Box 1 Folder 18

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[*Addressed to*:] Master Ralph Ebeneser Burr [*Ralph E. Burr*]
Norfolk
Conn. [*Connecticut*]
Mr. I. Mills.

Prairieville, Wis. Ter. [*Wisconsin Territory*] May 4, 1844.

My dear brother Ralph,

A thousand thanks to you for your good letter on that folio sheet & to pay for it you shall have a letter by yourself — I hope you will write every time you can & write every thing you can think of about the people, — tell who have died, who moved away &c., it will help Ma a great deal — am glad you go to the Academy now dont let there be many better scholars than you, does Warren board at his uncle Fosters? Give my love to him & tell him I want he should be a minister—

I think you have improved considerable in your hand writing. Do you grow fast? Do you try to restrain angry feelings when you feel them rising? I hope you do. you will be glad when you are older if you do. I want to caution you again about using a gun. now dear Ralph dont you think you know so much about a gun that there is no need of your being careful. many persons that have used a gun much more than you have met with sad accidents — deer skip & bound here though I have chanced to see but two live ones although I suppose they have many times passed very near our house — I believe I wrote you last fall that I had neither seen nor heard of wolves about here, but since then I have heard that in some parts of the Ter. [*Territory*] there are a good many & about five or six miles from here are some — there are but very few just about here — we dont know that we have heard them — there are two kind of wolves, the large grey wolves & those that are called prairie wolves the last are smaller than the others & less ferocious — expect there are some wild cats about — I last winter saw the skin of one stuffed that a man in our neighborhood killed — There are wild "prairie hens" about here, have been told that they look just like a common speckled hen. we sometimes hear the cocks crow in the morning. the round does not much resemble that of domestic cocks but is a coarse, cooing sound — believe the flesh of these hens is as good as any — they sometimes fill their crops with wheat, dont know that they do any other harm.

We send you & Erastus & Marcus a book which I hope you will own in partnership. I would commence it & read in course it is very amusing, & want you to tell me if you do not think the author gives a pretty good description of your school boy days —

I dont know but you are so good at school that there is no need of my telling you to be a "good boy" I hope you are, how does your head stand it?

May 7. Tues. I wrote the foregoing last Sat. eve. about as fast as I could. During the day I wrote a letter to Mother Grant, & yesterday I wrote a little to Aunt Susan S. Brown & Abigail Cowles. I intend to devote to day & to morrow in writing to "our folks."

There have been from 15 to 20 deaths about us with the scarlet fever. Several children & youth have died

Yesterday a little girl of our minister died — she was three or fours years old. believe all the other children of the family are sick — Joseph who is 13. Ashur 11 — Sarah 5 or 6 & a babe — but they are very good children, have given their hearts to their Savior & endeavor to spend their youthful days to please him. Will you not do thus my dear little brother, then when sickness & death come you will not fear. Christ will be with you — Jesus loves you now — then fly to his arms — & dear brother Erastus too — I want he should take this as written to him & also the whole letter — I will try to write him a little — I have seen a good many flowers up <*in*> with in a short distance from our house — We hear Whip-poor-wills almost every summer evening — they have been singing for two or three weeks — owls hoot evening & morning — partridge's drum day & night. have not seen any wood chucks about — your little dog does bravely — I can think how you look playing with your kittens — I am afraid that your furious animal that knocked Erastus down will yet kill one or both of you. or some others — <u>do</u> <u>be</u> <u>careful</u>. I suppose

Ethan & Levi & Russell look & act pretty much as they used to — Our ministers boys help their mother a great deal — wash dishes &c —

Your aff. [*affectionate*] sister
Caroline Grant —

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[*In envelope addressed to:*] Ralph E. Burr Esq
Norfolk
Litchfield County
Connecticut

Flemington [*New Jersey*] July 4th 1849

Dear Ralph

Have been trying to get Mary in the humour of writing for some days but have not been able, not to say that she is disobedient for I have not commanded her so to do, but she has kind of put it off until the spirit & flesh were willing & ready at the same moment.

Our town is as quiet today as sunday with the exception of a few firecrackers among the boys and once in awhile a gun shot from children of a larger growth. I have taken advantage of its being a holiday have not done much except in the way of chores, picked peas for dinner, staked up tomato vines, burnt up some weeds that were cut in the field, hoed quite a bit in the garden, and now at 1/2 past 3 oclock P.M. am writing to friends far away. We had some very hot weather week before last and first of last week, since that time it has been much cooler with a deal of easterly wind but no rain, the country is getting (just about here) very dry, pinching the gardens & oats very much. Last week and latter part of week before we cut and got in without the least damage by wet 22 loads of hay, 15 clover & the rest some early […] suffering with the dry weather. Found it very hard work mowing down clover in that hot weather, but made out to 'hang' on by taking it easy. Shall begin to mow again next week & harvest wheat also. Some people are cutting wheat & rye on hilly land. The hay crop is very abundant, think that we will cut about 56 loads from 25 acres of grass, The warm weather has started the corn forward pretty fast. have ploughed all of ours twice some three times, and one piece the 4th and last time, about half (11 acres) of ours looks very good indeed and the rest so middling; the best stands up over two feet high, and we have every size from 6 inches high to 3 feet.

Had our first green peas two weeks ago tomorrow, have had them most every day since but the hot & dry weather is cutting the crop short, the second crop are fast coming in but will not do much. First string beans day before yesterday, new potatoes are not quite fit to dig yet though I have pulled up a hill or two just to get a taste. Cherries & raspberries are ripe & currants nearly so (Mary says that currants were ripe 10 days ago; she wanted to be at them because they were red) also goosberries, We have no goosberries cherries or raspberries here but plenty of currants & can get goosberries plenty at home & cherries most anywhere. Well Ralph it must be something of a job to lay those thumping stone fences yet there is one consolation, once done they are a fixture, they always stay where you put them, Dont they? Now here we have to build a new post fence every twelve or fifteen years, sometimes sooner than that according to the kind of ground on which they are built The rails will last longer but the posts seldom do. Say to your Mother that a short time ago good molasses sold in New York for 36 per gallon by the barrel and tolerable nice brown sugar fro 4 3/4 & 5 cts per lb by the barrel. Just had our house painted outside a light brownish red, window shutters & frames white down stairs, up stairs Venetian shutters green window frames white, are getting pretty well snuged up except some fence to white wash which will be one of the is to be done's for some time yet I fear. They are about to build a large hall in our village 60 feet by 30, 3 stories high, by stock subscription, for the use of the Odd fellows, Sons of Temperance & co. with one large room to let for lectures small shows & so on. 'Twill be quite an ornament to the village and is to be on a new street that has been laid to induce others to build in same street. Am sorry to hear that your Mother has had a sick turn again. Tell she must expect to find me somewhat mysterious sometimes in my writing. I was sure that she would say rather that M [*Mary*] was in bed than sewing. well we do go to bed pretty early and find it very comfortable after working hard all day. Give my love to Mrs. C. [*Caroline*] Grant with all the rest, Tell Mrs. G. [*Grant*] to write to Mary and that I would be glad to see her in

Jersey any time. The Californians appear to be getting along pretty well, keep up something like a government among themselves are building up several little towns quite rapidly. Have one Presbyterian Church organized among them, & stern necessity will develop the agricultural resources of the country & after a while a civilized man might feel half at home there. Do you take any interest in foreign politics? I rejoice with the Hungarians & the Romans & hate the French for their foolish interference at Rome, with their cowardly folly in sticking to the wrong after they have found themselves out to be decidedly so, but that cursed false honour of the human race which drives men deeper & deeper in the wrong for the sake of others praises or blame is a prominent point in French character. Hope that it will not be long before the whole of Europe will bid adieu to kings & Emperors, and they be counted only as things that were.

('Tis mans inhumanity to man)
(Makes countless thousands mourn!)

And will be until men act out more fully the precepts of the New Testament.

Good-bye dear Ralph
Write soon to Me & Mine
Ever Yours
W [*William*] Hill

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[*Addressed to:*] Mr Ralph E Burr
Norfolk
Litchfield County
Connecticut.

All Well

[*Written across address:*] Mr Sheppard please send this up and charge the trouble to Wm [*William*] Hill

Flemington [*New Jersey*] Nov 4th 1849

Dear Ralph

This letter may come unexpectedly to you for I have just thought of writing it and not from any sudden movement of the spirit but because I have received an order to night for ten thousand more lead pots to be delivered in as short a time as possible. Now we shall require more help than we have engaged at present and if you have made up your mind to come to New Jersey this winter and could set out immediately and would be willing to work one month before going to school we would be willing to give you 20 dollars for your service exclusive of board. There are several reasons for my wishing you to come & one is that my Father is almost over done with hard work and I should like to releive him in some way. Do not wish to persuade you to come against your Friends wishes or interests and if they are not perfectly willing at home for you to come why do not come on our acc/ [*account*] but write to us immediately that we may know what to do; Have not done a single hours work out on the farm since my first letter to Mary when she was at home We hired all our corn cut & are hireing men to husk it besides the hands that we have in the shop

We have about 650 Bushels of corn in the crib and have a goodeal more to husk — The weather is still quite pleasant the last two days have been indian summer quite warm and pleasant. Our new rooms are walled up, roof not on yet, Mason built the new oven to day. I myself am pretty tired of constant work at the same thing but will have to get used to it I see — We have 400 bushels of lime ready slacked that wants spreading and a good many odd jobs, in fact at present I see no end of work — are building a new corn crib 25 1/2 feet long 8 feet posts and 4 feet wide at bottom, set up on posts 2 feet above groung to keep out the rats, Thus " [*drawing of barn of stilts*] I find it takes a good eal of thinking & considerable moving about to see that things are done rightly on the farm also to carpenters & masons and do my nearly two days work in the shop Had 3 two horse loads of Yankee pumpkins in the corn from the seed that I brought from your house last winter; all together we had 8 two horse loads and I have had the pleasure of chopping up 1 1/2 bushels noon & eve for two oxen that I am fattening for the good of mankind, for a month past, Should you come on now you would still see a little of the country and

be able to judge a little of the manner in which farming is done up in this unenlightened community. I take a bite of maple sugar almost every night and seldom forget here's to old Ralph or something like it, Often think of you all and would like to see you all very much, I love the wild and uncultivated spots of Connecticuts back bone and some of the places that I saw in that squirrel hunt are still present to memory, Mary says tell her mother that she made a mistake in sending for the yarn and that my mother wants two pounds of grey yarn and only one of white instead of the other way as Mrs Mary B Hill had it, she sat it down from memory and had confusion in her brain as all young housekeepers have and ought to have for dear knows they have enough to think of and too enough to do, Aunt H B Hill is spending the evening with us and she and Mary are chatting of many things at my elbow, but I do not pay much attention to what is going on.

Well you say here's a pretty budget of trouble and work of what is done, doing, and to be done, you can judge by this what occupies my mind I cannot think of many things beside work at present.

Now dear fellow if the things in this letter suit you and yours and you can come soon say first of next week or even the last you would be of considerable service and I will keep my promise made in the first part of this letter, Remember me kindly to Erastus & family your Father & Mother Carrie and all the rest & also to Maria Phelps when you see her,

The Presbyterian Minister left here (that is resigned of charge this week) and there is now an opening [*for*] a good minister that will put up with 500 or 600 dollars for a salary. Good night Dear Ralph

hoping to see you soon I am as ever

Your Brother

Wm Hill [*William Hill*]

I will just add — that William is almost tired out too — & I should be extremely happy if it would not be too much against your interest to permit Ralph to come Most affectionately

Mary [*Mary Burr Grant*]

William has written this with the speed of a steam engine & is <*waiting*> in a hurry to be off before the mail closes.

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Norfolk. [*Connecticut*] Jan 19th 1850.

Friend Ralph —

I must apologise for not writing you before. For since the receipt of your letter I have hardly had a moments leisure in the Day Time, And I do not like to write by Candle light, as it always affects my eyes. I was very glad to hear from you, and of your enjoying yourself as well, as I think you must from the manner you express yourself. I dont wonder you are contented with your lot & for what I know your Comparison is proper. So for news I think Norfolk [*Connecticut*] uncommonly Dull this Winter. I know of nothing unusual or that would interest you in the least.

Since the middle of December we have had excellent Sleighing just Snow enough and what is uncommon for N. [*Norfolk*, *Connecticut*] it has thus far lain quiet. We had a January thaw which lasted One Day, and the next night plenty of snow to repair it.

You inquire <*after*> about the Sabbath School here, or rather our class. I have not attended there two months. Esquire Peck was taken sick about that time ago, so sick that he was obliged to go home every Saturday. and return Monday a little better but worse at the end of the week. They Say he is soon to be Married, I Suppose he will be if his Health mends, And then 'may be we shall commence again.

The talented portion of community here, have revived their Lyceum, and the School Boys their Club. By the way Mr Rice has a full school this winter All he can well tend to. Quite a number of boys from other towns and one or two whom Rice looks Black at. You have been to school to him and know what I mean. I think your teacher must be behind the times, as it regards Wednesday exercises, though I think with you his dispensing with them is much to his credit Augustus Pettibone, does not attend school this Winter, His Father is going, or has gone, South and he can not be spared. it is just as well for him, he will learn more I presume. He was out here

to keep Thanksgiving, and staid a day or two with me. He would not miss being here if he had to come on foot. I presume Uncle Bradley misses his presence as much as any one or two. As for myself I do not go to school this Winter, but farm it night and morning and stay at Doctors between. I take it pretty easy there as it regards them and read six hours in the day on the average.

Huggins is at home most of the time, and a good pleasant fellow he is <*most of the time*>, Now and then he gets miffed at me, which is all right enough I suppose he has reason to be, but a great share of the time he is what he ought to be. ready to assist me when I need. He is a cold blooded fellow, and keeps the office so hot that I roast with my coat off — I have the advantage of him though, I make him keep the fire, and he is on the trot after wood all the time. I dont know as he will stay another year but I am sure I hope he will. We have had such fine winter weather that People have gone on with their building to good advantage Lawrence's folks have part of their Hoe Works running and the Ryans have got their Factory mostly out of the woods and have a number of hands hewing They have fairly filled up the village with their timber and wood. I believe Uncle Pendleton has got his works in operation as Levi went along a short time ago with a Bundle of Leather about large enough for him to sit on. Harlow Roys commenced raising his new works yesterday they raised two tiers and have eleven more to raise. He will have one of the largest works in the Country. when completed. He does great things or none. From reading over your letter I see you mention Dancing as common as if I were you and could without neglecting my studies I should learn, When they talked of starting a school here, I thought I would attend, but as for going down to Crowells, five miles once a week for that purpose, it wont pay. they muster up ten couple however who go out at night and come home to Breakfast. I believe in Dancing but not in running the thing into the ground. If they would get home in the proper time the good folks of this town would not oppose it as they do,

You must excuse the good looks of this letter, Ralph for I have had to jump up and leave it a dozen times, Write me as often as you can, and what you please, anything that interests you will me, and I would like to know if you ever expect to come back and live in old Norfolk [*Connecticut*], my mind is made up in regard to that I would like to know yours
Halsey is well and attending school, and wishes to be remembered to you (I guess) I have not seen him Nor does he know of my writing, Your Friends are all well (that I know anything about understand me), and hoping to (see you soon and hear from you sooner) as the Paddy wrote

I remain

Your Friend

J. H. P. Stevens.

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[*In envelope addressed to:*] Mr Ralph E Burr.
Flemington.
Huntington County.
New Jersey.

New York Oct 3d 1850.

Friend Ralph —

I have been walking my room this half hour, whistling & thinking what I had best do with myself. I did not feel like attending any of the Evening Meetings and there is not much fun in walking the Streets when you have no place to go to. I have made up my mind I could do nothing better than to write to you.

You see what a blunder I have made in writing New York at the top of the Sheet, I thought at first I would give it up, but I am afraid I would do no better if I were to try again. of Course you will not care for the looks, for between a poor pen & my dullness this Evening I do not expect a very showy Letter. I have been in New York now one Month, & conducted myself with Propriety No easy thing to do either (that is for me.) attend Lectures studiously Six pr Day. from 9 am. till 1. & from 2 1/2 till 5 1/2. the Lectures one Hour each, and an Evening Lecture at 7 PM. Three Evenings in the Week. That Keeps on pretty Steady whether he will or no.
I Know of nothing to write that would interest you particularly. I see Augustus Pettibone two or three times a week. I Board about two Miles from their Store. Up Town, Camp & I, Room with a

fellow from Maine, whom he got acquainted with last Winter, I do not get invited to as many Parties, Weddings &c as you had the luck to be last Winter in Jersey. I Can not Account for it any way unless the People were more Civil with you or else you are more Agreeable, I think it is the latter. The Boarders here are mostly Old Married People & I Do not have much company & <*as*> except Sundays have no time to go to August Pettibones. So you see I have no Chance to Show myself, not that I care anything about it for I cannot Study & Play at the same time & do both well. I intend to do the former & if a Chance turns up for the Latter, why then improve it.

The Weather has been quite Warm here to what it was in Norfolk [*Connecticut*] when I left. I never was so bit & Chewed up by the Mosquitoes, (get a dictionary & look up that word will you) as I was here During the first two Weeks but their Day will soon be over, & besides I have got used to them & their Music. I Suppose You have Singing Schools in Norfolk this Season, Do you attend? I Shall expect to see you in the Choir when I return, which will be about Christmas. You must write me all the news Gossip that has been the rounds since I left, I do not know the reason but I cannot find, anything of it in the Papers here. Tell me also, whether you do to School, what Boys go that I know, how many Scholars &c and I Shall expect a list of all the Marriages, Births & other wonderful Phenomenon that come to pass, in their regular Order. You know North End, is a famous place for them things to occur, but I hope none of them will happen to you personally I Suppose you have had your fill of all sorts of Hunting I think it must have been a good Season. Write any way & let me know, for I Hate to be in Ignorance. I know nothing further to Edify you with at this present time but will endeavour to Send more beauty in my next Epistle

End of Chapter First, Your friend J. H. Stevens.

PS Direct your letter to me, at 409 Broome Street N.Y.

New York Dec 5th 1850.

Friend Ralph,

There being no Lectures to Day in Consequence of the Death of one of the Students, whose Funeral will be attended this afternoon I take the Opportunity to Answer your last. I have not found the time to do so before, & you must not think me forgetful of you or attribute my long Silence to Neglect. I Suppose Augustus Pettibone told you all the News &c. that has <*happened*> been worth repeating I saw him a few Minutes Yesterday Said he had Seen you &c. I have not heard about Thanksgiving as yet, but Suppose you had the Usual Sermon Dinner &c

I would have liked to have been there, but thought it better to Stay a few weeks longer when We will have a Vacation of a Week & then I can enjoy myself at Home, without loosing any Lectures. The last Week has been Warm & Wet & the Streets so Muddy that you would not have know them from that New Road you have got in Norfolk [*Connecticut*] across the Curtiss Meadow — I hope the Weather & the Wind will get Settled before long — & that it will seem more like Winter.

Augustus Said he attended a Shooting Match a Day or two before Thanksgiving, but said Nothing of your being there & Therefore I conclude you were not present but Employed in Lecturing Science into the Heads of the Rising Generation in the Johnson School House, with a Beech Sprout &c — I would like to know if Any Young Ladies are to be indebted to you for the finishing touch to their Education, I Say all this as a Joke you will Understand. & you may expect to have your School visited one of these Days when I get back again. You must not call on me for any Remarks however just before Closing School which I believe is the Custom, at all counts it used to be. I Shall Decline the intended Honor expressing at the Same time my Conviction that the School Teacher is Lone. O Ralph we must have a Time about them Times. All that worries me is your Living so near Goshen & You know how Gold Beads shine, I cannot tell You anything New on that Subject. by the way tell me whether they look as they used to, I was rather disappointed to hear of your taking the Chair you occupy I thought you would have been Coming down here on the way to Jersey & Staid a Day or two with me, but I am not going to break my heart about it, by the way now when I think of it let me give you this advise to have Your School (Unkept) Christmas Week & then I will do the Same by mine & as for the Boarding Round let that alone for the same length of time, I must Adjourn now a few Minutes for Dinner, which needs my Special Attention &c — Well Ralph I have been thinking this 1/2 Hour what next to (rub you with) but Come to look at it all, it seems too bad, & if it were not that I have not time to write another, I

would burn this Letter, but as it is I think I may rely upon your Good Nature & fortune to send it & if you have Time &
the Tools just answer some of my Queries, in the manner they Deserve, & what that Manner is I Do not think Will Puzzle you Greatly to Determine, Write me all the Marvels that Come to pass & Believe Me always

Your Friend
J.H. Stevens.

Mr. Ralph E. Burr.
PS
I am going down to see Guson & shall make particular enquiries about you, so if you do not write one the Facts, I shall know it,

[*Written on outside by address:]* I have pulled this open to insert a parting Word So you need not think any one Else Did it

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