

Guilford Dec 31st 1859

Brother William

On this last day of the year, just at night. Having a few spare moments, I take pleasure in spending them in answering your letter which we were happy to receive. It was a long time since we had heard from you directly and were it not that we suppose the duties of Western Pioneer life are very arduous we should be disposed to complain a little. I suppose the main object in writing to another is to give desirable information and if I knew what questions you would like to have answered first, I might make a more interesting letter. Health is commonly inquired about first, & I say that we are all of us in usual health and I believe all of your relations and particular friends in Connecticut are also.

Second, what are you doing? I answer nothing of much importance or profit because there seems to be nothing to do except get wood and burn it and if you are better then I am glad of it. I expect to have a living of some kind while I stay in this poverty-struck world, but what I earn this winter - or get without earning - won't probably give me anything extra. Well then, what are other people doing? I commence at home. Hannah has had the Sewing (?) fever, and nothing would cure it but a \$50 Wheeler & Wilson. Aunt Sally Russell is always kind to the sick and so she out of kindness to the afflicted one offered to exchange the required amount for a piece of paper with some writing on it, and away we started to effect the cure. But calling at Sister Ruth's on the way she caught the fever also and being violently sick, arrangements were made and forthwith two Machines were bought, the fever left and they are both in better health than before.

Jan. 1st. eve. I was obliged last night to break off right in the middle of my story & contrary to my intention, but perhaps it is just as well, at any rate I will commence with a paragraph, today being the first Sabbath in the year and New Year's day also, we of course, expected a sermon appropriate to the occasion & were not disappointed. Mr. Wood preached from Gen 1st, 14th and was as usual very interesting. This afternoon before distributing the bread & wine he remarked at some length from the 17 first verse of the 13th chapter of John and if any person heard his remarks without being profited by them, I think it was his own fault & not the preaching. Next Tuesday eve if nothing prevents our pastor. will receive a donation visit from his friends, The seats (?) in Church this year sold extremely high, there being but few if any spare ones.

Hannah says here

Bill have a happy new year

And as this is my notion

I second the motion.

Arthur is quite busy with his arithmetic & thinks he can't get time to write to the boys just now but would like to hear from them.

To your neighbors who emigrated from Guilford you will please give my love as you have opportunity & please tell them that I hope the Lord will send them as much prosperity & as little adversity as he can consistently. We all (viz, Myself, Wife, Mother & Arthur - Willie don't know enough & if he did he is asleep) send our best love to you, your Wife & your Children one and all. We should be glad to visit you if we could afford the time and expense & we should be quite happyfied by a visit from you, but don't expect it quite yet.

Den^a John V. is keeping school in our district this winter which I think will be no disadvantage to the neighborhood. You wrote the market prices of the crops in Wisconsin and perhaps expect something of me in return. Well Corn is about 70C and Rye about the same per bushel. Hay is worth from 15 to \$18 per ton. Oats, 50, Potatoes 50 or more, but the amount of our crops is so small compared with yours that the price is hardly worth mentioning. Here I must close, so good night.

R. W. Benton

The cold is huge and has been for a week, but no sleighing.