiences of one woman whose life was touched by mill employment.¹

Judging by the letters, Mary Paul was a restless spirit. She moved around from place to place and job to job in these years. The letters open with Mary employed as a domestic with a farming family in Bridgewater, just a few miles from her family home in Barnard. Difficulties there led to her departure and her entrance into the textile mills of Lowell, Massachusetts. She labored off and on in Lowell for the next four years, but returned home to Claremont, New Hampshire, where her widowed father resided in 1850.² Two years later her letters show her living in Brattleboro, Vermont making coats in a partnership with another woman. After two years there, she was off to Redbank, New Jersey, where she resided in a utopian agricultural community for a year with friends she had met in Lowell.³ After that undertaking collapsed, she returned to New Hampshire for a stint as a housekeeper. Finally, in 1857, after twelve years of supporting herself away from home, Mary Paul married



Courtesy of Lowell Historical Society.
Lowell shopping district, 1856, shortly after Mary Paul worked in Lowell.

1. Paul Family Genealogy and Mary Paul Letters, Vermont Historical Society, Montpelier, Vt.; hereafter cited as VHS. See also letters from Mary's brother, William Paul.

2. Bela Paul, sixty, and Mary Paul, twenty-one, are recorded in the 1850 Census in dwelling 533 in Claremont, N.H.

3. The North American Phalanx, founded by American followers of Charles Fourier, was the largest and most successful of the phalanxes, with more than a hundred members when Mary Paul joined in 1855.

Isaac Guild, the son of her former Lowell boardinghouse keeper. The new couple moved to Lynn, Massachusetts, where Isaac found employment in a marble works. Mary Paul Guild bore two children over the next five years, and domestic concerns dominate her correspondence with her father. Bela Paul by this date had moved to Windsor, Vermont, and lived with a married son. He died in 1863, at the age of seventy-nine, an event that may well account for the ending point of this collection.

Mary Paul's letters offer repeated examples of the importance of economic independence and continued family ties for mill workers. Although economic motives are paramount in Mary Paul's initial decision to enter the mills, it is important to note that she has individual economic gain in mind. Hers is not a family decision—though she seeks her father's approval—to send a daughter to work. She expected to do better for herself in Lowell than she could in rural Vermont. While in Lowell she supported herself quite adequately. In her first eleven months in the mills she earned \$128, an average of about \$2.70 a week. With room and board in company housing set at \$1.25 each week, she would have had a margin to buy clothes, attend church and lectures, and still save stage-coach fare to permit her to return home.⁵

Her father was a widower in these years and was not in the best of health. Mary offers him occasional bits of advice and clearly would have liked to have taken better care of him in his old age. As she wrote in 1853: "I hope sometime to be able to do something for you and sometimes feel ashamed that I have not before this." And although Bela Paul does visit his daughter briefly when she is married and living in Lynn, Mary continues to live apart from her father. Despite some evident guilt, personal economic need proves more pressing than her sense of familial obligation. As she explains in one letter: "[I] must work where I can get more pay."⁶

Mary Paul's strong ties to her family are evident throughout her correspondence. Her letters are punctuated with questions about family members and expressions of concern for them. When Mary first went to Lowell she wrote of her disappointment that her father and brothers had not come down to see her off. She suggested that her family move to Lowell, indicating that her brothers could find employment in the mills.

4. For marriage and birth records see Massachusetts Bureau of Vital Records, vol. 109, p. 147; Irving Tracy Guild, December 30, 1860, vol. 132, p. 266; Sidney Pratt Guild, August 31, 1862, vol. 150, p. 230.
5. Lawrence Manufacturing Company Payrolls, Vol. GB-8, Manuscript Division, Baker Library, Harvard Business School.
6. Mary Paul to Bela Paul, Nov. 27, Dec. 18, 1853.

There was evidently a lively family correspondence, particularly with brother William who lived in Tennessee at this time. Other relatives figure in the letters, Aunt and Uncle Miller in Woodstock, and Uncle Jerry in Claremont, New Hampshire, in particular. It is evident that although Mary Paul left home to work by herself in Lowell, she was by no means distant from her family.

These letters strikingly reveal a gap between the actual experiences of women in this period and contemporary ideals concerning "woman's sphere." These years saw the rise of what one historian has termed the "Cult of True Womanhood," that body of prescriptive literature which defined women in terms of their roles as wives and mothers.⁷ Women were viewed as particularly suited for domestic pursuits; their influence in the world was felt primarily within the familial circle. Their position in society was characterized by submission and dependence, first as daughters in the parental home, and later as wives under their husbands' sway. In contrast to this ideal, Mary Paul lived away from family twelve years before her marriage, and there were undoubtedly many women like her.⁸ In Mary Paul's letters we see evidence of the increased economic and social independence enjoyed by many single women even in the face of the dominant ideology. They suggest the importance for historians of constantly testing broad ideals against the realities of the concrete attitudes and behavior evident in the everyday lives of ordinary men and women.

Bridgewater [Vt.] July 25th 1845⁹

Dear Father

Mr. Angell received your letter on the 22nd And I supposed would do something about my staying, but he has not.¹⁰ And so I thought I would write to you & have you come over yourself. I did not leave

7. Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood," *American Quarterly*, (1966) 18:157-74.
8. For the 175 women workers from the Hamilton Company in Lowell discussed in the introduction the mean length of time between beginning mill employment and marriage was almost eight years.
9. This letter, like the next five, is addressed to Bela Paul in Barnard, Vt. Bela is a widower at this time, his wife having died four years earlier. Mary is fifteen years old and is living in Bridgewater, a farming town about fourteen miles from Barnard. Paul Family Genealogy, VHS.
10. The Angells are probably Colburn and Clarissa Angell recorded in dwelling 103 in the 1850 Census of Bridgewater.

uncle Millers until Sunday morning. Aunt Sarah was quite sick [and I have not heard from her since. Mrs. A did not speak to me after I got home till after supper but she has done remarkably well since your letter came. I suppose Mr A wants I should stay but I do not want to. I did not see as anything was going to be done and for that reason I write. I suppose Aunt Nancy expects me every day but she will not see me till you come.¹¹

I want you to start as soon as you receive this.

Yours,

Mary

Dear Father

[Woodstock, Vt.] Saturday Sept. 13th 1845¹²

I received your letter this afternoon by Wm Griffith. You wished me to write if I had seen Mr. Angell. I have neither written to him nor seen him nor has he written to me. I began to write but I could not write what I wanted to. I think if I could see him I could convince him of his error if he would let me talk. I am very glad you sent my shoes. They fit very well indeed they [are] large enough.

I want you to consent to let me go to Lowell if you can. I think it would be much better for me than to stay about here. I could earn more to begin with than I can any where about here. I could earn clothes which I cannot get if I stay about here and for that reason I want to go to Lowell or some other place. We all think if I could go with some steady girl that I might do well. I want you to think of it and make up your mind. Mercy Jane Griffith is going to start in four or five weeks. Aunt Miller and Aunt Sarah think it would be a good chance for me to go if you would consent—which I want you to do if possible. I want to see you and talk with you about it.

Aunt Sarah gains slowly.

Bela Paul

Mary

11. Uncle Miller and Aunt Nancy are Nathaniel and Nancy Paul Miller who resided in nearby Woodstock. Aunt Sarah is Sarah Paul, an unmarried younger sister of Bela Paul. Paul Family Genealogy, VHS, 1850 Census of Woodstock, dwelling 372.

12. The postmark of this letter and its contents indicate that Mary has left the Angels and come to Woodstock, about eight miles from Barnard, where she is staying with the Millers.

Woodstock Nov 8 1845

Dear Father

As you wanted me to let you know when I am going to start for Lowell, I improve this opportunity to write you. Next Thursday the 13th of this month is the day set or the Thursday afternoon. I should like to have you come down. If you come bring Henry if you can for I should like to see him before I go. Julius has got the money for me.¹³

Yours Mary

Lowell Nov 20th 1845

Dear Father

An opportunity now presents itself which I improve in writing to you. I started for this place at the time I talked of which was Thursday. I left Whiteneys at nine o'clock stopped at Windsor at 12 and staid till 3 and started again. Did not stop again for any length of time till we arrived at Lowell. Went to a boarding house and staid until Monday night. On Saturday after I got here Luthera Griffith went round with me to find a place but we were unsuccessful. On Monday we started again and were more successful. We found a place in a spinning room and the next morning I went to work. I like very well have 50 cts first payment increasing every payment as I get along in work have a first rate overseer and a very good boarding place. I work on the Lawrence Corporation. Mill is No 2 spinning room.¹⁴ I was very sorry that you did not come to see me start. I wanted to see you and Henry but I suppose that you were otherways engaged. I hoped to see Julius but did not much expect to for I supposed he was engaged in other matters. He got six dollars for me which I was very glad of. It cost me \$5.25 to come. Stage fare was \$3.00 and lodging at Windsor, 25 cts. Had to pay only 25 cts for board for 9 days after I got here before I went into the mill. Had 2.50 left with which I got a bonnet and some other small articles. Tell Harriet Burbank to send me paper. Tell her I shall send her one as soon as possible. You must write as soon as you

13. The references here are to two of Mary's brothers, Henry and Julius, both apparently living with their father at this time. Henry was thirteen and Julius twenty-seven. Paul Family Genealogy, VHS.

14. Surviving payrolls reveal that Mary Paul earned \$6.30 per day in her first month in the mill, making \$1.80 per week, or \$0.55 above the cost of room and board. Lawrence Manufacturing Company Records, Vol. GB-8, Spinning Room No. 2, Nov. 20, 1845.

receive this. Tell Henry I should like to hear from him. If you hear anything from William write for I want to know what he is doing.¹⁵ I shall write to Uncle Millers folks the first opportunity. Aunt Nancy presented me with a new alpaca dress before I came away from there which I was very glad of. I think of staying here a year certain, if not more. I wish that you and Henry would come down here. I think that you might do well. I guess that Henry could get into the mill and I think that Julius might get in too. Tell all friends that I should like to hear from them.

excuse bad writing and mistakes

This from your own daughter

Mary

P.S. Be sure and direct to No. 15 Lawrence Corporation.

Bela Paul

Mary S Paul

Lowell Dec 21st 1845

Dear Father

I received your letter on Thursday the 14th with much pleasure. I am well which is one comfort. My life and health are spared while others are cut off. Last Thursday one girl fell down and broke her neck which caused instant death. She was going in or coming out of the mill and slipped down it being very icy. The same day a man was killed by the cars.¹⁶ Another had nearly all of his ribs broken. Another was nearly killed by falling down and having a bale of cotton fall on him. Last Tuesday we were paid. In all I had six dollars and sixty cents paid \$4.68 for board. With the rest I got me a pair of rubbers and a pair of 50.cts shoes. Next payment I am to have a dollar a week beside my board.¹⁷ We have not had much snow the deepest being not more than 4 inches. It has been very warm for winter. Perhaps you would like

15. There are repeated references to William, a third brother who lived and married in Tennessee during these years. Paul Family Genealogy; Letters of William Paul, VHS.

16. These were probably the cars of the Boston and Lowell Railroad. Each firm had railroad siding running right up to the mills to facilitate transport of raw cotton and finished cloth.

17. In fact, Mary earned only \$2.04 per week during the payroll period which ended January 10, 1846, making \$0.79 above the cost of room and board. She worked as a doffer removing full bobbins of yarn from the spinning frames and replacing them with empty ones. The work called for speed and dexterity, but it was intermittent, requiring only about fifteen minutes of activity out of each hour. Doffers were almost always children, usually sons or daughters of boardinghouse keepers or skilled workers.

something about our regulations about going in and coming out of the mill. At 5 o'clock in the morning the bell rings for the folks to get up and get breakfast. At half past six it rings for the girls to get up and at seven they are called into the mill. At half past 12 we have dinner are called back again at one and stay till half past seven.¹⁸ I get along very well with my work. I can doff as fast as any girl in our room. I think I shall have frames before long. The usual time allowed for learning is six months but I think I shall have frames before I have been in three as I get along so fast. I think that the factory is the best place for me and if any girl wants employment I advise them to come to Lowell. Tell Harriet that though she does not hear from me she is not forgotten. I have little time to devote to writing that I cannot write all I want to. There are half a dozen letters which I ought to write to day but I have not time. Tell Harriet I send my love to her and all of the girls. Gave my love to Mrs. Clement. Tell Henry this will answer for him and you too for this time.

This from

Mary S Paul

Bela Paul

Henry S Paul

Lowell April 12th 1846

Dear Father

I received your letter with much pleasure but was sorry to hear that you had been lame. I had waited for a long time to hear from you but no letter came so last Sunday I thought I would write again which I did and was going to send it to the [post] office Monday but at noon I received a letter from William and so I did not send it at all. Last Friday I received a letter from you. You wanted to know what I am doing. I am at work in a spinning room and tending four sides of warp which is one girls work. The overseer tells me that he never had a girl get along better than I do and that he will do the best he can by me. I stand it well, though they tell me that I am growing very poor. I was paid nine shillings a week last payment and am to have more this one though we have been out considerable for backwater which will take off a good deal.¹⁹ The Agent promises to pay us nearly as much as we

18. Mary is outlining the winter schedule when operatives took breakfast before beginning work. In the summer months, as the next letter indicates, work began at 5:00 A.M. and operatives had short breaks for breakfast and dinner during the working day.

19. Mary tended four sides of warp spinning frames, each with 128 spindles.

should have made but I do not think that he will. The payment was up last night and we are to be paid this week.²⁰ I have a very good boarding place have enough to eat and that which is good enough. The girls are all kind and obliging. The girls that I room with are all from Vermont and good girls too. Now I will tell you about our rules at the boarding house. We have none in particular except that we have to go to bed about 10. o'clock. At half past 4 in the morning the bell rings for us to get up and at five for us to go into the mill. At seven we are called out to breakfast are allowed half an hour between bells and the same at noon till the first of May when we have three quarters [of an hour] till the first of September. We have dinner at half past 12 and supper at seven. If Julius should go to Boston tell him to come this way and see me. He must come to the Lawrence Counting room and call for me. He can ask some one to show him where the Lawrence is. I hope he will not fail to go. I forgot to tell you that I have not seen a particle of snow for six weeks and it is settled going we have had a very mild winter and but little snow. I saw Ann Hersey last Sunday. I did not know her till she told me who she was. I see the Griffith girls often. I received a letter from a girl in Bridgewater in which she told me that Mrs Angell had heard some way that I could not get work and that she was much pleased and said that I was so bad that no one would have me. I believe I have written all so I will close for I have a letter to write to William this afternoon.

Yours affectionately

Mary S Paul

Mr. Bela Paul

P.S. Give my love to all that enquire for me and tell them to write me a long long letter. Tell Harriet I shall send her a paper.

the normal complement for spinners in these years. She quoted her wages in English currency, though she was undoubtedly paid American money, nine shillings being equal to \$1.50. As in the earlier cases, Mary is referring to her wages exclusive of room and board charges. "Backwater," mentioned here, was a common problem in the spring, when heavy run-off due to rains and melting snow led to high water levels, causing water to back up and block the waterwheel. Mills often had to cease operations for several days at a time. The April payroll at the Lawrence Company indicates that Mary worked only fifteen of the normal twenty-four days in the payroll period. ²⁰ It was standard practice to post on a blackboard in each room of the production and the earnings of each worker several days before the monthly payday, to enable operatives to see what they would be paid and to complain if the posted production figures did not agree with their own records of the work.

Lowell Nov 5th 1848²¹

Dear Father

Doubtless you have been looking for a letter from me all the week past. I would have written but wished to find whether I should be able to stand it—to do the work that I am now doing. I was unable to get my old place in the cloth room on the Suffolk or on any other corporation. I next tried the dressrooms on the Lawrence Corporation, but did not succeed in getting a place. I almost concluded to give up and go back to Claremont, but thought I would try once more. So I went to my old overseer on the Tremont Cor. I had no idea that he would want one, but he *did*, and I went to work last Tuesday—warping—the same work I used to do.²²

It is very hard indeed and sometimes I think I shall not be able to endure it. I never worked so hard in my life but perhaps I shall get used to it. I shall try hard to do so for there is no other work that I can do unless I spin and that I shall not undertake on any account. I presume you have heard before this that the wages are to be reduced on the 20th of this month. It is *true* and there seems to be a good deal of excitement on the subject but I can not tell what will be the consequence.²³ The companies pretend they are losing immense sums every *day* and therefore they are obliged to lessen the wages, but this seems perfectly absurd to me for they are constantly making *repairs* and it seems to me that this would not be if there were really any danger of their being obliged to *stop* the mills.

It is very difficult for any one to get into the mill on any corporation. All seem to be very full of help. I expect to be paid about two dollars a week but it will be dearly earned.²⁴ I cannot tell how it is but never

21. Mary Paul has left and returned to Lowell since her previous letter. She remained at the Lawrence Company until the end of October 1846. Lawrence Company Payrolls, Vol. GB-8. This letter is addressed to Claremont, N.H., where her father has recently moved.

22. The "dressroom" mentioned here would be a dressing room in the mill where warp yarn was prepared for the weaving process. Generally speaking, more experienced women worked in the dressing room, wages and conditions of work being considerably better there than in the carding and spinning rooms.

23. Wages were reduced in all of the Lowell mills in November 1848. See Henry Hall to John Aiken, September 4, 1848, Lawrence Company Records; Henry Hall to John Wright, September 4, 1848, Vol. FB-5, Tremont-Suffolk Mills Records, Baker Library, Harvard Business School.

24. This wage figure, \$2.00 per week, again refers to earnings exclusive of charges for room and board. The overall figure of \$3.25 weekly was extremely low for warpers, usually among the best-paid women workers in the mills. Thomas Dublin, *Women at Work: The Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826-1860* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), pp. 66, 139.

since I have worked in the mill have I been so very tired as I have for the last week but it may be owing to the long rest I have had for the last six months. I have not told you that I do not board on the Lawrence. The reason of this is because I wish to be nearer the mill and I do not wish to pay the extra \$.12-1/2 per week (I should not be obliged to do it if I boarded at 15) and I know that they are not able to give it me. Beside this I am so near I can go and see them as often as I wish. So considering all things I think I have done the best I could. I do not like here very well and am very sure I never shall as well as at Mother Guilds. I can now realize how very kind the whole family have ever been to me. It seems like going home when I go there which is every day.²⁵ But now I see I have not told you yet where I do board. It is at No. 5 Tremont Corporation. Please enlighten all who wish for information. There is one thing which I forgot to bring with me and which I want very much. That is my *rubbers*. They hang in the back room at uncle Jerry's.²⁶ If Olive comes down here I presume you can send them by her, but if you should not have the opportunity to send them do not trouble yourself about them. There is another thing I wish to mention—about my fare down here. If you paid it all the way as I understand you did there is something wrong about it. When we stopped at Concord to take the cars, I went to the ticket office to get a ticket which I knew I should be obliged to have. When I called for it I told the man that my fare to Lowell was paid all the way and I wanted a ticket to Lowell. He told me if this was the case the Stagedriver would get the ticket for me and I supposed of course he would. But he did *not*, and when the ticket master called for my ticket in the cars, I was obliged to give him a dollar. Sometimes I have thought that the fare might *not* have been paid beside farther than Concord. If this is the case all is right. But if it is not, then I have paid a dollar too much and gained the character of trying to cheat the company out of my fare, for the man thought I was lying to him. I suppose I want to know how it is and wish it could be settled for I do not like that *any* one should think me capable of such a thing, even though that person be an utter stranger. But enough of this. The Whigs of Lowell had a great time on

25. "Mother Guild" refers to Mrs. Betsey Guild who, with her husband, kept a boardinghouse at 15 Lawrence Company at least between 1847 and 1853. Mary Paul did get to know and like the "whole family," as she indicates, for in 1857 she married a son, Isaac, and settled in Lynn. Lowell *Directory*, 1847-1853; Massachusetts Bureau of Vital Records, vol. 109, p. 147.
26. Jerry refers to Jeremiah Paul who lived with his wife, Betsey, and two young children in Claremont, N.H. "Little Lois," mentioned at the end of this letter, was their two-year-old daughter. 1850 Census of Claremont, dwelling 407.

the night of the 3rd. They had an immense procession of men on foot bearing *torches* and *banners* got up for the occasion. The houses were illuminated (Whigs houses) and by the way I should think the whole of Lowell were Whigs. I went out to see the illuminations and they did truly look splendid. The Merrimack house was illuminated from attic to cellar.²⁷ Every pane of glass in the house had a half candle to it and there were many others lighted in the same way. One entire block on the Merrimack Cor[poration] with the exception of one tenement which doubtless was occupied by a free soiler who would not illuminate on any account whatever.²⁸

(Monday Eve) I have been to work today and think I shall manage to get along with the work. I am not so tired as I was last week. I have not yet found out what wages I shall get but presume they will be about \$2.00 per week exclusive of board. I think of nothing further to write excepting I wish you to prevail on Henry to write to me, also tell Olive to write and *Eveline* when she comes.²⁹

Give my love to uncle Jerry and aunt Betsey and tell little Lois that "Cousin Carrá" thanks her very much for the *apple* she sent her. Her health is about the same that it was when she was at Claremont. No one has much hope of her ever being any better.

Write soon. Yours affectionately

Mary S Paul

Mr. Bela Paul
P.S. Do not forget to direct to No. 5 Tremont Cor and tell all others to do the same.

Lowell July 1st 1849

Dear Father
I received your letter dated the 25. of June on Wednesday the 27. and would have answered immediately but had not time. I was very glad to get the letters from William. I had almost given up the hope of

27. The Merrimack House was the leading hotel in Lowell and usually housed distinguished visitors and millowners when they came to town. The date of the illumination, November 3, suggests it was part of election day festivities.

28. The Free Soil Party was a third party opposed to the extension of slavery into the territories acquired in the recent Mexican War. Former President Martin Van Buren ran on its ticket in 1848.

29. Eveline here is Eveline Sperry Paul, the wife of Seth Paul, another younger brother of Bela. Subsequent letters also refer to their oldest son, Seth Jr. Paul Family Genealogy, VHS; 1850 Census for Claremont, dwelling 135.

hearing from him and had commenced a letter to him when yours came in which *his* [was] enclosed. I will give you his words in regard to his health &c: "As for my own health, it has been generally very good. Though for the last few days I have been quite unwell and was confined to my *bed* for a day or two. I feel quite unsure at this time." And of the Cholera he says, "It has broken out fearfully within a few days on the 10th inst. (June) there were 10 deaths from it, on the 11th] 25, and I have not heard the report for yesterday (the 12th)." ³⁰ He is often in the Prison and will probably remain there until a better situation offers. He says "tell Henry I will write to him without fail before long."

My health has been pretty good though I have been obliged to be out of the mill four days. I thought *then* that it would be impossible for me to work through the hot weather. But since I think I shall manage to get through after a fashion. I do not know what wages I am to have as I have not yet been paid but I shall not expect *much*, as I have not been able to *do* much, although I have worked very hard. I shall send a letter with this to Eveline so that you can give it to her when you see her. Give my love to Henry and tell him I will write him as soon as I can and tell him to write and not *wait* for *me*.

Yours affectionately

Mary S Paul

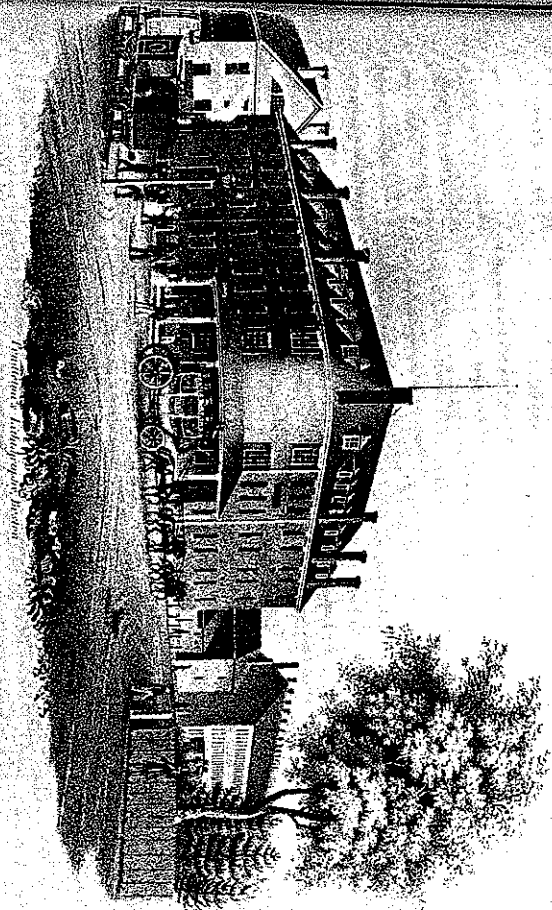
Brattleboro [Vermont] Nov. 7th 1852³¹

Dear father

I received a letter from Henry last night inclosing yours from William. He (Henry) said you wished me to send it back to you as you were going to send it to Julius. I send it therefore with this. His letter

30. A cholera epidemic swept through American cities in the first half of 1849. William Paul was an officer in the Tennessee Penitentiary in Nashville at this date. "The Affairs of William P. Paul," typescript, VHS; Charles E. Rosenberg, *The Cholera Years: The United States in 1832, 1849 and 1866* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

31. The fact that Mary Paul does not know what her wages will be suggests that she has recently returned to the mills after a period of absence. Since earnings were based on piece wage rates, it always took a new worker a month or two to determine exactly how much she could expect to earn. 32. The previous letter is the last one Mary wrote from Lowell. In 1850 she was back in Claremont living with her father, Bela, in the dwelling of William and Olive Kimball. There have been numerous references in the letters to Olive, who may have been a cousin. This letter is sent from Brattleboro, Vt., where Mary is working as a seamstress.



Merrimack House, 1835.

Courtesy of Lowell Historical Society.

contained also the news of the death of Frank Sperry. I think the family must take it rather hard. I wrote to William last Sunday and directed the letter to Nashville, Tenn. but I do not know as I ought to have done so as his letter is mailed at Jasper, Tenn. if I read rightly. When you write to him I wish you would tell him that I have written and directed to Nashville. I wrote to Julius also last Sunday. I presume he will be surprised to get a letter from me still I thought he might like the idea after all. I do not know as I have any news to write. I am well and doing pretty well. Abby and I have hired a stove for our room and bought half a cord of wood so we are quite comfortable these cold damp days and evenings. Have you had your rooms partitioned off yet? If not I hope you will before it comes to be much colder. We had quite a storm here last night. The wind blew so hard that we who sleep in the upper part of the house began to fear the roof would blow off. The house is four stories high. It makes me think of the house Adams told about, that was 500 ft. long 700 ft. high and 2 ft. wide. It is getting dark, so I must close hoping you will write soon. Love to Uncle Jerry and family.

Yours affectionately

Mary S Paul

Dear Father

Brattleboro Nov. 6th 1853

I don't know but that you are waiting for me to write to you, as I have been waiting for you. I have no news of any importance to write that I know of, excepting that I received a letter from William a few days since. He was well, and doing about the same as when he wrote you is employed by the same firm as when he wrote, not married yet but expecting to be sometime.³³ He said he would write you soon. It is very cold here today. The ground was covered with snow this morning, but there is little to be seen now excepting on the hills in the distance. I am sorry that winter is so near us. I dread the cold. Abby is at Guilford today. One of her brother's wives is very sick there. I have not heard from Henry for some time. I wish Julius would write to me. I sent him a paper last week. I wonder if he got it. Last night I saw a paper containing Cousin Louise Briggs marriage. It was a paper edited by her husband, a Mr. Stebbins of Michigan town of Adrian. I saw the

³³ William Paul married Lucy McIntosh in March 1854 and they had two children before she died in 1857. Paul Family Genealogy. VHS.

same notice in a Claremont paper a few days before. It was very unexpected to me, and I think it must have been sudden to her. She has an uncle here by the name of Woods, and Mrs. Woods gave me the information. Mr. Woods is in company with Mr. Carpenter in the Melodeon business. Mr. Carpenter is the man I am boarding with. How is Olive nowadays? Is she well and strong again? Are Uncle Jerry's family well? Give my love to them when you see them. I am getting along in the shop as usual. Have been making coats for a few weeks. I like it pretty well and am hoping to do better than on smaller jobs. I have plenty to do all the time. Write very soon for I am anxious to hear from you.

Yours affectionately

Mary S Paul

Dear father

Brattleboro Nov. 27, 1853

I think I will write you a few words tonight as you may be wishing to hear from me. Your letter of Nov. 13th tells me that you have been lame. I was sorry to hear it though I expected as much from your not writing before. It troubles me very much, the thought of your being lame so much and alone too. If there were any way that I could make it expedient I would go back to Claremont myself and I sometimes think I ought to do so but the chance for one there is so small, and I can do so much better elsewhere that I have thought it was really better for me to be somewhere else. But the thought of you always makes me wish to be where I can see you often. I feel anxious about Julius. I really wish that he might find steady employment at some good business. I am so sorry that he and Uncle Seih could not manage to agree. I wonder if he ever got the paper I sent him several weeks ago?

I have a plan for myself which I am going to lay before you and see what you think of it. When I was at Manchester last spring my friend Carrie and her husband were talking of going to New Jersey to live and proposed that I should go with them. They have decided to go and are thinking of going in a few weeks, maybe as soon as Jan. though they may not go until April or May. I have been thinking of it all summer, and have told them that I will go if you do not object. I can hardly get *my own* consent to go any farther away from you, though I know that in reality a few miles cannot make much difference. The name of the town is Atlantic is about 40 miles from New York City.

The people among whom they are going are Associationists.³⁴ The name will give you something of an idea of their principles. There [are] about 125 persons in all that live there, and the association is called the "North American Phalanx." I presume that you may have heard of it. You have if you read the "Tribune." The editor Mr "Greely"³⁵ is an Associationist and a shareholder in the "Phalanx," but he does not live there. The advantage that will arise from my going there will be that I can get better pay without working as hard as at any other place. The price for work there being 9 cts an hour, and the number of hours for a days work, *ten* besides I should not be confined to one kind of work but could do almost anything, could have the *privilege* of doing anything that is done there—*Housework* if I choose and that without degrading myself, which is more than I could do anywhere else. That is, in the opinion of most people, a very foolish and wrong idea by the way, but one that has so much weight with girls, that they would live on 25 cts per week at sewing, or school teaching rather than work at housework. I would do it myself although I think it foolish. This all comes from the way servants are *treated*, and I cannot see why girls can be blamed after all, for not wishing to "work out" as it is called. At the "Phalanx" it is different. All work there, and all are paid alike. Both men and women have the *same pay* for the *same* work. There is no such word as *aristocracy* there unless there is *real* (not pretended) superiority, *that* will make itself *felt*, if *not acknowledged*, *everywhere*. The *members* can live as *cheaply* as they choose as they pay only for what they *eat*, and no profit on that, most of the provision being raised on the grounds. One can join them with or without funds, and can leave at any time they choose. Frank has been there this Fall and was very much pleased with what he saw there and thought that it would be the best thing for Carrie and me to do with ourselves. A woman gets much better pay there than elsewhere, but it is not so with a man, though he is not *meanly* paid by any means. There is more equality in such things according to the *work* not the sex. You know that men often get more than double the pay for doing the same work that women do. Carrie and Frank are both Associationists and have been almost ever since I knew them, and I am acquainted with many others who are and their

34. The Associationists were utopian reformers, followers of Charles Fourier. They established model communities, or phalanxes, throughout the North-east and Midwest in the 1840s and 1850s.

35. Horace Greeley, editor of the New York *Tribune*, was an early supporter of Association, attended numerous national conventions of the movement, and gave it support in the pages of his newspaper.

principles are just what I would like to see carried into practice and they *are* as far as means will allow at the Phalanx. Another advantage from living there is this, the members can have privileges of *Education* free of expense to themselves alone, the extent of this Education must of course depend on the *means* of the society. If I could see you I could give you a better idea. That I can possibly do by writing, but you will know something by this, enough to form an opinion perhaps and I wish you to let me know what you think of my plans. If you have any real objection or if you would rather I would not go so far away, let me know and I will cheerfully give up the idea of going. I hope sometime to be able to do something for you sometime and sometimes feel ashamed that I have not before this. I am not one of the *smart* kind, and never had a passion for laying up money, probably never shall have, can find ways enough to spend it though (but I do not wish to be extravagant). Putting all these things together I think explains the reason that I do not "lay up" anything. One thing more, I have never had very good pay, I am getting along slowly on coats, and shall do better as I get used to the business. I can work at my trade if I wish at the Phalanx. How are Uncle Jerry's family? Give my love to them and Julius when you see him. I hope you will write me very soon as I shall be very anxious to know your mind and I wish to let Carrie know. If you should think it best for me to go I shall visit [Claremont] in the course of a few weeks that is if we go in Jan. If not till April I shall not probably come to [Claremont] until about that time. I have written you quite a long letter and it is not very plain. I am afraid you will never be able to read it. I ought to have written more plainly but I am in something of a hurry and must offer that as my excuse. Write immediately, please.

Affectionately yours

Mary S Paul

Brattleboro Dec. 18, 1853

Dear Father

I am very tired tonight but I suppose you are anxious to hear from me so I will write a letter. I was glad to find from your letter that you approve my plans in regard to going to New Jersey. I have not heard anything definite about my going since I wrote you. I am hoping to know *something* very soon and then I will let you know. I suppose Henry will be here on his way to Claremont soon. He will tell you when you see him what the Lowell folks think of these things also his

own opinion I suppose.³⁶ The thing seems to meet with general approbation and I still think it the very best thing I can do. I may not go till Spring, may not go at all. They may refuse us for our want of money to invest. Still if they do, I think we shall try to go *some time*.

Last week I received a letter from William. He was well and sent love to you, was expecting a letter from you. You spoke in your letter of your wish to have a home for us all. I *wish* it too dear father, but not on my own account. I find comfortable homes almost everywhere and otherwise. It grieves me to think that in your old age you must live away from your children with none to care for your comfort but strangers, and if I live long enough it shall not always be so. I do not get along *fast*, cannot earn much but I hope to do something for you. Do not work when you do not feel able to do so. I cannot bear to think that you must work as long as you can crawl and I do wish that it could be different.

If I thought I could make a decent living at [Claremont] I would come back there but I have tried to my satisfaction and must work where I can get more pay. I am very tired and must not stop to write any more. My love to all friends.

Most affectionately,

Your daughter,

Mary

Sunday morn May 7th 1854

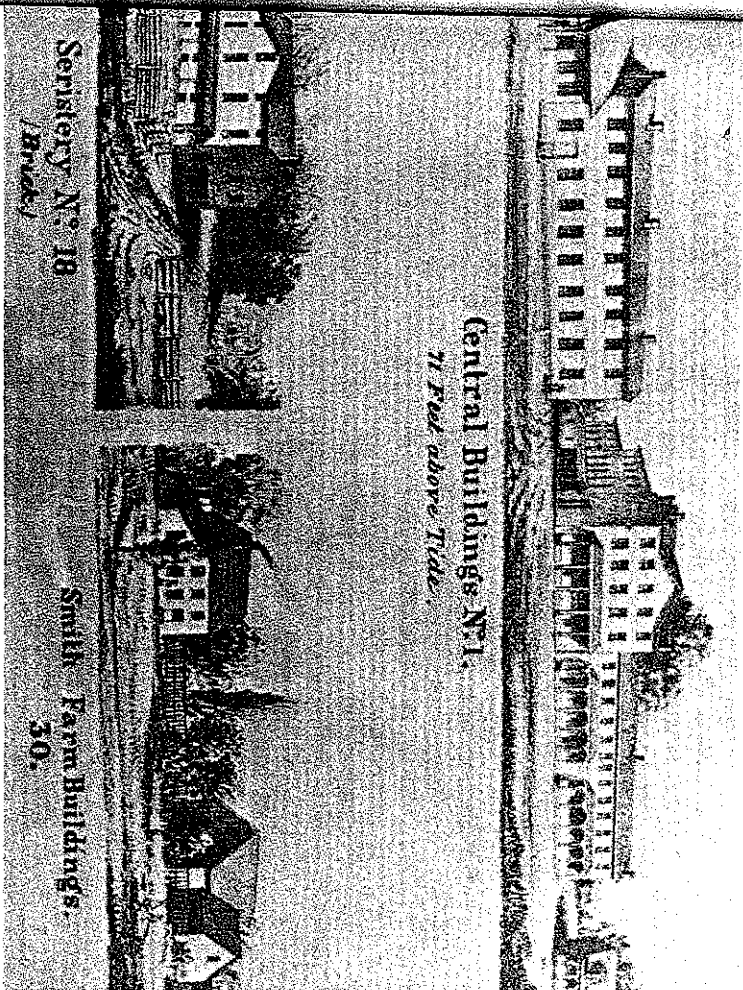
Dear father

North American Phalanx, N.J.

I feel that you must be anxious to hear from me, and so will write a few lines that you may know that I am here safe and well. I left, or we left Lowell the day I wrote you from there.³⁷ We had a very pleasant passage to New York, arrived there about eight-o'clock Thursday morning. Carrie & I were too tired to go about the city much so we did not see many of the "Lions". We left N.Y. for this place at three o'clock Thursday afternoon, instead of staying over night in N.Y. as we intended when we left Lowell and it was well that we did for

36. By this date Henry Paul was living in Lowell and was employed in the Lowell Machine Shop. *Lowell Directory, 1853, 1855.*

37. The letter referred to here has not been preserved. The reference makes it clear, however, that Mary had not left her Lowell experience entirely behind her.



North American Phalanx, 1855.

Courtesy of New York State Historical Association.

there has not been a *day since* when it would have been *pleasant* or even *comfortable* on the water. You have of course read the acct of the severe gale of that day which sunk the "Ericsson" in the harbor of New York. We very fortunately escaped the hardest of it. The boat had just reached the landing, when the wind began to blow tremendously and into the dock and frightened many of the horses which were attached to coaches which were standing on the wharf waiting for passengers. There was no serious damage done as I have heard, though many of the carriages came very near being overturned into the dock. We staid in the boat until the rain abated somewhat and then took the coach for this place. The rain came on again shortly and we got the hardest of the shower on our way. The ride seemed a long one & the prospect before us anything but encouraging (behind ditto) for our trunks were on the rack of the coach without the least covering or protection from the rain. Thus we rode ten miles or more over a rough hard road. I thought *Redbank* sure enough for the earth when *wet* is as *red* as any brick I ever saw.³⁸ It is mostly sand. It forms a very pretty contrast with the bright green grass above. By the way it is spring here, peach trees are out of blossom, cherry & apple trees are in full glory. As far as I can see from the window, at which I am writing, nothing but immense orchards of peach, cherry & apple trees present themselves to view. I never saw *orchards* before, but I have got a long way from my story. I'll had been expected for a long time they told us. The first thing attended to was getting off our wet things and getting some supper. This over we looked to our trunks; nothing in them was much injured though a great many things were wet. So far we were comfortable, and finally we have been that ever since we came, though we have had many discouragements. Our things which should have been here with us did not come until Monday afterward and then not all of them. We have been very busy all the week putting things to rights. Have not done much work beside our own. I have worked about two hours each day for the Phalanx, three quarters in sweeping, one and a quarter in the dining hall, clearing & laying the tables. Tomorrow I am going to begin sewing which will add three hours each day to my work. On ironing days I shall iron one, two or three hours just as I like. I must prepare to go to my dinner now. We have one hour, from 12 to 1, for dinner, breakfast from 5 1/2 to 7, tea from 6 1/2 to 7 1/2. After dinner from

³⁸. Redbank, N.J., was the location of the North American Phalanx.

one till quarter past two I do my work in the dining hall. Three o'clock, I have come back to finish my letter. I cannot tell you anything definite now about matters and things because I dont know about them myself. I shall write you again as soon as I can & then I will tell you more about ways here. The place is very pleasant and the people remarkably kind. Upon the whole I think that I may like very well after I get used to the strange ways. That which seems oddest is the manner in which the meals are conducted. I believe I told you about it when I was at [Claremont]. I want you to write me as soon as you can, tell Julius to write. My love to him and Uncle Jerry's family and all who enquire-for me. I shall write to Henry today and to William as soon as I can. Take care of yourself and dont work too hard. I wish that you could be here. I think you might find enough at your work to keep you busy as many hours in a day as you would want to work. There are a few here who work at one kind of business all the time but it is from choice. My work in the sewing room is to make a certain part of a stock (gentleman's stock). They make a great many of them here. Dont fail to write soon. I shall be anxious until I hear from you.

Yours truly,
Mary S Paul.

Bela Paul

Phalanx October 2nd 1854

Dear father

Your letter of Sept. 10th reached me in due season, & I was really glad to hear that you were so well. Hope you will continue so.

I received a letter from Henry last week saying he had heard from William &c which I was glad to hear. I shall write him again soon.

I am getting along very well here, better than I should at sewing. I have averaged about 6 hours work per day through the month of Sept. I do not yet know how much I shall have for it but I find I can live here easier & work but *half* the time than away from here & work all the time. Besides I am convinced that the work I do is better for my health than sewing. I have not done any sewing of any consequence & shall not be likely to have a great deal to do beside my own & there is always enough of that. I presume we shall stay here through the winter if no longer but we cannot decide that question until the end of the present month. Then Frank will know what the prospect is for him. Carrie is now in New York, has been two weeks with Emma who is sick of bilious fever. She was on her way from the White Mountains,

got as far as New York and was unable to get any farther. She is getting better but probably will not be able to go home for a week or two longer & Carrie will stay with her, I suppose until she is able to go home.

When I wrote you before I think peaches were the *go* but they are all gone & forgotten now I expect. The sweet potatoes are being gathered now. They raise a great many here & we have plenty of them to eat. Three weeks ago yesterday the "mill" was burned to the ground. This was a *great* loss to the Association and puts them back in all their work as well as their plans. I do not know what the actual loss was but believe it was about \$6,000. There were \$3,000 worth of grain burned. There were several kinds of business carried on beside the milling, in the building, & the tools connected with them belonged to *individuals*. Some of the losses are heavy. They have about decided to build again, on the old spot.

I suppose William & Olive have returned from their journey to Lynn, bid they enjoy it.³⁹ I hope to hear from you again soon. How are Uncle Jerry's family & how does Julius get along? I wish he would write to me. I must not stop to write any more tonight for I must go to bed. I wait on the tables in the morning now & have to be up in good season. Love to all.
Write soon.

Affectionately yours,

Mary S Paul

My dear father

Phalanx New Jersey March 3rd [18]55

I have been wishing to write you for some time but was prevented by the state of affairs here, at least I did not wish to write until I had something definite to say respecting my prospects here. But the probability is that I shall not *know* at present how affairs are to terminate, so I will wait no longer. I expect what I have just written needs a bit of an explanation. I think I wrote you early in the winter that the loss of the mill involved the Association in difficulties from which it would be hard to extricate it. That fear seemed to pass away and many seemed to think the foundations were too firm to be shaken even by an enormous debt, but it seems these were wrong for this

39. The reference here is probably to William and Olive Kimball, with whom Bela and Mary Paul lived in 1850. As a shoemaker Kimball may have gone to Lynn to return finished shoes and pick up additional leather stock.

Association is most certainly in the very last stage. I am sorry to say it but there appears to be no hope and a year at the farthest will terminate the existence of the North American Phalanx, in all probability. I do not know how long I can stay here but I shall not leave until I am obliged to do. The life here has many attractions & advantages which no other life can have, and imperfect as it is I have already seen enough to convince me that Association is the true life. And although all the attempts that have ever yet been made towards it have been failures, inasmuch as they have passed away (but they have all left their mark) my faith in the principles is as strong as ever, stronger if possible. There is a better day coming for the world. "We may not live to see the day But Earth shall glisten in the ray of the good time coming." Don't be worried about me, father, for I am certainly more comfortable here than I could be anywhere else. I suppose when I leave here I shall have to take up sewing again as that seems to be the only thing open to me. I flattered myself that I had fairly escaped from the confinement of the needle, but I shall have to return to it after all. Well I expect it will be all for the best. I was glad dear father to learn from your letter that you were so comfortable and I hope soon to hear that you are still more so. Oh that it were in my power to provide a comfortable home for you. A few days since I rec'd a letter from Wm. He was well and apparently doing well. Said he had intended to have sent you some money long ago but had been unfortunate about getting it etc., but would send you some yet. His wife is in Nashville at her fathers. He wished to be remembered to you when I wrote you. I presume you will hear from him soon if he has not already written. Frank & Carrie are still at South Orange & will remain for the present. Frank seems to be improving under the treatment. The weather is very fine here now. It seems more like May than March. I have in a glass of water, buds of the Mayflower which I got in the woods the 21st of Feb. Does'nt that seem like Spring? I want to hear from you very much & I hope you will write as soon as you can. I cannot think of Julius without the heartache. I wish I could do something for him. I wish he would answer my letter. Give my love to everybody that cares for me and accept the same for yourself from
Your affectionate daughter

Mary S Paul

Dear Father

Phalanx, April 12th, 1855

I intended to have written you before this time but I thought likely you had heard of me by Henry so would not be worrying about me. I suppose he has told you that I can remain where I am for the present through the summer probably, at any rate until my probation has expired. It is not at all likely that the Association will exist in its present form more than a year longer at most. A good many of the members have already gone away and others are preparing to leave.

From your last letter I perceive you have a very erroneous idea of affairs here. You say the place of interest seems to be in the hands of capitalists who have lost their courage when the hard times came. In this you are wrong. To be sure a good many of the stockholders are rich men, but the man who hold \$2000 of stock has no more control than the one who only has \$100, but of course he is the greater loser if his stock does not pay. It is true that many have lost their courage in the hard times but it is no more the rich man than the poor one. There have been many false steps taken & in a life like this which is but an experiment of itself there must be many failures, since man is not perfect. I know many will exult in the downfall of this place, but each are shortsighted. Charles Fourier's doctrines, although they may contain many absurd ideas, have enough of truth in them to keep them alive until the world shall be ready for them, and I am confident that it will take more than one lecture from "Dr. Lohrop" to annihilate Fourierism. Why I can mention any number of Associationists in Boston even who are just as strong in the faith as ever, confident as the "Herald" seems to be.

Oh there is one thing I intended to have spoken of when I was on the subject. I said, the man who had \$100 of stock had as much control as one who had \$2000. Perhaps you will ask if one who has *no* stock has as much. Yes in everything excepting in choice of public officers, and I suppose you can see the justice of that, but then, I know of but *one* member here who is not a stockholder, and I hardly think the privilege is denied him, for although he is poor he is very useful & probably that balances his deficiency in *money*. I guess I have said enough on this subject for the present.

Carrie & Frank spent a few days here last week. Frank is better but not well enough to take hold of hard work, therefore they are going to return to Lowell, soon. They have nothing in prospective to do but are in hopes to find something light which [will] not injure Frank & still afford them a living. It look rather dark for them, still I hope

something good will come of it. I am sorry to hear of Cousin Lois' misfortune. The poor girl is having a hard time. I hope she get better of this attack. Oh there is a remedy for rheumatism that a lady here told me of. I was telling her about your case & she told me to tell you to take *steam* baths, in this way. When you feel the lameness coming on, have a *sheet* wrung out of *hot* water and wrap it about you. Then over that put flannel blankets and dont spare the clothes. The object is to produce heavy perspiration and thus throw off the disease. Half an hour is long enough to remain in the sheet. On coming out of it take a *warm* bath and rub till the flesh is dry. I have never heard of this remedy before but I have a great deal of faith in it and I do wish you would try it. You will find but little trouble I think, anyway I will pay anyone who will assist you, give it a fair trial. How is Julius? I am hoping to hear something encouraging of him. Give my love to him if you see him, also to all who inquire. We have had a *very* backward Spring here thus far, a great deal of cold weather. Planting has been going on briskly for a good many weeks, still everything will be late. The grass is now quite green but it should have been so weeks ago. Write soon, and believe me ever

Your affectionate daughter

Mary

Bela Paul

Phalanx June 11th 1855

Dear Father

I dont know but you will think I am "strayed away or stolen" it is so long since I have written you but I assure you I am safe & sound. Before Henry came I waited to hear from him & since I have been so busy that I have hardly thought of pen or paper. I was very glad to see him. He came two weeks ago today (Monday) & left Wednesday morning. I presume he has got fairly initiated into his work before this time. I am expecting a letter from him every mail. I was very glad indeed to get Julius' letter by Henry. It was a very good one. Tell him I will answer it before long. When you wrote me last I concluded you had not received my last letter, but from Henry I learned that you did get it finally. I do not see why my letters should be misssent as I suppose they are for I direct them as plainly as I can. The weather is & has been cool all the spring. We have had but a few really warm days as yet. Neither has vegetation suffered from dry weather as it has East according to reports. Everything is in good condition, potatoes are in-

blossom & everything else as forward. Strawberries ripened late but we are having them soon in great abundance.

Yesterday 2,000 baskets (measuring half a pint each) were sent to market. They were all picked in one day on the domain. I presume as many or more will be sent today. All kinds of fruit are going to be as plenty as strawberries they say. Tell Olive I wish she could come out here & make us some strawberry shortcakes. I know they would be appreciated here. I am going to try to coax the cook to make one for me. I have all the strawberries I want to eat & it is the first time in my life that I was ever so favored. I went out one day & picked 20 baskets, but made myself almost sick by doing it. It is much harder picking them where they are cultivated than wild ones because they grow so closely it is hard to avoid stepping on them & then they are all picked clear of the hulls, and are ready for market as they are picked. This saves handling & crushing.

I suppose you recollect George Brewster of Woodstock.⁴⁰ He used to work for Eaton with you I believe, at any rate he used to know you. He is here with his wife. She was Frances Richmond, a niece of Walker Richmond. I think she told me her mother married a Shepherd for her second husband. I presume I have seen Mrs. Brewster & [Walker] but do not recollect her. She recollects you & knows everybody in Woodstock I should judge by what she says. They are travelling for pleasure I expect and came here to see as people go to Niagara to see. They are real nice folks but seem rather countryfied in their ideas. They have been married seven years, but Mrs. Brewster is still distributing her *wedding* cards.

Henry tells me you had not heard from William. I think it strange he does not write to you. I shall write him soon. How are Uncle Jerry's family? My love to them all, also to Uncle Seth's family. Tell Cousin Seth I have not seen the letter he was to have sent me. I have tried to write coarse & plainly so it would not trouble you to read but I dont know as I have succeeded. I dont know how long I can stay here but for the present I suppose but what I shall do & where I shall go when I go away is more than I can guess. Write as soon as you can & as often as you feel like it. Dont wait for me. I will write when I can. I always want to hear from you & dont care how often.

Yours affectionately

Mary S Paul

40. This would be Woodstock, Vt., where Mary stayed briefly with her aunt and uncle before entering the Lowell mills, and where the Pauls had lived earlier.

East Unity [N.H.] Oct. 8th 1856⁴¹

Dear Father

I guess you will begin to think I write you often enough but I am living at the *Post Office* now and can send as many letters as I please if I only *pay* for them. The folks that Maroa & I are keeping house for keep the P. O. in their kitchen.⁴² They went away this morning & are coming back Friday. I got your note with the enclosed letter Monday morning. I am sorry to hear that you have not found a room yet. What are you going to do? You must not stay in that damp place. Cant you find another place to *sleep* and let your *things* be there, that would be better than nothing. Give my love to Julius if he is with you now. I hope he will go back to Acworth again if he can get a living there & I suppose he does get that.⁴³ This mornings mail brought me a letter from Henry. He says he expects to go to Memphis, but does not know certainly, has not heard from Wm. since he wrote you, so there is no news from him. I presume we may not expect to hear from him (Wm.) until he gets his family moved to Memphis!

The reason for my sending this letter now is to tell you if a bundle should come for me from Isaac—and I expect there will be one before many days—to send it by stage to Unity Village as I shall be there in a day or two.⁴⁴ I expect Mr. Glidden after me Friday or Sat. You had better direct the bundles to his care. I dont know what the bundle will be, but it would not be out of the way to tell the driver to keep it *dry* if possible.

My eyes trouble me some but I dont think they will be any worse. Write often, and get out of that damp hole if possible.

Love to al,

Affectionately,

Mary S Paul

Manchester [N.H.] June 28th 1857

Dear Father

I suppose you will think soon that it is about time for another letter from me so I'll write, although I have little or nothing to say. The

41. East Unity is just south of Claremont, so Mary was living quite close to her father at this date.

42. This is probably the same Maroa whom Henry Paul marries. See below the letters of April 17, 1861, and after.

43. Acworth, N.H. is the next town south of Unity and is only about ten miles from Claremont.

44. This is the first reference to Isaac Guild whom Mary Paul marries in October 1857.

weather seems to be the principal topic here—its unusual coolness—but of course its all the same at Claremont so I wont waste time on that.

I wrote Maroa last Sunday and if you have seen her within a few days I presume she told you what news she had of me. My eyes are just about as they have been, or perhaps I ought to say better for they were *worse* than usual for several weeks. They are now about as they were when I came here.

I had my teeth fixed a short time ago and feel as if it were a good job done, though I hated to spare the money. I wanted it so much for something else, but my teeth needed it very much so I paid it out for them. It is quite warm today, seems like Summer. I want to hear from the boys, think it *very* strange that Henry dont write.

You said in your last letter that you had got your new vest & pants. Dont stop there, get a *hat & coat*, you need them.

I am glad you are thinking of going to Woodstock. Dont put it off, go right away, and go to Barnard with the little Tablet—if you can.⁴⁵ Isaac often speaks about it and once said he would have it put up, but I told him no. Give my love to Friends at Woodstock if you go before I write again.

Tell Maroa to direct when she writes me to C.F. Livingston's care. I forgot it when I wrote her. Give my love to her & to Julius, also to all who care for me.

Write soon and often

Yours affectionately,

Mary S Paul

Lynn Dec. 27, 1857⁴⁶

Dear Father

Perhaps you begin to think it is a thing to be doubted whether you have a daughter in these parts or not. Y'll settle the matter however for the present by giving written proof of my existence. I am so busy all the time that I do not write any letters at all. I got very tired doing my work and sometimes think I shall not be able to do it. I think though that I shall find it easier when I get more accustomed to it. I was very sorry to hear that you were lame again. Hope you are better by this time. I wish you could be here with me, comfortably stowed away in

⁴⁵ The tablet here is probably a marble slab intended to mark the grave of Mary's mother, Mary Briggs Paul, who died in Barnard in 1841.

⁴⁶ This is Mary's first letter from Lynn, Mass. after her marriage to Isaac Guild on October 7, 1857. He was a marbleworker in both Lowell and Lynn.

my little bedroom where I could look after you a little when you needed it. Where is Henry now? He wrote me from Unity a fortnight ago. I suppose I shall not see him again before his return to Ohio. I wish he could come this way and make me another visit but I suppose that is hardly to be expected.

The ground is now for the first time this year covered with snow, but it will soon melt away I suppose in a few hours of bright sunshine. We have had very little cold weather but there is time yet to make it all up. I have not written Wm. for a long time, am thinking of doing so today if I can. I have a severe cold which makes one feel rather uncomfortably. Remember me to all friends who ask for me. Love to Julius. Tell him to write to me. Write soon.

Yours affectionately,

Mary P Guild

Isaac sends regards. M.

[Lynn] Monday Eve, Nov. 29, 1858

Dear Father

It is some time since I wrote you, still I have not much of interest to write about. The world jogs on and we jog with it, taking our share of what life has to give. We are well and comfortable for which we cannot be too thankful. I wish every one could say as much.

We had a little snowstorm yesterday, traces of which still remain. Sleights have been running all day though wheels run more easily than runners as yet, I think. We see nothing of Henry as yet. I should [think] Maroa would grow tired of putting off] so many times from month to month. I am sorry Henry finds so much trouble in getting his money. It is very unfortunate for him. I hear nothing of William either. He may be waiting to hear from me though I wrote him last. Isaac's business is dull now as it is always at this time of year, but he will keep busy, getting out work for Spring. It is already past ten o'clock and I ought to be in bed, so I must not write any more. I hope to hear from you soon. I am glad you had the thick vest made and hope you will have some warm *undershirts* & drawers. Dont neglect to get them. Keep as warm as you can.

Affectionately Yours

Mary P Guild

Dear Father

Lynn March 6th 1859

I learn by Aunt Betsey that you are willing to come to Lynn for awhile and I hope to welcome you to my home before many weeks. I think the necessary arrangements cannot be made short of three weeks or thereabouts. I do not wish you feel troubled or anxious about coming here. I wish you to feel free & contented & as much at home as if you owned the premises and I hope you will never allow yourself to feel for a moment that you are a burden to anyone. Henry and William will defray all your expenses and be *glad* to.

There is one thing which I owe it to Isaac to speak of & which I hope you will not take unkindly. As you are coming into a new place where nothing is known of your previous life can you not for your own sake as well as for Isaacs and mine refrain from that one habit which always brings naught but trouble & an ill name? I do not wish to reproach you with the habit nor blame you in any way. I only ask you to regard your own reputation & ours. I would not ask you to do this if it were *only* a matter of reputation & did not involve a principle of right. It is right for you to do it. Do not be offended with me dear father. I have only done what duty demanded of me.⁴⁷

I shall come to Clarendon & come down with you. I think this would be the best way. Keep up good spirits and dont worry yourself to death. Lynn is not a bad place, and my home is a much pleasanter place than your damp room. I shall not need any of your bedding & you had better not bring anything but your clothing and such things as you will want with you.

I must close now. Give my love to Julius.

Yours affectionately

Mary P Guild

Dear Father,

Lynn April 11th 1861

Let us make you acquainted with your grandson Irving Tracy Guild.⁴⁸

47. While Mary is deliberately vague here, she is probably concerned about her father's drinking. The Temperance Movement was strong in Massachusetts, with many communities passing local prohibition ordinances in the 1850s.

48. Irving Tracy Guild was born December 30, 1860, Massachusetts Bureau of Vital Records, vol. 132, p. 268. The note at the bottom of this letter, "sent with Irving's picture," was added in pencil at a later date. The picture was probably a daguerrotype or tntype.

We thought you and Henry & Maroa would like to see the boy, so we send him along.
We are all well.

Yours affly

Isaac Orr and M P Guild

[sent with Irving's picture]

Dear Father

Lynn Oct. 27, 1861

I presume that by this time you have got back to Windsor again so I shall send this there.⁴⁹ I was glad to get your letter and hope you will favor us often in the same way.

Soon after your letter came, one arrived from Henry, announcing the advent of a daughter to his house & home. I rejoice in his good fortune and I dare say you all do. We consider our boy the best gift that has ever been bestowed on us, and we try to take the best of care of that gift.

He is a healthy happy boy thus far, full of life and strength. I know it would do your heart good to see him and I wish you could. He is not as *large* now in *proportion* as he was 3 months ago but he is strong. He is not handsome but *good* looking, and we are very well satisfied with him and hope he will grow up to be a *good* man.

You will find the [Lynn] "Reporter" which we send this week badly crumpled with his little fingers. He is not allowed to have papers but he laid violent hands on this one, so we send it to Grandpa for a message.

I have been wondering whether Julius went with the Fifth N.H. Reg't.⁵⁰ Let me know when you find out. I suppose he thought it his duty to go, but I am sorry. I hope *nothing* will ever induce Henry to go. Isaac of course will never go as he is a nonresistant in principle.⁵¹ Henry is fortunate in haveing work in these hard times but I hope he wont kill himself at overwork. Isaac has absolutely nothing to do and

49. This is the first letter addressed to Bela Paul in Windsor, Vt., located just across the Connecticut River from Clarendon. Henry Paul and his wife Maroa were apparently also living there, as is clear in the next letter in the series, in which Mary offers advice to them in bringing up their daughter.

50. In fact, both Julius and Henry Paul served in the Army during the Civil War. See Otis Waite, *History of the Town of Clarendon, New Hampshire* (Manchester, N.H.: John B. Clarke, 1895), pp. 277, 280.

51. Isaac Guild may have been a Quaker, hence his position as a non-resistant. Lynn had an outspoken Quaker group throughout the antebellum years.

winter coming & a family to support. He is not very well but better than he has been, and I am not well either. Shall have to keep a girl all winter I am afraid. That is, if we can manage to pay her. We have a house now at 72 dollars a year, which is better than paying one hundred though our rooms are smaller & fewer in number. I shall do my own work as soon as ever I am able to and I hope that will be before a great while.

I am afraid you wont be able to read this it is so poorly written but it tires me very much to write and that will account partly for the writing if it is worse than usual. I hope this will find you all as well as can be & I hope also that some of you will write me soon and let me know how Marroa and the baby are getting along. Love to all.

Yours affectionately

M P Guild

Lynn April 27th 1862

Dear Father

I meant to write you weeks ago, but I have been so nearly tired out that I have put it off hoping to feel stronger, but it is of no use. I never felt so nearly used up as now. I have had no "girl" since January and Isaac and I have managed after a fashion to get along. He has had so little to do that he could help me a great deal about my work. I could not have got along at all only for him.

We made another move April 1st and I hope we are settled to stay for some time where we are. We were very much crowded for room where we were and what was worse the house was so situated as to get almost no sunshine at all in Winter, and that circumstance alone would prevent our staying in it any longer than necessity compelled. We have plenty of air & sunshine where we are now, and larger & better rooms though the same *number* of them. We live *up stairs* as usual. I wish we could afford to live in a lower tenement, it is so hard for me to do my work up stairs though I manage not to go over the stairs more than once or twice a day because I have to be saving of my strength.⁵² Irving is nicely as usual and a great comfort to me as well as a great trouble, for he has to be watched so closely to keep him out of mischief. He dont talk any but is going to one of these days I suppose though we are in no hurry to have him. I had made up my mind to make you a

52. Mary Paul was five months pregnant at this date. On August 31, 1862, she gave birth to a second son, Sidney Pratt Guild. Massachusetts Bureau of Vital Records, vol. 150, p. 230.

visit this Spring, but the times are so hard, and the trouble of taking a child on such a journey so much, that I have decided to wait a little longer but I shall come as soon as I can with any comfort to myself and you. I want to see you all very much. I hope little Mary is thriving, dont play with her too much, and dont *feed* her too much (to [Henry] & [Marroa]) if you wish her to get along comfortably through "teething." My boy lives *entirely* on oatmeal gruel (cooked six or seven hours) with a little cream for breakfast & supper and *rye mush* (well cooked) with a little cream & sugar for dinner, half a graham cracker for luncheon in the middle of the forenoon. This will probably be his diet until he gets all his teeth, which will be a long time for he has only *six* now. There may be, and doubtless are ways of managing babies, as good as mine but I am sure that the more simple and *unvaried* their food for the first three years of their life the better. I dont know anything of Julius, and I suppose there is no reason to expect anything from Wm. at present. I hope though he will come out all right when the end comes. I hope you are all well and will write as soon as you can. Cousin Seth called to see us last month. I forgot to tell you where we are living now, on Essex St., cor. of Washington, west side of Essex & north side of Washington. You'll find it easily enough. Write soon, love to all.

Yours affectionately,

M P Guild