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METCALF COLLECTION
BOX III FOLDER 1

LETTER WRITTEN BY CHARLES METCALF¹
TO HIS PARENTS JOSEPH ADDISON METCALF AND CHLOE FALES
ADAMS²

Lowell³ April 27th, 1844

Dear Parents

Having a good opportunity to send to W. I take my pen once more to write you a few lines and inform you of our welfare, circumstances, and prospects, as you requested. In the first then we all enjoy good health, as do all our friends. Mary arrived (and the rest) on Tuesday about noon, safe and sound, she is at work at Mrs. Youngs⁴ for her board, does not work all the time, Mrs. Y. had been wishing to get some one thus to work but had obtained none till M. came, and we thought it would be the best thing she could do till she could get a place in the mill. Mr. Woods says he could not promise to take her under 3 or 4 weeks if at all, as he has plenty of that kind of help and is like to have at present as some have spoken to him for a place heretofore but have not obtained one yet as he is full of help, and if he takes any he must them, first. Lavinia and Sarah⁵ think that she will make a better spinner, than weaver and thought the best thing we could do was for me to speak to Mr. Jones, my overseer, for a place in his room, accordingly I did so this morning and he told me that he was full of that kind of help just now but perhaps would take her, a week from next Monday said he would let me know the first of the week. Wages about 15 cts per week besides board for the first 4 or 5 weeks and after that raised them in proportion to the worth of

¹ Charles Addison Metcalf b: 9 Nov 1822, Winthrop, ME d: 9 May 1871, IA; occupation 1844: operative – Massachusetts Mills, boards #4; married about 1847: Elizabeth Hight b: abt 1827, Wayne, ME d: 11 Aug 1893.

² Parents: Joseph Addison Metcalf b: 25 Dec 1795, Winthrop, ME d: 17 Jun 1845, Winthrop, ME; married 1821: Chloe Fales Adams b: 1 Jan 1797, Franklin, MA d: 23 Jul 1897, Walpole, MA.

³ Lowell, Massachusetts.

⁴ Mrs. Adeline W. Young; occupation 1844: boardinghouse keeper, Massachusetts Mills #27.

⁵ Sarah Bacon Metcalf b: 8 Jan 1827, Winthrop, ME d: 1 Nov 1872; occupation 1846: Boott Mills; married 1849: William Mann b: 11 Dec 1825, Slaterville, RI d: 23 Oct 1900.

the hand. I am very sorry it is so that she cannot get in with Sarah as I thought it would be better to have

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them together, but as it is I will do the best I can for her she seems to be willing to go into the spinning room and do the best she can. I intend to encourage her and help her along as much as I can. Sarah gets along well, she got 6 dolls. and 12 ½ cts besides her board the first 4 weeks, expects looms in a week, or 2. She paid me 3 dolls towards what I let her have. I told her she better keep the rest as she might need it, but she will write and tell you all about it. I am at work where I expected to when I wrote you before, it is rather hard work and I get very tired by night and feel thankful when Sat. night comes so that I can have a short respite. I have to carry out lay on top of the frames 5000 or more bobbins every day, and the same numbers of empty ones back again so you can see I have to [unclear] pretty lively. my fingers are so tired to night that I can scarcely hold on to my pen, much less write a legible hand, and this must be my apology for poor writing. the girls say that I have grown [unclear] since I began to work in the mill my nose bleeds every day more or less not much however owing probably in part to the invitation arising from the cotton flying about and partly from the temperature of the room and [unclear], think I shall go into the big machine shop the first good chance, unless I get a better place in the mill soon. That is Shubaels⁶ advice, and he is on the lookout for a place. Through his exertions Albion Benjamin has got a chance in the big shop⁷ and went to work yesterday at 60 cts per day. I suppose you will expect to hear something about my boarding place, well I board at No

⁶ Shubael Pratt Adams b: 5 Feb 1817, Medfield, MA d: bet 1885-1900, IA; married 1846: 1st Lydia E. Stetson b: 19 Jul 1816, Scituate, ME d: 25 Jan 1853, Lowell; married: 2nd Diancy Rawson Taylor b: 25 Feb 1825, Gilson, NH d: bet 1910-1920, Dubuque, IA.

⁷ Lowell Machine Shop.

4 Mrs. Hurds, Mass Corp⁸ she keeps a very good house and sets a good table
I room in the attic for the present a small room with only
one bed, have to go up 3 pairs of stairs, my room mate is a
Capt. Peaslee member of John St. church dates his
conversion to the revival in 1842. and joined the church
in July when I did. we have pleasant times together
one of us reads a chapter in the Bible and makes a prayer
at night alternately, it seems some like home for till
I came here I heard not a blessing asked at table or a prayer
except on the Sab. or at meeting. I was homesick for the
domestic altar but there was none to be found at either
Uncles. I must quit writing for to night. I am so tired and
sleepy, and it is past eleven o'clock. Sab. April 28. "Hail happy
day, thou day of holy rest." Have been to church today
A.M. to John St. P.M. – Mr. Blanchard⁹ with Albion. I have
not been there before on the Sab. and thought I should like
to hear Mr. Blanchard. But [unclear] it today, as he changed with Mr. [unclear]
Mr. Hanks¹⁰ has been gone 3 Sabbaths and is going to be absent till the
1st of June has gone to Illinois and Wisconsin for his health I
believe, some think he will not stay here long. I like him pretty
well, is very original in his discourses is apt to excite a smile
by his expressions is a great friend of the American Board thinks they
have done a great deal of good granted and makes contributions to aid them
but gives notice that those who wish may give to the Union [unclear]
and it shall be forwarded to them. Is a very nervous man and some
of his church are Garrisonites and they keep him in a [unclear] all the time. there
was a Garrison meeting here a short time since and he and Mr. [unclear]
Brewster, Protestant Methodists, effused to read the notice of the Indignations
meeting as Mr. H. calls it, which made their wraths, and they took it up
in the meeting and called them ministers of the Devil

⁸ Mrs. Hurd, boardinghouse keeper, Middlesex Mills #4.

⁹ Reverend Amos Blanchard, minister 1829-1845: First Congregational Church, Lowell, MA;
minister 184: Kirk Church Congregation Church,, Lowell, MA.

¹⁰ Reverend Stedman W. Hanks; minister 1840-1853: John Street Congregational Church, Lowell,
MA.

There is no particular attention to religion here at present, but Christians seem to feel the need of a revival of Gods work among us and the prayer meetings are interesting, there seems to be a spirit of prayer and may we not hope that when Christians are united in asking for the influences of the Holy Spirit it will be granted. Yes – ought we not to [unclear] the promises of Jesus Christ when he said “I will send you the Comforter; even the Spirit of Truth.” There is a young peoples meeting Sab. nights at 5 and a prayer meeting at 6 ½ o’clock also on Tuesday and Friday evenings, but I get so tired week nights that I cannot keep awake, and sometimes I think it is not duty to go, but generally calculate to go once a week at least. It is almost impossible for me to keep awake on the Sab. at church as the congregation do not rise in prayer time as they do in W. They rise the 1st and last times singing and the consequence is that as I am on my feet all the time in the week and sitting nearly all the Sab. that I get asleep, and it makes it very unpleasant for me as I try hard to keep awake, for I do not like to be seen sleeping at church. I feel anxious that the girls should choose that good part which shall [unclear] be taken away from them. Spent the evening them and the 2 Carolines on Wed. in the lower back where they room and as I left them, told them this had a good opportunity to read the Bible together at night, and hoped they would attend to the great concern, how very uncertain life is and the great thing to live for is to prepare to die, also the deep interest I felt for their salvations, it is my earnest desire, and daily prayer to God that they may be saved, and that we all as a family may be useful, and faithful in the service of our maker, kept from the evil that is in the world, from temptation and sin, that our health may be preserved if agreeable to the Divine Will fill up our days with duty, and be prepared to die. O glorious privilege that we can go to a throne of grace, and pour our supplications into the ear of Him who can be touched with the feelings of our impurities. How refreshing to the soul to lay our wants and desires before our Almighty Friends and cast all our burdens there. Never before have I heard such heavy tidings as the news of the death of Mr. Shaw it seems as if I could not revisit it to be a fact Alas! How uncertain life, how near at hand is the grim messenger when we least expect it

I can deeply sympathise with you for the chasm death has made and I might say your irreparable loss. I can hardly express my joy and thankfulness at the receipt of all your kind letters, it was like cold waters to a thirsty soul, even news from a far country, hope you will keep on as you have begun, and I will try to do my part to repay you, especially Father, hope you will “take time,” and write us a long letter the first opportunity. I feel down at the heel, and home sick once in a while but pray that I may have a contented mind which is a continual [unclear] Fathers poor health worries me considerable, he must not work so hard, and take care of himself. I had rather come home and work all summer for nothing but my board, than to have him work so hard. Shubael says you will never get over the effect of hard labour, but can probably lengthen your days if refraining from excessive labour in future, and that is the best medicine he can prescribe. Thinks a trip to the sea shore and a fishing excursion would be a benefit, but he told me he would write to Mother about you. Says he expects his Father here soon, have not heard a word from Franklin, or of friends out of the city, think I shall write to F. by Uncle [unclear] if he comes. Saw Cousin Ellis Adams of Waltham¹¹ few minutes a week ago Sat. he was here as journeyman but they had [unclear] and he got excused after staying 5 days. My heart is fill [unclear] following when I think of those dear little ones I have left at home [unclear] the cords of love wound with my very heart-strings, how I wish I could see them and hear them sing and say verses, and read in the Bible [unclear] I am separated from them, no one knows for how long tell them [unclear] must remember brother Charles, and be kind to each other, love and obey Father and Mother, and love Brother James, tell [unclear] Charles wants him to love to read, and go to school and be a good and pleasant boy, and love to work like a little man and help Papa, and James and ask J to learn him and Martha to sing for when I come home I shall want to hear them sing “How pleased and blest was I.” tell Martha C wants her to love to run out and pick up chips and do little chores for Mother and she must be Mothers girl now. Sarah and Mary are gone, I think of you all every day and of the home of my childhood, of the scenes of by-gone days never to return of society and friends I have left and the like of which I hardly expect to find again in any other place. Tell Uncle Asa Fairbanks that I asked the landlord in Portland¹² if he knew Mr. A. Boyle, he said he used to board there, but had gone away to keeping house, and he did not know in what part of the city he was. Think I shall write to James tomorrow night if I can hold a pen, if I do not tell I thank him for his kind letter and hope he will write every chance, and I will do the same hope he will go ahead this summer a [unclear], Father to work according to his strength and let the rest go. Do write after and let us know of your welfare, especially should any of you be sick. Please remember me to all the friends, [unclear] father and mother especially. Thank you for the papers you sent although I do not get much time to read. I have filled up my sheet and must close or I shall be sleepy in the morning. Trusting that we are remembered at the store of

¹¹ [Waltham, Massachusetts.](#)

¹² [Portland, Maine.](#)

grace daily I subscribe myself with affection and love, your Son, C. A. Metcalf